INSTITUTIONAL AND NON-INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS IN POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This article examines the role and importance of institutional and non-institutional actors in Kosovo's foreign policy processes. It is based on a review of official documents, non-governmental organization (NGO) research and academic literature, using a research method of material analysis. The paper's findings reveal Kosovo's challenges in its policy-making processes and emphasise the essential role of international factors and NGOs. The article provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and importance of Kosovo's foreign policy and the role and influence of institutional actors, such as the ruling party and opposition parties, and non-institutional actors, such as international actors and NGOs. The results emphasise the need for the engagement and support of the international community in Kosovo's foreign policy efforts. In conclusion, the paper contributes to the ongoing discussion on the policy-making processes in Kosovo and its foreign policy. Judah (2012) emphasised that for Kosovo to have a successful foreign policy, it must have a flourishing internal (domestic) policy because one cannot be successful without the other. The article emphasises the importance of considering institutional and non-institutional actors in the policy-making processes in Kosovo.

Keywords: Institutional and Non-Institutional Actors, Policy-Making Processes, Kosovo, International Factor, NGOs

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1. INTRODUCTION

Policy-making processes in another form in Kosovo also started during the 1999 war, especially with the involvement of NATO (international factors) and the bombing of the former Yugoslavia. While in 1999, on the territory of Kosovo, with United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1244, the country was placed under the international administration of the UN (Arifi & Brovina, 2022). Those involvement has helped the country's state-building and the development of all policies. After the declaration of independence in 2008, the Government of Kosovo became a relevant actor in promoting political processes related to state-building and the country's development in the international arena. Next, a very complicated policy-making process was the beginning of talks and negotiations with Serbia (in 2011), which took place for several years and is still ongoing (IFIMES, 2023). The Ahtisaari Plan was next to follow, as a package containing conditions therein, namely requirements that had to be met by the Kosovo side. From December 2008, the EU operated in Kosovo

with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) mission covering the justice field (Mehmeti & Radeljic, 2016).

This paper focuses on the roles and importance of institutional and non-institutional actors in Kosovo's internal and external policy-making processes. The second section of the literature review elaborates on Anderson's (2010) concept of public policies. Also, the theoretical approach of this research is based on the concepts of Fischer et al. (2007) with the hybrid theory that implicates all decision-making actors in decision-making from top to bottom and vice versa. Using a rationalist approach that immobilises all decision-making policies, Reyes (2001) sought to understand the effects of such an approach on policy outcomes. In this direction, the literature related to Kosovo's foreign policy and its affirmation in the international arena, together with global factors, such as the USA and the EU, is also examined (Newman & Visoka, 2018). This part also examines the role of parties in power and opposition parties in recognising the state of Kosovo in the international arena.

In the methodology part, this paper uses a material analysis research method to investigate and evaluate diverse materials and sources of information, including news articles, journals, books, reports, and other written materials. The purpose is to comprehend the outcomes of partnerships between the different stakeholders in Kosovo's foreign policy.

While in the results section discusses the role of international organisations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kosovo's foreign policy. The paper provides a detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by Kosovo's foreign policy and identifies the factors that influence it. It also emphasises the importance of continued engagement and support from the international community. The paper is a valuable resource for future research on Kosovo's foreign policy, but it is mainly based on academic literature and official documents, which may limit its perspectives. In general, the paper emphasises the decisive role of institutional and non-institutional actors in Kosovo's foreign policy.

Another significant challenge ahead of the entire Kosovar political spectrum was recognition from other countries for the youngest state in Europe. Recognitions from countries that had supported this independence were to follow soon after the declaration of independence. However, a remaining challenge that has persisted to date is getting recognition from countries that have been neutral to Kosovo's independence and from countries that oppose Kosovo's independence. Especially a big challenge is the non-recognition by five EU member states.

After summarising the challenges of policy-making process in Kosovo, a few research questions, answers to which will be understood in the following paper, are introduced:

RQ1: How did the international organizations impact the policy-making processes, i.e., Kosovo's foreign policy?

RQ2: How much have NGOs helped in the policy-making process in Kosovo, especially in foreign policy?

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 presents the research methodology. Section 4 provides the results, while Section 5 discusses the findings. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Public policy means the activity and behaviour of people to make, maintain and improve the general rules according to which they live. There are several definitions of politics, such as the art of governance, public affairs, compromise and consensus, and power and distribution of resources. Public policies are divided into two groups: the public and private fields. Public policies are the decisions public sectors and non-profit institutions make in solving general problems. Public policy analysis dates back to the dawn of civilisation and is the study of decisions and actions designed to resolve issues of public interest. Anderson (2010) defines public policy as what state governments decide to do or not to do about general problems. Public policy is divided into three theoretical approaches: rational approach, interest group approach and social movement approach. The rational approach considers government decisions based on the best and most independent information analysis. The interest group approach focuses on the role of interest groups and lobbies in shaping policy.

The social movement approach emphasises the importance of the influence of public opinion and social movements in forming public policies. For this reason, Fisher et al. (2007) divide the theoretical approach to public policies into three different theories. They are:

1. *The top-down theory* puts its main emphasis on the ability of the decision-maker to produce irreversible political objectives and has control in the implementation phase.
2. *The bottom-up theory*, the critics of this theory see local bureaucrats as the main actors in providing policies and see implementation as a negotiation process within networks of implementers.
3. *The hybrid theory* attempts to bridge the gap between the other two approaches by incorporating elements of top-down and bottom-up models and other theoretical models.

Reyes (2001) gives us four theories or four types of actors that differ from each other regarding public policies. Rationalists, technicians, incrementalists, and reformists are these four groups. Rationalists will be clarified because it suits the research.

Rationalists: The characteristic of this group is that they include reasoned choices about the desire to adopt different courses of action to solve public problems. This process of rational choices: identifies the problem, defines and ranks goals, identifies all policy alternatives, predicts the consequences of each option, compares implications about goals, and selects the best choice (Reyes, 2001).

On the other hand, foreign policy has to do with alternatives, goals and values that society seeks to realise, as well as the different types of threats

from which they wish to be protected (Hastedt, 2010). Foreign policy protects and promotes national interests, protects and promotes state security, and promotes and protects various economic, political and cultural attractions in the international arena (Baliqi, 2010). Foreign policy as a reality can be seen as part of general politics, but as a science, it belongs to the branch of political science (Hoti, 1995).

The line between foreign and domestic policy, which used to be more apparent in the past, has been increasingly blurred by contemporary politics and globalisation (Kaarbo et al., 2012).

Rosenau (1971, as cited in Vukadinoviq, 2008) points out that the correct presentation of foreign policy theory can borrow many elements from domestic politics, each time bearing in mind that many aspects of domestic politics influence foreign policy. This finding is correct because foreign policy reflects domestic policy, and domestic policy often directly or indirectly affects foreign policy (Vukadinoviq, 2008).

As a new and developing state, Kosovo has set its foreign policy objectives, usually related to internal policy. They recognise the new state (lobbying should be designed even more, despite high economic costs) and integration into the EU and NATO. These have been developed with state strategies and objectives, cooperating closely with the US and the EU.

Therefore, Newman and Visoka (2018) explore the policies and actions that Kosovo has undertaken in search of diplomatic recognition under the conditions of contested citizenship and the transitional international order. Existing debates about diplomatic recognition — mainly, how independent sovereign statehood is achieved — rely on systemic factors, normative institutions, and significant power preferences. Contrary to this, we argue that the experience of Kosovo represents a more complex and less predetermined process of international recognition, in which the agency of new states, diplomatic skill, timing and even chance can play a much more critical role. Important in mobilising international support for recognition than is generally understood. Building on this argument, we explore Kosovo's path to contested independence, examine the complex process of diplomatic recognition, and highlight the hybrid justifications for recognising Kosovo's statehood and independence. Without discounting the importance of systemic factors, this article contributes to a critical review of the norms and processes associated with state recognition in international affairs, which has implications for many cases. In this context, much material has been published about Kosovo, but more about the conflict and international law challenges.

Almost from the same point of view, Travers (2019) strongly emphasises that Kosovo's foreign policy strategy for increasing the legal subjectivity of the country prioritises achieving recognition by five non-recognising EU member states, strengthening relations with the US and joining international organisations.

Specifically, the article will include the rest of the non-institutional actors in Kosovo's foreign policy field.

2.1. The role of parties in the recognition of the state of Kosovo in the international arena

Economic development continues to be the main priority of the Government of Kosovo, followed by the focus on the field of the rule of law, education, transport, energy, mining, agriculture, tax policy, administration, and financial sector (Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2009).

Following the declaration of independence and the establishment of state institutions, the Government of the Republic of Kosovo established the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to intensify diplomatic relations and develop foreign policy in general (Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2009).

The strong orientation of foreign policy of the Republic of Kosovo shows towards advancing its international position and strengthening international support for Kosovo's sovereignty. Also, another strategic goal of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kosovo is to promote and improve its image in the international arena. Kosovo's foreign policy will serve as a critical tool, together with other government departments, to facilitate economic cooperation with various international partners, for membership into the global financial organisations, and attract foreign investment to Kosovo based on the free-market economy and competition (Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2009). The main objective of Kosovo's foreign policy in the past, but even today, is and was "the conviction of world opinion" (Baliqi, 2010, p. 206). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has all available assets to be used as its most vital tool for developing and using public diplomacy as soft power, but with significant influence in the international arena (Baliqi et al., 2013).

They emphasise the role of opposition parties in a country's foreign policy through the power held by opposition parties in the Assembly. The case during 2011–2014 is a concrete example of Kosovo. In principle, the leadership of the foreign policy committee belongs to the opposition parties (which functioned within the Assembly of Kosovo) (Haxhimehmeti, 2016).

The priorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, formed in 2013, were as follows (Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2021):

- continuation of cooperation with the EU on the path towards European integration;
- continuation of talks with Serbia for the normalisation of relations;
- establishment of the Kosovo Armed Forces to continue the path towards NATO membership because Kosovo aims to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures;
- Kosovo's application for European Council (EC) membership;
- continuation of bilateral and multilateral recognition achievements;
- continuation of the development of public and digital diplomacy;
- continuation of the story of economic diplomacy and attracting foreign investments.

Since it declared independence in 2008, Kosovo Government has divided its foreign policy into two phases. The priority or phase since 2008 was the establishment of the foreign ministry. Moving forward, the line between foreign and domestic

policy, which used to be more apparent in the past, has been increasingly blurred by contemporary politics and globalisation. In all the foreign policy capacities, the second phase's importance reduces to a central policy, whose main goal is recognition of the young state (Judah, 2012). The initial period of Kosovo's foreign policy was massively dependent on assistance provided by Western-allied states. The second period was much more active and less dependent on Western allies. It continued by expanding its capacities by including other fields, such as public diplomacy. Thus, participants from countries without recognised Kosovo's independence have organised conferences. The rebranding of Kosovo, which generally has a poor image abroad, has been and is the priority of foreign policy (Judah, 2012).

For Kosovo to have a successful foreign policy, it must have a thriving domestic (internal) policy because one can only be successful with the other (Judah, 2012).

2.2. The international factor and policy-making processes in Kosovo

International organisations that were operating in Kosovo had a crucial responsibility in peacebuilding. The same commitment applies to the reconstruction process in Kosovo, which began in 1999. The UN, the EU, NATO, and the OSCE have made reconstruction efforts in Kosovo. The UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of 1999 calls on other international organisations to develop and take a comprehensive approach to the economic development and stabilisation of the region affected by the Kosovo crisis (Arifi, 2017). Many academics characterise peacebuilding in Kosovo as an "integrated operation". It is described as such because it involves numerous international actors working together in peacebuilding. Partnerships between different organisations are increasingly becoming the norm in peacebuilding activities (Ozkanca, 2009).

In an integrated operation, the positive point is the division of tasks between international actors, which is a vital issue. As such, post-conflict reconstruction is the main challenge for developing international governance mechanisms that promote ongoing efforts to maintain stability and security (Ozkanca, 2009).

Since 1999, Kosovo has been in the spotlight of four international organisations such as the UN, OSCE, NATO, and the EU. Security, stability, development of democracy, the establishment of democratic institutions, etc., in Southeast Europe are vital to all these organisations. These four organisations have continued their most considerable field activity in Kosovo. These international actors share similar principles and values and significant responsibilities in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, promoting democracy and human rights, and building democratic institutions (Ozkanca, 2009).

The UN, the EU, NATO, and OSCE have the same objective in Kosovo: to support and assist the Kosovo authorities in developing a stable, democratic, peaceful, and multiethnic society by cooperating with all neighbours (Ozkanca, 2009).

Post-conflict reconstruction in Kosovo had far-reaching implications Because no international actor alone could meet peacebuilding challenges. Cooperation and coherence are critical factors in successful global peacebuilding operations. Ensuring a peaceful environment in Kosovo will serve Kosovo and the region and the interests of the EU and NATO (transatlantic community) (Ozkanca, 2009). The international factor in Kosovo is the guarantor of peace, state-building, and independence declared in 2008.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this paper is a material analysis, which involves examining and analysing different materials and sources of information, such as news articles, reports, and other written materials, to understand the partnership results between the various stakeholders. The material analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the exchanges and visits and their outcomes, as well as an understanding of the role of civil society in promoting bilateral relations and cooperation between Kosovo and EU member states (IFIMES, 2023; Darts et al., 2013).

Material analysis is a research method that systematically examines and interprets written or visual texts, documents and other recorded information. In the paper on the role of the international factor in assisting Kosovo's foreign policy, a material analysis approach can be used to systematically examine different sources of information related to Kosovo's foreign policy (Arifi & Brovina, 2022). These sources may include official statements and speeches by political leaders, international agreements and treaties, news articles and reports, and academic journals. A comprehensive understanding of Kosovo's foreign policy and the role of international factors in shaping it can be gained by using this method. The subsequent step was to interpret the data collected through the material analysis about the role of the international factor in assisting Kosovo's foreign policy. It considers the perspectives and interests of different actors, such as the US, EU, and other international organisations, as well as Kosovo's historical context and political situation. The broader implications were also considered, such as the impact of international support on Kosovo's ability to achieve its foreign policy goals and the wider implications for other young and emerging states in the region.

The paper utilised material analysis as its research method and additionally employed secondary sources, such as academic articles and conference proceedings, to examine the role of NGOs in Kosovo's governance. For this purpose, NGOs' role in overcoming the gap between citizens and decision-makers and the importance of their participation in government decision-making has been studied. Data from a specific example of a scientific conference have been used to illustrate how NGOs can promote Kosovo's foreign policy (Armakolas & Karabairis, 2012; Fanes, 2012; Kentas, 2012; Sláviková, 2012; Tiugea, 2012). The material analysis focuses on NGOs' contribution to democratic governance in Kosovo, including good governance, inclusion, accountability, transparency and conflict

prevention. This method will help understand NGOs' role in promoting democratic governance and shaping Kosovo's foreign policy.

4. RESULTS

4.1. The role of the international factor in assisting Kosovo's foreign policy

When US Vice President Joseph Biden (during Barack Obama's presidency) visited Kosovo in May 2009, he stated that the success of an independent Kosovo was an American priority. He stressed that the US support for Kosovo would continue to face many challenges ahead of Kosovo, including building effective institutions and fighting organised crime and corruption (Woehrel, 2013). This statement given by a former second man of the US says a lot. Joseph Biden showcased that the US has supported Kosovo's independence, proving this also during the war in Kosovo. This support continues even after the war. Suppose Kosovo's independence was a priority of American support in the past. In that case, the focus is to develop the country economically and strengthen the institutions by enhancing the rule of law and the fight against corruption.

On September 10, 2012, the White House issued a statement from President Obama which welcomed the end of supervised Kosovo's independence. He said that Kosovo had made significant progress in building the institutions of a modern, multiethnic, inclusive, and democratic state. Also, President Obama added that Kosovo has much work to do, especially in ensuring respect for the country's Constitution and equal treatment of all its citizens, as the Constitution regulates it. President Obama called Kosovo to resolve pending issues with its neighbours, particularly Serbia (Woehrel, 2013). The visit of the American Vice President to Kosovo and the statement of President Obama for Kosovo demonstrate the continuous support from the US for the sustainable development of Kosovo as the youngest state in Europe.

On the other hand, from the liberation period in 1999 until 2019, for almost 20 years, the EU had a significant presence in Kosovo, spread through several international missions.

The EU in Kosovo had (Kosovo Foundation for Open Society [KFOS], 2014):

- liaison office;
- in the beginning, there was also a special representative of the high representative;
- it led to a pillar within the UN administration (the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo — UNMIK), while EU member states have also contributed with troops to the Kosovo Force (KFOR), a NATO-led mission;
- since the declaration of independence in 2008, the EU focused its presence in Kosovo through two forms: *The political one* (Establishment of the EU office in Kosovo, where its head of mission is also the EU Special Representative); *Legal* (Mission in the field of law-and-order EULEX).

Increasing the number of recognitions continues to be the main priority of all institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. However, this priority should develop in full partnership with all countries that supported Kosovo's independence, such as the US, the UK, and France, the Troika of the Security Council that has recognised the independence of Kosovo, including Germany, whereas in the regional aspect closer cooperation with Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, and other countries (Desku, 2013). Through the approach from the second plan, the countries where Kosovo has diplomatic representation have talked in detail about getting recognition from countries that have yet to recognise Kosovo (Desku, 2013). The European Parliament, in two resolutions, has called on EU member states that have not recognised Kosovo to do so as soon as possible (Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2020).

For accelerated accession into the EU after the favourable opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), on March 8, 2011, dialogue on practical issues between delegations of both countries, the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia, was launched in Brussels. The EU directly supported the launching of this dialogue with the strong support of Kosovo's strategic partners, such as the US. The technical negotiations were a novelty because Kosovo and Serbia faced each other for the first time, but now as equal participants at the table (Kosovo's status and borders guaranteed by the most powerful democracies in the world) (Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2020).

4.2. The role of NGOs in policy-making processes in Kosovo, especially in foreign policy

NGOs have not started to be developed either during modern times or after the fall of communism. They have existed before and have been crucial for countries and Kosovo. Even in the 90s played a vital role in Kosovo, and their influence has been significant (Rrahmani, 2018). The participation of NGOs in government decision-making can play a crucial role in developing and strengthening a pluralistic, participatory and accountable democracy in Kosovo. The involvement of NGOs is essential for democratic governance (good governance, inclusion, accountability and transparency, conflict prevention) (Darts et al., 2013). NGOs are crucial in participation mechanisms, bridging citizens and decision-makers (Darts et al., 2013). Organising various roundtables to debate Kosovo's foreign policy and scientific conferences and coming up with concrete proposals on the development of Kosovo's foreign policy is what NGOs in Kosovo should do the most.

A concrete example is the organisation of a scientific conference by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society and the British Council themed "Kosovo Calling — International Conference about Kosovo, the EU, and the region — Promotion of Studies on EU Relations, Some Countries in the Region and Kosovo". At this conference, authors of five non-recognising EU members addressed different topics about the state of Kosovo.

Fanes (2012) addresses the non-recognition of Kosovo by Spain. After historically elaborating on the Spain–Kosovo relationship, at the very end, the author provides specific recommendations on how to work to get recognition from Spain. According to the author, Kosovo should: firstly, open institutional channels with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the Prime Minister, and other relevant institutions to establish direct

contacts; secondly, the issue of Kosovo should remain active in the Spanish Parliament, using the Basque and Catalan nationalists, thirdly, connections with opinion makers should establish, so that non-recognition by Spain remains a controversial topic (Fanes, 2012).

Sláviková (2012) addresses the non-recognition from Slovakia. At the end of the paper, she gives recommendations on how the Government of Kosovo should work to get recognition by this country. The proposals are: to start cooperation between Slovakia and Kosovo in justice, social and economic reforms, and partnership for EU and NATO integration, and all these need to be developed in the spirit of twinning projects. Then, the increase in trade between Slovakia and Kosovo, the rise of investment and export, the establishment of contacts between the political parties of both countries on ideological bases, and the cultural and sports exchanges (Slavikova, 2012).

Popescu (2012) talks about non-recognition by Romania. The author suggests that the approach towards Romania for achieving recognition by this country should be in the following forms: increased interest in cooperation regarding common interest in transatlantic relations, informing the public about the current situation in Kosovo, serving information about the Albanian-Romanian history of the past, then the introduction of Kosovar youth, the right to free movement (Papescu, 2012). Another author wrote about the non-recognition by Romania. Tiugea (2012) provides the following recommendations: civil society of both countries (Romania and Kosovo) should be involved in joint regional initiatives to develop a dialogue between civil society from both countries. Another way that connects these two places is the Albanian minority in Romania and Albanian students in Romania (the Albanian minority includes about 4,670 inhabitants). Another recommendation from this author is the cooperation of Albanian and Serbian NGOs to show countries like Romania that the dialogue between these two countries is advancing positively (Tiugea, 2012).

Greece, the EU member state, is another country that has not recognised Kosovo's independence. Armakolas and Karabairis (2012) wrote about the non-recognition of Kosovo by Greece. Although Greece has not recognised Kosovo, the authors emphasise that these two countries have cooperated. Greece's approach towards Kosovo may indicate to other countries without recognised independence that non-recognition does not mean non-cooperation. Trade exchanges between these two countries and other collaborations show that recognition from this country is getting closer every day (Armakolas & Karabairis, 2012).

Cyprus, and the EU state, is the last country to recognise Kosovo. Kentas (2012) says that the ongoing dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia could contribute to Cyprus's approach towards Kosovo. According to the author, the problem lies in the fact that the Turkish community supports the position of Kosovo. In contrast, the Greek community supports Serbia, and Cyprus's approach towards Kosovo will likely stay the same (Kentas, 2012).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo has nurtured diplomacy through civil society. Kosovo has made significant progress in communicating, interacting, and influencing the five EU states still reluctant to recognise Kosovo as an independent state. Civil society academics have provided a multi-pronged approach to diplomacy and the citizens of Kosovo and policymakers to interact with their counterparts in countries that have not recognised independence, given the lack of diplomatic relations (Selimi, 2014).

A partnership between civil society, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, the British Embassy, and the British Council has exchanged over 300 journalists, activists, and members of parliament (MPs) from Kosovo to the five EU member states that have not recognised independence. Civil society delegations visited Greece, Romania, and Slovakia. The visits made by civil society representatives created spaces for follow-up visits of the MPs of the Republic of Kosovo in Slovakia and the Slovak MPs in Kosovo (Selimi, 2014).

The Kosovar Center for Security Studies and the Slovak Foreign Policy Association organised events with civil society representatives in Kosovo and Slovakia and business leaders in Bratislava in 2012 to promote bilateral relations, cooperation, and partnership. "Cooperation without recognition" was the formula of this commitment. Both delegations aimed to engage and produce results in areas of common interest but which do not necessarily have political implications (Selimi, 2014).

The Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development and the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy organised a visit to Athens and Thessaloniki in 2013 for Kosovar civil society and business and media representatives. Being the first country from the Balkans to have joined the EU, Greece can teach many lessons to Kosovo institutions, and Kosovar society can learn a lot from the way of development of Greece. While in the case of Slovakia, civil society served as a channel of communication for political leaders, in the case of Greece, the engagement of civil society helped Kosovo by giving a more favourable impression to Greek public opinion and including Greek investors (Selimi, 2014).

The Kosovo Foundation for Open Society and the Global Focus Center organised a visit to Bucharest for civil society representatives, for whom a meeting with a broad network of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, journalists, representatives of Albanians, and Serb communities in Romania, MPs, foreign diplomats, as well as business representatives interested in investing in the Balkans (Selimi, 2014). This cooperation broke down barriers between these two countries, especially given the Kosovo–Romania relationship and the non-recognition of Kosovo by the latter.

The Kosovo Center for Security Studies and The NGO Support Centre in Cyprus organised a delegation of Kosovo civil society representatives in March 2014 in Cyprus. The NGO Support Centre headquartered in Cyprus focuses on implementing active citizenship, peace, reconciliation, development, education, and human rights protection projects. The meetings focused on the path of Cyprus's accession to the EU. The EU integration process requires exchanging experiences with all EU members, including Cyprus (Selimi, 2014).

5. DISCUSSION

The paper analyses and discusses the results of a partnership between civil society organisations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, the British Embassy, and the British Council to exchange over 300 journalists, activists, and MPs from Kosovo to five EU member states that have not recognised Kosovo's independence. The partnership aimed to promote bilateral relations, cooperation, and collaboration between Kosovo and the EU member states, using "cooperation without recognition" as the formula for this commitment. Different civil society organisations, such as the Kosovo Center for Security Studies and the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, the Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development and the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society and the Global Focus Center, and the Kosovo Center for Security Studies and The NGO Support Centre in Cyprus organised the exchange visits.

(Non)institutional actors in political processes are individuals, groups or organisations who influence public policy and political decision-making but are not part of formal institutional structures. This type of actor can be involved in political activities through protests, lobbying, forming political coalitions, media, etc.

In the case of Kosovo, (non)institutional actors have played an essential role in political processes. In fact, since 1998, civil society groups and various organisations have been part of developing democracy and helping to create good governance. This type of actor has substantially impacted public policy and political decision-making due to their power of organisation and mobilisation.

However, even if (non)institutional actors are essential, they should not belittle the role of institutional actors, such as the government, parliament and other institutions. In Kosovo, the part of institutional actors is essential for developing a strong and viable democracy. In political processes, (non)institutional and institutional actors should cooperate and engage in an open and honest dialogue. Thus, it will be possible to achieve better governance and a more robust democracy, reflecting the interests of all citizens.

The results show that the international factor plays a vital role in Kosovo's foreign policy and can help in different ways to support this policy. This support includes the integration of Kosovo into international organisations such as the EU, the UN, NATO, the Council of Europe, Interpol, etc., the signing of international agreements for cooperation in various fields such as security, economy, etc., the resolution of issues of major global problems affecting Kosovo, as well as the promotion of the country's image in the international arena. All these measures would help develop a solid and stable foreign policy for Kosovo.

Most of the studies have touched on the points of the cooperation of the government of Kosovo with different international partners (Newman & Visoka, 2018), which is also evident in this research paper. What makes it more exciting and sufficiently more powerful is a point of view on the influence of NGOs in the foreign policy of Kosovo, integrated with the government of Kosovo and the international factor, helping to promote the image of the country and the process of recognising the state of Kosovo in the international arena.

The findings of this research are essential for filling the gaps in knowledge about how different actors influence Kosovo's foreign policy. On the one hand, the international community is necessary to strengthen the subjectivity of Kosovo in the international arena, and NGOs, on the other hand, offer support in this direction. Also, promote global values such as democracy, human rights and the representation of Kosovo in countries this official policy has no access.

The results of this study are relevant to the ongoing debates on public policy processes, especially foreign policy, and the involvement of different non-institutional actors of a small and still not entirely accepted state.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper concerns institutional and non-institutional actors in policy-making processes in Kosovo. These factors' roles have included internal factors (local side) and external (international side). Each point of this paper deals with the function, position, and importance of the internal and external factors in strengthening Kosovo's foreign policy.

The first point answers the first question raised at the beginning of the paper. It demonstrated the internal factor in the policy-making processes in Kosovo; the role of the ruling party and the opposition parties in recognition of the state of Kosovo has been unifying to some extent in the international arena. This section particularly examines the role and work of the Government of Kosovo and its departments in charge of Kosovo's foreign policy, where they have demonstrated success in recognising the country in the international arena. Western allies helped in achieving this success.

The answer to the second question is addressed in the rest of the paper, focusing on the international factor and policy-making processes in Kosovo and the role of the global factor in assisting Kosovo's foreign policy. Further, the commitment of the International Community to the liberation of Kosovo in 1999 addressed to be a follower with the arrival of the UN mission (UNMIK) in 2008 arrival of the EU mission (EULEX), the presence of NATO (KFOR), and OSCE in Kosovo. It mentioned that all these regional and international organisations in Kosovo have participated and played a unique role in the policy-making processes in Kosovo since the post-war period. Also, these organisations have been and are guarantors of peacebuilding and state-building in Kosovo. The role of the international factor or Western allied countries in recognising the government was crucial. In addition, these ally countries have provided financial assistance to consolidate and lay the foundation for the country's foreign policy.

The third and final point addresses NGOs' role in Kosovo's policy-making processes, especially in Kosovo's foreign policy. This section disclosed data from various reports issued by NGOs in Kosovo about policy-making methods, focusing on foreign

policy. There has been a discussion on the organisation of public debates, conferences, and visits of NGO representatives in Kosovo, in countries that have not recognised Kosovo's independence, with particular emphasis on the five EU member states (Spain, Slovakia, Romania, Greece, Cyprus), which have not recognised Kosovo as a state. After these visits, the approach towards Kosovo started to change by these countries that have not recognised independence. All of these answer the third question raised and show that the assistance from NGOs in Kosovo has been quite significant, given their opportunities and capacities.

This paper is essential for future research on Kosovo's foreign policy because it provides a detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities of Kosovo's foreign policy in its effort to gain recognition and integration in the international community. Based on academic literature and the official data of the Kosovo government and international actors, the paper identifies the factors influencing Kosovo's foreign policy, including the role of major powers, such as the US and the EU.

The paper also contributes to the ongoing debate on Kosovo's foreign policy by identifying current successes and challenges and emphasising the importance of continued engagement and support from the international community. In this way, our paper can serve as a valuable resource for future research on Kosovo's foreign policy and other policies undertaken by other countries that have sought or have a similar objective to gain recognition from the international community.

There are some limitations in this research. It is mainly based on academic literature, journals, books, official documents of Kosovo, NGOs and international actors, and can only consist of several perspectives from the broader policy community. The availability of accurate and complete data in some cases may limit it. Limitations during this research were the nature of the data retrieval. It was impossible to conduct empirical research (questionnaires, interviews).

Finally, institutional and non-institutional actors have had a unique role and importance in the policy-making processes in Kosovo and Kosovo's foreign policy. The ruling Kosovar party and the opposition parties had much work to build institutional capacity and strengthen foreign policy, followed by the international factor with exceptional help for Kosovo's foreign policy and NGOs in breaking barriers between Kosovo and countries that have not recognised independence.

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