

Multiethnic Police Reform in Southern Serbia

Did the Multiethnic Police Contribute to Peace in the Presevo Valley?

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Abstract

This thesis examines the multiethnic police reforms implemented in southern Serbia in the aftermath of the conflict in 2000 and 2001. It discusses whether the introduction of a multiethnic police force contributed to post-conflict peace and stability in the Presevo Valley. Comparing empirical findings based on existing sources, it analyzes the use of multiethnic police reform as a peacebuilding strategy. The thesis argues that the promise of multiethnic police reform initially contributed to the peace settlement ending major hostilities. However, inadequate training and confidence building measures resulted in a lack of integration with the existing local security apparatus. This disabled the multiethnic police to become the main security provider in the region. Thus, the multiethnic police force contributed less to long-term peace and stability. The thesis finds that the challenges characterizing the effort to reform police structures in southern Serbia are common to many aspects of post-conflict peacebuilding.

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Source: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/history-and-politics-of-south-serbia>

List of Abbreviations

BIRN	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network
CAG	Community Advisory Group
COP	Community-Oriented Policing
CORE	Centre for OSCE Research
CPO	Community Policing Officer
DOS	Demokratska Opozicija Srbije / Democratic Opposition of Serbia
EU	European Union
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GSZ	Ground Safety Zone
HLC	Humanitarian Law Center
ICG	International Crisis Group
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MASC	Municipal Assembly Security Committee
MEPE	Multi-Ethnic Police Element
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MSC	Municipal Safety Council
MUP	Ministarstvo Unutrasnjih Poslova / Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OMiFRY	OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
OMiSaM	OSCE Mission in Serbia and Montenegro
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
UCK/KLA	Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves / Kosovo Liberation Army
UCK/NLA	Ushtria Clirimtare Kombetare / National Liberation Army (Macedonia)
UCPMB	Ushtria Clirimtare e Presheves, Medvexhes dhe Bujanovicit / Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
VJ	Vojska Jugoslavije / Yugoslav Armed Forces

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Research Question

The municipalities of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac in southern Serbia have the largest concentration of ethnic Albanians in Serbia. In 1992 a majority of the Albanians in southern Serbia voted for autonomy and the right to unification with Kosovo in an unofficial referendum. In 2000, following NATO's military operations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the deployment of international peacekeepers in Kosovo, fighting broke out in the region. An Albanian secessionist guerilla movement, the Liberation Army of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja (UCPMB in Albanian), started an insurgent campaign against Yugoslav and Serb authorities in the three municipalities of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac in southern Serbia (commonly known simply as the Presevo Valley). The armed conflict in southern Serbia lasted for about a year and resulted in a total of approximately 100 casualties on both sides together. An unstable peace was secured through international mediation. The Albanian insurgents were to be disarmed and the area and its ethnic Albanian inhabitants were to be integrated into Serbian institutions (Mønnesland 2006:373).

The Albanians of southern Serbia had come to view the police with hostility and distrust after decades of official discrimination and abuse during the 2000-2001 conflict. International observers, local ethnic Albanian leaders and Belgrade officials all agreed that the police was the single most urgent area of reform. The Albanians sought to create a police force that would reflect the ethnic composition of the area (ICG 2001:10). Therefore, an essential condition for securing peace and rebuilding confidence following the end of hostilities was to establish a multiethnic police force in southern Serbia, seen as the initial step in the process of integrating Albanians into Serbian state institutions. The Organization of security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was tasked to oversee a three-stage project for recruiting and training a

multiethnic police force (ICG 2003:18). The idea was well-received in the region and the multiethnic police was initially seen as a success story in conflict resolution in the Balkans. However, as time passed and multiethnic tensions no longer posed a great danger to local and regional stability, its effect on the peace process came into question.

In the article “Serbia makes Uneven Progress on Integrating Minorities”, Pedja Obradovic (2011:1) argues that Belgrade is failing to turn its verbal pledges into action when it comes to guaranteeing ethnic Albanians fair levels of state sector employment in southern Serbia. Even though integration of ethnic Albanians into Serbia’s political and economic system was a key element of the internationally brokered plan aimed at restoring peace, progress remains uneven. The number of Albanians working in the public sector in the three municipalities remains out of sync with the ethnic structure of the local population. According to Obradovic (2011:1), the project for a multiethnic police was aimed to create a police structure that would win the confidence of both Albanian and Serbs. The program was seen as successful by the international community, Albanians and Serbs alike. In 2001, Albanians made up a little over 50 per cent of the police force in Presevo, close to 35 per cent in Bujanovac, and close to 5 per cent in Medvedja.

At the same time, however, Riza Halimi, the only ethnic Albanian Member of Parliament in the Serbian parliament, and Ragmi Mustafa, Mayor of Presevo, both expressed deep reservations about the future of the police project. According to Halimi, ‘The number of Albanians in the police has fallen in the last ten years – some left, others were dismissed for violations’. Mustafa also doubts the multiethnic police project will survive. He says ‘The idea of a multiethnic police, which was well-received here, is not a long-term solution and I don’t believe it will survive.’ (Obradovic 2011:6).

There has not been any return to major interethnic hostilities in southern Serbia since the peace settlement in 2001. However, minor and scattered incidents have occurred throughout the decade following the establishment of the multiethnic police force. Ethnic grievances are still present, and southern Serbia may still be seen as an unsolved border dispute in former Yugoslavia. The lack of economic development in the region and the continued heavy presence of the Serbian security apparatus have the potential to spark ethnic Albanian secessionism and renewed hostilities.

This thesis will analyze the establishment and conduct of the multiethnic police force in southern Serbia and assess its contribution on peace and stability. It will attempt to assess the use of multiethnic police reform as a peacebuilding tool in the Presevo Valley. In recent years policing has become an ever more important element in peace operations around the world. Therefore, insight and knowledge of this particular peacebuilding effort may possibly contribute to enhanced understanding of the concept in general. Hence, the specific research question guiding this thesis is: *Did the multiethnic police contribute to peace in the Presevo Valley?*

This thesis will argue that the initial agreement on the establishment of a multiethnic police force in southern Serbia was an important factor for ending major hostilities as it made it possible for the competing parties to agree on a more comprehensive peace plan. However, it is difficult to assess its contribution on peace and stability in the longer term as the multiethnic police never got the chance to act as a de facto security provider in the three municipalities. Since its creation, the task of dealing with relevant safety and security issues was handled by other Serbian and Yugoslav security actors. The short term goal of recruiting and integrating minorities disabled the multiethnic police to take full charge of maintaining security due to lack of training and incompetent police officers. Thus, the long term goal of peace, stability and interethnic confidence based on the provision of security by a multiethnic police force was

hampered by short term goals. Relying too heavily on quantity as in number of minority officers instead of professional quality made the multiethnic police turn into a mere symbol of unfinished or failed reforms.

1.2 Limitations and Delimitations

This thesis is obviously limited by the chosen research method and sources. Even more obviously, at another level, even though the author indirectly has practical experience with the matter from working in neighboring Kosovo and has studied Balkan history, politics and society for some years, he has never set foot in the Presevo Valley. Initially, conducting a field study interviewing locals, both Serbs and Albanians, was considered as a research method. But due to factors such as available time and resources, this was not possible. As a consequence, this thesis will solely rely on secondary sources. The study will be limited by the fact that it is based on research conducted by others which the author has not been able to influence or investigate.

This thesis will specifically deal with multiethnic police reforms in southern Serbia since the end of hostilities in 2001. Even though no single case exists in a vacuum, it is necessary to delimit the scope of this study. Historical and current events in the region and on the international scene most certainly played their parts in the context under scrutiny. This is especially true with regards to developments in neighboring Kosovo and Macedonia. Possibly even more important are political developments in Serbia, both at a national level and locally in the municipalities in question. However, even though probably important to events on the ground in the Presevo Valley, time and space available will not allow this thesis to do more than just touch upon such developments.

The choice of sources naturally delimits the scope of the thesis. No reports on southern Serbia have been published by the International Crisis Group since 2007. Of the three articles specifically on police reform in southern Serbia used in this thesis, the latest was published in 2010. Research for these articles was conducted in 2002 and between 2003 and 2005 respectively.

Therefore, this thesis will only study a specific peace-building effort in a specific geographical area, but in a less specific period – multiethnic police reform in the municipalities of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac in the period stretching from the end of hostilities in 2001 up to around 2005.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1, *Introduction*, provides a short introduction to the case and the research question guiding the study before outlining its limitations and delimitations. Then it outlines the structure of thesis.

In Chapter 2, *Methodology*, after a short introduction to the chosen sources and methods, a short discussion on their reliability and the validity for the study will follow.

In Chapter 3, *Context*, a short presentation of the geography, demography and historical background is made in order to contextualize the subject under scrutiny before a more detailed account of the southern Serbia insurgency and the peace settlement ending it.

Chapter 4, *Theoretical Concepts*, deals with the concepts chosen to be relevant as frame of reference to the study of multiethnic police reform in southern Serbia. The chapter is divided into three, each part representing the main concepts: *peace- and statebuilding*; *policing in peace operations*; and *police reform*. Each of the concepts will in turn be defined and discussed using sources which will be presented in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 5, *Findings and Analysis*, the empirical findings of three case-studies on police reform in southern Serbia will be presented and discussed. The three case-studies will be introduced in more detail in Chapter 2. The chapter will be divided into parts representing relevant aspects of the subject.

Chapter 6, *Concluding Discussion*, will use the findings and conclusions derived from the three case studies presented in Chapter 5 to discuss the main concepts of this study, emphasizing the use of multiethnic police reform as a tool used in post-conflict peacebuilding operations. Concluding remarks will be drawn in response to the specific research question of this thesis.

2. Methodology

Relying on a rather small number of written sources and methodically solely analyzing and comparing already existing sources, it is necessary to briefly introduce them. The sources are for practical reasons divided in the following into parts relying on whether they are used mostly for background information, concepts and theory or empirical findings. Moreover, the research methods used by the authors of the three case-specific articles are outlined.

2.1 Sources

Information on the background on the area, the conflict and the peace settlement are for the most part based on four reports published by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in the period stretching from 2001 to 2007. Background information of a more general nature is extracted from publications on Kosovo by renowned authors, such as Tim Judah. Details on the “Covic plan” are compiled from the booklet *Serbia After Milosevic: Program for the Solution of the Crisis in Pcinja District*, edited by Milo Gligorijevic (2001).

The main theoretical concepts discussed in this thesis are *peace- and statebuilding*, *policing in peace operations* and *police reform*. Information on the theory and practice of *peace-and statebuilding* are derived from three academic textbooks. Mads Berdal’s (2009) *Building Peace after War* deals with modern peacebuilding in general and can be viewed as a critique of the lack of contextualization which characterized many peace operations during the last part of the 20th Century. A volume edited by Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (2009), *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding. Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* argues that a lot more attention needs to be put on constructing functioning local institutions in war-torn societies. The second edition of *Understanding Peacekeeping* by Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams (2010) gives a descriptive picture of peacekeeping operations in general and of

policing in particular. All of the theory on *policing in peace operations* used in this thesis is compiled from Chapter 17 of *Understanding Peacekeeping*. The theoretical background on *police reform* is based on the articles also used for analysis of empirical findings on the multiethnic police in southern Serbia (see below).

The empirical findings on the multiethnic police and police reform in southern Serbia are based on three academic papers which all deal with police reform in the region after the end of hostilities in 2001. Two of the articles, Thorsten Stodiek's (2006) *The OSCE and the Creation of Multi-Ethnic Police Forces in the Balkans* and Florian Bieber's (2010) 'Policing the Peace after Yugoslavia: Police Reform between External Imposition and Domestic Reform' are comparative multi-case analyses, dealing with post-conflict police reform efforts in the various successor states and regions in former Yugoslavia. Barry J. Ryan's (2007) "Quasi-pluralism in a Quasi-peace: South Serbia's Multi-ethnic Police", an article published in *International Peacekeeping*, on the other hand, is a single-case study on the introduction of multi-ethnic policing units in southern Serbia with emphasis on Community-Oriented Policing programs.

Acknowledging that all these publications are based on other primary sources and research conducted by other scholars, for the most part only these publications will be used as references throughout the thesis. The author also acknowledges that other relevant sources, both of a theoretical and empirical nature, most likely are available. These sources could probably have contributed to this study, but the choices made on sources will delimit and guide the remainder of the thesis.

2.2 Methods

The primary method applied to increase understanding of the contribution of the multiethnic police force to the peace process in southern Serbia is a comparison and analysis of already existing written sources. While initially planning to conduct interviews with individuals who have worked closely with police reform in the Presevo Valley, negative responses from potential interview subjects in combination with time limitations made this impossible. However, comparing and analyzing the empirical findings and conclusions of the three multi- and single-case studies will enable this thesis to identify general trends with regards to the conduct of the multiethnic police, how it is perceived by the local population and its level of legitimacy. These findings may be used as indications on how the multiethnic police force contributed to post-conflict peace and stability in southern Serbia. The empirical findings will in turn be discussed against the main theoretical concepts and the arguments made by the scholars having dealt with the main concepts.

The aims and choice of methods in each of the three articles dealing with police reform in southern Serbia vary somehow. The aim of Thorsten Stodiek's study, *The OSCE and the Creation of Multi-Ethnic Police Forces in the Balkans*, A Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) Working paper from 2006, is 'to compare the international police activities of the OSCE, UN and EU in Kosovo, South Serbia (Presevo Valley) and Macedonia in order to analyze whether, and to what extent multi-ethnic police services can help to overcome the legacy of ethno-political conflicts'; 'to identify the structural deficiencies of post-socialist security sectors'; and to study the problems facing the international community 'when they developed and implemented their training and reform concepts.' The findings of Stodiek's study are 'based on the analysis of a number of documents and research reports (...) as well as on numerous oral interviews and a comprehensive written survey with local police officers and their instructors and monitors (...) carried out by the author between September 2003 and June 2005 (Stodiek 2006:10,13).

Barry J. Ryan (2007) examines efforts made by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Serbian Ministry of Interior (MoI) to reform police policies in southern Serbia in “Quasi-pluralism in a Quasi-peace: South Serbia’s Multi-ethnic Police”. His article draws on research undertaken in the Presevo Valley in November 2002. Respondents included local government representatives, members of non-governmental organizations, media-representatives and a refugee from Kosovo. Participants included seven Albanians, five Roma and ten Serbs. The work also draws upon a number of unstructured interviews with key actors in the reform process in Serbia (Ryan 2007:284).

Florian Bieber’s (2010) ‘Policing the Peace after Yugoslavia: Police Reform between External Imposition and Domestic Reform’ does not seem to be based on research carried out by the author, and does unfortunately not include any notes on the use of methods. As a Discussion Paper produced for a Statebuilding Workshop on organizing police forces in post-conflict peace-support operations, Bieber’s analysis of police reform in southern Serbia is based on information derived from various written sources, including OSCE documents, an International Crisis Group Report and an article in the *Helsinki Monitor*.

Throughout the remainder of the thesis, the arguments presented will be directly based on the sources. As such, the sources will speak for themselves. However, the main concepts and empirical findings will be summarized and briefly discussed at the end of each sub-chapter.

2.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability deals with the way research was conducted and the extent to which the measure is free from random error. As this study relies on secondary sources only, it is hard to assess their reliability and whether the conclusions are based on correct measurements. However, a critical approach to the chosen sources will be applied throughout. It can be argued that the conclusions drawn by at least one of the contributors in the empirical part of the thesis, Thorsten Stodiek's (2006) *The OSCE and the Creation of Multi-Ethnic Police Forces in the Balkans*, may be biased in favor of the conduct of the OSCE and the multiethnic police as it is a Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) Working paper, possibly connected to the OSCE itself. However, no conclusions are drawn on the reliability of the source in question, and its findings will be taken into account in the remainder of the thesis.

Validity means relevance. It deals with the extent to which a measure reflects the desired concept it is supposed to measure. Validity may be both internal and external. In this thesis, internal validity is related to whether the choice of sources and methods enables the study to answer its research question. As already mentioned, it is hard to assess the contribution of the multiethnic police force on the peace process in southern Serbia as it never actually played a significant role as a security provider. However, the findings and conclusions of the chosen sources may say something about the reasons for why this happened.

External validity deals with to what extent the results of a study are relevant to subjects and settings beyond those in the study. In this thesis, external validity is related to whether or not findings and conclusions on multiethnic police reform in southern Serbia are relevant to other similar peacebuilding efforts in other post-conflict settings throughout the world. Acknowledging that all cases are unique, however, the thesis will argue that some of the findings and conclusions drawn may be

relevant to other settings and subjects. Particularly, the findings on inadequate training and overemphasis on the quantity of minority representation instead of qualifications may be relevant to other peacebuilding operations in which multiethnic police reform is included.

3. Context

The relative narrowness of the subject of this study makes it necessary to give a short introduction of the context in which the multiethnic police reforms took place. As already mentioned, time and space does not allow this study to include a ‘history of the Balkans’. But a general overview of the geography, demography, the historical background and more recent developments is needed in order for the reader to be more familiar with southern Serbia, the Presevo insurgency and the peace settlement.

3.1 Geography

The three municipalities of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac are located in the southern part of the Republic of Serbia along Kosovo’s eastern border and together cover an area of 1,267 square kilometers (BIRN 2011). Also known as the upper Morava Valley, the area is relatively fertile, with tall mountains to the east separating it from Bulgaria and lower mountains to the west separating it from Kosovo (ICG 2007:2). To its south the valley is bounded Macedonia. The area is often referred to as the Presevo Valley and Albanians often call it *Kosova Lindore* - Eastern Kosovo (Judah 2008:5). Presevo and Bujanovac are part of the Pcinje administrative district centered in Vranje, while Medvedja is part of the Jablanica district, with Leskovac as its administrative center (ICG 2007:2).

As part of the north-south corridor formed by the Morava and Vardar rivers and their tributaries, the Presevo Valley sits on the main historical trade and invasion route between Western Europe and the Levant. Its location makes it a region of strategic economic importance as it gives Serbia access to the northern Greek port of Thessaloniki on the Aegean Sea, via the Serbian city of Nis and the Macedonian capital of Skopje. Serbia’s main north-south motorway begins in Belgrade and ends near Nis, just north of the Presevo Valley. It is also the route for a yet unfinished major motorway, Corridor 10, connecting Greece and Central Europe. Together with

an adjacent railway line, this road is Serbia's main link to Macedonia and Greece, two states with Orthodox majorities that sympathized with the Serbs throughout the conflicts in the 1990s (ICG 2003:2). The Presevo Valley could also be in the middle of a possible east-west corridor of future oil or natural gas pipelines going from The Black Sea to the Albanian Adriatic Coast (ICG 2001:2; ICG 2007:2).

3.2 Demography

The three municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja together have Serbia's largest concentration of ethnic Albanians. According to a 2002 census, there was a total of 61,647 Albanians living in Serbia, not counting Kosovo. Of those, 59,952 lived in the Presevo Valley (Wikipedia 2012). Of the valley's approximately 100,000 inhabitants, it is estimated that around 70% are Albanians. The municipalities vary with regards to the number of their Albanian population. According to the ICG (2007:2), the ethnic composition, based on the 2002 census, is:

- Presevo: 2,984 (8.55%) Serbs; 31,098 (89.09%) Albanians; and 322 (0.92%) Roma.
- Bujanovac: 14,782 (34.14%) Serbs; 23,681 (54.69%) Albanians; and 3,867 (8.93% Roma.
- Medvedja: 7,163 (66.57%) Serbs; 2,816 (26.17%) Albanians; and 109 (1.0%) Roma.

Medvedja is completely rural and has only about 10,000 residents. Prior to the conflict, some 70 per cent were Serbs, the remainder Albanians. However, almost all the Albanians fled to Kosovo, and as of 2007 only some 800 have returned (ICG 2007:2). Bujanovac has the most complex ethnic balance, approximately 55 per cent Albanian, 34 per cent Serb and 9 per cent Roma. Presevo is almost 90 per cent Albanian. Each municipality also has a statistically insignificant number of other ethnicities (ICG 2003:3).

According to the International Crisis Group (2006:3), long-term demographic trends seem to favor the Albanians. Serbia is an aging nation, with an average age of 38.9 years in central regions and Vojvodina. In southern Serbia the average age is even higher, with the exception, due to the high Albanian birth rates there, of Bujanovac and Presevo. Of Bujanovac's 1,405 high school students in 2006, slightly over 900 were Albanians, and only some 505 were Serbs. The same imbalance was also present in the six Albanian and four Serbian elementary schools (ICG 2007:3).

Across ethnic lines, the entire south of Serbia is impoverished. Southern Serbia is one of the poorest regions in Serbia proper and has suffered from years of economic neglect. According to the 2002 census, the average annual income in Belgrade was 68,820 dinars, whereas the average in Presevo was only 9,352 (Ryan 2007:284-285). The absence of economic opportunities and the closure of state-owned companies have resulted in forced urbanization and emigration. This population outflow, combined with ethnic cleansing during the 2000-2001 insurgency and a greying Serbian population seems to be taking toll throughout the region

There have always been significant commercial and population movements across what have only recently become international borders, either de jure or de facto (Macedonia 1992 and Kosovo 1999/2008). Ties among the three regions have always remained strong, and many residents of southern Serbia, Albanian and Serb alike, have family links to Kosovo and northern Macedonia (ICG 2003:2). Mads Berdal (2009:38-40) argues that the political economy of armed conflicts which tend to be embedded in informal regional networks formed across formal frontiers is important to understand the dynamics of conflict. He argues that, according to Michael Pugh, Neil Cooper and Jonathan Goodhand, this is especially the case in relation to so-called 'marginalized borderlands'; areas constituting 'a pivotal locus in the emergence of violent political economies and [therefore] vital area[s] in which to focus attempts to

construct a post-conflict peace’ – the Presevo Valley in southern Serbia cited as an example.

3.3. Historical Background

Since the late 14th Century, the area which now includes Kosovo, southern Serbia and Macedonia have almost always been located within common borders, either during the Ottoman Turkish Empire (1389-1912), the Kingdom of Serbia (1912-1915), or the various Yugoslav successor states (1918-1992). The only brief exceptions were a period from 1878 to 1912, when the Congress of Berlin had awarded Medvedja to Serbia while leaving Bujanovac and Presevo in the Ottoman Empire, and an even shorter period during Italian and German occupation from 1940 to 1945, when Macedonia was partitioned between Bulgaria and an expanded Albania which also included most of Kosovo (ICG 2003:2).

Part of the recent instability in the region can be traced back to the border settlements imposed in the decade after 1912, which divided territories inhabited by Albanians between the former Yugoslav republics of Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro on the one hand and the newly independent state of Albania on the other. This resulted in the fact that a majority of ethnic Albanians lived outside an Albanian national state (Judah 2002:ix; ICG 2001:2).

Serbian invasion and occupation of Kosovo and Macedonia in the First Balkan War (1912) was followed by what could now be termed ethnic cleansing of Albanians. Many survivors retreated into the hills above the Presevo Valley, where bitter memories of expulsion and atrocities were kept alive through oral histories. In Presevo and Bujanovac the invasions left deep scars, intensified by the fact that neighbors in Medvedja had been subjected to the same process in 1878, following

transfer to Serbia at the Conference of Berlin (ICG 2003:2-3). Interethnic relations never seemed to have fully recovered (ICG 2001:2).

After the Second World War, parts of the Albanian inhabited areas of the Presevo Valley were a part of the Serbian autonomous province of Kosovo, but after the redrawing of administrative borders in 1947 they became a part of Serbia proper (Judah 2002:ix; ICG 2001:2). During the postwar period, Albanians were subjected to decades of institutionalized discrimination, which was further stepped up by Slobodan Milosevic in the late 1980s (ICG 2006:2).

In 1992, while Yugoslavia was already breaking apart, the majority of the Albanians of the Presevo Valley voted in favor of separation from Serbia and joining Kosovo in an unofficial referendum. Though this never materialized, it was a clear indication of a growing desire among the Presevo Valley's Albanian inhabitants to secede from Serbia within its existing borders (ICG 2007:1).

3.4 The Presevo Insurgency

During the Kosovo conflict and the NATO bombing campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) between March and June 1999, the Presevo Valley's Albanian population suffered arbitrary arrests and violent harassment at the hands of Serbian and Yugoslav state security forces, which in some cases allegedly tortured and executed civilians (ICG 2003:1). After the Serb withdrawal from Kosovo, the Albanians of the Presevo Valley were put under even greater pressure as Yugoslav forces, in particular the Yugoslav Army's (VJ) notorious Pristina Corps, relocated there from Kosovo in June 1999 (ICG 2001:2).

The history of abuse and discrimination, reinforced by poor economic conditions and perceived lack of opportunities, combined with the success of their ethnic kin in Kosovo, fuelled extremist nationalist tendencies and gave many Albanians reason to support the small groups of Albanian fighters who began to organize under the banner of the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) in early 2000. With support from former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA/UCK) elements inside Kosovo, they began to attack police and army units while exploiting Belgrade's light security presence in the Ground Security Zone (GSZ) (ICG 2003:1; ICG 2007:1; Ryan 2007:284).

The Military Technical Agreement between FRY and NATO made all Yugoslav forces withdraw on 15 July 1999 to a line five kilometers behind the new international administrative border between Serbia and Kosovo. This area was called the Ground Safety Zone (GSZ) and created a security vacuum which enabled the UCPMB to begin military operations against Serb authority in the region (Ryan 2007:284). Intended to prevent accidental clashes between KFOR and the Yugoslav armed forces, the rules of the GSZ barred all regular soldiers and heavy armor and allowed only police with light arms. The UCPMB exploited the GSZ to launch hit-and-run attacks on Serbian security forces in southern Serbia with virtual impunity (King & Mason 2006:105). During the winter of 2000, the UCPMB took advantage of this artificial safe haven to seize several villages in the GSZ in the vicinity of Dobrosin (ICG 2001:3).

The UCPMB made its first public appearance at the funeral of two ethnic Albanian brothers allegedly killed by Serbian police while driving a tractor in Dobrosin in January 2000. Uniformed men appeared proclaiming they were members of the UCPMB and declared their intention to protect the local people by driving Serbian security forces out of the Presevo Valley. It soon became clear that the UCPMB was

not a single group but a mix of locally based and mustered forces. Their key political objective was autonomy for the three municipalities, with the eventual goal of unification with Kosovo (ICG 2001:2-3).

Slobodan Milosevic and his regime were removed from power in Belgrade in October 2000. This made the leaders of the UCPMB fear that international opinion would change in favor of the new Serbian regime. As a consequence, the UCPMB, commanded by Shefket Musliu, launched a wider offensive on 22 November 2000 and began a campaign to expel Serbian security forces from the Presevo Valley (ICG 2001:3).

A combination of international pressure on the UCPMB, lack of support from ethnic Albanian political leaders in Kosovo and military restraint shown by Serb forces in the region strengthened Albanian moderates, such as Riza Halimi, and resulted in a ceasefire on 27 November 2000. More radical elements of the UCPMB, however, gradually changed position and began framing the hostilities in terms of a fight for minority rights rather than for a change in borders (Ryan 2007:286).

3.5 The Covic Plan and the Reoccupation of the GSZ

The continuation of hostilities and the deaths of four policemen challenged the unity of the new governing coalition in Belgrade, the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS). The nationalist faction in DOS, represented by FRY President Vojislav Kostunica and his associates, issued an ultimatum for NATO to evict the UCPMB from their new positions. On the opposite side, Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic and Deputy Prime Minister Nebosja Covic, representing the moderate wing of DOS, struggled to convince skeptical colleagues to be patient in order to win NATO's support (ICG 2001:3).

In December 2000, Covic was appointed president of a new ad hoc body, the Coordination Body for southern Serbia. Yugoslav and Serbian officials held meetings with NATO officials in Bujanovac, a first step in forging a relationship that later delivered rewards. When Covic led a delegation to Brussels in February 2001, he persuaded NATO's political governing body, the North Atlantic Council, to accept Belgrade's plan for FRY and Serbian forces to reoccupy the GSZ (ICG 2001:3).

The Serbian government presented a plan drawn up by the Coordination Body for southern Serbia, commonly known simply as the "Covic Plan". The plan had two conceptual aims. The first was that the three municipalities in their entirety should remain parts of Serbia with no border changes and no autonomy. The second was a variety of reforms intended to end official discrimination of ethnic Albanians by integrating them into Serbian institutions, like the police and the education system, and to assure all citizens of their civil rights. The plan also included a number of concrete measures aimed at confidence-building, such as the withdrawal of VJ units from population centers, disciplining of police and investigations into human right abuses (ICG 2001:5).

As such, the plan sought to convince ethnic Albanians to abandon their ambitions of "Eastern Kosovo". The plan had four pillars: 1) "elimination of threats to "state sovereignty" and "territorial integrity"; 2) security, freedom of movement and the right to return to Presevo Valley, through the disarmament and disbanding of "terrorists" and "demilitarization of the region"; 3) "development of a multiethnic and multi-confessional society", and 4) economic and social development (Gligorijevic 2001:70).

More specifically, the “Covic plan” states that ‘the elimination of the problems associated with terrorism in southern Serbia requires a unique approach of all government and political factors, expressed in the unique attitudes which include: (...) assurance of a multiethnic society (...) with the gradual restoration of interethnic confidence and tolerance in the region.’ The plan (Ibid.: 58-59) further envisages the ‘Integration of the Albanians in the government and social system and the respect for their human rights in accordance with the European standards, which would imply adjustment of the ethnic structure of employment in civil service (...) with the ethnic structure of the population;’ and ‘the performance of police services and of the measures towards the citizens by ethnically mixed police patrols (Albanian – Serb).’ (Gligorijevic 2001:56-57).

Dealing with restoration of peace and security in the regions, the international community were expected to assist the implementation of the following tasks: ‘(...) Withdrawal of the extraordinary engaged military and police forces, with the return or remaining of the regular police of ethnically mixed composition in the villages (stations, patrols and other forms of regular service)’ and ‘Amnesty from criminal responsibility and “pacification”, or “recycling” of terrorists into civilians with full freedom of their movements, provided that they do not commit concrete acts of violence until the end of this phase.’ (Gligorijevic 2001:61-62). The international community would be expected to primarily engage in (...) Cooperation in the elaboration of the models for the solution of various questions and suggestions regarding the training of the police for the work in multiethnic communities.’ (Gligorijevic 2001:64-65).

The plan specifically sets goals for the implementation of the integration of Albanians in the socio-political system of the Republic of Serbia which should ‘be achieved (...) according to the following schedule: within 2 months – 10%; within 4 months – 20%;

within 8 months – 40%; and within 24 months – 100%.’ It further states that the integration of Albanians would be achieved through the following tasks: ‘The harmonization of the ethnic structure of the employees in the police, (...) (including the harmonization of the ethnic structure of the managers).’ The stated result of this measure is ‘Hiring and giving jobs to Albanians’ while ‘Competent organs’ is charged with the task. The condition is stated as ‘That they fulfill the legal conditions’ and the deadline is set at 60 days after the signing of the agreement. The plan (Ibid.:108) also envisages ‘Increased control of the legality of the work of the police and of other organs, with emphasis on the violation of human rights of Albanians by state organs’, with the result being efficient reactions to justified complaints and grievances of the citizens. ‘Competent organs’ was again charged with the task while no deadline was set, but a report on the topic should be submitted within 30 days after the signing of the agreement (Gligorijevic 2001:103,105).

The plan further envisages ‘Engagement of ethnically mixed police patrols and other police units in action undertaken in the places with Albanian population.’ This should result in ‘Ethnically mixed patrols in villages populated by Albanians’. The responsible chief of police is charged with the task, the condition being ‘Number of employed Albanian policemen’. The deadline set for this task should correspond to the ‘implementation of the tasks under 3, after the fulfillment of all security conditions.’ (Gligorijevic 2001:109).

According to the plan, the restoration of security and peace implies: ‘The withdrawal of extraordinarily engaged, separate and special military and police forces, the return or remaining of the regular police of ethnically mixed composition in the territory and peacetime military units.’ The ‘remaining or return of the local police of nationally mixed composition and the continuation of their regular tasks in the demilitarized

zones' should be implemented within 120 days after the signing of the agreement (Gligorijevic 2001:110,115,118).

Emphasizing greater participatory and economic rights, this three-stage plan focused on confidence-building mechanisms among ethnic communities in the region. Phase one envisaged the integration of ethnic Albanians into the political and social structures of Serbia – and promised to improve, within a period of eight months, access and inclusion for ethnic Albanians to state services; to guarantee adequate representation in local and central government; to hold democratic local elections and facilitate the re-institution of mixed police patrols in southern Serbia consisting of equal numbers of Serb and ethnic Albanian officers. Phase two envisaged the demilitarization of the region and, in return for an end to hostilities and the disarmament of extremist forces, additional military and police withdrawal from the region. An amnesty would be granted to all former combatants, and regular local police would take over and normalize the situation. Displaced persons would be able to return, and they would receive support and protection from state officials. Phase three envisaged a structural revitalization of the region, which included repairing homes and accommodation of displaced persons (Ryan 2007:286).

The DOS moderates' emphasis on getting NATO on board prevailed despite tough rhetoric by elements within the political establishment in Belgrade. From December 2000, Yugoslav officials had requested NATO to lead negotiations with the UCPMB. NATO responded positively to the request, and Shawn Sullivan, a political advisor to KFOR, started negotiating with the insurgents. Covic wanted to employ NATO to avoid potential political pitfalls and use Presevo as an example to showcase Belgrade's new moderate dispensation and accelerate the international rehabilitation of FRY and Serbia (ICG 2001:4).

Meanwhile, to the south of the Presevo Valley, beginning in February 2001, ethnic Albanians guerillas calling themselves the National Liberation Army (NLA/UCK) had started an insurgent campaign against government forces in the northern part of Macedonia. This soon became an urgent concern for NATO and the decision to allow the Serbs back into the GSZ was a consequence of KFOR's need to use its resources on Kosovo's southern border with Macedonia instead of on its eastern internal border with Serbia (ICG 2001:4).

KFOR's main concern was force protection. As Serbian security forces no longer posed a substantial threat to its soldiers, the UCPMB insurgency was viewed as the greatest danger to the NATO-led force in Kosovo – especially after KFOR began conducting operations countering arms smuggling across the border between Kosovo and Serbia. NATO also feared the possible scenario of KFOR being surrounded by two simultaneous Albanian insurgencies on both its eastern and southern flanks (ICG 2001:4).

As a consequence, on 8 March 2001, NATO accepted Belgrade's plan for a phased reduction and reoccupation of the GSZ based on the "Covic Plan". The Serbian government signed an interim ceasefire agreement with one of several ethnic Albanian insurgent groups on 12 March. On 14 March VJ border guards, Ministry of Interior Police (MUP) and regular army units entered the southernmost part of the GSZ, on the border with Macedonia. Meanwhile, KFOR worked to "convince, cajole and threaten" Kosovo Albanian leaders to abandon their support of the UCPMB. The insurgents in southern Serbia started to find themselves isolated (ICG 2001:4).

On 14 May 2001, NATO announced that Yugoslav forces would be allowed to return to the rest of the GSZ in the Presevo Valley, known as Sector B, on 24 May 2001 (Ibid.:6). KFOR promised an amnesty to UCPMB fighters if they entered Kosovo and

gave up their weapons. Covic confirmed the Serbian government's offer of a general amnesty to the rebel fighters. At the same time, considerable international pressure was exerted on Kosovo Albanian leaders to express support for a political solution to the crisis (ICG 2001:7). As a consequence, on 20 May 2001 UCPMB Commander Shefket Musliu signed a NATO declaration promising to "demilitarize, demobilize and disband" his forces in the GSZ no later than 31 May. Also known as the Konjullj Agreement, the demilitarization statement was also signed by Shawn Sullivan, now NATO Head of Office in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (ICG 2003:2).

Fears that the reentry of FRY forces into the central sub sector of Sector B, the UCPMB's stronghold, could spark human rights abuses or an escalation of hostilities in the Presevo Valley were not born out. The government deployed approximately 15,000 soldiers and police throughout the GSZ and other parts of southern Serbia. Given the lack of any strong resistance from the UCPMB, the Yugoslav security presence was soon reduced toward the promised final number of about 1,800 (ICG 2001:6).

Serbian forces entered the final sub sector on 31 May 2001. Some scattered incidents during the reoccupation appeared to pose as threats to the peace process at the time. Eventually, however, they served to confirm to all sides the lack of alternatives. The UCPMB understood that the FRY forces would not be deterred by rebel acts of bravado. International observers argued that VJ had abandoned the brutal tactics of the Milosevic era and that it had shown its capability to mount a minimal but highly effective display of force and then been able to quickly negotiate a ceasefire. Apart from a few incidents, international officials reported that the week-long redeployment of government forces in Sector B went more smoothly than anyone had expected (ICG 2001:6-7).

Belgrade and the UCPMB had competed to get NATO on its side, a competition that the UCPMB was bound to lose in the Presevo Valley. Based on the experience of the UCK in Kosovo, some UCPMB leaders apparently believed that they enjoyed U.S. support until the final phase of the reoccupation of the GSZ in late May 2001. It is more likely that the U.S. felt betrayed by the UCPMB and their use of the GSZ as a safe haven and was only deterred from giving the VJ a free hand to counter the militants by fear of possible reprisals (ICG 2001:4).

UCPMB leaders were slow to understand and adjust to the new reality that from a regional and strategic perspective, good relations with the new regime in Belgrade was prioritized over southern Serbia. At the same time, NATO worked to convince local Albanians in the Presevo Valley that the UCPMB could never deliver on its political goals while the new government in Belgrade should be given a chance. Until February or March 2001, a majority of ethnic Albanians in southern Serbia supported the insurgents, but due to NATO's facilitation efforts a third alternative appeared – a government presence constrained by international observation. To most Albanians this appeared at least worth trying (ICG 2001:4).

It can be argued that the settlement of the conflict in southern Serbia was a unique event in recent Balkan history in many ways. It was the first time that NATO itself had played a central facilitating role in the Balkans. It was the first time that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had legally gained territory. It was also the first time that NATO determinedly sided with the Serbs against Albanians (ICG 2001:1).

In the following this thesis will examine and discuss an important component of the "Covic Plan", namely the multiethnic police force and the reforms associated with it. The aim of the remainder of the thesis is to assess the contribution of the multiethnic police force on peace and stability in the Presevo Valley. The introduction of

multiethnic police reform was understood a vital part of the peacebuilding effort in southern Serbia. The next chapter will explain and examine in general terms the role of policing and police reform in peace- and statebuilding operations.

4. Theoretical Concepts

The main concepts that will be introduced and discussed as theoretical frame of reference in this thesis are *peace- and statebuilding*, *policing in peace operations* and *police reform*. These three concepts are all related, as *police reform* and *policing in peace operations* have become important elements in modern *peacebuilding* operations. In recent years *statebuilding* has been widely acknowledged as a fundamental aspect of efforts to establish peace in war-torn societies, and may, according to Paris and Sisk (2009:14-15), be viewed as a ‘sub-component of peacebuilding’. It is possible to argue that the concepts are related to each other too such a degree that it is difficult to explain and discuss one without the other. This thesis will argue that in order to investigate the more specific concepts dealing with *policing in peace operations* and *police reform*, it is necessary to explain and define *peace-and statebuilding*, as the former concepts in most circumstances cannot exist outside settings characterized by the latter concept(s). In the following these concepts will be explained and discussed using the sources of information mentioned above.

4.1 Peace- and Statebuilding

The term ‘post-conflict peacebuilding’ was introduced by the then-UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992 in his ‘*An Agenda for Peace*’. He identified it as ‘activities to build peace after conflict in order to avoid its recurrence.’ (Bellamy & Williams 2012:17). In an effort to assess the implications for the UN at the end of the Cold War, Boutros-Ghali defined the term broadly to cover ‘action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict’ (Berdal 2009:17-18). According to Boutros-Ghali, peacebuilding might include functions such as ‘disarming the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, (...) advisory and training support for security personnel, (...) strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation.’ (Paris & Sisk 2009:5).

Since its introduction the term has remained closely associated with the UN and is treated as one of its core functions in the peace and security field (Berdal 2009:17-18). The UN definition of peacebuilding has become even broader, now covering ‘integrated and coordinated actions aimed at addressing the root causes of violence, whether political, legal, institutional, military, humanitarian, human-rights-related, environmental, economic and social, cultural and demographic’. Also, crucial to the UN understanding of the concept is the belief and insistence that actions in these different spheres are ‘mutually reinforcing’ (Berdal 2009:18). This broadened definition, which included ‘everything from preventive diplomacy and humanitarian aid to different types of civilian assistance, military operations, development activities, and post-conflict reconstruction’ (Paris & Sisk 2009:5) made clear that the purpose of peacebuilding had evolved to include both remedial and preventive aspects - aimed at consolidating peace after war and simultaneously preventing renewed violence in post-conflict societies (Paris & Sisk 2009:5). In 2007 the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations identified peacebuilding as ‘a range of measures aimed at reducing the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict.’ (Bellamy & Williams 2010:15).

Mads Berdal (2009:13) argues in *Building Peace after War* that the aims of post-Cold war peacebuilding, specifically its focus on supporting ‘political, institutional, and social transformations necessary to overcome deep-seated internal animosities and strife’ is far too ambitious, especially in its *transformative* commitment. He believes that the argument that contemporary peacebuilding has sought to ‘compress into a few years evolution that have taken centuries’ contains elements of truth.

Berdal (2009:18-20) believes that although the UN definition and its aspirations, which is also implicit in much of the peacebuilding literature, ‘conveys a profound and laudable aspiration’: to shift the focus of away from simply ending conflict and violence to something ‘more positive and ambitious’, it suffers from two weaknesses,

both from an analytical and a policymaking perspective. First, the term comprises ‘the entire basket of post-war needs’ without containing any sense of priorities. Second, he believes that approaches to peacebuilding ‘have displayed a marked tendency to abstract the tasks of peacebuilding from their political, cultural and historical context.’ This tendency has in Berdal’s view encouraged a social-engineering approach to the concept of peacebuilding.

Berdal (2009: 20-21,24-25) draws a distinction between the critical phase that follows the end of major hostilities and/or the signature of a peace settlement, and the longer-term challenges of rebuilding societies emerging from violent conflict. His focus in *Building Peace after War* is primarily on the former period, ‘when levels of insecurity are high; when violence is pervasive; when institutions are rudimentary, weak or non-existent; and when the very distinction between war and peace is blurred.’ This period may, and most often does, come in the immediate aftermath of violent conflict. But, according to Berdal, the distinction between the phases is not always simple and clear and cannot necessarily be defined in ‘purely temporal terms.’ He believes it is ‘futile to define the length of the early and critical period with any degree of precision.’ The period should not be understood in ‘purely negative or risk-filled terms: it is better seen as a unique kind of political space, shaped by fatigue, uncertainty and war-weariness, but also by the hope that the new political dispensation will result in rapid improvements to quality of life.’

Berdal (2009:20-21) argues that ‘ultimately, the long-term outcome of an intervention – its success or failure – may be determined during the ‘first’ period, as it provides the crucial opportunities for getting things right or badly wrong.’ In *Building Peace after War*, he is concerned with the nature of that period during which the long-term outcome of an intervention ‘may be said to hang in the balance’, and with ‘the policy challenges that are presented in this time.’ Berdal argues that ‘this is the period when

the trade-offs and the difficult policy choices arise, when expectations are high but when the best may also be the enemy of the good.’ The trade-offs are consequences of the underlying tensions that is present in societies emerging from violent conflicts, between ‘on the one hand, the requirements of security and political stability in the short term and, on the other, policy objectives vital to long-term stability and ‘sustainable peace’.’ The former include ‘physical security, the creation and stabilization of administrative and governing structures, and provision for the basic and life-sustaining needs of local populations’, objectives aimed at keeping the peace or a fragile peace process alive. The latter include issues ranging from ‘the administration of post-conflict justice, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed factions and combat against organized crime’ to ‘the broader aims of democratization and economic development.’ The tension between short and long-term objectives is, according to Berdal, highly context-specific. However, according to Berdal, even in the best circumstances, ‘a perfect reconciliation of long-term objectives with the more immediate tasks of stabilization has proved hard to achieve’. Therefore, Berdal argues, ‘trade-offs, priority setting and awkward compromises between these sets of objectives simply cannot be avoided’.

In recent years the term *statebuilding* has become closely associated with peacebuilding, both in practice and among scholars. In *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding* Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk (2009:14-15) define postwar statebuilding as ‘the strengthening or construction of legitimate governmental institutions in countries that are emerging from conflicts.’ In their view, statebuilding is not synonymous with peacebuilding, as they define as ‘efforts to create conditions in which violence will not recur.’ Statebuilding is in their view a ‘sub-component of peacebuilding.’ They argue that ‘support for postwar statebuilding should be viewed as a call for paying greater attention to strengthening or constructing effective and legitimate governmental institutions as an important element of peacebuilding.’ In line with Berdal, they argue that the core-functions which need to be established in any post-conflict society are:

‘the provision of security, the rule of law (including a codified and promulgated body of laws with a reasonably effective police and justice system), [and] basic services.’

They claim that ‘post-conflict peacebuilding combines three separate yet simultaneous transitions: a social transition from internecine fighting to peace; a political transition from wartime government to postwar government; an economic transition from war-warped accumulation and distribution to equitable, transparent postwar development that in turn reinforces peace.’ (Paris & Sisk 2009:1).

Statebuilding, according to Paris and Sisk (2009:1-2), is a particular approach to peacebuilding, ‘premised on the recognition that achieving security and development in societies emerging from civil war partly depends on the existence of capable, autonomous and legitimate governmental institutions.’ They believe that earlier peacebuilding efforts relied ‘too heavily on quick fixes, while not paying enough attention to constructing institutional foundations for functioning postwar governments and markets’, and that international agencies, as a consequence, ‘began to reorient their peacebuilding strategies towards the construction of effective, legitimate governmental institutions in transitional states.’

Paris and Sisk (2009:3) argue that the ‘increased attention on statebuilding as a foundation for peacebuilding made good sense’, but they acknowledge that ‘institutional strengthening, alone, would not produce peace and prosperity.’ However, they believe that ‘without adequate attention to the statebuilding requirements of peacebuilding, war-torn states would be less likely to escape the multiple and mutually reinforcing “traps” of violence and underdevelopment.’

In 2004, along with Roland Paris, several different writers arrived at similar conclusions on peacebuilding theory and practice, among them Francis Fukuyama, Simon Chesterman, James Fearon and David Laitin. These scholars all argued ‘that the operational concepts and implementation of peacebuilding had under-emphasized the creation or strengthening of governmental institutions as a foundation for successful transitions from war to peace.’ (Paris & Sisk 2009:7-8).

Theirs and other publications resulted in a growing interest for statebuilding within the peacebuilding scholarship and among practitioners of peacebuilding. Statebuilding became an important part of the peacebuilding discourse. According to Paris and Sisk (2009:10-11), Lakhdar Brahimi assessed in 2007 that:

‘The concept of statebuilding is becoming more and more accepted within the international community and is actually far more apt as a description of exactly what it is we should be trying to do in postconflict countries – building effective systems and institutions of government. Indeed, acceptance of statebuilding as a generic term to describe our activities will help to concentrate international support on those very activities.’

Summarizing the sources above, it seems like there is a considerable agreement among scholars on peacebuilding that more attention is needed on constructing and supporting representative and independent state institutions. Statebuilding has become the main strategy for establishing post-conflict peace and stability in war-torn societies. However, the scholars seem to agree that the strategy of statebuilding is faced with a variety of challenges. How these challenges are managed is crucial for the outcome and success of modern peace- and statebuilding operations.

Even though the literature referred to mainly deals with larger UN-led peace operations with a high degree of outside intervention, the arguments are relevant. The international intervention in southern Serbia was characterized by a relative light footprint. The Yugoslav and Serb authorities were themselves responsible for the democratization of state institutions envisaged in the “Covic Plan”. Therefore, related to the critique of externally imposed democratization in post-conflict societies, one could assume that the nature of the international intervention would increase the chances of success.

4.2 Policing in Peace Operations

Several researchers see *policing* as a key security precondition for peace building. Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams (2010:395-396) argue in *Understanding Peacekeeping* that ‘there has been a quantum leap in the role of policing in peace operations.’ They argue that ‘this reflects a shift from a Westphalian conception of the purpose of peace operations to a post-Westphalian view’, in which ‘there is a link between stable peace and the rule of law within domestic societies, and that peacekeepers ought to be in the business of establishing the rule of law and then building a sustainable capacity to maintain it in the long term.’ This view is related to liberal peace theory in which the relationship between representative, democratic institutions and peace is emphasized.

Bellamy and Williams (2010:283) claim that there has been a radical transformation of the role of policing in peace operations. Up until the twenty-first century, policing was viewed as a peripheral part of operations and was usually limited to monitoring local police. However, they argue, with the recognition that military peacekeepers are often confronted with situations which they are not capable to deal with, as well as the growing influence of the idea that there is a positive connection between the rule of law and stable peace, there has been a great expansion of policing in peace operations.

According to Bellamy and Williams (2010:377), a defining characteristic of contemporary peace operations is that they play a greater part than earlier operations in the provision of public security and the rule of law. Thus, there has been a dramatic increase in the role of civilian policing in peace operations in the first decade of the twenty first century, and is now recognized as a core part of UN peace operations.

Policing in peace operations began to change in the mid-1990s, as peacekeepers were tasked with facilitating the implementation of complex peace agreements and maintaining public security in the immediate aftermath of war. However, the police components typically remained limited to supervising and assisting the indigenous police forces. The key turning points came with the International Police Task Force deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 and the role of policing in the transitional administrations in Kosovo and East Timor from 1999. Since then, the importance of the rule of law in peace operations has become widely accepted. This type of policing has expanded beyond transitional administrations into the wider sphere of peace operations. All UN peace operations since 2001 have been explicitly authorized to engage in rule of law or policing activities (Bellamy & Williams 2010:379-380).

The main reason for this expansion of policing in peace operations is the growing recognition that the establishment of the rule of law is an important element in the transition from war to stable peace. The local police force is often best placed to deal with the problem when a crisis erupts. Relatively low-level crises can escalate rapidly into major problems that threaten governments or unravel peace processes in situations where local police services lack the capacity to tackle sporadic outburst of violence. Most contemporary analysts agree that ‘the rule of law is a key foundation of stable peace and that peace operations ought to be in the business of helping to establish it’. Moreover, military peacekeepers are often ill-suited in the long term to perform

policing tasks and capacity-building measures necessary to support the establishment of the rule of law (Bellamy & Williams 2010:380-381).

This idea is based on the view that stable peace requires the transformation of states and societies along liberal democratic lines, an idea that has been widely taken up by the international community. The ‘obvious connection’ between stable peace and the rule of law was first recognized by Boutros-Ghali’s *An Agenda for Peace* (Bellamy & Williams 2010:381). This growing recognition of the connection between the rule of law and stable peace was supported by two other factors. First, it was widely believed that in an interdependent world, security threats crossed borders. This gave particularly Western governments an incentive to ensure that other states were orderly and well governed. Second, it was widely acknowledged that successful economic development needs to be accompanied by measures to improve security. It was believed that economic development requires a basic degree of law and order which can in many cases only be achieved through external assistance (Bellamy & Williams 2010:382-383).

Bellamy and Williams (2010:386-387) divides policing operations into four main categories based on their different tasks and levels of authority: *Capacity-building*, *Traditional policing*, *Multidimensional policing* and *Executive policing*. At one end of the spectrum, international police officers advise and support local authorities but do not monitor them or perform policing functions. At the other end, in transitional administrations, the international police assume executive authority and conduct the full range of policing activities. In practice, however, most actual operations fit somewhere between the two poles.

Most relevant to the study of the multi-ethnic police reform in southern Serbia is *Capacity-building*. Most policing missions have a capacity-building element and aim to establish effective, legitimate and sustainable local police services. Typically, capacity building operations aim to ‘develop or modify the knowledge, skills, and character traits of police officers and support staff through a planned and systematic learning experience, thereby achieving effectiveness in a wide range of activities’. Capacity-building policing missions intend to ‘allow police staff to acquire abilities in order to perform given tasks to an adequate level or degree’. Also, they often attempt to use the police service as a vanguard for wider transformation by using the reform process as a ‘transmission mechanism’. The basic idea is that, in divided societies, reforms aimed at creating a multi-ethnic, gender-sensitive, democratic police service can have positive effects beyond their immediate impact on the police service itself, helping to embed these values within the wider society (Bellamy & Williams 2010:387).

Capacity-building covers a wide spectrum of activities designed to enhance the effectiveness of criminal investigations, the police service’s capacity to prevent and deal with civil unrest, and measures to improve the local police force’s accountability and compliance with international human rights norms. In practice, capacity-building includes training programs covering both practical policing issues and normative issues, for example democratic policing, human-rights and gender mainstreaming, the provision of equipment, planning and support for senior management, and the creation of systems of accountability such as transparent budgeting and accounting (Bellamy & Williams 2010:387).

According to Bellamy and Williams (2010:389), capacity-building operations have had some success. However, they also confront some major problems. First, as stand-alone missions, they are entirely dependent on the consent of the host government and

needs to cooperate closely with it. This can result in problems in situations where the host government does not enjoy a high degree of local legitimacy or where the police service is dominated by a particular ethnic group. Second, sustaining reforms and behavioral change in the long term has proved very difficult. This points, on the one hand, to a wider challenge with using the police as a 'transmission mechanism'. If the values inculcated by police reform are not shared by the wider society and the political elite, they are unlikely to be sustained. On the other hand, there is the problem of treating the police in isolation from other elements of the criminal justice system. Third, by purging corrupt and abusive officers and disrupting key systems, police reform can actually reduce a police service's capacity in the short term to fulfill their tasks. Finally, training can be quite haphazard in multinational operations where different national contingents are charged with different aspects of the mission.

Summarized, *policing* has become an important element in all peace operations. The close relationship between the rule of law on the one hand and peace and stability on the other seems well established among both scholars and practitioners of peacebuilding. Establishing the rule of law is believed to be a precondition for economic development and the transition from conflict to lasting peace. This can be fulfilled either through the direct intervention of international police components or through constructing and supporting indigenous security institutions. Increasing the capacity of local police forces is present in almost all international police missions and is seen as an effective approach to strengthening the rule of law in societies emerging from conflict. Enhancing the capacity of local police forces often require thorough reform processes, sometimes completely altering the status quo within the local security apparatus. As with peace- and statebuilding operations in general, police missions are faced with a range of challenges that needs to be managed in order to succeed.

4.3 Police Reform

Theory on police reform relates both to ‘normal’ policing and to policing activities in peace operations. The focus below will be on the latter and is derived from three articles on police reform in different parts of former Yugoslavia (Stodiek 2006, Ryan 2007, Bieber 2010). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the three articles used in this part to introduce relevant theory on police reform also entirely contributes the empirical findings on multiethnic police reform in southern Serbia for the remainder of the thesis. Although dealing with police reform in general, all three articles emphasize aspects of police reform in southeastern Europe and in the Balkans in particular. Below, information from the three articles is presented in order to see what have been key features of the police reforms in this area.

In *The OSCE and the Creation of Multi-Ethnic Police Forces in the Balkans*, Thorsten Stodiek (2006:7) argues that ‘In order to re-establish the state’s legitimate monopoly of force (...) and to secure a sustainable peace process, citizens must be disarmed, the parties to the conflict demobilized and demilitarized, and the armed forces reconstituted.’ He emphasizes that this requires reforming, or even completely restructuring, the domestic police forces. Stodiek claims that ‘the (re-)established democratic police services must have both the ability and the will to prevent human rights violations, protect democratic institutions and resolutely fight corruption, organized crime and terrorism.’

According to Stodiek (2006:7-8), ‘the establishment of ethnically mixed police forces within multi-ethnic societies in the aftermath of violent conflicts presents a particular challenge for police reforms.’ He argues that ‘In an environment, which is characterized by ethnically motivated hatred and social mistrust, police forces must be constituted of members off all population groups. Otherwise the population or at least certain minority groups will have no confidence in the security forces.’ Stodiek argues

that ‘the key question (...) is whether and to what extent it is possible to unite members of antagonistic ethnic communities in one and the same police force, and to develop a spirit of professionalism and comradeship within these multi-ethnic units, without which effective co-operation is impossible.’

Stodiek (2006:8) claims that creating multiethnic police forces ‘does not take place in a socio-political vacuum and its mere existence does not guarantee its acceptance by all ethnic groups. Even if the police behave appropriately (...), some ethnic groups may need more time to gain confidence.’ He argues that ‘comprehensive and long-lasting confidence-building programs such as “community policing” are necessary’ for this reason. The question for police reformers is, according to Stodiek, ‘whether to resort to existing experienced, but publicly discredited, police forces or to rely on the newly established police units that are trained to respect human rights, but are inexperienced in fighting crime.’ He claims that ‘without success in fighting crime, the police will not gain trust among the population and this may worsen the security situation in general.’

Stodiek (2006:10) highlights the fact that ‘local governments must have a sense of ownership if the reform process is to be successful.’ Unsupported reforms will not be sustainable. Also, police reform is a ‘sensitive issue for every government, because it “touches the heart of a state’s sovereignty and its monopoly of coercive means”.’ Resistance to reform may also come from within the police itself. Furthermore, Stodiek claims, ‘the reform process must be perceived as legitimate by the local population.’

Florian Bieber (2010:3-4) argues in ‘Policing the Peace after Yugoslavia: Police Reform between External Imposition and Domestic Reform’ that ‘For their central role during conflicts police reform has been understood to be a pillar of post-conflict

reconstruction, not only in former Yugoslavia, but also in other ethnic and civil conflicts from Northern Ireland to Sudan.’ According to Bieber, ‘The reforms which are initiated in the post-conflict period have to meet six particular challenges’. First, they need to *penalize* and possibly remove police officers who have been involved in serious human rights breaches during the conflict. Second, ‘former combatants need to *transition to civilian jobs*’ and police forces are often the obvious alternative. Third, ‘police forces need to be made more *representative* of the population, which in most cases involves increasing the share of minority members of the police force.’ Fourth, ‘police reform is necessary in order for the *return of minorities* and to provide a *secure environment* in which democratic elections can take place.’ Fifth, ‘police reform is inherently political and often controversial as the structure of the police reinforces the political structures after the war. These institutions, such as regional autonomy, are often integral part of the peace settlement.’ Sixth, ‘policing practices need to be professionalized and *reformed*.’ All these aspects ‘seek to transform police forces from a cause of conflict to a legitimate representative of an inclusive state to maintain peace’, but ‘the different priorities often pull the reform efforts into contradictory directions.’

In the form of assistance, advice, policing, mentoring, training, enforcement and coercion, international intervention shaped the evolution of post-conflict policing in former Yugoslavia. Bieber labels the effort to reform police in southern Serbia as *short-term post-conflict police reform*, which includes ‘measures that have assisted governments to reform police forces in response to a conflict.’ (Bieber 2010:4). According to Bieber (2010:12), this is a relatively light form of international assistance and consists of a ‘set of measures to address the ethnic composition of the police in the post-conflict context.’ In the immediate aftermath of conflict, police forces tend to be unrepresentative of the wider population. Minorities in particular, especially if they were a part of the conflict, ‘are usually reduced to a few token representatives, if at all.’ This challenge was confronted by all police forces across former Yugoslavia and

therefore became a core feature of all international efforts in the region. Bieber (2010:12) argues:

‘A particular challenge of increasing the number of police officers from minority communities is the tension with some long-term reform goals. The quick increase of minority members in the police force often does not facilitate the professionalism of the police, but might crucially enhance the legitimacy of the police which takes priority in an environment of low trust after conflict.’

In “Quasi-pluralism in a Quasi-peace: South Serbia’s Multi-ethnic Police”, Barry Ryan (2007:282-283) argues that one particular understanding of the role of the police in society is that the police are seen as primarily involved with maintaining a particular form of order. This implies that sub-cultures, or minority communities, perceived as being outside or contrary to this particular form of order, are often treated as a threat and ‘policed differently than the majority.’ This may increase the solidarity in the minority group and separates it from the majority.

Ryan (2007:283) argues that Community-oriented Policing (COP) ‘has become the mechanism through which the democratization of local policing has been presented to several post-conflict and transitional regions.’ COP seeks ‘to alter asymmetrical power relations between the police and the public by utilizing tactics that construct consensus for policing priorities and by focusing on the citizen’s most pressing concerns.’ COP is usually associated with foot patrols and increased interaction between citizens and police officers. The ‘concept entails the creation of facilitating structures to enhance cooperation between the police and the public’ and consultation is a key feature.

Summarized, police reform is an important part of the capacity-building element in policing missions. In order to establish rule of law in post-conflict societies, it is often necessary to reform the existing local police forces. The police may in many cases have been parts in the conflicts the international intervention seek to end. This is often the case in intra-state ethnic conflicts. Thus, police reform often includes the (re)integration of minorities and former combatants into the reformed police structures, the removal of elements within the police who has been engaged in human-rights abuses, and making the reformed police more professional and representative of the wider population. The aim of multiethnic police reform is to establish legitimate local institutions capable of maintaining a safe and secure environment fostering lasting peace and stability. Introducing community-oriented policing (COP) is a strategy for building confidence in the police among the local population. COP implies a close relationship between the police and population, between ‘the police’ and ‘the policed’, the latter having a say in the conduct of the former through close contact and dialogue.

4.4 Summary of Theoretical Concepts

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, there is a close relationship between the main presented above. Since the end of the Cold War, peacebuilding has been closely associated with statebuilding. Constructing and supporting local governing institutions capable of providing a safe and secure environment may be viewed as a condition for a successful transition from conflict to peace and stability in war-torn societies. This belief is based on the view that stable peace requires the transformation of states and societies along liberal democratic lines.

Along with the increased focus on the statebuilding aspect of peacebuilding, policing became an important element in the majority of peace operations. Police components in modern peace operations take different shapes and forms, but capacity-building is

an element in most of them. The international community seeks through their relatively soft intervention to enhance the capability and capacity of the local police structure to provide for a safe and secure environment. This often requires reform of the already existing police structures, as the police in many cases has been part of the conflict the international community seeks to end. Introducing community-oriented policing (COP) programs is a strategy for reforming the police apparatus in divided societies emerging from conflict.

Multiethnic police reform was a crucial part of the “Covic-Plan” ending the hostilities in southern Serbia in 2001. Furthermore, the international community played an important role in facilitating and implementing the police reforms set out in the peace settlement. As such it appears to be a peacebuilding measure as described in the theories discussed above. The remainder of the thesis will examine and discuss the establishment and conduct of the multiethnic police force and assess to what extent it actually contributed to peace and stability in the Presevo Valley.

5. Findings and Analysis

To be able to fully answer the research question, whether the multiethnic police contributed to peace in the Presevo Valley, it is necessary to analyze the establishment and performance of the multiethnic police as well as the perception of it among the local populace. This chapter will conduct such an analysis by asking a number of questions which again feed into the main research question. The first part, dealing with the mandate for the multiethnic police and the plan for its implementation, asks how central the establishment of the multiethnic police was for reaching an agreement on the “Covic Plan” and how the Serbs and Albanians differed in their opinions on this issue. The second part, on recruitment, training and field duty tasks of the multiethnic police, asks how the recruitment process affected their quality, whether the training provided was adequate, how the field duty influenced their professionalism and level of integration with the regular security apparatus, and if the multiethnic police ever became the main security provider in the Presevo Valley. The third part asks whether the introduction of community-oriented policing (COP) programs was a success. The fourth part, on the local perception of security and the reform efforts, asks how the inhabitants of southern Serbia assess their security situation, how they perceive the results of the police reforms and how they judge the conduct of the multiethnic police. The fifth part summarizes the findings and analysis, based on the main arguments and conclusions of the three contributing articles, and asks how their assessments differ with regards to the level of success of the multiethnic police and the reforms associated with it.

5.1 Mandate and Plan

As described in Chapter 3, the “Covic Plan” included elements of security sector reform. The introduction of a multiethnic police force was a vital part of the reform process. How central was the establishment of the multiethnic police for the agreement of the “Covic plan”? What was the level of agreement between the Serbs and Albanians on these matters?

Stodiek (2006:43-44) claims that the mandate for the multi-ethnic police is found in one of the objectives in the “Covic Plan”. Multiethnic police units were to be established, composed of a number of experienced Serbian and former Albanian police officers and 400 new police officers, of which more than half would be ethnic Albanians. The new police officers were to be trained at the police academy in Mitrovo Polje in three phases by May 2002. The OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (OMiFRY) was to provide training for this new Multi-Ethnic Police Element (MEPE) and offered 32 trainers. The first phase of training was to consist of three five-day refresher courses for 40 former Albanian and Serbian officers in order to enable the first multi-ethnic police patrols to be operative quickly. The second phase, designed for new recruits, included 12 weeks of basic police training followed by 16 weeks of field training, delivered by Serbian instructors. The start of phase 1 was set tentatively at 21 May 2001.

According to Ryan (2007:286), the first meeting between representatives of the international community, ethnic Albanians and the Serbian Coordination Body occurred on 30 March 2001. Chaired by a NATO representative, these talks, concerned with demilitarization, release of hostages and the formation of an ethnically mixed police force, resulted in little besides agreement on the necessity of talks on the establishment of mixed police training. Although a number of obstacles existed, both the Albanian and Serb side agreed in principle with the concept of joint police patrols in subsequent meetings. Ryan argues that ‘This exercise of negotiating the composition and aims of the multi-ethnic police had a major impact on the end of the conflict. Both parties agreed that policing in the region occupied common ground for discussions.’

Both parties agreed that multi-ethnic forces were imperative for stability in the region, to cooperate on a plan for the creation of multi-ethnic police patrols and that candidates for selection could not have been involved in terrorist or criminal activity. There were also areas of disagreement. The Serbian authorities wanted to retain a high degree of control over the training process, while the Albanians wanted the international community to administer the selection, recruitment and training of the multi-ethnic police officers. The Albanians feared that candidates would be arrested when they showed up for interviews. They also believed that the whole initiative was only temporary and therefore ‘needed to be institutionalized into a longer-term strategy for the region’ and that the multi-ethnic police officers needed to be fully integrated with regular police structures. The Albanians were concerned that potential Albanian candidates lacked the requisite level of education required by the MoI. The Serbs were afraid that potential ‘terrorists’ could get the opportunity to infiltrate their security structures. An agreement on these issues was ‘reached in the spirit of what Dr. Nebosja Covic termed ‘reconciliation and dialogue’, and a public call for candidates was made by the MoI on 29 May 2001.’(Ryan 2007:286).

Summed up, Both Serbs and Albanians agreed on the need for reforming the security sector during initial talks in the spring of 2001. The introduction of multiethnic police units was seen as a precondition for stability in the region. Including the element of multiethnic police reform in the initial peace negotiations enabled the parts to reach an agreement on other issues. As such, it can be argued that the comprehensive Konjulg Agreement ending the hostilities in the Presevo Valley was premised on multiethnic police reform. The mandate for the establishment of the multiethnic police was found in the objectives of the “Covic Plan”. The new multiethnic unit was to consist of experienced and newly recruited officers of both Serb and Albanian ethnicity. Initially, there were disagreements between the parties with regards to who should be responsible for recruitment and training. However, a compromise was reached on these issues and the OSCE was charged with providing training and mentoring.

5.2 Recruitment, Training and Field Duty

Implementing police reform and establishing the multiethnic police force required recruitment and training of new officers. Reforming existing police practices also required educating experienced officers. After completing training, the multiethnic police officers were put on duty throughout southern Serbia. How did the recruitment process affect the quality of the multiethnic police? Was the training provided adequate for making the multiethnic police into a reliable security actor? How did the field duties of the multiethnic police influence their level of professionalism and integration with the regular security apparatus? Was the multiethnic police ever enabled to become the main security provider in the Presevo Valley?

To be eligible for recruitment, multiethnic police cadets had to be between 20 and 27 years old, have secondary school education, be in good physical and mental health and have no criminal record. More than 500 candidates applied by August 2001. The UCPMB insisted on the incorporation of its former members and a compromise was reached in which former UCPMB fighters would ‘neither be preferentially treated nor rejected.’ Serbian representatives claim that 30 per cent of the Albanian officers were former UCPMB fighters, while the Albanian side insists that only five per cent of the Albanian officers were former fighters (Stodiek 2006:44).

The OSCE trained police officers in a three-stage model. Short five day and five week refresher courses were aimed at former police officers, including Albanians who had been dismissed or resigned during the Milosevic era. These courses sought to quickly signaling change and to build confidence and were based on training equal numbers of Serbs and Albanians (Bieber 2010:13). The first two training phases, run by five OSCE instructors and supported by two Serbian instructors, was completed by sixty Albanian and Serbian officers in July 2001. The first ethnically mixed police teams had already started patrolling in May the same year. The twelve-week academy

training started in August 2001. Lessons included general policing, operational police skills, firearms- and tactical training. The training curriculum was basically copied from that of at the OSCE police academy in Kosovo, and the academy was run by an OSCE police instructor in co-operation with a Serbian representative from the MoI. 34 Serbs and 64 Albanians took part in this first course. By July 2002, 253 Albanians, 128 Serbs, two Roma and three cadets of other minorities had completed and graduated from four basic training courses (Stodiek 2006:44-46).

The twelve-week basic training received pretty good ratings in a CORE survey of October 2004. The suitability of the local cadets was assessed differently by former OSCE instructors. Educational deficits and a lack of professional attitude, in part due to the politicization of the cadets were seen as the biggest deficits (Stodiek 2006:44-46).

The 16-week field training was conducted by Serbian police officers on the job as MEPE officers were to be incorporated into existing police structures. However, the MEPE officers were mostly deployed in groups of six or eight to police containers, mostly located in remote areas, where they did not receive any relevant and adequate field training. The training did not afford any opportunity to practice or apply the newly learned skills. The standing of the MEPE officers was pretty low amongst their colleagues, who themselves had undergone the regular six-month basic training (Stodiek 2006:46).

Starting in April 2002, in an effort to improve the poor policing skills of the MEPE officers, the OSCE Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (OMiFRY) offered a follow-up course for MEPE officers as part of the Modern Policing Course, already developed for the entire Serbian police. By December 2002, over 600 officers from South Serbia had participated in this course. The OSCE mission, now renamed OSCE

Mission to Serbia and Montenegro (OMiSaM), provided police officers in South Serbia with an additional Police Development Program in 2003. By 2004, a total of 620 officers had been re-trained in one-week courses to improve their policing skills (Stodiek 2006:46).

OMiSaM provided a six-week Trainer Development Program in 2003 and 2004 for 98 Serbian officers, around ten coming from South Serbia, in order to enhance field training and mentoring in Serbia. The mission also reassigned three police trainers to the Presevo Valley to improve in-service training and community policing in the region. In 2004 OMiSaM and the Serbian authorities established the South Serbia Working Group, comprised of the mayors and police chiefs of the three municipalities, police officials from Vranje and Leskovac, and representatives of the MoI, the Coordination Body and the OSCE. The initial focus was on an in-service training program conducted by Serbian instructors who had passed the Development Trainer Program. The OSCE and the Serbian MoI jointly conducted a training needs assessment and developed a training curriculum. Community policing and police management were high on the agenda. The training started in March 2005 (Stodiek 2006:46-47).

Taking stock of the establishment of the multiethnic police force, Stodiek (2006:50) argues that with the completion of the basic training courses in June 2002, OMiFRY had achieved its goal with respect to the number of officers recruited and trained. With a total of 280 Albanian officers, their share did not fully correspond to the percentage of Albanians within the south Serbian population as envisaged in the “Covic Plan”. According to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Albanian police representation in Medvedja, where Albanians made up 26.17 per cent of the population, was 12.1 per cent in 2002. In Bujanovac, 40 per cent of the police officers were Albanian, while 54.69 per cent of the general population was Albanians. In

Presevo, where Albanians constituted 89.1 per cent of the entire population, only 50 per cent, (according to ICG only 30 per cent) of the police officers were Albanians. But compared to the mere handful of Albanian officers in the three municipalities before May 2001, the development represented a great improvement. Presevo had an Albanian Chief of Police, while the positions as Deputy Chief of Police in Medvedja and Bujanovac were held by Albanians. The Albanian community was consulted during the appointment process for these positions.

Most MEPE officers were deployed in small ethnically mixed teams in 40 newly established police containers within or in the vicinity of Albanian and ethnically mixed villages in the Presevo Valley. Some worked at fixed police stations in towns. Three years after the beginning of the first training course, both the OSCE and Serbian MoI stressed that all MEPE officers had been incorporated into the structures of the regular Serbian police. Therefore, they claimed, the term MEPE was no longer appropriate. However, the tasks of the officers deployed in containers were restricted to their own force protection, foot patrolling and manning the radios, which had a negative effect on the development of their general policing skills. This made established and experienced Serbian officers assess that the MEPE units were “a largely separate and less capable entity”. Furthermore, no Albanian officers had been promoted since the beginning of the training. This was justified by the MoI with the lack of higher education of most Albanian officers and their lack of work experience (Stodiek 2006:50-51).

Stodiek (2006:51) argues that there has been a lack of cooperation between Serbian Gendarmerie and the multi-ethnic police, an ‘issue that contradicts the assertion that the MEPE officers have been integrated into Serbian police structures.’ There was an obvious mistrust on behalf of the Gendarmerie towards the MEPE. The exclusion of the MEPE from search operations in Albanian-dominated municipalities represents a

‘missed opportunity for building confidence among the ethnic minority population in the state security organs.’ As a step towards genuine integration of the multi-ethnic units into the regular police force, the OSCE pushed for the reduction and consolidation of the MEPE containers and the establishment of more permanent sub-stations, in which the multi-ethnic police could carry out similar functions as in the main police stations and “have the capacity to develop local initiatives to prevent crime and undertake criminal investigations.” These changes would also result in a normalization of career development and rotation of staff between the sub-stations and main police stations. As a consequence, the Serbian authorities started reducing the number of containers by late spring 2005.

According to Ryan (2007:287), 455 officers had been trained by 27 June 2002. The multi-ethnic officers were deployed to their place of residence ‘creating, on paper at least, a far more pluralist structure in local policing institutions.’ The multi-ethnic police officers became highly visible symbols of a new approach to local policing in southern Serbia, operating out of blue containers and wearing distinctive uniforms. Ryan argues that ‘they were so symbolic of Albanian-Serb cooperation that they quickly became targets for militant ethnic Albanian factions.’ Their distinctiveness also served to differentiate them from the regular police. According to Ryan, one report states that ‘ethnic Albanian communities continued to perceive the Gendarmerie and regular police as the *real* police, as they carried out most security tasks and arrests, while ‘the multi-ethnic police are assigned more mundane tasks of day-to-day policing and border duties’.’ Not a single multi-ethnic officer had received a promotion after two years in the field. This was explained by the MoI by the inadequate education levels of many of the Albanian members of the multi-ethnic police. An OSCE assessment concluded that the working conditions and the limited responsibilities given to the multi-ethnic police officers rendered them little opportunities to develop their policing skills.

Ryan (2007:288) claims that an assault in Bujanovac in 2004 on multi-ethnic police officers attempting to arrest three Albanians illustrates that they had gained little popular authority. According to Ryan, multi-ethnic officers were rescued by Gendarmerie when they were threatened by angry Albanians at a checkpoint. Ryan had also observed heavily armed Gendarmerie in close proximity while visiting a multi-ethnic police container in August 2003. This had prompted him to conclude that the Gendarmerie was deployed to protect the multi-ethnic police unit. According to Ryan, this may have been necessary due to 'incessant threats' against the multi-ethnic officers made from former commanders of the UCPMB in February 2003. Surprisingly, according to Ryan, 'only two multi-ethnic police officers ever resigned, even though up to 75 per cent of the unit may have been threatened.'

Ryan (2007:288) argues that 'the failure to integrate the multi-ethnic policing element into the greater policing structure de-legitimized it significantly'. Ryan argues that this may be the result of a lack of trust in the multi-ethnic police officers by the Serbian MoI, who believed that the multi-ethnic police was strongly influenced by former UCPMB commanders.

According to Ryan (2007:289-290), it was 'universally acknowledged that multi-ethnic policing was not living up to their expectations.' Although the introduction of multi-ethnic police officers represented an achievement, an interview revealed that they 'had so far failed to impress.' They were perceived as 'passive observers of everything ... who didn't have the authority to do anything and were unable to do anything concrete' by one respondent. The same respondent complained that they spent too much time in their containers and did not patrol or have any contact with the citizens. According to Ryan, other respondents agreed with this view; 'the multi-ethnic police are put in a situation that they can do nothing. They just walk around. They cannot do anything nor can they protect anyone'. Another respondent explained that

they were ‘ordinary citizens who have a uniform – they have limited authority’. Yet another respondent remarked that when they ‘get more authority and power they will prove themselves in the field and gain the trust of the citizens. Naturally, if they remain in the containers, doing nothing but sit and watch they will not gain the trust of the citizens.’

Summarizing the findings above, it is fair to argue that the recruitment, training and field duty of the multiethnic police force affected their level of quality in a negative way. First, the recruitment process was carried out according to plan, but many of the new recruits were lacking necessary qualifications. This may indicate that quantity was prioritized over quality. However, the increased number of Albanian officers did represent an improvement. The training phases were also carried out as planned, both by instructors from the OSCE and the MoI. But the training provided did not result in the desired level of qualifications for the multiethnic police officers. This may be due to inadequate training programs and the new recruit’s pre-training level of education. The insufficient training could have been compensated with effective on-the-job-training when the newly trained officers were put on active duty. However, the majority of the multiethnic police officers were deployed to police containers where they did not get the chance to increase their capabilities. The poor professional quality of the multiethnic police officers made it undesirable for the regular police to be more closely integrated with the multiethnic units. This lack of integration resulted in a situation where the multiethnic police was viewed as a separate and second-rate security actor in the Presevo Valley. As a consequence, security continued to be provided by the regular police, the Gendarmerie and the Army.

5.3 Community-Oriented Policing

Community-oriented policing (COP) programs were introduced in southern Serbia in order to democratize the security sector and build confidence between the local population and the multiethnic police. COP was supposed to make the police more representative of the general population, removing the barriers that had existed between them. This was meant to be done by creating local institutions where the populace could influence police policies. But did COP succeed in what it was intended to achieve?

Ryan (2007:282-283) holds that the work done by the OSCE in South Serbia illustrates the difficulties involved in implementing confidence-building strategies to achieve de-securitization. According to Ryan, the ‘OSCE sought to alter both the composition and the *modus operandi* of local policing’ in order to normalize politics in the region. ‘The reforms were based on the premise that the introduction of community-oriented policing (COP) would facilitate the democratization of the local security apparatus.’

Ryan (2007:291-292) claims that community-oriented policing had always been considered to be part of a wider plan to democratize policing in southern Serbia. In June 2003 the OSCE drew up provisional plans to initiate COP and to address the shortcomings of the multi-ethnic police. The plan centered on the ‘development of concrete community policing initiatives which, where necessary, should result in a change of policing policy and methodology’ and aimed at establishing Community Advisory Groups (CAGs) in the three municipalities. The plan also envisaged work on ‘improving the reputation of multi-ethnic policing through further training in order to provide a more effective law enforcement resource in the region.’ The multi-ethnic units should be given more active roles in police activities. However, instead of pushing the MoI into incorporating the multi-ethnic units into the regular police

structures, the OSCE wanted to improve their credentials by placing them at the center of their COP plan.

A hierarchy of structures to facilitate the implementation of COP was devised which aimed to utilize civil society to support the police, drawing heavily on British models. This model assumes that the goals of civil society are in harmony with the goals of the police and surrenders very little control to civil society over the actions and policies of the police. Ryan (2007:292) argues that the fact that representatives of the Serbian and ethnic Albanian civil society disagree fundamentally on the role of security in the region, even though agreeing on the need for more control over a more locally accountable police, makes the applicability of COP to southern Serbia questionable. According to Ryan (2007:292), ‘the Covic Plan had not progressed beyond its policing element, and there was no indication that the necessary socioeconomic reforms to fund and contextualize COP were about to be implemented.’

As a part of COP, Community Advisory Groups (CAGs) were to be established at the village/neighborhood level in order to facilitate dialogue between community members and police. Nearly 70 per cent of the villages in southern Serbia had either created, or were in the process of creating, CAGs as of August 2004. It was believed that the CAGs could be further empowered if they were to address issues related to community safety. With respect to re-integrating the police with civil society, it was envisaged that the CAGs ‘should also be engaged in providing oversight of police activities, enhancing community participation in police decision-making, encouraging the police to be more responsive and responsible, creating ownership on the part of the community and fostering good police-community relations’ (Ryan 2007:292).

The introduction of Community Policing Officers (CPOs) was proposed by the OSCE to address the concern expressed over the effectiveness of multi-ethnic policing and their relationship with the local community. These officers were to be deployed to link the 40 multi-ethnic police containers with the surrounding villages and to provide information to police chiefs at the municipal level. Consolidation of the number of police containers and the construction of more permanent police sub-stations in their place was also planned (Ryan 2007:292-293).

At the municipal level it was proposed to establish Municipal Safety Councils (MSCs) to be headed by the local mayor. Civil society would be included in a sub-group, the Consultative Group, which would have an advisory function. Through consultations the MSCs would define local safety issues and advise the mayor on the allocations of funding, while having no decision-making power over the municipal budget (Ryan 2007:293).

The MSCs, according to the OSCE plan, would be accountable to a Municipal Assembly Security Committee (MASC), which would be a part of the municipal assembly and composed of its local assembly members. The MASC should be the oversight body for local policing. According to the OSCE plan, 'MASC cannot appoint local police chiefs nor exercise control over operational activities of the police service', but 'citizen's representatives have the right to ask questions about police activities in their constituency'. The MASC could raise funds and allocate them as needed based upon an evaluation of local police needs and the central government's ability to address them. However, the OSCE plans did not indicate from where the funds would come. The police had no legal obligation to participate in these bodies (Ryan 2007:293).

Rather than pushing for incorporating them into regular policing structures, the OSCE put the multi-ethnic police units at the center of a policy to institute COP. According to Ryan (2007:294), ‘The primary problem [with this approach] was that it envisaged institutionally weak local committees negotiating with a centrally controlled police force to influence local security priorities.’ Further, he argues, ‘Essentially consultative bodies with little or no authority over the police, the various bodies were given limited power to question and receive answers from the police but were not empowered to influence police policies’ and the police themselves had no legal obligations to attend the meetings. Also, the local civil society was only given an advisory role. Ryan (2007:295) argues that ‘It is difficult to envisage these security committees generating the requisite transformation of policing in the region.’

The introduction of COP in southern Serbia was an attempt to democratize the security sector through building confidence between the local population and the multiethnic police. However, the establishment of the various structures on different levels in the municipalities did not have the desired outcome. The local population did not get to influence police policies because of the low level of decision-making power within the institutions established as a part of COP. The lack of success for COP as a confidence building measure was definitively also a result of the low qualifications of the multiethnic police units.

5.4 Local Perception of Security and Reform Efforts

The establishment of the multiethnic police may be viewed as a strategy for building confidence between the police and the local population in southern Serbia. The level of confidence relies on the population’s perception of safety and security as well as on their perception of the multiethnic police and its conduct. It can be argued that building confidence between the police and the population is as important as combating crime. Confidence is arguably a precondition for an effective police force.

How did the inhabitants of southern Serbia assess their security situation? How did they perceive the results of the police reforms and how did they judge the conduct of the multiethnic police?

Citing research conducted in the Presevo Valley in 2004, Stodiek (2006:52) argues that one third of the Serbs and 40.8 per cent of the Albanians felt unsafe in their respective municipalities. Also, only about a half of each ethnic group (52.8 per cent of the Albanians and 45.5 per cent of the Serbs) felt that their property was secure. However, in another poll, done on behalf of the OSCE and the MoI, a clear majority of the respondents in the municipalities did not mention serious crimes as posing the biggest problems in South Serbia.

In another survey conducted by the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2003, inhabitants of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja assessed the different factors threatening general security in South Serbia. 53 per cent of Serbs said that general security was not threatened, while only 15 per cent of Albanians shared this view. Among the Albanian respondents, 43 per cent felt that general security was most threatened by the Serbian Gendarmerie, followed by 14 per cent who identified the military as a threatening factor. Among the Serb respondents, on the other hand, neither mentioned the Gendarmerie or the army as threatening factors but focused on terrorism and inter-ethnic conflicts (Stodiek 2006:52).

In the same survey, both Serbian and Albanian respondents assessed the situation with respect to their personal security as significantly more positive. For the Albanians, the Gendarmerie posed as the biggest threat, while the Serbs focused on crime and corruption. Comparing the security situation of 2003 with that of a year before, half of the Albanian respondents said it had improved and pointed to the introduction of the

multiethnic police as a major contributing factor. 60 per cent of the Serb respondents said the security situation had remained the same, while 25 per cent said it had improved. Only nine percent of the Albanian respondents and seven per cent of the Serbs assessed the security situation as worse compared to the year before (Stodiek 2006:52-53).

As all the articles seems to agree on, multiethnic police officers received insufficient field training and had few opportunities to develop general policing skills by on-the-job training. Therefore, their policing skills were rated rather low among both locals and representatives of the international community. Multiethnic police officers, both Serbs and Albanians, appeared to be far less experienced than their colleagues in the regular police. According to one police chief, a number of Albanians selected should not be serving in the police, because they had only been included to protect Albanian interests. In his view, 50 per cent of the officers were unsuitable and needed a lot more training. This rather negative assessment was not shared by the officers themselves. The relative majority (44.5 per cent) said that all or more than 90 per cent of the officers were suitable for police work (Stodiek 2006:53).

According to the Serbian Humanitarian Law Center (HLC), there have been no 'serious incidents of police misconduct against members of ethnic communities since the fall of Milosevic'. The relations between Albanians and the police have improved significantly in Serbia. The HLC considered the 'frequency with which police officers continue to use excessive force during identity checks, arrests, detention in police stations, and investigatory interrogations' to be the most pressing human rights problem. The Albanian population in South Serbia continued to complain particularly about the discriminatory and menacing behavior of the Gendarmerie (Stodiek 2006:54).

In 2004, the Albanian population in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja was more enthusiastic about the performance of the multiethnic police than were the Serbs. While 64.2 per cent of the Albanians rated their performance as good or excellent, only 39 per cent of the Serbs felt the same. Only 5.7 per cent of the Albanians rated their performance as poor, compared to 24.3 per cent of the Serbs (Stodiek 2006:55-56).

A clear majority of the Serbian respondents (69 per cent) preferred that the MUP, the Army and/or the Gendarmerie should be responsible for the security in the region. Only two per cent of the Serbs preferred the multiethnic police. In contrast, 24 per cent of the Albanians preferred the multi-ethnic police. However, the majority of the inhabitants of southern Serbia felt that the police had reformed since 2001. Albanians appreciated the effects of reform more than the Serbs did. The respondents believed that the behavior of the police had visibly improved since the introduction of police reform, although more needed to be done (Stodiek 2006:56).

While 59.4 per cent of the citizens of South Serbia stressed that they would be willing to cooperate with the police in solving problems in their community, there was still a significant percentage (40.6 per cent) of the correspondents who were unwilling to do so. The introduction of ethnically mixed patrols had led to a significant increase of trust in the police and the willingness to cooperate with it (Stodiek 2006:57).

Unlike the ethnic Albanian population, ethnic Serbs view the multi-ethnic units with much skepticism. The acceptance of these units is also rather low within the regular police apparatus, most visibly expressed by the inadequate integration of these units into existing structures. Cooperation between multi-ethnic units and special police forces tasked with fighting organized crime and terrorism continuous to be difficult (Stodiek 2006:83).

Ryan (2007:290) claims that Serbs and Roma respondents ‘were far more disparaging of multi-ethnic policing than were ethnic Albanians, who seemed to view it as a flawed idea with potential.’ Generally, the Serbs in southern Serbia ‘viewed reform as a concession benefitting ethnic Albanians.’ Both Serb and Roma respondents answered that ‘nobody gained from its introduction’ when asked if they identified themselves with the multiethnic police. The compromises allowing ethnic Albanians to join the police enabled Serb respondents to articulate their lack of trust in the multiethnic police. One respondent questioned their qualifications, while another accused it of being ‘composed of criminals and terrorists.’ Another questioned their loyalty, arguing that ‘we do not know under whose authority they are’. Serb and Roma respondents alike were ‘critical of multi-ethnic policing at a structural level, considering the concept valid but its implementation problematic.’ Multi-ethnic policing was not directly listed by Serb and Roma respondents as a particular achievement, while Albanian respondents considered it as ‘an improvement, albeit a flawed one, on past practices.’

Both Albanian and Serb respondents ‘expressed concerns about the limitations of the role of multi-ethnic units.’ Their limited range of active tasks ‘proved to locals that the unit was largely dysfunctional.’ According to Ryan (2007:291), ‘The inability or unwillingness of multi-ethnic policing to perform effectively was a source of dissatisfaction to people in southern Serbia’. Ryan (2007:291) argues that such observations illustrate that:

‘the importance of multi-ethnic police as a confidence-building measure declined with the stabilization of the region, and that the seemingly symbolic function of the force needed to be altered in order to both improve the effectiveness of the force’s contribution to local safety matters and to enhance its levels of public confidence.’

Summarizing the findings above, a significant number of both Serbs and Albanians felt unsafe in their municipalities in 2004, albeit for different reasons. Large portions of the Albanians continued to view the Gendarmerie and the Army as threats to their security, while the Serbs continued to fear terrorism and inter-ethnic violence. This is clearly an indication that old grievances were present among both ethnicities. The Serbs maintained that the security situation had remained static, while the Albanians believed that it had improved due to the establishment of the multiethnic police. The Albanians seemed to be more enthusiastic about the performance of the multiethnic police and appreciative of the reform effort than the Serbs, who still preferred the MUP, the Gendarmerie or the Army being responsible for their security. The Albanians felt a higher degree of confidence in the multiethnic police than the Serbs did. However, both ethnicities seem to agree that the limited operational capability of the multiethnic police was a reason for concern.

5.5 Summary of Findings and Analysis

The information and findings above is derived from three different sources. It is fair to assume that they have arrived at different conclusions. To what extent did they differ with regards to their assessments of the level of success of the multiethnic police and the reforms associated with it? How did they assess the effectiveness of the recruitment process, the quality of the training provided and the level of integration between the multiethnic police and the regular security apparatus? How did they assess the multiethnic police as a mechanism for building confidence between the population and police?

Thorsten Stodiek's (2006:59-60) main arguments are that the establishment of multiethnic police units and their deployment in southern Serbia led to a significant increase in confidence in the local police among large segments of the population. However, Serbs and Albanians alike are skeptical about the policing skills of many

multiethnic police officers. Their operational inadequacies are a result of the in-service training provided by the Serbian authorities, particularly for officers stationed in police containers. Stodiek claims that a lot remains to be done with respect to the integration of the multiethnic police elements into the regular police force. Likewise, structural deficiencies inherited from communist and Milosevic era, such as centralization, politicization and corruption, are obstacles to the establishment of an accountable and efficient democratic police force.

Stodiek (2006:85) concludes that the key problem remains the low and functionally inadequate level of training and, as a consequence, the qualifications of the multi-ethnic units. Police authorities in southern Serbia are reluctant to integrate the new multi-ethnic units into regular police forces. If the integration problem remains unresolved and the special units continue to be comprised solely of Serbs, there is a real danger that the concept of multiethnic police could degenerate into a mere symbolic gesture. This would mean stagnation and involve the risk of serious regression. Once the population and the officers themselves have come to the conclusion that multi-ethnic units represent a second choice and thus cannot be taken seriously, the whole concept of employing multiethnic police to build peace in post-conflict situations will be called into question. While it was reasonable and necessary to focus on the quantitative goal of deploying a sufficient number of multi-ethnic units as soon as possible in the beginning, the focus must shift to improving the performance of the new officers if the concept of multi-ethnic police is not to be undermined.

Florian Bieber (2010:1,4) argues that despite the extensive efforts made by the international community involved in the reform of police forces across the post-conflict regions of former Yugoslavia, the results have been modest. While conflicts have ended and the militarized police forces have become more professional and

inclusive, the political influence remains strong. He claims that police reform as a short-term post-conflict program in southern Serbia ‘did not result in a permanent mechanism to recruit, promote and retain Albanian police officers’. More than two years after the conflict, the overall number of Albanians in the police force still remained well below their population share. The multiethnic police were often overshadowed by the Gendarmerie, which carried out all contentious police operations (Bieber 2010:13).

According to Bieber (2010:14-15), the interethnic conflict in southern Serbia ‘triggered first a localized and minority-focused police reform, but the international engagement led to reform initiatives which had a broader scope, encompassing the entire policing sector.’ He argues that this expansion reflects two aspects which emerged during the initial period of police reform focused on interethnic relations. First, without structural changes of the police, including emphasis on community policing, the inclusion of minorities is unlikely to shift the overall relationship between the state and its citizens. Second, expanding the remit of reform has been an effective strategy to secure broad popular support, as measures focused solely on improving interethnic relations are often viewed by minorities as privileging them over majorities.

Barry J. Ryan (2007:282) claims that the reforms did not sufficiently empower local actors over centralized institutions. He argues that his article illustrates the limitations of COP, arguing that ‘de-securitization requires the creation of spaces wherein the local order being maintained by a locally accountable police is open to deliberation.’ Ryan (2007:294) argues that the two-stage police reform plan, ‘aimed first to recruit, train and deploy representatives of the ‘securitized’ minority communities in order to foment legitimacy for state policing structures.’ Then ‘it aimed to institute COP in southern Serbia as a mechanism to democratize the region’s security structure.’ The

multiethnic police managed to withstand the pressure exerted by separatist extremists who regarded them as traitors to the cause of Albanian nationalism. However, the multi-ethnic police units had to be protected against this threat by the Gendarmerie, which did not contribute to their legitimacy. It also quickly became evident that the multi-ethnic police units were poorly trained and resourced. They remained separate from the regular police, which continued to operate as before.

Thus, according to Ryan (2007:295), ‘the security sector in the Presevo Valley remains relatively unreformed.’ He argues that the disproportionately large number of security forces still present in the area, combined with ineffective plans to democratize the police, have intensified the sense of unease among local ethnic Albanians. Furthermore, the ‘re-securitization’ of ethnic Albanians of southern Serbia is underway. He argues that security sector reforms appeared to have merely created ‘the chimera of pluralism through the illusion of local control and the false hope of accountable policing.’ He concludes that ‘The inherent conservatism in COP does not promote the concept as a suitable mechanism for the kind of structural transformation of policing practices so often required in post-conflict and transitional regions.’

Summarizing and comparing the main arguments and conclusions from the three articles above, it is striking that they all seem to agree that the multiethnic police force in southern Serbia lacks operational qualifications as a result of inadequate training. They also seem to agree that, as a consequence, the multiethnic police have not been fully integrated with the regular police. Nonetheless, Stodiek’s article seems to be particularly positive and optimistic about the multiethnic police reform in southern Serbia compared to the other articles. He emphasizes the effect multiethnic police had as a confidence building measure, but acknowledges the continued politicization of the police. Ryan and Bieber, on the other hand, seem much more negative and pessimistic about the reform efforts. While Bieber argues that the results of reform have only been

modest, Ryan claims that the introduction of COP has been unsuccessful to the extent that the security sector in southern Serbia remains unreformed.

6. Concluding Discussion

It seems fair to claim that whether an intervention is a success or failure a (the long-term effect) – it is determined during the first phase. What happens in this period makes crucial preconditions for what is occurring later. It is in this phase that ‘trade-offs and the difficult policy choices arise, (...) [and] the best may also be the enemy of the good’ (Berdal 2009:20-21). The trade-offs are consequences of the underlying tensions present in most war-torn societies. Tensions may be between short term goals (the requirements of security and political stability) and policy objectives vital to long-term stability. Among short term goals are physical security, stabilization of administration and governance. These are key preconditions for keeping the peace as well as for reaching long-term goals like democratization and economic development.

The tension between short and long-term objectives is context-specific, but even under the best of circumstances it may be hard to achieve an optimal accordance between long-term objectives and the necessary immediate tasks. In terms of the police reform in southern Serbia there seems to be a dilemma of whether to rely on the existing, experienced professional police, or trust a new and inexperienced multiethnic police unit. This dilemma has been illustrated by Stodiek (2006:8) who claims that ‘without success in fighting crime, the police will not gain trust among the population and this may worsen the security situation in general.’

A police reform may be an attempt to transform a police force from being a reason for conflict into becoming a legitimate agent for the state to maintain peace (Bieber 2010:3-4). However, different priorities may prove contradictory. A relevant example is the integration of minorities into a police structure. This measure may be adequate as a short time solution, but pose problems in the long-term perspective. The example is pertinent to police reform in the “Covic Plan”. It succeeded in the short-term in pulling support away from separatist extremists towards moderate Albanian political

leaders. However, as the case has shown, the push for rapid recruitment of minorities was contradictory to the goal of professionalization of the police - the short-term training programs hardly provided for a sufficient education for police officers.

The empirical findings seem to relate well to the challenge cited by Berdal as being common in most peace-and statebuilding missions. The short-term goal of ending hostilities relied on quick fixes in which multiethnic police reform was an important element. Agreement on the integration of Albanians in the security sector was a crucial factor for getting the warring parties to start discussions on other issues. However, the need for the rapid recruitment and inadequate training for the new officers consequently made the multiethnic police a second-tier security provider, only tasked with mundane police duties. The Gendarmerie continued to perform 'real' police work in the Presevo Valley. As a consequence, large parts of the Albanian population kept on viewing the Serbian security apparatus with hostility as they were perceived as representing the former enemy. Confidence in the multiethnic police remained low, especially among the Serbs, who still relied on the 'old' police structures, the Gendarmerie and the Army, for their security.

As quantity was prioritized over quality, the multiethnic police never got the chance to take charge of the 'real' security issues in the municipalities, either because they were not capable or because they were not given the chance. Thus, the short-term goal of integrating Albanians in the police structures made the long-term goal of peace, stability and interethnic reconciliation harder to achieve.

In order to understand why the multiethnic police reform worked out as it did, it is necessary to focus on the tension between local confidence building and police professionalism. In this case it seems fair to conclude that the establishment of multiethnic police units and their deployment in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja led to a

significant increase in confidence in the local police among large segments of the Albanian population.

People got used to the multi-ethnic patrols, and contact between the population and the police improved, not least because of Albanian-speaking officers. The establishment of police containers in remote areas gave the population the chance to develop personal contact with the police. Community-oriented policing projects were also important steps in confidence-building. The establishment of Community Advisory Groups and Municipal Safety Councils, and the deployment of Community Policing Officers could possibly improve the relationship between the population and the police even more. This is particularly necessary for the Serbian population, which is still rather skeptical about the suitability of the Albanian police officers to serve all ethnic communities (Stodiek 2006:59).

The level of trust is well illustrated by the Albanians who began to turn to the multiethnic police with their concerns, which would have been almost unthinkable for the mono-ethnic police forces before 2001. Still both Serbs and Albanians are skeptical about the policing skills of many multiethnic police officers (Stodiek 2006:83). A lot remains to be done to achieve goal-effective integration.

At the same time as the Serbian MoI is insisting that the integration of the multiethnic police into the regular Serbian police has been successfully completed, the “former” multiethnic police officers have not achieved full police status, and are not fully accepted by the local population or colleagues in the regular police. Biased promotion practices are another point of tension. Moreover, multiethnic police units are neither used as confidence-building instruments in police raids nor in search operations conducted by the Gendarmerie. Hence, the primary challenge to building confidence in the multiethnic police force remains – simultaneously to secure the rights of all ethnic

groups in an even-handed manner and be reliable for securing the state's monopoly of force (Stodiek 2006:85).

The answer to the research question, did the multiethnic police contribute to peace in the Presevo Valley, seems rather straightforward. Multiethnic police reform and the initial establishment of the multiethnic police force in southern Serbia did directly contribute to the peace settlement ending major hostilities in 2001. Inclusion of multiethnic police reform and integration of Albanians in police structures in the "Covic Plan" enabled the warring parties to start talks on other issues which in turn resulted in a peace settlement. Even though the resulting peace was somehow fragile, a return to major ethnic hostilities did not occur during the period studied in thesis.

However, the grievances which initially fuelled the insurgency are probably still present in the Presevo Valley and interethnic reconciliation is far from complete. Furthermore, the multiethnic police reform carried out in southern Serbia relied too heavily on quick fixes. A large number of Albanians were recruited into the newly established multiethnic police force in a fairly short period, in many cases without fulfilling the qualifications required. In addition to inadequate training carried out by both the international community and the Serbian MoI, this made the multiethnic police force a second-tier security actor in the Presevo Valley, not trusted by segments of the local population and only enjoying a low level of legitimacy. Safety and security issues continued to be handled by the same elements within the Serbian security apparatus which had played a part in the 2000-2001 insurgency and the decades preceding it, probably contributing to the continued presence of Albanian grievances.

Thus, multiethnic police reform did contribute to peace in the short-term, but did probably not have any significant effect on long-term peace and stability. The promise of police reform and integration of Albanian into police structures was a contributing factor in ending the hostilities, but the multiethnic police force did not prove itself an effective and relevant peacebuilding tool in southern Serbia.

The evidence presented indicates that professionalism was sacrificed for confidence-building measures. The integration of Albanians into the multiethnic police force increased the confidence in the newly established police force within the majority of the population in the three municipalities. On the other hand, the qualifications of the newly recruited officers were inadequate which affected the overall professionalism of the multiethnic police force. The fact that the new multiethnic police units were stationed in containers in the vicinity of Albanian villages resulted in a closer relationship between these units and the local population, but disabled them from learning and practicing proper police duties. It can be argued that the introduction of community-oriented policing had the same effect on the professionalism of the multiethnic police force as it prioritized confidence-building over increasing the operational capabilities of the multiethnic police force. As a result, 'real' police work continued to be done by the Gendarmerie or the regular police.

Obviously, the perception of the multiethnic police varies both within and between the different ethnic groups in southern Serbia. However, it seems clear that the Albanians view the multiethnic police units in more positive terms than the Serbs do. This is likely a result of the feeling among Albanians that the multiethnic police also represent their ethnic group, in contrast to prior to the its establishment when the police was viewed with hostility and skepticism, representing their adversary and enemy. The Serbs, on the other hand, view the multiethnic police more negatively and still rely on the Gendarmerie, the Army and the regular police for their security. For the Serbs, it is

likely that the multiethnic police force is viewed as a concession to the Albanian side and representing something close to an enemy within the state.

The establishment of the multiethnic police force in southern Serbia and the reforms associated with it was a strategy based on the view of peacebuilding in which construction and support of liberal democratic institutions is an important element. Creating representative institutions tasked with maintaining a safe and secure environment fits neatly into the statebuilding approach to peacebuilding. The evidence provided shows that the challenges that most peace operations in general and policing missions in particular faces was present in southern Serbia. As mentioned above, as a peacebuilding strategy, the multiethnic police reforms in southern Serbia was successful in the short-term, but less so in the long-term.

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