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Introducing the Resilient Peace System: New Potentials for Peace in Kosovo and Medellín

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B.Sc, M.Sc

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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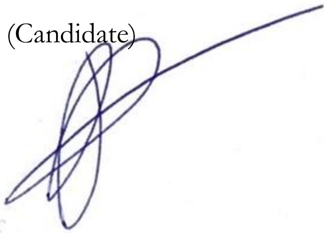

Dedicated to my late grandma, Roelie Luitjens - De Vries, who taught me what resilience looks like in person.

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I can confidently say that the last four years have been a crazy ride; after starting my PhD in September of 2018 I, among others, lived in 3 different countries, met wonderful people, got introduced to new food and traditions, conducted over 150 interviews (of which about half on zoom!), live(d) through a pandemic, published several articles and book chapters, and, like icing on the cake, I became a mom in March of 2022. While I am certainly sad that the period of being a PhD candidate is over, I am proud to be able to finally present the 'Resilient Peace System'. All of this would of course not have been possible if it wasn't for the countless support and help which I received; of all those who helped me over the last four years, I want to acknowledge the most important ones here.

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Abstract

Introducing the Resilient Peace System: New Potentials for Peace in Kosovo and Medellín
Marije Renate Luitjens-Tol

Peace and conflict dynamics have become increasingly complex over the course of the last century; as a result, peace interventions have transformed from top-down, one-size-fits-all interventions to bottom-up practices that place the local at the centre. Nevertheless, questions on how to engage with the present-day complexities of peace processes remain largely unresolved. Existing analytical frameworks lack the capacity to present a holistic picture of the local dynamics in conflict-affected situations, which in turn complicates the realisation of successful peace efforts. This thesis responds to this problem by introducing the Resilient Peace System, a new tool to analyse the complexity of peace within conflict-affected situations. The RPS connects (academic) debates that are often held in isolation and in doing so it engages with the present-day resilience and peacebuilding critique. The RPS has been developed empirically over the course of the last four years and has been conceptualised based on in-depth qualitative research in Kosovo and Medellín (Colombia). Through approaching peace as a complex adaptive system and by applying a resilience lens to analyse this system, it becomes possible to observe the dynamic essence of peace within a conflict-affected setting. The RPS is an analytical tool that analyses 1) the local understandings of peace, 2) the obstacles to peace, and 3) the capacities for peace within a specific context, and it reflects the interrelation between them. The RPS therefore exposes contextual dynamics and interdependencies that are otherwise not visible, and as such adds to understanding the present-day complexities of peace processes. It is therefore both an epistemological approach - to add to the changing understanding of peace within academia -, and an analytical tool to guide peace policy to better comprehend the strengths and weaknesses of a specific conflict-affected situation to work towards more effective peace efforts. As such, the RPS adds both to the lively academic debates on peacebuilding and resilience, and it responds to the necessity of creating peace efforts that offer better opportunities for durable peace.

Key terms: Resilience, Peace, Peacebuilding, Conflict analysis, Conflict resolution

1. Introduction

"It is just that there is no peace, we don't live in peace".

Camila, 40 years, Medellín

It is March 13, 2021, and Camila and I are talking about her life in Medellín, the second largest city in Colombia. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, we are separated by about 9000 kilometres, but with the use of Zoom I am right there in her living room. Family members that she is sharing her house with, are walking by and at times make their opinion clear during the conversation. While it is only the first time we speak, Camila is an open book: she tells me about the difficult times she went through growing up during the peak of Medellín's urban war, and enthusiastically explains her personal attempts at creating a more equal city. After her explanation that she would love to cycle to work, but cannot because of the many mountains, I ask her "what does peace mean, to you personally?". Immediately upon asking the question Camila's mood changes, she remains quiet for a while and then becomes emotional. While I offer to change the topic, she shakes her head and replies "it is just that there is no peace, we don't live in peace".

Camila's opinion is widely shared among the interlocutors in both Kosovo and Medellín, the case studies of this research. While peace cannot simply be understood as a binary of yes or no peace, this widely shared opinion deviates from the public discourse where both Kosovo and Medellín are understood as post-conflict settings 'at peace'. This indicates that, at least in Kosovo and Medellín, the understanding of peace at an international level is significantly different from the local understandings of peace. External attempts, generally by the international community, at the creation of peace following a universalised understanding have hence not been successful. Over the course of the last decades, the peacebuilding community has largely agreed upon the importance of including local voices to overcome the divide between externally mandated interventions and the local needs (Chandler 2017; de Coning 2018; Firchow 2018; Leonardsson and Rudd 2015; Mac Ginty 2014; Stepputat and Moe 2018; Visoka 2017a; Visoka and Richmond 2017). Through research initiatives as the Everyday Peace Indicators (EPI), it has become clear that peace and peacebuilding means different things to different people and is hence highly context sensitive (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2014). These findings moreover indicate that peace, and the situation in which peace is meant to be created, is highly complex; it is crucial to understand this complexity, to visualise the potentials for peace within a specific context. In line with this, current peacebuilding approaches emphasise the importance of existing capacities, capabilities, and practices to strengthen a society from within (Chandler 2015; Juncos 2018, 562; Juncos and Joseph 2020; Mac Ginty 2021). It hence becomes clear that the concept of resilience, which generally refers to the adaptive capacity of a complex system in times of adversity (Folke et al. 2010; Taşan-Kok and Eraydin 2013; Walker and Cooper 2011), has taken a centre stage (de Coning

2016). Interestingly however, the debate on the building local capacities to realise peace, is not per definition linked to local understandings of peace. As the integration of different progressive debates is lacking, the current peace paradigm fails to present a complete picture of the complexity of peace. On top of that, these new developments remain primarily on a theoretical level and the 'pragmatic turn' of these interventions is generally absent. The existing frameworks for analysing situations of conflict and peace lack the capacity to depict the complexity on the ground, and current peace interventions are not capable of creating a durable peace, in line with the local understandings. It is therefore crucial to find new ways to map the complex situations on the ground in order to increase the potential for successful efforts at durable peace. The gap between conventional understandings of peace and the situation on the ground furthermore demonstrates that academia currently is insufficiently able to analyse these complex local dynamics. This brings me to the overall argument that is presented in this thesis: there is a necessity to introduce a new way of analysing conflict-affected situations to better comprehend the complex local dynamics of peace, in order to realise more effective peace efforts. To respond to this need, I introduce the 'Resilient Peace System' in this thesis; the Resilient Peace System (also referred to as the RPS) is an analytical tool that looks holistically at the local meanings of peace, the obstacles to and necessities for peace within a specific context. The development of the RPS has been an inductive process, based on ethnographic (online) fieldwork in Kosovo and Medellín (Colombia).

The Resilient Peace System brings together different debates within the peace paradigm: it among others combines the debate on local peace meanings, the importance of building on local capacities, and the rise of resilience within the peace paradigm. In line with the resilience paradigm, I propose to understand peace as a complex adaptive system. It is however not the aim to create a 'resilient peace', but to use resilience-thinking to provide insight into the weaknesses and strengths of a particular system of peace. The RPS consequently consists of three components: 1) peace meanings, 2) obstacles to peace, and 3) capacities for peace. The first category analyses what the local understandings of peace are, this hence goes beyond the question if there is peace but focuses on the *meaning* of peace. Continuing with Camila's story, she believes that peace is the ability to walk the streets without having to be afraid for violence erupting. The analyses of these peace meanings often link to the obstacles to peace present within a system. In current theories on resilience and peace, conflict is defined as the risk that needs to be avoided (Chandler and Coaffee 2016; Hussain 2013). Here the link to resilience becomes clear, as -in line with widely accepted resilience debate - resilience focuses on the managing of risks within complex adaptive systems (e.g., Chandler 2017; Dijkstra et al. 2018; Juncos 2018). Within the RPS, peace instead of conflict becomes the focal point. In doing so, it goes beyond merely focusing on risks of (re)lapsing into conflict, as it explores 'obstacles to peace' which incorporates a broader understanding of the situation. Lastly, capacities are at the core of all resilience operationalisations, and have become centre of attention in peacebuilding approaches. Building on that, I argue it is crucial to discover the capacities already present in society in order to strengthen these and not about bringing in externally mandated programmes to 'create' capacities. In line with earlier ideas of hybrid peace (e.g., Mac Ginty 2011) and Gearoid Millar's (2019) notion of trans-

scalar peace, the RPS furthermore acknowledges the importance of understanding peace as multi-layered. It is crucial to understand in what way different societal scales interact and influence each other, to realise effective change. Simply put: if at community level successful attempts at peace are made, but the national level does not support this, or even contradict it, there is a low chance of sustaining this form of peace. Analysing a peace system using the RPS thus combines concepts that are often applied in isolation, which makes it possible to bring to light dynamics between different components that are often overlooked. As such, it provides a holistic vision of both the necessities and capacities for peace within a specific setting.

While I am aware that introducing yet another analytical tool might be received with scepticism, I believe that using the RPS to analyse a situation of peace, lays bare new potentials for peace within that specific context. Is it hence necessary? To quote Walt Kilroy (2021, 2): "If it brings new insights – when used in conjunction with other ways of analyzing conflict – and exposes relationships and dynamics which are not otherwise visible, then the answer should be 'Yes'." However, to properly highlight necessity of the RPS, the next section will present the limits of the existing peace paradigm, and as such makes the case for re-thinking current conceptualisations of peace, and existing peace interventions.

1.1 The limits of existing peace interventions

Both the origins of academic discipline on and the global practice of peacebuilding date back to recent history. It is only since mid-20th century that theories on, and practices of, conflict resolution and peacebuilding rose quickly. In this relatively short period of time, the world has however experienced substantial changes and, among others due to globalisation, has become increasingly complex. Consequently, warfare also experiences an increased complexity: while every conflict is different, and there is no clear-cut moment of change, in general scholars agree that after the Cold War conflicts became increasingly diffuse, conflict tactics changed, and different conflict actors became more difficult to recognise (de Coning 2016; 2018; Kaldor 2012; Stepputat and Moe 2018; World Bank and United Nations 2018). Over the course of the century, global peacebuilding practices have both emerged and undergone significant changes following critique from within the field. To demonstrate this evolution, this section will provide an overview of the genealogy of theory and practice reflected in academic work[1] of peacebuilding by discerning six different phases, highlighting the limits of the existing peace interventions. In this explanation, I built forth on the first four *'peacebuilding generations'* as presented by Richmond (2002; 2010; 2016) and add a fifth and sixth phase. I thereby argue that the limitations experienced in the five first phases, led to the current phase of 'practicing resilience'. This phase has been crucial in the development of the RPS. While this section focuses on the limits of peace interventions, chapter 2 will introduce the resilience paradigm and consequently present the 'practicing resilience' phase.

[1] In other words: while the within the peacebuilding paradigm practice and theory are highly intertwined (as for example becomes visible Séverine Autesserre's latest book "t*he Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World*"), this section presents a review of the existing academic body of the resilience and peacebuilding paradigm and it is therefore important to acknowledge that an analysis purely focusing on local peacebuilding *practices* might alter the results. As the RPS has been developed inductively and therefore includes existing peace efforts in both countries, this should not limit the applicability of the RPS in practice.

The period after WWII, from the 1940s – 1970s, has been crucial for both the academic peace discipline and the universal institutionalisation of peace interventions (Chandler 2017; Paris 2004; Richmond 2011; United Nations 1945). The creation of the United Nations, through the signing of the United Nations charter in June 1945, formed the legal basis for United Nations peace missions (Paris 2004; United Nations 1945). States were considered to be principal actors on the international stage, and peace interventions were based on consent, impartiality, and neutrality (Chandler 2017; Richmond 2002; United Nations 1945). The interventions were rooted in the philosophy of liberalism, which believed democratisation to be key to peace and security in both international and domestic spheres (Paris 2004, 7; Richmond 2010; Wilson 1918). During this period, peace was understood as the absence of direct violence – peace "in spite of hatred, scarcity, and violence" (Richmond 2008, 2). This conceptualisation of peace was heavily influenced by Johan Galtung, who is often considered a 'founding figure' to the peace and conflict discipline.[2] Galtung visualised conflict as an illness: something that can be cured with the right diagnoses and can eventually lead to two versions of peace, either negative or positive peace (Webel and Galtung 2007). Negative peace indicates the absence of direct violence and the prevention of war, and positive peace means the absence of also structural and cultural violence – and thus relates to broader issues of human security. In other words, where negative peace is merely an absence of violence, positive peace refers to the positive restoration of relationships, and justice for all (Galtung 1969). While missions during this period were portrayed to be based on consent and impartiality, it soon became clear they were power-based and hegemonic activities that did not provide a stable peace (Richmond 2005, 91). This led to the belief that understanding the root causes of a conflict and the inclusion of local voices are crucial for peace.

During the second phase from the 1970s – 1990s, tackling root causes through conflict resolution hence became central to peace interventions. Over time, the understanding of conflict developed from a purely biological treat to something that arises out of the "repression of human needs, and is a social, as well as psychological phenomenon" (Richmond 2010, 19). With this, the understanding of what constitutes peace also broadened, encompassing a wider array of issues as human security instead of merely state security (Galtung 1969; Richmond 2010, 19-21). To realise this type of peace, understanding the root causes became of importance and understanding human behaviour hence became crucial (Boulding 1978). During this period, connecting different societal levels gained relevance and local voices were deemed crucial for the creation of a positive peace (Richmond 2002, 77). It nevertheless remained the role of the state to fulfil the needs of their citizens – and in turn the needs of individuals must be made clear through a vibrant civil society. It remains the understanding that liberal, democratic countries were generally believed to experience less (civil) wars (Chandler 2017; de Coning 2018, 302; Mac Ginty 2011; Richmond 2005, 2011; Stepputat and Moe 2018). At the same time however, peace interventions were still mono-dimensional: focusing on one specific level of analysis (i.e., local, or state) of the conflict environment, while conflicts had become

[2] While there are various 'founding figures' who helped establish the peace and conflict discipline, Johan Galtung and Kenneth Boulding are widely accepted as key figures. Where Kenneth Boulding (1910-1993) is often referred to as the founding father of conflict studies in the United States, Johan Galtung (1930-present) has largely influenced the European paradigm (Ramsbotham et al. 2011).

significantly more hybrid and complex, with diffuse conflict actors (Richmond 2002). As such, it became clear that appropriate guidelines were required for United Nations peace operations to build strong foundations for sustainable peace (United Nations 2000b). This critique led to the third phase of peacebuilding.

While new guidelines were required, it was still commonly acknowledged that 'western liberal states' were able to bring peace, and lack of liberal regime was a potential for war (Chandler 2017, 10). This notion led to the creation of the United Nations Agenda for Peace in 1992, which was formalised by United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (United Nations 1992). The adoption of the Agenda for Peace solidified liberalism within peacebuilding and provided a blueprint for interventions as it required interveners to focus on good governance, democratisation, rule of law, market relations, and human rights (Chandler 2017, 22; Leonardsson and Rudd 2015; Richmond 2010, 22). The focus hence shifted from positive or negative peace to the creation of liberal peace. To achieve this objective, the mono-dimensional approach transformed into a multidimensional approach: different actors, as local, regional, or state level actors were combined in an attempt to create sustainable peace (United Nations 2003). By the end of the 1990s, 'democratisation' had become one of the main concerns of the United Nations and the number of peace operations surged throughout the 90s (Paris 2004, 36; Stepputat and Moe 2018). The liberal mandate became a blueprint for the interventions in among others Kosovo, the DRC, and East Timor. But the peacebuilding failures that followed painfully brought to light that the conservative liberal peace paradigm did not bring the successes that were hoped for. Moreover, at the end of the 90s earlier (liberal) peacebuilding successes in Central America, Southern and West Africa, turned out to be "plagued by problems such as criminal violence, corruption, political exclusion, or continued instability" (Call and Coning 2017, 2). The optimism that arose after the Cold War rapidly disappeared and critical notions that 'peacebuilding has failed' took over (Castillo 2017; Chandler 2017; Leonardsson and Rudd 2015; Mac Ginty 2011; Richmond 2005, 2010, 2011). As such, the peacebuilding community largely agreed that it is problematic to export liberal policies, institutions, and practices with the aim to 'bring peace' (Chandler 2017, 11; Ramalingam 2013, 39; Richmond and Mac Ginty 2015). This notion led to another shift in peace practices and theory, whereby the inclusion of local people became of main importance in the fourth phase of peacebuilding.

During the 2000s, the importance of local-liberal hybridity became widely acknowledged (Richmond 2010). This implied that, in the words of former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, it became central to "put people at the centre of everything we do" (United Nations 2000a). As a result, a separation between conservative peacebuilding strategies, now often referred to as statebuilding, and more innovative, emancipatory peacebuilding activities became apparent (Richmond 2010, 15; Visoka 2017a). Peacebuilding practices paved way for the local population to own and build sustainable peace (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015). But, while local ownership and capacity building is clearly emphasised, democratisation is still at the heart of the peace operations; there is still a strong notion that non-liberal sociocultural values are a problem or barrier to the restoration of peace (Richmond 2010). As a result, peace operations aim at building

capacity, through 'teaching' the local people liberal values and understandings (Chandler 2014, 31). Despite this renewed focus on local agency, peacebuilding remained trapped in the liberal peace paradigm, referred to by David Chandler (2017, 165) as the *impasse of peacebuilding*. This implies that while capacity building, or training, can take place, this can only be in the context of the local understandings of peace, leaving the universal liberal peace notion behind. This places the work of local organisations at the centre of peacebuilding activities. But, even if peace operations start from below, as soon as there is an external intervention, aiming to 'teach' or 'bring knowledge' on how to construct peace, the impasse becomes clear. The more international empowerment appeared on the agenda, the clearer the gap between the external perspective and the 'local' arena (Chandler 2017, 174; Pupavac 2005). Placing "people at the centre", was hence not enough to realise sustainable peace practices that are supported by local communities. It became clear that the peacebuilding sector lacked the local understanding of peace, which became a focal point during the fifth phase, which roughly started in 2010.

During the fifth phase it hence became central to incorporate *local understandings* of peace (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015). It is, as such, often referred to as a post-liberal phase within academia that leaves the existing universal liberal notions behind and acknowledges that "a decolonisation of knowledge about peace making and peacebuilding is required" (Richmond and Mac Ginty 2013, 765). As a result, within the peacebuilding paradigm a break with liberalism becomes visible, which has led to the discussion of non-interventionism – to not intervene in peace processes in order to allow for a 'localised peace' to develop (Richmond 2018; Stepputat and Moe 2018). This furthermore resulted in a shift in accountability-thinking (Chandler 2017; Richmond 2018), because: who can be held accountable for the peace process when there is no clear intervention? It raises questions concerning (state) sovereignty, and just as important, of responsibility – if states are no longer holding the main responsibility to protect[3], who does? These questions remain relevant in current peace debates and create the opportunity for the peacebuilding community to draw 'lessons learned' from previous attempts and to re-think the limitations of existing peace interventions. Simultaneously, these questions paved way for the sixth phase of peace interventions: practising resilience. This phase generally acknowledges that peace is complex and multidimensional, and that the local population, and the local capacities within a population, cannot be excluded when striving for a durable peace.

In line with this, Autesserre (2021) argues that the "Peace, Inc." approach has failed, referring to the conventional peacebuilding approach, which consists of external, top-down interventions, promoting among others democracy, justice, and good governance. Autesserre (2021) moreover shows that despite significant changes in *theory* in reality "Peace, Inc." is still dominant and the theoretical shift to incorporating local voices remains to be applied in practice. Autesserre is not alone in this statement; there is widespread agreement on the necessity to adapt peace interventions to current needs (e.g., Chandler 2017; de Coning 2016; Firchow and Mac Ginty 2014; Mac Ginty 2021; World Bank and United Nations 2018), because, in

[3] This is a reference to the R2P, the *responsibility to protect*, which became accepted into the United Nations discourse in 2005.

the words of Oliver Richmond (2010, 1) the "quality of the peace that has emerged has been low and fraught". Despite this, questions on how to engage with the present-day complexities of peace and conflict, and issues such as the inclusion of local actors, the accountability of the peace process or power dynamics within existing interventions, remain unresolved. In other words, peacebuilding remains at an impasse.

This brings me back to my overall argument: there is a necessity to holistically depict the complexity of peace within conflict-affected situations. I believe that the introduction of the Resilient Peace System meets this necessity. The RPS engages with the present-day peacebuilding critique and as such offers new potentials to improve both existing theory and peace practices.

1.2 The Argument and Key Findings: Introducing the Resilient Peace System

As the previous section has shown, peace and conflict dynamics have become increasingly complex over the course of the last century. And, while external peace efforts have changed significantly, questions on how to engage with the present-day complexities of peace processes largely remain unresolved. There are no analytical tools that can unpack the complexity of peace and that can holistically present the local dynamics of peace within a conflict-affected situations. This, in turn, complicates the realisation of successful peace efforts. This thesis responds to this problem by introducing the Resilient Peace System, an analytical tool to map the complexity of peace within conflict-affected situations. By applying a resilience lens, and through viewing peace as a complex adaptive system that can be analysed, it becomes possible to observe the dynamic essence of peace within a conflict-affected setting. As such, the RPS adds both to the lively academic peacebuilding and resilience debate, and it answers to the necessity of realising more effective efforts at peace. The creation of the Resilient Peace System has been an inductive process, whereby the data obtained in the field have been leading the conception. Consequently, the conceptualisation of the RPS has altered over the course of this research, based on the data both obtained in the field as well as through documentary analysis. Before presenting this conceptualisation, the main concepts of this research, peace(building) and resilience, are defined in this section to provide the necessary foundation for the rest of the analysis. Based on existing peacebuilding definitions (e.g., de Coning 2018; Galtung 1996; Mac Ginty 2021; United Nations n.d.a), I refer to *peacebuilding* as all efforts made that attempt to realise the transition from situations of (violent) conflict to *peace*, and/or attempts at the realisation of peace after physical violence has stopped or has been limited significantly. As peace studies are inherently interdisciplinary, I moreover believe we should understand peacebuilding in a broad sense and include efforts that are often conceptualised and practiced in isolation, such as statebuilding, the creation of social cohesion, or reconciliation efforts. Following from this, in this thesis I present peace as complex system, of which its concrete conceptualisation depends on the (conflict-affected) context, which is lasting in time and is supported by various societal levels including local communities. As becomes clear throughout this thesis, I understand the contextual definition of peace to be in line with the results from the RPS analysis. In other words: peace in Kosovo differs from peace in Medellín. As the peace genealogy in section 1.1 indicates, resilience practices have become embedded in existing academic literature on local peace practices. Despite

this and as will be further discussed in chapter 2, there barely are direct references to resilience within this body of work. I however believe that integrating resilience *thinking* further into the peace paradigm, offers interesting new perspectives. This thesis builds forth on the most widespread definition of resilience which argues that resilience is the "capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks" (Walker 2004, 4). There is however a significant difference: instead of aiming to build resilience or to create a resilient system, in this thesis a resilience *lens* is adopted to observe the dynamics of complex adaptive systems in order to both unpack its complexity. As resilience-thinking hence offers a lens to holistically analyse a complex system, within the RPS 'peace' is understood as a system. While this use of resilience is closely related to complexity theory, using a resilience lens offers an additional advantage: resilience inherently focuses on capacities (e.g., to bounce back better, see chapter 2, page 17), which are a crucial element of the RPS. As a result, using a resilience lens to analyse a system of peace, the RPS answers the need for analytical tools that can present a holistic picture of the local dynamics for peace in conflict-affected situations. In addition to unpacking the complexity of peace within a conflict-affected setting, using the resilience lens makes it possible to simultaneously determine the capacities for peace that are already present. As such, the resilience lens has been applied to analyse the potentials for peace in the conflict-affected contexts of Kosovo and Medellín. This has been an inductive process, whereby the data has guided the eventual conceptualisation of the RPS. Over the course of this process, several key elements to the main argument became apparent, of which an overview will be presented here.

First of all, I believe it is crucial to focus on *finding* the existing capacities for peace within a specific context, in contrary to focussing on capacity building. Following this, it is important to understand how these capacities link to the short- and long-term obstacles to, and meanings of, peace. To emphasise the focus on finding capacities for peace, I believe we should rephrase the practice of a conflict analysis to a *peace analysis*. Conflict analyses find its roots in the general acknowledgement that it is crucial to understand the context in which programmes are executed, if not, this "could lead to missed opportunities to prevent violence or to poorly designed interventions that inadvertently trigger or exacerbate conflict" (United Nations 2016a, 2). Consequently, conducting a conflict analysis has become a mainstream tool for understanding the local context in which conflict interventions take place, and to evaluate interventions in order to adapt next ones (Frelin 2016, 207; International Alert et al. 2004; United Nations 2016a; USIP n.d.; Ekstedt and Holmberg 2006). A conflict analysis largely focuses on the transformation or prevention of conflict through understanding the local dynamics, actors and structural root causes of the conflict. Next to an increased focus on the local, Frelin (2016, 213) argues for the inclusion of complexity in a conflict analysis, in the form of a social capital analysis of a local system. While this is an interesting development, a conflict analysis does not include a specific focus on *existing capacities* for peace within the local context, and the placement of these within the wider conflict affected context. On top of that, a conflict analysis does not include local voices on peace meanings and there is hence a risk that the subsequent peace intervention does not align with the local understandings of peace and therefore lacks local support. A

peace analysis guided by the RPS does include both obstacles to peace (often strongly related to the root causes of conflict), capacities for peace, and the local understandings of peace, and as such provides a more holistic picture of the complexity of the given context. While I believe we need to move away from the term *conflict* analysis, it is important to emphasise that a *peace* analysis does not exclude a focus on conflict; there is no black and white situation, when conducting a peace analysis in conflict-affected situations, conflict is indisputably a part of the analysis. In a similar light, the use of the word 'conflict-affected' is meant to complicate the black and white use of conflict versus post-conflict. Post-conflict is a controversial term, as it is difficult to define when a situation is 'post'-conflict. This for example becomes visible as the indicators (set by various data bases as the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, the ACLED Conflict Severity Index or CrisisWatch) used for defining conflict countries depend on the database and tend to change over time. As the RPS is however can be applied contexts that are at different stages of (post-)conflict, this thesis refers to conflict-affected, which affirms the grey-zone between conflict and post-conflict.[4]

Second, as the findings of this thesis are meant to add to improving existing peace practices, it is a conscious decision to not refer to peace 'interventions', which imply the 'intervening' of an external party within the local context, potentially interrupting existing attempts at peace. Instead, as I argue throughout this thesis, it is about *finding* the existing capacities for peace, in order to clarify in what ways external organisations, as e.g., (I)NGOs or donors, can *support* these efforts with the aim to realise durable peace. It is hence necessary, in the words of Autesserre (2021), to adapt our conventional approach to peacebuilding. To emphasise this, I therefore refer to 'peace efforts' instead of peace 'interventions'. Peace efforts should be understood in a broad sense, as for example peace projects or programmes mandated by external actors that listen to local necessities, or donor support to local initiatives. The findings presented in this thesis should hence be understood to inform existing policy that mandate peace efforts. In line with this, where academia often plays a crucial role in informing and guiding policy, this is especially the case for the academic peace and conflict sector; in order to deliver valuable work on an academic level, there is a need to stay connected to practice and vice versa. It is however crucial to remain critical of the use and understanding of concepts that seem to have become mainstream within both academic and policy works. Despite this, when concepts peak in policy sectors, as resilience does, disregarding it altogether would negate potential mutual positive impact that academic peace and conflict frameworks have on policy, which subsequently guides practice.

Lastly, besides the necessity to place capacities for peace at the centre of the new peace efforts, I argue that we need to step away from the aim to create 'resilient peace', or societies that are resilient to conflict. Within current resilience practices, it is the objective to create a resilient community, one that can cope with e.g., risks of conflict. The problem however arises that in these projects the accountability of overcoming, or preventing conflict, is often placed with the community (Chandler and Reid 2018; Harris et al. 2017; Juncos and Joseph 2020). Leading to, what Todurel Vilcan (2017) refers to as the 'responsibilisation' of

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[4] It is however important to note that conducting a RPS analysis during a high-intensity war does complicate the data collection, though there might be interesting opportunities to explore with the use of online data collection.

victims. Since within the RPS peace is regarded as a complex adaptive system, the focus is no longer on the creation of 'resilient communities'. On top of that, it is crucial to emphasise that the RPS does not provide a blueprint to achieve resilient peace; it is not the main objective to create a 'resilient peace'. Instead, the RPS applies resilience-thinking to analyse a) the different (often hidden) parts of the peace system, and b) in what ways these parts are interrelated and depended on each other. The creation of a resilient peace is unrealistic; as there is no agreement on how to measure either peace (Jarstad et al. 2019, 4) or social resilience (Copeland et al. 2020), it is impossible to measure the 'resiliency' of peace. Attempting to do so would moreover obscure the potential of the RPS as an analytical tool, which is adding to the current understanding of peace and to present new potentials for peace within a specific conflict-affected context.

The conceptualisation of the RPS has been based on ethnographic research in both Kosovo and Medellín, which have been selected due to their significant differences in among others the type and level of conflict and consequent interventions. The data from both case studies have guided the conceptualisation of the RPS, which will be explained in-depth in chapter 3.1. To create a representative sample, the sample in Kosovo includes interlocutors from five field sites that have been selected based on different levels of interethnic interaction, and the sample in Medellín consists of interlocutors from the six economic stratifications (*estratos)* within the metropolitan area. This thesis therefore not only provides insight into differences between Kosovo and Medellín, but also *within* each case study. An important key finding is that the RPS of both Medellín and Kosovo demonstrate clear linkages between the peace meanings, the obstacles to peace, and the capacities for peace. This underlines the importance of conducting a RPS analysis to guide the design of peace programmes, as it demonstrates which capacities are crucial to overcome obstacles, and to realise a locally supported peace. In Kosovo, for example, especially among Kosovo-Serbs, peace is often understood as the ability to speak your own language without fear of repercussion, which directly links to the obstacle of the large ethnic divide. On the other hand, more and more youth, are (often secretly due to stigma) attending language classes to bridge this divide and to overcome existing stigmas. Interestingly, while people in their surrounding networks are often reluctant or dismissive at first, there are examples where others join their peers in learning the 'opposite' language. This also indicates the importance of incorporating different scales of peace into the analysis; the individual scale can have a significant influence on the peace scale of the family and community as more people might become motivated to participate in breaking these boundaries. In Medellín on the other hand, a widespread meaning of peace is being able to walk the streets without having to be afraid of (gang-related) violence. Not surprisingly, this links to the obstacle of gang prevalence throughout the city. There are however manifold attempts in the city that aim to limit the gang participation and control, as for example community-based theatre or sport initiatives. These initiatives are often initiated on the individual peace scale, but in most cases develop into a collective exercise, here the merging of various peace scales becomes visible. While these two examples provide a first glimpse at the peace system within both Kosovo and Medellín, the empirical chapters will provide an in-depth explanation of each component.

The data from both Kosovo and Medellín also present an interesting observation regarding the presence of the liberal peace paradigm. While, as explained in section 1.1, the academic paradigm presents itself as 'post-liberal', both case studies present elements of liberal peace. In both Kosovo and Medellín for example, peace is largely understood as 'freedom'. In Medellín moreover, the political polarisation between left and right is often brought up, and in Kosovo the obstruction of Kosovo-Serbs to vote freely in Kosovo's elections are indications of democratic instability. While I am of the undisputed opinion that liberal peace paradigm has proven insufficient to deal with the complexities of present-day conflicts and has not managed to deliver durable peace, these finding should be understood as an indication that liberal peace is not a binary of either liberal or post-liberal. In other words, while it is important to adapt the conventional liberal peace approaches to fit the present-day complexities, we should not disregard its value altogether. One of the most crucial critiques that however remain valid, is that it is problematic to 'export liberalism' to 'bring peace'. Liberal peace should not be understood as an 'end-stage' that can be achieved by following a one-size-fits-all understanding of democracy and peace. But, to understand a holistic picture of peace within a specific context, it is crucial to start from the local in order to understand if, and in what ways, liberal peace notions might be of relevance depending on the situation. This moreover brings me to the last element of my argument: we need to move away from universal, generalised understanding of peace as either positive or negative. In line with previous research (e.g., Firchow 2018; Jarstad et al. 2019; Mac Ginty and Firchow 2014; Väyrynen 2021), this research demonstrates that it is more complex than the dichotomy between negative and positive peace. Both case studies show that peace is dynamic, and as such is understood in various ways. In other words: striving for 'positive peace' does not cover the complexities specific to the context. This also becomes present in the next section, where an initial look at the data is presented to demonstrate the use of the RPS in practice.

1.3 Thesis outline

The conceptualisation of the Resilient Peace System forms the backbone of this thesis: chapter 4 to 6, the three empirical chapters each represent one of the components of the RPS. Prior to this, chapter 2 introduces the origins and rise of resilience within social science and development practice. It moreover presents the last phase of peacebuilding: 'practicing resilience', following the peacebuilding phases discussed above. It demonstrates that, while the word resilience has not become common in peace theory, it is rooted in resilience-thinking as it emphasises the importance of existing capacities, capabilities, and practices to strengthen a society from within. The chapter ends with and explanation of the conceptualisation of the RPS, here the three components (local peace meanings, obstacles to peace, and capacities for peace) are presented and the importance of peace scales is explained. The case study selection and methodology are explained in chapter 3. The methodology has been altered significantly due to the spread of Covid-19; where the initial plan was to twice conduct a six-month fieldwork, one in Kosovo and one in Medellín, a large part of the fieldwork had to take place online. This however also provided interesting opportunities, such as the possibility of conducting various interviews in one day and therefore reaching a larger sample. The case

studies have been selected following Gerrings' understanding of a diverse case-study selection and are based on significant differences within the conflict-affected contexts of Medellín and Kosovo.

As mentioned, the three empirical chapters each represent one component of the system. The first, chapter 4, presents the analysis of the local peace meanings. The local peace meanings have been divided into four categories of peace: peace as freedom, peace as mental well-being, peace as positive ethnic relations, and peace as justice. In both Kosovo and Medellín peace as freedom was by far the largest category. But, while in Kosovo most interviewees understood peace as *freedom from want*, in Medellín most references were made to *freedom from fear*. Chapter 5 is the longest chapter of this thesis, and it discusses the obstacles to peace in both contexts. There are three different types of obstacles: 1) everyday obstacles or hindrances to peace as experienced by interlocutors in their everyday lives, 2) situational obstacles caused by unforeseen crisis, and 3) long-term obstacles deeply rooted in society. Most obstacles are however not clear cut and often interrelated: (visible) everyday obstacles could be an indication of (hidden) long-term obstacles. To present a clear overview of all the obstacles in both contexts, the data have been divided into four different categories: 1) socioeconomic obstacles; 2) security obstacles; 3) sociocultural obstacles; 4) governmental and political obstacles. In line with the peace meanings, in Medellín the category of security obstacles was by far the largest, and in Kosovo the socioeconomic obstacles were regarded to be the most significant. Lastly, chapter 6 gives an overview of the capacities that are already present in society; in other words, it emphasises the importance of finding the existing capacities for peace. The understanding of capacities is derived from resilience-thinking, whereby the focus lies on the capacity to transform. The capacity to transform within both Medellín and Kosovo is consequently conceptualised into three concepts: social capital, collective action, and the capacity to unlearn. In line with the peace meanings and obstacles, in Medellín most capacities focus diminishing the gang prevalence throughout the city. In Kosovo however, the capacity of 'unconscious' (un)learning is relevant to overcome ethnic stigmas and to realise a bridging social capital.

The conclusion in chapter 7 is divided along two main lines; first a summary of the key findings is presented, along with the developmental path of the RPS. Over four years ago, this research initially aimed at building a 'resilient post-conflict society' through citizen participation. After extensive literature research it however became clear that the focus should be altered; through engaging with existing critique on resilience and peacebuilding, the RPS slowly came into focus. The second part of the conclusion presents both the academic and policy implications of this research. Lastly, potential avenues for further research will be offered.

2. The Rise of Resilience: Conceptualising the Resilient Peace System

We live in an increasingly complex world, filled with risks and uncertainties. Risks it seems we can't prepare for, and the ongoing uncertainty of them taking place. The most recent example is the global pandemic of Covid-19, which left the world paralysed. A year before the start of Covid-19, on March 14, 2019, cyclone Idai hit land in Mozambique, followed by Zimbabwe and Malawi. The cyclone left hundreds of people dead, thousands missing and large parts of the countries devasted (OCHA 2019). Not even 12 hours before this disaster, 50 people were killed in a live-streamed mass-shooting at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand (Wahlquist 2019). Both natural and man-made disasters as such leave the world in shock, and deepen the existing feelings of uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity towards the modern-day world (Corry 2014; Juncos 2018). This, together with a change in conflict tactics, diffuse conflict actors and unprecedented events like 9/11, have had major impact on the different ways of preparing for shocks. Next to an increased presence of resilience in academic and policy debates, resilience is becoming more and more used to describe people or situations in everyday life: the notion of resilience has become normalized. Over the last decade, resilience has also made its name within the peace and conflict discourse; this nevertheless poses new challenges to the way resilience was understood so far (Chandler 2014; de Weijer 2013; Harris et al. 2017; Koonings and Kruijt 2015). Questions that follow are: how can a community, or society, where resilience is present in many forms (personal disasters, natural hazards, economic risks, conflict security) and on many layers (individual, household, family, community, society, etc.) increase their resilience to cope better with conflict risks? Can a community become "resilient" to violence or conflict? With the rapid rise of resilience in peacebuilding, uncertainty on how to operationalise and create resilience has risen as well (Chandler and Coaffee 2016, 3; Hussain 2013). As explained in the introduction, over the course of the last decade the one-size-fits-all notion of the liberal peace paradigm has proven to be incapable of dealing with the complexities of present-day conflict, resulting in various peacebuilding failures. Following the wide recognition that it is unfruitful to impose external top-down programmes, there is a clear wish to include voices from the ground. There is hence a shift towards working with existing strengths and capabilities aiming to create a form of peace that is accepted by the local society and is sustainable (Chandler 2017; Richmond and Mac Ginty 2013; Richmond 2015; United Nations 2015).

In the current peacebuilding debate, resilience-thinking clearly comes forward, even though it remains mostly on a theoretical level and the 'pragmatic turn' of the resilience concept remains mostly absent. In other words, there is no widespread agreement on the translation of resilience into pragmatic action on the ground. At the same time, the current debate on localized forms of peace is often understood separately from existing resilience-debates. This chapter aims to merge the two debates by operationalising the notion of resilience in relation to peace. To do so, this research proposes to merge the notion of resilience and peace in a 'Resilient Peace System' (RPS), which can be used to analyse peace within a specific conflict-affected situation to understand the necessities for, and obstacles to, the creation of durable peace. Before presenting the conceptualisation of the RPS, this chapter first presents the background and origins

of the resilience discourse. After this and building on peace genealogy discussed in the introduction, the most recent phase of peacebuilding 'practicing resilience' will be explained. In this phase, the critique on the use of resilience in practice will be discussed as well, which leads to the conceptualisation of the RPS.

2.1 Understanding the resilience discourse

While resilience is used widely nowadays, the contemporary usage of resilience dates back only slightly more than four decades and was introduced by Crawford Stanley Holling in 1973. Holling (1973) wrote an influential essay, challenging the existing mathematical, or mathematical-ecological[5] way of resilience-thinking, where resilience is understood as an abstract variable. Resilience is here the time (*t*) it takes a system to return to 'equilibrium' after a disturbance, and equilibrium is understood as the equivalent to long-term persistence (Walker and Cooper 2011, 145). Holling (1973) argued the focus on returning to equilibrium by stating that "an equilibrium centered view is essentially static and provides little insight into the transient behavior of systems that are not near equilibrium" (2). Instead, Holling (1973) placed the focus on the sustainability of complex adaptive systems within ecology and defined the concept as the "persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables" (14). Consequently, Holling paved the way for contemporary resilience-thinking to develop and broaden, while remaining rooted in studies of complex adaptive systems (Folke et al. 2010; Taşan-Kok and Eraydin 2013; Walker and Cooper 2011). Various other ecologists took the notion of resilience and developed separate understandings. Over the course of the last four decades, numerous definitions of resilience have been presented. Despite this, the definition presented by the ecologists Brian Walker et al. (2004, 4) is among the most often and most widely used definition, it argues that resilience is:

> "the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks".

Over time, it became obvious to scholars that researching the resilience of ecological systems, could not be done without focusing on the influence of individuals and social groups on ecological systems and vice versa (Adger 2000; Folke et al. 2010; Holling 1999). As a result, the social resilience-perspective first emerged at the beginning of the 21st century (de Weijer 2013). As a result of this change in understanding, two different conceptualisations of resilience became clear. Within ecological system resilience 'bouncing back after a disaster' is the preferred definition of resilience. This means the focus is not placed on preventing risks, threats, or problems from happening, but on quickly recognizing problems and addressing these in an adequate manner with minimum disruption (Chandler and Coaffee 2016, 4-5; de Weijer 2013). Over time, the focus of resilience definition shifted to the first part of the definition, the 'capacity of a

[5] Holling later referred to this as 'engineering resilience', which has become a widely accepted term.

system' or 'self-regulation', therewith emphasising the dynamic identity of resilience. Here, bouncing back or returning to equilibrium is not key, but rather growth and development, or 'bouncing forward' (de Weijer 2013; Manyena et al. 2011; Rodin 2015). David Chandler and Jon Coaffee (2016, 5) refer to this distinction as the first- and second-generation resilience-thinking, or the shift from an 'homeostatic approach' to an 'autopoietic approach'. Where the homeostatic approach refers to maintaining essentially the same function or a state of equilibrium, the autopoietic approach sees resilience as transformation, aspiring to generate new and innovative ways of thinking and organising. Growth and development are hence the aim, which can be reached through an increased awareness of interconnections and processes (Chandler and Coaffee 2016, 6). Resilience is seen as a process of ongoing self-transformation, where the transformative capacity is of importance (Chandler and Coaffee 2016, 5).

Chandler and Coaffee (2016, 6) also discern a third range of resilience approaches, which applies an emphasis on the rethinking of contextual possibilities to be better prepared for future risks. This notion has led to a shift towards resilience-thinking, and consequently organising and governing on the basis of resilience has become normalised (e.g., Chandler 2014; Davoudi 2012; Joseph 2013; Juncos and Joseph 2020; Taşan-Kok and Eraydin 2013). The use of resilience within governing approaches has however received wide critique, which will be discussed later in this chapter (Chandler and Reid 2018; Grove 2013; Juncos and Joseph 2020; Uekusa 2017).

2.1.1 Complexity theory and risk society

As discussed above there are various approaches for conceptualizing resilience, but all of these are rooted in the notion of complex adaptive systems. This implies that all resilience conceptualisations focus on systems that are first of all complex, meaning they consists of many working components that are all interrelated in some way. And second, these systems are all 'adaptive' implies that they are subject to constant change; within eco-systems species evolve, and social systems change due to human behaviour. While the operationalisation of resilience will be further explained below, it is first important to highlight the link between complexity theory and the understanding of risk management in relation to resilience.

The increasing complexity in everyday life is at the heart of the current-day resilience-thinking and replaced the previous emergency planning processes (Coaffee 2009; de Coning 2016). Resilience became seen as relevant to understanding current-day threats and to increase the likelihood of managing the increasingly complex risks (Chandler 2014). This strongly links to the notion of complexity theory, which finds its origins in social science in the 1990s (Byrne 1998). In contrary to earlier work, complexity theorists argue for the importance of "simplifying seemingly complex systems" (Manson 2001, 405). A system approach is hence embedded in complexity theory (Day and Hunt 2023; Sammut-Bonnici 2015), whereby Cedric de Coning (2016) defines a system as "a community of elements that, as a result of their interconnections, form a whole" (168). In complex adaptive systems the interaction between the elements is non-linear and dynamic, and the system changes, or adapts, over time (Day and Hunt 2023). Complex systems should be understood in a broad sense, from ant colonies or a flock of birds to psychological or

socio-political systems (Day and Hunt 2023, 2; Sammut-Bonnici 2015). Over time, as also indicated by de Coning (2016) complexity theorists argue that complex systems exhibit three core-characteristics: holism (Hunt and Day 2022; Mitchell 2009; Morin 2005), non-linearity (Boulton et al. 2015; Brusset et al. 2016; Hunt and Day 2022) and the ability to self-organise (Mitchell 2009; Cilliers 1998). Holism means that complex systems can only be understood through a whole-systems approach: a system can only be understood in its entirety, as the behaviour of the parts of the system depend on each other. This links to the notion of non-linearity, which means that a certain input might not necessarily lead to the expected outcome, and as such is the opposite of a linear or deterministic system. This dynamic essence is moreover a prerequisite for the third characteristic, the ability of systems to self-regulate and adapt to new situations. Over time, it has become generally acknowledged that complexity theory can offer insights into situations of conflict and processes of conflict resolution or peacebuilding, and as result the argument of complexity has recently come to the forefront in peace and conflict paradigms (de Coning 2016; 2018; 2020; Brusset et al. 2016; Day and Hunt 2023; Hunt 2015).

This rise is strongly linked to rise of the resilience, which finds its roots in complexity theory. The unpredictability and uncertainty that come with the transformation from conflict to peace, are acknowledged within the resilience paradigm. In line with this, over time the question "How can we make the systems that we depend upon resilient?" has become central in the various academic disciplines (Walker and Salt 2006, 2). This has led to the believe that increasing the resilience of a complex adaptive system, implies managing the risks that threaten it (Walker and Salt 2006; Junos 2018; Heng 2006). This is in line with the believe the "risks can only be managed, not completely eradicated" (Heng 2006, 70), and a constant change is hence required to increase the resilience of a system. In the 80s, the notion of a 'risk society' emerged, developed by the sociologists Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, which refers to existence of man-made risks and the way modern societies organise themselves to manage these risks. As a result, there is a shared understanding within international relations, security, and peacebuilding studies that risks cannot be eliminated, but only managed. Following this acknowledgement, it is crucial to conceptualise the 'risks' present in the modern-day society (Davies et al. 1997; Dijkstra et al. 2018; Juncos 2018; Mythen and Walklate 2008; Rasmussen 2006).

Despite this shared understanding (that risks can only be managed, not prevented), the study into the conceptualisation of *risks* within the field of international security lacks behind compared to the developments within psychology or financial studies, where a risk is better-defined (Dijkstra et al. 2018). Regarding peacebuilding, various definitions of 'risks' have been presented within the academic and policy spheres, so far, a risk is often referred to as a simple 'probability-effects calculation' and there is barely a distinction made between risks, uncertainties, and threats (Dijkstra et al. 2018, 538). The probability-effects calculation has become important in relation to early warning systems in peace studies, where risk-assessment is used with the aim to prevent, for example, a violent conflict from erupting (de Coning 2016, 35; Ramsbotham et al. 2011, 133). John Davies et al. (1997) developed a list of standardised indicators of genocide, to help determine the risk of a genocide happening. Paul Collier and his colleagues on the other

hand, argues that the risk of conflict is directly linked to poverty, stating that the risk of civil conflict is the highest in the poorest countries (Collier et al. 2003). According to United Nations terminology, peacebuilding aims "to *reduce the risk* of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development" (United Nations n.d.a). While the notion that risks are important in relation to preventing conflict has been around for longer, it remains disputed what constitutes as a risk in relation to peacebuilding.

It seems that there is growing believe that it has become impossible to predict when the next crisis takes place, or which countries, or areas, are at highest risk (Juncos 2018, 559). As Matthias Garschagen (2013, 31) argues, resilience has become the "management paradigm", as it promotes an integrated approach to managing risks. In this understanding, societies form complex adaptive systems in which resilience is build. This begs for an integrated approach that can expose the "patterns of interconnections" and aims to understand how different elements interact and form a system (Cilliers 1998; de Coning 2018). Resilience thus has the capacity to incorporate different components of a system that would previously be studied separately. This makes it possible to obtain a more holistic picture, or in the words of Ami Carpenter (2014, 66): "Simply put, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". In order however to translate this understanding of resilience to practice, it is crucial to operationalise the concept. There are however various understandings of resilience; assessing individual resilience to natural hazards differs in conceptualisation from implementing community resilience to gang-violence. Despite these differences, a number of similar characteristics of social resilience come forward in the academic literature, which together lead to the conceptualisation of social resilience and will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.2 Operationalisation

First of all, there is no straightforward conceptualisation of social resilience existing at the moment. Despite this, analysing the academic debate on resilience brings forward five concepts, which are (1) (adaptive) capacity, (2) (un)learning, (3) collective action, (4) social capital and (5) social cohesion and will be discussed here below. *Adaptive capacity* is central to any conceptualisation of a resilient system (e.g., Carpenter 2014; Chandler 2012, 2017; de Coning 2018; Folke et al. 2006; Holling 1973; Joseph and Juncos 2020; Taşan-Kok and Eraydin 2013). As explained above, conceptualisations of social resilience have come to refer to adaptive capacity in the broadest sense; not just to return to equilibrium or 'bounce back', but to transform to a better condition (Harris et al. 2017; Menkhaus 2013). To achieve transformation, *learning or unlearning* of certain behaviour or habits is deemed of importance to 'bounce back better'. In social science, the importance of 'unlearning', e.g., the unlearning of racism or white supremacy, has gained significant importance over the last two decades (Leinonen 2017; Maroney 2009; Rudman et al. 2001; Spivak 1994; Water 2013). The notion of social resilience as adaptive capacity is moreover rooted in the debate on human agency (e.g., Juncos and Joseph 2020; Shah et al. 2020, 15), as it focuses on the *agency* that individuals and communities possess to enhance their (e.g., (un)learning) capacities to 'bounce back better'.

According to Fikret Berkes and Helen Ross (2013, 6) a community's resilience is "understood as the capacity of its social system to come together to work toward a communal objective". To 'come together and work' is deemed of high importance to increase the resilience of a community.[6] According to Neil Adger (2003, 388) capacities to adapt "are bound up in their ability to act collectively". *Collective action* is therefore deemed an essential feature of resilience (Chaskin 2008; Magis 2010; Taşan-Kok and Eraydin 2013). As Marina Arana and Rafael Wittek (2016, 764) argue: "Collective action is a community resource crucial to ensure the resilience of communities". Other concepts as 'capacity for self-organization' (Chandler 2015; de Coning 2016) or 'collective agency' (Otsuki et al. 2018) are also commonly used to refer to the notion that people have to work together in order to become more resilient as a social group, like a community. Collective action and *social capital* are therefore strongly related, and as such social capital is often considered a key feature of resilience (Aldrich 2012; Aldrich and Meyer 2015; Tierney 2014; Uekusa 2017). An important reason for this is that social capital networks in the community provide access to various crucial resources in disaster situations, as aid, financial resources, or emotional and psychological support (Aldrich and Meyer 2015; Elliott et al. 2010). Social capital should hence be understood as something that – along the lines of the social engineering approach – can be constructed (Portes 1998), and as Pierre Bourdieu (1985, 249) asserts "the profits which accrue from membership in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible". Bourdieu's focus on social capital lays on the individual profit one can obtain from having a large social capital. He moreover emphasises that while social capital can strengthen in-group relations, it may create tension between different groups and can lead to exclusion, or restriction on individual freedoms (Asquith 2019). Robert Putnam's (1995) definition of social capital focuses however on the more positive consequence of social capital, claiming that when people within a community possess a lot of social capital, this indicates there are "norms and social trust that facilitates coordination and cooperation for mutual good" (67). This notion strongly links to the understanding of *social cohesion*. Already in 1893, Emile Durkheim referred to the understanding of social cohesion as a 'glue' that holds the society together through mutual trust and reciprocity. A study by Ramadanak Patel and Kelsey Gleason (2018, 165-167), into the relation between social cohesion and resilience, revealed that higher levels of social cohesion indicate higher levels of community resilience.

When analysing the social resilience of a certain system, it is therefore important to interlink these components, that have previously been studied in isolation (Carpenter 2014, 66). It is important to note however that these components might change per resilience context and are hence, like resilience itself, not fully static. While various research has proven that enhancing social cohesion or instigating collective action are important in building social resilience, in practice it becomes clear that decision makers do not often incorporate these findings into specific resilience-programming. Despite this, resilience has gained significant importance in various programmes within the development and peace sector. This, building on section 1.1, brings us to the final peacebuilding generation: 'practicing resilience'.

[6] A community should here be understood in the broadest sense; a community of diverse (not homogenous) people – who are connected through their space of living, or elsewise.

2.2 Merging resilience practices into the peace paradigm

Sensing the critical wave in peacebuilding, United Nations Secretary Ban Ki-Moon established an Advisor Group of Experts in 2015, to review the current status of United Nations peacebuilding efforts (United Nations 2015). The experts presented a report entitled "the Challenge of Sustaining Peace", which argued that there had been a "generalized misunderstanding of the nature of peacebuilding" (United Nations 2015, 7), which led to 'shortcomings' in peacebuilding missions (Chandler 2017, 7; de Coning 2018, 311). More importantly, this led to the introduction of the comprehensive approach of 'sustaining peace' on the international agenda. Sustainable Development Goal 16 (United Nations 2016b) forms the basis for the renewed focus on sustaining peace, and aims to:

> "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

While sustaining peace as a concept is relatively new on the United Nations agenda, its essence can be found among the core tasks mentioned in the United Nations Charter, written and signed in 1945: "sav[ing] succeeding generations from the scourge of war" (United Nations 1945). This renewed focus is an attempt to bring together the fragmented peace interventions preventive to, during, and after war. With the formalisation of peacebuilding on An Agenda for Peace in 1992, peacebuilding was presented as a logic follow-on to peacemaking and peacekeeping, with the main objective to prevent relapse. As the 2015 report proposes, while the strong focus on prevention has not changed, introducing sustaining peace should liberate peacebuilding from strict limitations to post-conflict contexts (United Nations 2015, 17). Sustaining peace moreover acknowledges that peacebuilding must avoid blueprint, and one-size-fits-all solutions: as the report highlights, sustaining peace must be understood as "a task that only national stakeholders can undertake" (United Nations 2015, 7-9), therewith acknowledging once again the importance of including voices from below. Sustainable peace is conceptualised in broad terms, placing the focus on what is already working, and not what 'needs fixing' (International Peace Institute 2017). António Guterres, the current United Nations Secretary General[7], has made sustaining peace a central theme of his office at the beginning of his term in 2018. In line with this, both within the academic and the policy debate, blueprint liberal peace building has become more and more accepted as the past. As de Coning (2016, 167) indicates:

> "The focus is now shifting away from a for-or-against liberal peacebuilding debate, to alternative ways of dealing with the effects of the problems that peacebuilding was meant to resolve. Two new concepts and approaches that have taken centre stage in this development are *resilience* and *sustaining* peace."

[7] Antonio Guterres took office on January 1, 2017.

De Conings (2016; 2018) however does not refer to resilience or sustaining peace directly when introducing his concept of 'adaptive peace', which is rooted in complexity theory as explained above. Adaptive peacebuilding aims to help societies develop resilience, to cope with and adapt to various forms of change as it "suggests using a particular form of structured engagement that helps to generate institutional learning and stimulates and facilitates adaptation" (de Coning 2018, 306). It is hereby important that the local communities are involved in all aspects of the peacebuilding process as peace has to emerge from within (de Coning 2018, 307). In other words, external wisdom will not offer aid if this won't be internalized.

Internal versus external wisdom also appears in the conceptualisation of peace itself. As a result, peace is understood as more open-ended or goal-free, where the eventual conceptualisation of peace depends on the context-specific interpretations of peace (Call and de Coning 2017). Roger Mac Ginty and Pamina Firchow have been working with new conceptualisations of peace, referring to 'everyday peace'. Everyday peace was first conceptualised by Mac Ginty in 2014, referring to it as the "routinized practices used by individuals and collectives as they navigate their way through life in a deeply divided society" (549). It focuses among others on local coping mechanisms, as avoidance of ethnically tensed situations. Everyday citizens are therefore crucial in designing a programme that can construct a lasting, sustainable peace, instead of including a through an INGO artificially constructed civil society, often removed from the needs on the ground (Firchow 2018, 35). Following this line of thought, a global project to conceptualise everyday peace has been realized through the creation of Everyday Peace Indicators (EPI)[8] – where bottom-up research is done to understand the local understandings of peace (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2014). Through this research it has become clear that peace, and peacebuilding, mean different things to different people, and that, comparable to adaptive peacebuilding, it is crucial to understand these differences. Similar, though from a different perspective, is the victim-centred approach proposed by John Brewer et al. (2019). After conducting extensive research, the authors argue that victims should be seen as central to any conflict transformation attempts (Brewer et al. 2019, 9). While victims are often the centre of a peace discourse, they hardly ever get the chance to speak for themselves, which places victims in a dangerous ambiguous position. In line with the EPI projects, the victim-centred approach claims it is of great importance to focus on the reconstruction of everyday life, which Brewer et al. (2019, 15) refer to as "everyday life is the realm in which ordinary, taken-for-granted, habitual social life is performed, experienced and understood as ordinary, taken-for- granted and habitual". After the 'brutalisation' of everyday life in the form of conflict, it is only possible to restore everyday life through the inclusion of victims.

While these different visions do not place the focus on resilience per se, in all these approaches resilience-thinking is central. Chandler (2017, 165-191) describes this as the 'rise of resilience' within intervention approaches. These different notions all aim to incorporate local voices into the process, to build forth on existing local understandings of peace, and on local strengths and capacities. Resilience is central here, as it offers new perspectives *because it* emphasises the importance of existing capacities,

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[8] For more information, see: https://everydaypeaceindicators.org.

capabilities, and practices to strengthen a society from within (Chandler 2015, 13; Juncos 2018, 562; Juncos and Joseph 2020). In line with this, peace and resilience definitions started to appear in academic circles, highlighting the importance of local capacities. Chandler (2012) for example defined resilience broadly as the "capacity to positively or successfully adapt to external problems or threats" (217), and later added that the key point of resilience within peacebuilding practices is that the focus lies on "working with and upon the capacities, capabilities, processes, and practices already 'to hand' rather than the external provision of policies or programmes" (Chandler 2015, 28). While Chandler does not refer directly to peace or violence in his definition, Hans Kruijt and Kees Koonings (2015, 2) do: "resilience means that communities, networks, grassroots organisations, and public and non-governmental support structures mobilise to create alternative, non-violent spaces and practices in cities". Despite growing focus on resilience within the peace paradigm, Kruijt and Koonings are however among a handful of academics that directly link resilience and violence in their definition. The translation to concrete practice furthermore remains largely absent (Juncos and Joseph 2020). The next section will nevertheless highlight a number of projects in which resilience is at the forefront, and several attempts to understanding how resilience-building can add to peacebuilding will be presented.

2.2.1 Resilience, peace, and the international community

In contrary to numerous academic definitions of resilience and peace, the conceptualisation of resilience in peacebuilding practices portray conflict not as something that can be solved through resilience building, but as something that undermines resilience. Conflict stressors, or the risk of conflict, should be eliminated in order to keep resilience 'high' (Carnwath 2017; Peters 2017). In peacebuilding policy however, the resilience vision is more in line with the existing peacebuilding literature on for example sustainable peace. A study presented by USIP argues that "strengthening a society's capacity to overcome violent shock and communal stressors could play a key role in preventing conflict and achieving a more sustainable postconflict recovery" (van Metre and Calder 2015, 5). Along these same lines, Interpeace (2021) announced the adoption of a new strategy: "Strategy 2021-2025: A Resilient Peace". In which they aim to "strengthen the capacities of societies to manage conflict in non-violent, non-coercive ways by assisting national actors in their efforts to develop social and political cohesion" (Interpeace 2021). This strategy builds forth on the 'Framework for Assessing Resilience' (FAR), which has been designed between 2014-2016 as an inclusive and participatory process, with a strong emphasis on local perspectives, ownership, and leadership (Interpeace 2016; 2021). The FAR offers analytical insights into the functioning of resilience for peace and is crucial as it is currently one of the only, if the not the only, framework that observes peace and conflict through a resilience-lens. In contrary to the frameworks presented earlier, this framework specifically aims at understanding how resilience interacts with durable peace. It does not offer a scale or measurements for ranking countries' resilience but should be understood as a guiding framework: it "offers a method for the systematic and replicable analysis of resilience using participatory mixed methods research approaches" (Interpeace 2016, 14). Similar to other conceptualisations of resilience, it emphasises concepts

as absorption, adaptation, and transformation capacities on different levels, from individual to society. It moreover makes a difference between positive and negative manifestations of resilience and argues that negative manifestations of resilience[9] may "foster conflict and resilience to conflict may in turn be undermined" (Ibid, 15).

Another interesting project, which ran throughout 2018, is the Resilient Peace network. The network brings together leading experts on resilience and peace, with the aim to achieve and exceed the aims of SDG 16[10] in West Africa. This was done through a series of three workshops. While not directly focusing on the operationalisation or defining of 'resilient peace', it "engaged with the challenges of building peace in West African states in the context of the withdrawal of Western actors and the promotion of resilience approaches in peacebuilding" (Resilient Peace 2018). Unfortunately, a conceptualised understanding of resilient peace has not been presented. The project is closed, the is website no longer updated, consequently only the anticipated outputs are presented. The article "Resilience in peacebuilding: Contesting uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity", authored by Ana Juncos (2018) and used throughout this chapter, is the only journal output so far.

While the literature on resilience and peace is growing quickly and it continues to play an enormous role in various conflict and peace programming, there is no agreement yet on how to define or conceptualise resilience in relation to peace. As Ken Menkhaus (2013) states in his speech at the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform:

> "This [defining resilience] is simply not possible. Moreover, it is not clear that it is even a problem to be solved. Instead, it may be an opportunity. That is to say, the different definitions and approaches to resilience in different disciplines are loaded with opportunities to borrow and adapt, in ways that can enrich our use of the term when applied to peacebuilding work."

While this argument is true in so far that it holds possibilities for adaption, there is still no clear notion of how to translate resilience practices that focus on the creation of peace. Furthermore, as there is no clear operationalised understanding of peace, there are other threats to adapting the resilience approach to peacebuilding efforts. Despite the growing body of research on resilience in relation to peace, there is very limited information on "how to increase resilience" in practice. There is moreover a growing critical notion towards the use of resilience in relation to peacebuilding, which will be discussed in the following paragraph.

2.2.2 Critique of the resilience paradigm

While most scholars agree there is a necessity to remove the implementation of the external blueprint by the intervener, resilience is generally accepted as the solution. Chandler (2015) for example argues that

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[9] For example, a resilient dictatorship or a violent youth-gang with high levels of resilience (Davis 2012).

[10] SDG 16 implies to "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" (UNSDG n.d.).

"rather than enlarging our understanding of problems and their solutions, the removal of the 'big picture', universalist meta-narratives, and critical sociological understandings could be seen as constructing a new and much more problematic paradigm" (48). It is important to clarify that I believe adopting a resilience-focus does not mean only analysing the 'local strengths, or capacities', but that it incorporates the working components of the wider system and as such does not omit 'the big picture'. This implies that while observing the capacities on a local level is important, creating a (more) durable peace can only be done when other social scales are included as well. This links to the notion of trans-scalar peace (Millar 2019), which argues that the agency of the local should not be overestimated, in other words: the power dynamics within the interactions of the local, regional, national, or global, are all crucial to creating peace. Creating peace through the resilience lens, allows for a holistic analysis of these different fractions, scales, and peace meanings within a peace process. On top of that, when adopting this wider scope, the discrepancies between the agenda of international actors and the wishes and strategies from local communities become visible. These potential discrepancies demonstrate the necessity of, as also argued by Autesserre (2021), adapting the (largely top-down) conventional peacebuilding approaches to incorporate more local voices to improve current peace interventions.

However, when incorporating local voices merely through a resilience building approach, another crucial, and widely supported, critique comes forward: that by building on existing local capacities and capabilities, the accountability of the peace process shifts. This is in line with earlier mentioned critique of the use of resilience-strategies to pushing a neoliberal agenda. By adopting an actor-centred approach, the focus has increasingly been placed on the "capacity of affected communities to recover with little or no external assistance" (Manyena 2006, 433). The responsibility of creating 'resilience', is therewith placed more and more upon the victims – where neoliberal elites and authorities encourage victims to take ownership of the risks instead (Evans and Reid 2014; Lentzos and Rose 2009). As explained in the introduction, Vilcan (2017, 2) refers to this as the ongoing 'responsibilisation' of victims[11]. The growing concern of the neoliberalisation of resilience in the policy discourse, also shows in other ways: for example, the use of resilience as a governing strategy tends to ignore social vulnerability or obscures pre-existing social injustices (Chandler and Reid 2018; Grove 2013; Uekusa 2017). The strong focus on the importance of social capital in resilience building can moreover "easily mystify 'human adaptability' and operate under a neoliberal discourse because social capital promotion is believed to enhance resilience and reduce social vulnerability while leaving structural injustices untouched" (Uekusa 2017, 2). As Kooning and Kruijt (2015, 17) put it "resilience points either towards strategies to make cities more liveable within the parameters of neoliberal urbanism, or to coping responses available to the urban excluded without enabling these urban categories to challenge the root causes of fragility". It is hence often the case that the translation from resilience to practice ignores the root causes of societal issues, whereby the target communities are

[11] It is important to note here that the binary between victims versus non-victims is not always that straightforward, there are certainly locals who would not want to be referred as victims despite having lived through conflict. The reference to responsibilisation of victims is intended to stir the discussion on who is accountable for the peace process, and 'victims' do not form a static group within this discussion.

increasingly deemed responsible for their own fate. Despite this existing controversy, there is a general agreement on the positive contributions that resilience-thinking potentially offers to peacebuilding (e.g., de Coning 2018, 2020; Grove 2018; Juncos and Joseph 2020; Kastner 2020; Koonings and Kruijt 2015; Menkhaus 2013). While it is therefore crucial to comprehend the resilience critique, the concept should not be disregarded altogether. The next paragraph will demonstrate in which ways the Resilient Peace System engages with the existing critique.

2.3 Engaging with the resilience critique

The most important way in which the RPS engages with existing resilience critique, is through shifting the focus from a community or society as complex adaptive system, to understanding peace as a complex adaptive system. In line with notions of holism, non-linearity, and self-regulation, it becomes possible to unpack the complexity of peace, or, in other words, to map the multitude of different working parts that are all interconnected. Doing so moreover lays bare the transformativity of peace, meaning it is constantly changing, or transforming, for example as a result of people changing their behaviour or new policy being implemented on a regional level. By focusing on peace as a complex adaptive system, it becomes possible better discern the different factors that play a role in peace processes. It is important to reiterate, that it is not the aim of the RPS to build a resilient peace, but to unpack the on-the-ground-complexity in order to offer new insights into and opportunities for peace. Observing peace as complex adaptive system brings along five other (related) reasons that motivate the introduction of the RPS, which are: 1) it brings together two previously isolated debates in the peace-discourse, 2) it takes the responsibilisation of victims away, 3) the RPS cannot be used as a neoliberal strategy, 4) it builds on present day approaches and existing framework, and lastly, 5) the RPS is meant to analyse peace in conflict-affect contexts, avoiding the binary of either post-conflict of conflict situations.

First of all, the conceptualisation of the RPS merges two often isolated debates in peacebuilding: the debate on localised understanding of peace, and the peace-resilience debate. Over the last decades, peace-thinking has seen a spike in the bottom-up, local understandings of peace, replacing the top-down metrics of peace and peacebuilding (Mac Ginty 2012, 56). New definitions of peace have emerged, as transrational peace (Echavarría Álvarez 2014, 61), adaptive peace (de Coning 2018), sustaining peace (United Nations 2015), everyday peace (Mac Ginty 2014), followed by the introduction of the Everyday Peace Indicators (EPI) Firchow and Mac Ginty 2016). The debate on the importance of incorporating local everyday understandings of peace, instead of implementing a top-down vision of what peace should be, is currently dominating the peace debate. This debate is however held in a separate paradigm from the peace-resilience debate, which limits the opportunities for understanding the complexity of peace. When conceptualising peace as a complex system, these two debates become integrated into one. In other words: local, everyday peace understandings are a crucial part of the RPS.

Secondly, as mentioned above, the use of resilience as a governing strategy is widely criticised, among others as it results in a shift of accountability to victims (Vilcan's 2017). Through the increasing bottom-up

focus, locals, often victims, have become seen as the main drivers of peace. This is also the case within resilience-programming, where the neoliberal elites and authorities encourage local communities (or 'victims') to take ownership of this process and therewith take away their own responsibility to assist in this process (Evans and Reid 2014; Lentzos and Rose, 2009). In other words, national institutions or the wider international community no longer have to be held accountable. To avoid this, within the RPS framework the focus no longer lays the community, but on peace itself. In other words, instead of understanding the community as a complex adaptive system, peace is understood as a complex adaptive system. As such, the trans-scalarity of peace becomes of importance, as the presence of and interaction between various scales of society – e.g., individual, family, community, national, international - are crucial to the wider peace system. This is in contrary to previous resilience practices where the focus, and the accountability of building resilience lies with the local communities. It is moreover important to reiterate that the RPS does not aim at creating resilience, but that it uses the resilience lens to unpack the complexity of peace in order to understand the contextual necessities for peace. This links to another often heard critique, and the third motivation for introducing the RPS, which is the use of *resilience for neoliberal governing strategies*. When stepping away from the objective of building resilience on the local level, the possibility that resilience is merely used as a disguise for neoliberal strategies that appear to be bottom-up is avoided.

Fourth, to provide further support for the operationalisation and use of the RPS, this section highlights in what ways the RPS can be set apart from and builds on various *present-day peace approaches and existing frameworks*. As explained in the introduction, the RPS should, in line with the previous argument, be understood as a peace analysis instead of a conflict analysis. As this has been thoroughly explained in section 1.2, this section focuses on similarities to other peace frameworks and approaches. In the early 2000s, a shift occurred that acknowledged the importance of adopting a multi-level lens, whereby the conversation between the local and international scales became again of importance in peacebuilding. Despite this, this notion of hybrid peace is embedded in liberal peace notions and came to view the actors and relations as more or less fixed (Autessere 2021; Mac Ginty 2011; Richmond 2005; Visoka 2017a). In other words, hybrid peace does not reflect the on-the-ground reality of a peace process. In response to this, various other approaches appeared. Richmond (2014) for example introduced the concept of peace enablement in 2014, which focused on a "more hands-off, but also more supportive, form of assistance" (224). Peace enablement holds a bottom-up perspective, focusing on local agency and empowerment of local and marginal actors, but it incorporates the vision that the international community has to be included in the process, provided however that there is thorough local knowledge (Richmond 2015, 220). Millar (2019, 3) however argues it is important to take it one step further, instead of only acknowledging the importance of cooperation of different scales, it is also crucial to understand the power dynamics between these scales. Millar (2019, 15) therefore suggest that earlier attempts "over-emphasized the agency of the local (inadvertently suggesting a false equality between the global and the local)". Building on these and similar approaches, the RPS holds the notion that peace is multi-layered, which is represented as a common thread in the RPS conceptualisation.

Next to this, there is a growing acceptance that peacebuilding is complex. This is among others visible in the development of strategic peacebuilding, which finds its roots in the 1990s and acknowledges the importance of incorporating a larger scope, aiming to build societies that can better sustain peace (Lederach and Appleby 2010; United Nations 2007). According to John Paul Lederach and Scott Appleby (2010, 9) "strategic peacebuilders are like doctors who understand that the body is composed of interconnected systems and then specialize in certain regions of connection with the conviction that these subsystems crucially sustain the entire anatomy". In line with this, Galtung (1996, 265 – 266) also uses medicine as a metaphor to emphasise the complexity of conflict and peacebuilding. Similar to these visions, the RPS promotes a holistic vision of peace therewith aiming to understand these 'interconnected systems'. Despite this, both Galtung's visualisation of peacebuilding and the strategic peacebuilding approach are based on a conventional conceptualisation of peace (Autesserre 2021; Lederach and Appleby 2010; Philpott and Powers 2010; Kroc Institute n.d.; United Nations 2007), which holds limited context sensitivity. This is in contrary to the RPS which incorporates local understandings of peace, therewith adding to the discussion on the reconceptualisation of peace and promoting context sensitive peace initiatives. This focus on the local is in line with initiatives as the Everyday Peace Indicators (EPI) research, which demonstrates that peace and peacebuilding meanings are highly context sensitive (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2014), or everyday peace which focuses on the capacity of local 'ordinary' people to alter the course of conflict and strive for peace (Mac Ginty 2014; 2021). The capacities component within the RPS is rooted in this notion. Despite this, while there are similarities between these approaches and the RPS, existing frameworks do not holistically reflect different components of a peace process in one framework and as such, existing approaches lack the capacity to reflect the on-the-ground complexity of conflict-affected situations. The adaptive peace approach is however is informed by concepts of resilience, complexity, and local ownership and focuses on the learning capacity and the capacity to adapt of both institutions and local communities (de Coning 2018, 305 - 306). While this approach knows various similarities to the RPS, it however aims at increasing the resilience of a *community* instead of unpacking the complexity of a system of peace, therewith risking the responsibilisation of victims as explained above.

Lastly, for a long period, peace processes were deemed successful when the violence stopped, and when a negative peace was reached. This would however mean it is possible to clearly define when a situation is 'post-conflict'; the reality is however more complex. Even though this complexity has already been acknowledged with the introduction of new concepts as everyday peace or sustaining peace, in practice it often remains difficult to move past this binary of conflict, or post-conflict. This becomes for example visible in the context of Kosovo, where ethnic violence has lowered significantly over the last decade: between January and August of 2019, seven cases of interethnic violence were registered by the Kosovo police (Human Rights Watch 2020), a significant decrease in relation to a decade earlier. As a result, international attention on creating a durable peace in Kosovo has declined significantly (Visoka 2017; Visoka and Lumi 2020). Despite this, the conflict drivers, as discussions on border adjustments, are still present and fuel the persisting ethnic tensions (Vajdich 2018). When using the RPS as an analytical tool,

the binary of conflict and post-conflict becomes irrelevant, as the RPS analyses (the peace system within) *conflict-affected* situations, therewith acknowledging the complexity of peace. Consequently, the RPS is also useful in situations that are alleged to be post-conflict, and as such become 'forgotten' by the international community.

In short, the introduction of the Resilient Peace System to analyse the necessities for, and capacities of, peace within a specific conflict-affected situation, is motivated by the following five reasons: 1) it brings together two previously isolated debates in the peace-discourse, 2) it takes the responsibilisation of victims away, 3) the RPS cannot be used as a neoliberal strategy, 4) it builds on present-day peace approaches and existing frameworks, and lastly, 5) the RPS is applicable to conflict-affected contexts, instead of either post-conflict of conflict situations. The first part of this research has been mostly deductive and has led to introducing the resilient peace system based on existing theories and research, as presented here. This initial notion of the RPS has been taken into the field and has been adjusted to knowledge obtained during the two fieldwork periods. This has led to the final conceptualisation of the Resilient Peace System, which will be presented in the following paragraph.

2.4 Conceptualising the Resilient Peace System

Where the reasons to introduce the Resilient Peace System have been made apparent throughout the first part of this chapter, this part focuses on the conceptualisation of the system and its analytical purpose. The use of the RPS makes it possible to analyse the obstacles to, and capacities for, peace within the contextual dynamics of a conflict-affected setting. While doing so, the intended outcome is not to create a 'resilient peace', but to provide insight into the weaknesses and strengths of a particular system of peace. As mentioned in the introduction, the RPS hence offers a 'peace analysis' instead of a conflict analysis; in the latter the focus lies on understanding the root causes of conflict within a local context to avoid renewed tensions or conflict (United Nations 2016b). This is in contrast to the RPS, which provides a holistic picture of a conflict affected setting, as the local peace meanings and the strengths or capacities of the system are also reflected. This means that peace efforts can consequently engage with and build forth on these. On top of that, applying system-thinking embedded in resilience makes it possible to observe the interaction between elements that have previously been studied separately. As mentioned, the RPS is operationalised based on the fieldwork that has been conducted in Kosovo and Medellín, Colombia. While this section presents the final operationalisation of the system, the empirical chapters discuss each component more in depth, after which the discussion chapter offers a holistic presentation of the RPS. The operationalisation as depicted in this section provides an overview which is necessary to comprehend the empirical chapters. Figure 1 demonstrates the diagram of the Resilient Peace System, which will be explained in more depth below.

The Resilient Peace System is operationalised in three main components: local peace meanings, obstacles other, represents the conflict-affected setting in which the RPS analysis is performed. On the left side, 'trans-scalarity' refers to the different societal scales within the system, that are intertwined and

dependent on each other. The scales are in line with the notion of trans-scalar peace (Millar 2019), which will be introduced below. The first component, the local peace meanings, should be understood in relation to the altering understanding of peace over the last decades.

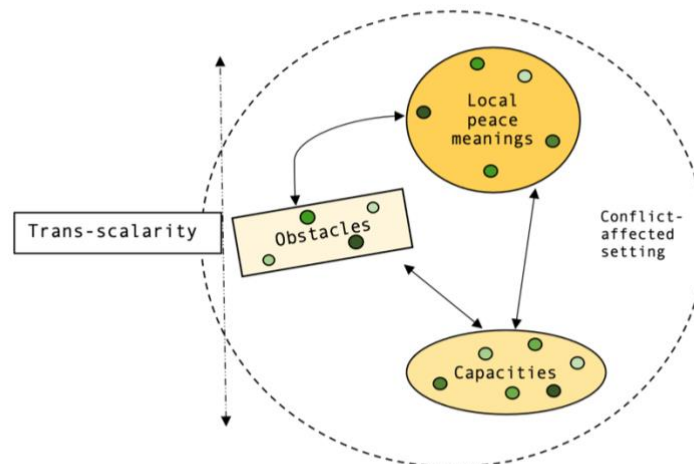

Figure 1: Diagram of a Resilient Peace System

As such, local peace meanings refer to on the ground understandings of peace within a specific conflict-affected context. Understanding these localised views of peace are crucial in the realisation of a durable peace, as will be explained further below. Next to that, the obstacles refer to both the hindrances to peace as indicated by the interviewees, and the deeper-rooted, and therefore often long-term, obstacles that prevent a durable peace from taking place. The last component concerns the already existing capacities that aim to overcome the obstacles to peace. The green dots visible within the circle of each component, indicate the separate findings in each category but do not represent the actual number. It is moreover important to keep in mind that these individual findings are also often connected to other individual findings, in other words: a local meaning of peace is often directly related to an obstacle present in everyday life, which at the same time correlates with a possible capacity already present in the system. The arrows in the diagram hence indicate the dynamic essence of the system. To obtain a better understanding of the functioning of the three components, they will be explained separately here below.

2.4.1 Local peace meanings

As the peace genealogy shows, there is a growing awareness that defining peace from below plays an important role in the creation of a stable peace. The reasoning behind this shift is that local voices reflect the "true needs of society" (Mac Ginty and Firchow 2014, 33), and as such avoid a 'perception gap' between the peace builders and the recipient communities (Kahn and Nyborg 2013, 264; Richmond 2009). Understanding local peace indicators is hence crucial to establish a peace that is accepted by the local society and as such is more sustainable (Chandler 2017; Richmond and Mac Ginty 2013; Richmond 2015; United Nations 2015). The Everyday Peace Indicator project as proposed by Firchow and Mac Ginty (2014) is most notable in this respect, as it "seeks to find out people's perceptions of their own conflict rather than

impose narratives on them" (33). It is hence deemed important to step away from outside experts or scholars developing the indicators of peace, as these perceptions are often not in line with local opinions. The first component of the Resilient Peace System therefore reflects the meaning of peace according to local actors.

2.4.2 Obstacles

Resilience-thinking is inherently linked to the managing of risks (Chandler and Coaffee 2016; Heng 2006; Juncos 2018; Walker and Salt 2006). As explained above, within the peacebuilding paradigm resilience is often understood in relation to preventing risks of conflict (Davies et al. 1997; Dijkstra et al. 2018; Ramsbotham et al. 2011). Therefore, the focus is often placed on the occurrence of conflict, instead of the creation of peace (see also: United Nations n.d.a). The RPS however uses peace as the focal point, meaning that instead of focusing on risks of conflict, it explores 'obstacles to peace'. There are three types of obstacles within the RPS, which are 1) everyday obstacles or hindrances to peace as experienced by interlocutors in their everyday lives, 2) situational obstacles caused by unforeseen crisis, and 3) long-term obstacles deeply rooted in society. These types are however not isolated, but highly interrelated. The obstacles falling into the first type often hold a strong relation to long-term obstacles: i.e., the increase of unemployment during the Covid-19 pandemic (which falls into category 2), only worsens the everyday obstacles of unemployment felt by many, and simultaneously should be understood as a strain on the long-term obstacles of 'socioeconomic inequality', or 'high levels of migration leading to brain-drain'. Through hence focusing on the obstacles to peace, the RPS goes beyond focusing on risks of (re)lapsing into conflict and reflects a more holistic picture of the necessities for durable peace.

2.4.3 Capacities

Lastly, the capacities of a system to cope with the disturbances or adversities present, are another crucial part within the resilience-approach (Holling 1973). In line with this, adaptive capacity is integral to resilience. While initially this meant the capacity to bounce back to equilibrium, over time adaptive capacity has obtained a broader understanding of 'bouncing back better' (e.g., Chandler 2012, 2017; Carpenter 2014; de Coning 2018; Folke et al. 2006; Holling 1973; Joseph and Juncos 2020; Taşan-Kok and Eraydin 2013). Adaptive capacity can be broken down in other capacities present within a social system, for example collective action or (un)learning. For instance, efforts at unlearning deeply grounded distrust against the 'other' after clashes between different ethnic groups erupted. Or, in a more positive manner; *learning* after a successful event, to incorporate the 'lesson' into daily life and increase the capacity to cope with possible risks. Transformation to a better condition is however key, and as such, within this thesis the broader notion of *transformative capacity* replaces the concept of adaptive capacity. Using the RPS as an analytical tool moreover provides the opportunity to incorporate local differences specific to the peace system. It is important to emphasise that the objective is not to create necessary capacities for peace, but to locate the capacities that are already present in the system. Understanding how these capacities relate to obstacles, and

meanings of peace, makes it possible to discern which capacities to build forth on when aiming to create peace.

2.4.4 Scales of peace

In the complex system of peace, these three separate components fall within the context of the various societal scales that influence the system. The scales should be understood as cross cutting through the system and not as a separate 'component' of the system. Societal scales refer to for example the scale from the individual or the family to the international scale. It is crucial to highlight in what way different societal scales interact and influence each other within a certain context. This is in line with the work of Millar (2019), who argues that it is vital to work towards a *trans-scalar peace system*, which asserts that it is necessary to "accept that logics and perspectives from the bottom-up are necessary, while recognizing also that the global conflict system structures from the top-down are the prevailing context of all peace interventions" (14). Instead of assuming the importance of certain societal scales, the Resilient Peace System analyses the presence of different scales of peace in the field through inductive research. This is important because while in certain conflict-affected settings federal institutions might hold significant power in the process, in other settings this institutional level might not be present at all. On top of that, while the 'local' is often understood as one level, this disregards the presence of other scales as the individual, the family, or community. Solely focusing on the 'local, national, global' is therefore often not sufficient to indicate the complexity of the peace system. It is moreover impossible to create a durable peace by merely working on a local level, as the power dynamics that exists between the local and for example the international scale can have significant impact on the system in its totality. Using the RPS as a method of analysis offers the opportunity to better comprehend which different peace scales are of importance within the system, and in what way these levels interact with and depend on each other.

While it might appear that the field research merely zooms in on the 'local', the RPS analyses the presence of the different peace scales, and the way in which these interact with each other in a particular system of peace. The only way to observe the impact of, and the power dynamics between these scales, is through on-the-ground research. In other words, the influence of decisions made on for example the global or regional scale (e.g., the United Nations or European Union) concerning peace interventions in e.g., Kosovo or Medellín, must be analysed on the ground as these decisions have a trickle-down effect. This links to the discussion on the gap between policy and practice; while this research does not study the 'higher' levels in its entirety, it presents the impact of these different scales on the larger system of peace.

2.5 Conclusion

While the study of peace and conflict is only about a century old, it has gone through significant changes in both theory and practice. By now, a manifold of (critical) research is present, and there is an ongoing broad and vibrant debate on what peace entails and on how to establish durable peace. The most obvious change that has taken place over the last century, is the shift away from a 'liberal one-size-fits-all' type of

peace. While the state has been regarded as the most important vehicle of peace for centuries, shifts in world power and previous peacebuilding failures have led to a changing perspective on the importance of liberal peace. What becomes apparent, is that despite these obvious changes, a number of aspects have remained the same, or have once again gained importance. One of these aspects is the focus on the local, and more specifically, on existing local capacities. Where during the '70s and '80s, when conflict resolution gained attention, local voices were deemed crucial in the creation of inclusive and durable peace, a top-down paradigm took over when liberal peace interventions were dominant. As a result, the population was merely a 'recipient' of peace interventions, not having the agency to act themselves. The negative effects of this have become painfully visible in peacebuilding failures as Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, or Liberia, where a universal notion of peace was implemented through external interventions based on pure liberal notions. These earlier peace conceptualisations moreover heavily relied on Galtung's (1969) visualisation of positive and negative peace remained dominant. In practice this however implies that achieving a positive peace remains based on a universal notion of peace, whereby the focus lies on the positive restoration of relationships and justice for all. While, as this research will also indicate, there are certainly aspects of positive peace still relevant in today's conceptualisation of peace, it is the universality of peace that is implied in the categorisation of positive and negative peace that no longer suffices. There is various contemporary research, for example the introduction of the Everyday Peace Indicators by Roger Mac Ginty and Pamina Firchow (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2016; Mac Ginty 2012), that challenge these notions. In this change the focus on the local again becomes visible, currently emphasising the importance of building on local strengths. Despite the common understanding that the 'local' is important in peacebuilding practices, there are ongoing discussions concerning the position of the local, the level of third-party intervention, or the importance of local ownership versus external peacebuilding actions. The Resilient Peace System offers a new potential perspective within these ongoing discussions. As such, the RPS hence builds forth on the peace and resilience-thinking of the last decades. The RPS moreover engages with the existing critique on peacebuilding, and more specifically, with critique on the application of resilience-thinking in peacebuilding strategies. The conceptualisation of the PRS should therefore be understood both as an epistemological approach - to add to the changing understanding of peace within academia -, and as an analytical tool to understand processes and necessities of conflict affected settings. While this chapter has introduced a general conceptualisation of the RPS, the empirical chapters indicate the ways in which the RPS as an analytical tool adapts to the specific context of the case study. Before presenting the empirical chapters, the next chapter will first justify the case study selection, and explain the methods used throughout the period of data collection.

3. The Resilient Peace System in Practice: Case Study Selection and Research Methods

The conceptualisation of the Resilient Peace System has been an inductive process, based on in-depth research in the two conflict-affected settings of Kosovo and Medellín. To observe the functioning of the tool in practice, the selection of two vastly different case studies has been pivotal. This research is therefore rooted in ethnography, as this provides the opportunity to observe the dynamic essence of a peace system within a conflict-affected setting. During the process, and in line with the overall objective, it became clear that the RPS is a useful analytical tool to analyse the contextual necessities for achieving a more durable peace. While it was initially planned to conduct 'on the ground' ethnography in both Kosovo and Medellín, the spread of Covid-19 altered this planning. As a result, half of the research in Kosovo, and the whole research in Medellín, shifted to online ethnography. The validity and reliability of the obtained data form the cornerstones of this research. While there are various forms of validity, it broadly refers to the accuracy and trustworthiness of instruments, data, and findings (Bernard 2011, 41). Tied to this is the notion of reliability, which refers to the probability that another round of data collection and analysis will reveal similar or the same results (Bernard 2006, 54; Schnegg 2015, 28). While this research is rooted in anthropological methods, a multi-method approach is applied to assure triangulation of the findings (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 128). As such, three methods of data collection are selected: (participant) observation, un/semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis. While due to the spread of Covid-19 the research converted into online ethnography, the same methods have been used. The decision for this will be further elaborated on in the section below. Besides selecting valid and reliable methods, this research has a strong case selection and a rigorous choice of sampling which are of crucial importance to the validity of the research. The first part of this chapter clarifies the selection of Kosovo and Medellín as case studies, after which the sampling methods and data collection methods are explained. This is followed by an explanation of the data analysis, in which the process of coding is described. Lastly, the limits of the research are presented.

3.1 Case study selection

To best conceptualise the mechanisms of the Resilient Peace System, it is important to observe a complex peace system in more than one conflict-affected setting, which is why two case studies (Kosovo and Medellín in Colombia) have been selected for this research. Case study research knows a long history in ethnographic research, where it generally refers to (ethnographic) fieldwork within a specific setting in order to obtain in-depth knowledge (Gerring 2009, 6; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). While theoretically seen the conceptualisation of the RPS could be deducted from a single case study, I have decided to select the two vastly different case studies of Kosovo and Medellín. In contrary to the generally accepted method of a multiple-case study design (Bryman 2012, 75), the case studies have not been selected with the objective of mere comparison, but to derive data from both case studies to guide the conceptualisation of the Resilient

Peace System. Researching the applicability of the RPS in contrasting context is crucial not only to understanding in what way the different parts of the system interact and depend on each other, but also to observe in if and how the analytical tool adapts to different contexts. In other words, analysing the functionality of the RPS in two highly diverse settings increases the potential of using this peace analysis in a wide variety of conflict-affected situation.

To realise the selection of two vastly different case studies, four indicators of difference have been selected that reflect diversity within each of the three components of, and the presence of trans-scalarity within, the RPS. These indicators are (1) the level of conflict-affectedness, (2) the type of conflict-affectedness, (3) the number and type of international interventions, and (4) resilience interventions in relation to violence. Medellín and Kosovo have been selected as case studies, as both cases present differences on all of these indicators. For example, to achieve the largest variance concerning indicator 2 and 4, Medellín has been selected as a city, and Kosovo as a country. And, regarding indicator 2: where Kosovo's conflict can largely be framed as 'ethnic', Medellín experiences an extremely complex urban conflict, and the city knows a high variety of conflict actors. It is furthermore specifically the city of Medellín that is subject to various resilience interventions (indicator 4); the city is often referred to as a 'resilience miracle'. Kosovo on the contrary only knows a limited amount of resilience interventions. Before going more in-depth on the selection of Kosovo and Medellín in relation to these four indicators, a short background of both case studies will be presented.

3.1.1 Kosovo: the ghosts of a young democracy

Kosovo is a small, mountainous country of about 1.8 million inhabitants, tucked between Serbia, North-Macedonia, Montenegro, and Albania. Since its declaration of independence in 2008, Pristina has been the capital. The European Centre for Minority Issues in Kosovo (ECMI n.d.) estimates that about 87% of Kosovo's population is Albanian, while 8% is Serbian. The other 5% is a mixture of different communities, the main ones being in order of size: Bosniak, Turkish, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani and Roma (MRGI 2020). While over hundred countries have accepted Kosovo's independence, Serbia continues to deny the independence of Kosovo. Serbia moreover boasted an active derecognition campaign, and as a result more than 15 countries have already derecognized Kosovo.

Figure 2: Map of Kosovo (Source: Marshall Centre)

After Slobodan Milošević's rise to power in 1986[12], Serb nationalism inflamed rapidly. Shortly after Milosevic revoked Kosovo's autonomy in 1989 (Bellamy 2000, 106), systematic violence against ethnic Albanians within the Kosovo region increased, triggering civil resistance (Visoka 2017a, 2). After several failed diplomatic attempts, the violence escalated into a war between the separatist group the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Yugoslav Forces in 1998 (Bellamy 2000; Tansey 2009). According to the Humanitarian Law Center (2016), 13,536 persons were killed or disappeared during the war (1998-2000) in Kosovo. Of these casualties, 10,812 were Albanians, 2,197 Serbs and 526 were members of other ethnic communities (i.e., Roma, Ashkali, Gorani, Bosniaks, Egyptians, etc.) (Ibid). The war came to an end after a NATO intervention; an aerial bombardment campaign 'Operation Allied Force', lasting from March 24 until June 9, 1999. The air war killed approximately 500 civilians[13] and injured around 6,000 civilians[14], making it one of the most controversial interventions in peacebuilding history (Human Rights Watch 2000; Lambeth 2001; Voon 2001). Despite the violence coming to an end, the newfound peace was only fragile (Visoka 2017a, 2). Partly due to the United Nations resolution 1244 (UNSC 1999)[15], the international community became heavily involved in Kosovo. After years of research, special envoy Martti Ahtisaari presented the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (the "Ahtisaari Plan") to the United Nations Security council in April of 2007 (UNSC 2007). Along the lines of the Ahtisaari Plan, and in close cooperation with the U.S. and major European states, Kosovo's declaration of independence followed on February 17, 2008 (Bilefski 2008; Kosovo Declaration of Independence 2008; Visoka 2018,

[12] Six years after the death of Yugoslav leader Josep Broz Tito.
[13] According to the Humanitarian Law Center, the NATO bombing resulted in 758 victims.
[14] Civilians from both Serbian and (Kosovo-)Albanian decent.
[15] Due to the absence of a peace agreement, and with no functioning state institutions, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999 (UNSC 1999). The resolution gave mandate to the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) and provided the mission head, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, with full executive and legislative authority in Kosovo.

73). Despite the great efforts of the international community to create a durable peace, ethnic tensions continue to flare up, and the society remains deeply divided (Calu 2020).

3.1.2 Medellín: a city in the midst of violence

Medellín, with a metropolitan area inhabited by over 4 million people, is the second-largest city of Colombia and is the capital of the Antioquia department (World Urbanization Prospects 2021). As figure 3 indicates, the city[16] is currently divided into 16 departments or 'comunas'[17], which are again divided into various neighbourhoods or 'barrios' (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2017). The signing of the peace accords in 2016, brought an end to fifty-two years of brutal Colombian civil war, that lasted from 1964 – 2016 (Echavarría Alvarez et al. 2020; LaRosa and Mejía 2017, 84). In the midst of the national civil war, Medellín experienced her own urban conflict. As a result, the urban situation is extremely complex; there are various subliminal conflicts that affect the city, and consequently there is a large variety of conflict actors active (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2017).[18]

Figure 3: Map of Medellín (Source: Municipality of Medellín)

Over the last decades Medellín however obtained fame due to its significant transformations: this is among others due to a change in urban political scene, whereby the focus has been placed on 'social urbanism', bringing public services, as transport, education, health, and security infrastructure to the lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods (earlier referred to as invasions) (Doyle 2016, 7). As a result, Medellín has changed from the most violent city of the world in the early 1990s[19] (Doyle 2019, 150), to a popular tourist destination in 2022. In this increasingly positive image of Medellín, the city is often portrayed as a 'miracle'

[16] Without the wider metropolitan area.
[17] *Comunas* are often stigmatised, as the word is used to refer to neighbourhoods associated with poverty and (violent) crime. Despite this, as often repeated by interlocutors spoken to in the field, it simply refers to the division of Medellín into 16 administrative zones.
[18] For those interested, the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica published an excellent report 'Medellín: Memorias de una Guerra Urbana'.
[19] The year 1991 became the most violent year, with a homicide rate of 381 per 100,000 inhabitants (Doyle 2019, 150).

(Franz 2017; Naef 2018). The reality is however more complex; while murder rate dropped rapidly after the early 2000s (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2017, 94), armed groups[20] have almost complete control over the territory. As a result, violence did not disappear but altered into a new type of violence, where the assassination of social leaders, especially youngsters active in artistic or cultural resistance, became one of the new tactics to spread terror. Next to that, the city experienced an increase in the murders and violence against women, and the existence of 'invisible borders[21]' became normalised. On top of that, the number of disappearances, arbitrary detentions and reports of sexual violence is increasing rapidly (Amnesty International 2021; Temblores NGO 2021). Like Kosovo, a durable peace remains to be achieved.

In the following four sections, I will elaborate on the indicators based on which the two case studies have been selected: (1) the level of conflict-affectedness, (2) the type of conflict-affectedness, (3) the number and type of international intervention, and (4) resilience interventions in relation to violence.

3.1.3 The level of conflict-affectedness

Medellín, Colombia, and Kosovo have been selected as *conflict-affected* contexts. In this research, conflict-affected refers to countries or regions that experience(d) conflict at any point in time since 1989. This year has been selected because of two main reasons; first, there is a general agreement that since the end of the Cold War conflicts have become increasingly complex (and as such make an interesting case study for an RPS analysis), and second, it is since 1989 that the Uppsala Conflict Database includes 'non-state' and 'one-sided' violence next to 'state-based violence' into their conflict encyclopaedia. More specifically, the selection of conflict-affected case studies is based on the inclusion in the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP) databank, and the inclusion in the Global Peace Index. A minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per calendar year is required for the inclusion of a new conflict into the UCDP Conflict Encyclopaedia (n.d.). Kosovo appears on this list as *Serbia (Yugoslavia): Kosovo* referring to the intrastate conflict within secessionist intentions within the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1998-1999. Colombia has been listed as an intra-state, non-state, and one-sided conflict; among others a low-intensity intrastate conflict that began in 1964 and has partly been 'ended' by the peace agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government in 2016.

Besides this, the Global Peace Index (GPI) measures peace along three thematic lines: the level of Societal Safety and Security; the extent of Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict (data derived from UCDP); and the degree of Militarisation (Institute for Economics and Peace 2021). Five 'states' of peace are indicated: very high, high, medium, low, and very low. This research focuses on countries that are affected by conflict but do not currently experience heavy violence as this would obstruct research-

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[20] Armed groups refer to the existence of various criminal organisations, which often refer to themselves as *combos* or *bandas* (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2017, 82). As these terms are often used interchangeably, though some literature distinguishes between 'delinquent combos' and 'criminal bandas' (Doyle 2016, 9) – to avoid confusion in this chapter the more general reference 'gangs' is used.

[21] Invisible borders are only 'visible' to the gangs, indicating the territory in control by the specific group. The invisible borders are dangerous places, as murders easily happen when a gang member crosses into unknown territory.

possibilities. There are consequently 92 countries that fall into the potential scope of this research, ranking from 59 to 150, as these fall into the categories of a medium or low state of peace. In this regard, Kosovo (rank 80) has been chosen as 'medium' peace country and Colombia (rank 144) as a country with a 'low' peace ranking. This way, diversity in the level of conflict-affectedness regarding both case studies has been assured.

3.1.4 The type of conflict-affectedness

As the background on both case studies indicate, Medellín and Kosovo experience vastly different roots of the conflict and as such provide an interesting diversity when it comes to the 'type of conflict'. The conflict in Kosovo has been framed along ethnic lines of Albanian versus Serbian, and the territorial dispute remains active. The 'battle of Kosovo', which took place in 1389 between the Christian Serb armies and the Ottoman armies, plays an important role in the continuing ethnic division and continues to be of importance in the creation of nationalism in both countries[22] (Bieber 2002, 96; Kaldor 2012, 41). The battle resulted in the colonisation of the Kosovo region, and wider Albanian territories, by the Ottoman empire, during which most Albanians in the region converted to Islam (Mehmeti and Krasniqi 2018). It was only during the Balkan Wars in 1912, that the Ottoman rule in Kosovo came to an end and most of Kosovo became incorporated in the Serbian kingdom once again (Salihu et al. 2019, 231). The historical narrative concerning these events continue to be crucial in the ethnic division that divides Kosovo nowadays. Kosovo has therefore been selected as an ethnically framed conflict, which as such, in combination with religion and nationalism, plays an important role in the continuing social tensions.

The conflict in Medellín is extremely complex, as the metropolitan area is not only affected by the national conflict (which is largely fought along political lines), but also knows her own urban conflict with a variety of armed actors and a high level of organised crime. Next to the whirlwind of urban conflicts blasting through the city, the roots of the national conflict also continue to divide the city along political lines. Only twenty years after Colombia became independent from Spain in 1819, the first political conflict erupted in the country which resulted in the existence of the Liberal and Conservatives parties that continue to dominate the Colombian politics (LeGrand 2003, 171; Steele and Schubiger 2018, 589). Over the course of the following centuries, various politically framed conflicts swept the country. Amid this civil unrest and in response to the violence, various left-wing guerrilla groups, as the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC-EP), emerged (Jaramilo et al. 2009; LaRosa and Mejía 2017, 96). This not only complicated the conflict more, but also deepened the political divide which continues to be present in both the country and Medellín.

Where the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia continues to present itself over territory, and is framed ethnically, Medellín experiences a very different type of conflict, as various forms of conflict come together within the boundaries of the urban area: rooted in a national political dispute, an urban war

[22] As such, the narrative is often referred to as the 'myth of Kosovo' (see for example: Bieber 2002).

between a high variety of armed actors, and a high level of gang-control throughout the metropolitan area. As such, the variance provided with this indicator demonstrates that the Resilient Peace System is suitable to analyse a variety of conflict-affected contexts.

3.1.5 The number and type of (inter)national peacebuilding interventions

By selecting case studies based on variance within the level of (inter)national intervention, the effects of these interventions on the peace system can be analysed holistically. Besides that, this indicator should be understood in relation to the importance of trans-scalarity within the peace system, as the influence of the (inter)national and the more local levels can be analysed. Especially on the level of international intervention, Kosovo and Medellín present very different case studies.

Over the last decades, besides the presence of UNMIK and KFOR since 1999, Kosovo experienced a tidal wave of peacebuilding efforts. As such, Kosovo has received unprecedented international attention (Visoka 2017a, 1). There is hence no better case than Kosovo to evaluate the suitability of peacebuilding interventions, the unintended outcomes of statebuilding efforts, and the local backlash to international interventions.[23] Kosovo had become the focal point for various international donors and consequently for countless international peace- and statebuilding interventions. These types of international interventions in post-war Kosovo are a clear presentation of liberal peace and statebuilding efforts (Calu 2020, 22; Kostic et al. 2012), whereby externally set mandates are considered necessary to create sustainable peace and construct a sovereign state, hereby often contradicting the local dynamics of state formation (Visoka and Richmond 2017, 111).[24] Even fourteen years after Kosovo becoming independent, governmental processes remain influenced by international actors. This for example becomes evident in the establishment of the Specialist Court (explained in chapter 5), or the 2020 intervention of U.S. ex-president Trump in negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo (IISS 2020; Stojanovic and Jeremic 2020).

Regarding Medellín, the U.S. is considered the most influential foreign actor in Colombia (Human Rights Watch 2020b). While the U.S. Department of State (2021) claims to have had positive effects in the creation of a "vibrant democracy with a growing market-oriented economy", various sources (Dube and Naidu 2015; Stokes 2005; Villar and Cottle 2011, 73) paint a completely different story. Under the disguise of the war on drugs, the U.S. heavily militarised Colombia and counterinsurgency became financed. In line with Kosovo, these interventions were based on (neo)liberalism. On top of that, police and military violence increased following the neoliberal policies, whereby interventions as 'Operacion Orion' in Comuna 13 of Medellín, are a direct consequence of the U.S. intervention in Colombia (Lopez 2018, 9). Consequently, the wealth gap in Colombia has increased significantly; it is the only major country in Latin America where the gap between rich and poor has widened (Villar and Cottle 2011, 119; World Bank 2021). Interestingly, while the Havana peace talks between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government have been supported by

[23] See for example work by Annika Björkdahl; David Chandler; Gëzim Visoka; Ivan Gusic; Marius Calu; Oliver Richmond; Vjosa Musliu.

[24] The international support on which Kosovo's independence is build, is moreover not purely altruistic and interventions have often been framed as the best solution for maintaining stability in the Balkan, aiming to avoid renewed conflict (Visoka 2018, 13).

external actors,[25] they have largely been led by the parties themselves (Herbolzheimer 2016, 7). In 2016, this resulted in the comprehensive Peace Agreement[26] between the FARC-EP and Colombian government, led by President Juan Manuel Santos, which brought an official end to the 52-years of Colombian Civil War (Echavarría Alvarez et al. 2020; Final Agreement 2016; LaRosa and Mejía 2017; Sánchez et al. 2017). Here we see the influence of the 'national level' within the Medellín peace system: part of the peace process is the installation of Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). In 2021, the JEP discovered that between 2002 and 2008, at least 6,402 victims have been murdered, falsely accused of being guerrilla members (Asmann 2021; JEP 2021). Medellín formed the organisational headquarters for these actions. On top of that, in contrary to Kosovo, peace initiatives from the Colombian national government have a large effect on Medellín. Over the decades of war, the government engaged in peace negotiations with various armed groups, which led to the demobilization of multiple guerrilla groups in the first half of the 1990s, among them the M-19 and the EPL (Jaramilo et al. 2009, 4). Despite this, successor groups with links to the paramilitary continue to hold power and wreak havoc in Colombia, among others through their (violent) campaigns against leftist insurgents, or human rights activists (Human Rights Watch 2010, 3; LaRosa and Mejía 2017, 102).

Aside from the fact that in both countries the positive effects of the (inter)national interventions on the local system of peace should be questioned, there is a large difference in the level of (inter)national interference within both contexts. Kosovo has experienced a flood of internationally mandated peacebuilding interventions, and as a result the national politics remain largely influenced by international actors as the EU and the United States. This is in contrary to Medellín, where not only the local peace processes have mostly been led nationally, but also the national level knows significantly less international interference. This variance provides an opportunity to understand the effect of international peacebuilding interventions, and the results of (inter)national peace scale interference within a specific context.

3.1.6 Resilience interventions in relation to violence

The last indicator on which the case study selection has been based is the presence of resilience interventions in relation to violence. There is a large variance between the two case studies; where Medellín is often 'seen as' a 'resilient miracle', Kosovo only knows a limited amount of resilience interventions, and mostly with a focus on natural disasters. To demonstrate this variance, a short overview of the resilience interventions in both countries will be presented here.

During the 'rise of resilience', as explained in the previous chapter, resilience-based projects appeared in Kosovo as well. By far most of the projects that are or have been present in Kosovo, focus on resilience

[25] Cuba and Norway have been assigned as 'guarantor countries', and Venezuela and Chile were appointed as 'accompanying countries'. In the form of special envoys, other international actors joined the peace process: the U.S., the UN, Germany and eventually the European Union (Herbolzheimer 2016, 7).

[26] Fully referred to as the "Final Agreement to End the Conflict and Build a Sustainable and Lasting Peace", consisting of 6 chapters: Comprehensive Rural Reform; Political participation; End of Conflict (ceasefire); Definitive End of Bilateral Hostilities; Solution to the Illicit Drugs Problem; Agreement Regarding the Victims of the Conflict and the Implementation, Verification, and Public Endorsement.

to natural disasters (as for example: *Building Local Community Resilience for Sustainable Development in International Watersheds* (CRESSIDA)[27], or *Disaster Resilience Initiative Support for Kosovo*[28] (D-RISK) by the UNDP). In line with this, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM n.d.) mission in Kosovo initiated the *Community Stabilization and Resilience* project, which aims at stabilising communities in order to diminish migration drivers as the risk of natural disasters. The project is however linked to the 'EU – Community Stabilization Programme', and both projects are rooted in the IOM's wider commitment to build resilience, which is understood to be inherently linked to Disaster Risk Reduction.[29] Another example is the Economic Resilience Initiative (ERI), which has been initiated by the European Investment Bank in 2016. The initiative aims at resilience-building through economic investment (EIB 2018), and all objectives are in line with the understanding of a stable democratic state, as envisioned by the European Union. In line with the liberal peace and statebuilding objectives, these aims show a neoliberal agenda for democratisation but negate the complexities on the ground. These projects moreover show a hidden neoliberal agenda, where the responsibility of the migration issue is placed on the individual, while structural injustices remain untouched (Joseph 2018; Uekusa 2017, 2; Vilcan 2017). The project 'Teaching Peace and Building Resilience' aims at "promoting a culture of peace [in schools] and build student resilience" and focuses on the enhancement of individual resilience. Interestingly, the project acknowledges that peace and resilience are mutually reinforcing topics (Founds et al. 2020, 9). Despite the aim to increase *individual* resilience in students, it is expected that by doing so the schools, families and communities of these students will also increase their resilience, hence creating safer and more secure environments. This however shows that the complexity of the situation is not considered, as many obstacles that the students face are deeply rooted in their respective families or communities. Besides that, the local specifics of the educational system, which function in a parallel Serb vs. Albanian system,[30] are not considered in Kosovo. While the project aims at promoting (interethnic) peace, all participating schools are Albanian (Founds et al. 2020, 6). This specific project provides a clear picture of the various scales on which 'peace' can exists (individual, school, family, community, etc.), but does not engage with the embedded power dynamics that exists between these levels. Without fully incorporating the local dynamics and hence the complexity of the situation into these resilience-building efforts, achieving sustainable outcomes remains difficult.

In contrary to the relatively limited 'resilience attention' in Kosovo, over the last decade Medellín has consecutively been branded as a "resilient city" and is as such often referred to as a "miracle" (Naef 2020). Projects that have been developed as part of the social urbanism programme[31] have strongly added to this branding of Medellín as a 'resilient city' (Naef 2020, 1). Medellín's significant decrease in violence

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[27] CRESSIDA makes use of a more solid framework and aims at providing support, to prevent flooding, to local communities located alongside the Drina and Drin river watersheds (Cairns et al. 2017).

[28] D-Risk aims at contributing to "enhanced risk governance for preparedness and response as well as increased women's role on community disaster management in Kosovo by developing capacities of local and central authorities as well as of women" (UNDP 2019).

[29] Defined as the capacity of a system (an individual, household or community) exposed to pressures to avoid, resist, and recover from their impacts in an efficient manner, without compromising its essential basic structures and functions.

[30] This will be further explained in the empirical chapters.

[31] For more information on this, see for example: Maclean, K. 2015. *Social Urbanism and the Politics of Violence: The Medellín Miracle.* Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

started to attract international attention, and as such became part of various resilience programmes. The most iconic projects that erose out of social urbanism programmes, which added to the urban resilience branding, are the construction of the Metrocable (a cable car connecting the excluded often marginalized parts of the city to the rest) (Mesa Duque et al. 2018), the park-libraries, and the construction of many school and sport facilities (Naef 2020, 5). The most internationally known are however the outdoor electric stairs in Comuna 13, which started in 2012 (Naef 2018; Reimerink 2017). The construction moreover obtained widespread international attention as Medellín was granted the 'City of the Year' award in 2013 by the Wall Street Journal and Citi, for their innovative city centre (therewith referring to the electric stairs) (Henley 2013). The city, together with 27 other cities in Colombia, became part of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign (MCRC), launched in 2010 by the UNISDR (2019).[32] Next to this, in 2016 Medellín became part of the 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) programme[33], launched by the Rockefeller Foundation. Following this, Medellín's authorities emphasised urban resilience as a "core value of the city and its residents" (Naef 2020, 2). Medellín has consequently come to play an important role in the academic narrative of urban resilience, and as such Medellín has become a model for urban transformation (Naef 2020; Ijjasz-Vasquez and Duran Vinueza 2017; Rodin 2014; The Hague Academy 2020). Despite this, the city continues to struggle with one of the highest levels of inequality in Latin America (Franz 2016, 15; World Bank 2020a); the majority of the territory remains in control of the at least 350 active gangs (combos) (EAFIT 2020; Mercado 2020) and there are high levels of (everyday) violence (Dickinson 2021; Doyle 2019). Notwithstanding the large focus on implementing 'resilience' focused projects, these have failed to tackle the root causes of the conflict (Naef 2018, 181-184; 2020). As articulated by Tobias Franz (2016), these interventions should be understood more in relation to the neoliberal agenda of Medellín authorities. This also shows that the analyses that only focus on Medellín's transformation as an "urban miracle" (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2017; Franz 2016), fall short to acknowledge the larger picture of the social and political struggles that are still present. While the resilience interventions in both Kosovo and Medellín struggle with similar shortcomings, there is a significant difference in the resilience attention within both contexts. This variance in resilience-attention leads Kosovo and Medellín to be ideal case studies to observe the effect of these interventions on the Resilient Peace System.

In conclusion, following Gerrings' understanding of a diverse case-study selection, Kosovo and Medellín have been selected based on the variance in four different indicators. First of all, while both countries are conflict-affected, Colombia is still ranked as a 'low peace' country in contrary to Kosovo which knows a 'medium' peace. Second, both countries show a large variance in the type of conflict. Where Medellín knows various conflicts that merge, these are largely based on political roots, and in relation to organised crime in the form of gang-presence. In Kosovo on the other hand, the conflict has been framed ethnically.

[32] The Campaign targets local governments and mayors, aiming to make them key drivers on the road to building urban resilience through awareness raising, capacity building and budget allocation.
[33] The 100RC makes use of the City Resilience Index (CRI), which is based on five years of research and has been designed in cooperation between Rockefeller Foundation and ARUP. The CRI is described as "a comprehensive tool for cities to understand and assess their resilience".

Third, while Kosovo has experienced a 'flood' of internationally mandated peacebuilding interventions, Medellín knows significantly less international interference. Lastly, where Medellín is branded as an example of a 'resilient city' due to the significant decrease in violence, Kosovo only knows a limited number of resilience interventions, mostly in relation to natural disasters. This is connected to the decision to select the whole country of Kosovo, and the metropolitan area of Medellín. For this reason, the scope of this research includes both a city and a country.

3.2 Sampling methods

This research has made use of non-probability sampling, which is common use in qualitative research and more specifically to obtain cultural data (Bernard 2006, 187). There are two main reasons for this, first because it is near to impossible to map a population of which a random sample can be drawn, and secondly, when conducting qualitative interviews the researcher has to make sure to "gain access to as wide a range of individuals relevant to their research questions as possible, so that many different perspectives and ranges of activity are the focus of attention" (Bryman 2012, 416). When doing so, the chances of a sampling error are limited, and selecting a representative sample is assumed to be more likely (Bryman 2012, 187). To achieve this and reach a wide range of individuals, and a variety in the sample, in Kosovo five different field sites have been selected, divided into three categories based on the level of interethnic interaction: positive, hybrid, and negative. 'Positive' focuses on a municipality which experience positive interethnic cooperation (Kamenica); hybrid refers to areas where tensions between ethnicities are still present, but some cooperation between the two divides is possible (Mitrovica and Rahovec); and negative indicates largely monoethnic enclaves, where segregation is ongoing and there is barely interethnic cooperation (Gjakova and Gracanica). This resulted in a sample of 57 interviewees, spread out over the five field sites, and a total of 75 interviews. Medellín, like the rest of Colombia, is economically divided along six different *estratos*, or economic stratifications: whereby *estrato* 1 refers to the lowest and *estrato* 6 to the highest economic class.[34] This led to a sample of 74 interviewees, spread out over the six *estratos*, and over 80 interviews. In both case studies, various interviewees were hence interviewed multiple times.

To reach these samples, a combination of Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) and snowballing has been used. Both these sampling methods are categorised as Chain Referral Methods; which are used to reach hard-to-find, or hard-to-study, populations (Bernard 2006; Gile and Handcock 2010). As in both Kosovo and Medellín social tensions are present, people willing to engage in this research might be difficult to find without the right sampling method. Therefore, a combination of snowballing and RDS has been used. This means that multiple different starting points have been used, referred to as key-informants or 'seeds' (in RDS-terms), to draw a wide sample of the community. In Kosovo this consisted of a pre-existing network through earlier engagement with the peace NGO PaxforPeace. In Medellín the entry points that

[34] While the stratification of Medellín in '*estratos'* has been originally planned to battle severe poverty in the 1990s, where inhabitants pay taxes according to their stratification, the results have not been very positive: the *estratos* solidified into a class system, in which it is difficult to move from the lowest classes upwards.

have been used, were based on a visit to the city in 2012 in combination with extensive networking - both within private and academic circles - before the start. All initial people spoken too (or 'seeds'/key-informants) have been asked to list three others from their network that are suitable and interested in participating. When the selected persons arrive, a new round of sampling takes place, and each informant is asked for three other informants. The sampling frame, and thus the social relations in the communities, are tracked and used in the analysis of the data. While within RDS originally money or a coupon is offered to the participants (Heckathorn 1997), this has not been applied in this research – besides ethical issues, it poses a danger to building strong rapport, and as a result to obtaining reliable and valid data (Ogbu 2008,74). The selected sampling methods have proven successful, as in both contexts a large and varied sample has been established. It is moreover important to emphasise that the people in the field are regarded as the 'experts' on this topic: they are the *interlocutors* within this research, connecting the researcher to the information.

While these methods secure the representativeness of the sample within each case study, it is not the aim of this research to generalise the findings beyond the specific research context, or to assure external validity (Bryman 2012, 47). The data obtained from Kosovo and Medellín provide an analysis of the peace system within the specific context. Added to this, the data derived from these case studies have been used to build the Resilient Peace System. The RPS, which has hence been constructed using the outcomes of the two different case studies, can as such be applied onto other case studies. It is hence the RPS which is generalisable. The RPS, operationalised in peace meanings, obstacles, and capacities, can be used in the same format -as an analytical tool- in another conflict-affected setting. Doing so will most likely provide different outcomes from the previous two case studies, and as such demonstrate the difference between the various 'peace systems' in conflict-affected settings. To obtain valid and reliable data from these samples, various qualitative methods have been used which will be explained in the next section.

3.3 Data collection methods

Both in Kosovo and Medellín several qualitative research methods have been used over a period of about 6 months in-dept (field) research. During this period, three main methods have been central: various degrees of participant observation, a variety of interviews, and (online) documentary analysis. Due to the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, during the first period of fieldwork in Kosovo the research turned into an online ethnography. In this section, the methods will be explained as used both 'on the ground' and in online surroundings.

3.3.1 Participant observation

Participant observation has been used to obtain in-depth data on the components within the resilient peace system. Conducting participant observation implies 'being there', allowing for immersive engagement with the field (Bernard 2006; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011; Howlett 2021). Social life is complex and untangling this to develop an intimate understanding is best done through being present in the field. It is through

participating in the mundane activities and interactions of everyday life, that aspects not easily communicated through words can be analysed (Bernard 2006). Kathleen DeWalt and Billie DeWalt (2011, 23-24) categorise various degrees of participant observation, ranging from 'passive observation' whereby the researcher is present but acts as a pure observer, to 'complete participation' when the researcher becomes a member of the group that's being studied. In Kosovo, varying degrees of participation have been used, up to 'active participation', whereby the researcher engaged in everyday life to learn societal behaviour and habits. In practice this meant participation in family or friends' gatherings as dinners, in cultural events, or participation in events organized through for example (I)NGOs or official government bodies. In Medellín the participant observation however took place in an online environment; referred to as ethnography for the internet (Hine 2015), digital ethnographies (Murthy 2008), or the use of 'netnography' (Kozinets 2010), which focuses on social media platforms and online material (Kozinets 2021, 8).[35] While most of these refer to conducting research into online phenomena, the forced 'online shift' during the pandemic led to further adaptation of the use of online research methods (Howlett 2021; Lobe et al. 2020). Consequently, both passive and moderate participation have been used in Medellín. Regarding the first, the existence of Google Maps Street View, in combination with the analyses of e.g., Twitter, SnapChat, or Instagram videos and even the use of (travel or other personal) vlogs, aided in familiarising with, and 'being in' the environment. Moderate participation took place in the form of participation in online events (e.g., a gathering of (political) activists or an interactive movie screening) to attending a friends/family gathering using video calling platform. Interestingly, as a result of conducting all interviews online, I was often quickly 'invited' into the personal sphere of the people spoken to. In both contexts participant observation has proven to be fruitful to observe and understand -among others- the power dynamics present in the peace system, or the analyses of obstacles or capacities that have become normalised over time and will hence not be presented when focusing merely on interviews. At the same time, conducting online ethnography also created the opportunity to be present in various locations (through e.g., the use of Instagram or via received pictures/videos on WhatsApp) at the same time, thus obtaining valuable data that would otherwise be missed.

Establishing rapport is key to understanding both tacit and explicit aspects of a society. While there are various definitions on 'rapport', the most accepted one is the creation of a relationship based on mutual trust and cooperation between the researcher and informant (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011; Jorgenson 1989).[36] H. Russel Bernard (2006, x) argues that rapport "makes it possible for anthropologists to do all kinds of otherwise unthinkably intrusive things". The establishment of rapport is done in various ways, though in this research two methods are used: hanging out and informal conversation. Hanging out simply refers to 'being present' in a certain context, and informal conversation refers to a conversation on any kind of topic, most likely close to the interest of the interviewee. In Kosovo, where the first part of the research has been conducted in the field, both techniques have been used to establish rapport. In Medellín on the other hand,

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[35] A list highlighting activities of participant observation can be found in annex II.
[36] This also implies that people will be willing to take part without offering a coupon or receiving money in return.

online informal conversation, either through video calling or WhatsApp messaging, has been the main method for establishing rapport. In line however with Mario Guimaraes (2005, 151) who argues that the creation of rapport in online settings is similar to offline settings, the establishment of rapport has been fruitful in Medellín. An indication of the quick establishment of rapport, is the rapid network building process that took place in both contexts. On top of that, as Ilmari Käihkö (2021) argues, online chatting with interlocutors has other advantages as well; despite the large distance it remains possible to stay in contact on a continuous basis. On top of that, it provided the opportunity for the interlocutors to share relevant data, such as photos, articles, or videos.

3.3.2 (Online) Interviews

The method of interviewing functions as another cornerstone within this research, as conducting interviews is crucial in understanding the interlocutors' perspective. While there are various forms of interviews, the focus lies semi-structured, or in-depth, interviews. In Kosovo, a little under half of interviews have been conducted online, while in Medellín all interviews, except for one, took place over the internet. The increasing availability of communicative technologies has made it possible to conduct the interviews choosing from a selection of various videoconferencing services, which made it easier for the participants to engage based on the availability of the platform (Deakin and Wakefield 2014; Howlett 2021). Various research indicates that conducting online interviews using video platforms resembles onsite interviews (Hine 2015; O'Connor and Madge 2017), as body language can be interpreted, or the dynamic environment of the interview "prevent participants from overthinking their answers or considering the most socially desirable responses" (Howlett 2021, 4; Mann and Stewart 2000).

Due to the nature of online research, most of the interviewees have been interviewed once, for which semi-structured interviews are the best suited because it "has much of the freewheeling quality of unstructured interviewing and requires all the same skills" (Bernard 2011, 157), but is based on an interview guide. The interview guide used in the interviews was based on the different parts of the Resilient Peace System: local peace meanings, obstacles, capacities and the presence of peace scales. The average time span for an interview was about 1.5 hours, where most interviews initiated with informal conversation necessary to establish rapport (Bernard 2011, 56; Hine 2015, 78), before focusing on the interview guide. Besides the usual semi-structured interview format, walking interviews or participatory mapping exercises have been used as well to obtain a wide variety of data. Both methods have helped to understand the structure of the interviewees' social environment (Kingsolver et al. 2017). As the word indicates, a walking interview implies an interview while walking, during which informants indicate which places are of importance to them and why. This has both been used during the off- and online part of the research. During the research on location in Kosovo, various walking interviews have been held to explore the different research locations through the eyes of the participants. In Medellín, where possible depending on safety, walking interviews have been held whereby interviewees demonstrated their surroundings through video calling or even by using Google Maps. This provided great opportunities to get acquainted with the field, while conducting

research on distance. The participatory mapping exercises provide similar information, as the participant has been asked to map for example their neighbourhood or another place of importance, to indicate where e.g., peace activities or social tensions take place.

3.3.3 Documentary and Social Media analysis

Throughout the whole research period, the method of documentary analysis (or documentary research methods – DSM) has been used as well (Ahmed 2010). A wide variety of documents are used, as local news articles, policy documents, project proposals, or evaluations or secondary descriptive or inferential quantitative data. These documents are largely accessible online and moving to online research hence did not impede the data collection. This provided the opportunity to deepen my understanding of the obtained data from the two other methods, and to check if the obtained data align with the existing documents. If not, it provides opportunity to investigate this discrepancy, and to analyse why this is the case. In relation to this, another source that has proven very useful is social media, mostly in the form of Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook (Hine 2015; Kozinets 2021). After the creation of an 'overt research account'[37] on each platform, various everyday practices, happenings, or larger events could be followed. This created an important connection to the field: it for example provided information that made it easier to connect with interviewees, but also offered opportunities for triangulation.

3.3.4 Reliability and validity

By selecting these three methods, triangulation has been realised which assures the validity and reliability of the obtained data (Bryman 2012). Qualitative methods as participant observation and un/semi-structured interviews have moreover been selected because, as Bernard (2006, 356) puts it "the only way to obtain sensible data from society is to conduct participant observation". It would not be possible to obtain the deep, rich data when other methods would have been applied. It is crucial to mention that I, the researcher, am the instrument of research in most of the selected methods. This might complicate the reliability of the data. By being transparent however, and implementing various control mechanisms in the methods, the chances of obtaining unreliable data are lowered significantly. In other words, it is the aim that another researcher would obtain the same conclusions.

There are various techniques to assure the validity of the findings and increase the reliability of the data. These techniques differ per method: participant observation makes it for example possible for the researcher to understand the meaning of the data. Constant validity checks have been performed through for example shifting between emic ('insider') and etic ('outsider') perspective – thus critically and objectively reflecting the obtained data from that specific event or day. To assure the validity of the obtained interview data, rapport has been established to reduce the 'reactivity bias', or to reduce the chance that informants act or answer differently (Bernard 2006, 354). Besides that, several interview techniques have been used to

[37] In the creation of this account, the research was clarified in the tagline.

obtain more in-depth and valid data, for example 'probing' or 'baiting'. Probing is used to dig deeper, e.g., by remaining silent long enough, portraying naivety or echoing an informant's answer (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). Baiting on the other hand implies acting like you already know something, which helps people to open up during a conversation (Bernard 2011, 165). These techniques function similarly when conducting interviews through a video conferencing platform, as the researcher can "access verbal and nonverbal cues, providing an equally authentic experience to in-person interviews" (Howlett 2021, 4; Sullivan 2012). Through the recording of the interviews, based on informed consent, the validity of the data can be reassured as the transcription of data at times showed new leads that were missed during the interview, or the use of 'incorrect' techniques have been determined and as such avoided during the next interview.

Table 1. Observing the RPS in practice

Methods	***Purpose / Analytical focus***	***Analytical objective within the Resilient Peace System***
Hanging out	Rapport building – in order to participate and have in-depth interviews. This is a crucial technique also to uncover lines of inquiry that might not come forward during an interview appointment. This has only been done in Kosovo.	All components
Participant observation	Obtain in-depth knowledge on various components of the RPS, as both tacit and explicit factors come forward. This has been applied both off and online.	Obstacles/risks and capacities, and peace scales
Interviews (semi-structured)	Semi-structured interviewing has been used to obtain rich and in-depth data based on single interview opportunities. These have been conducted both off and online.	Local peace meanings, obstacles, capacities, peace scales
Walking interviews	Walking interviews have been used off- and online in order to deepen the understanding of the location, and to see the location through the eyes of the participant.	Local peace meanings, Obstacles/risks, capacities, and peace scales
Mapping exercises	Mapping exercises have been used to obtain in-depth understanding of the local surroundings of the participant; at the same time, it has proven useful to understand the obstacles and risks within the RPS. Both off- and online, i.e., in Medellín mapping based on Google maps/walks + interviews, in Kosovo through interviews and mapping	Obstacles and risks, peace scales
Documentary and Social Media analysis	DSM and Social Media Analysis has further deepened the understanding of the obtained data, and as such functioned to triangulate the other data. At the same time, SMA also increased the connection to the field, which was important in doing online research.	Peace scales, risks, and capacities

3.3.5. Ethics and Positionality in the field

Within ethnographic studies, it is of importance to reflect on the ethnographer's position in the field, as this influences the process of data collection and the data availability in general (Bryman 2012; Cohen et al. 2011; Gonçalves and Gagundes 2013, 338). In other words, reflecting on positionality "recognizes that researchers are part of the social world they are researching and that this world has already been interpreted by existing social actors" (Holmes 2020, 3). To assure the reliability and validity of the data it is, next to the decision explained in the previous section, hence crucial to carefully consider both the fixed (e.g., culturally ascribed as gender, skin colour, nationality) and fluid (e.g., political views, personal life-history, experiences, etc.) aspects of my positionality in the field (Holmes 2020, 2). In this section, I will first reflect on both the fixed and fluid labels ascribed to my position in the field, before discussing ethical considerations.

To start with the fixed aspects of my positionality: I am white woman from the Netherlands, in my early thirties. Working as a female researcher, especially in rather male-dominated spaces of Kosovo and Medellín, certainly brings along challenges to data access (this is in line with various research as Hausermann and Adomako 2021; Pante 2014; Schmidt Stiedenroth 2014). Women would, for example, relatively easily share their thoughts and fears with me, especially in relation to the pitfalls or dangers of being a woman in either society, as there was a mutual understanding between us. On top of that, I believe conducting the research online made it possible to enter areas in Medellín, which due to me being a woman would have been extremely difficult to enter otherwise. For men, on the other hand, I realised that me being a woman sometimes formed a barrier to becoming vulnerable about e.g., their feelings of safety. Demonstrating my knowledge of the situation, and my attempts to create a safe interview space through building rapport, resulted in people often letting their guard down and sharing their ideas with me.

Unfortunately, being a woman undeniably comes with certain forms of sexual harassment. I, luckily, exclusively experienced this in the form of the questions like "are you married?". As a major difference from earlier fieldwork experiences, I could now provide the honest answer 'yes', often immediately closing the topic. This brings me to the 'fluid aspects' of my positionality and the way these have shaped my research. First of all, as I am married to Sandra and hence in a queer relationship, I would not always expose this detail of my marriage, due too potential backlash. On the other hand, this has also opened up space for interesting conversations in both Kosovo and Medellín. Especially in Kosovo, openly discussing your sexuality is extremely difficult and being able to create a safe space to do so led to compelling data. Second, while I am undeniably white and Dutch, I had lived among others in Spain and Honduras, where I have learned to speak Spanish and have met various Colombians. As a result, I have been to Colombia, and Medellín specifically, in 2012. This has impacted my access to data in Medellin for two reasons: a), 2012 was a critical time, at the start of the tourist boom but when (according to various interlocutors) the city was still "very different", which made is easier to discuss the transition and times before this, and b), I speak Spanish, meaning I could individually do all the interviews and, just as important, through Colombian friends I am familiar with (parts of the) local slang, which helped to speed up the building of rapport. In Kosovo I had a similar advantage, as I had been there before through my work at

the NGO Pax for Peace and as such had a significant CSO/NGO network which provided an interesting starting point. The decision to not learn either of the local languages (see section 3.5) did mean that I was depended on a translator. I however had the luck of hiring a perfect translator, Emina Krujezi, who spoke both languages and possessed a lot of cultural sensitivity. Originally Bosnian, but having grown up in Kosovo, Emina can present herself as both Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian and she has a significant network among both ethnic groups in the country, which made it easier for me to include a wide variety of voices.

Finally, all data have been obtained in compliance with the AAA code of Ethics (AAA 2012), and after approval of the Research Ethics Committee at DCU. This implies among others that both in Kosovo and Medellín, all participation was initiated after obtaining informed consent; the participants were fully aware of the aims and conditions of participating in the research. I have always been open, about the potentials of this research – not to give hope (i.e., 'solve' their situation). It is moreover important to acknowledge that sensitive topics have been discussed, and as a result that: first of all, the names of the interlocutors have been anonymised, and second, I have always aimed to be aware of the impact certain questions might have. I have informed all interlocutors that they were able to stop an interview at any time, and I have held on to a list of potential referrals to organisations that could help with war-related trauma during the duration of the research.

3.4 Data analysis

A thorough process of data analysis is crucial in the process of securing valid and reliable data and the transcribing of the interviews is an important first step (Adu 2019, 59). Due to the high number of interviews - a total of 157 - done, this research has made use of the audio-to-text transcription service through the software programme Trint.[38] While this has been hugely beneficial with regard to time, all transcriptions have been 'checked', meaning that each interview has been listened back to and possible errors in the transcripts have been edited. This has also been done to not disregard the crucial benefits of the "traditional listen-and-type method" (Maclean et al. 2004, 91): the engagement in the transcription process, facilitates the opportunity to familiarise with the data and to start discovering patterns (Adu 2019; Johnson 2011; Patton 2015). The discovering of patterns is indicative of the coding process, which is crucial to data analysis (Bryman 2012, 298; 575). Rather than using NVivo, the data in this research has been analysed using a coding schedule, which has been developed during the first period of fieldwork.

3.4.1 The coding process

As explained in the previous chapter, the Resilient Peace System is operationalised in three different components ('peace meanings', 'obstacles', and 'capacities'), which are derived from the existing debates

[38] Trint is often used within academic research and assures the security of your data. They state: "we're fully certified to ISO 27001:2013, verified by SAM (US government vendor), the UK Crown Commercial Service (CCS), Cyber Essentials and we're PCI DSS compliant" (Trint 2022).

(both on policy and scholarly levels) on peace, peacebuilding, and resilience. These three components need to be analysed in relation to each other when aiming to depict the complexity of conflict-affected situations, and consequently when finding new opportunities for durable peace. During the process of open coding (Mills 2010, 155), the raw data have been divided into the three separate categories in line with these components: 'peace meanings', 'obstacles', and 'capacities'. While for each category a different coding process took place, all coding schemes have been developed inductively and have been adapted multiple times based on the findings in the field.

In line with this, different data collections methods have been used to obtain data for each category, after which the obtained data was either categorised as peace meaning, obstacle or capacity. As for example becomes visible in table 1, the data for the category of peace meanings are based solely on interviews, as the meaning of peace within a specific context can only be expressed by the people living within this context. Using methods as observation or documentary analysis for this category could potentially obscure the notion of peace according to the local population. In other words, the answers from the interlocutors to question "what does peace mean to you?", or "when do you feel at peace?" have led to the analysis presented in chapter 4. To analyse the obstacles to durable peace explained in chapter 5, both interviews, (participant) observation and documentary analysis have been guiding the analysis. As a result, the triangulation of methods supports the definition of obstacles within each context. This means that while for example justice is of importance to the larger system of peace (as reflected by the RPS), it might not be immediately relevant in the everyday life of the locals. This discrepancy at times between obstacles and peace meanings does not mean that one of the components is less relevant to the realisation of durable peace, but one of these is less urgent according to the locals in their everyday lives. On top of that, this does not imply that meanings and obstacles would have to be tackled separately; the obstacle of obtaining justice or walking alone at night are both crucial parts of the holistic system within each specific context. Lastly, as table 1 indicates, the capacities have also been inductively derived from the data through method triangulation. The RPS indicates that all three components are interrelated parts of the system of peace: in other words, focusing on obstacles in isolation from the other components would limit the opportunities for a durable peace, as local ownership or existing capacities might be dismissed.

For each of these categories, a coding scheme has been created, in which all the interviewees' references per category could be logged. Before filling in each coding scheme, the data in Kosovo have been grouped per field site and in Medellín per *estrato*.[39] This means that for each of the three categories (peace meanings, obstacles, and capacities), there are five coding schemes for Kosovo, one for each field site, and three schemes for Medellín, one for every two *estratos*.[40] This means that in the coding schemes for category 'peace meanings', the background information of each interviewee, plus all references to peace made during the interviews is collected. This is followed by the process of axial coding (Mills 2010, 154),

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[39] The *Estratos* have been divided in three groups: 1 + 2, 3 + 4 and 5 + 6. This is done because during the interviews the interlocutors often indicate that their neighbourhood would be *estrato* 3/4' or *estrato* 5/6, not making the separation between each class. Similar references were used in official municipal documentation.
[40] This because the *estratos* have been combined into 1+2, 3+4, and 5+6.

where similar references have been grouped together. This led to the final stage of data analysis, or selective coding, in which four 'categories of peace' became clear: peace as freedom, peace as mental well-being, peace as positive interethnic interaction and finally, peace as justice. This process of categorising has been repeated for each separate field site in Kosovo, and each *estrato* in Medellín. Doing so made it possible to observe similarities and differences in the understanding of peace between the field sites in Kosovo or *estratos* in Medellín. A similar analytical process has been applied to the categories of 'obstacles' and 'capacities', with the difference that these categories also include data from (participant) observation and documentary analysis. This means that the coding schemes include extra columns[41] that includes data obtained from observation and documentary analysis. The analysis of the obstacles resulted in five separate categories: socioeconomic obstacles; security obstacles; sociocultural obstacles; governmental and political obstacles; and territorial obstacles. Lastly, for the 'capacities' also five different categories became clear: the capacity to adapt, social capital, collective action, interethnic interaction, and the capacity to (un)learn. The three empirical chapters that follow, are structured in line with this analysis. It is important to emphasise that these labels have been assigned after data collection, the categories have hence been developed inductively and remained open to adaptation over the course of the whole research.

3.5 Research limitations

It is important to understand and acknowledge the research limitations of this project, especially since the unforeseen Covid-19 pandemic has altered the project significantly. According to the initial plan two 6-month periods of fieldwork were scheduled within each research site. Due to the pandemic, I was however forced to leave Kosovo after three months and unfortunately have not been able to go to Medellín. As explained above, the research methods have been altered in such a way to minimise their impact on the outcome of this research. Despite this, as a trained anthropologist, I believe being in the field would have enriched the obtained data even further. The everyday aspects of a society, especially those so common to the interlocutors that they are not easily articulated, are best understood through experience. On the other hand, this unforeseen situation has also shown the value of conducting online research; being easily 'invited' into someone's personal space (their home), the possibility to 'enter' dangerous areas which physically would not have been possible, or the opportunity to increase the number of interviews held. The latter moreover helped to expand and broaden the research sample. I would however suggest for any follow-up research that a combination of a short (3-5 week) field trip and online research produces the richest data. This would provide the opportunity to at the very least familiarise oneself with the tacit aspect of a society as well. While the exact length of the stay would depend on the time and resources available to the researcher, I suggest at least a 3 week stay.

Another limitation that is important to mention is the work with a translator in Kosovo. Where I speak Spanish and was hence able to conduct interviews individually in Medellín, I did not speak either

[41] Next to the background information of the interviewee and all references to obstacles or capacities made during the interviews.

Albanian or Serbian. As these are two main (very distinct) languages, it was impossible for me to learn both in a relatively short period of time. While I considered learning merely one of the languages, this would potentially create a gap between me and the native speakers of the 'other' language. There was hence no other option but to work with a translator. As explained above, Emina and I collaborated for about 4 months, where she translated live during each interview. While there were some weeks with barely any interviews, other weeks we did up to four interviews a day. At the same time, when she felt I should rephrase my question to clarify the meaning, or because the initial question was too sensitive, she suggested an alternate option. Despite this, it is impossible to avoid some parts to get lost in translation. The use of various interview techniques, as explained above, and triangulation have however been used to limit this possibility.

3.6 Conclusion

The selection of the research methods and case study selection have been crucial in order to obtain reliable and valid data. First of all, to demonstrate the workings of the RPS, two case studies have been selected based on diverse case study selection. The selection has been based on four indicators of variance, which are 1) level of conflict-affectedness, 2) type of conflict, 3) number and type of (inter)national interventions, and 4) number of resilience interventions. According to the Global Peace Index (GPI) Colombia is ranked as a 'low peace country', while Kosovo already knows a 'medium peace'. Second, there is a large variance in the type of conflict that both research sites have experienced. While in Medellín various conflicts are present simultaneously, these are largely based on political roots, and in relation to organised crime in the form of gang-presence. This is contrary to Kosovo where the conflict has been framed ethnically. Third, while Kosovo has experienced a 'flood' of internationally mandated peacebuilding interventions, Medellín knows significantly less international interference. Finally, the transformation of Medellín has often been referred to as a success, whereby the city is branded as being 'resilient'. Kosovo however only knows a limited number of resilience interventions, mostly in relation to natural disasters. These four indicators guarantee a large variance in case studies, and as such it has been possible to 'test' the working of the RPS in two vastly different contexts. Following the case study selection, non-probability sampling has been used to obtain a wide range of interlocutors relevant to this research. As a result, in Medellín people from the six different *estratos* are part of the research sample, and in Kosovo people from three categories based on the level of interethnic interaction (positive, hybrid spaces and negative) were selected as research participants. While I was forced to shift my research online due to the spread of Covid-19, the essence of the main methods remained the same; three main methods (participant observation, interviews, and documentary and social media analysis) have been selected to assure triangulation. Interestingly, this shift has demonstrated the value of online research in a way that I was not familiar with before. At the same time, our current communication possibilities, where it is possible to communicate 24/7 and build valuable relationships over the internet, made sure that I was still able to build rapport and obtain reliable and valid data.

4. The Local Meaning of Peace in Kosovo and Medellín

In line with Camila, as explained in the introduction, Burim (Kosovo-Albanian, 33) argues "to be real, I think I have never felt peace".[42] This chapter will indicate that while the notions of what peace means differ within Kosovo and Medellín, by far most of the interlocutors in both research contexts are of the opinion that they do not live in *peace*, and those who do, mention the existing peace is only relative. This first empirical chapter focuses on the local peace meanings within the conflict-affected setting of Kosovo and Medellín. This chapter presents a snapshot of the whole Resilient Peace System; as figure 4 of the RPS framework depicts, this chapter highlights the area within the red rectangle.

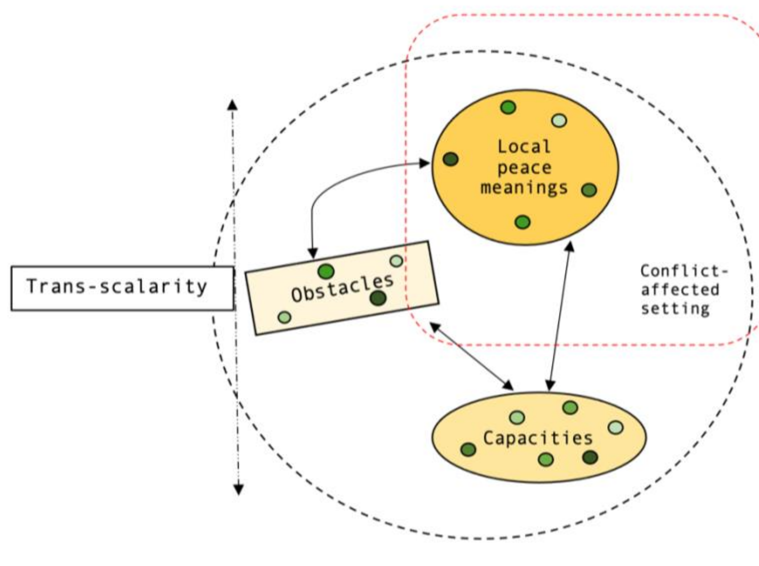

Figure 4: Local peace meanings within the Resilient Peace System

When placing the answers from Camila and Burim within the wider literature, the answers are not surprising: Burims notion of peace in Kosovo aligns with statements made by various authors who indicate the same concerning the persisting ethnic divisions, or the persisting absence of justice (Calu 2020; Visoka and Richmond 2017; Visoka 2017a; 2018). Additionally, while the type of violence alters, Medellín has experienced numerous cycles of war, both as a result of the multiple civil wars[43] raging through Colombia ever since Spanish independence in 1819 (Steele and Schubiger 2018, 589), due to the various faces of the city's own urban conflict (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2017). In line with conceptualisations of the everyday peace indicators as explained in chapter 2, the interviewees were asked to define what peace means to them. Their answers provide an interesting insight into the current situation in both Kosovo and Medellín. During the process of analysis, four meanings of peace appeared as most prevalent: peace as

[42] Interview Burim, April 28, 2020.

[43] The latest war has lasted for over more than 60 years, and despite the signing of the Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace, or the Peace Accords, in 2016 between the FARC and the government, trust in the peace process is low.

freedom, peace as mental well-being, peace as positive ethnic relations, and peace as justice. It is important to reiterate that these categories developed inductively and are hence derived from the answers provided by the interlocutors to the question "what does peace mean to you?", or "when do you feel at peace?".

Interestingly, the meanings that the interlocutors attached to peace present similarities to the ideals of the liberal peace paradigm (Chandler 2017; de Coning 2018; Paris 2004, 36; Richmond 2005; 2011; Stepputat and Moe 2018). Despite this, liberal peace applies a top-down understanding of peace and as such easily negates local differences. By far most peace meanings in both Kosovo and Colombia fall within the first category of peace as freedom, but the large variations in the understanding of 'peace as freedom' on the ground indicate that it is a not a 'one-size-fits-all' definition. In line with Mac Ginty's (2021, 19) conceptualisation of everyday peace, this research demonstrates that peace begs for a multi-scalar definition, and on top of that, this definition depends greatly on the giving context. The data obtained during this research demonstrates stark contextual differences: while in Medellín the notion of peace as justice plays an important role, in Kosovo a link to justice was not made during any of the interviews when discussing meanings of peace. The latter is surprising, as the public discourse on peace in Kosovo places a heavy emphasis on the importance of justice in achieving a stable peace (e.g., Haxhiaj 2021; Visoka 2019). While the data on local peace meanings should not negate the importance of justice in Kosovo's Resilient Peace System,[44] it demonstrates that on a local level there are other, more urgent, matters that deserve attention according to the interlocutors. This indicates the importance of hearing local voices, as they truly reflect the "needs and aspirations of local populations" (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2014, 33). This also underlines the value of the local peace meanings, as they demonstrate that due to local differences, both between and within Medellín and Kosovo, it is unviable to implement a generic peace intervention.

To present an overview of the local voices in Kosovo and Medellín, this chapter has been divided in four separate parts, in line with the four categories of peace as indicated by the interlocutors: peace as freedom, peace as mental well-being, peace as positive ethnic relations and peace as justice. The first part discusses the category of peace as freedom, which is by far the most important category for both research sites. In other words, by far most references were made to peace as freedom in both Kosovo and Medellín. As a result, over half of this chapter is dedicated to the category of peace as freedom. To provide a good overview of the different types of freedoms referred to, this category has been divided into four types of freedom: *freedom from fear, freedom of movement, freedom of expression* and *freedom from want*. Within these freedom types, which are again in line with the answers of the interlocutors, there were strong local differences. Due to the real dangers of being robbed, attacked, or assaulted on the street of Medellín, *freedom from fear* - in relation to *freedom of movement* - was by far the most important form of freedom in the city. In Kosovo however, the fragile economic situation leads to *freedom from want* to rise far above the other types of freedom. Next to peace as freedom, there are however three other categories that became apparent during the interviews. Even though less references were made to these peace meanings, they are important to

[44] More specifically – the persisting 'injustice' is a large obstacle in Kosovo and will be discussed in the next chapter.

present a holistic picture of the RPS in both contexts. Interestingly, the second category, peace as mental well-being was barely mentioned in the context of Medellín. In Kosovo however, more than twenty years after the war, mental problems start to surface more frequently, and more attention is placed on peace as mental well-being. The framing of Kosovo's conflict along ethnic lines leads to the fourth category of peace as positive ethnic relations. Not surprisingly, this category is only present in Kosovo. As already mentioned, the last category of peace as justice, was mentioned significantly more in Medellín than in Kosovo. The following paragraphs should not only be understood in relation to conceptualisation of the Resilient Peace System, but the rich data also made it possible to analyse the differences between Medellín and Kosovo and within each research sample selected for each case study.

4.1 Peace as freedom

Peace as freedom is by far the largest category of peace in both Kosovo and Medellín, in other words: most of the interviewees referred to peace as having freedom when they were asked what peace means to them. The importance of the relation between peace and freedom has been widely acknowledged within both theory and practice (Hanlon and Christie 2016; Jaede 2018; Rauscher 2022). The notion of freedom, mostly defined as '*freedom from want*' and '*freedom from fear*', has become understood to be a basis for peace (Agenda for Peace 1992; Galtung 1967; Peou 2016, 336). Notions such as *freedom from fear* in relation to *freedom from want* are integral concepts in the Human Security[45] debate (Hanlon and Christie 2016; Peou 2016). *Freedom from want* in this sense refers to the provision of basic needs, as food, shelter, or development, while *freedom for fear* enhances a wider perspective, and includes the need for physical and personal safety (Hanlon and Christie 2016, 5; Sen 2014, 526). The data indicate that both *freedom from want* and *freedom from fear* are important in relation to local peace meanings in Kosovo and Medellín. Next to that, two other types of freedom also became apparent: *freedom of expression* and *freedom of movement*. As mentioned, to present a clear overview, this section therefore is divided into four parts, discussing*; freedom from fear, freedom of movement, freedom of expression* and *freedom from want*. The following paragraphs will moreover demonstrate interesting differences within each context, in Kosovo between the different research sites and in Medellín between the different *estratos*.

4.1.1 Peace as *freedom from want*

In line with the human security paradigm, the first category that will be discussed is *freedom from want*, or not having to worry about providing meals, clothing, or a place to live for you and your family or loved ones. While *freedom from fear* merely focuses on protecting individuals from violence or violent conflict, *freedom from want* goes beyond this and argues that e.g., hunger, poverty, or inequality are also integral to the provision of security (Hanlon and Christie 2016, 5). In line with this, the SDG16 promotes human security and

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[45] Human security is a relatively new concept, which effectively entered the development paradigm in the 1990s, and as people-centred approach refers to the "security of people and communities, as opposed to the security of states" (Hanlon and Christie 2016, 4).

emphasises the importance of basic needs as "a world free of poverty, hunger, disease as well as access to safe drinking water and food" (Steiner 2019). This links to the famous Abraham Maslow's pyramid (1943), a framework that proposes a hierarchy of needs, defines the need for food, water, shelter as the most essential (physiological) basic need, immediately followed by the need for safety and security. The focus on *freedom from want* has become a common expression in relation to human security and within United Nations policy circles (Richmond 2016, 128-189; Tadjbakhsh 2010; UNDP 1994, 3). While there is an ongoing discussion on the correct definition and application of 'human needs' (Danesh 2012), there is a common understanding that in line with Maslow's theory, physiological and security needs are crucial to create peace (Burton 1990; Firchow 2018). This also shows in the data from Kosovo and Medellín, as the interlocutors argue that having sufficient economic funds to sustain oneself or a family is a crucial aspect of local peace. The level of unemployment in Kosovo is at the time of writing more severe than in Medellín: in 2020 Kosovo dealt with an unemployment rate of 25,9% (Kosovo Agency for Statistic 2021), where in Medellín 18,9% of the population was unemployed (Medellín Como Vamos 2021A). It should however be noted that in Kosovo the level of unemployment has decreased slightly since 2017, where in Medellín the unemployment level has increased (Ibid).[46] In Kosovo however, about 25% of the interviewees refer to peace as *freedom from want*, which is significantly higher than in Medellín (15%). What is moreover interesting, is that the data from Kosovo show no ethnic division in the understanding of peace as *freedom from want.* All the selected research sites throughout the country demonstrated roughly the same sentiment. In Medellín there are however clear differences between the selected *estratos*, by far most references to 'not worrying about providing basic needs' were made by people living in the low, and low-middle class (*estratos 1 – 3*). Interlocutors from Medellín often referred to the persisting economic inequality, for example due to the stigmatisation of the poor, where in Kosovo this was not mentioned once. Due to these differences, this section will first focus on economic inequality in relation to Medellín, followed by *freedom from want* in relation to the economic hardships in Kosovo.

In 2020, the Gini Coefficient indicated 0.537 for Medellín (DANE 2021a, 4), which refers to a severe income inequality. For Kosovo however, the calculations stopped in 2017, with a Gini Coefficient of 0.29 (World Bank n.d.a), indicating a significantly lower income inequality. The latest statistics of Medellín,[47] indicate that a third (32.9%) of the population currently lives below the poverty line (DANE 2021a, 2; Medellín Como Vamos 2021b). The poorest areas, which coincide with a high level of gang-presence, are situated in the north of the city (Colombia reports 2021). Due to stigmatisation of the poor from specific areas and the presence of structural discrimination there are limited job opportunities available, which will be discussed further in the next chapter. According to Salomé (27, *estrato* 1/2) peace means: "That you have the possibility of having money, and that this is not just depended on where you live".[48] At least a quarter of the interviewees, from all different social backgrounds, linked peace to equality, explaining that without

[46] In both contexts the percentage is however expected to increase over the coming year(s) due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (EC 2020).
[47] Medellín includes the surrounding municipalities, as Bello or Itaguï.
[48] Interview Salomé, March 11, 2021.

equality it is difficult to move to any form of peace. Next to stigmatisation of certain areas, other minorities, as the queer community, also deal with structural discrimination upon finding work. Valentina (29, *estrato* 3/4) for example explains the difficulties finding work, as being a transwoman: "As they say here: if you are transsexual, you're going to end up as a hairdresser or a prostitute".[49]

Elira (30, Kosovo-Albanian) is a young woman from Rahovec in Kosovo and a working-mother of two sons; despite living of a double income (her husband works in tourism), she explains having difficulties with providing for her family.[50] According to her, they do not live in peace now, as she worries daily about the needs of her family. Upon asking her what peace means to her, she immediately answers: "We would have peace when we can forget our needs and can start thinking about others". This resonates with Firchow's (2018) study into everyday peace, who shows that communities first require the assurance of safety and physiological needs before choosing "more positive peace indicators" (122). Lazar (38), a Kosovo-Serb living in Mitrovica, affirmed this while walking through the town together. During the walk, he points at some empty buildings "we should worry more about restoring life",[51] he goes on to explain how much he loved growing up in a diverse and undivided town. But it's different now, life cannot be restored that easily. "There is no way of building peace, if you can't feed your family", he argues. Aferdita (37, Kosovo-Albanian), who is originally from Gjakova, but now lives in Pristina, would agree with him. She laughs, while stating that "peace is about making sure that people have jobs. If they have a good job, they don't have time to fight with their neighbour, because that means they would be late for their job".[52]

It is important to keep in mind that basic needs are not static, they logically differ over time, and from context to context, or per gender. In line with this, a UNDP public opinion poll from 2019, indicates that while Kosovo-Albanians and 'other minorities' were most concerned with unemployment and corruption, Kosovo-Serbs listed unemployment and 'interethnic relations' as most important concerns (UNDP 2020a, 12). This is especially interesting as the data from this research do not demonstrate a clear ethnic difference; the fear of not being able to take care of your family crosses ethnic boundaries. In Medellín, a similar comparison could be given, as the interviews showed that while interviewees living in low and middle-class areas referred to obstacles as poverty and unemployment, people from higher class neighbourhoods refer to peace as walking the streets without worries. In line with the broader human needs theory (Burton 1990; Maslow 1947), the data derived from both research contexts hence confirms the most crucial necessity of income to provide for food, water, and shelter. Despite this, the data indicate, in line with the concept of human security, that human needs go beyond these basic needs. This leads to the three other types of freedom discussed below: *freedom from fear, freedom of movement* and *freedom of expression*.

[49] Interview Valentina, April 7, 2020.
[50] Interview Elira, March 7, 2020, and various informal conversations
[51] Interview Lazar, April 28, 2020.
[52] Interview Aferdita, March 2, 2020.

4.1.2 Peace as *freedom from fear*

The human security argument that *freedom from want* is directly related to *freedom from fear*, can be linked back to the Four Freedoms speech made by Roosevelt in 1941 (Hanlon and Christie 2016, 5-6; Roosevelt 1941). In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), adopted on December 10, 1948, *freedom from fear* is also mentioned as a universal human right. While there have been debates on the exact meaning of the term (e.g., Goodin and Jackson 2007), *freedom from fear* is here generally understood as the protection of individuals to violent conflict. The data from Kosovo and Medellín however indicate that there are vast contextual differences when experiencing fear: interlocutors from all six *estratos* in Medellín indicated a high fear of physical violence.[53] In Kosovo, this type of fear is significantly lower. Within both contexts however, the actual level of fear experienced depends on both the background of the individual and their location, or space, within the country or city. Within existing theory, the spatialisation of fear has received increasing attention over the last decades (Bannister and Fyfe 2001; Garcia-Carpintero et al. 2020; Gidon and Mi-kyoung 2020; Tulumello 2015; 2020; Zúñiga 2014;). The existence of 'spaces of fear', or the relation between fear and the (urban) spaces in which this fear exists, has been the centre of attention. In line with this, Tulumello (2015; 2020) advocates for the use of the term 'landscapes of fear', which embeds the dynamic nature of relationship between fear and a certain space. As Tulumello (2020) writes, a landscape refers to "a network of relationships between the subject, representation, embodied experiences, and socio-political factors" (128). What are considered to be *landscapes of fear* in Kosovo or Medellín, depends on a variety of factors as context (individual relation to spatial context) or personal background (i.e., economic or political background, or identity as sexuality, class, ethnicity, or gender) (England and Simon 2010, 202), and is not per definition a direct cause of increasing crime rates (Tulumello 2015, 258).

In Kosovo, a correlation between ethnic identity and the presence of fear becomes visible in for example Gracanica, a largely mono-ethnic enclave of Kosovo-Serbs close to the capital. In Gracanica, none of the interviewees would enter Pristina without certain hesitation. Goran's (21, Kosovo-Serb) view was shared by most "Just go [to Pristina] out on my own or with friends from Gracanica is a different story really. They wouldn't feel that safe, even to go during the day to drink a coffee".[54] This is in line with a study performed by the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS 2019, 12), which indicates that at least two-third of the people who referred to peace as *freedom of fear* are Serbian. As a result of this fear, Kosovo-Serbs are often not keen on leaving their hometown. Despite this, the fear of ethnic hatred and physical crime does not align with the official statistics of 2019, as 'only' 9 people in total have been convicted of "(Co)-Inciting national, racial, religious or ethnic hatred, discord or intolerance" (KAS 2020, 19). While it could potentially be the case that these statistics divert from reality, an interesting age division became visible: where some younger people explained to have 'surpassed their fears' and would now go to Pristina without being afraid (and without incidents taking place), people from above the age of 45 mostly remained in Gracanica. The fear of physical violence is especially high in the North of Mitrovica (KCSS 2019, 12),

[53] In both research contexts, fear is generally referred to as fear of physical violence -in various forms - occurring.
[54] Interview Goran, February 25, 2020.

the mono-ethnic Kosovo-Serb part of the town that was selected as hybrid space for this research. During an interview in a café in the North of Mitrovica, Milica (26, Kosovo-Serb) explained to feel "peaceful when there is a longish period of time (several months) with no incidents",[55] indicating that incidents continue to take place. While by far most references to fear were made by Kosovo-Serbs, a few Kosovo-Albanian interviewees from Mitrovica explained to see peace as the ability to cross the 'bridge' without fear. The bridge in Mitrovica physically divides the Kosovo-Albanian community on the south side and the Kosovo-Serb community on the north side. As such, the bridge has become an important symbol in the conflict between Kosovo-Albanians and Kosovo-Serbs and remains a space of tension (Bátora et al. 2021). "I am hesitant of going there [north side of the bridge]. You never know what happens," Liridona (41, Kosovo-Albanian), a woman in her forties, explains, "you can interview 90% of the people here; they never went to the other side, even though the wall doesn't exist".[56] Interestingly, none of the interlocutors from the Kosovo-Albanian ethnic enclave of Gjakova made references to peace as *freedom from fear*. This is however not surprising, as the vast majority of interlocutors from Gjakova also indicated to have never had any interethnic interactions. For most *Gjakovars* spoken to, there is hence no need to cross the ethnic boundary.

Most of the interviewees from Medellín referred to being afraid to either be (violently) robbed, attacked, get caught in the middle of an armed gang-fight, or to become a victim of sexual assault. In contrary to Kosovo however, these fears are not related to ethnic division. The majority of violence in Medellín currently stems from the 350 *combos*[57] that are active in the city (Blattman et al. 2020, 3). Especially in lower class neighbourhoods the gangs are in control, or in other words, they execute a 'criminal government' (Ibid). It is not surprising that most of the interviewees indicate to feel at 'peace at home', whereby the street, especially those outside of their own neighbourhood, often becomes seen as a space of fear. In the words of Catalina, (62, *estrato* 1/2): "I can feel at peace here, in my home, but the moment I leave, not so much".[58] In Medellín, the personal context and background are also of importance for the understanding of specific areas as *landscapes of fear*. While most people feel safe in their own neighbourhoods, irrespective of the *estrato* of their neighbourhood, leaving this most familiar area leads to a decrease in the perception of safety.[59] There are however certain areas, especially the city centre, which are considered a high risk at almost all times by most of the interviewees. On the contrary, within El Poblado, which is dominantly high class and hence belongs to the highest *estratos*, the safety perceptions increase significantly. The relation between *landscapes of fear* and the *freedom of movement* will be explained more in-depth in the next paragraph. Another factor besides location that influences safety perceptions, is the time of day: the interviews indicate that night-time is assumed as significantly more dangerous, but again especially in specific areas. Official statistics on the security perceptions in the city indicate that in 2020 only 52% of the population felt secure (Medellín Como Vamos 2020). Despite this, Medellín has experienced a significant

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[55] Interview Milica, March 10, 2020.
[56] Interview Liridona, March 10, 2020.
[57] Colombian terms used to refer to (smaller) street gangs.
[58] Interview Catalina, April 21, 2021.
[59] Most participants would however not indicate the streets to be dangerous per se but would explain it as 'having to be aware of the possible dangers all the time'. This is also due to the normalisation of violence, which will be explained as an obstacle in chapter 5.

reduction in murder rates, from 99 per 100,000 in 2009 to 23 per 100,000 in 2017 (Doyle 2019, 155). This is acknowledged by various interviewees, especially by those that have vivid memories of the periods in which the violence was highest. The change is, according to them, undeniable. Despite this, it is clear to all people spoken to that walking the streets of Medellín is not without risk. As also argued by Simone Tulumello (2015), there is a disconnect between the cause (e.g., the actual crime rates) and effect (fear) on the streets of the city. Likewise, Caroline Doyle (2019) argues that the violence (both real and perceived) in Medellín continues to influence residents, more specifically she argues that "residents continue to feel threatened by the presence of perpetrators of violence who have the capacity to engage in such acts, should they wish" (159). While violence has significantly lowered, it has thus never completely disappeared from the everyday. A large part of the informants moreover indicated that the type of violence is changing in Medellín; where before the violence was mostly a result of conflict between different armed actors, now everyday violence such as violent robberies have become more mundane. The increasing unpredictability of violence adds to the feelings of insecurity in the city. The statistics on crime and violence in Medellín moreover indicate that there has been an increase since 2016, after years of relative quietness (Colombia Reports 2022; National Police 2021).

The number of reported sexual assaults in Medellín has also increased over the last decade (Alcaldía de Medellín 2021; National Police 2021; Semana 2020). Sexual assault, and gender differences, is a common theme within the literature on spaces of fear, often in relation to mobility women experience within cities (Garcia-Carpintero et al. 2020; Gidon and Mi-kyoung 2020; Olstead 2011; Rodó-de-Zárate et al. 2019). This is also the case in Medellín, where there is a clear gender gap visible regarding sexual violence; the majority of women explain that the streets of Medellín can be a difficult place to manoeuvre. As Valeria (28, *estrato* 3/4) explains: "A thousand things can happen, because above all as a woman you feel more vulnerable here. If they [men] think you are alone, for example in the city centre or any other place, they can rob you easily, or they can touch you easily, or they can rape you, or…they can do a thousand things".[60] This corresponds with data from 2019 from the Secretariat of Health in Medellín, which demonstrates that at least 9 cases of sexual violence are reported daily (Secretariat of Health 2019). Due to the high level of tabu still present, the actual number is expected to be even higher. This form of violence moreover cuts through all levels of society, and there is no clear division between the lowest *estratos*, and the highest ones. As a result of this fear, women adopt avoidance strategies aiming to evade potential danger. This is also indicated by research from María Garcia-Carpintero (2020), who demonstrates that young women adopt various strategies to cope with the potential dangers on the streets, for example: "stopping when walking, changing their pace, modifying schedules of going out, aligning their own plans with plans of friends, changing routines" (9). Similar strategies were shared during the interviews, to which Mariangel (26, *estrato* 5) added that women have "become objects of consumption. (…) you have to try not to be provocative, so that

[60] Interview Valeria, April 13, 2021.

nothing will happen to you".[61] While various female interviewees in Kosovo also experience sexual harassment, none of them referred to this when discussing peace as *freedom from fear*.

There is a stark difference between Kosovo and Medellín regarding the experience of fear. First of all, while in Medellín a large number of interviewees referred to peace as *freedom from fear*, only a small part of the interlocutors in Kosovo did so. Second, while in Kosovo the fear present is divided along ethnic lines, this is not the case for Medellín. In Kosovo, Kosovo-Serbs form a large majority in relation to experiencing fear. On top of that, the data from the different research locations within Kosovo presented differences too; people living in the Kosovo-Serb mono-ethnic enclaves or areas (as north of Mitrovica) were significantly more likely to refer to peace as *freedom from fear* than other locations. In Medellín on the other hand, the selection of different *estratos* did not present differences: there were people across all *estratos* who referred to peace as *freedom from fear*. There is however a large gender gap, women in general experience a high level of harassment, and are therefore overrepresented when understanding peace as *freedom from fear*. What however becomes clear in both research contexts is that fear is related to the background of the individual and their location, or space, within the country or city. The fear of violence, more specifically what are 'safe spaces' to go to, is directly related to the mobility the interlocutors experience. In other words, the *freedom of movement* is directly connected to the notion of fear: the higher the *freedom of fear*, the higher the *freedom of movement*. Interestingly, within the human security debate or human needs theory, *freedom of movement* does not receive specific attention. Despite this, the interview data demonstrate that interlocutors, especially those from Medellín, see a strong connection between peace and the ability to move freely. This relation will be further explained in the following paragraph.

4.1.3 Peace as *freedom of movement*

Next to the focus on *freedom of fear*, or *want*, in human needs theory or the human security debate, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does refer to the "right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state" (UDHR 1948). Interestingly, there is clear reference to the role of the state in the provision of this 'right', which again demonstrates the influence of the liberal paradigm. There is however no clear reference to potential reasons for a limited *freedom of movement*. While in both research setting there are no references made to the state, or state institutions, there is clear correlation between fear and the sense of being able to move freely. The *freedom of movement* and *freedom of fear* are highly interrelated, but the significant number of references to movement made, motivated the writing of this separate section. In Medellín, fear cuts through all different *estratos* as it restricts people from all over the city to 'move freely'. As a result, people from all different backgrounds referred to peace as having *freedom of movement*. In Kosovo on the other hand, feeling the freedom to move without fear is related to ethnic background: only Kosovo-Serbs referred to peace as *freedom of movement*. On top of that, the term 'freedom of movement' has a particular connotation in Kosovo, as it is often understood in relation to the independence of the country.

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[61] Interview Mariangel, March 6, 2021.

None of the interviewees however referred directly to matters of independence in their explanation of peace, it was more often mentioned as an obstacle and will therefore be discussed in chapter 5. This section considers two factors that influence safety perceptions, and as such the *freedom of movement*, which are: personal relation to space and an individual's background.

First, most people feel safest in their own ethnically dominant area in Kosovo, or in their own neighbourhood in Medellín. In Kosovo, the vast majority of Kosovo-Serbs linked everyday peace to the ability to move around freely. Understandably, this fear has a spatial character as the perception of fear depends on either entering Albanian or Serb dominant territory. Here we hence see that ethnic identity has a significant influence on the perception to move around freely. It is also demonstrated in a UNDP Public Pulse report from 2020 (UNDP 2020a), that while on average 86.3% respondents feel safe in the streets of Kosovo, only 46.2% of the Kosovo-Serbs respondents confirm the same. Furthermore, according to KCSS, over the last years, safety perceptions[62] in relation to physical security among Kosovo-Albanians are relatively static, but among Kosovo-Serbs this perception has deteriorated significantly (KCSS 2019, 12). While in Medellín ethnic identity is not regarded of such importance, another interesting phenomenon presents itself: people indicate to feel safe in their own neighbourhood, even in areas of the city with the highest gang activity (Colombia Reports 2022). Most of the 350 *combos* active in the city are concentrated in the north (both in the north-west and north-east) of the city (Blattman et al 2020, 5). While these areas are generally referred to, by those who do not live there, as no-go areas, inhabitants would often feel relatively safe within their own neighbourhood. Gabriela (*estrato 3/4)*, a 25-year-old, explained that when she moved to a low-class neighbourhood with a high level of gang control, she didn't feel less safe. On the contrary, in her words: "It was weird, because in this square nothing happened. You could go out and walk at 4am, and nothing would happen to you because of the informal control in these zones".[63] Despite this, for people who are not from these areas, these zones remain incredibly dangerous as gangs would often not let 'foreign' people enter, restricting the *freedom of movement*. There are for example instances in which the local authorities are afraid to enter certain areas, due to the fear of heavy fighting breaking out (Drummond et al. 2012). Similarly, regional, or national NGOs are not always able to enter certain areas or continue projects if the situation appears unstable. This demonstrates that people who are generally completely aware of the dynamics within their own areas, and because of that can quickly adjust if needed. This coincides with literature on the spatiality of fear, as Jon Bannister and Nick Fyfe (2001) show that the level of fear is linked to an individual's understanding of the space. Being familiar with a certain space offers the opportunity to "read the environment as a barometer of risk and protective factors" (Ibid, 809). Interestingly, there is a widely shared notion that staying safe is connected to 'staying inside'. More than half of the interviewees in Medellín argued that they would feel 'at peace' only in their own homes; Miguel (24, *estrato* 1/2) for example

[62] KCSS (2019, 8) recently published another study indicating that 80% of the Kosovo citizens believe violent extremism to be a national threat; as this was however not mentioned by any of the interviewees, no further reference will be made here.
[63] Interview Gabriela, April 6, 2021.

explains that he feels peace when he is at home with his family.[64] The importance of being with your family, or at least knowing your family is safe, is something widely shared among other interviewees in the city.

The second factor influencing the *freedom of movement* is an individual's background, as for example economic or socio-political background, or personal identity as sexuality, class, ethnicity, or gender (England and Simon 2010, 202; Garcia-Carpintero et al. 2020). As the data indicated, a political background and/or sexual and gender identity have a prominent influence on the freedom to move. Regarding the socio-political background, being a social leader (i.e., a political activist or a human rights defender), is a dangerous position in Colombia. Since the signing of the peace agreement over 400 human rights defenders have been murdered (Human Rights Watch 2021), the highest number of any Latin American country. A local advocacy group Indepaz (2021) however estimates the numbers to be even higher, stating that in 2021 alone, 195 leaders have been murdered. Among the interviewees were several social leaders, who explained that the situation is deteriorating, and death threats are rising; as a result, large part of them explain to be severely restricted in their *freedom of movement*. In turn, some of them argue that peace means being able to move freely and without fear.

In conclusion, while in both research settings people referred to peace as having more *freedom of movement,* there are interesting local differences. In Medellín, the moving 'freely' is restricted due to the level of fear caused by the high gang presence. This fear hits people from all levels of society, across all *estratos*. In Kosovo however, the wish to move freely, and without fear, was only expressed as such by Kosovo-Serb interviewees. The ethnic background hence plays an important role in perceptions concerning *the freedom of movement* in Kosovo. Next to this, restriction of movement due to an individual's background, is closely related to the *freedom of expression*. In other words, this limited freedom of movement goes hand in hand with a limited *freedom of expression*, which will be further elaborated on in the next section.

4.1.4 Peace as *freedom of expression*

In line with the other freedoms, the *freedom of expression* is a fundamental human right embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948). Again, role of protecting this freedom is often placed in the hands of the state and is understood to be a crucial part of a well-functioning democracy (Bhagwat and Weinstein 2021; CoE n.d.; Freedom House n.d.; Lührmannet al. 2019). Interlocutors from both Kosovo and Medellín consider the freedom to express oneself an important aspect of peace. Despite this, the data do show a difference in the significance of the *expression of freedom* between the two case studies: in Kosovo almost a quarter of the interviewees thought of peace as expressing oneself without being afraid for possible consequences, while in Medellín only 10% of the interviewees referred to this. The Freedom House publishes a yearly rank of the access that people across the world have to political rights and civil liberties. Both Kosovo (Freedom House 2021a), and Colombia (Freedom House 2021b) are considered partially free in 2021, though Colombia ranks higher on the freedom ladder. To present a clear overview

[64] Interview Miguel, March 19, 2021.

the data have been divided into two categories: 1) expressing political views and 2) expressing gender or queer identity.[65]

First of all, the Freedom House (2022) indicates for both contexts that people are free (score 3 out 4) to express their "personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution". This is however in contrary to the interview data from both research contexts.[66] Being a political activist in Medellín does not come, as explained in the previous section, without risks. At the time of the research, most of the interlocutors who identify themselves as political activists agreed that they do not feel any *freedom of expression*. Interestingly, all of them are left-wing political activists, and often feel misunderstood and even threatened by the majority right-wing population. Historically the right-wing politics have dominated the country, and the 'fear' of the left is still present (Vargas 2021). After ground-breaking elections in May 2022 (Daniels 2022), Gustav Petro was inaugurated as first-ever leftist president of Colombia (Stuenkel 2022). While this indicates a crucial change, and a growing support for left-wing political activists, the 'left' remains largely stigmatised in Medellín. At least a third of the interviewees associated the 'left' immediately with the situation in Venezuela.[67] Andrea (64, *estrato* 3/4) explained that she feared that the installation of the leftist government will leave Colombia "just like Venezuela", in other words, bankrupt and in a large social crisis.[68] This moreover indicates the deep divide between the two political spheres. While a report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace argues that the tensions between left and right have lowered since the beginning of the peace agreement (Rettberg 2021), according to various sources being part of the left-wing remains dangerous in Colombia (Vargas 2021). The political gap is felt by various interviewees who feel limited in being able to express their thoughts and opinions about politics. Martín (42, *estrato* 1/2) explained that while he realised he could speak out more than his parents ever could, he and the people around him expressing similar ideas continue to receive threats and are subject to attacks.[69] In turn, various interlocutors argue that being able to speak freely is an important indicator of peace. In Kosovo, the limited freedom to express yourself politically is especially felt by the Kosovo-Serb community, since most of the political actions are controlled by Belgrade (see chapter 5). During the interviews this was however not mentioned in relation to peace, but as an obstacle to peace. As such, it will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Regarding the second category, the freedom of gender/LGBTIQ+ expression is limited in both research contexts. In Medellín, there is a slightly higher level of acceptance[70] of the general LGBTIQ+ community in comparison to Kosovo. Despite this, the level of stigmatisation is high, which makes it difficult for LGBTIQ+ people in Medellín to freely express themselves. While especially for transwomen in Latin America overall deal with a low life expectancy (IACHR 2015), other forms of physical violence form a real threat for the LGBTIQ+ community in both Kosovo and Medellín. The social stigmatisation

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[65] It should be noted that this division is not black and white; the 'freedoms' are often interrelated.
[66] For Medellín specifically, the data on the murders on social leaders also tell a different story.
[67] For more information, see the Human Rights Watch world report on Venezuela, from 2022
[68] Interview Andrea, April 1, 2021.
[69] Interview Martín, April 15, 2021.
[70] For example: in contrary to Kosovo, people who are openly living as queer are able to obtain and hold on to jobs.

of the LGBTIQ+ community moreover leads to high levels of discrimination and exclusion of social life. As Davíd (25, *estrato* 3/4) explains, peace is the "right to walk and inhabit the street, the city, the places, the peripheries, the central areas, without having to hide something".[71] In Kosovo this fear of 'being yourself' is also shared, and as a result more and more LGBTIQ+ people are leaving the country.[72] Despite the progressive Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, where article 24 states that no one shall be discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation (Constitution of Kosovo 2008, art. 24), in practice the LGBTIQ+ community is not accepted within daily life and violence against LGBTIQ+ people is not uncommon (OHCHR 2020).[73] In the situation of Kosovo, there is a clear discrepancy between top-down liberal statebuilding efforts aiming to create stable peace and the everyday post-conflict context of Kosovo's society. On top of that, Qëndron, a 29-year-old transgender male, argues that "becoming a man is more accepted, because the power of the family is measured by men".[74] This is an indication of the persisting gender inequality in Kosovo (Haug 2015, 147; OHCHR 2020, 27; Visoka 2017a, 167). And as various sources indicate (Barometer Initiative et al. 2020; OECD 2020a; World Bank 2019a), the same can be argued for Medellín where men continue to dominate the political and public sphere. During the interviews in Medellín, the difficulties of manoeuvring the social sphere as a woman often came forward, most in the form of limited mobility, social expectations, or expectations of physical appearance. The last two categories will be discussed further in the next chapter. In Kosovo's everyday life, besides the need to adhere to social expectations (often explained as getting married young, preferably with someone from the same town, having children and taking care of the family), the feeling that expressing your opinion as a woman is more complicated, is shared by many. Hilde Haug (2015, 161) however indicates that, mostly through the work of civil society organisations that focus on women empowerment as awareness raising or women's rights education, a (slow) shift is visible in the young Kosovan state. Despite this, various women agree with Venera (Kosovo-Albanian, 26), who argued that: "being a girl or a woman there is super hard because it is a small place and if you speak up and share your opinions about something, or argue or anything else, you are the stupid one, not them".[75] The dominant social rules hence limit people in both Kosovo and Medellín in their *freedom of expression*, as Agim (25, Kosovo-Albanian) explains: "there are rules, like [having to be] white, Albanian, Muslim, heterosexual and a male, otherwise you won't be happy. If we get rid of this, we are closer to peace".[76]

In conclusion, in both Kosovo and Medellín the link between local peace and the *freedom of expression* is largely divided into 1) being able to freely discuss political opinions, and 2) the freedom to express your LGBTIQ+ identity without fear of repercussions. Another factor bringing peace closer according to various interviewees, is to live with *freedom from want*. *Freedom from want* is the last category of peace as freedom, before moving on to peace as mental well-being.

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[71] Interview Davíd, April 16, 2021.
[72] Interview Agim, July 15, 2020.
[73] In 2019, 26 cases of violence against LGBTIQ+ people have been noted (OHCHR 2020)
[74] Interview Qëndron, May 1, 2020.
[75] Interview Venera, April 16, 2020.
[76] Interview Agim, July 15, 2020.

4.1.5 Conclusion

At first sight, the categories mentioned in this section appear to be in line with notions of peace as defined in the liberal peace paradigm. It is however important to reiterate that in contrary to the visualisation of peace according to the liberal peace paradigm, the data from Kosovo and Medellín demonstrate that peace does not beg for a one-size-fits-all conceptualisation. There is hence not a 'liberal peace blueprint' which, when followed correctly, brings a stable peace (de Coning 2018; Eriksen 2009). In contrary, this analysis shows the importance of understanding the local interpretations of peace as freedom, as it demonstrates that meanings of peace are highly contextualised and depend on local dynamics. The largest contextual difference is present in the importance of the freedom categories: in Kosovo the focus lies on *freedom from want*, where in Medellín the majority of the interlocutors refer to peace as having no fear. Within each category contextual differences moreover become present. In Medellín, the interviews show no significant difference between the *estratos* within the categories of *freedom from fear* and *freedom of expression*. In Kosovo *freedom from fear* and *freedom of movement* is clearly separated along ethnic lines: by far most of these references to peace were made by Kosovo-Serbs. The importance of incorporating local differences in understanding peace meanings, also comes forth in the following sections. While peace as mental well-being is increasingly of importance in Kosovo, it is less brought to the surface in Medellín due to historical and cultural context. The category of peace as interethnic interaction is an important category in Kosovo, but it was not mentioned once in relation to peace in Medellín. And, interestingly, while it is widely understood as integral part of peacebuilding processes, in Kosovo none of the interlocutors directly referred to peace when discussing justice issues. As already mentioned in the introduction, persisting injustice is often seen as an obstacle to peace, which will be discussed in the following chapter. In Medellín however, interviewees did refer to peace as justice, which is discussed in the last section of this chapter.

4.2 Peace as mental well-being

While in both contexts only a small portion of people referred to peace as mental well-being, it is crucial to include, especially since there is a low tendency – i.e., due to stigma, low levels of trust or the focus on religion - to 'seek help' in both societies (Gaviria et al. 2016; Jassir Acosta et al. 2021; Le Roux and Valencia 2019; Sopa 2019). Even though both countries have suffered horrific levels of violence, there was a clear difference in references to mental health. In Medellín, only general references were made to mental well-being. Juan Carlos (46, *estrato* 1/2) for examples states he feels at peace when "I feel good with myself, when…when I have a good mental health".[77] Despite the high levels of violence experienced by a large part of the interviewees, mental health and trauma are barely part of the conversation in the city. In the larger picture of Medellín this is not surprising, as according to various people spoken to, there is limited commemoration taking place, aiming to 'just' move forward (See also: Lindsay 2003, 42; The Sicario Effect 2018[78]). Memorialisation and forgetting will be further elaborated on in the following chapter. Various

[77] Interview Juan Carlos, April 7, 2021.

[78] The Sicario Effect is a podcast on John Jaro Valesquez from Medellín, episode 13 concerns 'forgetting'.

studies however indicate that PTSD and other war-related mental health issues are prominent for those individuals that have experienced heavy violence (Cuartas and Roy 2019; Tamayo-Agudelo and Bell 2019). While most articles focus on Colombia, and specifically the rural areas of the country, Medellín deserves special attention with regard to post-war mental well-being, as it "has been a nexus for multiple streams of violence" (Gaviria et al. 2016, 141). Silvia Lucia Gaviria et al. (2016, 144-145) highlight the importance of increasing the focus on mental health support in Medellín, as their research shows that prevalence to PTSD is high in the city. This could be due to the high number of Internally Displaced Persons that Medellín receives. In line with this, over the course of the last decade, 'Mental Health and Psychosocial Support' (MHPSS) has become more and more understood as a vital part of peacebuilding (Hamber 2020; Tankink et al. 2017): the United Nations has also committed to integrating MHPSS as part of all peacebuilding programmes (UNDP 2022). Colombia has been one of the first countries in the world to implement the IASC Guidelines for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (Echeverri and Castilla 2008), since then changes in legislation have been made as well, for example: in 2013 mental health became considered a fundamental right in Colombia (Chaskel et al. 2015, 94), and various MHPSS focus projects have been installed throughout the country (Heartland Alliance n.d.). Despite this, the "provision of mental health services is uneven and subject to significant underinvestment" (Tamayo-Agudelo and Bell 2019, 40), with as result PTSD and other war-traumas remain prevalent throughout the country.

In contrary to Medellín, in Kosovo direct references were made to overcome war-related trauma. Research moreover indicates there continues to be a significant need for post-war mental health services to deal with the psychological trauma of war (Fanaj and Melonashi 2017). In line with this, Paul Spiegel and Peter Salama (2000, 2204) argue that "Killings of civilians in Bosnia and Kosovo have caused severe trauma and a high prevalence of PTSD and other anxiety disorders". The perceived increase in mental health problems due to war-time experiences, gave way for numerous international organisations to offer what has become to be defined as mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to combat war-related trauma (IOM 2000; IRC 1999; Keough and Samuels 2004; Tanink et al. 2017). Over the course of the last decades, MHPSS has been acknowledged as prerequisite for the creation of durable peace, and as a result it has been integrated further into peacebuilding practice (Arthur and Monnier 2021; Tanink et al. 2017; 2019; World Bank and United Nations 2018). Despite this, the services offered do not always obtain the perceived results, for example due to bad coordination of the practices or to the lack of capacity among practitioners (UNDP 2022, 5). This also becomes visible in Kosovo's society today, where despite the widespread interventions, mental health problems related to war trauma are still widespread (Fanaj and Melonashi 2017; Sopa 2019). Upon analysing the data gathered during this research, it became clear that people who grew up in places where severe violence took place, as Gjakova or Mitrovica, are more prone to refer to or share experiences of severe trauma during the interviews. Not surprisingly, an age gap presented itself, whereby people who consciously experienced the war referred, to their traumatic war past. At the same time however, cases whereby feelings of fear, or a disturbed sleeping pattern, have been passed

on to Kosovo's youth due to unresolved trauma (Kraja and Ahmeti 2015), which also came forward during the interviews.

The interviewees in Kosovo furthermore indicated that mental health issues cross ethnic boundaries: in Mitrovica both Albanian and Serbian interviewees referred to the NATO bombing as traumatic experience, throughout the whole country various Serbs referred to the ethnic clashes of 2004 (Calu 2020, 59), and in Gjakova the majority of the interviewees experienced mass violence during the war which many of them shared during the interviews (Human Rights Watch 2000). These traumatic experiences are however not often discussed at home. Aferdita (37, Kosovo-Albanian), who was forced to flee Gjakova during the war, is one of the few people willing to share her struggle with war trauma. As she explains, for her peace means to be able to "feel safe when going to sleep". She continues to explain that, in contrary to herself, her parents are not able to deal with trauma… "I remember we never spoke about it, my parents still don't, they will cry and then just say 'make coffee, want something to eat'? And it's not healthy, there is so much disease coming from it".[79] Research by Naim Fanaj and Erika Melonashi (2017) indicate high prevalence rates for PTSD in Kosovo, arguing that PTSD "constitutes a major public health issue for Kosovo" (2). Various studies however indicate that the existing mental health services lack satisfactory quality (Fanaj and Melonashi 2017; Morina et al. 2010), and as a result there appears to be a "need for future mental health interventions" in Kosovo (Fanaj and Melonashi 2017, 6). Since the end of the war in Kosovo, the field of mental health and psychosocial services has developed significantly.

The focus on improving MHPSS services in both countries is of high importance, as doing so limits the chance of widespread poor and short-term interventions; it increases the chances of decreasing the stigma and those in need being able to find the necessary support. Another important factor in relation to mental well-being, links to reconciliation. This is especially true for Kosovo, where the conflict took place along ethnic boundaries and reconciliation has been an integral part of the state- and peacebuilding process. The next part will therefore focus on the notion of peace as positive interethnic interaction in Kosovo.

4.3 Peace as positive interethnic interaction

Since the introduction of conflict resolution by Kenneth Boulding (1978), the notion of tackling root causes and working towards reconciliation, or the restoration of social relationships broken by conflict, has been at the top of the peacebuilding agenda (Galtung 1969; Lederach 1997; Mac Ginty 2014; Salter and Yousuf 2016). While in Medellín there are breaches between different social groups, i.e., with different economic and political backgrounds, there is a limited focus on reconciliation within the city. Following from the 2016 Peace Accords, the Colombian government installed a Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition, of which the Truth Commission (Comisión de la Verdad[80]) is the main truth component (Comision de la Verdad n.d.; Oettler 2020). While reconciliation[81] is an overall objective,

[79] Interview Aferdita, March 2, 2020.
[80] The truth's commissions full name is: La Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición
[81] Especially between ex-FARC members and the government, and demobilised combatants and the victims.

it is not referred to as a main component of the peace process. At the same time, references to reconciliation (in any form) have not come forward during the interviews. This is however in contrary to Kosovo, where reconciliation has originally been an integral part of the state- and peacebuilding process (Calu 2020; Visoka and Richmond 2017), and over a quarter of the interviewees referred to 'ethnic interaction' as sign of everyday peace. One of the reasons for this relatively limited number of references could be the deep social divisions, and notion of a limited *freedom of expression*. It is nevertheless also important to recognise that according to most of the interviewees, peace is not defined as interethnic communication. An interesting observation could however be drawn from the answers given, as a clear generation gap became visible. While the generations above the age of fifty often speak both Serbian and Albanian, and are hence able to communicate with each other, interethnic interaction between Serbian and Albanian communities in Kosovo barely takes. As the war took place twenty years ago, this is not surprising per se. Ethnic hatred and social trauma have however been passed on to younger generations, and as a result by far most young Kosovo citizens do not engage in interethnic relations (Calu 2020; Luitjens 2020; RCK 2020).

Despite this, various interviewees[82], mostly below the age of 30, indicated to open themselves up to interethnic communication. Ramadan's (25, Kosovo-Albanian) experience at a Balkan-wide dance convention in North-Macedonia conveys a powerful image. He explains how much fun he had, without even knowing people's background. He felt a strong connection with one guy in particular, in his words: "We did everything, dance together, have fun together, get drunk together, until at some point he was like "hey, where are you from?". I said: "I'm from Kosovo" and the guy said "Bro, I'm from Serbia!". It was such an awkward moment of silence, after which he said: "nice moves, see you". And then it became cold afterwards. It really felt like peace until we knew each other's ethnicities."[83] Marija (Kosovo-Serb), who is 23 and lives in Gracanica, explains she never imagined to be having an Albanian friend, "but that changed when I started studying [at the American University in Pristina] and met Fatima. She is really cool and I am really happy I changed my ideas".[84] While in the case of Marija it led to a friendship crossing ethnic boundaries, her case is a clear exception. More often people interpreted the interaction as living together respectfully. In line with this, Ardita (23, Kosovo-Albanian) defines local peace as "seeing our symbols, of the republic of Kosovo, in the institutions and seeing the two languages, for example seeing the 'ministry of culture' in Albanian and in Serbian".[85]

While in Colombia reconciliation is a large part of the national peace process[86], none of the interviewees in Medellín referred to peace as in the form of reconciliation. In Kosovo however, while you could discern multiple forms of reconciliation, references to reconciliation are solely made in relation to the establishment of positive interethnic relations. This understanding of peace comes back in several of the obstacles presented in the next chapter, in other words: the ethnic divide – specifically – between Kosovo-

[82] Among others: Ramadan, Ardita, Nikola, Marija, Venera, Miloš, Lazar, Vlora.
[83] Interview Ramadan, April 20, 2020.
[84] Interview Marija, April 10, 2020.
[85] Interview Ardita, February 18, 2020.
[86] The Peace Accords in 2016, led directly to the creation of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition Commission, which puts emphasis on the importance of truth in achieving reconciliation.

Albanians and Kosovo-Serbs leads to various obstacles to peace. While the Kosovan ethnic divide is linked to persisting feelings of injustice, people spoken to do not regard justice a crucial aspect of what they believe to be peace. It is however an important obstacle which will be elaborated on in the next chapter. Regarding Medellín however, a small portion of the interviewees did specifically refer to peace as justice, which will be discussed in the following section.

4.4 Peace as justice

Within the liberal peace framework, justice and peace are strongly connected, which is also indicated by Sustainable Development Goal 16: "Peace, justice and strong institutions" (United Nations 2016). While in both contexts justice is regarded to be important, it is mostly discussed as an obstacle of having to overcome injustice. In Kosovo, despite existing feelings of injustice, none of the interviewees referred to justice in relation to peace. As explained in the introduction, this is a particularly interesting observation in the context of Kosovo, where the popular discourse regards 'justice' as crucial to establishing a durable peace in the country. The data obtained during this research do not negate the importance of justice in the wider Resilient Peace System of Kosovo, it is an indication that the interlocutors feel that there are more urgent matters in the creation of peace. In other words: while the persisting injustice does form an obstacle to - durable - peace for various interviewees, it does not affect their daily lives in the same way as other matters (as e.g., economic hardships) do.

In Medellín however, an interesting phenomenon became visible in relation to justice and the 2016 Peace Agreement. During the interviews, impunity was often mentioned when discussing peace, though specifically in relation to the national peace process. Impunity was often mentioned in order to explain how people feel about the 2016 Final Agreement between the Government and FARC. Among the people spoken to, there was moreover one person, Mariana (66, *estrato* 1/2) who directly referred to peace in Colombia as 'impunity'. Mariana has suffered urban displacement by the FARC and feels strongly that the 2016 peace agreement fosters impunity. As she says "Peace for me here is just impunity. I just don't agree with it because they are…paedophiles, kidnappers, rapists, killers, they are criminals. Nobody can negotiate with criminals".[87] This is also linked to the signing process of the peace agreement, as after the official signing of the Havana peace accords by the Colombian government and FARC on September 26, 2016, the Colombian people rejected the peace accords through a plebiscite on the 2nd of October of the same year (LaRosa and Mejía 2017, 84). Despite this, a revised document was presented to Congress, and as such got accepted by both chambers on November 30, 2016. Various people explained to feel betrayed by this, indicating the government does not 'really listen'. It is moreover interesting to observe that due to the signing of the Peace Agreement, peace has obtained a different meaning for some Colombians. However, when asking Mariana what peace means to her personally and on an everyday basis, she explains peace to her means being with her family and knowing that her family is alright.[88]

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[87] Interview Mariana, March 13, 2021.
[88] Ibid.

4.5 Conclusion

As becomes visible throughout this chapter, in both research contexts peace is generally characterised by the absence of it. The majority of the answers thus convey a wish for peace, something that is not believed to be present at the moment. This finding is in contrary to the public discourse regarding both Medellín and Kosovo – which are generally considered to be at peace. This demonstrates the importance of investigating the understanding of local peace from a bottom-up perspective, instead of following the peace markers set out by (earlier) peace paradigms. While there are undeniable similarities to the liberal peace paradigm, such as the importance of freedom in various forms, there are vast contextual differences. In other words, the categories of peace do not tend to mean the same in different contexts, and as such derive from the generalised top-down and one-size-fits-all understanding of liberal peace. The findings in this chapter are in line with for example adaptive peace (de Coning 2018), or everyday peace (Mac Ginty 2021). De Coning (2018) argues that peace should be understood as more open-ended and goal-free, whereby the "the end-state is open to context-specific interpretations of peace" (94). This becomes visible in the local differences between peace e.g., as *freedom of expression*, or peace as *freedom of movement*. It is moreover important to emphasise that these local understandings of peace should not be understood in isolation, but in relation to each other and the other 'scales' of peace as explained in chapter 3. This is in line with Mac Ginty's (2021) argument for a multi-scalar definition of peace, whereby local actions and understandings can have significant impact on other scales, in other words: "how what might appear as somehow isolated behaviour (such as everyday peace) is, in fact, part of much larger assemblages (…)" (19).

The data obtained within this component of the RPS, furthermore demonstrate the importance of the local context – both in space and time. The meanings of peace obtained from the interlocutors, demonstrate the, to borrow Mac Ginty and Firchow's (2014, 33) words, "needs and aspirations" of local communities. Logically, these peace meanings are prone to change. If the same research would have been done in Kosovo directly after the war, or during first time major trials, we can assume more references to peace as justice would have played a more important role on an everyday basis. While one could argue that temporality of these peace meanings negates the importance of them, this chapter indicates that this is not the case. It is only through researching local peace meanings or focusing on everyday peace indicators as Mac Ginty and Firchow, that important contextual differences become present. While one could assume that peace universally means *freedom from fear*, the data from this research indicate that there are significant local differences in the practical understanding of *freedom from fear* that need to be accounted for. At the same time, it is important to place these local peace meanings in a broader context, and to include a focus on more long-term necessities for (durable) peace, which is why the second component of the Resilient Peace System are *obstacles* to peace. The obstacles as discussed in the next chapter, are often completely interdependent on the local meanings of peace, and in relation to this, the capacities indicate the (local) strengths to overcome the obstacles and work towards the realisation of the local peace understandings discussed in this chapter.

5. Obstacles and Risks in the Resilient Peace System in Kosovo and Medellín

In the previous chapter it became clear that most interviewees in both Kosovo and Medellín are of the opinion they do not live in peace. While it is of course more complicated than a simple binary of either peace or no peace, the local peace meanings indicate that there is no stable, durable peace. Furthermore, the data indicate that this is in contrary to the popular top-down narrative, which claims that both Medellín and Kosovo are post-conflict, and therefore experience peace. This significantly impacts the types of interventions that are brought to both contexts, which are generally not in line with the vision of peace as understood by the interlocutors. The Resilient Peace System indicates that there are various obstacles in both contexts that prevent this local sense of peace from taking place, which is the focus of this chapter. Using the red dotted lines, figure 5 indicates which part of the RPS is present in this chapter.

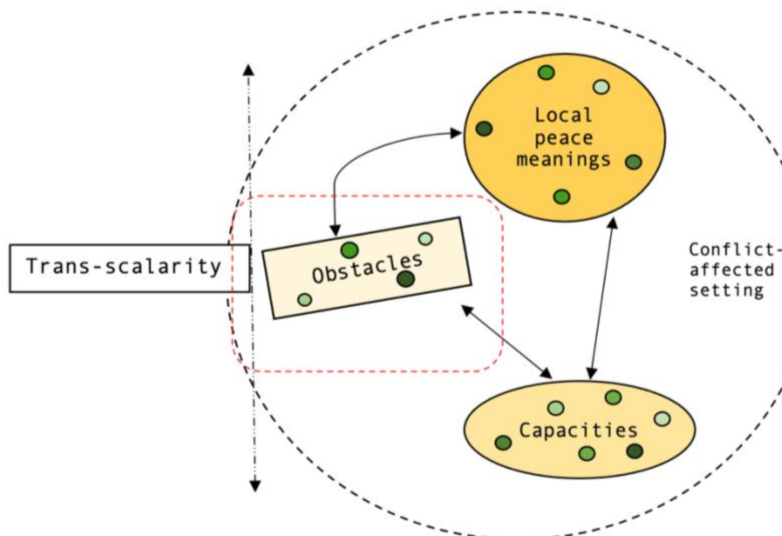

Figure 5: Obstacles within the Resilient Peace System

Obstacles are the barriers to achieving a durable peace, which have been derived from data obtained from interviews, (participant) observation and documentary analysis. There are various kinds of obstacles preventing peace from taking place, to provide a good overview they have been divided into three types: 1) everyday obstacles to peace as experienced by interlocutors in their everyday lives, 2) situational obstacles caused by unforeseen crisis, and 3) long-term obstacles deeply rooted in society. These obstacles are however strongly interrelated; everyday obstacles often indicate the presence of a deeper-rooted obstacle. For example, when interviewees from the *lowest estratos* in Medellín refer to gang presence as an obstacle, this must be understood in relation to the long-term obstacle of persisting socioeconomic inequality.[89]

[89] This does not mean that socioeconomic inequality explains the existing of gangs, but it is an important part of the explanation.

Logically, long-term obstacles are long-term factors that are rooted in society and require structural change. If translating these in terms of conflict analysis, it would be referred to as 'underlying factors' or 'root causes' of the conflict. The conceptualisation of obstacles is moreover strongly related to risks, they could be framed as 'conflict risks'. As such, there is a clear link to resilience-thinking (Chandler and Coaffee 2016; Heng 2006; Juncos 2018; Walker and Salt 2006). More specifically, the ability to "expect the unexpected" (Folke 2016), or to anticipate, prepare for and cope with (adverse) risks is essential to resilience-thinking. The situational obstacles are directly linked to resilience-thinking: it indicates the 'unexpected' aspect of obstacles, which is bound to time and place. The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic led to various situational obstacles (flooded hospitals, worsening economy) to peace in both Kosovo and Medellín. Despite the temporality of this obstacle, the Covid-19 pandemic also affected deeper rooted long-term obstacles (as economic instability) within society. This demonstrates the extent to which the types of obstacles are interrelated. There are obstacles that fall into multiple categories, i.e., the high level of socioeconomic inequality is both felt by interlocutors as an everyday obstacle (e.g., in the form of stigmatisation of the poor), but it also is a long-term obstacle. At the same time, the situational risk of Covid-19 negatively influences this persisting inequality. To present a holistic overview of the various obstacles within a system of peace, the three types of obstacles run as a red thread through this chapter. Finally, within existing work on resilience and peacebuilding, risks are often operationalised in relation to the prevention of conflict, thereby placing the emphasis on conflict. When using the RPS to conduct a peace analysis, the focus is however placed on the obstacles to peace.

During the process of data analysis, four different categories of obstacles became present. These categories form the backbone to this chapter and will be discussed in the following order: 1) socioeconomic obstacles; 2) security obstacles; 3) sociocultural obstacles; 4) governmental and socio-political obstacles. In line with the peace meanings, there are interesting contextual differences between Kosovo and Medellín. Where *freedom from want* is the most widely shared meaning of peace in Kosovo, most interviewees regard socioeconomic obstacles to be the most important. The ethnic divide is however prevalent throughout all obstacles, e.g., various Kosovo-Serbs regard security obstacles to be prevalent over socioeconomic obstacles. The gang prevalence in Medellín is not only clearly visible in the peace meanings, but most references to obstacles were also made in relation to gang presence. While regarding security, people from all *estratos* referred to gangs as an obstacle, the social rules stemming from narcoculture are mostly an obstacle to those living in the lower *estratos*. Within each category, a contextual overview will be provided, explaining not only the differences between Medellín and Kosovo but also within each context. Lastly, the three types of obstacles will be discussed in these categories too, in order to reflect the dynamic essence – and therewith the complexity – of the obstacles present in each case study.

5.1 Socioeconomic obstacles

In the previous chapter, it became clear that there is an important correlation between economic prosperity and local peace meanings. In both Kosovo and Medellín, interlocutors referred to peace as *freedom from want*.

This is in line with the Human Needs Theory, which argues that physiological (next to security) needs are crucial in the creation of peace. On top of this, while a direct link between conflict and economic hardships cannot be established, there is an overwhelming amount of research indicating that grievances coming from socioeconomic inequality can however contribute to violence, or even armed conflict (e.g., Baghat et al. 2017; Botero et al. 2019, 3; International Labour Organization 2012; Koubi and Böhmelt 2014). Rafael de Hoyos et al. (2016) moreover argue that no participation in either the job market or schooling system, limits the accumulation of human capital, which in turn hinders "the country's economic growth and poverty reduction" (4). As such, youth unemployment has increasingly been seen as one of the drivers of instability, and do form an obstacle to the creation of durable peace (Amarasuriya et al. 2009; Izzi 2013; UNSDG 2017). Unemployment often leads to exclusion from society, which in turn has the potential to increase socioeconomic inequality. While the data from both research contexts indicate the crucial role of socioeconomic obstacles within both systems of peace, there are stark contextual differences in the conceptualisation of socioeconomic obstacles in Kosovo and Medellín. In Medellín almost half of the interviewees indicated to experience economic obstacles, which are mostly related to the high inequality present in the city. The inequality in Medellín links to the persisting stigmatisation of the poor in combination with limited job opportunities. The latter, limited job opportunities, is comparable to Kosovo, where finding a job is considered the biggest obstacle. In Kosovo, almost 85% of the interviewees regard the limited number of job opportunities to be a significant obstacle in daily life. In both Kosovo and Medellín, people struggle with economic instability. After overcoming the obstacle of finding a job, there is often no job security yet; especially among the youth temporary contracts are common leading to the persisting economic insecurity. In this section the analysis is divided along these lines: the first part focuses on inequality in everyday life, whereby the focus is largely placed on Medellín; the second part explores the impact of limited job opportunities, where both Kosovo and Medellín are discussed.

5.1.1 Income inequality in everyday life

While in Medellín half of the interviewees referred to inequality as a significant obstacle in their everyday lives, none of the people spoken to in Kosovo experienced this. This is in line with findings by the Gini coefficient: Colombia scored 54.2 on the Gini index in 2020 (World Bank n.d.b), indicating a severe income inequality. Kosovo on the other hand has a relatively low level of income inequality and scored only 29 during the last measure in 2017 (World Bank n.d.a; World Bank 2019B). This does not mean there is no economic inequality at all in Kosovo, but that it is not severe enough to be regarded as an obstacle. The inequality in Kosovo mostly presents itself in the search for a job, which will be discussed in the second paragraph. Consequently, this section only presents findings from Medellín. According to the Gini coefficient Colombia ranks as the country with highest inequality within Latin America, and while there is no specific calculation for Medellín, the income inequality in the city is similar to the national average (Colombia Reports 2021). A World Bank (2021, 6) report indicates an increase in income inequality since 2018, showing that 10% of Colombia's richest inhabitants currently earn more than 11 times the income of

the poorest 10%. This inequality becomes visible in Medellín in extreme manners, as Luciana (29, *estrato* 3/4) explains "you can see the richest things in one area, and when you go to a point very close from there you see extreme poverty in a very, very, very, very cruel way".[90] The persisting inequality is a core constraint to both social and economic progress (World Bank 2021), and has a large influence on the various spheres of Medellín.

The high levels of poverty in Medellín are directly linked to the income inequality. During the Covid-19 pandemic, poverty has significantly increased: in the year 2020, over 1.2 million inhabitants lived in poverty, in comparison to 921,000 in 2019 (DANE 2021a; Medellín Como Vamos 2021). While after the 2020 surge, poverty is reducing again (DANE 2022a), still more than 39% live below the poverty lines and 12% of the population earn less than $40 a month (Ibid). While living in poverty was mostly explained as not knowing if rent can be paid, or if there is sufficient food for the rest of the week, it is noteworthy that over 20% of the interviewees referred to sexual exploitation, as a result from living in poverty. More specifically, child prostitution in relation to sex tourism has increased significantly (Bizkova 2021; Fernández Fierro and Mateus González 2020; Marcela Zuñiga 2019). Marcela (23, *estrato* 1/2) explains that for a tourist in Comuna 13, "they no longer offer you drugs, they offer you the girls from the neighbourhood here".[91] The high level of sex tourism in Medellín (Ossa-Estrada and Muñoz-Echeverri 2017) moreover stimulates the idea that the child prostitution is a way out of poverty. Not surprisingly, the normalisation of this idea limits the potential for change.

Poverty is felt in various ways: Héctor is 18 years old and lives in Belen Zafra, one of the most violent and poorest neighbourhoods of the city. Via a youth programme he currently works at the Metro of Medellín, and while during the first interview he explained to be studying at a public college, about two months later he already felt forced to stop. Partly due to the *Paro Nacional*,[92] and mostly due to the necessity of money at home. But, as he says: "studying is better, better than being stuck here in the neighbourhood".[93] This links to the lack of both education and job opportunities, which was mentioned by almost a third of the interviewees. The need to drop out of education to support your family, like Héctor, has been mentioned multiple times. While participation in education in Medellín is above Colombia's average (Castro Aristizábal et al. 2019), especially tertiary education attainment remains too low (OECD 2016; Carroll et al. 2020). While the income difference is limited at primary school level, on tertiary education level the difference in attendance is significant; the 60% of university attendance of the upper class stands in stark contrast to the 25%-32% higher education attendance within the low to middle class (Carroll et al. 2020). There are various reasons for this, as the need to provide for family (like Héctor) or the high costs of attending education. On top of that, there is a significant discrepancy in educational quality (Ibid), especially between private and public education (Arbona et al. 2022, 2). This is due to the large gap in resources

[90] Interview Luciana, April 29, 2021.
[91] Interview Marcela, March 30, 2021.
[92] During the 'Paro Nacional' protests of 2021, universities in the city stopped teaching; while there might be multiple reasons for this, I was told that it was for student activists to join in organising and participating in the protests.
[93] Interview Juan Carlos, April 7, 2021.

available between public and private schools (Castro Aristizábal et al. 2019; Heras Recuero and Olaberría 2018). The low quality of public education was only mentioned to be an obstacle by inhabitants from the lowest *estratos*. While there are various scholarship opportunities,[94] it became clear during the interviews that people are hesitant to take on loans (Sablosky Elengold et al. 2021). Various people indicated to have heard stories, where paying back the loan is impossible, since job opportunities after school are limited too. The struggle to find a job is however an obstacle within both Medellín and Kosovo's society and will be discussed in the next section.

5.1.2 Limited job opportunities

While inequality is not at the forefront in Kosovo, 85% of the interviewees referred the limited job opportunities as a crucial obstacle in their daily lives. In Medellín this percentage is significantly lower: roughly a quarter of the interlocutors referred to this. This does not mean that job perspectives are better in Medellín, it indicates that other obstacles have a more significant impact on the daily lives of the people spoken to. Despite this, data derived from observation and documentary analysis demonstrate that in line with the high level of poverty, unemployment is a severe obstacle in the city too. Both research contexts show high levels of unemployment, which increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the latest calculation of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS 2022), Kosovo struggled with an unemployment rate of 25.8% in the first quarter of 2021.[95] In Medellín the official Government statistics indicate a lower unemployment rate of 11.3% between July and September of 2022 (DANE 2022b). In both Kosovo and Medellín, there is a clear age gap in unemployment, whereby the youth is struggling significantly harder to find a job. In Kosovo the older generations see the limited job opportunities as an obstacle for their children or close relatives, while the younger generations would experience these difficulties directly. In Kosovo, this gap is confirmed by official statistics (KAS 2019a; World Bank 2018a): almost 50% of the youth (15-24) is unemployed, while a quarter of Kosovo's population is between 15-29. This is similar for Medellín, where the youth is struggling most to obtain a job, or to receive quality education (Medellín Como Vamos 2021). While in Kosovo 80% of the youth attend university, finding a job related to one's study is incredibly challenging. Avni (27, Kosovo-Albanian), a young MP from Gjakova, told me a joke I often heard afterwards: "Why are the coffees so good in Kosovo? Well, because we have barrista's with a master's degree".[96] In comparison, the percentage of youth attending school or even university in Medellín is significantly lower than in Kosovo. In line with Kosovo however, those who are lucky enough to study and prepare for a bright future, cannot be certain of a stable income either. This is both due to the difficulties of finding a job and the normalisation of short-term contracts, prohibiting people from building economic stability.

[94] Both for tertiary education as for private primary or secondary education.
[95] While this did not reflect in data from this research, it is important to indicate the large gender gap, as according to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2019) only 13.9% of the working age women were employed in 2019.
[96] Interview Agim, July 15, 2020.

Related to this is the high percentage of informal economy in both Medellín (56.2%) (Colombia Reports 2021; DANE 2021a), and Kosovo (31%) (Berisha 2020; OECD 2019). As there is no job or social security within this sector, it has been hit hardest during the pandemic. The stigmatisation of the lower classes in Medellín (Hart 2021; Pardo 2021; Quiceno Toro and Sanín Naranjo 2009) and minority groups in Kosovo (UNDP 2017a, 1) complicate the job search even further. In Kosovo, this stigmatisation mostly targets minorities including Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian or the LGBTIQ+ community. According to a UNDP report from 2017, only 13% of the minorities between the age of 15 and 65 is employed (UNDP 2017b, 1).[97] The Government Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities (2017) moreover confirms that people from the Roma and Ashkali community are "commonly hired to perform temporary sweated jobs that do not require higher skills and are not well paid" (5). Gazmen (28, Roma) shows me the poor living conditions of a Roma settlement in the Gjakova municipality by using YouTube.[98] As he explains, it is extremely difficult to find a job: "We don't have any representation at public institutions, I only know of people that work for example as a cleaner".[99]

Similar trends are visible in Medellín resulting from xenophobia, in particular towards Venezuelan migrants. Juliana (57, *estrato* 1/2) explains that the situation she observes in her neighbourhood is dire: "They [general refence to employers] don't let them do anything, they don't let them work", on top of that, the ruling *combo* in the neighbourhood is extorting the Venezuelan families living there (Feierstein and Winfield 2019, 8).[100] Other research confirms the high level of xenophobia, reiterating that this limits the employment opportunities or leads to exploitation in the workforce (ACAPS 2021; UNHCR 2019; UNHCR 2021). The sentiment that Venezuelan migrants only come to Colombia to 'steal jobs' comes forward during conversations. Discrimination becomes visible even in these situations, as Venezuelan refugees who beg on the streets are less likely to receive anything. Sebastián (36, *estrato* 1/2) explains he has seen a growing number of beggars carrying around cards saying: 'I am Colombian, please help ME'. A large part (more than 40%) of the Venezuelan migrants ends up in the informal economy, not able to find a job both due to documentation issues and discrimination within the work force (Bahar et al. 2018). This socioeconomic exclusion resulting from rising xenophobia is often linked to an increased potential for social tensions (Chaves-González et al. 2021; Crisis Group 2022, 4), and as such forms a crucial long-term obstacle to durable peace.

Another form of socioeconomic exclusion in Medellín concerns the stigmatisation of the poor. While interlocuters from Medellín referred to this, it did not come to light as such in Kosovo. As Medina (30, *estrato* 1/2) explains, there is the notion that people who are born in low *estratos* "are uneducated, that we are people that don't value a good education".[101] People are seen as lazy, or even dangerous, not worthy of

[97] The official government data does not separate along the lines of ethnicity, as such there are no specific data on unemployment among Kosovo-Serbs vs. Kosovo-Albanians. What furthermore complicates this data, is the presence of the parallel system: most of the Kosovo-Serb work in the Serbian system, and are hence not counted as part of Kosovo.
[98] Due to the spread of COVID-19, I was unable to actually visit the area.
[99] Interview Gazmen, May 3, 2020.
[100] The act of extortion is common practice of the gangs, which will be discussed later in this chapter.
[101] Interview Medina, March 17, 2021.

respect. This stigmatisation is further made visible as social rules tend to differ between *estratos*, as Vanessa (39, *estrato* 1/2) explains "I leave my neighbourhood thinking I was dressed well, but as soon as I arrived (…), they asked me "why did you put your shirt like this?"".[102] This framing along the binary of either decent, or indecent (undesirable) people, is confirmed by research from Eleanor Gordon et al. (2020, 2). Obtaining a good job, outside of informality, is therefore difficult when coming from the lower *estratos*. The notion of the 'indecent poor' also becomes visible at the metro stations near the outskirt – and lower stratifications – of the city. Large parts of these areas are unpaved, leading to 'yellow' staining on the shoes due to the dust. Inhabitants from the area consequently became stigmatised as 'patiamarillos', or 'yellow shoes' (Blandón 2015; Hart 2021). Since most people would carry clean shoes with them to not carry this stigma to work, a new job developed called 'guardazapatos'; someone who looks after your yellow 'undesirable' shoes at the station.

While stigmatisation of the *poor* is not a significant obstacle to durable peace in Kosovo, nepotism and corruption on the job market is. In contrary to this, in Medellín nepotism was only mentioned in relation to governmental and political obstacles, which will be explained later in this chapter. While during participant observation in Kosovo nepotism became clear within the various research sites, only a small number of interviewees (living in Rahovec and Gjakova) clearly mentioned it as an obstacle. Other sources however confirm the high levels of nepotism (Gjinovci 2016; GLPS 2020; Visoka 2017a, 103). At the same time, deeply rooted corruption also limits people from obtaining a job (UNDP 2016a, 7). A UNOCD study from 2011 (23) shows that up to 14% of the respondents were convinced somebody was employed purely due to a money transfer. While not often shared during the interviews, the cases that were shared gave insight into the barriers that corruption pose. Avni (27, Kosovo-Albanian) explains how corruption severely complicates the job search: "In Gjakova we have too many cases where we know that they want 5,000-7,000 euros maybe 10,000 euros to have a job in hospital, or education system. And you can't send it to court because they are experts in doing this".[103] The effect of this form of social exclusion, in combination with the fragile economy in Kosovo, lead to high levels of migration (Begisholli 2019). Over half (58%) of the interviewees referred to the high levels of migration as an obstacle to their everyday life. According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS 2019B), almost 35,000 Kosovo citizens left the country in 2019. The European Policy Institute of Kosovo (2019) even indicates that between 2008 and 2018 a total of 529,647 citizens migrated to EU countries. There is however a clear age gap: most people that migrate or plan to migrate in search for better job opportunities, are under the age of 30. As a result, large number of houses is only inhabited by elders (Gollopeni 2016, 309), which is in contrary to Kosovo's tradition of living with a larger family. Besides viewing it as an obstacle to be forced to live apart from family and close ones, migration also poses obstacles to the people remaining. While visiting Gracanica, Nikola (25, Kosovo-Serb) explained angrily that while "Serbs usually play football", too many people had left, and as a result "we can't

[102] Interview Vanessa, March 29, 2021.
[103] Interview Avni, April 22, 2020.

gather two teams anymore for football, so that is one of the reasons to play basketball".[104] This feeling of a diminishing social circle is shared among various interviewees. Liridona (41, Kosovo-Albanian) tells me that they [her husband and kids] "are only ones left", as her brother and sister migrated too.[105] In the words of Besim Gollopeni (2016) emigration from Kosovo "has mostly affected the core of society, such as family" (308). Various research moreover indicate that the broken family ties have negative effects on those who do migrate as well as on the family members who stay behind (Antman 2013; Demurger 2015; IOM 2014), for example in the form of lack of (parental) support, (feelings of) isolation and a diminishing social capital (Gollopeni 2016, 309). At the same time, there is a high socioeconomic impact of the continuing 'brain drain', or the migration of highly skilled workforce, from Kosovo. The migration of high-skilled human capital from a country has significant consequences for its socioeconomic development (Dzvimbo 2003; Katseli et al. 2006; Mahroum 2000). Kosovo experiences high-skilled emigration[106], and the brain drain is among others affecting the health sector. According to the head of the Kosovo Chamber of Doctors (Ahmetxhekaj 2019), Kosovo is currently 900 physicians short to meet the standards recommended by the World Health Organization. Despite the current shortage of physicians, it remains difficult for newly graduated doctors to find a job within Kosovo, according to various sources this is due to the high levels of corruption and nepotism present in the country (Ahmetxhekaj 2019; Sheremeti 2019), and because of the low salaries in Kosovo in comparison to those in potential migration countries. Consequently, people feel forced to leave, hoping to be able to provide for their family through remittances (Calu 2020). While there are positive sides of migration, as the high number of remittances that the home country enjoys (Demurger 2015), the negative effects form significant obstacles within Kosovo's peace system.

In conclusion, while socioeconomic obstacles have a significant influence on the peace system of both Medellín and Kosovo, there are large contextual differences. The limited job opportunities and fragile economic situation leads to the most significant socioeconomic obstacles in Kosovo. In Medellín on the other hand, socioeconomic obstacles stem from persisting socioeconomic inequality and high levels of poverty. Both everyday- and long-term obstacles come forward in both cases, often intertwined. In Kosovo the limited job opportunities lead to a high level of migration, which in combination with increasing brain drain also show long-term obstacles to achieving durable peace. Within the context of Medellín, the socioeconomic inequality is felt on an everyday basis in the form of social exclusion, but it also poses a long-term obstacle. It is important to reiterate that the nexus between conflict and inequality is a controversial one. And while there seems to be an agreement that vertical inequality (among individuals of households) does not pose a risk of conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Latin 2003; World Bank 2018b), horizontal inequalities (between social groups) do appear to increase the likelihood of violence and conflict (Bircan et al 2016; Cederman et al 2011; Kuhn and Weidmann 2015; Wilkinson 2006). The

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[104] Interview Nikola, March 17, 2020.
[105] Interview Liridona, March 10, 2020.
[106] The risk of further losing valuable human capital is also signaled by the Kosovan Government, and as a result a 'brain gain' campaign has started (Sheremeti 2019).

effects of this also become present in another significant obstacle within the city: the lack of economic opportunity, especially when due to marginalisation of specific social groups, increases the likelihood of gang recruitment (Doyle 2016, 3; Idris 2016, 6). Despite often being presented as a 'miracle city' that has become resilient over the years, the gang presence remains the most important obstacle within Medellín's peace system. The local government in Medellín is however keen on 'selling' the resilient narrative, aiming to attract new business and innovation (Franz 2016; Naef 2018; 2020). This branding of Medellín led to disguise problems on the ground, in the words of Ana (26, *estrato* 1/2): "towards outside the 'resilient face' is shown: a resilient city that can beat violence and now is the city of innovation (…) Well, they have done that over the backs of a poor, poor city, without opportunities, with youth that grow up in very deplored conditions".[107] It is through actions like these, that citizens have lost, or lose, their faith in the local government, which will be discussed in the governmental and political obstacles below. Before diving into that, it is important to focus on the presence of security obstacles, as this is by far the largest category in Medellín, and almost half of the interviewees in Kosovo referred to this as an obstacle as well.

5.2 Security obstacles

In line with the human security debate, the findings in this section demonstrate the needs of the people (in contrary to those of the state) when it comes to insecurities present in society (Hanlon and Christie 2016). As the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (n.d.) indicates, human security focuses on "context-specific and prevention-oriented responses". The importance of this context-specific approach becomes clear in this category too: where in Medellín the focus lies on gang-related insecurity, in Kosovo insecurity is mainly understood as interethnic interaction. In Medellín security obstacles are moreover prevalent over the other obstacles, which is in line with the findings in the previous chapter, where *freedom from fear* is the most significant local peace meaning. Gang-presence is however not only a security obstacle; it forms a red thread throughout the other obstacles. While the dominance of a criminal actor is a logical threat to achieving durable peace, it is significantly more complicated than that, as will be shown in the second part of this section.

In Kosovo the relation to *freedom from fear* is less significant, but there is a clear link between security obstacles and peace as positive interethnic interaction. The persisting ethnic polarisation between the Kosovo-Serbs and Kosovo-Albanians is a significant (long-term) obstacle to durable peace within Kosovo's Resilient Peace System as it prevents the creation of an inclusive society, and ethnic tensions are easily sparked. Within both research contexts, the security obstacles discussed in this section influence the other obstacles in various ways. To demonstrate this well, this section is divided in two parts, first the persisting interethnic fear in Kosovo, followed by the low safety perceptions in Medellín due to gang control.

[107] Interview Ana, March 3, 2021.

5.2.1 Crossing ethnic boundaries

The persisting ethnic divide become visible in the hesitance among various interlocutors to cross ethnic boundaries. While studies by Saferworld (Bennett 2011) and the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS 2017) show that public safety perceptions have improved between 2010 and 2015 in Kosovo, various people spoken to would express fear of entering an area where the 'other' ethnicity is dominant. These perceptions are moreover highly fluid, as shown by shrinkage in this positive trend near the end of 2015, most likely due to the rising political instability at the time (KCSS 2017, 11). In line with the KCSS, data from this research show the general safety perceptions remain low. While this is also true for minorities other than the Serbian community (as Bosnian, Egyptian, Ashkali or Roma), most of the fear remains rooted in the dichotomy between Serbs and Albanians.[108] Over half of the people in Gracanica have low safety perceptions when visiting Pristina, or another Albanian majority city. This fear is largely due to stories that are passed on from person to person, as Marija (23, Kosovo-Serb) explains "entering the premises of the university [in Pristina] was a big obstacle because here in Grancanica we only heard one side of the story: I heard that when I would speak Serbian, they would attack me and harass me".[109] While that fear has now passed, and she became friends with some of her Albanian colleagues, it was a difficult barrier to cross. Violent incidents have a trickle-down effect whereby the fear remains years after the event. This is also shown in Emine's (61, Kosovo-Albanian) story, who lived in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood north of the river[110] in Mitrovica before the war; she explains how she feels about going back to her old house, which is still there: "I am not coming back there, because I don't feel safe anymore after the war (…) I am not risking my life again".[111] This confirms the theory on the spatialisation of fear as explained in the previous chapter: what is considered as dangerous depends on a variety of factors and is not necessarily linked to the actual (physical) threats. Parallel to the perception of Pristina or Kosovo-Serb dominated areas as 'unsafe', during the weekend restaurants in Gracanica (a Kosovo-Serb town) are increasingly being visited by Albanians living in the capital. According to Goran (21, Kosovo-Serbian) "a lot of Albanians are passing through [Gracania], or eating here, it is not likely that someone would have a problem with you".[112] In line with the 'spaces of fear', under the right circumstances (i.e., with a clear objective of dining out and economic gain), Gracanica has become regarded as a space of 'safe' interethnic interaction. This moreover demonstrates the fluidity of safety perceptions: while going to Pristina is perceived as insecure, having 'them' in 'your' town and restaurants, is generally perceived as safe. At the same time however, Goran argues Albanians can come to Gracanica because "the Serbs don't normally pick on people".[113] This quote is however exemplary of ethnic stigmatisation and fear: *we* know that *our kind* doesn't pick on people, the other is however not to be trusted. This fear, stemming from the ethnic polarisation, is deeply embedded

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[108] Not surprisingly, as there is barely an interaction with other ethnicities, Gjakova was the only place of research where no reference was made to feeling 'fear' when crossing an 'ethnic boundary'.
[109] Interview Marija, April 10, 2020.
[110] Currently a predominantly Kosovo-Serbian area.
[111] Interview Emine, March 10, 2020.
[112] Interview, February 25, 2020.
[113] Ibid.

within Kosovo's society. For example, even the educational systems are separated in a Serbian and Kosovan curriculum, which will be explained in the sociocultural obstacles. Consequently, the content of the history[114] or geography[115] classes differ significantly between ethnicities (Fort 2018, 9). These early forms of separation lead to deep divisions (Bush and Saltarelli 2000; Zembylas and Bekerman 2012), and the vastly contrasting content of these lessons add to the stigmatisation of the 'other'. This complicates the creation of an inclusive society, and bridging this division is moreover further complicated by the language gap (Calu 2020). The latent ethnic tensions that become present in the 'fear' of crossing the ethnic boundary is a significant long-term obstacle to durable peace. While in Medellín no references were made to ethnic divisions, there is widespread fear related to the perceived or real insecurity of areas within the city. This will be discussed in the next section.

5.2.2 Gangs controlling 'security' in Medellín

While a large part of the interviewees indicated to always feel afraid when going outside, almost all agreed to feel afraid upon entering specific areas in the city, or while being out at night. By far most of the interviewees indicated to be robbed at least once. As also discussed in the previous chapter, these safety perceptions vary based on the location in the city. Location also matters in relation to understanding gang control as an obstacle; about 45% of the interviewees regarded the high level of gang control an obstacle to their daily life, and of those, half live in *estrato* 1 or 2, and even 80% in *estratos* 1 to 4. This does not mean there is no gang presence in the higher *estratos*, the main difference is the amount of control and the influence of the gang presence on everyday life.[116] In line with research by Doyle (2019, 157), the data indicate a high level of extortion payments, or *vacunas*, which is both an important control mechanism used by the gangs, and it is one of their most important income sources (Blattman et al. 2020, 5). The act of extortion has moreover become normalised. While only a small number of people would refer to the extortion payments without being asked, upon asking it became clear everyone is aware of this happening. Extortion happens mostly to businesses, in other words: the owners of shops, restaurants, theatres, or stores are frequently asked for extortion payments, which is corroborated by various research (Blattman et al. 2020; Paláez 2021; Pareja 2018; Suárez Gómez et al. 2018, 392). The interviews with Juan Pablo (31, *estrato* 1/2) are an interesting example of this. They took place – through zoom – in the back of his store, in the heart of Comuna 13. While time and again costumers walked in, he explained having to pay extortion was 'just part of it'. It has become as normal as other payments (i.e., light, electricity) that needed to be done. Despite this, if businesses refuse or simply cannot pay, the consequences are potentially significant (Blattman et al. 2021, 18): various interviewees explain that those who refuse to pay are threatened, tortured, or even murdered. According to various interviewees, over the years the forms of extortion have expanded.

[114] The explanation of the '98 – '99 war is vastly different in the sense of perpetrators, number of victims, etc.

[115] Where the Kosovan curriculum of course present the country as independent from Serbia, within the Serbian education system Kosovo is a Serbian province.

[116] For this reason, in-depth research performed by Blattman et al. (2020, 13) into gang presence in Medellín, has been conducted predominantly in areas with stratification 1, 2, 3 or 4.

Alejandro (36, *estrato* ½) for example explains that in some areas even "the arepas[117] and eggs that are sold in the neighbourhood pass through 'vacunas', a tax, by the armed groups".[118] Besides the extortion of businesses, depending on the neighbourhood, the inhabitants are also extorted. While the exact numbers remain disputed,[119] during the fieldwork stories of extortion of inhabitants became clear as well.[120]

Another important factor of gang control comes in the form of urban displacement. Up to 17% indicated forced urban displacement to be, or to have been, an obstacle in their everyday lives. Various research shows the increase in urban displacement within Medellín since 2007 (GRID 2019; Medellín Como Vamos 2020, 177; Medina 2010, 38; Oscampo-González and González-Becerril 2018), and according to Doyle (2019, 157) it can be assumed that "this number is, in fact, higher and that there are many more victims than previously thought".[121] The high level of violence, and consequently low safety perceptions, forced Isaac (25, *estrato* ½) to leave his own neighbourhood. The clashing of armed groups also results in displacement: Marcela (23, *estrato* ½) explains how her family was to leave her home during the military *Operation Orion* in 2002, during which various armed groups clashed.[122] Armed actors, like gangs, have moreover various reasons to force people out of their homes, e.g., the refusal to pay the *vacunas* (Doyle 2019, 157-158), the necessity of the victims' home for production/selling of drugs, to get 'rid' of potential enemies – e.g., as the result of a (personal) fight –, or as a sanction to those who disobey the rules established by the ruling armed actor (Sánchez Mojica 2016, 94). In line with this, Mariana (66, *estrato* ½) explains that "they [gang members] tried to kill my son, and we all had to leave".[123] Despite it being an awful situation, Mariana says she was lucky enough to have family outside of her neighbourhood that could help her to prevent them from becoming homeless. Various research indicates the 'loss of shelter' to be the most significant effect of urban displacement (Sánchez Mojica 2016, 93); it leads to immediate vulnerability and a degrading social capital, where victims of displacement often have to rebuild their social network and boarder life. On top of that, as argued by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (Cortés Ferrández 2020): "many areas of expulsion are also areas of reception" (11). This increases the vulnerability of the IDPs, as due to an instable location of replacement, a secondary displacement can easily be triggered. There are also various sources that present cases whereby a person or families have been displaced multiple times (Cortés Ferrández 2020, 11; GRID 2019, 81). The occurrence of urban displacement provides a clear insight into the complexity of a peace system; the international peace scale significantly impacts the level of IDPs. Due to the global normalisation of drug use, the vicious cycle of displacement is pertained (Otis 2014). As Sebastián (36, *estrato* 1/ 2) explains, people in Europe or the United States never think about this, but "you

[117] Typical Colombian savoury pastry.
[118] Interview Alejandro, April 8, 2021.
[119] Blattman et al. (2020, 14) would argue that Santa Cruz is the place where the highest extortion of inhabitants takes place, while Robledo is only 4%; in contrary to Pareja (2019) who writes that in Robledo almost all new families need to pay in order to 'stay'.
[120] For example: interview Gabriela, April 6, 2021, and Juan Pablo March 22/April 19, 2021.
[121] While the developmental processes in Medellín, as for example the construction of the metro cable, have also forced people out of their homes (often in exchange for a sum of money offered by the municipality) (Mesa Duque 2018), this was not mentioned by interviewees during this research.
[122] Both criminal and non-criminal groups
[123] Interview Mariana, April 20, 2021.

buy one gram of cocaine in Europe, and ten families will be displaced in Colombia".[124] Internal displacement has severe impact not only on security and social life, but it also profoundly impacts (mental) health, impedes access to education and limits job opportunities (IDMC 2018, 14). Understanding the effects of intra-urban displacement is hence of high importance; it is a significant obstacle to durable peace.

This practice of forced migration as executed by the armed actors, is a form of vigilante/popular justice, or in the words of various interviewees: 'la justicia por propia mano'[125], also referred to as the act of 'lynching' (Jiménez 2021). This form of justice became apparent in two different ways during the fieldwork: through gang dominance, and second, as justice exercised by citizens. The first category becomes mostly visible in areas with a weak state presence, where 'criminal governments' rule (Blattman et al. 2020; Drummond et al. 2012, 248). In this sense, the justice imposed by the gangs active in the area is a way to maintain strong control. There are various acts visible in areas with strong gang control. In Comuna 13 for example, especially in the most touristic areas,[126] gangs control the safety on the streets as they profit from tourism. Various inhabitants of Comuna 13 explained that because of the gang presence, people are now able to walk the streets without fear, as the gangs will make sure nothing happens. Sebastián (36, *estrato* ½) presents an interesting example, as he says: "My brother told me that here you can't lose anything; once a tourist left his tablet, and it disappeared. But three hours later it appeared again".[127] Through the system of control, the tablet was quickly found, and the thief heavily punished, or 'lynched'. Another form of gang-justice happens in the form of revenge between two rival gangs, whereby it is assumed that the target committed a crime as considered by gang-law. Besides the disproportionate use of violence, lynching does not always go as planned. Marcela (23, *estrato* ½) explained that after a day of NGO-work, while bringing the kids who joined the programme home, one of their 13-year-old boys was shot and killed on the street. It later turned out he was assumed to be someone from the rival gang.[128] In the second category, where popular justice is performed by citizens, there is one main difference from category one: there is no aim for territorial control. On top of that, this form of justice strongly links to a clear lack of trust in the police authorities (Jolly 2014; Olivares Tobón 2022), which will be further discussed in the governmental and socio-political obstacles. As a result, people execute their own form of justice (Jiménez 2021), and even encourage others to do so through for example social media, as the Facebook page "Denuncias Ciudadanas Medellín – Oficial" [129] (2022), or Instagram page "Guardianes Antioquia" [130] (2022). Instead of making the streets safer however, these forms of justice threaten the legal system within Medellín as they delegitimise justice authorities in the city. The security obstacles in Medellín show a direct link to *freedom from fear* as the most widely shared meaning of peace. At the core of this, is the persisting gang influence throughout the city. During the interviews it became moreover clear that most of the security obstacles (i.e., gang practices

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[124] Interview Sebastián, March 25, 2021.
[125] Taking justice in your own hands.
[126] As the gangs in control are profiting of the tourism, is it important to keep the area 'safe'.
[127] Interview Sebastián, March 25, 2021.
[128] Interview Marcela, March 30, 2021.
[129] Translated as "Citizens complains of Medellín".
[130] Translated as "Protectors of Antioquia"

as extortion, or expulsion) are only experienced by people in the lower *estratos*, which is an indication of (the long-term obstacle of) socioeconomic inequality, as explained in the previous section.

In conclusion, while security obstacles are an important component of both the RPS in Medellín and in Kosovo, there are significant contextual differences. In Medellín, the presence – and dominance – of gangs in the city, lay at the basis of various other (both long-term and everyday) obstacles. In Kosovo on the other hand, it is the ethnic division between Kosovo-Albanians and Kosovo-Serbs that heavily influences Kosovo's peace system. This has become visible in this section but will also be shown in the sections to come. The next section will discuss sociocultural obstacles, which are directly linked to security obstacles, e.g., the presence of narcoculture in Medellín and the persisting feelings of injustice rooted in the ethnic gap in Kosovo.

5.3 Sociocultural obstacles

Sociocultural obstacles stem from negative social norms that are forged, accepted, internalised, and reproduced socially within a specific context (i.e., Kosovo and Medellín). Social norms and behaviours that have become embedded in the existing social structures are part of people's 'habitus'. Habitus, stemming from Bourdieu, refers to the dispositions of individuals, or the internalised behaviour, habits, and beliefs that stem from a particular setting (Bourdieu 1995, 15; Costa and Murphy 2015, 3-4; Maton 2008, 50-53). As Cristina Costa and Mark Murphy (2015) argue "it is a complex social process in which individual and collective ever-structuring dispositions develop in practice to justify individuals' perspectives, values, actions and social positions" (4). Interestingly, the category of social obstacles compromises the highest variety of obstacles and consequently forms the largest category of obstacles in both RPS analyses. While there are some similarities in the subcategories of sociocultural obstacles, the obstacles in the two contexts can largely be divided along two lines: in Medellín, the sociocultural obstacles present are related to the widespread narcoculture, which among others forged an internalisation of violence, whereby violence seems to have become normalised. In Kosovo on the other hand, the ethnic gap prevailing in the country goes hand in hand with social identity issues and persisting feelings of injustice. This section is divided accordingly: the first two sections solely focus on the normalisation of violence within narcoculture in Medellín. The section after discussed first practices of memorialisation, feelings of injustice, and second, social exclusion in both Kosovo and Medellín.

5.3.1 Normalisation of violence on the streets of Medellín

While lynching is initially discussed as a security obstacle, it also demonstrates the limited respect for human lives within the streets of Medellín. It is an indication of a high level of violence normalisation within Medellín's society, in other words: people become desensitised to the everyday violence taking place. One way in which this becomes visible is the widely accepted saying of *no dar papaya*, loosely translated as 'don't show the goods', i.e., do not take your phone out when walking the streets. It is commonly acknowledged that when you do not follow this rule (as strict as possible), it is your own fault when getting robbed.

Interestingly, for most this rule had become completely normalised. Adapting to everyday violence has become internalised and as such has become part of people's habitus in Medellín. In other words: violence has become so normalised that people will pay no specific attention to it. Emma's (32, *estrato* 5/6) trip to Brazil demonstrates this very well.[131] She explains that while on a plane to Argentina, she gets to talking with her very talkative neighbour on the plane, a man from Argentina:

> *"And at the end of the conversation, when the plane was descending to land, this man asked me…he said "I want to be respectful to you. I want to ask how it is to live in Medellín, I heard Medellín is a very violent city, and Colombia a violent country. But I am not sure if it's true". And I said no, well, that living in Medellín was very easy, very normal. And that I had only seen two people being murdered, but that's normal. And he looked at me with no clue what to do."*

It was through the reaction of her neighbour, that the normalisation of violence became clear to Emma. Various other interviewees agreed with Emma that the internalisation of violence currently indicates a significant obstacle to change. While habitus is continuously reproduced within existing social structures, and as such becomes internalised, it may "be changed by history, that is by new experiences, education or training" (Bourdieu 2005, 45). This however implies that it first must become conscious; a problem needs to be visible to achieve change. This is however related to an interesting capacity that will be discussed later, as Casa Morada has started a campaign to 'de-normalise' violence. The normalisation of violence also becomes clear however in the glorification of the narcoculture, which will be discussed next.

5.3.2 Living with Narcoculture

Narcoculture, generally understood as a subculture that has come forth out of drug gang-life and where the 'law of the narcos' dominates, is widespread in Medellín (Moch 2010; Sánchez 2020). Narcoculture is not only expressed locally through for example films (*Blow*) or tv-shows (*Narcos*), social media and *narcocorridos* (Cabañas 2014, 4; Goyes and Franko 2021), there is also a widespread international celebration of narcoculture which complicates local lives. While for example visiting the White House in Washington D.C., Mauricio (29, *estrato* 1/2) was asked not to mention he is from Medellín: "And I was like…what? But of course, I understood that if I would say I am from Medellín, there would have been questions because of Pablo Escobar, because cocaine, because of the (…)".[132] While everyone spoken to understands the term 'narcoculture', almost 30% of the interviewees explained to experience obstacles due to this. Of this 30%, the inhabitants from the lower stratifications (1 to 3, or where gang control is higher) mentioned the presence of narcoculture significantly more often as an obstacle than in upper-middle-, or high-class neighbourhoods. Data analysis indicated two main obstacles that stem from the deeply rooted narcoculture: 1) adhering to the rules of narcoculture and 2) 'easy money' as part of narco-life.

[131] Interview Emma, April 6, 2021.
[132] Interview Mauricio, March 22, 2021.

First, the social rules that follow from narcoculture are logically more widely acknowledged in neighbourhoods with higher gang control. While there are many rules, the most widely acknowledged one is 'ver, oir, y callar' translated as 'see, listen and shut up'. This rule implies that inhabitants of a gang-dominated neighbourhood see and hear things but should always remain silent. As Héctor (18, *estrato* 1/2) explains "it is a rule in all places, because I can see how they murder someone. I can hear how they murder someone, but if I say something everything will go wrong".[133] If the rule is not followed, punishment happens in the form of threats, torture, forced migration or even murder. This demonstration of power is another important aspect of narco-life, various research indicates that narcoculture perpetuates 'hyper masculinisation' (Baird 2012; 2018). Gaining economic power is crucial to this masculinity. During the research it became clear that notion of fast or easy money, or 'dinero fácil', is a well-known aspect of the narco-life (Daly 2015). Within the socioeconomic inequality of Medellín, the ability to make 'easy money' has become a way to contest the distribution of power and money (Roldán 1999). The impression that quick money can be made without even finishing school, has become the norm in parts of Medellín. During the interviews the pressure on Medellín's youth, specifically young men, became visible. Thiago (36, *estrato* 1/2) explains the familiar thinking process well: "without losing any years [in school], well, I can make a lot more money than when staying in school, and I don't even have to go to university for it".[134] As Sandra (21, *estrato* 1/2) argued that within narcoculture: "you have to very noticeably show the things you possess", doing so has become a "benchmark of success".[135] Various people explained that especially in areas with high gang-control, children drop out of school to make fast money, which is corroborated by research from Holli Drummond (2016). On the long run however, the youth become excluded from participating in Medellín's wider society which perpetuates the extreme socioeconomic inequality. There were various parents[136] who expressed how difficult it is to raise their children in an environment where narcoculture dictates the rules. Besides having to protect your children from (everyday) violence, making sure they do not fall prey to the easy money mentality remains an everyday challenge.

Violent acts committed in the name of *narcolaw* often remain unpunished by official authorities, causing feelings of injustice in relation to legal repercussions. While several interviewees[137] expressed these feelings, the widely understood rule of 'ver, oir, y callar' prevents people from speaking more freely. The normalisation of this, is also linked to – the lack of - memorialisation in Medellín, which will be discussed in the next section. Before doing so however, the widespread feelings of injustice in Kosovo will be discussed first.

[133] Interview Héctor, May 13, 2021.
[134] Interview Thiago, April 7, 2021.
[135] Interview Sandra, April 20, 2021.
[136] For example: interview Juliana or Andrea.
[137] For example: interview Marcela, Natalía, Marcela, Natalía, Alejandro, Mauricio, Fernando.

5.3.3 Truth-finding, memorialisation and persisting feelings of injustice

The international community has widely accepted the importance of truth-finding, in relation to memorialisation and reconciliation, as is visible in the creation of various Truth and Reconciliation Commissions around the world (Heilman 2018; Kelsall 2005; Niezen 2017; Sooka 2006). There is however undeniably a friction between certain truth-finding or memorialisation processes and reconciliation, as through memorialisation activities the social divides are potentially brought to the surface therefore impeding the process of reconciliation (Selimovic 2013; Rieff 2016). While both Kosovo and Medellín experience obstacles in relation to truth finding, in Kosovo feelings of injustice are widely shared, while in Medellín the lack of memorialisation practices is seen as an obstacle to realising change.

Already before the war in Kosovo, the United Nations established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1993 to deal with war crimes in former Yugoslavia (ICTY 2020). Alongside of the ICTY, some hybrid domestic courts (supported through UNMIK, and later EULEX) focused on low-profile war crimes (Korenica et al. 2016; Simangan 2018). Despite this, many cases remain undealt with (Visoka 2017b); a feeling also articulated during the interviews. According to Avni (27, Kosovo-Albanian) "the local Serbs have done a lot of crimes, and nobody is judged for that".[138] While Avni refers to the lack of justice for the Albanian side, a report issued by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) in 2011, also known as the Marty Report[139], indicated that mainly war-time crimes committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) have not been addressed yet (Warren et al. 2017, 7). Due to international pressure, and in line with Europe's wider integration agenda, the EU had little choice but to financially support and push for realisation of Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office (SCP-KS n.d.), which focuses solely on the prosecution of KLA members (Korenica et al. 2016, 477). During the interviews, various Kosovo-Albanians expressed their anger regarding the existence of the court. Ezra (29, Kosovo-Albanian) expresses her anger of losing her dad, who fought for the KLA during the war. In line with this, a public perception study performed in 2017, shows that over half of the ethnic Albanians would be "willing to protest if KLA fighters are indicted by the Kosovo Specialist Court" (Warren et al. 2017, 5). As such, there is a risk that the deeply rooted ethnic and political tensions rise further due to the installation of the Specialist Court. Despite this, both Serbian and Albanian communities indicated it is important to deal with war crimes (Ibid). Interestingly however, none of the Kosovo-Serbs referred to the existence of the Specialist Court, and upon asking they merely reacted sceptical, not trusting a fair execution of its mandate.

While in Kosovo people from all research sites referred to injustice, these notions were communicated the strongest in mono-ethnic (Albanian) Gjakova. Each year on Orthodox Christmas (January 6th), Serbian pilgrims travel to Gjakova to visit the Orthodox church. Each year, protests are organised against the return of those (Kosovo-)Serbs who the local Gjakovars accuse of war crimes, but who have not been indicted. The Gjakovar Ferdonije Qerkezi (62, Kosovo-Albanian) expressed and

[138] Interview Avni, April 22, 2020.
[139] A reference to Dick Marty, a Swiss Senator.

materialised these feelings of injustice most clearly. During the war, the Serb paramilitary took her entire family (her husband and four sons); she is still searching for the remains of two of her sons and the perpetrators have not been indicted yet. By turning her (unchanged) house into a museum, Ferdonije has become a symbol of the scars that the brutal war left behind. Her action received international attention (Klinkner and Schwandner-Sievers 2019), for example through a written testimony on her quest for justice to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs (Qerkezi 2019). Despite this, Ferdonije lost hope in the international community finding her loved ones: "I am sure that by now my sons are now covered by new roads and houses".[140] While the expression of these feelings of injustice are a protest towards the international peace scale for not doing more, Ferdonije's museum is also part of the memorialisation processes in Kosovo. Indicated by various research, active memorialisation also promotes justice for victims (Barsalou and Baxter 2007; ICTJ 2022). In contrary to Kosovo, where a collective memory of Kosovo's history is widely shared (e.g., through museums, memorials, or events), in Medellín memorialisation practices that include the whole city are limited. This will be the focus of the second part of this section.

Memorialisation is increasingly understood as an important element of the peacebuilding process (Barsalou and Baxter 2007; Selimovic 2013; Sooka 2006). Collective memorialisation is an important step in healing from collective trauma (both collectively and on a personal level); not having the opportunity to do so limits the possibility to move forward (Sobutic 2009, 3). The inclusion of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition Commission[141] (publicly referred to as the "Comision de la Verdad") in the Colombian Comprehensive Peace Agreement could be understood as an important step in acknowledging the importance of memory and truth (Díaz Pabón 2018; Piccone 2019; Rodriguez Castro 2021).[142] Despite this, there is a limited collective memory present in Medellín's society. Or, as Patrick Naef (2018, 62) argues, Medellín "inhabitants find themselves torn between memory and forgetting". This does not mean there are no memorialisation initiatives, in contrary, there are various memorialisation initiatives present, which is also indicated by various literature (Castrillon et al. 2016; Lacy and Riaño-Alcalá 2006; Maya 2017; Naef 2018; Villa Gómez 2013). Despite this, most of these initiatives[143] take place on a local level within the city (i.e., within Comuna 13, El barrio de Antioquia, or Moravia), though a collective memory shared among all Medellín's citizens lacks behind. The lack of collective memorialisation is mostly felt as an obstacle within the lower and middle-class neighbourhoods. This is however not surprising as the highest *estratos* were, and still are, relatively sealed off from the violence taking place in the city. In line with this, Naef (2018) argues that innovative cities, as Medellín, often obscure a collective memory to "build the future" (179). A well-

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[140] Interview Ferdonije, March 8, 2020.

[141] Through the work of the truth commission, the complicated context of Medellín in Colombia's war is brought forward as well. Despite this, the focus of the Truth Commission mainly lies on the events in relation to the armed conflict; hence excluding other armed actors (as criminal structures) that were not directly embedded in the conflict. During various interviews with people working for the Truth Commission in Medellín, it however became apparent that this cannot be seen separately.

[142] While the importance of memorialisation and truth seeking are acknowledged in the agreement, the work of the Truth Commission is not straight forward, nor always accepted as merely positive. There have been issues concerning transparency (see e.g., Rodriguez Castro 2021), the negative effects of the institutionalisation of memory (see e.g., Jimeno 2018 *in* Díaz Pabón).

[143] Memorialisation initiatives, either with the motive to create a collective memory or to memorialise smaller traumatic events as the disappearance of children, that are present, will be discussed as capacities in the next chapter.

received report published by the National Centre for Historic Memory (CNMH) on the memories of Medellín's urban war, argues for the importance of the reconstruction of memory, as the connection between this and the "possibility to construct a democratic post-conflict society" has become abundantly clear (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2017, 19). Using victim accounts, the CNMH presents a detailed overview of Medellín's history, aiming to aid building a vivid collective memory. During conversations held, various people indicated to feel that the lack of collective memorialisation creates a significant obstacle for the future, as forgetting leads to repeating (on collective memory and repetition see: Selimovic 2013). In the words of Mía (26, *estrato* 3/4): "We are a country of forgetting, we have repeated it…Medellín is a cyclic city (…) cycles of violence, calm, violence. No one knows their past, people try to ignore it and just live different than their parents did".[144] This lack of collective memory also showed in interviews, as various people were not aware when important (violent) events happened in the city. Paula's (30, *estrato* 3/4) comment indicates this perfectly: "Pablo Escobar was killed in 91, or…91, 92, 93...? I don't know, I don't have the exact date, but it was shortly after I was born".[145] Other research confirms that having a collective memory[146], or not having the willingness to remember, should be understood as a risk of a recurrence of the past (Selimovic 2013, 4). It is therefore crucial for Medellín's society to learn from past cycles of violence with the aim to prevent new violence erupting in the future.

In the case of Kosovo however, the strong collective memory connects to long-term obstacle of ethnic polarisation. In contrary to Medellín, during the interviews it became clear that historical dates[147] are written into everyone's brain. Sharing a collective memory as such is crucial in the creation of a strong 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006), which in Kosovo presents itself along ethnic lines: the collective memory of the Kosovo-Albanians often contradicts the memory of the Kosovo-Serbs. The presence of these opposing collective memories [e.g., shared through family, or through the separate educational systems] not only continues to separate 'us' from 'them' (Climo and Cattell 2002,1-2), but narratives of loss also potentially awakens a "sense of entitlement for revenge" (Robben and Suarez-Orozco 2000, 23). Despite both international and local pressure, there is however no comprehensive national strategy for dealing with the past (Hetemi 2017; Visoka and Lumi 2020). There are however various local initiatives to deal with the past in Kosovo,[148] but this is not sufficient to deal with the collective trauma on this scale. The ethnically divided collective memory hence forms a significant obstacle to stable peace; the potential to instigate new surges of ethnic violence should not be underestimated.

In both Kosovo and Medellín, memorialisation processes are largely based on shared trauma stemming from conflict. Various research indicates that traumatic events can transcend to group members that were not present, and hence can be passed on to younger generations (Dietrich 2013, 133; Hirschberger

[144] Interview Mía, March 11, 2021.
[145] Interview Paula, April 11, 2021.
[146] The lack of collective memorialisation is mostly felt as an obstacle within the lower and middle-class neighbourhoods. This is however not surprising as the highest stratifications were, and still are, relatively sealed off from the violence taking place in the city. In this case the high level of inequality present in Medellín's society becomes vividly present.
[147] For example, the battle of Kosovo or the coming to power of Milosevic
[148] See the Kosovo Memory Book or the Dealing With the Past Balkan Initiative

2018; Rinker and Lawler 2018; Robben and Suarez-Orozco 2000, 23). These events turn into powerful narratives of defeat and according to Jeremy Rinker and Jerry Lawler (2018) "collective historical trauma underlies much of the social conflict in the world today" (150). This demonstrates the importance of acknowledging obstacles stemming from (the lack of) memorialisation practices, as they have significant impact on the potential for durable peace within both contexts.

In conclusion, while there are important contextual differences between Kosovo and Medellín, obstacles in relation to truth finding, justice and memorialisation are evident in both cases. Where in Medellín this mostly concerns the lack of memorialisation, and the risk of repeating history, in Kosovo the collective memory obstructs the creation of an inclusive society. In both Kosovo and Medellín, the creation of an inclusive society is further obstructed by the large divisions between different social identities, which will be discussed in the following paragraph.

5.3.4 Obstacles stemming from social identity matters

The exclusion of groups based on their social identity is present in both contexts. In Kosovo, this becomes mostly visible in the form of tensions in relation to ethnicity. In Medellín however, these obstacles are articulated in relation to high levels of racism and/or xenophobia. One factor in common however, is the discrimination of the LGBTIQ+ minority group. This section will first focus on the inter- and intra-ethnic tensions in Kosovo. The discrimination experienced by the LGBTIQ+ community is discussed next and focuses on both contexts. Lastly, everyday obstacles in relation to racism and xenophobia in Medellín will be presented.

To reiterate, over 80% of the interviewees indicate the largest obstacle in Kosovo to be the persisting ethnic division present in every day's society. The ethnic division, e.g., in the form of physical separation as divided schools or health care systems, leads to obstacles as exclusion or discrimination. The existence of the Serb parallel system in Kosovo hence contributes significantly to this separation. The origins of parallel structures in Kosovo can be found already during the 1990s. After the collapse of Yugoslavia, Kosovo presented itself as a parallel state within another state as it performed most of the modern statehood functions (Pula 2004; Visoka 2018, 58). After Ibrahim Rugova was unofficially elected as Kosovo's first president in 1992, social, economic, and political service institutions were formed (Calu 2020, 53). Notwithstanding, one of the key objectives of this unrecognized state was to secure international support in "realizing sovereign statehood" (Visoka 2018, 58). Once Kosovo, which had presented itself as a parallel state within another state during the nineties (Pula 2004; Visoka 2018, 5), became recognised as a state by the international community, Belgrade established strong parallel institutions aiming to obstruct the Kosovo state from realising (Visoka 2017a, 12). Just before Kosovo declared independence, Serbia demanded from all Kosovo-Serbs that they would boycott Kosovo's institutions, hoping to obstruct independence (Calu 2020, 83; Visoka 2017a, 91). Not long after, Kosovo-Serbs withdrew from Kosovo's existing institutions. As Kosovo's statebuilding project proceeded, the Serbian government went against this by rebuilding

Serbian legal, administrative, education and health structures, parallel to the emerging Kosovar ones (van der Borgh and Lasance 2013, 188; Visoka 2017a, 91-92). On top of that, while Kosovo has 38 municipalities that function according to a local self-government[149] (Republic of Kosovo 2020), the ten Serbian majority municipalities maintain their own education and healthcare system regulated by Serbia and in line with the Serbian constitution. Kosovo-Serbs are thus largely depended on Serbia regarding health care, public institutions, and the education system.

There is hence limited contact between the Albanian community and people from the Serb community, and vice versa. A 2020 study on ethnic stereotypes in Kosovo showed that over 50% of the Kosovo-Serb population has no contact at all with the Kosovo-Albanian population, and in reverse, almost 70% of the Kosovo-Albanian population has no contact with people from Serbian decent living in Kosovo (KCR 2020, 5). In line with this, various interviewees explained to never have interacted to someone from the 'other' ethnicity, as there is no opportunity for it. Agim (25, Kosovo-Albanian), who is living in Rahovec, moreover explained "we have discriminatory books and teachers, and it is hard to break this cycle".[150] Not going to the same school further impedes bridging a deep language gap. Upon the declaration of independence, Albanian and Serbian became acknowledged as official languages at the national level (Assembly of Kosovo 2008). While older generations would often speak both languages (as both Serbian and Albanian was taught in school), the younger generations barely speak each other's language. Slobodan (28, Kosovo-Serb) argues that not speaking each other's language "is the biggest mistake", which is a common opinion among a large part (44%) of the interviewees.[151] Sofija (36, Kosovo-Serb), a woman in her late thirties from Kamenica, explains that despite living in a 'mixed town', she could not go to the movies with her friends, as everything was in Albanian, without subtitles.[152] The absence of the Serbian language in official government publications also became visible during the presentation of the measures taken against COVID-19 (Popović 2020). Here it becomes clear that unforeseen crises, as Covid-19, lead to situational obstacles, as the initial lack of information brought unnecessary confusion and resentment among many Kosovo-Serb citizens. [153]

In relation to the security obstacles, and the understanding of peace as *freedom from fear*, the crossing of the bridge in Mitrovica clearly shows how difficult it is to cross the ethnic divide. This is also demonstrated in an excerpt[154] from my fieldnotes:

One afternoon, Yllka, (29, Kosovo-Albanian) suggested to cross the bridge to grab a beer with one of her Serbian colleagues and a mutual friend of ours. While crossing the bridge, she mentions it was only a few years ago that she started doing this; before that, it felt like a "no-go area". It's barely a 5-minute walk to the bar, but we enter

[149] Local governance "denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population" (Republic of Kosovo 2020).
[150] Interview Agim, July 15, 2020.
[151] Interview Slobodan, February 25, 2020.
[152] Interview Sofija, August 21, 2020.
[153] It is important to note however that with the arrival of 'English', both within social media/tv and as a subject in school, or through the presence of the international community, more and more often younger generations communicate using English.
[154] Field visit to Mitrovica, March 10, 2020.

a different world. Serbian flags everywhere, nationalist murals, and the main currency is no longer the euro, and Yllka no longer speaks the local language. While waiting for our friend to arrive, another friend of Yllka walks happily towards our table. After they exchange their 'hello's' and 'it's been too longs', Yllka excitedly turns towards me and says: "This is Kristina, the best Serb you will ever meet!". Kristina laughs and says: "Yes! I am very nice for a Serb".

This example is merely one of the many instances, where during interethnic interaction a reference was made towards ethnicity. While in these cases there are often no bad intentions, the expressive forms of separation lead to deeper divisions and over half of the interviewees mentioned the (structural) presence of ethnic discrimination in their daily lives. At the same time, these deeply divided identities become internalised and as such form a source of "meaning and experience" (Castells 2010, 6-7). Ethnic tensions are easily sparked when this sense of meaning is assumed to be threatened, which is when the process of othering potentially shifts to depicting 'them' as hostile (Merskin 2005, 374). This is for example shown in the rumours that spread in August of 2020, when Kosovo-Albanians reported Serbian "soldiers walking the streets of Karaceva village in Kosovo" (Exit 2020). Fear is hence spreading easily, whereby risks of renewed violence remain at the surface.

While the interethnic tensions become easily visible in Kosovo, almost a third of the interviewees referred to *intra-ethnic* tensions as an everyday obstacle. This seems surprising, as the dominant narrative in public discourse presents the tensions between Serbian and Albanian people as main threat to peace. Despite this, the international institutions as UNMIK also point to the importance of intra-ethnic tensions within Kosovo (Visoka 2017a, 77).[155] In line with the Ahtisaari plan, the Kosovo state mostly focused securing on minority rights, whereby the different groups were assumed to be "unitary entities" (Calu 2017, 48). In-group differences were hence not taken into consideration. During the interviews, Kosovo-Albanians most often referred to tensions between educated city-people and *katundar/e* (or 'village people' or 'village mentality'), often spoken about with a sense of 'backwardness' (Blumi 2019, 165; Schwandner-Sievers et al. 2000). The meaning of this term 'city' however fluctuates, while in Pristina people from Rahovec could be considered katundar(e)s, people from Rahovec clearly refer to people from 'outside' of Rahovec as katundar(e)s[156]. The data moreover clearly show the stigmatisation of people from their own ethnicity who engage in contact, or initiate friendships with people from the 'other' ethnicity. This seems to happen equally across ethnic groups in Kosovo. Miroslav (37, Kosovo-Serb) explains his difficulties with maintaining friendships that cross ethnic boundaries: "I have also been intimidated by the Serbs, because they would simply not accept that I have a lot of Albanian friends".[157] Here the interaction between different peace scales once again becomes clear: it is the family or community scale which criticises, and sometimes 'bans', cross-ethnic relationships which are initiated on an individual level.

[155] Intra-ethnic tensions mainly occur within the Kosovo-Albanian community.
[156] Interview Erza, March 7, 2020.
[157] Interview Miroslav, February 25, 2020.

Next, discrimination based on gender or being part of the LGBTIQ+-community is widespread in both Kosovo and Medellín. Qëndron (30, Kosovo-Albanian), a young transgender[158] man from Kosovo, explains that because LGBTIQ+ discrimination is widespread throughout Kosovo, it is only possible for him to live in Pristina. It is impossible for him to build a live in Gjakova, his hometown: "I would never get a job, I am the embarrassment of the city and the region".[159] This does not mean there is no discrimination or violence in Pristina, but as the capital city there is a more open vibe than in the rest of Kosovo (see also: We-accept, n.d.). Transsexuals[160] in Medellín also suffer severe stigmatisation and often become victims of physical violence (Defensoría del Pueblo n.d.). Davíd (25, *estrato* 3/4), who is part of the queer community himself, explains he regularly receives calls from trans-friends living in other parts of the city, that they have received death threats and need to leave as soon as possible.[161] As a result, transsexuals, mostly transwomen, largely remain in the centre, where their presence has become relatively normalised. While Colombia offers the best legal protection of the LGBTIQ+ within Latin America (Wilson and Gianella-Malca 2019), the everyday reality for a large part of the LGBTIQ+ community is hence bleaker (Bocanumenth 2020). Various interviewees and available research (Alzate-Urrea et al. 2016; IACHR 2015; Kyu Choi et al. 2019, 5; Thylin 2019), indicate that physical violence is a common experience for LGBTIQ+ people living in the city. In Kosovo, as also shown by Qëndron, family support is crucial in the battle against LGBTIQ+ discrimination. In the words of Qëndron: "there are so many homeless now because of LGBTIQ+ non-acceptance by their family".[162] In Medellín it is however not so much the family, as the presence of combos that affect the ability to live freely. Soon Kyu Choi et al. (2019, 6) confirm this, stating that most of the violence against the LGBTIQ+ community has been carried out by gangs and paramilitary groups.

In line with this, both countries struggle with minority discrimination. In Medellín this is however mostly visible in the form of racism towards Afro-communities (Serna Maya and Marchena Tobón 2020) and xenophobia towards Venezuelan migrants (GIFFM 2021; UNHCR 2021). While racism takes place on various levels, during the interviews people referred to a case of 2020, where an Afro-Colombian manicurist was refused entry to the house of her costumer, as she doesn't "permit negros in her house" (El Tiempo 2020; Semana 2020b). This incident received a lot of attention, both within the media and for example on Twitter (e.g., @René Higuita, September 15, 2020), where similar stories were shared. It is moreover in line with various sources that point to racism of Afro-Colombians in Medellín (Gutiérrez Zuluaga et al. 2019; IOM 2019; Nieto 2018). Especially Afro-Colombian women experience racism, for example in the form of limited access to the job market (Álvarez Ossa 2013; Bohórquez Durango et al. 2017; Muñoz Cañas 2019). As explained in the socioeconomic obstacles, and in line with a significant increase in Venezuelan refugees over the last years, xenophobia has increased significantly in Medellín (Alsema 2019; GIFFM 2021). The

[158] Transgender is used here, as this term is used by LGBTIQ+ rights defenders in Kosovo.
[159] Interview Qëndron, May 1, 2020.
[160] This is the term used by LGBTIQ+ rights defenders within Medellín.
[161] Interview Davíd, April 16, 2021.
[162] Interview Qëndron, May 1, 2020.

social crisis in Venezuela has significant impact on the situation in Medellín, leading to new situational obstacles in Medellín as the rise in xenophobia and social exclusion of refugees. This has the potential for social tensions to rise (Chaves-González et al. 2021; Crisis Group 2022, 4). In line with Colombia's progressive legal framework for LGBTIQ+ community, Kosovo knows a robust legal and institutional framework concerning minority rights and protection. Despite this, minority discrimination is deeply embedded into Kosovo's society (OHCRH 2019; Visoka 2017a, 96). Kosovan minorities as among others Bosniak, Gorani, Egyptian, Roma, and Ashkali, experience fundamental problems as unemployment, lack of education or (personal) development, due to the high levels of discrimination and social exclusion (Calu 2020; Minority Rights 2018; Özerdem and Payne 2019, 6). In both Kosovo and Medellín, exclusion from participating in society potentially leads to increased group grievances, which in turn holds the potential to incite violence (Alcorta et al. 2020). This has become moreover recognised in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG n.d.), as goal 16 recognises the crucial link between 'peaceful' and 'inclusive societies'.

In conclusion, the sociocultural obstacles discussed in this section should be understood in relation to the social norms in society that have become internalised and are reproduced as such. Consequently, there is a variety of obstacles discussed. The first part of this section focuses solely on Medellín, and the obstacles stemming from persisting and widespread gang control in the city. The normalisation of violence in Medellín indicates that, since it is part of the city's habitus, it is very difficult to change these patterns since people do not register violence as 'abnormal'. It is hence necessary to make people conscious of the abnormality of violence, to strive for change. This will be further discussed as a capacity in the next chapter. The normalisation of violence is however linked to the narcoculture, which, through the execution of social rules and implementation of narcolaws, can heavily impede everyday life in areas where gangs are prevalent. The long-term obstacles are obvious here, as the widespread use of violence is deeply embedded in Medellín's society, which makes it difficult to create any form of peace. The normalisation of these practices is in line with a lack of collective memorialisation of the violent past in the city. Not dealing with the past moreover holds the danger of the past repeating itself. On the other hand, as shown in Kosovo, collective memory can also solidify the divide between the two opposing (ethnic) groups; again, running the risk of tensions rising. It therefore depends heavily on the context if memorialisation can have positive or negative effects. Lastly, the social exclusion of ethnic and social minorities touches upon long-term obstacles as socioeconomic inequality. Over time, inequality and exclusion have become recognised as important factors in building sustainable peace (Baldwin et al. 2007; De Coning 2018; UNDP 2020b; World Bank 2020b). Exclusion based on social identity potentially leads to grievances that could incite violence and protest. An interesting example are the protests, dubbed *El Paro Nacional*, which took place all over Colombia over the course of 2021. These are however not isolated events, similar protests swept through the country in November 2019, but were brought to a halt in March 2020, due to the rapid spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. A year after the start of the pandemic, the situation further aggravated: the strict lockdowns have

pushed 3.6 million people into poverty, with as result that a total of 42.6% of the Colombians did not earn sufficient income to meet their basic needs (DANE 2021b). El Paro also brings to light widespread governmental distrust which is the focus of the next section, where governmental and socio-political obstacles are discussed.

5.4 Governmental and socio-political obstacles

As argued by the liberal peace theory, western ideas of democracy have been understood as a prerequisite for peace and stability. Colombia officially is one of the oldest democracies in Latin America, despite this, it continues to struggle to guarantee political rights and civil liberties (Freedom House 2022). In line with the liberal state- and peacebuilding paradigm, Kosovo has been established as a multiparty democracy aiming to create a strong rule of law (Zupančič and Pejič 2018). Both Kosovo and Medellín however continue to struggle with various governmental and socio-political obstacles (Camaj 2014; Pula 2017), which will be discussed in this section. The first part of this section focuses on the lack of trust in government institutions, which is present in both research contexts. This is followed by more context-specific socio-political obstacles. First, in Medellín the current national peace process has not only led to distrust, but also to further widening political gaps in society. In Kosovo the ethnic divide also becomes clearly visible in these obstacles, which is why the last part of this section focuses on obstacles indicated by Kosovo-Serbs: the political interference from Belgrade and not feeling accepted by the Kosovan state.

5.4.1 Low levels of government trust

Both Kosovo and Colombia cope with a lack of trust in (both local and national) governmental institutions (Babamusta 2020; Camaj 2014; Moncaya 2020; OECD 2020b; Pula 2017). In Kosovo, the instability of government over the last years had significant impact on the level of political trust. The inauguration of Albin Kurti as Kosovo's fourth prime minister on February 3rd, 2020, represented a significant change in the political scene of the young democracy (Luitjens and Pérez 2020). Interestingly, this led to renewed faith in Kosovo's future: according to a public perception study by the National Democratic Institute, the general trust in the Kosovo government almost doubled from 26% to 54% between the period of May 2019 and May 2020, which coincides with the inauguration of Kurti (NDI 2020). In line with this, - especially younger - interviewees often expressed hope when referring to Kurti. Even among the Kosovo-Serbs[163], a change in attitude was noticed, as the words "at least he has not committed any war crimes" were mentioned by various interviewees. Despite this, the older generations remained largely sceptical, according to Ardita (23, Kosovo-Albanian) "because they suffered so much".[164] Rightly so: already on the 25th of March, Kurti's ambitions were shattered as the young government was voted out of parliament through a motion of distrust (Walker 2020). Deception followed and as Berisha (25, Kosovo-Albanian) said

[163] Kosovo-Serbs largely vote for the Belgrade-backed Lista Srpska, as explained below.
[164] Interview Ardita, February 18, 2020.

"Frustration is certainly rising. The limited sparkle of hope is gone again".[165] The NDI data also show this, as there is a steep decline in trust to 13% by November 2020 (NDI 2021). Interestingly, as Vetëvendosje[166], led by Albin Kurti, won the national elections in February 2021 again with a landslide, the NDI (2021) observed that "an overall rebound in optimism about Kosovo's direction and trust in institutions is apparent", as over one third of the Kosovo population indicated to trust the national government. While the data of the NDI present a snapshot of the general government trust, the high fluctuation in the data demonstrates the volatility of the political situation. This is moreover an indication of the fragile and structural lack of trust in Kosovo's political institutions, which has been present since its independence in 2008 (Babamusta 2019; Camaj 2014; Pula 2017).

Corruption within governmental institutions play an important role in the lack of governmental trust in both Kosovo and Medellín (European Commission 2020; Freedom House 2022; OECD 2020b). The Corruption Perception Index[167] (TI 2021) also indicates this: coincidently both Kosovo and Colombia score 39 (TI 2020), on a scale from 0 being 'highly corrupt' to 100 being 'very clean' and the countries share the 87th place, out of the 180th countries evaluated in 2021. Government corruption, in any form, severely undermines the rule of law within a country (Council of Europe 2021; Frye 2010; Kubbe and Engelbert 2018; UNOCD 2004) and in turn, a strong rule of law is associated with the creation of sustainable peace (United Nations n.d.b). Or, as the UNOCD (2004) argues, it leads among others "to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life, and allows organised crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish" (iii). According to the Rule of Law Index (World Justice Project 2021), Colombia scores 0.32 on a scale from 0 to 1, indicating a relatively unstable rule of law. One of two indicators on which Colombia scores the worst is, not surprisingly, corruption. While Kosovo scores higher with 0.47, this is still below the global average.[168] This is moreover in line with results from NDI poll of 2020, which shows that 53% of Kosovo citizens regard corruption to be the 'biggest problem for Kosovo', where the government/executives and the Presidency are considered the most corrupt (closely followed by the judiciary and members of parliament) (NDI 2020, 8-9). In line with this, almost 40% of the interviewees referred to corruption as an obstacle in their everyday life. While not all people spoken to referred to corruption directly in relation to politics (also for example in relation to obtaining a job), there seems to be a shared understanding that the politics equals dirty money.[169] Elona, a Kosovo-Albanian woman in her early twenties living in Kamenica, phrased it like this: "In Kosovo people don't do politics for politics (…) they do politics for money".[170] As a result, especially older generations indicate to lose faith that positive change might come. As Besjana (58, Kosovo-Albanian) explains: "politically I hoped that things would

[165] Interview Berisha, August 15, 2020.
[166] A political party: "Self-Determination".
[167] Countries are ranked on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
[168] The Rule of Law Index focuses on three forms of corruption within the government: "bribery, improper influence by public or private interests, and misappropriation of public funds or other resource" (World Justice Project 2021). The arrest of ex-president Uribe on alleged bribery charges in relation to the criminal justice system, is a perfect example of the deep seeded corruption the Rule of Law Index refers to.
[169] This notion was conveyed by the vast majority of people spoken to, also outside of formal interviews.
[170] Interview Elona, April 15, 2020.

improve, no corruption, that we would get better education, I envisioned a lot of things differently".[171] While the re-election of Kurti has renewed hope, two important side-marks need to be made: it is important to understand the fragility of this hope, as previous times have demonstrated. Second, this hope correlates with ethnicity: while over a third of the Kosovo-Albanians believe Kosovo is moving in the 'right direction', over half of the Serbs believe Kosovo is moving in the 'wrong direction' (NDI 2021). Despite the relative high level of corruption in both countries, there are important contextual differences: in Kosovo references to corruption are made specifically in relation to the national government, while in Medellín most people often refer to corruption in relation to gangs, which will be the focus of the next paragraph.

In Medellín, over 40% of the interviewees suggest that there are pacts between the police or local authorities and gangs, aiming to profit from the illegal trafficking as well. Héctor (18, *estrato* 1/2) tells me how the police, at least in his neighbourhood where gangs dominate life, profits from illegal trade: "If it is 1000 pesos, they would sell it for 2000, of which at least 500 pesos is for the police".[172] Interestingly, also in higher *estratos*, there is general understanding of the police as corrupt. Santiago (28, *estrato* 5/6) explains that within the most touristic areas in Medellín, there are police on every corner. While he indicates that this gives him a feeling of security, he also explains that illegal activities (as drug trade or prostitution) are acknowledged but not countered by the police.[173] A recent study by Christopher Blattman et al. (2021, 19) shows that (silent) agreements between the active gang and the police, lead to a certain level of calm within gang-controlled areas. Additionally, Eric Arias et al. (2019) demonstrate that the vast majority of Medellín's citizens are of the opinion that the police is corrupt (3), but that this has become so ingrained in state institutions that it does not immediately affect the perception of police quality (9). It is however crucial to nuance this, as data from this fieldwork indicate that the trust in police efficacy depends on the *estrato*. Interviewees who live in *estrato* 5 or 6, are generally able to trust the police, in contrary, in the lower classes this trust deteriorates; the concern that police do not show up when called upon was shared several times. As a result, as Héctor (18, *estrato* 1/2) states, people[174] "prefer to call those from the neighbourhood [the dominant gang] than the police".[175] This widespread distrust in police capacity, is linked to previously discussed lynching practices and the notion of 'taking justice in your own hands'. Since it is not certain police will show up, or will be able to help, it is easier to solve the problem locally.

The accusations of corruption do however not stop at the police in Medellín, also high-level officials within Medellín's government have been accused, and even convicted for corruption over the past five years (Alsema 2017; Bargent 2017; Ortiz Jiménez 2020; U.S. Attorney's Office 2020). The latest accusation of corruption comes from the still powerful right-wing ex-president Álvaro Uribe, who claims to have information on corruption scandals concerning Daniel Quintero, the mayor of Medellín (Galindo 2021). In response, Quintero sued Uribe for slander, which has however been denied by the judge (El Tiempo 2021).

[171] Interview Besjana, May 15, 2020.
[172] Interview Héctor, May 13, 2021.
[173] Interview Santiago, April 24, 2021.
[174] Which is confirmed by e.g., Sandra, interview April 20, 2020.
[175] Interview Héctor, April 7, 2021.

Despite these being merely accusations, they do have effect on the political trust in Medellín. Mía (26, *estrato* 3/4) explained these incidents only confuses the citizens more, because "Daniel Quintero has shown himself as independent, however at various times his position has been ambivalent towards Uribe; he has shown his liking towards Uribe, he has also shown his displeasure".[176] Various people indicated to not expect 'a positive change' with the arrival of Quintero, saying for example that he is simply another "marionette", who "also covers many things, from long ago, and with only limited number of people that benefit" (Valeria 28, *estrato* 3/4).[177] There are moreover rumours that Quintero is guilty of nepotism, for example in the creation of the "No-Violence Secretariat", which is headed by Thiago Upegui who is a family member of Quintero (Comunas de Medellín 2021; Ramírez Gil 2020). This news, among others, has impacted the 'hope' for real change that many interviewees expressed to have.

Another factor adding to governmental distrust in Medellín is the perception of a lack of state presence. Especially in informal city areas or in areas dominated by a specific gang, state presence is not felt (Gillin 2015; Sotomayor 2017; Staguhn and Yayboke 2020). This shows in references to police absence as described above, which mostly occurs in the lower stratifications of the city. Further deteriorating this trust is the failure of the local authorities to provide good infrastructure and clean drinkable water to all parts of the city (Hart 2021; Rocha Furigo et al. 2020). The inhabitants from Granizal, located in Comuna 1 El Popular, for example, still need to collect drinking water from tanks spread over the neighbourhood, as the water that comes through the pipes causes health problems (Hart 2021). This demonstrates the power the municipality has on the scales of individual, family, and neighbourhood.[178] Not surprisingly, the interviews also show a lack of state presence within the lowest stratifications. Salomé (27, *estrato* 1/2) explains that she feels that "here, the State isn't interested in who has the control (…) no, no…they do not care because it is not part of their agenda…".[179] Besides a limited trust in local authorities, the political trust in the national government has also deteriorated over the last decade (OECD 2020b). This is partly due to both the referendum on the peace agreement, the slow implementation of the peace process, and to the reluctance of the current government to implement the peace accords (Crisis Group 2017; Kreutz and Nussio 2019; Piccone 2019; WOLA 2020). On top of that, in the beginning of 2021 an immense government scandal of the 'falsos positivos' (false positives) was brought to light by the Special Peace Jurisdiction (JEP). The false positives refer to at least 6,402 people who were murdered by the national army, and who were falsely declared as 'combat kills' aiming to boost the statistics in favour of the government led by President Alvaro Uribe (Daniels 2021; JEP 2021). The number turns out to be three times higher than previously admitted by the government. Antioquia is moreover one of the zones most murders took place and has therefore - together with 5 other areas – been prioritised in the research (JEP 2021). During the interviews, various people expressed their horrors over these findings, indicating that it impacts their trust in the national

[176] WhatsApp conversation Mía, November 9, 2021.
[177] Interview Valeria, April 13, 2021.
[178] Another interesting dynamic between the neighbourhood level and the municipal scale becomes clear in a theory presented by Camila (33, *estrato* 3/ 4). Camila explained she noticed that the run up to a change of government is always aligned with a period of increased violence – a period in which the gangs need to settle everything with the new government, to be able to continue their activities.
[179] Interview Salomé, March 11, 2021.

authorities. These findings came at a crucial time in the election race, and especially right-wing Colombia was hit hard (Janeksty 2022). While the inauguration of Gustav Petro in August of 2022 is an indication of change (Petro for example promises to fight corruption) (Stuenkel 2022), its impact on the deeply rooted trust in national authorities remains to be seen. The country remains deeply divided, as just a little less than 50% voted for his right-wing opponent. On top of that, the still powerful right-wing Alvaró Uribe already indicated that the results cannot be excepted as fair (Alsema 2022), fuelling the deep divide between left- and right-wing in the country.

To sum up, a lack of trust - on various scales in society, including citizen-government trust - is considered to significantly obstruct the creation of sustainable peace (Interpeace 2021; Kreutz and Nussio 2019; Kumagai and Iorio 2020; Wong 2016). Corruption plays a major role in this, as becomes visible in both research contexts: when allegations increase, the overall trust in the government deteriorates. A fragile rule of law, in combination with high numbers of corruption within the political arena, carries the potential to further weaken this political trust (TI n.d.; USIP 2010). The deeply rooted (severe) lack of political trust should be understood as a long-term obstacle, as it has the potential to delegitimise the government (see e.g., DIFD 2015) and to further deepen social divisions. Besides this however, there are other socio-political obstacles at stake that will be discussed in the following paragraph.

5.4.2 Socio-political obstacles

The socio-political obstacles that will be discussed here are social obstacles that have political root causes. Both Kosovo and Medellín cope with socio-political obstacles, though they play out significantly different. Where in Medellín the deeply rooted political division is a significant socio-political obstacle, in Kosovo the ethnic divide, in the form of influence from Belgrade and the internal integration of Kosovo-Serbs are important obstacles on an everyday basis. In line with this, this section first focuses on Medellín, before continuing with the influence from Belgrade and the position of Kosovo-Serbs.

First, in Medellín various interviewees indicated to not always feel 'safe' expressing their leftist-ideas. According to Alejandro (36, *estrato* 1/2) the situation in Bogotá is quite different; in the capital people have always had political discussions, and as a result "the right has such a fear for Bogotá, they feel that Bogota is leftist. But it isn't, it is progressive, people are capable to think in a 'barrio popular'. People talk politics in taxis, in bars… Medellín in turn? It is a forbidden theme, just for some people. Politics is corruption (…) there is a hate for politics, a laziness for politics, an apathy for politics".[180] The inability to discuss politics came up relatively often during the interviews, especially in relation to the divide it creates between left-wing and right-wing supporters. As mentioned, ex-president Alvaro Uribe still has significant influence in Colombia, so much that people refer to themselves as 'Uribistas', part of the 'Uribismo' political movement. This political polarisation has been inflamed by the peace process. Before signing the peace agreement, a

[180] Interview Alejandro, April 8, 2021.

referendum was held on the acceptance of the agreement where the majority voted 'NO' (Amaya-Panche 2021; Semana 2016). Despite this, after some alterations, President Juan Manuel Santos, member of the liberal party, signed the Peace Agreement without the popular vote (Final Agreement 2016; LaRosa and Mejía 2017). The NO-vote largely came from the right-wing Colombians who followed the narrative set by Alvaro Uribe, who refers to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as an "Impunity Agreement" (Olmo 2016). As a close ally of Uribe, the next president (2018-2022) Ivan Duque Márquez, openly disagreed with the agreement, arguing he would dismantle it (Sánchez-Garzoli 2019). While the Constitutional Court protects the implementation of the agreement,[181] the polarised narratives conveyed by the political elite deeply impact the rest of society, continuing to foster the over a century-old political divide. Next to understanding the political divide as a long-term obstacle, the deeply rooted power of the right-wing elite also significantly impacts the potential for an inclusive society. During the interviews almost 15% of the interviewees, spread equally over all *estratos*, referred to the power of right-wing elite as an obstacle in their everyday life (for right-wing power, see also: Calderón Castillo 2018; Coronado 2019; Vargas 2021). Voices critical of Duque's conservative government are subject to espionage, threats, and harassment (Fundacion de Libertad de Prensa 2021; Reporters Without Borders n.d.), a fear also shared by various interviewees. Congruently, the World Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders n.d.) states that "Colombia continues to be one of the western hemisphere's most dangerous countries for journalists". While the presidency of Gustav Petro is an undeniable change in this, it remains to be seen how much influence his government will have on these long-term obstacles.

While there is also a clear political divide in Kosovo, it is separated along ethnic lines. Among Kosovo-Serbs there is a common feeling of being 'caught in the middle': not integrated in Kosovo, but not fully part of Serbia. The most important reason for this, is the presence of the Serb parallel system, which continues to be influenced by Serbia (Calu 2020). In April 2013, the EU brokered "First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations", or simply referred to as the 'Brussels Agreement', came into effect (European Commission 2013). The agreement was perceived as a breakthrough within Kosovo as it seemed that territorial integrity had been secured and that parallel structures would be abolished (Calu 2020, 11). For Serbia however, it paved way for Serbian institutions in Kosovo while making sure not to fall behind in the EU accession process (Visoka 2017a, 194). As a result, Belgrade finally supported the participation of Kosovo-Serbs in Kosovo's local election that followed later that year. At the same time, Civic Initiative 'Srpska' (GIS), a new political party, entered the elections. The party was however completely financed and controlled by Belgrade (Calu 2020, 85). In the national elections of 2014, the party was replaced by the "Lista Srpska", which managed to obtain most of the reserved seats for Serbs in the 2014 national government (Fazliu 2017; Visoka 2017a, 93). Until today, Lista Srpska remains strongly supported by Kosovo-Serbs, at the same time, the party is fully backed by Belgrade: any political suggestion made by Lista Srpska, first passes Belgrade for approval, before being presented in the Kosovan parliament.

[181] The Peace Agreement can however not easily be dismantled; after cutting funding on specific bodies of the peace agreement, the Constitutional Court ruled this invalid.

While only 15% of the interviewees referred to the existence of the parallel system as an obstacle, about half of them were Albanian, the other half Serbian. According to Marko (35, Kosovo-Serb) "If you ask a Serb randomly who the president is, you'll get the answer that it's 'Vucic' [Serbian president]".[182] At the same time, Albanian people largely feel that the parallel system is affecting Kosovo at large. As Arben (33, Kosovo-Albanian) puts it "we are fighting the parallel system",[183] therewith hoping to tackle the perceived inequality between for example the Serbian and Kosovan health care system.[184]

What complicates the presence of this system further, is the fear that Belgrade imposes on a large part of the Kosovo-Serbs. Political intimidation is a very sensitive topic and only a few of the interviewees dared to speak to me about this, but the fear and control became undeniably clear during the periods of participant observation. This intimidation by Belgrade became especially clear in the Kosovo-Serb dominated Gracanica and (north of) Mitrovica. Most of the Kosovo-Serb interviewees living there indicated to not feel free to express their opinion. This feeling was once again confirmed by the news that a seventeen-year-old Kosovo-Serb football player from Gracanica would join Kosovo's national football team (Weizman 2020). In various conversations the story was shared concerning his parents; his mom was supposedly fired from her job and his dad received reprimands at work, both due to pressure of Belgrade-backed forces (Stojanovic 2020). While it is unclear what really happened, the story spread like wildfire and the grip of 'Belgrade' is felt by most of Kosovo-Serbs, in specific those working within the Serbian system. Lazar (38, Kosovo-Serb) explained he isn't afraid to speak about these political issues, and for a clear reason: he and his family don't work within the Serbian system.[185] Most of the Kosovo-Serbs however do and losing their job is not an option. The fear to not obey Serbian imposed rules, solidified after the murder of Oliver Ivanovic on the 16th of January 2016. Ivanovic was a prominent Kosovo-Serb politician for the Citizens' Initiative Serbia, Democracy and Justice (SDP), and he set himself apart from Belgrade influences. The murder is allegedly connected to 'Belgrade-backed forces' (Milivojevic 2019). Lazar (Kosovo-Serb, 38) explains that the last two years he would hear "do you remember what happened to Oliver Ivanovic", his murder was a "clear message for the rest of the people to keep their heads bowed".[186]

At the same time however, most of the people spoken to explain to not feel accepted by the Kosovo state. For about 10% of the Kosovo-Serb interviewees, this formed an obstacle to living peacefully. While also among the Albanians living in Kosovo the superordinate 'Kosovar' identity has not been fully accepted, there is a wider acceptance present than among Kosovo-Serbs. What is more interesting is that even the Albanians that do identify strongly as Kosovar, do not necessarily regard Kosovo-Serbs as fitting to the Kosovar identity (Maloku et al. 2016, 7). Nikola (25, Kosovo-Serb) for example explains to not feel respected, having the feeling that "Albanian people don't really want to accept us at all".[187] The Kosovar identity as discussed in the Ahtisaari plan, hence remains widely contested. This logically translates into

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182 Interview Marko, April 21, 2020.
183 Interview Arben, August 19, 2020.
184 According to a report from the International Crisis Group the hospitals within the Serbian health care system are "largely better equipped".
185 Interview Lazar, February 27, 2020.
186 Ibid.
187 Interview Nikola, February 26, 2020.

various obstacles - i.e., no Serbian translation, contradicting Kosovan and Serbian laws, etc., - that not only prevent Kosovo-Serbs from integrating fully, but also complicate everyday life. A Kosovo-Serb interviewee explains to have made the conscious decision to not become the 'general' director at their current job, where various Kosovo-Albanians work too, since as a Serb "it is a bit too much in this fragile area".[188] In other words, negative reactions are expected from both the Kosovo-Albanian and the Kosovo-Serb community. It is hence extremely complicated for Kosovo-Serbs to fully integrate into Kosovo, or to establish fruitful, long-term relationships.

This final section of this chapter confirms that despite seemingly dealing with the same obstacles (e.g., political polarisation, or distrust in government institutions), there are stark contextual differences between Kosovo and Medellín. Both countries are affected by deep-seated corruption, which has significant impact on the political trust. What further deteriorates this trust is more context-specific; in Kosovo governmental trust is divided along ethnic lines. While in Medellín polarisation also plays a role in the political distrust, this plays out along the lines of 'left-' and 'right-wing' political divisions, rooted deep in Colombia's national history. Distrust in governmental institutions in Medellín is for example influenced by corruption between the police and the gangs, or the lack of state presence in areas where gangs are prevalent. Despite these differences, the risks stemming from these obstacles, are however comparable: delegitimisation of the (national or municipal) government (see e.g., DIFD 2015) and social exclusion of specific groups potentially deepens social divisions and as such hold the risk to incite violence, and thus obstruct the creation of a durable peace.

5.5 Conclusion

As this chapter shows, the peace meanings discussed in the previous chapter, are strongly linked to the (various types of) obstacles to durable peace that are presented in this chapter. More specifically, in Medellín the prevalence of gangs has a large influence on the meaning of peace, which is in line with the obstacles: various obstacles are rooted in the dominance of gangs in the city. In Kosovo however, the ethnic divide between Kosovo-Serbs and Kosovo-Albanians first influences the peace meanings (mostly from the interviewees with a Kosovo-Serb background), and the divide trickles down to all categories of obstacles. This moreover demonstrated that while within the international narrative both contexts are considered post-conflict, and even 'at peace', this sentiment is not shared by most of the interviewees in both contexts. There are, as this chapter indicates, various obstacles to achieving a durable peace. Using the Resilient Peace System to analyse these, shows the presence of four categories of obstacles: 1) socioeconomic obstacles; 2) security obstacles; 3) sociocultural obstacles; 4) governmental and political obstacles. The obstacles discussed within these categories can moreover be largely divided into three types: 1) everyday obstacles or hindrances to peace as experienced by interlocutors in their everyday lives, 2) situational obstacles caused

[188] Due to the sensitivity of this information, the name of the interlocutor is omitted.

by unforeseen crisis, and 3) long-term obstacles deeply rooted in society. All three types are interrelated; everyday obstacles often indicate the presence of a deeper-rooted obstacle. Not being able to speak 'each other's' language, is an everyday obstacle for various people in Kosovo. Concurrently, this is an indication of a long-term obstacle to peace: the persisting parallel system in Kosovo. In Medellín, the spread of the unforeseen crisis of Covid has led to the situational obstacle of a virtual disappearance of tourism, which heavily impacted the economic reality of various people. This moreover links to the long-term obstacle of inequality, which in turns ignites protests as *El Paro* in 2020 and thus has the potential to lead to violence. Logically, long-term obstacles are long-term factors that are rooted in society and require structural changes. If translating the long-term obstacles in terms of conflict analysis, these would be referred to as 'underlying factors' or 'root causes' of the conflict. The conceptualisation of obstacles is thus strongly related to risks, which is where the link to resilience becomes clear.

While there are certainly similarities to the liberal peace paradigm (e.g., the importance of a strong rule of law), it is important to reiterate that the use of the RPS urges to understand the contextual differences, instead of following a one-size-fits-all understanding of democracy. The current situations in both research contexts are moreover an example of this: while Kosovo is built as a democratic state, there are still various (both long-term and everyday) obstacles to overcome. At the same time, Medellín is often presented as a success of neoliberalism, having turned from a violent and dangerous place into a vibrant and resilient city. But as this chapter shows there are a multitude of obstacles and risks still present in the city. While the ideals of establishing a democracy seem to be functional on the surface, both Kosovo and Medellín show that this is not sufficient to deal with deeper rooted obstacles which heavily impact the day-to-day in both settings. It is therefore important to move away from this general notion of liberal peace and understand peace as a system in which various components are intertwined, to reflect the complex situation. The final component of the RPS is the 'capacities for peace', which sheds a crucial light on potentials for peace already present in society; in contrary to bringing these capacities in a top-down manner, uncertain if they fit the local needs. The last chapter of this thesis will discuss the final component of the Resilient Peace System: the capacities for peace.

6. Capacities for Peace in the Resilient Peace System in Kosovo and Medellín

The analysis of the two previous components of the RPS paints a rather bleak picture of the peace system in both Kosovo and Medellín. Both research contexts experience significant obstacles to durable peace, which are in line with the findings that most of the interviewees do not believe to live in 'peace'. Despite this, there are crucial capacities for peace within both Kosovo and Medellín, which offer interesting prospects for the creation of a durable peace. These capacities are discussed in this chapter and have been inductively derived from data obtained through interviews, participant observation and documentary analyses. In short, this chapter focuses on the area that falls within the red dotted line in figure 6 below.

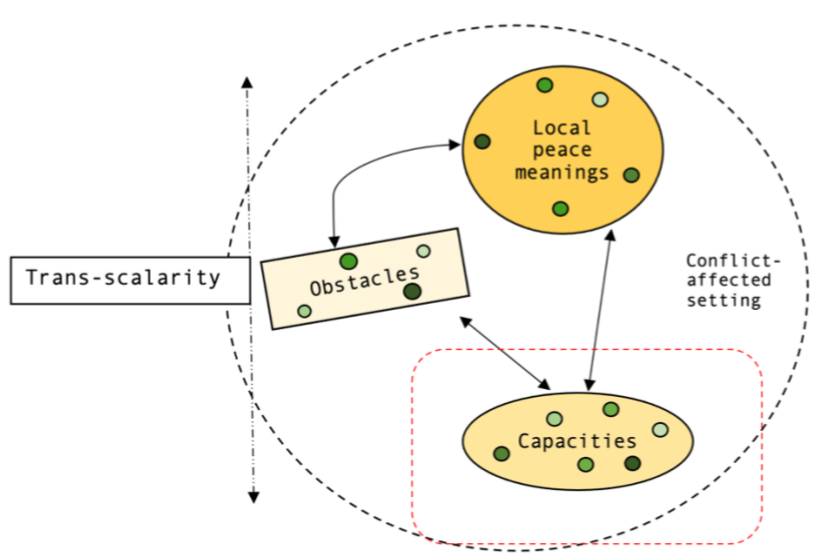

Figure 6: Capacities within the Resilient Peace System

In the early 2000s, the concept of 'capacity building' was at the centre of attention within the international peacebuilding community (Fukuda-Parr et al. 2002; Huang and Harris 2006; Wing 2004). Capacity building, or capacity development, was initially framed as the attempt to 'build' capacity within a specific post-conflict setting. In line with the liberal peace paradigm, democratisation remains at the heart of the capacity building initiatives. In practice this implies that an external party enters the field to 'teach' the local people liberal values and understandings (Chandler 2014, 31). As a result, an immediate hierarchy of understanding is created, creating a clear gap between the external perspective and the 'local' arena (Chandler 2017, 174; Pupavac 2005). What furthermore forms an issue is not only the possibility that a limited capacity is being built, but that by doing so, the local capacity is destroyed. Over the course of the last decade however, in line with the 'local turn' in peacebuilding, it has become acknowledged that capacity building should be understood in the context of the local situation, leaving the universal liberal peace notion behind. Despite

this, even if these peace operations start from below, the power remains at the externally intervening party. As a result, the aim to 'teach' or to 'bring knowledge' in order to construct peace has not changed, and as such no real change has been made. Trusting local knowledge and supporting the existing capacities is therefore crucial to move forward. During the current phase of peacebuilding, *practicing resilience*, ideas as adaptive peace, or everyday peace, come into existence, whereby the local is understood as the starting point of peace efforts. This is in line with resilience-thinking, where the focus lies on the capacities present within a system. In other words, capacity-thinking is inherent to resilience-thinking; resilience should be understood as the 'capacity of a system' to successfully cope with, or grow from, (unexpected) hardships. While within earlier generations of resilience-thinking 'adaptive capacity' was understood as the 'capacity to bounce back', back to equilibrium, this focus has shifted to understanding capacity as a way to 'bounce forward' (Chandler and Coaffee 2016, 5). By now, transformative capacity is understood as an inherent part of resilience; a resilient system does therefore not merely bounce back while maintaining the same function, it transforms and reorganises, aiming to better prepare for future events (de Weijer 2013; Harris et al. 2017; Luitjens 2021; Manyena et al. 2011; Menkaus 2013; Rodin 2015). While not always referred to as resilience, resilience-thinking becomes visible contemporary peace philosophies, because it emphasises the importance of *existing* local capacities, capabilities, and practices to strengthen a society from within (Chandler 2015, 13; Juncos 2018, 562; Juncos and Joseph 2020). The capacities, as third component of the RPS, should be understood as such: these are capacities observed during the fieldwork, and hence refer to capacities that are already present within the local context. The RPS hence does not focus on answering the question of how do we *create* capacities for peace but which capacities are *already present* in the field and how can these be used to counter the obstacles to durable peace. The focus therefore lies on finding the capacities; these are already present within each context but need to be discovered in order to build forth upon.

Within the RPS, the capacities should moreover be understood in relation to the obstacles to peace as presented in the previous chapter. Various capacities presented here, hold the potential to deal with obstacles discussed in the previous chapter; for example, a theatre community initiative in Medellín aiming at keeping youth of the streets, directly counters the obstacle of gang-recruitment, and on a larger scale even the wider gang presence in the wider city. This again links to the widely shared meaning of peace as *freedom from fear* and *movement*. Most of the capacities presented here, are those in possession of the local community, as conveyed by the interviewees. While there is no explicit reference to (individual) agency in this section, it is inherently implied in the presence of three categories (social capital, collective action, and the capacity to unlearn). In other words, the actors should not be viewed as passive and without agency, but as having the agency and thus being able to strive for self-transformation (Berkes and Ross 2013; Carpenter 2014; Chandler 2015). The more 'old-fashioned' understanding of adaptive capacity, or returning to equilibrium and therewith maintaining a status quo, is not discussed specifically in this chapter. Despite this, it is important to mention that this adaptive capacity is present in Medellín in relation to living in gang-controlled areas. Adhering to social rules as *ver, oir y callar* (see, listen, and shut up), make it possible to live in a city with high levels of violence; this normalisation of violence is hence a coping mechanism. Despite

this, there is also resistance visible of people who do not accept the internalisation of violence and are trying to change this. In line with the focus on transformative capacity, this chapter presents an overview of the capacities present in society that aim at overcoming obstacles to peace. Following this data from the research, in this chapter the transformative capacity has been operationalised in three concepts: social capital, collective action, and the capacity to unlearn. These three concepts are moreover interrelated and depend on each other to realise potentials for change. In line with the previous chapters, the capacities in Kosovo generally link to overcoming, or coping with the large ethnic divide, where in Medellín most of the capacities stem from the gang prevalence in the city. There is however a wide variety of capacities within both contexts, which will be presented within each category.

6.1 Social capital

Before the rise of resilience within peacebuilding, social capital was already considered a crucial building block for the creation of just and peaceful societies (Colletta and Cullen 2000; Cox 2009; Paffenholz 2009). Social capital, or the social network or 'ties' within a society, provide access to various resources (e.g., financial resources, access to information, emotional support) in situations of need (Aldrich and Meyer 2015; Bourdieu 1985; Elliott et al. 2010; Kilroy 2021; Putnam 1995).[189] While there is little agreement on the exact definition of social cohesion (Fonseca et al. 2019; Schiefer and Noll 2016), there is a general agreement that it is inherently linked to social capital. Within peace and development practices, social cohesion broadly refers to the 'glue' that holds a group (e.g., community or society) together through mutual trust, solidarity, and cooperation (Schiefer and Noll 2016, 584). Emile Durkheim (1893), often referred to as the earliest cohesion thinker, indicated that the absence of social conflict and the presence of strong social bonds are essential features of cohesion (Schiefer and Noll 2016, 233). In line with this, it has become generally acknowledged that mutual trust and cooperation are required to restore the social capital broken by conflict (Brown and Zahar 2015; Cromwell 2022; Kilroy 2021; Paffenholz and Spurk 2006, 30). Within the resilience paradigm, social capital is regarded to be a crucial capacity to bounce forward and transform effectively, as it provides access to various resources when needed. As such it is considered a key feature of resilience (Aldrich 2012; Aldrich and Meyer 2015; Tierney 2014; Uekusa 2017). The presence of strong social networks and intra-group cooperation are however not always positive as they "may become the vehicle of ethnic and parochial interests" (Belloni 2009, 10), which might fragment society and eventually undermine a larger scale social cohesion (Bourdieu 1985; Colletta and Cullen 2000). Within existing literature and policy documents references hence are made to *good* social capital, or *positive* social cohesion. Or to 'bridging' social capital, which refers to connections *between* groups, crossing ethnic, class or religious gaps, within a society (Gelderblom 2018; Kilroy 2021, 5; Putnam and Gross 2002), versus 'bonding' social capital which are "social networks, values, norms and connections that keep *homogenous* groups cohesive"

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[189] Within liberal peacebuilding, social capital is moreover often linked to the creation of a civil society and is thus seen as a prerequisite for effective democracies. The development of a strong civil society has therefore become essential to liberal peacebuilding practices, for which the creation and strengthening of social capital is regarded crucial.

(Chigas 2006, 18). The latter focuses on strong ties within a specific group, which is understood to have a more negative impact on (often divided) conflict affected societies. While there are certainly negative forms of social capital present in both contexts (e.g., in Kosovo there is strong social capital *within* ethnic communities, dividing along ethnic lines, and in Colombia group ties are stronger *within* social class than between), this section focuses specifically on social capital beneficial to durable peace.

Lastly, the promotion of social cohesion and capital is deeply embedded within the liberal peace paradigm. Over time however, this focus has received significant critique claiming that the creation of social capital by external actors does not benefit the peace and statebuilding process at large (Andrieu 2010; Paffenholz 2011, 138). This is where resilience-thinking takes on an interesting role, as it does not imply the external creation of social capital but focuses on the enhancement of social capital which is already existent in society. In line with this, this section presents the social capital both analysed through the method of observation and interviews during fieldwork. The first part focuses on the positive impact family has on the social capital present, while the second part discusses wider social networks.

6.1.1 Family matters

The institution of the family is generally understood as fundamental in the creation of positive social capital (Bourdieu 1973; Bubloz 2001; Coleman 1994; Furstenberg and Kaplan 2007; Winter 2000). The existence of trust and solidarity within the family both provide an individual access to crucial resources in times of need. This also becomes clear in the data from Kosovo and Medellín; the social capital derived from the family translates to interesting capacities for peace. Within both research contexts, family is moreover considered to be a cornerstone of society. This for example is visible in a tradition in Kosovo, as the oldest son always lives at his parents' home, together with his partner and children (von Glutz 2004). In addition to this, the capital derived from a large family also offers important benefits, as among others became visible when having to adapt to the closure of the schools in Kosovo as result of the Covid-19 pandemic. While a large part of the parents had to remain working, other family members are there to take care of the (now home-schooled) children. Benefitting from these resources prevents people from encountering (further) economic hardship, and hence aids with countering socioeconomic obstacles. Over the last decades this has however been changing, and especially in larger cities families obtain their own house more often. Bekim (24, Kosovo-Albanian) for example explains that a large part of his friends prefers to live in the capital, or at least to "be disconnected from the big families we have in Kosovo, we lack privacy (…)".[190] While over the course of the last decades various scholars (Coleman 1994; Harell and Stolle 2014; Putnam 1995; Schmeets and te Riele 2014; Schiefer and van der Noll 2016) have raised alarm over the declining social capital - due to among others globalisation, individualisation or increasing technology -, interviewees in Kosovo explain that the family remains at the heart of society. In other words: even though direct family ties might weaken, the existing capital often remains; family members mostly will help in times of need, for

[190] Interview Bekim, May 15, 2020.

example (financially) in times of job loss. The possession of this social capital is an indication of resilience on an individual, or small group level, making sure that individuals have the capacity to bounce back, or even to bounce back better.

The importance of family in Medellín was conveyed most by interviewees from the lower *estratos*. Various people explained that large family networks help to overcome obstacles as gang recruitment, or economic hardships. In line with this, various research (Drummond et al. 2019; Gutiérrez Rivera 2013; Luitjens 2020; Wolseth 2011) indicates that fragile family structures or exclusion from the family increase the potential of gang participation, and family capital increases the potential prevention of recruitment. During multiple conversations, people indicated that it is due to their family that they managed to stay out of danger. According to Juan Pablo (31, *estrato* 1/2) it is thanks to his mom that he is living a good life: "it was always my mom, who protected us and made sure we were taken care of".[191] A cohesive family, and the social capital that derives from that, help youth to avoid engaging with gangs, or, as many say, family helps you to 'stay on the right track'.[192] This not only has benefits on an individual level; limiting possibilities for recruitment also impacts gang presence on a wider scale and hence targets the more widely shared obstacle of gang presence. There are also initiatives that are more directly aimed at diminishing gang presence, which will be discussed as collective action.

According to various scholars, growing up in a cohesive family provides an individual with a wider toolbox for extending this social capital beyond the family (Asquith 2019; Claridge 2019; Coleman 1988; Putnam 1994; 1995). Having learned the values of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity within the family, provides an individual with a toolbox to build -positive- social capital outside of the family. Social capital is moreover understood as a prerequisite for the collective action that leads to (among others) these initiatives. The next paragraph will therefore focus on social capital beyond the family.

6.1.2 Strong social ties

The existence of social capital that extends beyond the family, provides various benefits to both the individual and the wider community (Aldrich and Meyer 2015; Kerr 2018; Uekusa 2017). The existence of elements related to social capital as trust, solidarity, and reciprocity within social networks, makes it possible for people to cope with obstacles discussed in the previous chapter. In both Kosovo and Medellín, people indicate to help each other in times of need. In Kosovo, this was most often described as 'when I will have a flat tire, there are enough people that I can call to help me'. Despite this, there were exceptions to the rule, as Slobodan (28, Kosovo-Serb) explains that within his community in Mitrovica, people generally help each other with whatever is needed: "If you need to go to the hospital and you can't wait for an appointment, and you know a guy that knows a guy, then you can always enter".[193] Irrespective of the research site, the (in the words of Slobodan) "tradition to help each other" is present everywhere. In

[191] Interview Juan Pablo, March 22, 2021.
[192] It is however important to point out that, even if families are cohesive, this is of course not a 100% guarantee that their children will not be subject to recruitment.
[193] Interview Slobodan, February 25, 2020

Medellín, this is especially the case within cohesive (lower *estrato*) neighbourhoods. Juliana's (57, *estrato* 1/2), who lives in a cohesive neighbourhood, explains that she experienced a difficult time when her two kids were small, and her husband too ill to work. There was barely any money, but "they knocked on my door, bringing lunch so that the kids would not miss out on anything".[194] She continues to say that because of this, she would never leave the neighbourhood, she has her whole social network there. These findings in both contexts are in line with earlier research (Aldrich and Meyer 2015; Elliott et al. 2010) that shows that social networks provide access to crucial resources in times of need. As Bourdieu (1985, 249) moreover argues, these are "profits which accrue from membership in a group" (249). In Medellín, the data show that people who live in *estrato* 1-3 refer more often to these profits, than the higher-class neighbourhoods. There are various factors that lead to a higher level of cohesion in *estratos* 1-3, for example the difference in the construction and set up of the neighbourhood. Due to the rapid urbanisation, tall apartment buildings rose in Medellín, especially in high(er) class neighbourhoods. El Poblado in an interesting example, as most of its inhabitants live in apartment buildings, often barely knowing their neighbours. This has significant impact on the existing social ties (Kaźmierczak 2012). In lower class neighbourhoods however, people often feel safe because they know by far most of the people in their neighbourhood or area and can often rely on each other. Luciana (late 20s, *estrato* 3/4) explains that when a reunion takes place in her neighbourhood, "people often share the food with all the neighbours. We say that within certain neighbourhood blocks, as I have seen it, there is a feeling of family unity".[195]

This 'family unity' is not always regarded to be positive, as mentioned, social capital within a specific group may lead to fragmentation between groups (Asquith 2019). This becomes for example visible in Kosovo, where most of these social networks do not cross ethnic boundaries. It is however also necessary to mention the importance of this ingroup cohesion, due to the presence of intra-ethnic tensions. As explained, strong intra-ethnic relations lay at the basis of any social capital (both within the in- and out-group) and are increasingly understood as important factor in peacebuilding (Chigas 2006; Visoka 2017a). Despite this, a strong 'ingroup' feeling might lead to the exclusion of other groups – in other words, it intends to lead to an increased level of "othering" (Eriksen 2002; Jensen 2011; Portes 1998). There are however various attempts in Kosovo to realise what is generally defined as 'bridging social capital' (Chigas 2006, 18), which will be discussed as a form of collective action in the next section. Before doing so however, an interesting example of bridging social capital at the University of Antioquia will be explained in the next paragraph.

6.1.3 University for peace

Lastly, an interesting place that facilitates the creation of bridging social capital in Medellín is the Universidad de Antioquia (UdeA). The UdeA has been referred to as a 'space of peace' several times during the interviews, as the persisting socioeconomic inequality is less present on the campus. Fernando (29,

[194] Interview Juliana, April 8, 2021.
[195] Interview Luciana, April 29, 2021.

estrato 3/4) expresses his wishes to replicate the university model in the wider city: "(…) we need to learn why the university, despite being a territory hit by the conflict, continues to be a territory of peace for those who inhabit it daily".[196] During the interviews it became clear that most people attending the UdeA would agree with Fernando. Various people explain that this public university is an interesting space, as it offers the opportunity to "meet people from many different worlds" (Valentina, 29, *estrato* 3/4).[197] Emiliana (27, *estrato* 5/6) agrees with this, explaining that the university "opened her perspective", as she could share experiences with people from all over Medellín.[198] Next to this, the UdeA offers various programmes that aim to start constructive discussions concerning the future, or on the notion of peace within the city and country (Universidad de Antioquia n.d.). According to many interlocutors, the university should be understood as a mini urban universe.[199] Within this mini universe, students are offered the opportunity to benefit from bridging social capital, which crosses boundaries that are often 'restricted' outside of the University grounds. The benefits of obtaining this social capital come in various forms, for example in the form of employment opportunities (Batistic and Tymon 2017; Ooka and Wellman 2006), or as access to various crucial resources in situations of need, i.e., when disaster strikes (Aldrich and Meyer 2015; Elliott et al. 2010).

In sum, this section indicates the benefits that arise from positive social capital in both Kosovo and Medellín, especially on an individual level. In other words, people clearly profit from membership in a group. Being able to fall back on your network, makes it possible to successfully cope with hardships (as school closure due to Covid, or economic hardships), but also potentially helps to bounce back better (e.g., access to job markets through the UdeA). Especially in the case of the UdeA the capacity for bridging social capital, whereby ties between adversary groups are created, becomes clear. This form of social capital, also referred to as 'good social capital' receives paramount attention in current peace and state building initiatives (Colletta and Cullen 2000; Gelderblom 2018; Putnam and Gross 2002). Despite this, various research demonstrates that external actions to create social capital directly aimed at peacebuilding have adversary affects, even potentially deteriorating existing capital. Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk (2006, 31) for example argue that "joint initiatives with overall objectives" might be more successful at creating social capital. In line with resilience-thinking, the RPS analysis focuses on discovering the already existing and informal versions of social capital, to enhance those instead of externally mandating new social capital to arise. Social capital is moreover regarded as a crucial aspect of resilience, as it, to borrow Putnam's words (1994, 7), facilitates "cooperation for mutual benefit". Here, the inherent link between social capital and collective action becomes visible (Chandler 2015; de Coning 2016; Otsuki et al. 2018). When the presence of 'good' social capital increases, the readiness to cooperate on certain issues increases too when people

[196] Interview Fernando, April 14, 2021.
[197] Interview Valentina, April 7, 2021.
[198] Interview Emiliana, March 16, 2021.
[199] This however does not mean that this 'mini universe' is the ultimate safe place in the city; there are still robberies, and as Ana (26, *estrato* 1/2) explains, how she knows of two social leaders, professors from the university, who have been attacked, leading to death in one case, over the last two years.

understand the mutual benefit arising from this cooperation. The next section therefore focuses on the various collective initiatives, that aim at countering the current obstacles to peace.

6.2 (Collective) action in the form of local initiatives

Within the resilience paradigm, collective action is understood as fundamental to increase resilience (Adger 2003; Arana and Wittek 2016; Berkes and Ross 2013; Chaskin 2008; Magis 2010; Taşan-Kok and Eraydin 2013). It is thus widely agreed upon that people must work together to overcome hardships and increase the transformative capacity. A large part of the policy literature on collective action focuses on overcoming the problem of realising this cooperation (Hardin 2015; Olson 1965; Rydin and Pennington 2000). While there is however no blueprint that guarantees collective action, Ostrom (1998; 2010) indicates it is crucial for individuals to understand the action as beneficial for themselves in order to get them to cooperate. Next to that, as becomes visible in the section above, social capital is a crucial resource for collective action. This also shows in both Kosovo and Medellín, where collective action is widespread. Both research contexts are fruitful grounds for various peace initiatives, both on individual and collective level. Next to that however, as part of the many internationally mandated liberal peacebuilding initiatives, Kosovo knows a large number of NGOs and CSOs that receive (or have received) funding through international aid. As however explained in the previous section, externally mandated attempts to realise collective action are not always beneficial, which will also become clear in this section.

In line with the obstacles and peace meanings as presented in the previous chapters, the initiatives in Kosovo focus largely on overcoming the ethnic divide. In Medellín on the other hand, most of the actions aim at limiting gang influence and coping with the high levels of violence. To provide a clear overview of the actions present in both contexts, these will be discussed per case study. There is however an important separate category that appears in both Kosovo and Medellín: protesting. This will be discussed first, before diving into each case study separately.

6.2.1 Organised protests

An obvious form of collective action comes in the form of protests, where people gather for the greater good (Jordan 2022; Landmann and Rohmann 2020; Putnam 1995). Where protests based on bridging social capital, hence crossing ethnic boundaries, are rare in Kosovo, in Medellín various demonstrations do take place that cross the dividing class stratifications. Despite this, demonstrations that cross the political boundaries of left and right remain rare.[200] Gloria (32, *estrato* 3/4) however explained that at the start of "El Paro", not only people from different classes but also people from both the left- and right-wing gathered to protest the announced tax reforms in Colombia.[201] These protests moreover took place during a wave of Covid-19 infections; despite this, the demonstrators took the streets demanding change. Through this

[200] WhatsApp conversations Gloria, Héctor and Mía.
[201] WhatsApp conversation with Gloria, December 6, 2021.

form of collective action, large parts of the city became united in a fight against the right-wing government led by Duque. The (personal) benefit of gathering in large numbers on the streets is larger than the potential risks the pandemic carries along. This confirms the collective action theory of Ostrom (1998; 2010), as people are more prone to participating when there is a clear personal benefit. While in Kosovo most protests do not cross ethnic lines, and at times even widen existing gaps, protests in Štrpce sparked hope in Kosovo and the wider Balkan. These demonstrations were joined by both Kosovo-Albanian and Kosovo-Serbs and were aimed against the construction of a hydropower plant that might deprive the citizens of water (Bytyci 2019; KosSev 2019). Ljiljana (22, Kosovo-Serb), a young woman from Štrpce, told me that "it was a wonderful story, because we all came together and collaborated".[202] While Štrpce is generally referred to as an 'example municipality' regarding interethnic relations, the data indicate that there is not a lot of interethnic interaction on a day-to-day basis. In line with El Paro, the personal benefit of partaking in this protest was thus important enough for people to bridge the ethnic divide. While the protest in Štrpce is an exception, a majority of the (both local and externally mandated) initiatives for peace in Kosovo focus on bridging the ethnic divide. The effects of this will be discussed in next section.

6.2.4 Striving for interethnic cooperation in Kosovo

It has been widely agreed upon that (rebuilding) bridging social capital between antagonistic groups in post-conflict settings is crucial for the establishment of durable peace (Colletta and Cullen 2000; Gizelis 2011; Kilroy 2021; Lederach 1997). This is also visible in Kosovo, as a strong focus is placed on the top-down discourse of reconciliation between adverse groups. The Ahtisaari Plan, which later formed the basis for the Kosovo Constitution, for example proposed the presence of a multi-ethnic democracy where all citizens are equal (UNSC 2007, 3). In line with this, in the period after 1999, Kosovo experienced a period of, what Kushtrim Vllasaj (2020, 334) refers to as, "NGO-blooming". The interference of the international community and the high amount of aid money that arrived with that, led to the rise of numerous (local) NGOs and CSOs aiming at peace, democracy, and statebuilding in Kosovo (Civicus and KCSF 2011; Pula 2005). While over the years the number of organisations shrank, Kosovo still knows a large and active civil society sector. CSO planning is however largely motivated by available donor funding. Over the years, donor priorities have however shifted from peacebuilding to criticising and monitoring political processes of the government (Visoka 2017a, 173). An interesting NGO that continues to work on overcoming the ethnic divide is Community Building Mitrovica, which is moreover the only multi-ethnic NGO in the country (CBM n.d.). Another example of organisations aiming at interethnic interaction is the presence of - for example - peace camps, or youth centre initiatives, where multi-ethnic activities are organised. The few interviewees who participated in these activities generally had positive experiences. Drita (20, Kosovo-Albanian) grew up in Rahovec, and explained that in the youth camp she participated in, people from Serbian, Roma, and Albanian communities joined, all hanging out together and having fun, without any

[202] Interview Ljiljana, April 5, 2020.

feeling of judgement. Despite this, it seems that most of the interaction during these camps is fleeting, as upon returning to their own social bubble, the connections seem to be largely lost. Drita explains that while she still has contact with some of the Albanian kids from camp, she lost contact with the Serbians kids.[203] While these activities might have a positive personal impact, in general the interactions are frowned upon by the wider community and moreover are not deep enough yet to build the trust necessary for more sustainable relationships. This is moreover in line with what has been discussed in the previous section; externally mandated initiatives to create social capital or realise collective action do not always have the desired effect. On the contrary, working on the sensitive issue of improving interethnic relations can be negatively perceived on both a personal, and an organisational level. There hence is only a limited 'safe' space to promote reconciliation (Visoka 2017a, 172).

Next to these externally mandated attempts at generating social capital and in turn collective action, there are various local initiatives for peace which are successfully constructed across ethnic boundaries. This research therefore analyses locally initiated capacities for peace that were mentioned during the interviews or as observed while in the field. The most common place where interethnic interaction happens, is at the workplace (Idrizi and Brand 2012, 10). Despite this, while over half of the people spoken to have social interactions with other ethnicities through work, only a small part has these interactions on a regular basis.[204] More often it is similar to the case of Nikola (25, Kosovo-Serb), who works for an NGO in Gracanica and would only engage in interaction with Albanians during larger scheduled events, as a conference.[205] During a presentation of a report on the Specialist Court in Pristina, it moreover became clear that these interactions often remain at a superficial level. Vlora (23, Kosovo-Albanian) however, paints a more positive picture; at the age of 16, she started working at one of the few tourist shops on the north side of Mitrovica.[206] Logically, she daily met Serbian people and aside from a few 'bad encounters', she enjoyed her time there and was happy to have a job. The few examples where people do cooperate on a daily basis as colleagues only present positive examples. While it could be assumed that people who would accept such jobs are more open to engaging in interaction in the first place, Teuta (28, Kosovo-Albanian) is an exception. While she tells me, she prefers not to enter the 'north' of Mitrovica, she does say: "I have two Serbian colleagues, and we laugh and talk, we communicate all the time!".[207] The need to obtain a salary, maintain a job, or reach a certain objective on the job, become visible in these interactions. When everyday needs are factored in, the barrier to engage in interaction becomes lower. A study by Orli Fridman (2019, 189) also confirms this, arguing that interactions in Kosovo coming forth out of shared everyday needs "may generate processes that go beyond the process of integration in institutions and towards integration in social life". It once again becomes visible here, that people are prone to participate in cooperation, when it benefits themselves sufficiently (Ostrom 1998; 2010). This however should be understood in a wider

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[203] Interview Drita, April 20, 2020.

[204] It is however crucial to keep in mind that a large part of society, still up to an average of 30% is unemployed and hence by default is excluded from this factor.

[205] Interviews Nikola, March17 & April 6, 2020.

[206] Interview Vlora, February 25, 2020.

[207] Interview Teuta, February 24, 2020.

sense than just employment, e.g., people also 'cross ethnic boundaries' to obtain specific items, or groceries. Interestingly, this happens most often among Kosovo-Serbs, living for example in Gracanica, Mitrovica, and Rahovec. Miloš (35, Kosovo-Serb) grew up in the 'upper part' of Rahovec, an area specifically protected by the KFOR after the war and due to ethnic tensions largely cut off from the rest of the town. As gradually things started to change, Miloš is now entering the major Albanian part of the town again, at least three times a week to "go to the mall with my brother, wife and kids" as there is "nothing to do around here [upper part]".[208] Milica (26, Kosovo-Serb), living in the north of Mitrovica, explains one of the things she loves about living there is the possibility to go to the south because "it is nice and looks like a real city. We usually go to shop there and eat there, because yeah, [laughing] the food is better there".[209] Related to this, is the evidence shared above that Albanians are increasingly visiting Gracanica, to go for dinner or to escape the city for a bit.

These everyday encounters in some cases, though still limited, lead to friendships that cross interethnic boundaries. This is in line with the notion of Paffenholz and Spurk (2006, 31) who argue that creation of bridging social capital, which is essential for collective action among divided groups, appears to be more effective when the objective is not directly aimed at reconciliation. This also becomes visible in the following cases of interethnic friendships. It was not until a few years ago and due to the nature of her job, that Yllka (29, Kosovo-Albanian) started to cross the bridge in Mitrovica. By now, she has a handful of good Serbian friends, and she loves to come to the bar on the north of the bridge to drink a beer, though never alone and certainly not with other Albanians. She argues that they wouldn't understand, nor want to come. She however loves to come to the north, also because "in the south I don't really have friends that want to go for a beer with me, not all of them drink because of religion".[210] At the age of 23, Slobodan (28, Kosovo-Serb) obtained a scholarship to study an MBA in the USA, where he was scheduled to live with six Albanian guys, all from Kosovo. While he was first hesitant, he explains the experience changed his perspective: "I got to meet people as humans. All were Albanians from Kosovo and we really got a friendship and relationship, and we became really close".[211] Despite the years that have passed, he still goes and visits them in Pristina. While regarding work, interviewees from all research sites experienced ethnic interaction, in relation to friendship, none of the interviewees from Gjakova mentioned the presence of interethnic friendships. While there is a common understanding that weak or limited interethnic bonds will present a higher likelihood for violence to erupt (Colletta and Cullen 2000; Varshney 2001), it is more complex than that. This is shown by a CDA study (Chigas 2006) on the ethnic violence in Kosovo of 2004, which shows that communities with more interethnic interaction did not manage to prevent interethnic violence from taking place. There were however many individuals who "took action, often at significant personal risk, to protect or help their K-Serb neighbours" (Chigas 2006, 19). While these actions were not sufficient to prevent violence from taking place, it demonstrates that bridging social capital, based on trust

[208] Interview Miloš, March 7, 2020.
[209] Interview Milica, March 10, 2020.
[210] Interview Yllke, March 10, 2020.
[211] Interview Slobodan, February 25, 2020.

and cooperation, provides important capacities to overcome obstacles to peace. It is therefore useful to analyse the existence of these local capacities, in order to strengthen them from within. In line with this, this last paragraph presents a number of creative (collective) initiatives for coping with obstacles to peace.

Various Kosovo-Serbs interviewees from Kamenica explained there is a lack of entertainment opportunities addressing them: e.g., there are no 'Serbian' cafés or shops, and theatre and movies are in Albanian. Due to this lack of entertainment, Sofija (36, Kosovo-Serb) explains the presence of a *culture house* is a warm welcome: "there we can also go to the movies, because otherwise it is mostly Albanian movies or English with Albanian subtitles".[212] The culture house is also used by a group of Serbian artists, who create exhibitions. Zoran (30, Kosovo-Serb) is one of the artists and explains that they invite Albanians to come and see the exhibition, because "art is very important, and ethnicity shouldn't get in between that".[213] Another place where art has been placed above ethnicity, is in Mitrovica. Merita (43 Kosovo-Albanian) works at an ethnographic museum based in the south of Mitrovica and explains that over the years they have managed to establish relationships with art collectives in the north.[214] Over the last years, various smaller exhibitions (mostly outside of the museum) have been organised, where people from different ethnic backgrounds got together. On a larger scale, the "Bridge Film Fest" has been organised by an all-female cast in Mitrovica for a number of years. As one of the organisers[215] explained to me "we started to screen some movies in the middle of the bridge, and it became a huge success". Despite its success, and the fact that people from opposite sides of the bridge came together, the festival was forced to close a couple of years ago. The organisers are however not giving up, hoping to soon use the bridge again as a point of gathering, instead of division.

In Kosovo, the collective action present is strongly connected to the concept of bridging social capital. On the one hand, social capital that connects across ethnic boundaries are necessary for collective action, on the other hand, collective action has the potential to create interethnic social ties. The local initiatives that are currently present in Kosovo mostly aim at the latter. There is moreover still limited bridging social capital in Kosovo, and it is crucial to strengthen this through capacities as collective action. The collective action in Medellín has a different objective; it mostly aims at coping with, and (the hope of) transforming the gang prevalence and gang-related violence in the city. Here the link between the obstacle of gang violence, in relation to the meaning of peace as *freedom of movement* and *fear*, becomes visible. This stark contextual contrast should moreover be understood as a strength of the RPS; the 'sum of the parts' of Medellín's peace system differs largely from Kosovo's peace system.

[212] Interview Sofija, August 21, 2020.
[213] Interview Zoran, August 25, 2020.
[214] Interview Merita, March 2, 2020.
[215] Interview Yllka, March 10, 2020.

6.2.3 Overcoming (gang) violence in Medellín

In line with Kosovo, the interventions in Medellín are rooted within neoliberalism, though with a large focus on the fight against international drug trade. Authorised by Bill Clinton in 2000, "Plan Colombia"[216], which included a package of $1.3 billion to battle the 'war on drugs'. The U.S. military training and funding during Plan Colombia "allowed neoliberal doctrine to enter into Colombia largely uncontested" (Dyer 2019). In the same period, the Mayor of Medellín Sergio Fajardo (2004 – 2008) introduced the social urbanism programme in 2006, which drove institutional change in line with neoliberal ideals. Social urbanism is widely regarded to be the reason for the 'miracle' transformation of the city, as homicide and violence rates decreased significantly (Abello Colak and Pearce 2015, 205; McGuirk 2014, 243-246; Naef 2020, 1-2). This moreover led to the branding of Medellín as a 'resilient city' (Naef 2020, 1-2). While these transformations are noteworthy and should not be denied, the implementation of these neoliberal policies have significantly increased the wealth gap in Medellín (Franz 2016, 13), and Colombia as a whole; it is the only major country in Latin America where the gap between rich and poor has widened (Villar and Cottle 2011, 119). At the same time, while the violence has reduced, the 350 gangs currently active remain in control of the city (Mercado 2020; EAFIT 2020).

While on the surface Medellín appears to be the example of a resilient city, the situation on the ground tells a different story (Franz 2016; Naef 2018; 2020). This 'myth' of resilience however results in limited international aid, while there are (international) NGOs active in the city, the majority of collective actions are bottom-up, locally initiated actions. Before highlighting several interesting initiatives, it is important to comprehend the effect that 'gun pacts', or a collective decision for a truce between opposing gangs have on the safety in the city (Dávila 2016, 111; Doyle 2019; Gualdrón 2013; Pablo Sepulvada 2019). Over the years, the importance of these types of local truces and peace agreements has become acknowledged among peacebuilding scholars, as they have the "predominant aim of managing local patterns of armed conflict and violence" (Pospisil et al. 2020, 4). As such, they have become increasingly better documented (Ibid; PA-X n.d.). Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of local truces, these specific gun pacts in Medellín often take place on a very local level, between two (relatively small) gangs, and as such are not officially documented yet. The information below therefore is based on research data from both this research, and other qualitative research. Various people[217] spoken to, though only in *estratos* 1 and 2, explained that the presence of these pacts significantly lowered the violence in the neighbourhood. In her research, Doyle (2019) argues that the presence of a pact between two larger gangs (*Los Urabeños* and the *Oficina de Envigado*) most likely significantly reduced the violence in various neighbourhoods. This specific pact seems to be made as both gangs "agreed to lower homicides to avoid the detection of authorities" (Doyle 2019, 156). There is hence a personal benefit connected to participating in the pact, which helps to overcome the collective action problem. Similar pacts also take place on a more local level,

[216] The total budget for Plan Colombia was $7.5 billion, of which the Colombian government originally pledged $4 billion, the United States $1.3 billion, and the European Union and other countries $2.2 billion (Villar and Cottle 2011 73).
[217] For example, Davíd, Natalía, Marcela, Emma, Mía.

between smaller gangs that hold power over a specific area. A news article in El Tiempo (2013) indicates that there is indeed a benefit for gang members to adhere to the pact on a personal level, arguing that those who do not obey the new pact are at serious risk of being murdered. While the pacts have a significant effect on the level of safety for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, there are a multitude of local initiatives that specifically aim at lowering the gang-presence within the city, of which several prominent ones will be discussed here.[218]

Two years ago, Gerónimo (32, *estrato* 1/2), together with several friends, erected an 'art school' in Comuna 13. They managed to find an empty space and turned it into a place where various art-related workshops are given. Besides the theatre classes, which are given by a theatre professor, "we teach rap, photography, manicures, pedicures, make-up, graffiti, painting, music and we also give psychological assistance to single moms".[219] The interview took place during a painting workshop, where various kids from around the age of 12 were gathered in a big room – where large sheets of paper were painted in various colours. Gerónimo explains that his idea came forth out of his own experience; when growing up he was able to attend another local initiative, called 'Casa Ami'. Casa Ami also provided workshops and taught him a different way of living through "opening doors to a much better place filled with love". Having that experience, he understands the importance of coming together as a community to provide alternatives to life on the streets. As such, this initiative is inherently linked to security obstacles in Medellín, and the meaning of peace as *freedom of fear*, and *freedom of movement*. By offering alternative options to youth, gangs potentially become weakened. Gerónimo's school is moreover doing well, there is a lot of interest, and through donations of tourists that visit the area necessary funding is gathered to provide all the classes.[220]

Another interesting initiative is a family-run football club in Bello, set up by Emiliano (61, *estrato* 3/4) in 2000. The football club is run by not only Emiliano's family (i.e., Emiliano, his son, and his daughter), but also by various people living in the area.[221] While the club started out small, Emiliano explains there are over 500 people enrolled in the club, of whom by far most are youth. As the club is situated in one of the most conflictive regions of the area, gang presence is not uncommon. Despite this, they, in Emiliano's words: "don't make us afraid, we are doing sports there on a regular basis, and they don't actually come to us". Emiliano moreover explains that their football club offers a 'different option', a path away from street and gang-life. On top of that, to facilitate help for the vulnerable youth that joins the club, various psychologists are active in the club – of whom Gloria (the daughter of Emiliano) is the psychosocial manager. As such, the club hence shows alternatives to the sociocultural obstacle of narcoculture. While the club started out on voluntary basis, by now the trainers receive a form of payment for their work. The team of psychologists however works on voluntary basis, aiding to the needs of the children and youth

[218] Due to the large number of interesting initiatives, it is impossible to refer to all. Other initiatives that came up were for example: Madres de la Candelaria, who fight for justice and the search of their missing children, and the theatre group Renovacion, which aims at 'keeping children on the right track'.
[219] Interview Gerónimo, April 29, 2021.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Interview Emiliano, April 15, 2021.

active in the club.[222] The football club is moreover an interesting example of an idea initiated on an individual level that turned into an initiative for change on family level, and by now has transformed into action on the scale of the community- and even the city.

Similarly, Casa Morada (n.d.) functions as a cultural centre where youth from almost all over Medellín gather. The space facilitates not merely opportunities to meet, but also offers adolescents the possibility for "exploration, creation, and expression" (Casa de las Estrategias n.d.). Casa Morada is located in Comuna 13 (San Javier), finds its origin in 2012, and is a project initiated by among others Casa de las Estrategias; another local initiative from four friends aiming to improve the situation through art. While Casa Morada has various initiatives, as art, music, or even computer and investigation workshops, an initiative that deserves extra attention is Morada Esteréo, an independent radio station with local editors from all over the city. Through the radio station, Casa Morada moreover regularly publishes an independent radio show/podcast called 'Morada Noticias' in which local editors[223] work together to present news from Medellín. The podcast is also used to broadcast campaigns, an important one being "nothing justifies homicide"[224]. Alejandra (31, *estrato* 5/6), an employee from Casa Morada[225], explains that this message is very important as people have lost a sense of value of a life: "just because you have a problem, you can take the life of someone else".[226] This is in line with the obstacle of the normalisation of violence in Medellín. The people gathering at Casa Morada also argue that this 'loss of value' is one of the major problems within the city. In each new episode over the course of 2021, the show would therefore start off by providing the main headlines, including the number of people killed the day before, aiming to create awareness among the listeners. People hence collectively cooperate through platforms like Casa Morada, to create a wider understanding that murder is not normal.[227]

Raising awareness is also the objective of the project called *La Nueva Banda de la Terraza*, or *The new gang of La Terraza*. The name refers to the infamous gang *La Terraza*, which is one of the most prominent gangs in Medellín. The initiative only started in April 2020 and is the result of cooperation between three neighbours in the neighbourhood of Laureles (Londoño 2021). The three neighbours project sentences, aiming to raise awareness and protesting the current situation, on walls in the city. After this, photos are taken and posted on the Instagram account called La Nueva Banda de la Terraza. The account quickly obtained followers, and as a result the pictures are shared widely on social media and obtain significant attention. An action that obtained specific attention is the projection of the number 6402, which indicates the number of innocent citizens killed by the army: the false positives. Through using social media, a small initiative set up by three neighbours becomes easily shared by a larger collective and as such reaches a large

[222] Whatsapp conversation Gloria, 02/12/2021
[223] These local editors are specifically referred to as "editors of the city" – aiming to include bottom-up voices to present 'real' news.
[224] "Nada justifica el homicidio".
[225] Casa Morada is part of a larger network of organisations and is run mostly by volunteers. In line with this, Alejandra is officially employed through Casa de las Estrategias, and as such is detached to Casa Morada.
[226] Interview Alejandra, April 16, 2020.
[227] Casa Morada is moreover an example of a local initiative that has started out on neighbourhood level but has grown to be an important institution within the area. There are several similar examples, where some have even evolved to prominent Civil Society Organisation (CSO) or Non-Governmental Organisation in the region. Coorporación Región[227] is an example of such an initiative, which came into existence in 1989 and has over time grown into a well-known CSO within the region of Medellín.

public, both within and outside of the city boundaries. Organisations such as Coorporación Región and Casa de las Estrategias also often share these specific posts, helping to widen the reach. And with success, during the interviews various people referred to the Instagram posts of La Nueva Banda de la Terraza, explaining how powerful it feels to be protesting this way. It here becomes visible that social media can play an important role in the creation of social capital (Rasmussen 2014, 104 – 125), in the form of a cohesive group of protesters who are eager to cooperate on this matter.

Lastly, as explained in the previous chapter, collective memorialisation plays an important role in the prevention of recurrence of violence (Barsalou and Baxter 2007; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2017, 19; Lundqvist 2019; Selimovic 2013; Sooka 2006). In line with the obstacle of a limited collective memory, there are various collective initiatives that aim at creating collective memory of Medellín. An important memory asset in Medellín is the museum 'Casa de la Memoria'.[228] The museum cooperates with a network of victims to present a detailed overview of the past, with the aim "to see to not repeat" (Casa de la Memoria n.d.). A similar aim can be found in the 'graffiti tour' within Comuna 13. The graffiti tour originates with local artists who spray-painted the walls with depictions of their past, often critical about the gang presence, around the electric stairs. Over the last decade, a large network of local guides has developed, offering tours of the Comuna, which mostly attracts foreign tourists. The tour is however beneficial to Medellín's citizens as well; which shows in Paula's (30, *estratos* 3/4) experience: "we really have lived in a bubble, we lived in a completely separated reality; how can this be the same city?".[229] Learning about these cycles of violence in Medellín have opened Paula's eyes to the hardships in her own city. Learning about the past makes it possible to become aware of deeply embedded structures, which is a necessary step to unlearn these and move froward. The capacity to unlearn will be discussed in depth in the next section.

In conclusion, there are various collective initiatives to overcome obstacles to peace in both Kosovo and Medellín, and in line with previous findings, they are vastly different per context. In Medellín, most actions aim to tackle the (effects of) the persisting gang control, which is in direct relation to various obstacles to peace discussed in the previous chapter. More specifically, it is largely due to the presence of gangs that most of the interviewees believe there is no peace in Medellín. On the other hand, in line with one of Kosovo's most prominent obstacles, most collective actions that happen in Kosovo focus on overcoming the ethnic divide. At the same time however, the lack of bridging social capital in Kosovo, complicates the presence of collective action. On top of that, due to the sensitivity of the issue, collective action happens more often in a setting where the mutual benefit of cooperation is considered large enough and when the focus is not directly aimed at 'bridging the divide' (i.e., a work setting). These forms of collective action are nevertheless crucial capacities within Kosovo's wider peace system, and it is therefore important to understand their presence. This is especially true as the capacity to (un)learn, which will be discussed in the

[228] The House of Memory Museum.
[229] Interview Paula, April 11, 2020.

last section, is crucial to overcome stigma, communal judgement or even fear, before engaging in action (Harris et al. 2017; Menkaus 2013). Especially for the younger generations in Kosovo, it is true that for most interethnic relationships people first have to overcome fear or communal judgement, before engaging in meaningful contact. In line with Kosovo, various initiatives as discussed above focus on unlearning learned behaviour (i.e., habitus) or stigma, regarding to gang-culture or stigmas regarding lower class society. In other words, people need to first become aware of the problem, before engaging in action to change this. This demonstrates the complexity of the peace system, as the capacities are interrelated and depend on each other. Understanding where these capacities can be found within both contexts, however, increases the potential to strengthen them 'from within'. The capacity to (un)learn behaviour is thus a crucial part of both Kosovo's and Medellín's resilient peace system. The last section of this chapter will therefore present the capacities to (un)learn that have become present in both contexts.

6.3 Capacity to (un)learn

The debate on nurture, or learned behaviour, is inherent to social science. Over the last decades, this debate has been broadened by the notion that 'if we can learn something, we can unlearn it' (Leinonen 2017; Maroney 2009; Rudman et al. 2001; Spivak 1994; Water 2013). In relation to the current Black Lives Matter movement, the idea that racism and white supremacy can be unlearned, has been widely accepted (Libers 2020; Montoya 2020). In both Kosovo and Medellín, capacities to unlearn deeply embedded thought processes or learned behaviour are widely present within society. The data concerning these unlearning capacities have been divided into two categories: people unlearning through unconscious actions, and people who take conscious decisions to do so. Both categories however indicate the value of overcoming deeply rooted stigmas, unlearning prejudice, and stimulating behavioural change in the larger context of the resilient peace system.

Especially regarding conscious unlearning, it is important consider the question who decides what will be unlearned. In relation to peacebuilding processes, there are potential discrepancies between what external interveners and local communities regard as important for building peace (Autesserre 2021; de Coning 2020; Firchow and Mac Ginty 2014; Mac Ginty 2021). In Medellin, for example, the normalisation of violence is deeply embedded in society and consequently it is not an aspect that will be locally argued as necessity to unlearn, which contrasts the understanding of peace by the international community. While not on a large scale, attempts at 'de-normalising' violence do however exist in Medellín, for example in the form of a local initiative by Casa Morada as explained above. As an effect from this initiative, there is a growing support from the local community that de-normalising violence is crucial to achieving a durable peace. It is because these attempts start at a local level, that community support is growing. In other words, these small initiatives can from the roots of wider change. This is in line with the words of Firchow and Urwin (2022, 3), who are that in order to become successful "interventions should be in line with community priorities". While initially these attempts might not be fully in line with, or even regarded as

sufficient according to Western expectations, it is important to support the unlearning capacities that start from within the community.

6.3.1 Conscious unlearning

In this section, several local initiatives that aim to motivate 'unlearning' in both contexts will be explained.[230] These are hence initiatives that originate locally and even though this might be on a small scale, promoting these local initiatives[231] instead of external interventions that promote behavioural change increases the potential of success (de Coning 2020; Donais 2012; Firchow and Urwin 2022). This does, in the words of de Coning (2020) not imply adding "local flavor to an internationally-designed model", it is the acknowledgement that peace has to be "home-grown".[232] In line with this, the unlearning initiatives discussed below are 'home-grown', both in Medellín and Kosovo. In Kosovo, the conscious unlearning capacities take place in relation to overcoming the ethnic divide. In Medellín, unlearning not only takes place in relation to obstacles as the high levels of violence and gang presence, but also regarding high levels of socio-economic inequality.

In Medellín, Camila (40, *estrato* 3/4) set up an interesting initiative specifically for children. She refers to herself as a 'popular librarian'; she started a project where she brings and/or reads from children's books in a more marginalised and stigmatised area of the city.[233] Camila learned about the project, called 'Street Library', from her time working with an NGO in Peru (for more see: ATD Cuarto Mundo n.d.). The street library became a big success in Medellín as well: before the pandemic about 50 to 70 children would show up daily, eager to read or to be read to. Reading from an early age on not only aids the vocabulary or literacy development (Hargrave and Sénéchal 2000; Kalb and Ours 2014), but also benefits the critical thinking capacity of children (Roche 2014) and it offers the possibility to learn different perspectives outside of their social and economic context. Through the project, Camila hence offers the possibility to both learn, but also unlearn deeply rooted beliefs and behaviour which for example feed the socioeconomic inequality in the city.

The deep ethnic divide between primarily the Serb and Albanian ethnic groups is generally deeply ingrained in Kosovo's population, whereby distrust towards the 'other' often prevails. Despite this, there are cases where this gap has been bridged, and where people have overcome their initial hesitance or fear. Elona (21, Kosovo-Albanian) lives in Kamenica and has been actively participating and organising interethnic activities from a young age. As a result, she has a lot of friends from the Roma and Serb communities in Kamenica. She knows that her wider social circle judges her because of this. While in the beginning she was influenced by this judgement, she now explains it "makes me so mad, I would like to say to them "what the hell is wrong with you". The hate they have seems to be growing". In line with Gëzim

[230] The activities discussed in this section do not explicitly refer to 'unlearning' in their descriptions; I use 'unlearning' as an umbrella term for activities aimed at changing perceptions, attitudes or behaviour.

[231] It is important to reiterate that 'promoting initiatives' does, in the words of de Coning (2020) not imply adding "local flavor to an internationally-designed model", it is the acknowledgement that peace has to be "home-grown". In practice, this means that the provision of specific required funding or book donations, necessary to keep the initiatives afloat, is sufficient.

[232] In practice this means that the provision of funding or book donations, required to keep initiatives afloat, is sufficient.

[233] Interview Camila, March 13, 2021.

Visoka (2017), I believe it is necessary to promote the people who are able to overcome and unlearn this deeply rooted prejudice, which could be done through "the formation of people's capacity to question and overcome the existing ethno-nationalist, top-down, elite-driven, externally controlled politics" (23). While this remains difficult, a group of people that is actively aiming to surpass the ethno-nationalist agenda, are those who intend to learn the 'other' (i.e., Serbian or Albanian) language. During the interviews, it became clear that about 14% of the interviewees are currently learning, or have learned, the Serbian/Albanian language. The people who actually speak both languages is slightly higher, as the older generations (who have gone to school when Tito was in power) have often learned both languages at school. Most of the older interviewees however indicated to not use the other language often, or not at all. As such, it is more important to focus on those that are currently learning, as they have made the conscious decision to do so, despite widespread opinions. In some cases, this decision has a positive trickle-down effect on the wider family. Milena (25, Kosovo-Serb) explains that she started learning Albanian in secret, so she could communicate with people at work in Pristina.[234] She had been thinking about a good way to tell her family, when they accidently found out when she spoke Albanian while shopping. While at first this was frowned upon, she laughs when she says: "Now I help them all when they want to go shopping (…) I translate for them". Her story shows the gradual acceptance of her family, and in a later conversation Milena even explained her sister has started learning the language too.

Miguel (24, *estrato* 3/4), living in Medellín, also had to deal with his social circle not accepting his decision to move to Altavista, a metropolitan area of Medellín, stigmatised as being poor and dangerous. Miguel explains he is "one of these people that needs to have lived it, in order to know what is really happening".[235] Despite that the people close to him were fearful of him moving there, it has changed his understanding of life in such areas: "I have come to know incredible people in Altavista, and I really saw the other face of Altavista (…) a really enriching experience". His decision helped him to overcome the negative stigmas attached to similar areas and showed others the dangers were not as severe as initially assumed. While Miguel hence took the conscious decision of moving, or Milena the decision to learn Albanian, their surroundings also unlearned (parts) of their initial beliefs. This however happened unconsciously, without their intent. Similar stories will be explained below.

6.3.2 Unconscious unlearning

Travelling, or at least leaving your everyday situation, plays an important role in opening your world and obtaining new understandings. In Medellín, people explain that their experience in travelling to countries outside of Colombia transformed their perception on the 'normalisation of violence' in the city.[236] Until Valeria (28, *estrato* 3/4) moved to the United States, her habitus was very much a product of Medellín society. Valeria explains how she needed to get used to living in a situation where she could safely take a

[234] Interview Milena, June 7, 2020.
[235] Interview Miguel, March 19, 2021.
[236] For example, Emma, Sandra, Valeria.

taxi at night.[237] It made her realise how aware she always needed to be of her surroundings in Medellín; being back in the city she always needs to be 'alert' for anything that might happen to her. This is similar to Diana's (39, *estrato* 5/6) story, who has lived both in Canada and Spain, and "in Canada I was never, never worried, and in Spain ever less".[238] Coming back to Medellín was difficult for both women in that respect. Being removed from Medellín's everyday situation, both women had been offered the chance to unlearn the learned behaviour of (among others) having to be alert always, of accepting this situation as 'normal'. This links to the deeply rooted understanding of *no dar papaya* (don't show the goods), though according to various interviewees resistance to this is growing. This is moreover not only the case for people who have been directly confronted with their internalised ideas through travelling; among Medellín's inhabitants the discomfort with *no dar papaya* is also growing across all *estratos* in the city. Natalía (33, *estrato* 3/4) for example explains that being robbed on the street while on the phone seems "unfair to me, it is like blaming the victims instead of the criminal, the person who robbed you. You are the guilty one…But how so?!".[239] Through sharing this opinion with others, awareness is created which helps other to change these internalised thoughts as well. In line with this, the de-normalisation campaign of Casa Morada as explained above, aims at changing the habitus of their listeners by raising awareness on normalisation of murder specifically.[240] Through unlearning the common ways to approach problems, the internalised behaviour, habits, and beliefs become visible to the individual and consequently could be 'unlearned' and altered (Bandeira de Melo et al. 2016; Bourdieu 1995, 15; Costa and Murphy 2015, 3-4; Maton 2008, 50-53). While this is a conscious attempt at unlearning, it hence aims to realise unconscious unlearning too.

In line with Diana and Valeria, Jelena (24, Kosovo-Serb) also obtained new understandings after leaving her everyday surroundings.[241] She grew up in Dona Gusterica, a small village in the Gracanica municipality, close to Pristina. While studying at the university in Niš [a city in Serbia] she got the opportunity to do an internship at a Kosovan Ministry in Pristina. This would mean going into Pristina daily by herself, which scared her at first. After her mom agreed to trust her decision, she decided to take the opportunity. Her uncle on the other hand became angry at her: "I told him I would take the opportunity and he was like 'Are you crazy, they're Albanians, they killed...!'". Despite this, she kept going. Over time, her fear went away and "now I go into Pristina freely". Slobodan (28, Kosovo-Serb) told me a similar story, as he went on a scholarship to the USA to study.[242] While in the USA, he had six Kosovo-Albanian roommates. Initially, he let prejudice lead him and was hence not particularly happy. Over time however, he became friends with them and now still travels from Mitrovica to Pristina to visit them. In these instances, taught behaviour (to fear the 'other') has been unconsciously unlearned and existing prejudices are overcome. In line with other capacities, this demonstrates that to act collectively, the profits of

[237] Interview Valeria, April 13, 2021.
[238] Interview Diana, April 22, 2021.
[239] Interview Natalía March 17, 2021.
[240] Building on this, the "capacity to forget" is largely present in Medellín. As explained in chapter 5, the lack of collective memory is clearly visible in Medellín's daily narrative. Despite this, there is a variety of initiatives on various levels that are aiming to change this, as the Casa de la Memoria.
[241] Interview Jelena, March 6, 2020.
[242] Interview Slobodan, February 25, 2021.

interaction have to be clear enough: for Jelena this means obtaining her degree, while for Slobodan this initially meant enjoying his time in the United States. Over time both Jelena and Slobodan expanded their social capital and in doing so, added to the bridging social capital in society.

This section demonstrates the importance of unlearning deeply rooted stigmas when aiming to counter the existing obstacles to peace. This is in line with a growing amount of research, which argues that the capacity to unlearn is often crucial in order to move forward (Leinonen 2017; Libers 2020; Maroney 2009; Montoya 2020; Water 2013). Despite contextual differences, the initiatives aimed at (both conscious and unconscious) unlearning are in line with the importance of social capital and the collective actions present. In other words: all three categories of capacities in Medellín largely focus on countering obstacles that stem from the large gang control in the city. In Kosovo however, the capacities aim at overcoming the ethnic divide persisting in the country.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the capacities for peace that are existing within Kosovo's and Medellín's peace system. It is thus not the question which capacities can be created to counter existing obstacles, but which capacities are already there that can be strengthened. In line with what Visoka (2017) refers to as an 'agenda for emancipatory peace', and with the general peacebuilding shift to the 'local', this chapter argues that "local needs and perspectives should be given primacy over external blueprints and geopolitical interests" (226). As explained in the introduction, various attempts at 'building capacity' through external actors, did not have the desired success, often because they do not meet the local necessities. The two previous chapters have presented the local necessities, both in the form of local peace understandings and the obstacles to peace present. In turn, the capacities discussed here have proven to be largely in line with the most essential obstacles and peace meanings.

It is moreover noteworthy to mention that the most prevalent capacities largely link to long-term obstacles which are deeply rooted in society. Of course, the initiatives for peace instigated locally, are often a reaction on the everyday obstacles or hindrances to peace which the interlocutors experience directly in their daily lives. Despite this, two crucial long-term obstacles to peace (the ethnic divide in Kosovo and the gang prevalence in Medellín) motivate most of the initiatives present. There are barely any local attempts directly aimed at overcoming socioeconomic obstacles, which form an important category in both research contexts. This is not surprising however, as it is near to impossible to revitalise an economy or tackle socioeconomic inequality through bottom-up initiatives alone. This should be understood as an indication of the importance to engage other peace scales, as decisions made on the municipal, national, or even international scale could potentially increase employment opportunities. Local capacities that do fall within this category should however not be underestimated: social capital is important resources in times of economic hardships in both Medellín and Kosovo. On top of that, in Kosovo interethnic interaction increases when this is deemed a necessity for employment. At the same time, working to unlearn deeply embedded prejudice, also aids in the lowering of minority discrimination, which in turn would work in

favour of these specific groups on the job market. In Medellín, protests like *El Paro* also aim at countering what is believed to be a corrupt institution and potentially with success: while no direct link, the election outcome of 2022 promises a change in political scenery on a national level. At the same time, (un)learning initiatives, like the street library or Casa de la Memoria, aim at overcoming stigmas that perpetuate the extreme socioeconomic inequality. This chapter moreover demonstrates that there are interlinkages between all the different categories of capacities explained throughout this chapter; social capital is an important resource for collective action, while at the same time, collective action can lead to the creation of social capital. The capacity to unlearn is inherently linked to this, as it is an important capacity to overcome obstacles to the creation of (bridging) social capital such as deeply embedded prejudice. Next to that, the capacity to unlearn can both take place as an individual initiative and in the form of collective action. Through analysing the capacities within these different categories, it becomes possible to observe in what way the capacities are related, and how they build forth on each other. It is crucial to know this, when wanting to strengthen them from within.

Finally, while not identified as a specific capacity, the wish for a better future has been strongly articulated by various interviewees. While in some cases it might seem that people are merely tired of the situation, it is especially among the younger generation in both Kosovo and Medellín that the hope for a better future remains. In the words of Fatime (21, Kosovo-Albanian): "You killed my great, great, grandmother, who gives a shit! We have to go forward; we don't want to go backwards".[243]

[243] Interview Fatime, February 25, 2020.

7. Conclusion: Revisiting the Resilient Peace System in Kosovo and Medellín

The initial research proposal that I submitted over four years ago focused on building a 'resilient post-conflict society' through citizen participation. Through focusing on the relation between a resilient post-conflict society and citizen participation, the proposed research aimed to offer new opportunities at overcoming the peacebuilding impasse by bridging the existing knowledge gap between peacebuilding and resilience. The idea was that bridging this gap would provide opportunities for achieving 'post-conflict resilience', or: the ability of a post-conflict society to cope with (post-)conflict tensions to avoid conflict from erupting again. Within this process, the role of citizen participation was essential. This however implied that a society 'becoming resilient to conflict' is a) possible, and b) an inherently positive undertaking. After engaging with the widespread resilience critique it however became abundantly clear that this original focus had to be adapted. As explained in chapter 2, this critique mainly evolves around two (largely intertwined) arguments: the use of resilience projects as a disguise for neoliberal practices, and the *responsibilisation of victims*. Various research demonstrates that within government practices, or even within international projects, resilience is often used as a disguise of a neoliberal agenda focusing on the principle of competition, "whereby the idea is normalized that individuals are ultimately responsible for managing their own risks and adversities" (Luitjens 2021, 10). As a result, root causes of the conflict are often left aside, whereby structural injustices remain present in society (Chandler and Reid 2018; Grove 2013; Juncos and Joseph 2020; Koonings and Kruijt 2015; Uekusa 2017). When moreover focusing on local capacities, the accountability of the peace process shifts from the INGOs and/or authorities to those affected (e.g., Chandler and Reid 2018; Harris et al. 2017; Joseph 2013, 2018; Juncos and Joseph 2020; Koonings and Kruijt 2015; Vilcan 2017) as the focus is placed on the "capacity of affected communities to recover with little or no external assistance" (Manyena 2006, 433). Despite this widespread controversy, it is important to not deny the potential positive contributions that resilience-thinking offers to peacebuilding, both on a theoretical level and in practice (e.g., de Coning 2018, 2020; Grove 2018; Juncos and Joseph 2020; Kastner 2020; Koonings and Kruijt 2015; Menkhaus 2013). The existing critique demonstrates the necessity to restructure current resilience practices, and as such became the starting point of the development of the Resilient Peace System.

The conceptualisation of the RPS has been an inductive process, whereby the data obtained both in the field and through documentary analysis have been leading its conception. Consequently, the conceptualisation of the RPS has altered over the course of this research, also influenced by the lively academic debate (e.g., Chandler and Coaffee 2016; de Coning 2016; Juncos and Joseph 2020; Juncos 2018; 2018; Mac Ginty 2021; Väyrynen 2021). This last chapter is divided in four parts, first, a summary of the key findings of this research will be presented. Hereafter, the academic implications of the Resilient Peace System will be explained, highlighting the academic contributions of this research. This is followed by the

policy implications, where the possible contributions to the field are discussed. Lastly, the conclusion will provide several opportunities for future research.

7.1 Summary of Key Findings

The RPS research is rooted in the existing critiques and debates within the peacebuilding and resilience paradigms. Peacebuilding finds itself at difficult times: peace interventions have not had the success hoped for, and due to the complexity of conflict-affected situations, academia lacks the capacity to holistically reflect this. With this thesis, I argue for the necessity of new analytical tools - that incorporate (academic) debates often held in isolation - to better comprehend the strengths and weaknesses within conflict-affected situations. And, following from this, I believe the RPS is a crucial step towards meeting this necessity. There are several ways in which the RPS engages with the current peace and resilience critique This is first of all done through understanding peace, instead of communities or societies, as a complex system. The concept of resilience is rooted in complex system thinking, whereby concepts that have previously been studied in isolation are understood as part of a system. Analysing a system of peace through a resilience-lens hence lays bare often hidden structures and interdependencies, and as such can add to current understandings of and potentials for peace. Next to that, understanding peace as a system helps to avoid the risk of shifting accountability and 'responsibilising' victims for the creation of peace, as it is no longer the community that is expected to become resilient. The decision to understand 'peace' as a system, instead of a group of people as a community, was the first step in the conceptualisation of the RPS. At this stage, it was however still meant as an analytical tool that could be used to observe the necessities of a particular peace system, with the aim to create a resilient peace. Over the course of the research however, this earliest conceptualisation of the RPS proved an impossible task, as will become clear in the following paragraph.

7.1.1 Achieving Resilient Peace

The aim to achieve a resilient peace, would mean that the results of the research in, let's say Kosovo, could be used to create a *resilient peace*; a peace that could withstand risks of renewed conflict. In this version, the RPS had moreover been operationalised into various concepts (among others adaptive capacity or collective action) that had been directly derived from resilience literature. This however meant that the research became less inductive, as this implied that in while the field I would specifically search the capacities that fall into these categories. This led to an impasse that I was trying to avoid; using a universal notion of resilience and peace to observe a local situation. It however quickly became clear that doing so would prevent me from using a context-sensitive approach. As such, two things became clear: first, when using the RPS to analyse the status of a peace system, this should be an inductive, bottom-up process. It depends on the local context which capacities are present. To understand the layout of a peace system within a specific location, the framework had to be 'filled in' to a minimum degree. The second point that presented itself, is that creating a 'resilient peace' should not be the objective. Both among practitioners and within peace and conflict studies, the focus has largely been placed on the eradication of conflict to achieve peace

(e.g., Davenport et al. 2018; Jarstad et al. 2019; Mac Ginty 2006). In line with this, I first defined resilient peace as: "an everyday, localised form of peace existing of various indicators that change over time and place, that is supported by different levels in society, that can adapt to and learn from endogenous and exogenous shocks in order to bounce back better". Or, in other words, resilient peace is a form of peace that can cope with (renewed) tensions of conflict or violence, to not (re)lapse into conflict. While this is theoretically appealing, the translation to practice lacks significantly. Moreover, as there is no agreement upon an effective way to measure peace (Jarstad et al. 2019, 4) or social resilience (Copeland et al. 2020), let alone resilient peace, it was an unrealistic aim. In addition, and in line with earlier studies (e.g., de Coning 2018; 2020; Jarstad et al. 2019; Richmond and Pamina 2014), this research also demonstrates that peace largely depends on the local situation: peace in Kosovo is different from peace in Medellín. But, most importantly, focusing on achieving a resilient peace obscures the potential of the RPS, which is to add to the current understanding of peace and to present new opportunities to add to the creation of a durable peace within a specific context. In other words, the RPS aims at unpacking the present-day complexity of peace processes and does not aim at creating a resilient peace.

7.1.2 Resilient Peace System Operationalised

Continuing the current debate concerning local voices in peacebuilding and the application of a resilience-lens, the Resilient Peace System has been operationalised into three components: 1) local peace meanings, 2) obstacles to peace, and 3) capacities for peace. While not a separate component, the trans-scalarity of peace runs through the whole system; the influence of various peace scales on the overall system of peace is an important part of the analysis. This paragraph will quickly reiterate the origins of these components. To begin with, the first component stems from the current peacebuilding debate whereby local voices are deemed curial to provide critique on the generalised top-down vision of peace (de Coning 2018; Firchow 2018; Firchow and Selim 2022; Leonardsson and Rudd 2015; Mac Ginty 2021; Richmond 2018; 2021; Stepputat and Moe 2018). Universalised notions of peace risk the chance of not being accepted locally, and hence cannot be sustainable. It is therefore crucial for the RPS to incorporate local peace meanings to understand what peace resembles within the local context of the peace system. Secondly, obstacles to peace directly link to the importance of 'risks' within resilience-thinking (Heng 2006; Juncos 2018; Walker and Salt 2006). In current work on peace and resilience, the focus lies on avoiding risks of conflict. For example, mitigating and reducing 'risks of conflict' are an inherent part of the United Nations peacekeeping mandate (United Nations n.d.a). When using the RPS as an analytical tool, peace instead of conflict is placed at the centre of attention. This means that instead of focusing on risks of conflict, the RPS explores 'obstacles to peace'. Obstacles to peace incorporate a broader understanding of the situation, it goes beyond merely focusing on risks of (re)lapsing into conflict. Lastly, capacities are at the core of all resilience operationalisations, and are mostly referred to as adaptive capacity (e.g., Carpenter 2014; Chandler 2012; 2017; de Coning 2018; Folke et al. 2006; Holling 1973; Joseph and Juncos 2020; Taşan-Kok and Eraydin 2013). This should be understood in a broad sense, referring to capacities that are present within a system

of peace, which help to transform to a better condition. To emphasise the importance of transformation, this research refers to transformative instead of adaptive capacity. It is important to reiterate that the capacities refer to those capacities that are already present in a specific context; it is about *discovering* these capacities and understanding in what way they link to obstacles and peace meanings, not about creating capacities following external notions of peace. This is in line with Mac Ginty (2021), who writes while "ground-level conflict disruption" can only be conducted by local actors, it can however "be supported by external actors" (208).

The focus on peace scales is crucial to provide a holistic view, and reflect the complexity, of any peace system. This implies that peace takes place, and is influenced by, various societal scales. This links to the notion of trans-scalar peace by Millar (2019), who argues it is crucial to understand in what way different societal scales interact and influence each other, in order to realise effective change. Simply put: if at community level successful attempts at peace are made, but the national scale does not support this, or even contradict it, there is a low chance of sustaining this form of peace. This is in line with de Coning's (2020) argument on Adaptive Peace Operations, which is an "approach where peacekeepers, together with the communities and people affected by the conflict, actively engage in a structured process to sustain peace by employing an iterative process of learning and adaptation" (854). Despite not referring to this directly, de Coning's approach recognises the importance of incorporating different scales, to create what he refers to as 'adaptive peace'. The RPS however shows that these scales are depended on the local context and are thus not similar in each peace system. Where in Colombia the 'neighbourhood scale' plays a significant role in the system, this is not the same for Kosovo. While the other components are discussed in separate chapters, peace scales are integral to each of the components. The decision has therefore been made to include a focus on the peace scales in each of the empirical chapters, without devoting a separate chapter to it.

I want to reiterate that the intended outcome is not to create a 'resilient peace', but to provide insight into the weaknesses and strengths of a particular system of peace. In line with this, I believe that it is important to shift the attention from focusing on solving 'conflict' to realising peace. As explained, in the current practice of conflict analysis, the focus lies on understanding the root causes of conflict within a local context to resolve conflict and avoid renewed tensions or conflict (UNDP 2016b). As a result, local meanings of peace and the capacities for peace that are inherent to the local context are not accounted for. The RPS does reflect a holistic picture of a conflict-affected context, and as such justifies the introduction of yet another analytical framework. This justification will however be explained more in depth in the following paragraph.

7.1.3 Another analytical tool?

Using the RPS as an analytical tool, exposes potential focal points of new peace efforts within a specific conflict-affected context. Developing yet another analytical tool however raises important questions, in particular regarding the added value of the RPS. As clarified above, the RPS engages with existing

peacebuilding literature and as such there are strong links to existing peace approaches and frameworks. One could argue that the RPS does not hold added value, since the components are derived from other research. While it is true that all components are rooted in earlier research, the RPS sets itself apart as it presents an integrated approach. Integrating the different components into one system provides the opportunity to add to new understandings of peace: the RPS not only analyses these components separately but reflects on the way in which these components are interrelated and are depended upon each other. In contrary to existing debates which observe these components often in isolation, the application of a resilience-lens provides the opportunity to observe the sum of its parts. Doing so, makes it possible to observe connections between the necessities and possibilities for peace, which would otherwise have been hidden.

In other words: through presenting peace as a complex adaptive system, the relation between the three components and the different peace scales is presented, and as such a holistic view of peace becomes visible. As such, the RPS is both an epistemological approach to add to the existing academic peacebuilding debates, and it offers opportunities for improving existing peace interventions. The next two sections will therefore highlight the academic and policy implications that arose from research into the RPS.

7.2 Academic implications of the RPS

Within the current academic conundrum of peacebuilding, there are three main arguments that the findings of this research contribute to the debate. First of all, while the liberal peacebuilding paradigm is currently often disregarded altogether as being 'bad', this research demonstrates that it does contain valuable lessons. Second, despite this, we do need to step away from universalised understandings of peace and focus on local peace meanings. And, lastly, the valuable contributions that resilience-thinking brings to peace studies can be divided into two main points: it offers the opportunity to present a holistic overview of the complexity of conflict-affected situations, and through understanding peace as a complex adaptive system the issue of 'responsibilisation of victims', or the use of resilience as neoliberal strategy, is avoided.

First, it is a commonly shared believe among academics that the liberal peace paradigm has proven insufficient to deal with the complexities of present-day conflicts and has not managed to deliver durable peace; as a consequence, various academics argue peacebuilding is in a 'post-liberal' phase (e.g., Chandler 2017; Mac Ginty 2008; Olaf 2014; Richmond 2009; Richmond and Mac Ginty 2015; Visoka and Richmond 2017). While it is hard to argue with this, in peace practices there is still a strong focus on building liberal institutions and the creation of democracy (e.g., Autesserre 2021). This also becomes visible in the findings of this research, as the analysis in Kosovo and Medellín both present strong elements of liberal peace; in both contexts, for example, peace as freedom is by far the largest category of local peace meanings. On top of that, while not indicated as a *meaning* of peace, both Kosovo and Medellín cope with justice *obstacles* to peace. In Medellín moreover, the political polarisation between left and right is often brought up and in Kosovo the obstruction of Kosovo-Serbs to vote freely in Kosovo's elections are indications of democratic

instability. These findings indicate that referring to a 'post-liberal' phase in peacebuilding does not paint the full picture, as parts of the liberal paradigm continue to ring true on a local level. In other words, the liberal peace paradigm does hold interesting values, and should therefore not be disregarded all together. This is in line with various scholars (e.g., Gill-Tinye 2022; Heathershaw 2013, 275; Paris 2010, 5; Selby 2013, 58–59) who argue that there is a necessity to adapt liberal peace to the current situations, i.e., by placing less attention on the values of democracy and free market. While I agree that is an important step in the right direction, the focus remains on the 'export of liberalism', which continues to feed the creation of unequal power relations. On top of that, liberal peace is often understood as the 'end-stage', which can be achieved by following a one-size-fits-all understanding of democracy and peace. This research demonstrates it is crucial to start from the local: through analysing the local meanings and necessities, it becomes clear which 'liberal peace necessities' are present within a specific context. These necessities can diverge significantly between different contexts: while both Kosovo and Medellín show elements of the liberal peace paradigm, there are vast differences between these two contexts. The importance of starting at the local, also becomes apparent in the second contribution of this research: the necessity to move away from universal, generalised understanding of peace. Most of the present-day peace practices are rooted in the conceptualisation of peace as either positive or negative. The objective of achieving positive peace is largely based on generalised understandings of peace; whereby the absence of structural and cultural violence is of importance (Galtung 1969). As the research data indicate, it is more complex than the dichotomy between negative and positive peace. In both Medellín and Kosovo peace is understood in various ways; indicating that striving for 'positive peace' does hence not cover the complexities specific to the context. As such, these findings are in line with, and add to the current debate in peace studies (e.g., Firchow 2018; Jarstad et al. 2019; Mac Ginty and Firchow 2014; Väyrynen 2021).

Lastly, by merging the current resilience paradigm into existing peacebuilding debates, two main contributions to peace studies come forward. First of all, through understanding peace as a complex adaptive system, and using a resilience lens to analyse this, it becomes possible to reflect the dynamics and interdependencies between components that have previously been studied in isolation. It becomes clear that the road to peace consists of various components that continuously interact with and depend upon each other. When aiming to achieve peace, it is crucial to comprehend a peace system holistically. And as this research demonstrates, using the resilience lens offers the opportunity to do so. Lastly, the question of accountability is an important issue within the current peace debates (Chandler 2017; Chandler and Reid 2018; Harris et al. 2017; Juncos and Joseph 2020; Richmond 2018). The local is often placed at the centre in current peace interventions which leads to a shift in accountability of the peace process from the INGOs and/or authorities to those affected. Consequently, locals can be held accountable for the success or failure of peace, in other words: the *responsibilisation* of victims (Vilcan 2017). By placing the focus on peace, instead of the community, and through stepping away from the objective of 'creating resilience', this risk can however be avoided. At the same time, resilience is used as a disguise of a neoliberal agenda which builds forth on the principle of competition; whereby individuals are again responsible for managing their own

risks. Doing so however ignores the (deeply rooted) obstacles to peace, which are a crucial part of the RPS. Again, through shifting this focus to analysing the peace system, the risk of using the RPS as a neoliberal disguise is limited.

The academic peacebuilding sector does not exist in isolation from practice. Despite this, academic research often remains on a theoretical level, but it is crucial to build the bridge between academia and practice. Even more so when bridging the divide increases the potential of the realisation of durable peace. The following section will therefore focus on the policy implications of this research.

7.3 Policy implications of the RPS

As stated in the introduction, I believe that academic research, especially within the peace and conflict paradigm, has the crucial capacity to inform and guide peace policies. In line with this, the potential to add to the creation of more fruitful peace efforts has been the main motivator of this research. As such, there are several policy implications that the RPS brings to the table, which will be highlighted in this section. First, several general implications will be explained. After this, an example will be provided of the RPS in practice: opportunities for peace that arose from the RPS will be explained for Kosovo and Medellín.

First and foremost, using the RPS as an analytical tool provides a more comprehensive understanding of the necessities for peace within a specific context. On top of that, as the RPS reflects the local understandings of peace, it shapes the possibility to work towards a peace that is locally supported, and therefore is more durable. As explained in the previous section, it is important to incorporate local voices, as not doing so might lead to a gap between the local wishes for peace and externally mandated peace interventions. It is of course undeniable that the RPS might demonstrate discrepancies between the agenda of the international community, and the contextualised findings from the RPS. While I do not deny that this is in fact difficult, I do believe, in line with various contemporary peace scholars (e.g., Autesserre 2021; Dzuverovic 2017; Firchow 2018; Mac Ginty 2021; Richmond and Visoka 2021) that it is crucial to better incorporate local voices. This because merely imposing external ideas, even if they appear best according to the international community, has proven to not achieve success when these are not supported locally. I therefore believe we need to build forward on the existing local capacities, in order to tackle obstacles to the durable peace.

Conflict analysis is still a widespread stool to better grasp the local context before designing projects. Despite this, the current use of conflict analysis fails to reflect a holistic picture of the situation because it neither incorporates local understandings of peace, nor does it reflect the capacities for peace already present within the peace system. When using the RPS to conduct a *peace system analysis,* the capacities show what is already present within a specific context, and as such offers the opportunity to build forth (i.e., through financial support, or by providing manpower) on existing attempts for peace. On top of that, the RPS analysis also demonstrates the ways in which the different components are interrelated and are depended upon each other. As such, it becomes possible to not only understand which capacities are there,

but also to understand how these link to specific obstacles to peace and in which way they add to realising a specific understanding of peace. When eventually using the RPS to guide policy, it is not the intent to merely deliver a thick report highlighting *all* the obstacles to, or *all* capacities for peace; but to synthesise the most crucial findings in order to make recommendations that can guide new efforts for peace. To provide an example of this, the following two sections will present opportunities for peace in Medellín and Kosovo, obtained through the RPS analysis.

7.3.1. Medellín opportunities for peace

What first becomes apparent in the RPS analysis of Medellín is, almost ironically, the severe complexity of the situation. The three components of the peace system are highly interrelated, and the indicators within these components are again interdependent. Despite this, the obstacles to peace in Medellín are largely rooted in two main long-term obstacles, which are the gang dominance and the high socioeconomic inequality. The most widely shared peace meaning is 'feeling safe on the street', which falls into the category of peace as *freedom from fear*, and *freedom of movement*. To present the value of the RPS analysis when used to guide peace policy, it is useful to visualise the most important findings in the RPS diagram. An example of this is provided in figure 7, which shows in what way the components, and the indicators within these components, relate to and depend on the other.

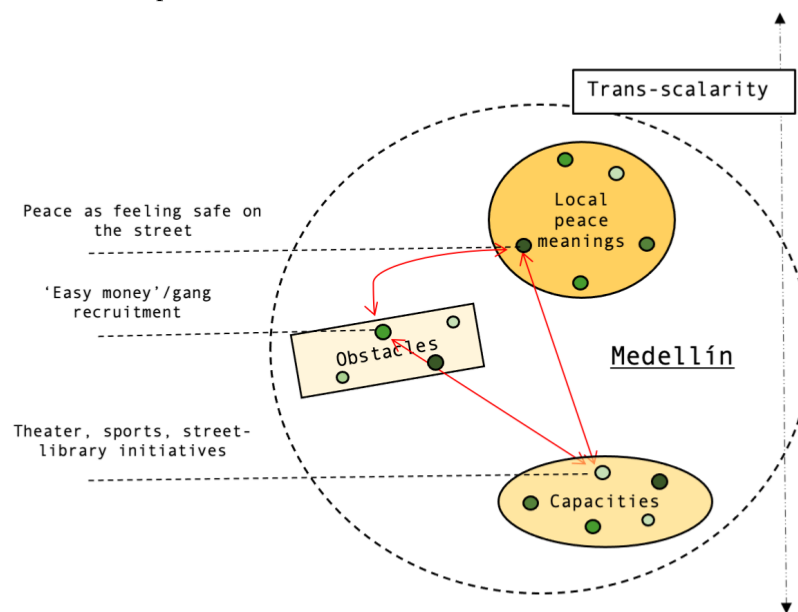

Figure 7: Diagram of Medellín's Resilient Peace System

The understanding of peace as feeling safe on the street directly relates to the widespread presence of gangs in the city. It is important to mention here, that the persisting gang prevalence and socioeconomic inequality lead to a wide variety of obstacles that are also deeply connected. For example, a young person experiencing economic deprivation and living in lower *estratos* of the city, runs an increased risk of being recruited by the controlling gang. The obstacle of gang recruitment is therefore presented in figure 7 in relation to 'easy

money'; as the economic deprivation on individual level is sustained by the deeply embedded stigmatisation and exclusion of the poor, it is complicated to climb the social ladder. Joining the gangs is therefore often seen as an 'easier' alternative to finding a job. Luckily, there is a wide variety of local initiatives that aim to unlearn deeply rooted stigmas and to offer alternatives to gang recruitment. Unlearning deeply embedded stigmas creates possibilities to build bridging social capital between socioeconomic divides and for people to slowly climb the social ladder. The various local initiatives present to offer alternative pathways to 'easy money' and gang recruitment hold the crucial potential of presenting youth with different realities. As the initiatives (e.g., theatre, art, or dance) do not directly aim at 'opposing' the social rules laid out by the gangs, their presence is generally accepted. These initiatives are however often not sufficiently supported financially or depend on a single person or group of friends, and therefore lack the capacity to realise wider change. This is a hence an important policy recommendation for peace work in Medellín; it is crucial to find - instead of build - the capacities that are already present in the city in order to support those. As the RPS demonstrates, the local initiatives that aim at change, link to the obstacle of gang recruitment, and as such play an important role in the realisation of the peace meaning 'feeling safe on the street'. This moreover shows that the various scales of peace are highly interconnected; initiatives on the individual, family, or neighbourhood scale significantly impact the gang presence on the municipal peace scale. At the same time, without support from either (I)NGOs, on e.g., the national or international scale, the impact of these local capacities is only limited.

7.3.2. Kosovo opportunities for peace

Kosovo presents an interesting case when connecting the different components together. While the most widely shared meaning of peace refers to *freedom from want*, and limited job opportunities are considered an obstacle by 85% of the interlocutors, this is immediately followed by over 80% of the interviewees who referred to the ethnic divide as an obstacle. On top of that, most of the other obstacles mentioned, are linked to the persisting divide between Kosovo-Albanians and Kosovo-Serbs. At the same time, when observing the capacities, there are barely any local attempts at overcoming the socio-economic obstacles. This is of course not surprising, as revitalising the Kosovan economy through bottom-up practices alone is near to impossible – which is an indication of the importance of incorporating other peace scales when increasing the potential for durable peace. As a result, by far most of the capacities link to obstacles in relation to the ethnic divide. The ethnic divide has therefore been used as an example in figure 8, to demonstrate in what way the RPS analysis can guide peace policy in Kosovo.

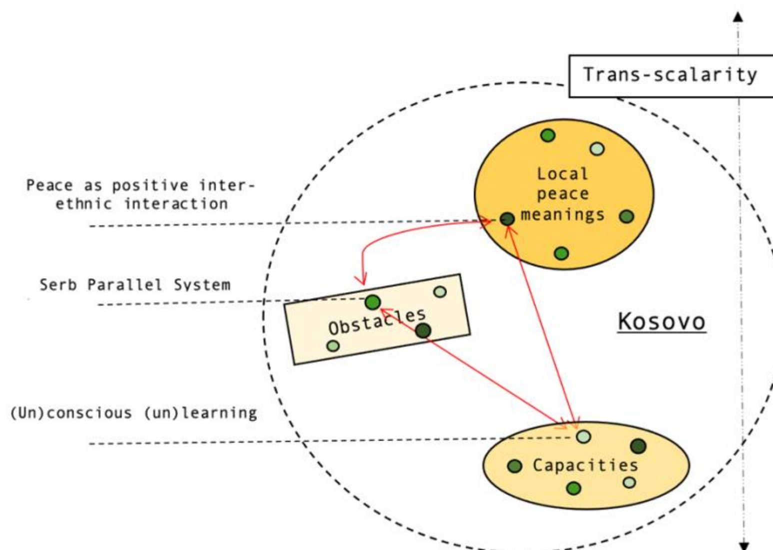

Figure 8: Diagram of Kosovo's Resilient Peace System

The large ethnic divide in Kosovo is solidified by the existence of the Serb parallel system, which continues to polarise the country. As such, the Serb parallel system is a significant obstacle to realising widespread positive interethnic interaction. While other peace scales (most importantly the national, regional, and international) are crucial to dismantling the parallel system, the impact of local capacities on realising change should not be underestimated. Especially because this is a highly sensitive issue, sustainable change cannot be achieved through external pressure, nor by 'forcing interaction upon people'. For example, the conscious decision to learn 'the other language' plays a crucial role in realising peace. While free language courses are promoted by the NGO community or the US embassy, the course times are often during work hours and participation remains tabu within various social circles. Individual efforts of language learning deserve more attention, as it is through these attempts that others might join too. As Milena's story indicates, through her efforts of learning Albanian, other family members joined too. In a Group for Legal and Political Studies report, I refer to these people as 'language pioneers' (Luitjens 2020, 19); through offering free language courses outside of working hours the number of *language pioneers* might increase. While learning the language is a crucial step in realising interethnic interaction, there are other interesting attempts at realising this. These attempts can be both conscious and unconscious and are most durable when they start on either individual scale (as language learning) or within a small collective. The value of unconscious unlearning of stigmas should not be underestimated; for example, in an interethnic work setting or through realising more interethnic study opportunities by introducing more English university programmes. In these instances, the personal benefit of participating in the 'collective action' trumps the negative. These are important steps in realising a larger bridging social capital, which in turn is necessary to increase the willingness to participate in collective actions. There are however only a limited number of local initiatives that consciously aim at bridging the divide, as for example the Bridge Film Festival in Mitrovica, or the art café in Kamenica. These initiatives are however often fragile, for example due to the lack of financial support. Like Medellín, the

interaction between various peace scales is of importance for realising durable change. While for example language learning is often initiated individually, it is important to create circumstances in which these initiatives can thrive (i.e., offering free language courses outside of work, discussing the potentials of including friends of family, etc.) for which other scales (i.e., municipal, national, or even international) are necessary.

7.4 Conclusion and future research recommendations

In conclusion, the Resilient Peace System is an analytical tool to conduct a peace analysis that has been developed using a resilience-lens. Through using this lens, peace becomes conceptualised as a complex adaptive system, existing of various interrelated components that previously have been understood in isolation. As such, the RPS has been operationalised into three components: everyday peace meanings, obstacles to peace, and capacities for peace. Cross-cutting through these components is the peace-scale analysis, which observes the dynamics between the different societal scales that are important in the peace process. As such, the RPS provides new opportunities for improving peace efforts, but also adds to the lively academic debate.

Of course, the research does not end there, on the contrary, during this research various avenues for new research became clear. First and foremost, I believe it is crucial to further research the effects of the trans-scalarity of peace within a specific peace system. While the RPS focuses on finding the local capacities already present in a system, it is crucial to better understand how these are related to and depend on other societal scales. In line with this, I believe that to present a more complete analysis of a peace system, it is necessary to better comprehend the capacities and obstacles on other peace scales as well. While this thesis does discuss that support from multiple societal scales is (e.g., municipal support for individual initiatives) needed in order to realise durable change, this picture is notwithstanding more complex. Conducting research on finding a better way to map the trans-scalarity of a peace system would be beneficial to providing an even more holistic peace analysis. Next to that, as this research indicates that the RPS is a useful tool for guiding peace policy, it is important to improve the overall method of analysis in order to concise the time necessary to obtain data. At this stage, it would take at least roughly three months of research to conduct a thorough peace analysis. Being aware however of the time constraint within peacebuilding practices, I hope to be able to improve the RPS in following research. I believe that refining the tools for data collection and advancing the process of data analysis will make it more appealing to peace practitioners. Because, with the risk of sounding too sentimental, in the end this is what it is about: working towards a more just and peaceful society.

Annex I: Interview guide

As the interviews have been conducted on an open, and semi-structured basis, this guide provides a mere indication of the questions asked. During the interviews I would follow the lead of the interlocutors, while holding on to the guide.

Introduction

- Who are you?
- What do you want to share about yourself, your life?
- Where do you live/grew up?
- How is your family build up?

Interview guide 1: Peace meanings

Peace

- What does peace mean according to you?
- When can we speak about peace?
- Do you feel that you live 'in peace'? Why?
- Is there peace in Medellin? Your municipality?
- What makes it happen that there is no peace? What are the obstacles to peace?
- What does it mean to feel safe?
- Do you feel safe at home, work?
- When do, or don't you feel safe on the streets?
- What makes you feel safe?

Social tensions

- Do you feel the situation has improved over the last 20 years?
- What has changed, or stayed the same?
- Do you feel there are tensions where you live?
- What kind of tensions?
- What does your social circle look like?

Interview guide 2: civilian activism/participation

Relations to governmental institutions

- Are you happy with the current situation?
- Do you trust the people that work within governmental institutions?
- Do you vote for local elections? Why?
- If you could change two things, what would you change?
- Do you feel responsible for the municipality you live in?
- Would you like to work for the municipality? And if this is voluntary?
- Have you been ever asked to volunteer? Have you?

Activism

- What does it mean to be an activist? What does an activist do?
- Do you know people that are activists?

- Are you an activist? Since when?
- What kind of activist are you?
- What made you/them decide to become an activist?
- If you are activist: what organisations did/do you work with?
- What does you close circle (family, friends) think of it?
- Do you feel it is possible to express your own opinion?
- Is there a specific place where activism takes place?

<u>Topic 3: Social network and trust</u>

Social network

- Do you live alone or together with other people? If so, who are they?
- During a typical day of your week, do you meet a lot of different people?
- Do you in general meet a lot of new people? Or do you mostly see the same people?
- Do you consider a lot of people around you to be your friends?
- What does it mean to be your friend?
- Would you say you have a big group of friends, or one or two good friends you can tell anything to/be yourself with? And, what would you prefer?
- How would you categorize the people around you? i.e. friends, family, acquaintances.

Trust

- What does trust mean to you?
- From within that network, who do you really trust? (use circles of trust?)
- What makes you trust, or distrust people?
- Do you have someone you can always fall back on? Who and why?
- Do you have the feeling (as a matter of speaking) you get back from people what you give?

<u>Topic 4: Risks & coping</u>

Obstacles

- What is a 'risk'?
- What is the first thing, or event, you think when thinking about a 'risk'?
- Do you feel there are 'things' that are a risk to the way you live your daily life? Why?
- What obstacles do you encounter in daily life?
- Are these obstacles something you can deal with? How do you do that?
- Do you feel the situation has changed over the last 20 years?

Coping

- Do you have experience with unexpected events that had a negative outcome?
- If so, could you give an example?
- How do you deal with unexpected events?
- Do you get angry, when things don't go as they should?
- Within your community, do you organize events to deal with unexpected events together?
- Is it always the same person leading these events?
- What does 'coping with trauma/hardship' mean to you?

Topic 5: Trans-scalarity

Wider international community

- How do you feel in relation to the international community?
- How has the international community added to peace in…, did they?
- EU integration? (Kosovo)
- Is peace local?
- Which actor do you feel is most influential?

Relations to governmental institutions

- Who do you turn to when you need something bureaucratic fixed?
- Do you vote?
- Are you happy with the current situation?
- What should change?
- Is there trust?
- Do you feel connected?
- Have you been ever asked to participate?

Annex II: List of participant observation

List of participation observation, separated in 'online' and 'offline' P.O.; this list is however not exhaustive, but it provides valuable insights into the various P.O. efforts during this research.

Online P.O.	
Informal café meetings	During the research in Medellín, I had a couple of informal meetings – where the person I would speak to would be situated in a café, mostly in a larger mall. Often this would offer me the opportunity to observe the surroundings (as I would ask them to show me their view), and to observe a glimpse of 'everyday life'.
Home setting	Especially during pandemic, using video calling to connect to the outside world became more normalised – apps appeared where people could play board games together at distance, watch movies together, etc. I believe this also normalised talking to me in informal home settings, where I would simply 'be' in their house. On a number of occasions I received a tour of the whole house, the view of the neighbourhood, etc., and other times I simply joined in their everyday as home life would continue in the background of our conversation.
Neighbourhood strolls	Next to 'walking' the streets of Medellín on google maps, or via shared travel vlogs, as much as I could – I also was lucky enough to have interlocutors that would show me the neighbourhood via their phone. This of course depended on the safety situation, but if possible they'd happily show me around; this in and off itself was a valuable insight into the freedom of movement of Medellín's citizens.
Community/CSO events	As during the pandemic life shifted online, there was an increase in online events which would otherwise have taken place in person. An example of this is a meeting of the football club in Bello, where a renowned community leader spoke about the value of sports for peace. Or online sessions of e.g., Casa Morada.

Offline P.O.	
Informal café meetings	In Kosovo I luckily had the chance to build my network offline, before the pandemic hit. This meant I had various meetings in café, drinking Kosovo's delicious macchiato while talking to various people. This gave me a good insight into local life (from Pristina's hip cafes, to the more traditional settings in more rural places).
Home lunch/food	Even though I only had a relatively short amount of time before the pandemic, I have been invited to a number of houses where I listened to their stories, while sharing food (and often, of course, drinking homemade Raki).
Neighbourhood strolls	Kosovo's history is writing on its territory, and walking through this with various interlocutors gave me valuable insights into the impact of the past on the presence, and the freedom of movement. In relation to Medellín: I was lucky enough to go to Medellín in December of 2022, where I visited the various fieldwork sites. Interestingly, I recognised a lot from 'online' – when for example entering comuna 13, I was able to walk straight to the store of one of my interlocutors, who I had often spoken to during his work.
(I)NGO/CSO events	As I worked for GLPS during my time in Kosovo, I quickly became part of the event calendar; which is an extensive one in Kosovo. I participated in various CSO/NGO events, from topics as dealing with the past or internal integration (of Kosovo Serbs).

Annex III: List of interviewees referenced

Medellin

	Estrato 1/2	**Age, *estrato***	**Interview date(s)**
1.	Ana	26 years, estrato 1/2	March 3, 2021
2.	Salomé	27 years, estrato 1/2	March 11, 2021
3.	Mariana	66 years, estrato 1/2	March 13, 2021
4.	Mauricio	29 years, estrato 1/2	March 15 & March 22, 2021
5.	Héctor	18 years, estrato 1/2	March 15 & May 13, 2021
6.	Medina	30 years, estrato 1/2	March 17, 2021
7.	Isaac	25 years, estrato 1/2	March 18, 2021
8.	Juan Pablo	31 years, estrato 1/2	March 22 & April 19, 2021
9.	Sebastián	36 years, estrato 1/2	March 25, 2021
10.	Alejandro	36 years, estrato 1/2	March 25 & April 8, 2021
11.	Vanessa	39 years, estrato 1/2	March 29, 2021
12.	Marcela	23 years, estrato 1/2	March 30, 20M21
13.	Thiago	36 years, estrato 1/2	April 7, 2021
14.	Juliana	57 years, estrato 1/2	April 8, 2021
15.	Martín	42 years, estrato 1/2	April 15, 2021
16.	Sandra	21 years, estrato 1/2	April 20, 2021
17.	Catalina	62 years, estrato 1/2	April 21, 2021
18.	Gerónimo	32 years, estrato 1/2	April 29, 2021
19	Juan Carlos	46 years, estrato 1/2	April 7, 2021
	Estrato 3/4		
19.	Mía	26 years, estrato 3/4	March 11, 2021
20.	Camila	40 years, estrato 3/4	March 13, 2021
21.	Natalía	33 years, estrato 3/4	March 17, 2021
22.	Miguel	24 years, estrato 3/4	March 19, 2021
23.	Andrea	64 years, estrato 3/4	April 1, 2021
24.	Valentina	29 years, estrato 3/4	April 7, 2021
25.	Paula	30 years, estrato 3/4	April 11, 2021
26.	Gloria	32 years, estrato 3/4	April 12, 2021
27.	Valeria	28 years, estrato 3/4	April 13, 2021
28.	Fernando	29 years, estrato 3/4	April 14, 2021
29.	Emiliano	61 years, estrato 3/4	April 15, 2021
30.	Davíd	25 years, estrato 3/4	April 16, 2021
31.	Luciana	29 years, estrato 3/4	April 29, 2021
32.	Gabriela	25 years, estrato 3/4	April 6, 2021.
	Estrato 5/6		
33.	Mariangel	26 years, estrato 5/6	March 6, 2021
34.	Emiliana	27 years, estrato 5/6	March 16, 2021
35.	Emma	32 years, estrato 5/6	April 6 & May 25, 2021
36.	Alejandra	31 years, estrato 5/6	April 16, 2021
37.	Diana	39 years, estrato 5/6	April 22, 2021

38.	Santiago	28 years, estrato 5/6	April 24, 2021

Kosovo

	Rahovec	**Age, background**	**Interview date(s)**
1	Erza	29 years, Kosovo-Albanian	March 7, 2020
2	Elira	30 years, Kosovo-Albanian	March 7, 2020
3	Miloš	35 years, Kosovo-Serb	March 7, 2020
4	Drita	20 years, Kosovo-Albanian	April 20, 2020
5	Venera	26 years, Kosovo-Albanian	April 16 & August 19, 2020
6	Agim	25 years, Kosovo-Albanian	July 15, 2020
	Gracanica		
7	Jelena	24 years, Kosovo-Serb	March 6, 2020
8	Milena	25 years, Kosovo-Serb	June 7, 2020
9	Marko	24 years, Kosovo-Serb	April 21, 2020
10	Nikola	25 years, Kosovo-Serb	February 26, March 17, April 6, 2020
11	Marija	23 years, Kosovo-Serb	April 10, 2020
12	Goran	21 years, Kosovo-Serb	February 25, 2020
	Gjakova		
13	Burim	33 years, Kosovo-Albanian	April 28, 2020
14	Aferdita	37 years, Kosovo-Albanian	March 2, 2020
15	Qëndron	30 years, Kosovo-Albanian	May 1, 2020
16	Ramadan	25 years, Kosovo-Albanian	April 20, 2020
17	Ardita	23 years, Kosovo-Albanian	February 18 & March 8, 2020
18	Avni	27 years, Kosovo-Albanian	April 22, 2020
19	Gazmen	28 years, Roma	May 3, 2020
20	Ferdonije	62 years, Kosovo-Albanian	March 8, 2020
21	Berisha	25 years, Kosovo-Albanian	February 13 & 18, August 15, 2020
22	Besjana	58 years, Kosovo-Albanian	May 15, 2020
23	Bekim	24 years, Kosovo-Albanian	May 15, 2020
	Mitrovica		
24	Fatime	21 years, Kosovo-Albanian	February 25, 2020
25	Merita	43, Kosovo-Albanian	March 2, 2020
26	Vlora	23 years, Kosovo-Albanian	February 25, 2020
27	Teuta	58 years, Kosovo-Albanian	April 24, 2020
28	Yllka	29 years, Kosovo-Albanian	February 25, March 10, April 16, 2020
29	Slobodan	28 years, Kosovo-Serb	February 25, 2020
30	Liridona	41 years, Kosovo-Albanian	March 10, 2020
31	Emine	61, Kosovo-Albanian	March 10, 2020
32	Miroslav	37, Kosovo-Serb	February 25, 2020
33	Milica	26 years, Kosovo-Serb	March 10, 2020
35	Lazar	38 years, Kosovo-Serb	February 19 & April 28, 2020

	Kamenica		
36	Zoran	30 years, Kosovo-Serb	August 25, 2020
37	Elona	21 years, Kosovo-Albanian	March 31, April 15, August 18, 2020
38	Sofija	36, Kosovo-Serb	August 21, 2020
39	Arben	33, Kosovo-Albanian	February 27, August 19, 2020
	Štrpce		
39	Ljiljana	22 years, Kosovo-Serb	April 5, 2020

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