

inTegra

TRUTH FINDING PROJECT

Attitudes towards inter-ethnic relations and truth telling in Kosovo:

An Empirical Research

Truth Telling in Kosovo; Which Way Now?



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2007 – 2008, Kosovo

Intro

In beginning of 2007 INTEGRA NGO has decided to focus on Truth Finding/Telling process in Kosovo as one of the few institutions that have been committed in this Field.

Lack of information and data's for situation in the ground has pushed INTEGRA NGO for development of an empirical research towards Truth Finding/Telling issues. With constant advises and a consultation with our partners, INTEGRA with support of IKV PAX Christi during the period 2007/2008 has implemented the project "*Attitudes towards inter-ethnic relations and truth telling in Kosovo: An Empirical Research*". For further and deeper information INTEGRA on September 2008 has organized a round table "*Truth Telling in Kosovo; Which Way Now?*" with participation of members from different institutions with intention on discussion and compiling concrete recommendations on Truth Finding for Kosovo circumstances.

This final product contents Results of the Research, Recommendations and other relevant annexes to the project.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. BACKGROUND	4
2.1 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH INFORMATION	5
2.2 METHODOLOGY	6
3. RESULTS INTERPRETATION	7
3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS	7
3.1.1 Age.....	7
3.1.2 Gender.....	8
3.1.3 Place of Residence.....	9
3.1.4 Regions.....	10
3.1.5 Ethnicity.....	11
3.1.6 Relation of Place of Residence and Ethnicity.....	12
3.1.7 Education.....	12
3.1.8 Employment Status.....	13
3.1.9 Marital Status.....	14
3.1.10 Family Size.....	14
3.2 BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE WAR	15
3.2.1 Pre-War Residence.....	15
3.2.2 War-Time Residence.....	16
3.2.3 Return.....	16
3.2.4 Participation in War.....	17
3.2.5 War Losses/Other Negative Experiences.....	18
3.2.6 Reporting Experiences.....	19
3.2.7 Institutional Reaction.....	20
3.3 ETHNIC RELATIONS AND COOPERATION	21
3.3.1 Ethnic Cooperation.....	21
3.3.2 Albanian-Serbian Relations in Respondent Community of Residence.....	22
3.3.3 Reasons for Tense Relations.....	23
3.3.4 Normalization of Albanian-Serbian Relations.....	24
3.3.5 Engagement in Improving Ethnic Relations.....	25
3.3.6 Social Distance Scale.....	26
3.4 THE TRUTH AND EXPERIENCES	27
3.4.1 What is “The Truth”?.....	27
3.4.2 Talking about War Related Experiences.....	29
3.4.3 Talking to “The Other”.....	30
3.4.4 Blaming Game.....	31
3.5 TRUTH COMMISSION	32
3.5.1 Is There A Truth Commission in Kosovo?	31
3.5.2 The Need for Truth Commission.....	33
3.5.3 It’s Time for Truth Commission.....	34
3.5.4 Role of the Governments in Creating Truth Commission.....	35
3.5.5 NGOs & Civil Society vs. Government on Truth Commission.....	37
3.6 ATTITUDES TOWARD JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF KOSOVO AND ICTY	38
3.6.1 (Dis) Trust in Judicial System of Kosovo and in ICTY.....	38
3.7 ISSUES CONCERNING HISTORY	40
3.7.1 History Channels.....	40
4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	44
5. Policy Recommendations	47
6. Lesson learned regarding Truth Telling/Finding in Kosovo	52
7. Annex 1 – Fact Sheets	
8. Annex 2 – Agenda of the Round Table “Truth Telling in Kosovo; Which Way Now?”	
9. Annex 3 – List of Round Table Participants	

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents research findings from a study on Truth Finding in Kosovo. The aims of the study were to collect baseline data in order to analyze the opinions and attitudes of people living in Kosovo towards their past and their experiences; to measure their willingness to communicate their past to each other; to undertake a thorough analysis of the need for implementation of official processes of Truth Finding in Kosovo, and in particular, the implementation of a *Truth Commission* (TC); and to provide initial recommendations on how Truth Finding projects and activities in Kosovo could be encouraged and supported by governmental structures and civil society.

2. BACKGROUND

Truth finding is probably one of the most complex social undertakings. The very concept of “Truth” has so many implications that it is extremely hard – though not impossible - to define it in precise terms. “Truth” often means different things to different people, even if they interact on an everyday basis, reside in the same place, come from the same region, share various cultural values or are identified (inaccurately) as being a homogenous group by others with little understanding of local dynamics.

An understanding of what constitutes truth is crucial in addressing issues within post-conflict societies. As long as there are many “Official Truths” for different communities, often in contradiction with one another, it is impossible to even begin reconciliation, because each side holds its Truth to be the only valid one. In the case of Kosovo Serbs have their own stories of the war and its aftermath, which are opposed to those of Albanians. It is only when these contradictory Truths interact, find points of commonality, and demonstrate respect for crucial elements in a reciprocal manner, that improvement of the situation can be anticipated.

This is exactly the issue that led NGO INTEGRA to initiate a Truth Finding Research aimed at finding different kind of truths of people living in Kosovo, and measuring their availability to face their past and the willingness to show it to each other. The long term and follow up goal of this project is to help in the reconciliation process in post-war Kosovo. The overall motto of this project is "*Tell them your Truth, Respect Theirs*".

2.1 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH INFORMATION

The main ideas behind conducting this empirical research study are 1) to have more information regarding individual experiences of Kosovo residents with the traumatic events of the recent past, and 2) see how those interviewed are dealing with these events. Another important benefit of conducting this research is to identify the general level of information about the work of Truth Commissions.

Until now, such research has not been conducted in Kosovo. Although known to have a history of human rights violations, Kosovo itself has not established a Truth Commission. Truth Commissions are , according to one definition, "bodies set up to investigate a past history of violations of human rights in a particular country -- which can include violations by the military or other government forces or armed opposition forces."¹

This research is important because it measures awareness within the Kosovo population of Truth Commissions and Truth Finding processes. This in turn could help governmental and non-governmental organizations design appropriate, effective Truth Finding projects in the future. Acknowledging the

¹ Priscilla B. Hayner, "Fifteen Truth Commissions—1974 to 1994: A Comparative Study," Human Rights Quarterly, v. 16, no. 4, November 1994, pp. 597-655

importance of past events is a crucial step towards creating a better future in Kosovo.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The research for this project was carried out in Kosovo from November to December 2007. Following a review of relevant reports and initial data from other countries that conducted similar researches, the authors devised a research methodology, drawing on the quantitative method. The questionnaire consisting of 46 questions can be found in the Annex.

The sample of the research was not a representative one; rather it is based on quota.² As this study focuses on relations between Serbs and Albanians, in the sample the number of Serbian respondents is higher than it would be if a representative sample would have been selected. Aside to selecting more municipalities with Serbian inhabitants, the collated quantitative data was collected from respondents coming from various places of Kosovo that faced more direct exposure to war abuses, violence and crimes. Some of the municipalities were left out due to the low extent of experiences some of them had before, during and after the war based on the previous studies and researches implemented by various research organizations in Kosovo. The sample included respondents from both regions of Kosovo: “Rrafshi i Dukagjinit” and “Rrafshi i Kosovës” whose experiences with the war were more intensive, as well as those who have a higher level of multi-ethnic cooperation now.

The cities and villages included in this research were selected based on quota, but respondents were selected randomly (by chance), by beginning with the “starting point” based on “the right side” method. There were 824 respondents in total, out of which 608 were Albanians (73.8%), 205 Serbians (24.9%), 4

² The defining characteristic of a “Quota Sample” is that the researcher deliberately sets the proportions of levels or strata within the sample. This is generally done to insure the inclusion of a particular segment of the population. The proportions may or may not differ dramatically from the actual proportion in the population. The researcher sets a quota, independent of population characteristics. In our sample, the number of Serbian respondents is higher than it would be if a representative sample would be selected.

Bosniaks (0.5%), 4 Turks (0.5%), 1 Gorani (0.1%), 1 Roma (0.1%), and 1 Ashkali (0.1%).³

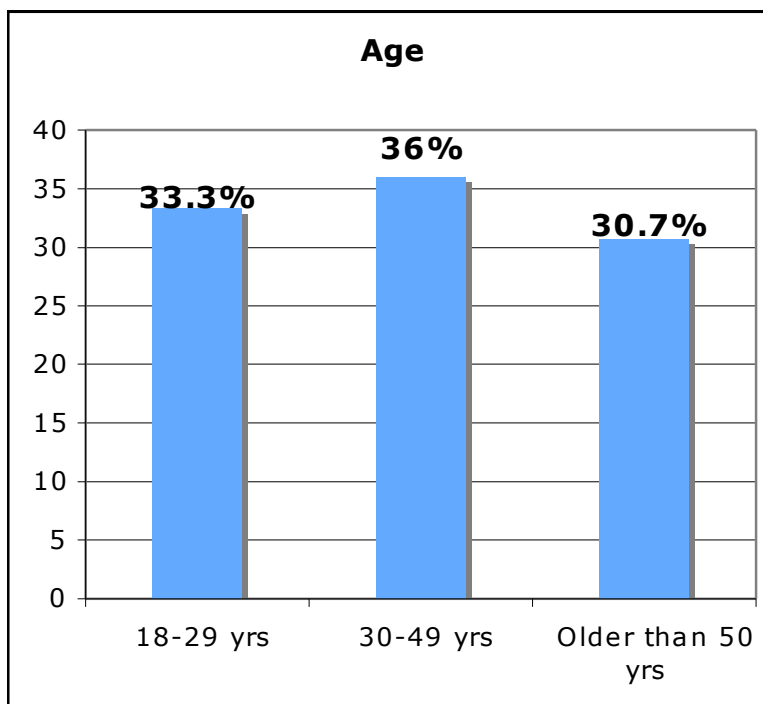
The questionnaires were filled out by means of face-to-face interviews. Field interviewers, who already had research experience, attended a mandatory training on the above mentioned methodology and on the topic of the research per se. SPSS was used as a method for analyzing collected questionnaires.

3. RESULTS INTERPRETATION

3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

3.1.1 Age

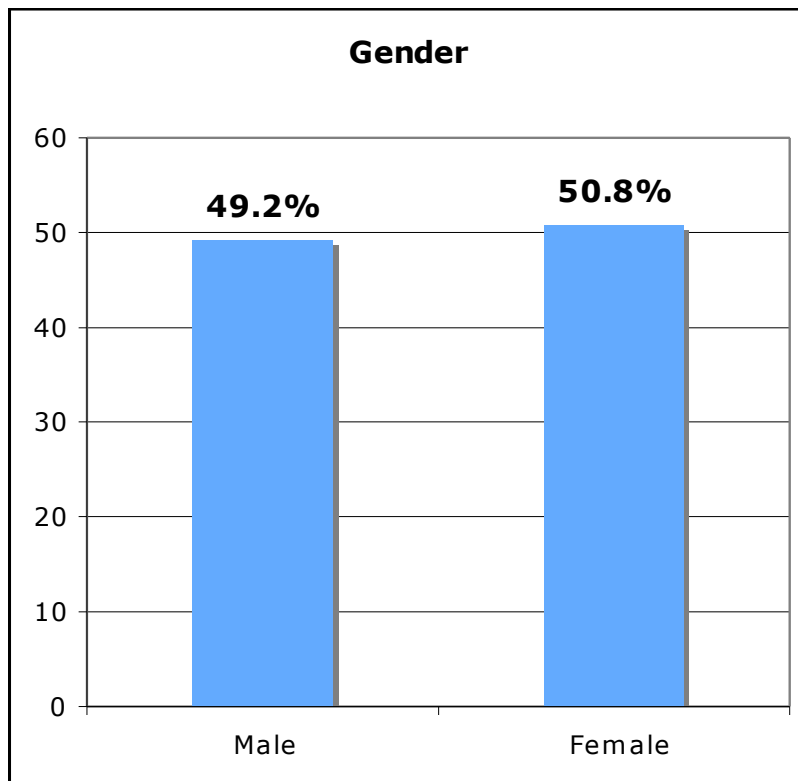
The respondents were divided into three categories: “18 – 29 yrs” - 33.3%, “30 – 49 yrs” – 36%, and “Older than 50” - 30.7 %. This division does not reflect the actual population data in Kosovo; however it was chosen because older people have more information regarding different time periods of traumatic experiences.



³IDPs living in Kosovo were included in the survey. IDPs living in Serbia were not included in the survey due to lack of resources. For future research it would be interesting to also measure their attitudes towards truthfinding.

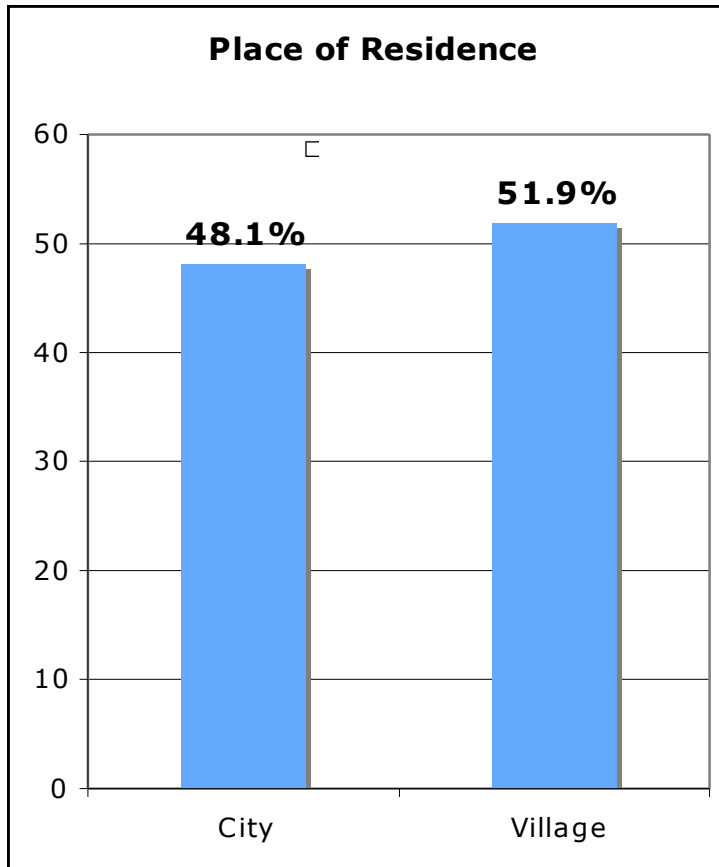
3.1.2 Gender

Of all respondents, 50.8% were female, and 49.2% were male.



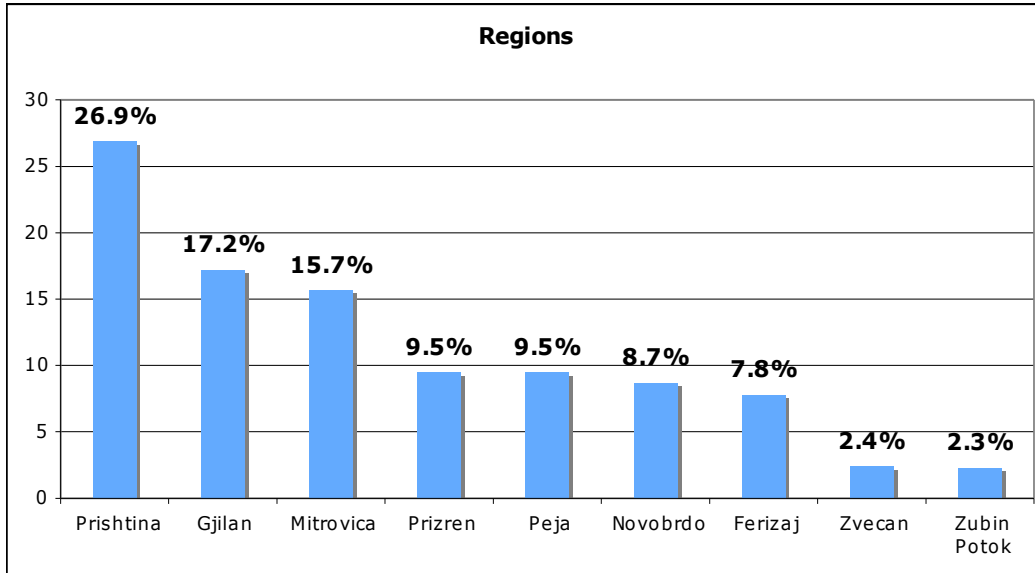
3.1.3 Place of Residence

Regarding the respondents' place of living, 48.1% were living in the cities, whereas 51.9% were living in the villages.



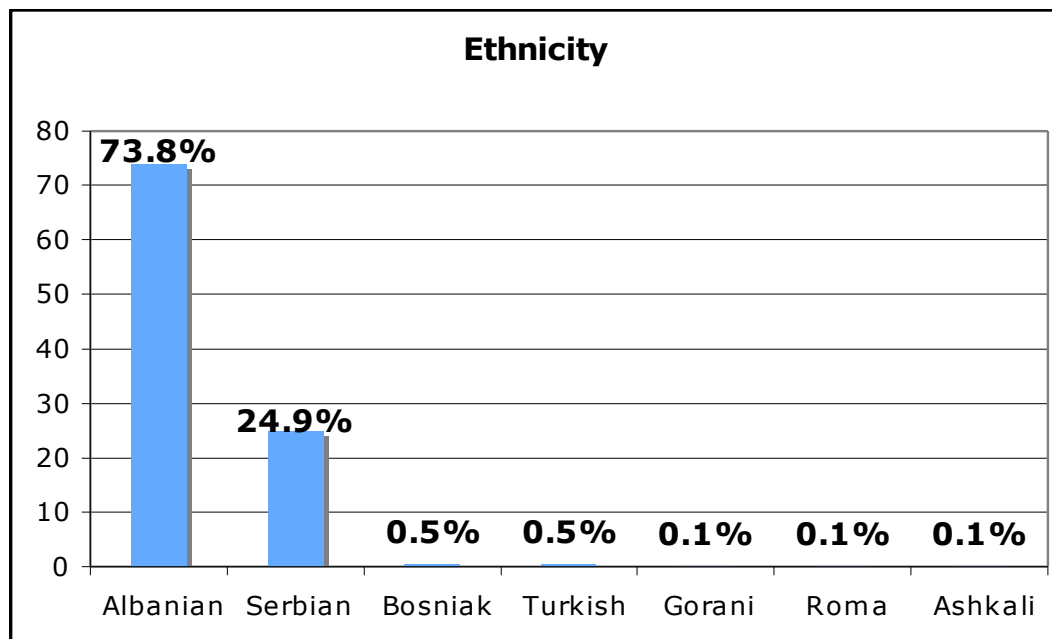
3.1.4 Regions

Because of the quota sample design, the regional division does not reflect the real geographical division of Kosovo. 26.9% of the respondents are from Prishtina, 17.2% from Gjilan, 15.7% from Mitrovica, 9.5% from Prizren, 9.5% from Peja, 8.7% from Novoberdo, 7.8% from Ferizaj, 2.4% from Zvecan, and 2.3% from Zubin Potok.



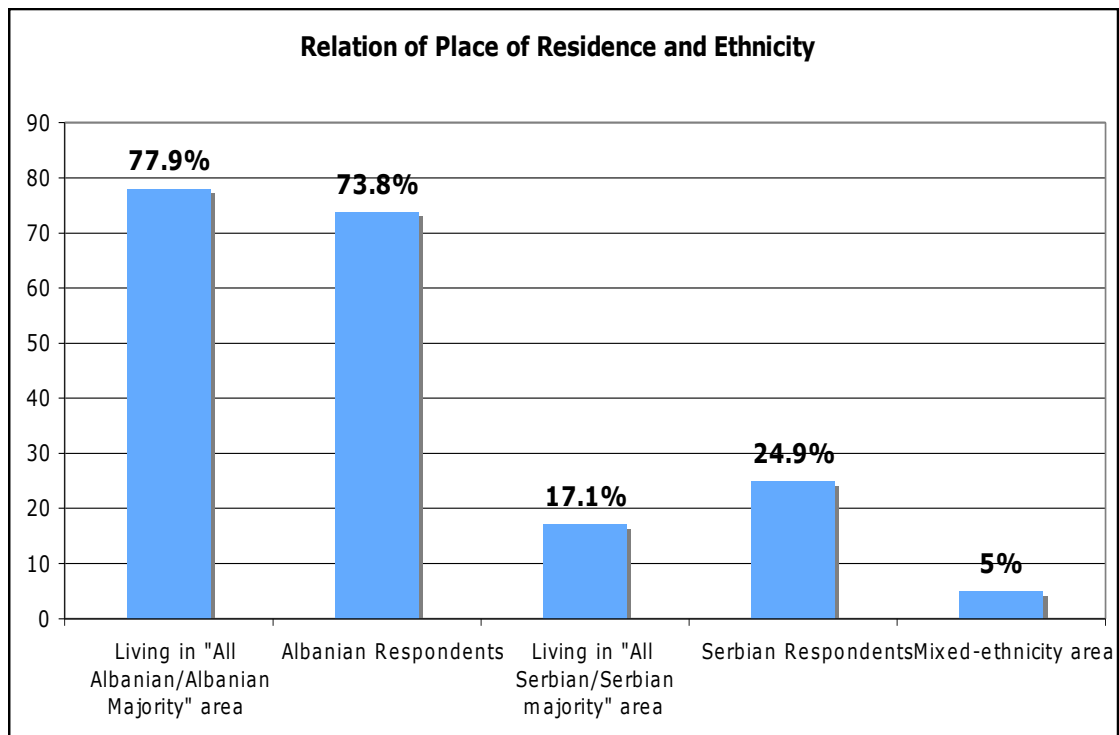
3.1.5 Ethnicity

In terms of ethnicity, 73% of respondents were Albanian, 24.9% Serbian, and 1.3% “Other”, comprising Bosniaks, Gorani, Turks, Roma, and Ashkali. These percentages do not accurately reflect the division of the population (which according to the demographic projections is 92% Albanian, 4% Serbian, and 2% Bosniaks and Gorans, 1% Turks and 1% Turks (ww.wikipedia.com)). The rationale behind this is that this particular study focuses on relations and reconciliation efforts between Albanians and Serbians.



3.1.6 Relation of Place of Residence and Ethnicity

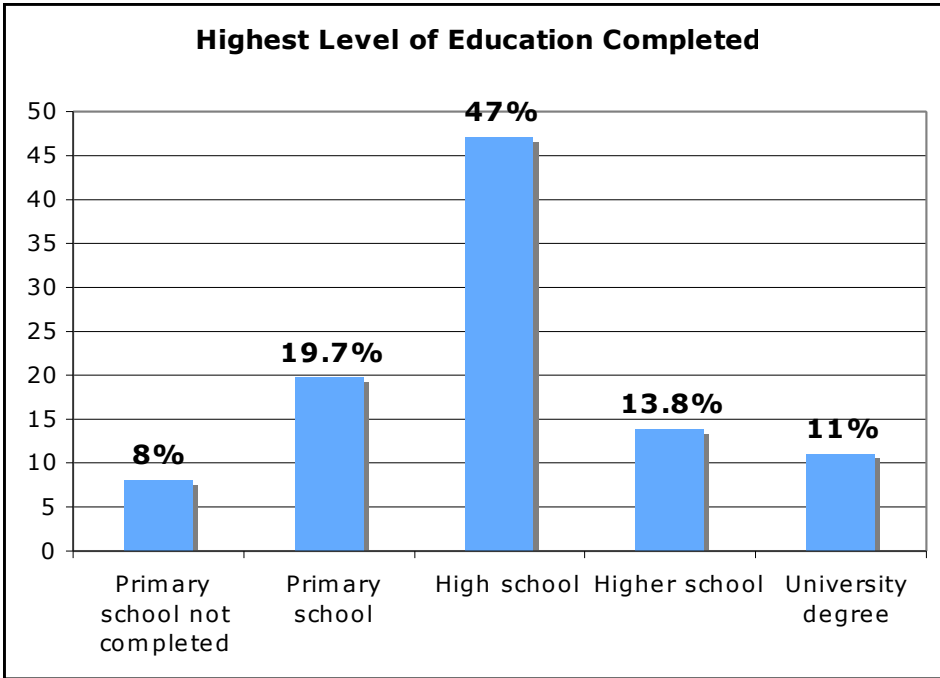
Patterns of ethnic division in Kosovo can be clarified by this question. The percentages are similar with the ones in *Ethnicity*, suggesting that territory and ethnicity in Kosovo are closely linked. 77.9% of respondents live in “All Albanian” and “Albanian majority” populated areas (73.8% of respondents are Albanians), while 17.1% say that they live in “All Serbian” or “Serbian Majority” populated areas (24.9% of respondents were Serbians). Only 5% of respondents say that they live in areas with mixed-ethnicity populations.



3.1.7 Education

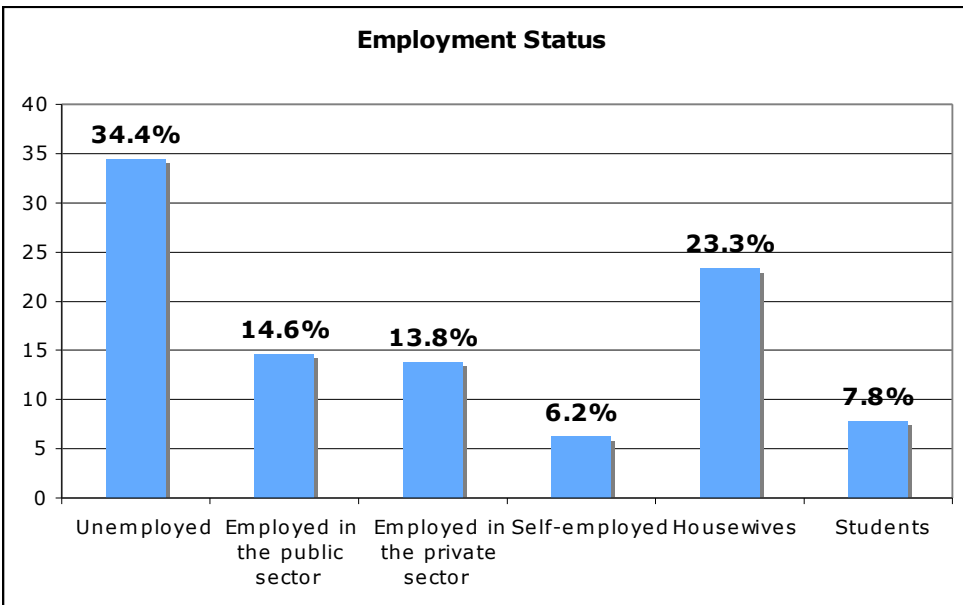
Most of the respondents have high school education (47%), and primary school education (19.7%) as their highest level of education completed, while 13.8% have “higher school”⁴ and have started but not completed university degree. 11% have a university degree. Only 8% have not finished primary school.

⁴ Two-year post secondary school in ex-Yugoslavia.



3.1.8 Employment Status

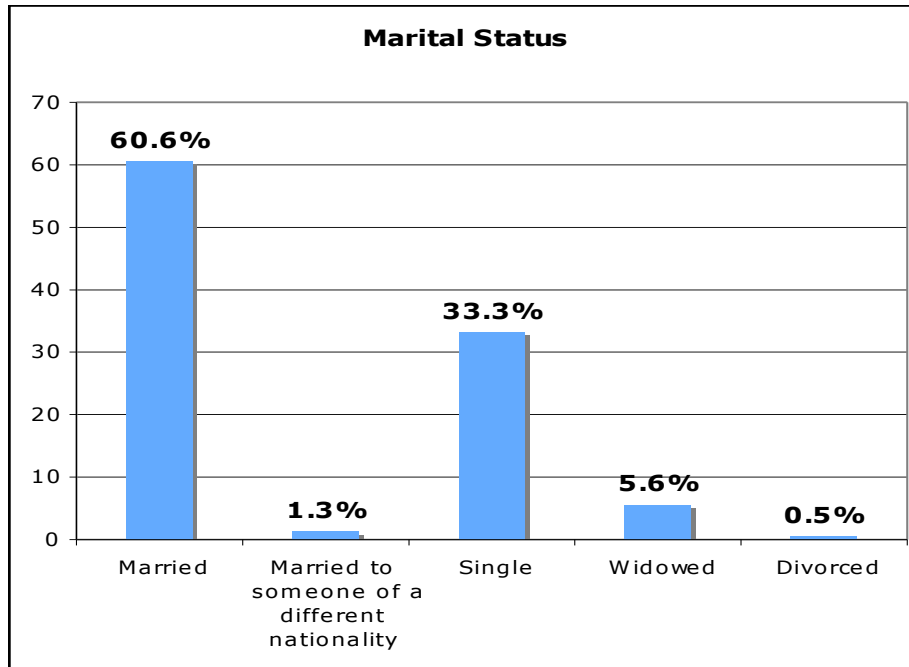
Regarding employment status, 34.4% are unemployed, 14.6% are employed in the public sector, 13.8% are employed in the private sector, 6.2% are self-employed, 23.3% are housewives, and 7.8% are students.



3.1.9 Marital Status

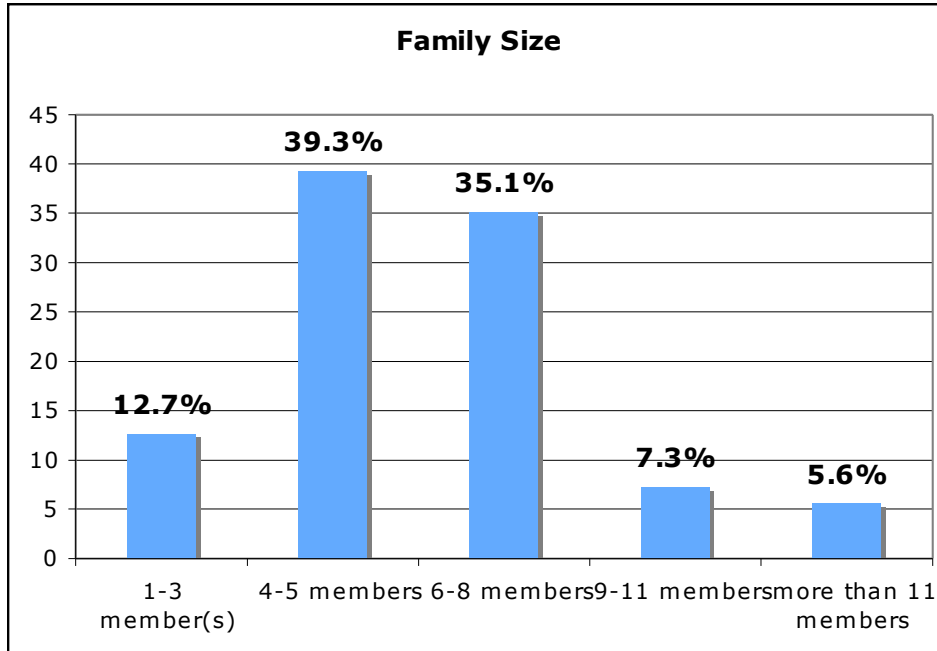
Responses regarding marital status of study participants can also be analyzed in the light of Kosovo's recent past developments. 5.6% of respondents are widowed, which is a much higher percentage compared with other surveys conducted by research companies in Kosovo.

While 60.6% are married, only 1.3% report marriage to someone of a different nationality. 33.3% of participants are single, and 0.5% are divorced.



3.1.10 Family Size

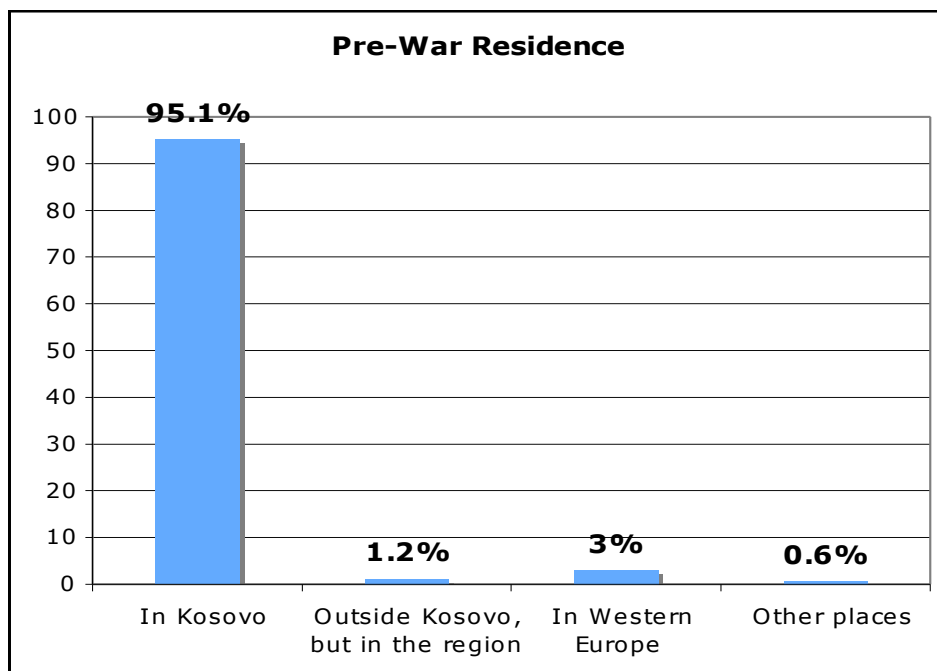
Concerning family size, the majority of respondents have 4 to 8 members ("4 to 5 members" 39.3%, and "6 to 8 members" 35.1%). There is a high percentage of large families (7.3% have "9 to 11 members", and 5.3% have "more than 11 members"). 12.7% have "1 to 3 members".



3.2 BEFORE AND AFTER THE WAR

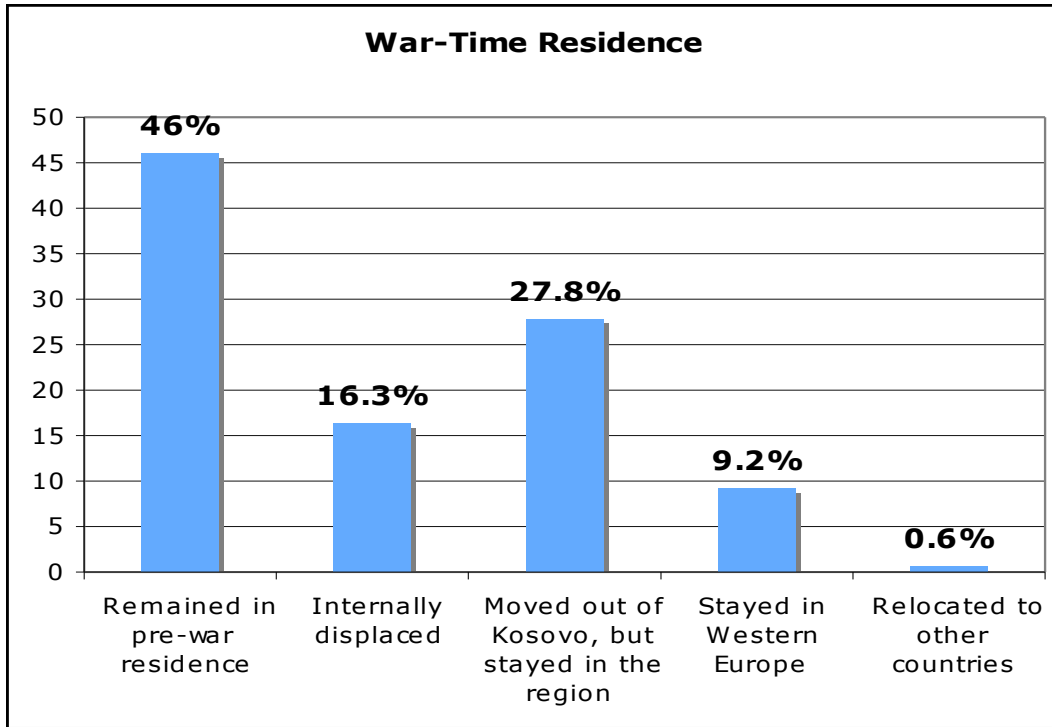
3.2.1 Pre-War Residence

When asked about their pre-war residence, the overwhelming majority reported they lived in Kosovo (95.1%). Other respondents have lived “outside Kosovo, but in the region” (1.2%); in Western Europe (3%); and in other places (0.6%).



3.2.2 War-Time Residence

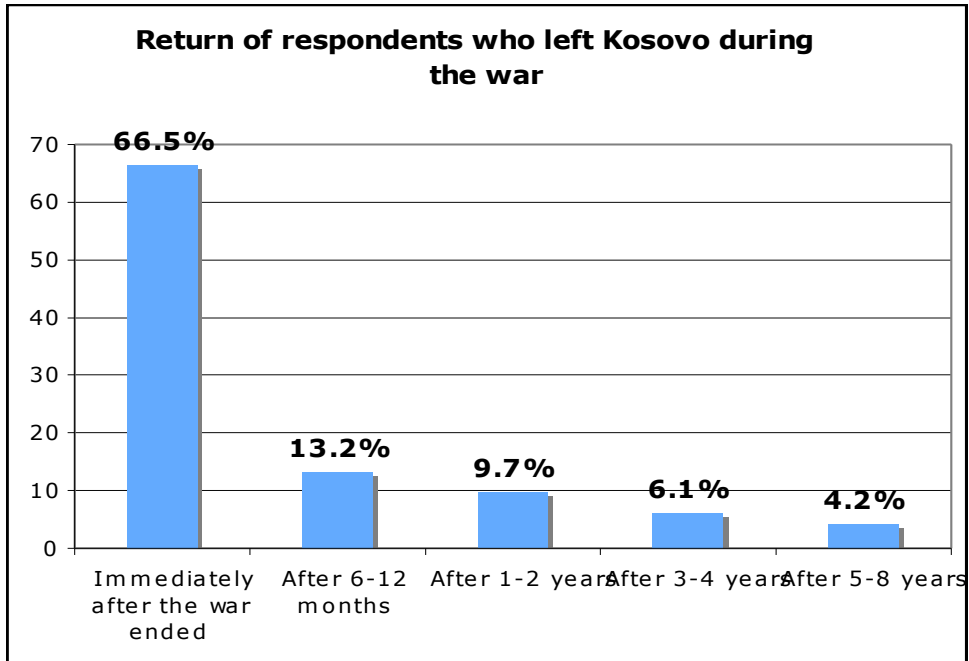
Almost half of the respondents remained in pre-war residences during the war (46%); 16.3% were internally displaced; 27.8% moved out of Kosovo, but stayed in the region; 9.2% stayed in Western Europe; and the remaining 0.6% relocated to other countries



3.2.3 Return

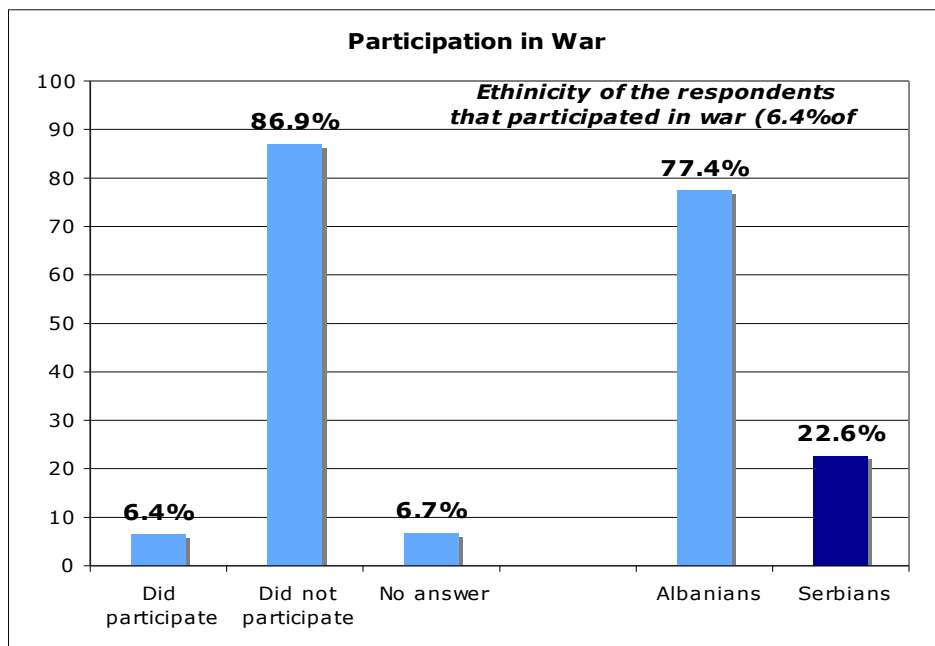
From the overall percentage of respondents who left Kosovo during the war (37.6%), 66.5% returned "immediately after the war ended"; 13.2% returned "after 6 to 12 months"; 9.7% returned "after 1 to 2 years"; 6.1% returned "after 3 to 4 years"; and 4.2% "after 5 to 8 years". The fact that 79.7% of those who have fled Kosovo during the war returned within the first year suggests a high level of optimism within the returnee population at the time.⁵

⁵ Note: IDPs living in Serbia were not included in the survey.



3.2.4 Participation in War

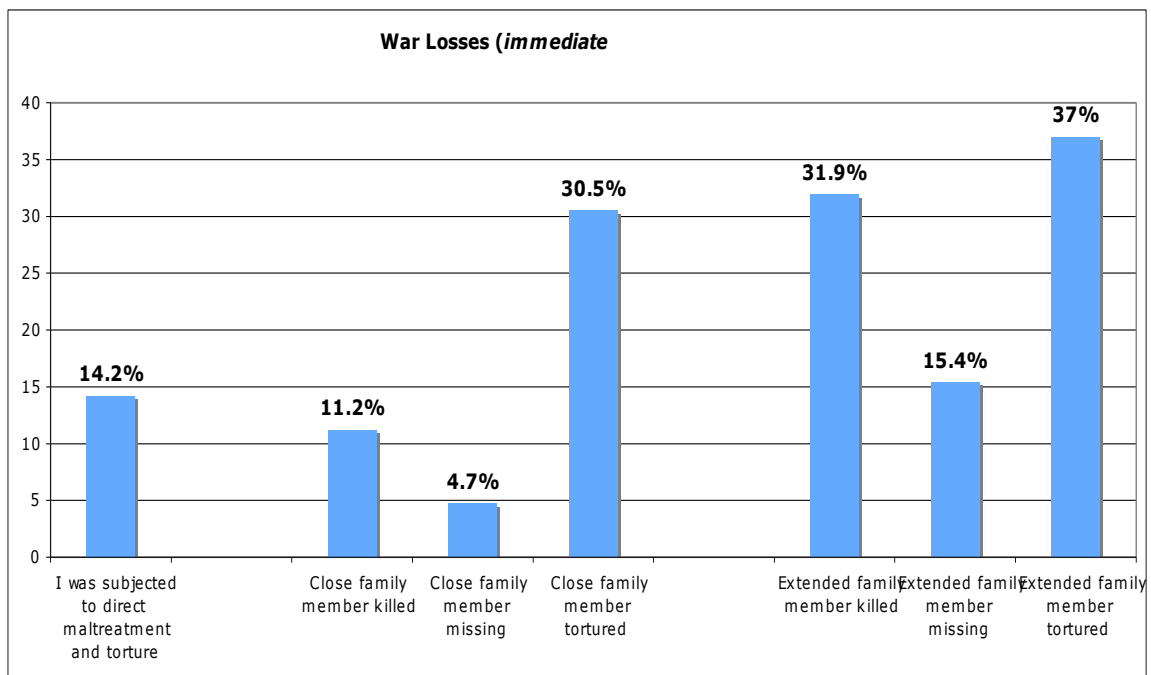
From the total number of respondents, 6.4% have participated directly in the war (frontline). 86.9% did not participate, whereas 6.7% have refused to answer on this question. Of the total number of participants reporting direct participation in the war, 77.4% are Albanians, and 22.6% are Serbians.

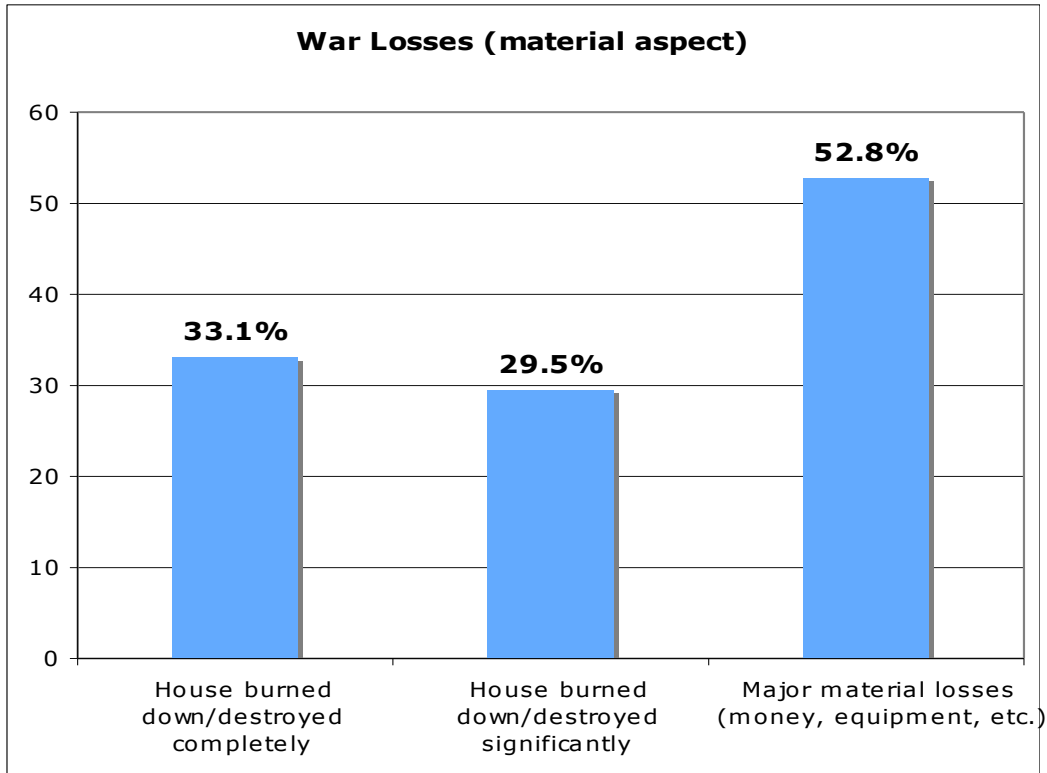


3.2.5 War Losses/Other Negative Experiences

Regarding respondent losses during the war in terms of immediate family members: 11.2% had a close family member killed; 4.7% had a close family member missing; and 30.5% had a close family member tortured. Concerning extended family losses, 31.9% of participants reported members killed; 15.4% reported members missing; and 37% reported members tortured. 14.2% of respondents report that they themselves were subjected to direct maltreatment and torture.

Addressing the material aspect of loss, 33.1% reported their houses were burned down or destroyed totally; 29.5% report have their houses were burned or damaged at a significant level; and 52.8% experienced major material losses (money, equipment, etc.).

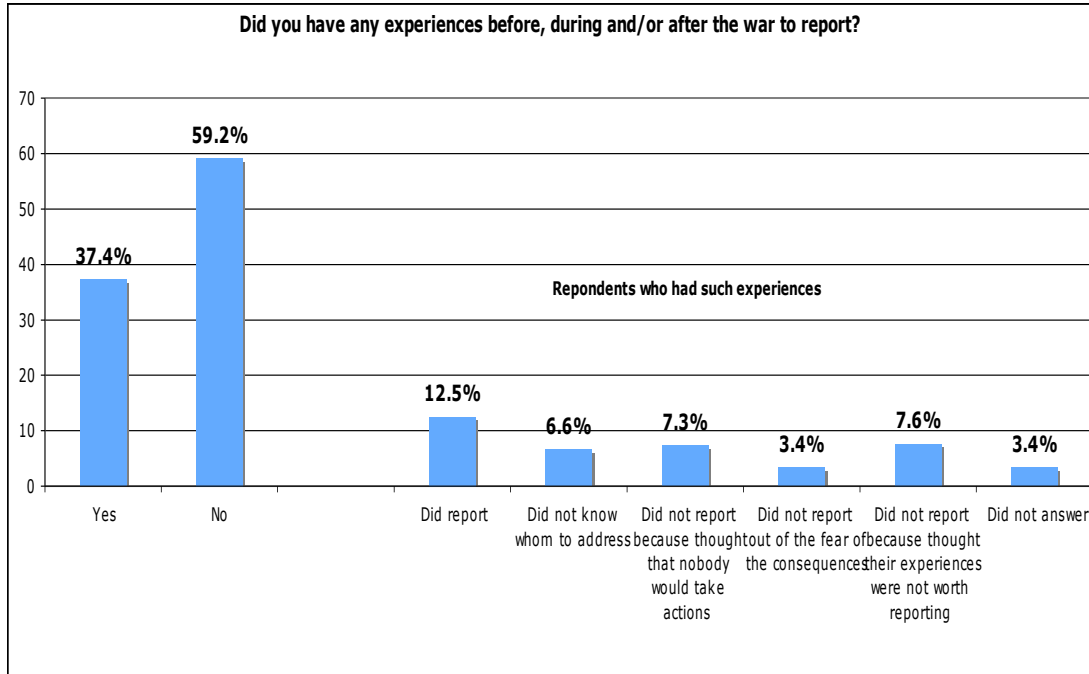




3.2.6 Reporting Experiences

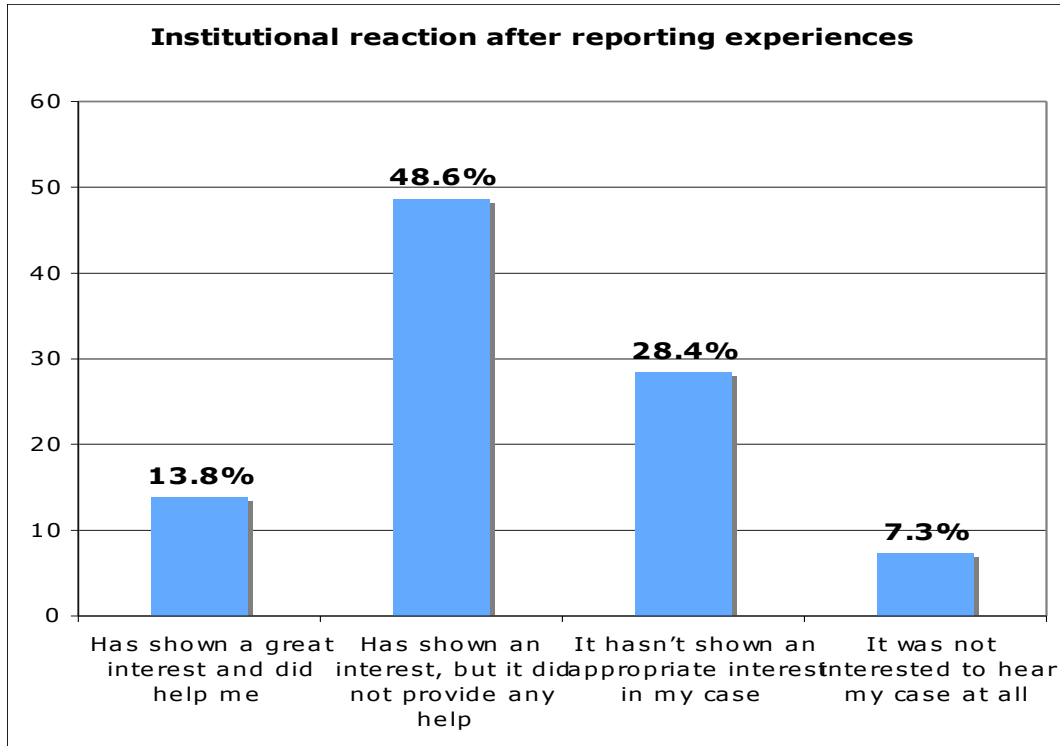
Respondents were asked first if they had experiences before, during and/or after the war, which they considered to be worth reporting. Those responding yes were then asked if they reported these experiences to relevant institutions (i.e., those thought to have competence in dealing with their experiences).

A total of 59.2% reported no traumatic/negative experiences, while 12.5% had such experiences and did report them to the institutions 6.6% did not know to whom they should address their concerns; 7.3% did not report because they thought that nobody would take any actions; 3.4% did not report out of the fear of the consequences reporting might have; and 7.6% did not report because they thought their experiences were not worth reporting. 3.4% of respondents did not answer.



3.2.7 Institutional Reaction

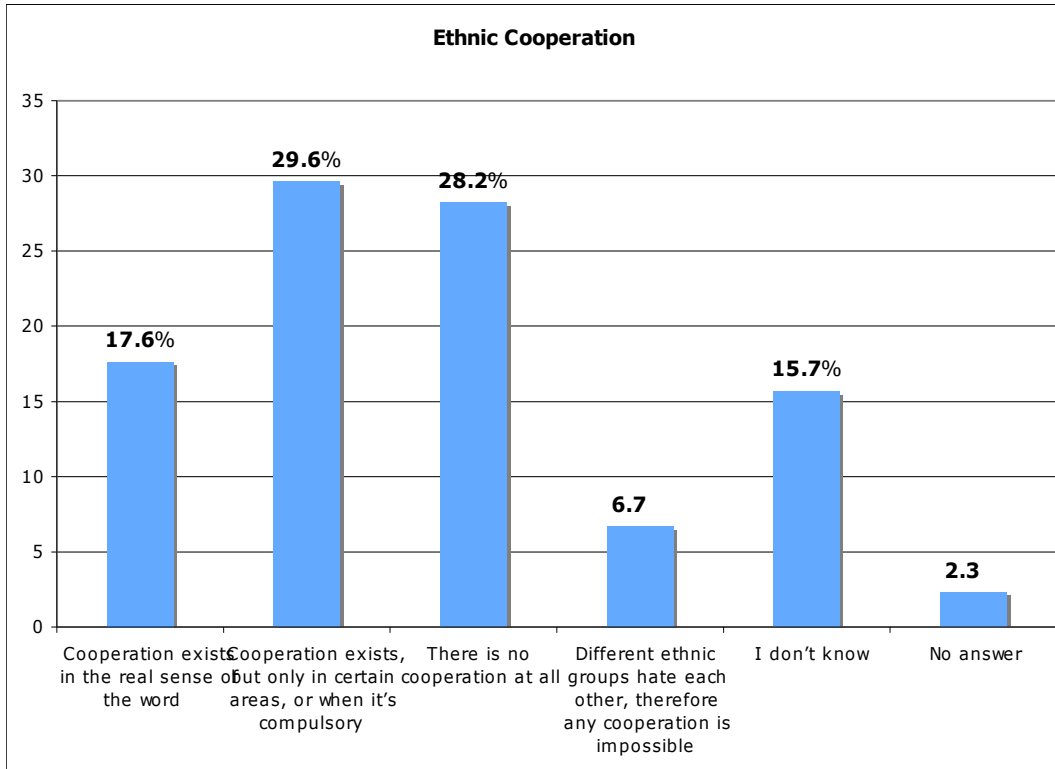
It is interesting to note that of those respondents reporting experiences to institutions, the vast majority viewed the institutions as being unhelpful or inappropriate in terms of responsiveness. Only 13.8% report that the relevant institution “has shown a great interest for it and have helped them”. On the other side, 48.6% reported the relevant institution “has shown an interest in my case, but it did not provide any help”; 28.4% reported “it hasn’t shown an appropriate interest in my case”, and 7.3% reported that the institution they turned to “was not interested to hear their case at all”. This high percentage of disappointed respondents is a very worrying issue. Most of all, it suggests widespread public distrust of institutions regarding war crimes and other negative experiences, but also a lack of both institutional consciousness and preparedness in dealing with these important aspects of Kosovo’s recent past.



3.3 ETHNIC RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

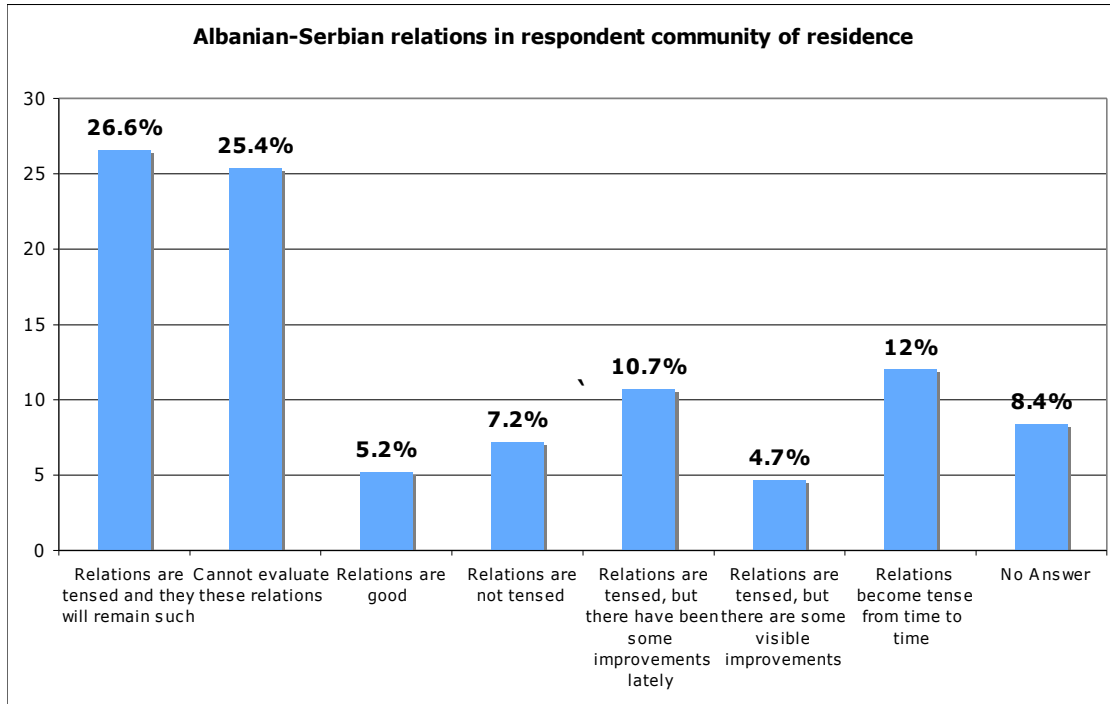
3.3.1 Ethnic Cooperation

Regarding respondent perceptions on the cooperation between different ethnic groups in Kosovo, there is great disparity in views. 17.6% of the respondents think that “cooperation exists in the real sense of the word”, 29.6% say that “cooperation exists, but only in certain areas, or when it’s compulsory”, 28.2% think that “there is no cooperation at all”, 6.7% think that “different ethnic groups hate each other, therefore any cooperation is impossible”. 15.7% have answered with “I don’t know”, and 2.3% did not answer at all.



3.3.2 Albanian-Serbian Relations in Respondent Community of Residence

Respondents were not so optimistic when evaluating the relations between Albanians and Serbians in their respective communities. 26.5% think that “relations are tense and they will remain such”, and 25.4% say that they “cannot evaluate these relations”. Only 12.4% are positively oriented (5.2% think that “relations are good”, and 7.2% that “relations are not tense”), whereas the others are somewhere in the middle: 10.7% think that “relations are tense, but there have been some improvements lately”, 4.7% think that “relations are tense, but there are some visible improvements”, and 12% think that “relations become tense from time to time”. 8.4% did not answer the question.



3.3.3 Reasons for Tense Relations

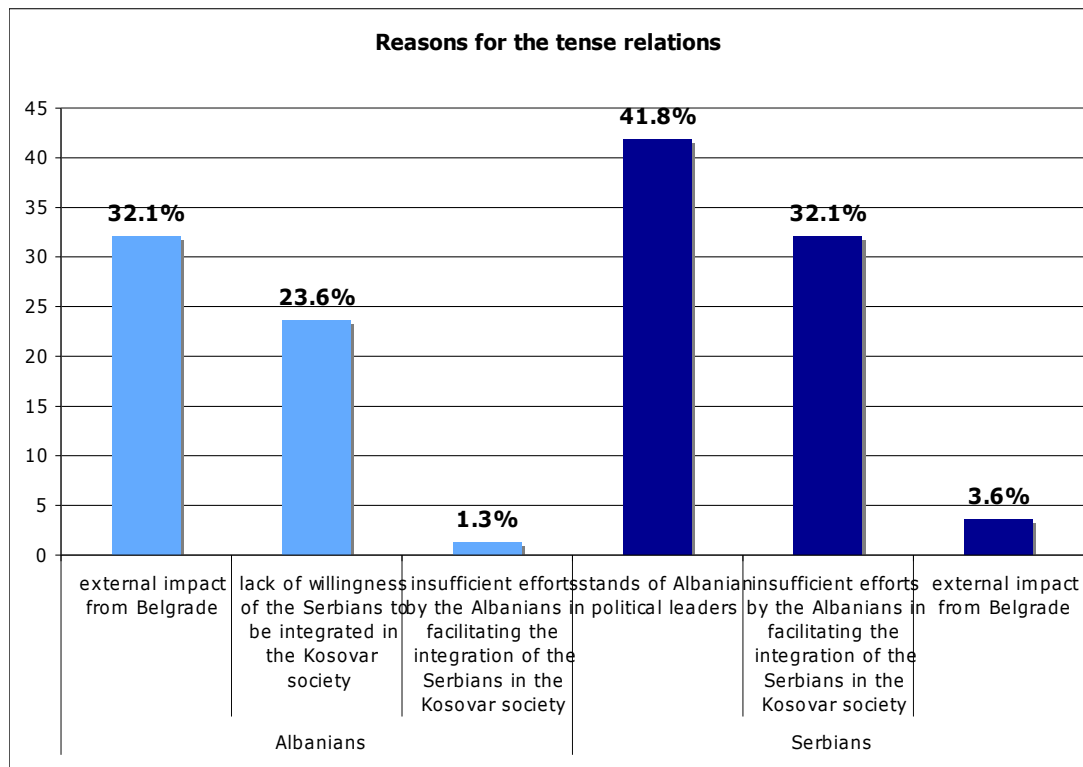
Those respondents expressing negative views regarding Albanian-Serbian relations were asked additional questions about the reasons behind these tensions.

Not surprisingly, there were significant differences between Albanian and Serbian respondents in this category, with each inclined to blame the other. Albanian respondents indicated the main reasons for interethnic tensions as being “external impact from Belgrade” (32.1%), and “lack of willingness of the Serbians to be integrated in the Kosovor society” (23.6%), whereas only 1.3% mentioned “insufficient efforts by the Albanians in facilitating the integration of the Serbians in the Kosovor society”.

For Serbian respondents, 41.8% indicated tension resulted from the “stance of Albanian political leaders”; 32.1% indicated tensions were due to “insufficient efforts by the Albanians in facilitating the integration of the Serbians in the

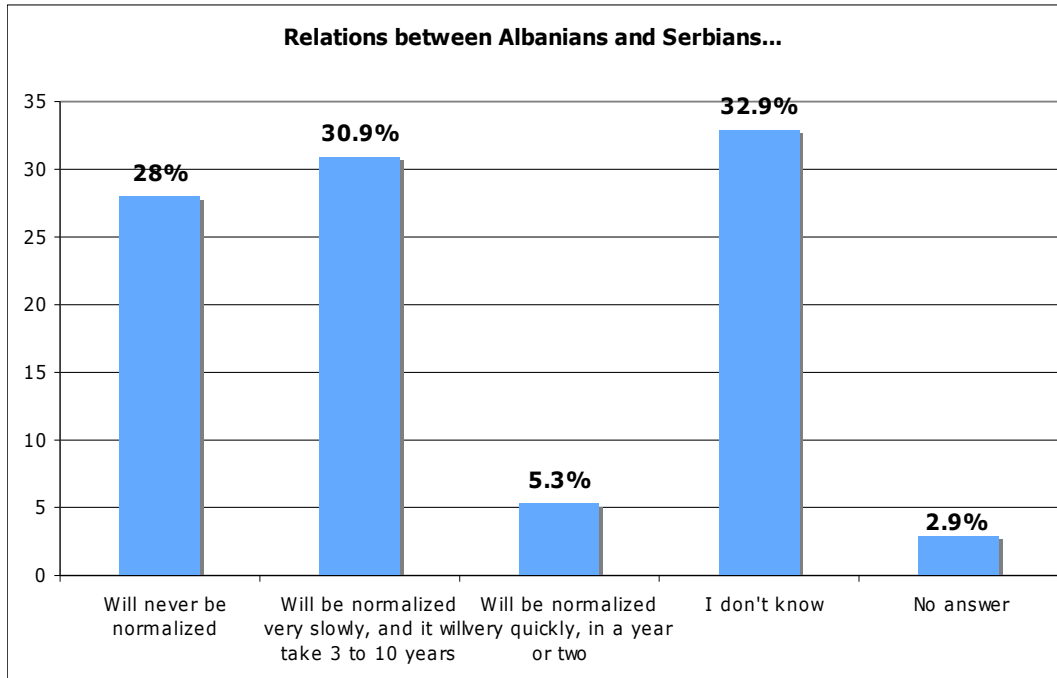
Kosovar society”; with only 3.6% characterizing “external impact from Belgrade” as a problem.

These opposite view points are clearly a huge challenge for all reconciliation initiatives. The implication is that larger, long-term investments of effort, time and money will be necessary to successfully resolve tension and bridge ethnic differences in Kosovo.



3.3.4 Normalization of Albanian-Serbian Relations

When asked to consider the timeframe needed for normalization of Albanian-Serbian relations, members of both ethnic groups are pretty skeptical. 28% indicated that relations will “never normalize”, 30.9% indicated this will be done “very slowly, and it will take 3 to 10 years”, and 32.9% stated they “do not know” when relations will be normalized. Only 5.3% thought that relations will be normalized “very quickly, in a year or two”. 2.9% did not answer.

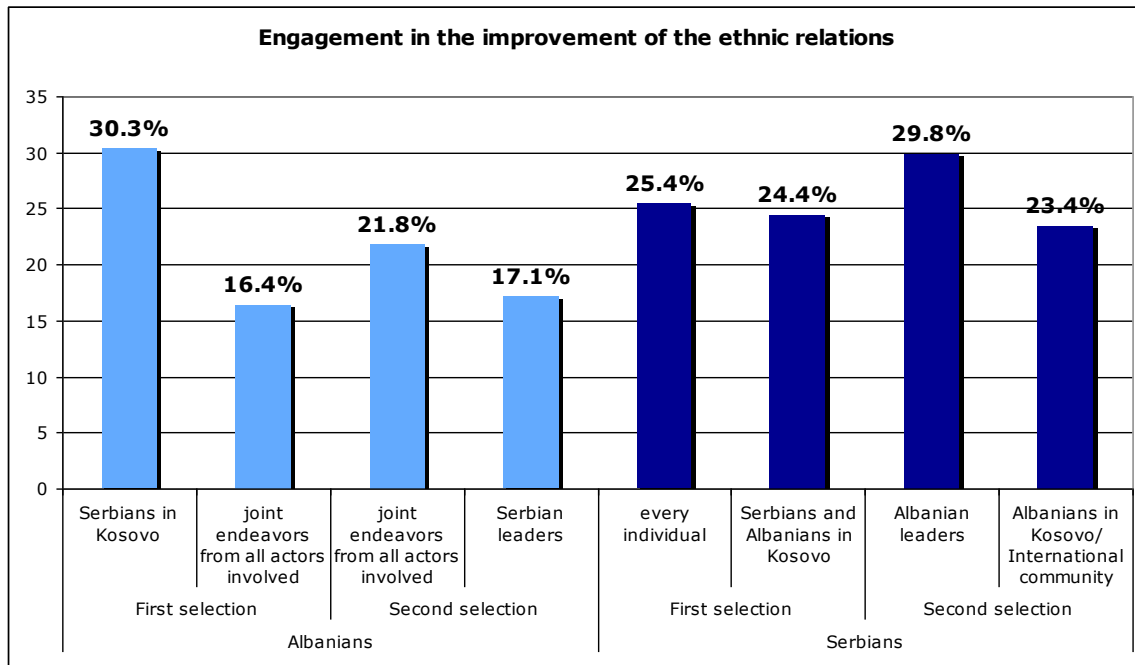


3.3.5 Engagement in Improving Ethnic Relations

Respondents were asked their opinions on who should be engaged in improving ethnic relations in Kosovo. The answers differ significantly based on respondent nationality, just as was the case for the question about “Reasons for tense relations”. Respondents were asked to select two out of nine answers provided for this question.

Albanian respondents stated the main efforts should come from “Serbians in Kosovo” (30.3%), and “joint endeavors from all actors involved” (16.4%) – in their first selection of an answer to this question; and “joint endeavors from all actors involved” (21.8%), and “Serbian leaders” (17.1%) – in the second selection.

Serbian respondents took a somewhat different stance. Their first choices were “every individual” (25.4%), with “Serbians in Kosovo and “Albanians in Kosovo”, both having 24.4%. However, in the second selection the highest percentage of respondents indicated “Albanian leaders” (29.8%), with “Albanians in Kosovo” and “International community” – both having 23.4%.



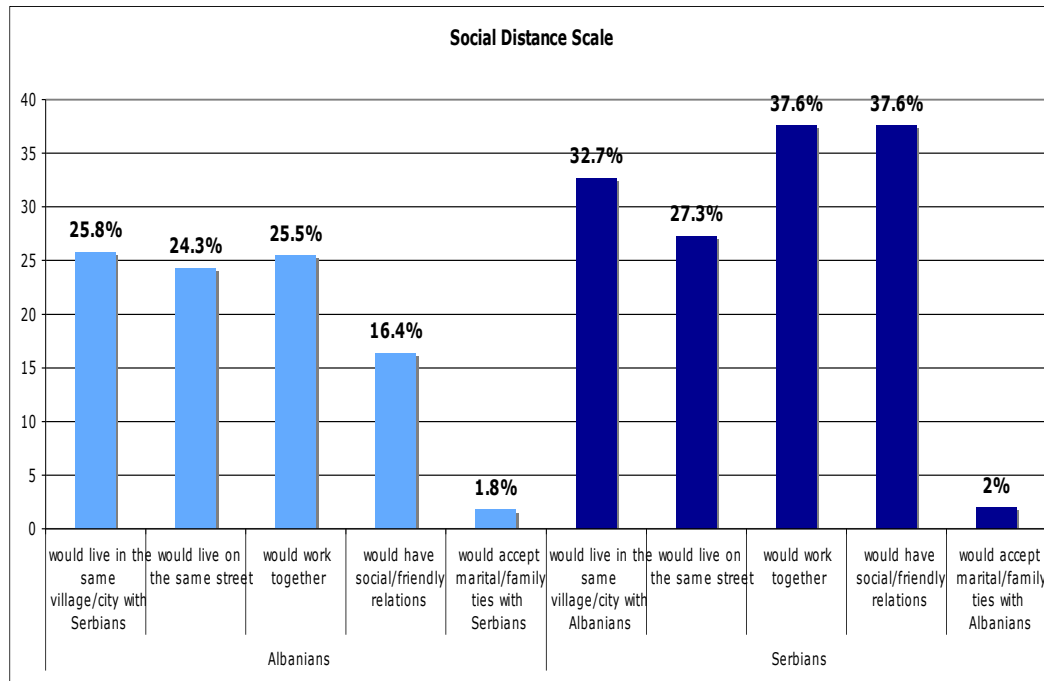
3.3.6 Social Distance Scale

According to the definition, the Bogardus Social Distance Scale is a psychological testing scale created by Emory S. Bogardus to empirically measure people's willingness to participate in social contacts of varying degrees of closeness with members of diverse social groups, such as other racial and ethnic groups, etc.

In Kosovo, this scale has a particular meaning because of the traumatic events related to interethnic warfare. As expected, reciprocal social acceptances between Albanian and Serbian respondents showed some variation.

With Albanian respondents, 25.8% indicated they would live in the same village/city with Serbians; 24.3% would live on the same street; 25.5% would work together; 16.4% would have social/friendly relations, whereas only 1.8% would find marital/family relationships with Serbians acceptable.

Concerning the Serbian respondents, 32.7% of them reported they would live in the same village/city with Albanians; 27.3% would live on the same street; 37.6% would work with Albanians; 37.6% would have social/friendly relations; while only 2% would accept marital/family ties with Albanians.



3.4 THE TRUTH AND EXPERIENCES

3.4.1 What is "The Truth"?

Respondents were asked what they consider to be "The Truth." Answering modalities were the following: "The Truth is what I have seen with my own eyes", "The Truth is what is being heard", "The Truth is what I have experienced by myself", and "Something else."

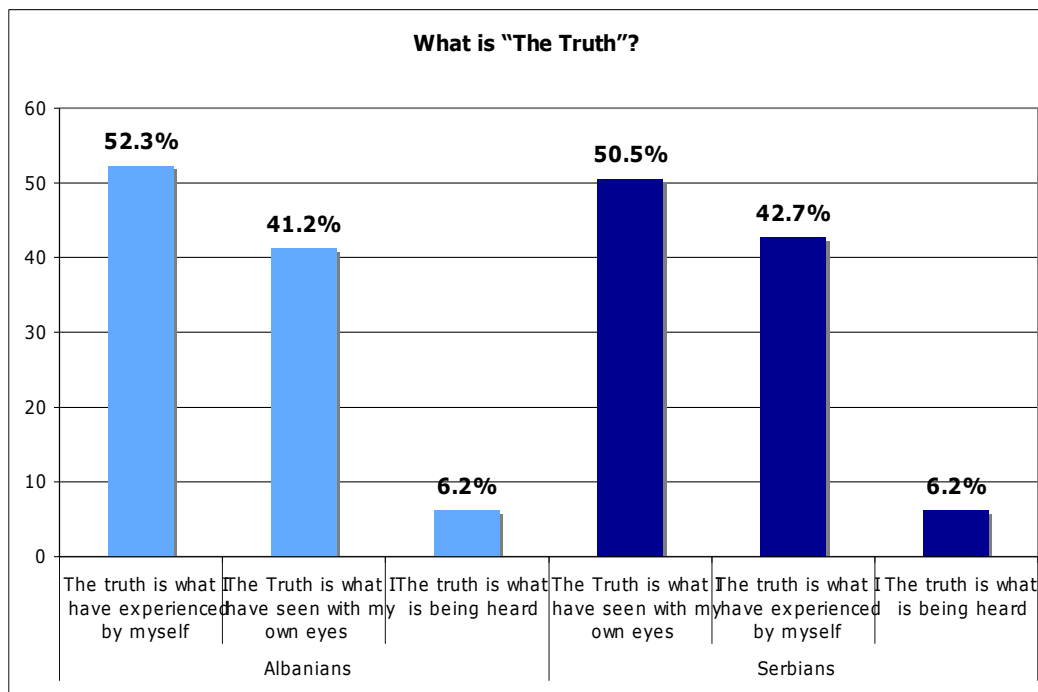
For Albanian respondents, "The Truth" is mostly what they have experienced (52.3%), and what they have seen (41.2%). Only 6.2% have answered - "The Truth is what is being heard."

On the other hand, for Serbian respondents, “The Truth” is more what they have seen (50.5%), and what they have experienced (42.7%), while only 6.2% think that “The Truth” is “what is being heard.”

In this question respondents had to choose one out of three already provided answers, however there was an additional option for an independent answer.

Some of these independent answers are:

- “The truth is what you see and what you experience”,
- “The truth is more then what you see, experience and hear, it is a proven fact”,
- “The truth is something else”
- “The truth is found by traces”
- “No truth is present in Kosovo”

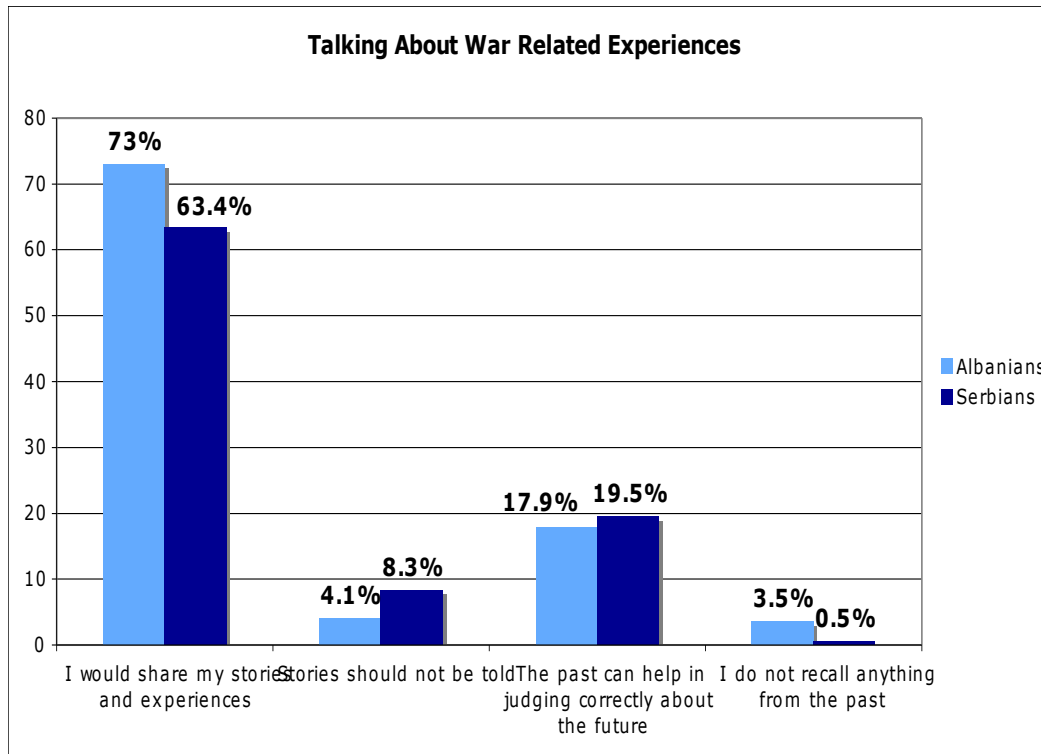


3.4.2 Talking about War Related Experiences

Probably one of the most difficult parts in dealing with war related traumatic experiences is finding a proper time and method of sharing them. Reliving those experiences can be a hard and painful process, with the degree of difficulty unique to each person. There are opposing views as to the appropriateness of

sharing these memories. One side of the argument argues that sharing and working through traumatic experiences is the only way to ease the internal tensions of the individual. The opposing argument is that traumas should be willingly forgotten, so past events do not become a permanent barrier to future progress.

Both Albanian and Serbian respondents (73% and 63.4% respectively) appear to be in support of sharing stories and experiences. Only 4.1% of Albanian respondents and 8.3% of Serbian respondents think that these stories should not be told, whereas 17.9% of Albanians in the study and 19.5% of Serbians believe that “the past can help in judging correctly about the future”. 3.5% of Albanian respondents and 0.5% of Serbian respondents stated that they have “an amnesia” – they do not recall anything from the past.

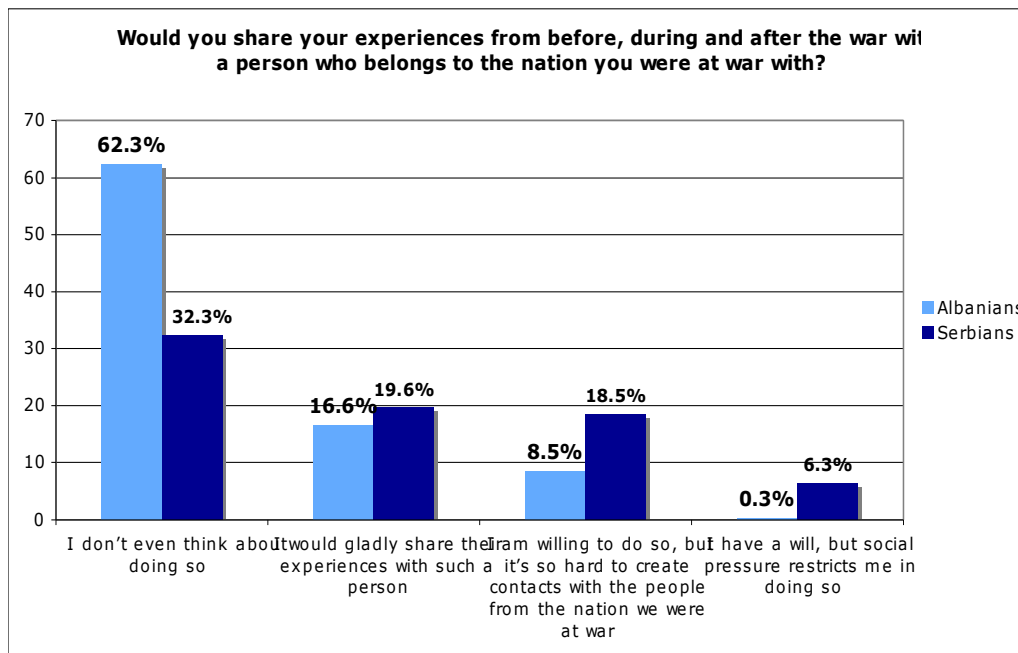


3.4.3 Talking to “The Other”

When asked if they would share experiences from before, during, and after the war with a person of the nationality they considered themselves to be at war with,

Albanian respondents seem more reluctant to do so. 62.3% of Albanian participants stated that they “don’t even think about doing so”, compared with 32.3% of the Serbian participants.

16.6% of Albanian respondents and 19.6% of Serbian ones say that “they would gladly share their experiences with such a person”, 8.5% of Albanian respondents and 18.5% of Serbian ones “are willing to do so, but it’s so hard to create contacts with the people from the nation we were at war”, while 0.3% of Albanian respondents, and 6.3% of the Serbian ones admit that they have a will, but the social pressure restricts them in doing so.



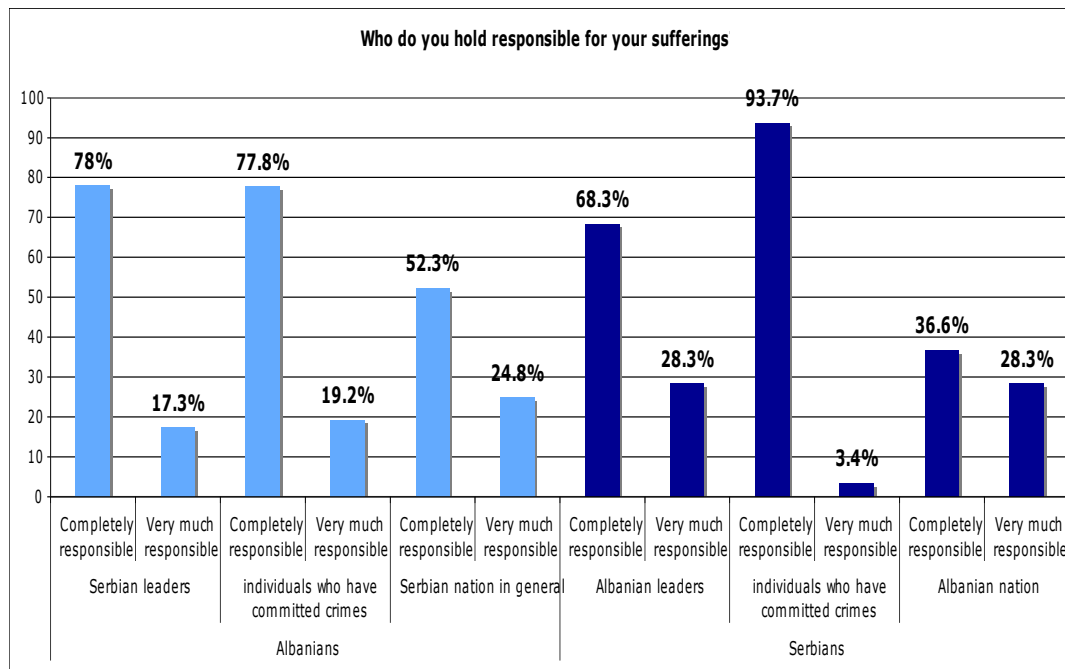
3.4.4 Blaming Game

In the post-war regions it is very often that people try to identify a certain actor (a person/institution/nation) in order to treat their misfortunes as a consequence of that actor’s actions.

Even this research suggests that both Albanian and Serbian respondents think they have a “clear” image of who is to blame for the wrongdoings they have suffered in the past.

Vast majority of Albanian respondents, 95.3%, holds responsible for its sufferings Serbian leaders (“completely responsible” 78%, and “very much responsible” 17.3%); individuals who have committed crimes – 97% (“completely responsible” 77.8%, and “very much responsible” 19.2%), and the Serbian nation in general - 77.1% (“completely responsible” 52.3%, and “very much responsible” 24.8%).

On the other side, Serbian respondents hold responsible Albanian leaders – 96.6% (“completely responsible” 68.3%, and “very much responsible” 28.3%); individuals who have committed crimes – 97.1% (“completely responsible” 93.7%, and “very much responsible” 3.4%), and to a lesser extent Albanian nation - 64.9% (“completely responsible” 36.6%, and “responsible to a certain extent” 28.3%).

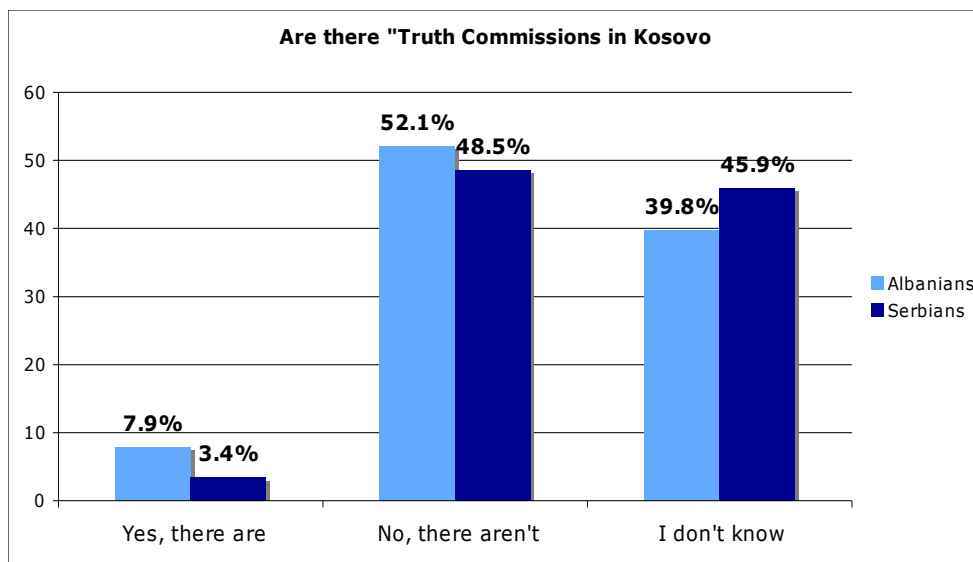


3.5 TRUTH COMMISSION

3.5.1 Is There A Truth Commission in Kosovo?

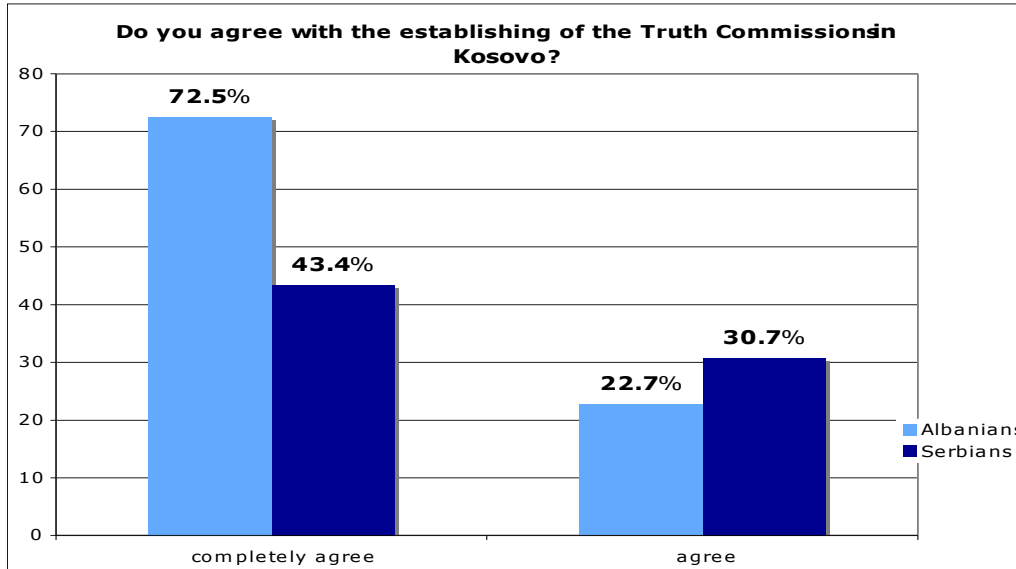
Regarding the question whether there is a Truth Commission in Kosovo, 7.9% of the Albanian respondents affirm its existence, 52.1% say this Commission doesn't exist, while 39.8% don't know if this Commission exists or not.

A similar distribution of answers is when Serbian respondents are asked: 3.4% of them say that there is a Truth Commission in Kosovo, 48.3% think that there is no such Commission, and 45.9% don't know the answer.



3.5.2 The Need for Truth Commission

Both Albanian and Serbian respondents are strongly affirmative toward the establishing of a Truth Commission in the near future in Kosovo. 95.2% of Albanian respondents are in favor of this idea ("completely agree" 72.5%, "agree" 22.7%), while 74.1% of Serbian respondents share the same opinion ("completely agree" 43.4%, "agree" 30.7%)



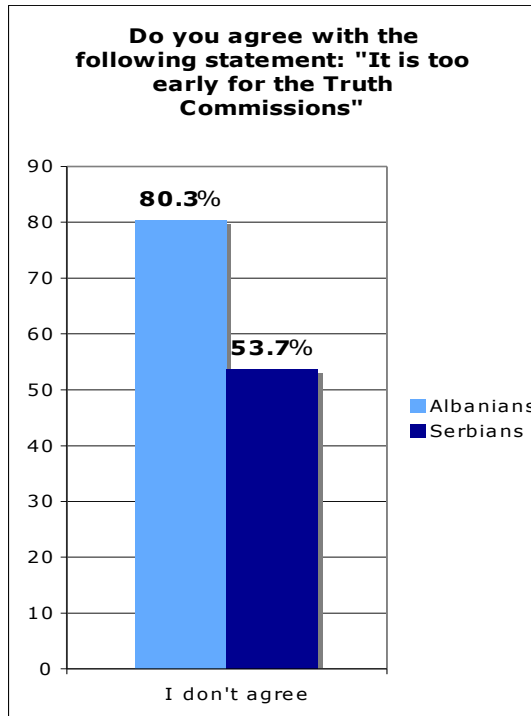
3.5.3 It's Time for Truth Commission

Albanian and Serbian respondents agree on the issue of the time-frame for establishing Truth Commission in Kosovo. 80.3% of Albanian respondents and 53.7% of Serbian ones “do not agree with the statement that it is too early for Truth Commission.” Expression of the readiness for the immediate creation of Truth Commission in Kosovo can be understood as “not being afraid of the truth” stand from both parties, which is comprehensible in a context where each side holds the truth to be on its side.

The difference between Albanian and Serbian respondents (26.6 %), maybe can be explained in terms of the level of the overall trust towards the international institutions, which is higher among the Albanians.

Regarding other answers, there is a considerable percentage of Serbian respondents who “don’t know” whether it is still early for a Truth Commission (26.3%), while this category of respondents among Albanians comprises 10%. On the other hand, 3.1% of Albanian respondents and 2.4% of Serbian respondents “agree completely” with the abovementioned statement, while 3% of Albanian respondents and 8.8% of Serbian ones “agree to some extent.”

2.8% of Albanian respondents and 7.8% of Serbian respondents have stated “something else”, while 0.8% of Albanian respondents and 1% of Serbian ones have refused to answer.

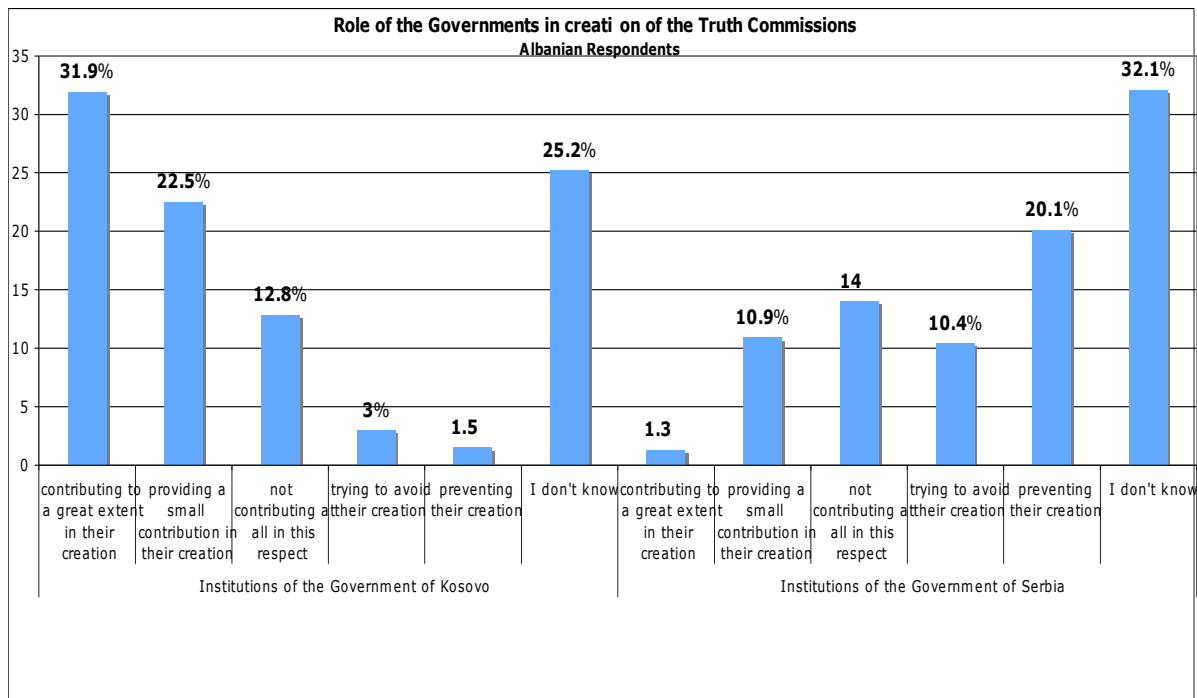


3.5.4 Role of the Governments in creating Truth Commission

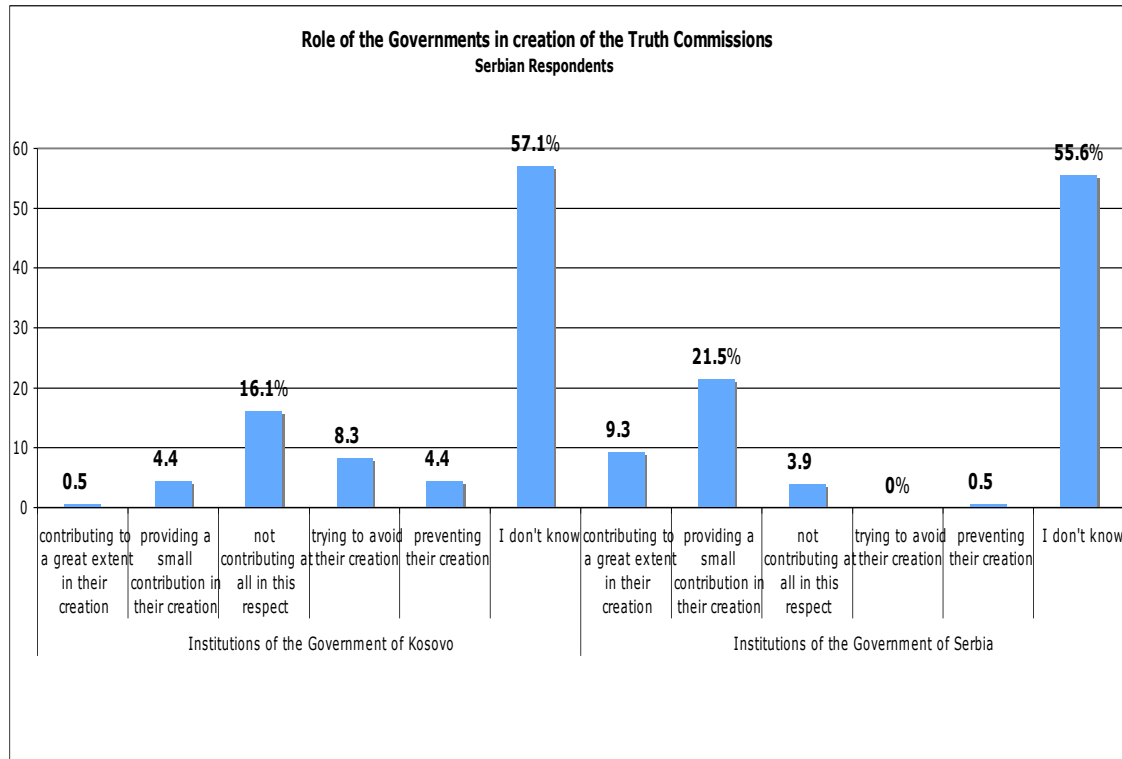
Albanian and Serbian respondents were asked about their perception of the role of the Governmental Institutions of Kosovo and Serbia respectively, in the process of creating a Truth Commission.

Albanian respondents say that Institutions of the Government of Serbia have an obstructive role regarding Truth Commission: 20.1% of these respondents think that those institutions are preventing the creation of a Commission, 14% think they are not contributing at all in the creation of a Truth Commission, 10.4% say that they are avoiding their creation, 10.9% state that these institutions are contributing too little in creating a Truth Commission, 32.1% “don’t know”, and only 1.3% of Albanian respondents think that Institutions of the Government of Serbia contribute greatly in this respect.

However, Albanian respondents are affirmative regarding the role of Institutions of the Government of Kosovo in creating a Truth Commission: 31.9% think that those institutions contribute to a great extent in the creation of a Truth Commission, and only 1.5% think they are preventing their creation; 22.5% say that they are providing a small contribution in establishing a Truth Commission, 12.8% think that institutions of the Government of Kosovo are not contributing at all in this respect, and 3% think of the institutions as the one trying to avoid creation of a Truth Commission. 25.2% have answered “I don’t know.”



More than half of the Serbian respondents say they don’t know the answer when asked about the role of Serbian Government on this issue (55.6%); while 21.5% think that the institutions of this Government are doing too little in creating a Truth Commission, 3.9% think that they are not contributing at all, 9.3% say that institutions are offering a great contribution in establishing them, and only 0.5% think they are preventing the creation of a Truth Commission.



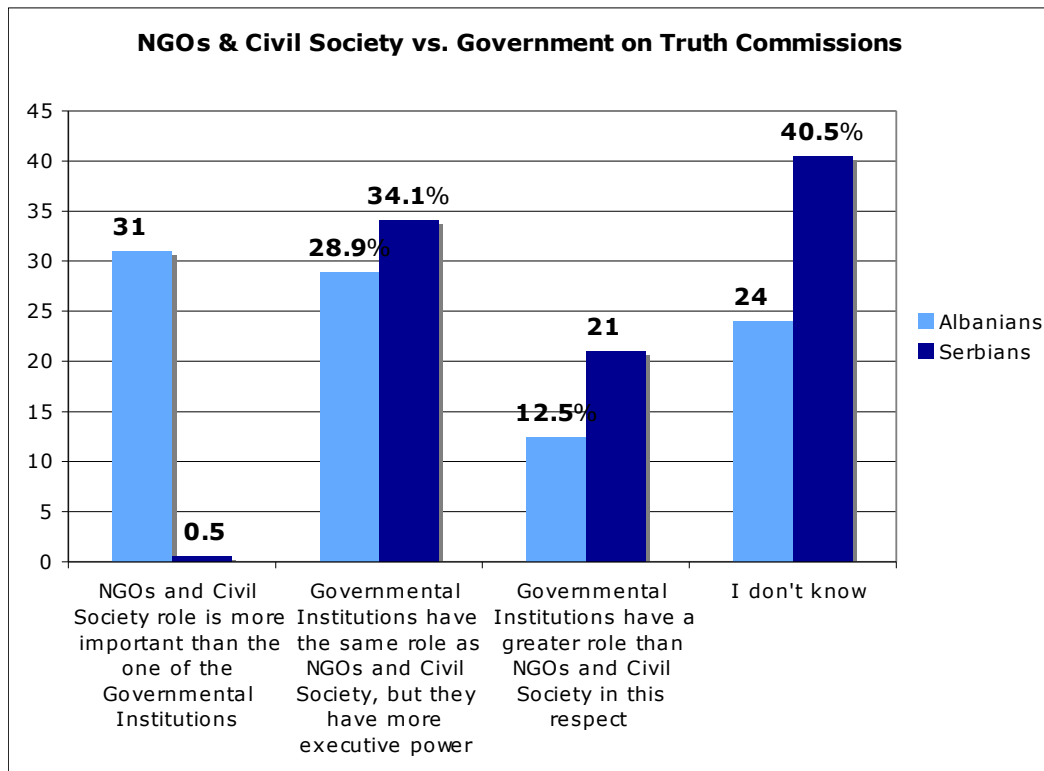
An approximate percentage of “I don’t know” answers, 57.1%, is present when Serbian respondents are asked about the role of the Kosovor Government institutions in creating Truth Commission; 16.1% think that these institutions are not contributing at all in this aspect; 4.4% say these institutions are preventing the creation of Truth Commission, which is the same percentage of respondents who think that these institutions are contributing too little in creating it. 8.3% think that they are avoiding this issue, and only 0.5% think that the Kosovor Government institutions are contributing to a great extent.

3.5.5 NGOs & Civil Society vs. Government on Truth Commission

Albanian respondents are far more positive in evaluating the role of the NGOs and Civil Society in general, in creation of the Truth Commission compared to the Serbian respondents.

31% of the Albanian respondents think that the role of the NGOs and Civil Society is more important than the role of the Governmental Institutions, while only 0.5% of the Serbian respondents think alike.

28.9% of Albanian respondents and 34.1% of Serbian respondents say that the role of the Governmental Institutions is the same as the one of the NGOs and Civil Society, but Government has more executive power, thus the impact of its institutions is stronger. 12.5% of Albanian respondents and 21% of Serbian respondents think that the Governmental Institutions have a greater role than NGOs and Civil Society in this respect, while 24% of Albanian respondents and 40.5% of Serbian ones say that “they don’t know” which side has a more important role in creating a Truth Commission.



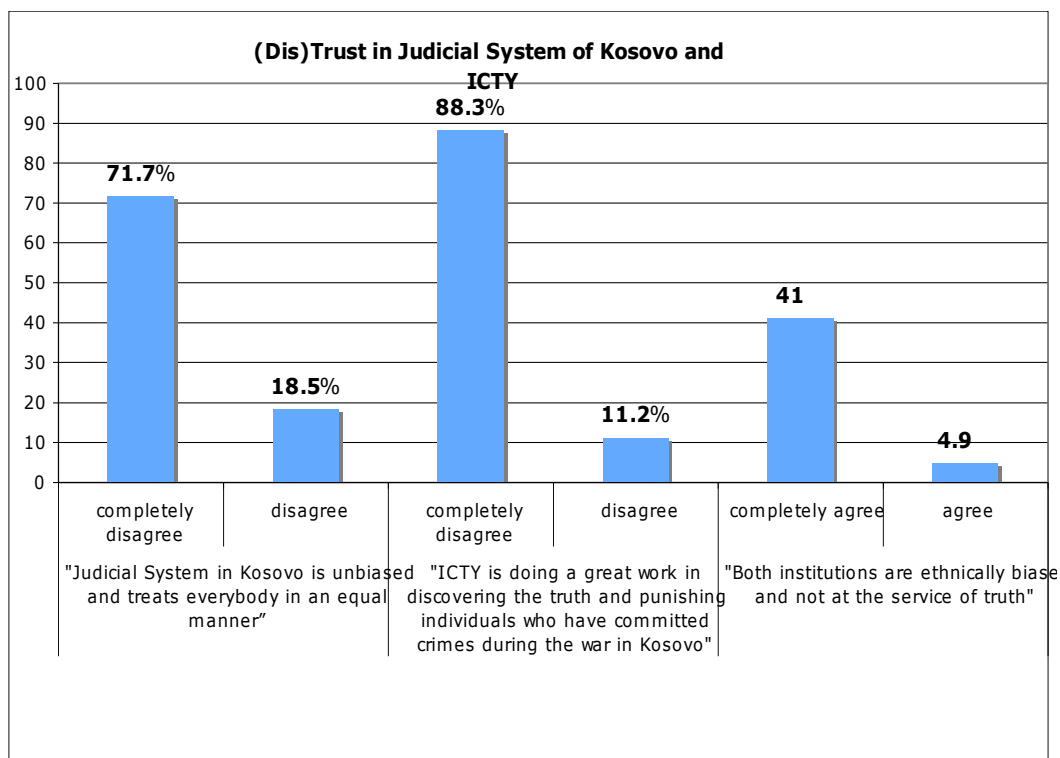
3.6 ATTITUDES TOWARD JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF KOSOVO AND ICTY

3.6.1 (Dis) Trust in Judicial System of Kosovo and in ICTY

There is a huge variation between Albanian and Serbian respondents regarding their evaluation of the Judicial System of Kosovo and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Serbian respondents have a highly critical stand toward both institutions, while Albanian ones are more assenting.

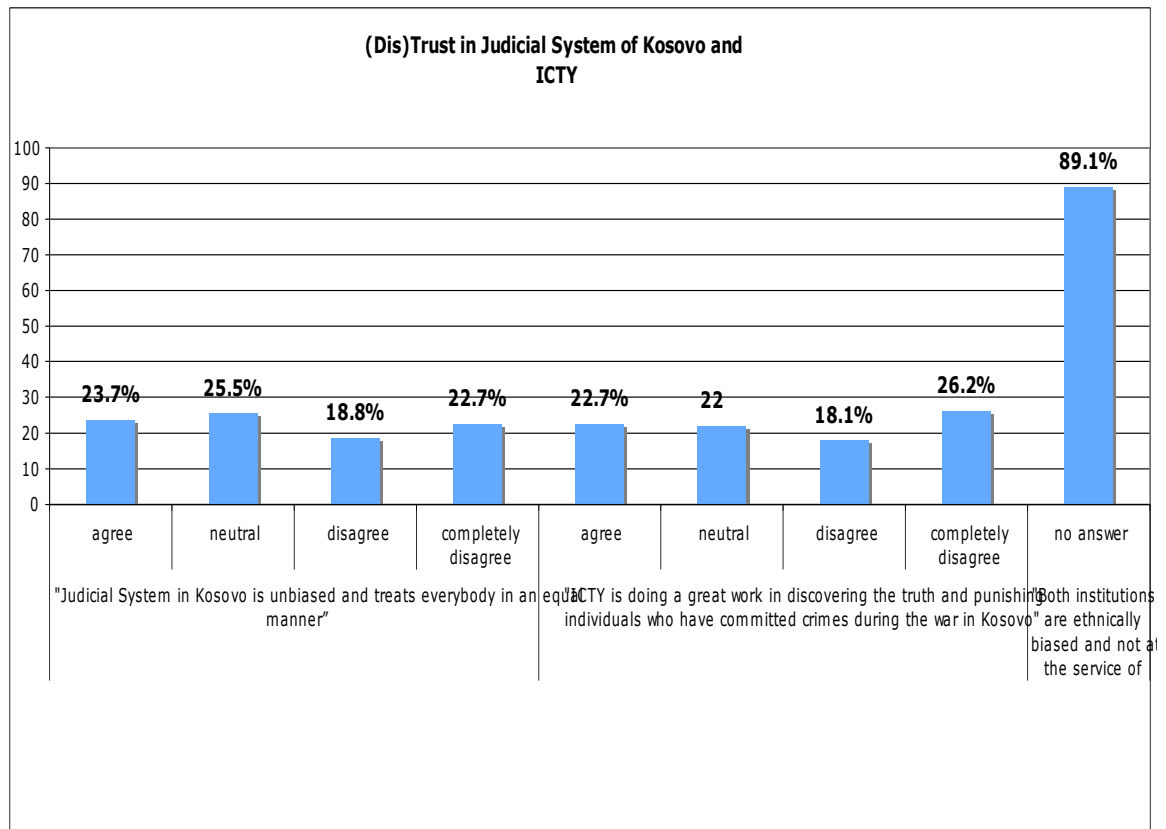
90.2% of Serbian respondents do not agree with the statement “*Judicial System in Kosovo is unbiased and treats everybody in an equal manner*” (71.7% “completely disagree”, and 18.5% “disagree”). When evaluating the work of ICTY, 99.5% of Serbian respondents disagree with the saying that “*ICTY is doing a great work in discovering the truth and punishing individuals who have committed crimes during the war in Kosovo*” (88.3% “completely disagree” and 11.2% “disagree”) Also, 41% of Serbian respondents think that both institutions are ethnically biased and not at the service of truth, while 53.7% have “no answer”.



Albanian respondents have split stands toward the Judicial System in Kosovo: 23.7% agree on its fairness, 25.5% are neutral, and 41.5% disagree with the statement “*Judicial System in Kosovo is unbiased and treats everybody in an equal manner*” (18.8% “disagree”, and 22.7 “completely disagree”)

Regarding ICTY’s work, the situation is similar. 22.7% agree with the statement “ICTY is doing a great work in discovering the truth and punishing individuals who have committed crimes during the war in Kosovo”, 22% are neutral, 44.3% disagree (18.1% “disagree”, and “26.2% “completely disagree”), while 9.7% say they “don’t know.”

Interestingly, 89.1% of the Albanian respondents didn’t answer the question whether there is an ethnic bias present in the work of these institutions.



3.7 ISSUES CONCERNING HISTORY

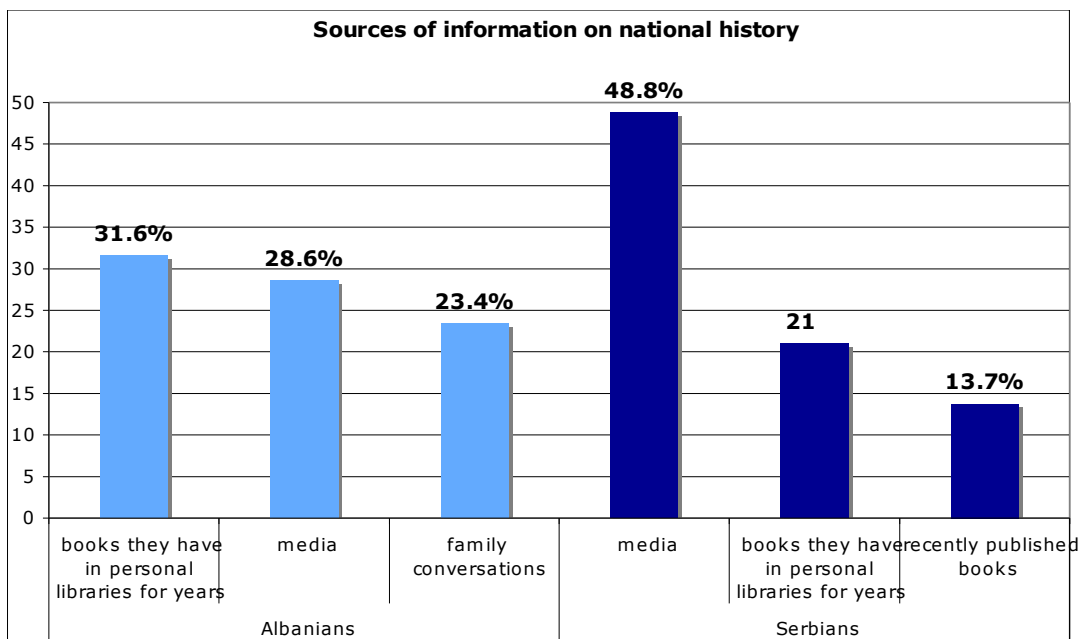
3.7.1 History Channels

For Kosovo it is said that it suffers from a “surplus of history”, therefore it is important to know through which means history is being conveyed here.

Regarding this issue, there are certain differences between Albanian and Serbian respondents. For Albanian respondents the most important sources of information on their national history are “books they have in personal libraries for years” (31.6%), media (28.6%), and family conversations (23.4%),

For Serbian respondents, the most significant sources are media (48.8%), “books they have in personal libraries for years” (21%), and recently published books (13.7%).

The main differences are visible in the role of media (Serbians 48.8% - Albanians 28.6%), and in “Family conversations” (Albanians 23.4% - Serbians 3.4%)

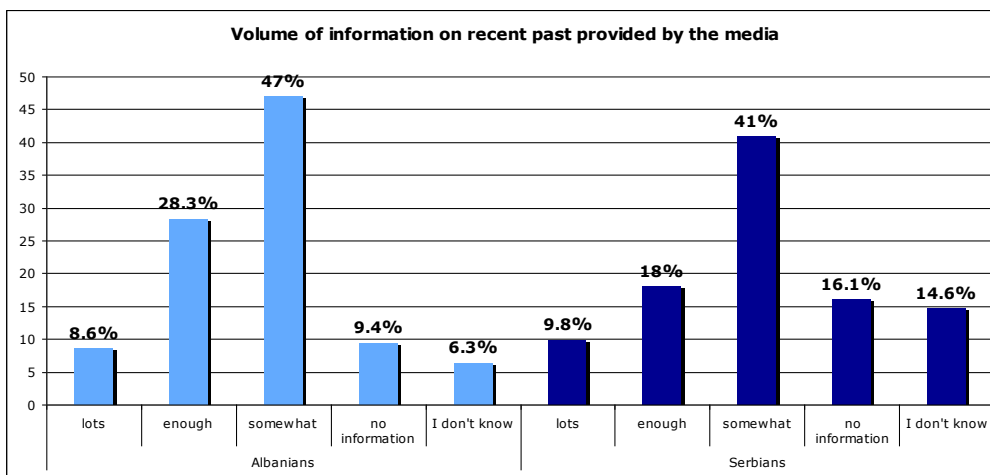
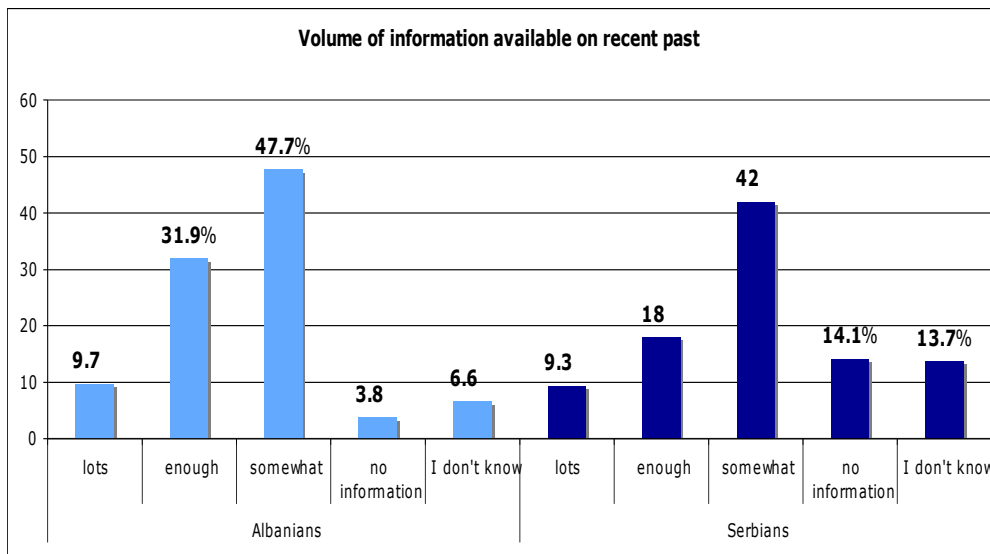


Concerning the volume of information available to the citizens of Kosovo about their recent past, 41.6% of Albanian respondents are satisfied with the situation (9.7% “lots of information”, and 31.9 “enough information”), and 47.7% say that there is “not enough information” on recent past.

27.3% of Serbian respondents are satisfied with the volume of information on Kosovo's recent past, while 42% think that "there is not enough information", and 14.1% say that "there is no information at all."

Regarding the information on recent past events provided by the media, 36.8% of Albanian respondents are satisfied with it, while 56.4% say that there is not enough such information.

27.8% of Serbian respondents say they are satisfied with this kind of information in the media, but 57.1% think that the media lack information on their recent past.



4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- The vast majority of respondents who have fled Kosovo during the war returned within the first year.

- Regarding respondent losses during the war in terms of immediate family members: 11.2% had a close family member killed; 4.7% had a close family member missing; and 30.5% had a close family member tortured.

- Around 32% of those who stated that they have had war experiences worth telling, reported them to the institutions. Around 68% did not report them because they “did not know to whom they should address their concerns,” “they thought that nobody would take any actions.” Alternative they “did not report out of the fear of the consequences reporting might have,” or because “they thought their experiences were not worth reporting.”

- 77% of those who reported their experiences to the institutions did not get any help. Only 13.8% said that the relevant institution “has shown a great interest in their experiences and have helped them,” whereas 7.3% reported that the institution they turned to “was not interested to hear their case at all.”

- Only 12.4% of respondents were optimistic when evaluating the relations between Albanians and Serbians in their respective communities.

Albanian respondents indicated the main reasons for interethnic tensions as being “external impact from Belgrade”, and “lack of willingness of Serbians to be integrated in the Kosovor society” For Serbian respondents, tension resulted from the “stance of Albanian political leaders,” and due to “insufficient efforts by the Albanians in facilitating the integration of Serbians in Kosovor society”

- Members of both ethnic groups are skeptical when asked to consider the timeframe needed for normalization of Albanian-Serbian relations.

- When asked who should be engaged in improving ethnic relations in Kosovo, the answers differ significantly based on respondent nationality.

Albanian respondents stated the main efforts should come from “Serbians in Kosovo”, “joint endeavors from all actors involved,” and “Serbian leaders,” while Serbian respondents stated that “every individual”, “Serbians in Kosovo,” “Albanians in Kosovo,” “Albanian leaders” and “International community”

- Reciprocal social acceptances between Albanian and Serbian respondents showed some variation.

- For Albanian respondents, “The Truth” is mostly what they have experienced, and what they have seen, while for Serbian respondents, “The Truth” is more what they have seen, and what they have experienced.

- Only a minority of Albanian and Serbian respondents appear to be in support of sharing past stories and experiences. 16.6% of Albanian respondents and 19.6% of Serbian ones say that “they would gladly share their experiences with such a person” (see paragraph 3.4.3.)

- Albanian respondents seem more reluctant to share experiences from before, during, and after the war with a person of the nationality they considered themselves to be at war with, compared to the Serbian respondents.

- Vast majority of Albanian respondents holds responsible for its sufferings Serbian leaders, individuals who have committed crimes, and the Serbian nation in general. On the other side, Serbian respondents hold responsible Albanian leaders, individuals who have committed crimes, and the Albanian nation.

- Regarding the question whether there is a Truth Commission in Kosovo, more than half of the Albanian respondents say this Commission does not exist (52.1%), while 39.8% do not know it exists or not. A similar distribution of

answers is when Serbian respondents are asked: 48.3% think that there is no such Commission in Kosovo, and 45.9% do not know the answer.

- Both Albanian and Serbian respondents are strongly affirmative towards the establishing of a Truth Commission in the near future in Kosovo. 95.2% of Albanian respondents are in favor of this idea, while 74.1% of Serbian respondents share the same opinion.

- The majority of Albanian and Serbian respondents do not agree with the statement that it is too early for a Truth Commission in Kosovo.

- Albanian respondents say that Institutions of the Government of Serbia have an obstructive role regarding Truth Commission, but they are affirmative regarding the role of Institutions of the Government of Kosovo in creating Truth Commission.

More than half of the Serbian respondents say they do not know the answer when asked about the role of Serbian Government on this issue, and 9.3% say that these institutions are offering a great contribution in establishing a Truth Commission.

An approximate percentage of “I don’t know” answers, 57.1%, is present when Serbian respondents are asked about the role of the Kosovar Government institutions in creating Truth Commission; and 4.4% say these institutions are preventing the creation of Truth Commission.

- Albanian respondents are far more positive in evaluating the role of the NGOs and Civil Society in general, in the creation of a Truth Commission compared to the Serbian respondents.

- There is a huge variation between Albanian and Serbian respondents regarding their evaluation of the Judicial System of Kosovo and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Serbian respondents have a highly critical stand toward both institutions, while Albanian ones are more assenting.

- Regarding “history channels,” there are certain differences between Albanian and Serbian respondents. For Albanian respondents the most important sources of information on their national history are “books they have in their personal libraries for years”, media, and family conversations, whereas for Serbian respondents, the most significant sources are media, “books they have in their personal libraries for years”, and recently published books.

- Albanian respondents are more satisfied than Serbian ones with the situation regarding the volume of information on Kosovo’s recent past.

- Majority of both Albanian and Serbian respondents thinks that the media lack information on their recent past.

In the past few decades, dealing with the past all over the world has gained an increasing significance as a key component to a widespread strategy in creating a culture of human rights, confronting impunity, and building a peaceful society. Among the many strategies to deal with the past, the idea of truth finding—uncovering the truth behind a previous period often characterized by both violence and secrecy—has become particularly important.

When intentions to deal with past human rights abuse, atrocity and conflict are hindered by responsible institutional bodies, as was the case with commissions in Haiti, Nigeria and the former Yugoslavia, then an unofficial process initiated by NGOs might be a better option. NGOs can also raise awareness on the importance of truth-finding/truth-telling within a post-conflict society.

Also in the case of Kosovo the involvement of NGOs in truth finding seems necessary, considering the existing suspicions towards the Other’s political

actors and governmental institutions. Serbs mainly hold Albanian leaders responsible for tensions and vice versa.

Nevertheless Albanian and Serbian respondents are strongly affirmative toward the establishing of a Truth Commission, and the majority also opposes the statement that “it is too early for Truth Commissions to be established.”

However, the issue of setting up the process of establishing a single Truth Commission is rather a delicate one, since both communities believe their views on the past are the Truth and that a Truth Commission can verify their version of events.

A bottom-up truth finding process may offer an alternative. The basic idea of truth finding by telling stories has come from truth commissions that have emerged from the Global South. Kosovo can learn from these so-called Truth Telling projects that took place in other post-conflict countries. Nevertheless there is no one-size-fits-all regarding truth telling projects. They should be context specific.

While “Official truth commissions attempt to produce a historical narrative that contributes to the “official story of national history”⁶, the unofficial truth telling projects generate the preparatory steps of the population towards the creation of a truth commission. Local truth telling project however also have value in their own right, as they can potentially contribute to reconciliation on the inter-personal and local level.

⁶ Louis Bickford, “Unofficial truth projects” , This paper examines non-governmental initiatives that, like official truth commissions, are premised on the idea that by elucidating the truth concerning past human rights abuse and atrocity, societies can build more just, stable, and democratic futures, 2007, pp.25.

For Kosovo the truth finding process could hence be started with “telling personal stories” on a local level. Ideas of collective responsibility and a strict victim-perpetrator division across ethnic lines would no longer be present if a “sharing experiences” environment will take place. This could contribute to calming down the tense relationships between ethnicities living in Kosovo. Moreover the “telling personal stories” initiative does not collaterally rely on the actual establishment of a state-level Truth Commission in Kosovo.

The research has shown that Albanian and Serbian respondents support the idea of sharing their past stories and experiences. However only a minority currently considers taking part themselves. Once local truth telling processes with the willing would be under way, more willingness to participate may however be generated, depending on success.

Aside to truth commissions and truth telling exercises however also the criminal law system is crucial in facing the past and establishing a record of Truth. However both communities and Serbians especially, have negative views of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). If a Truth Commission would be established and any potential linkage with the ICTY – even a rhetorical one - should therefore be strongly avoided.

In addition, Serbian respondents are highly distrustful of the Judicial System in Kosovo. This means that they would hardly accept any decisions of this Judicial System on the issues concerning war experiences. There is a need for immediate action toward creating a better functioning judicial system, in order to build trust. However it is clear that it will take years of institutional efforts in achieving a considerable success.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING TRUTH TELLING/FINDING IN KOSOVO

The roundtable “Truth telling in Kosovo: Which Way Now?” was divided into two working groups: **a working group focusing on policy recommendations and a working group of NGOs sharing lessons learned regarding truth telling on a local level** (see Annex 3). The working group focusing on policy recommendations was diligently engaged in discussions about the concept of truth telling, the significance of this initiative and the benefits associated with undertaking this kind of activity. The empirical research served as a reference point to the participants during the discussions. Following intense debates on the issue, the members of this working group came up with the following recommendations:

General recommendations:

Truth finding and truth telling are the preconditions for peace building in a post-conflict society. A post-war society must pass through the very intricate and meticulous process of truth finding in order to create the prime conditions for peace building.

It is important to raise awareness in society about truth telling and truth finding. This should be done by carefully analysing the stances taken and judgements made by both parties of the conflict. The population needs to be aware of the positive and negative experiences that could emanate from the meticulous process of truth finding and therefore, the civil society should seek to draw an improved information strategy targeting citizens regarding various ways of truth finding and truth telling. This strategy must cover all levels of the society and it should be developed based on the target groups which covers age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, location, gender and cultural background. All actors involved in the drawing up of the strategy and implementation of the campaigns should have an expertise in the field. This expertise ensures that gaps for misinterpretations, misunderstandings and hurting feelings of each other are avoided among target groups.

The concepts of truth telling and truth finding need to be clarified. It is evident that “truth” is a confusing concept which has many abstract and relative sides attached to it. Specifying a definition is of paramount importance and the truth should be enlightened regardless of its nature – bitter or not.

The media and journalists should be educated and sensitised about the truth telling issues. Bearing in mind that the role of media is crucial in the behaviour and attitudes of the conflicting parties and recognising that the Riots of March 2004 were further ignited by the media reporting in Kosovo, the journalists and media in general should be made sensible of the issues concerning truth finding and should be encouraged to have a calm approach when dealing with this issue. The media must demonstrate professionalism in its reporting, because it is a significant actor in raising the awareness of society and covering the truth finding issues in the field.

A regional approach and regional cooperation backs the process of truth telling/ truth finding. Recognising that the root of the problems in all conflicts Yugoslavia-wide is more or less the same; the need for cooperation between initiatives at the regional level should be encouraged. Initially, this would be done by informing the population and the members of the civil society of the existence of similar initiatives in other countries of former Yugoslavia. To ensure efficient achievement, further work should be done on researching different ways of assisting each other in the regional truth telling process. The previously outlined point would be especially beneficial for Kosovo, which lacks any past experience in this field.

Recommendations to the civil society:

Building capacity within the civil society to play an active role in truth telling processes is needed. Bearing in mind that truth telling processes in the Western Balkans, especially in Kosovo, are new prospects, all actors in the civil

society focusing on truth telling should consolidate capacity building programmes which would ensure efficient work in the field. Civil society should create a lucid strategy which would enhance a critical approach among its members and other structures involved with regards to truth telling. This would serve as a precondition for raising awareness, lobbying and influencing the society positively.

A good, professional and well-developed methodology will contribute to bringing different groups together in the process of truth telling. This issue should be tackled assiduously, relentlessly and cautiously as all parties involved foster different beliefs and possess different experiences from the war. In this case, some idea that suits or appeals to one party could be detrimental and devastating to the other.

Good communication flows between all players is key in ensuring a successful truth finding/telling process. Therefore, the idea of communication between NGOs and family members of missing persons as well as governing institutions and civil society itself should be promoted and inclined further. On the other hand, the communication between civil society organisations must be enhanced for better results.

Civil society should delegate its representatives to update and inform the public about ongoing activities in the field of truth telling and be a link with policy makers. The representatives should initiate a meeting with high level policy makers from the governing bodies in order to employ their experience and have their input on the truth telling issue as well as introduce them to the overall idea of the initiative.

Recommendations regarding a truth commission

It is necessary to clarify the concept of a truth commission and to give a straightforward definition. Bearing in mind that not everyone has a clear view

on what a truth commission (TC) is and the way it functions, it is suggested that initially a concise easy-reaching definition ought to be produced in order to raise the awareness of the society and the government on the issue.

A truth commission in Kosovo would need a clear mandate. Before a TC would be erected a feasibility study should take place. In order to ensure efficient work and satisfactory results, a clear mandate should be set for the TC. The mandate would serve as the time frame when the TC starts functioning and its deadline before which the objectives aimed by the TC should be accomplished. Considering the obstacles associated with working in the field on a rather touchy topic, it was advised that a feasibility analysis is done by scrutinising the experiences of other truth commissions worldwide.

Any truth commission should address the concerns and needs of the victims. The triangle consisting of personal, structural and cultural violence must be taken into account when questions about the mandate of the TC are raised. A reference: the conflict in Guatemala and the model adopted by Guatemalans with two commissions in place. The first commission mainly executed its task under the umbrella of the UN and was specifically focusing on history, who has initiated the conflict and who has suffered from it. On the other hand, the second commission had a psycho-social character and it was initiated by the Catholic Church and the investigations mainly conjured the stances of victims and victimisers. Actors involved should have high interest towards eliminating the violence in the post-war societies of Balkans emanating from cultural differences and should show determination in improving the perceptions when approaching someone from other beliefs and cultural backgrounds.

The establishment of a truth commission should have the full support of the government. The civil society should complement the truth commission but stay independent of it. A clear message should be given to both the population and the civil society that the TC would operate as an official organ

orchestrated by the government. It must be unequivocally stated that the civil society can only challenge the TC but in no way interfere with its agenda and/or serve as a substitute for it. Among the roles of the civil society should be the creation of an informal structure of NGOs which would work on lobbying governing institutions of Kosovo, regional and international institutions and raising awareness among different target groups

Whether the (regional) truth commission will deal with missing persons needs to be jointly decided with victim groups. The importance of specifying whether the process of enlightening the fate of missing persons falls into the objectives and responsibilities of the (Regional) Truth Commission (RTC) needs to be treated with professionalism while the commission is in the establishing phase. During this phase the involvement of associations of missing persons and victims of the war is regarded as highly important and compulsory. A region-wide supported civil society initiative to establish a regional truth commission in former Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, is already in place. It is hereby acknowledged for its efforts regarding the above points.

Recommendations regarding the research

Due to the changed political situation since February 2008, a follow up research/survey should be undertaken on opinions regarding truth telling. Taking into account the latest political developments in Kosovo regarding the final status, unilateral declaration of independence, the recognition process of Kosovo as a sovereign country and its aftermath, the results of the research 'Attitudes towards inter-ethnic relations and truth telling in Kosovo' (executed before the final status of Kosovo) could be different among both parties involved in the research. The aforementioned point encourages further research which would give a clear indication whether the current situation would be more promising regarding reconciliation or whether it would be subject to deterioration.

LESSONS LEARNED REGARDING GRASSROOTS TRUTH TELLING

The discussions in the second working group focused on sharing experiences and lessons learned on grassroots level. It brought together NGOs working on truth telling/finding in Kosovo itself and in the wider region (Bosnia, Serbia and The Netherlands) (See Annex 1).

During the open discussion the members of the working group touched base on the following lessons learned:

Though, the work in truth telling/finding is relatively new in Kosovo, there are organisations that have already undertaken such activities. Recognising the wealth of experience that these NGOs and regional and international NGOs have gathered over time in this field, it is of great significance to exchange ideas and experiences in order to learn from each other. NGOs can also learn from the range of different methods and techniques regarding truth telling/finding, for example:

- i. (Regional) Truth Commission
- ii. Database with information on the amount of war victims and their experiences
- iii. Forums with public hearings of victims
- iv. Local truth finding at municipal level; bringing different groups together to talk about the past and missing persons
- v. Peace building trainings including story telling with participants from all over ex-Yugoslavia
- vi. Memory book with personal war stories
- vii. Public debates on regional level about truth telling

- viii. Database and listening to experiences of (tortured) victims
- ix. Positive stories of courageous (inter-ethnic) actions
- x. Memorials for heroes, people who helped others during the war

The sensitivity of the issue and a task for awareness rising. All actors involved in the truth telling/finding process should be made aware of the sensitivity of the issue. The role of civil society on the process would be to raise the awareness of all actors on the matter.

Civil society has various means to mobilise reluctant governments concerning truth telling/finding. Taking into account the current political situation, governments prefer to keep the issue of truth telling/finding at a low profile mainly because it is not a profitable issue for them. The civil society is fully aware of the flat challenge it has to face when attempting to convince the governments to tackle this issue. NGOs could lobby and develop strategic plans and exercise influence by various means in order to succeed in mobilising the government. A suitable mechanism for persuasion would be referring to the utilisation of the Ahtisaari Plan, especially its aspects regarding inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relations between all communities in Kosovo. Lobbying on the issue of truth telling in Kosovo has already proven to be effective. An example of a successful lobby of civil society, by the associations of missing persons, is the creation of a governmental commission on missing persons in Kosovo. It has to be added though that the association of missing persons is critical of the (lack of) work performed by this commission.

The stories have to be told regardless of their nature. All bitter, devastating, emotional, sensitive and taboo issues regarding truth telling should be incorporated in the upcoming projects without classifying the past. The reason being is that any classification of the past would lead to fragmentations which in turn would derail the initial purpose of the whole initiative. Knowing the other's story is professed as the only path which would enlighten the truth.

Truth telling consists both of finding facts, and also of sharing experiences and perspectives of the war. The searches for missing persons, finding the facts of war crimes and justice for victims are pivotal to truth finding. However NGOs should also concentrate on the broader prospect of “dealing with the past”. This may involve e.g. history books and other education materials, memorials and museums and citizens sharing stories of the war.

The victims should be the top priority. NGOs should not forget who is being worked for (the victims) and should not execute projects for the sake of satisfying the donors. NGOs should prioritise their responsibilities and tasks in favour of the target group: the victims.

Appreciating the victims’ expectations is very important. NGOs and authorities should be aware that victims have high expectations from the truth telling, especially those who have lost family members or who have missing persons in their close family. The importance of respecting and restoring the dignity of victims must be central to the truth telling process. Furthermore, preventive measures should be adopted to avoid harming the victims once again during the process of truth telling. Truth, justice and reparation are seen as key to success.

NGOs should be aware of the fact that it is very hard and often painful for victims to be part of truth telling. Trust building is pivotal to truth telling/finding projects. It is very important to be able to build trust among victims. If the civil society does not gain the trust of victims, they would be very reluctant in truth finding process and this would reflect on the reliability of these initiatives. For example, one NGO reported to provide the only safe space where tortured people could share their stories.

Trust within truth telling projects also needs to be built for people to feel comfortable enough to speak out and/or share their story. This is often a step-by-

step process. Examples of building a safe environment for story sharing are separate preparatory meetings with different groups, and sharing your own individual history as a trust building measure before discussing collective responsibility

There are several methods for regional truth telling/finding initiatives. As the wars had a regional dimension, there is also a need for regional initiatives. These initiatives would span the whole or part of former Yugoslavia's conflict zones and different methods could be used. For example:

- i. Public debates on a regional level can serve as an ideal means of tackling the issue in a challenging way by bringing together actors from different sides and areas that were connected during the war.
- ii. The production of a regional memory book with personal stories of people across Yugoslavia is a low-threshold activity that can act as an information bulletin regarding truth telling for those not so familiar with the whole process. It also gives the opportunity for victims from different conflict areas of the former Yugoslavia to appraise the fact that the opposite side has war experiences too, which may even be similar to one's own.
- iii. Peace building training sessions featuring story telling for people from across former Yugoslavia were also mentioned as a good regional approach. The participants, e.g. veterans of war, come from different ethnic, religious and national backgrounds and share their personal and family experiences and views on their past. This approach enables participants to perceive each other as individuals rather than as a nationality.

NGOs can shed light on positive stories and heroes from the war. In wars the focus is often on military heroes of the war. Other heroes of the war tend to be forgotten; civilians who helped people from the enemy group and who often risked their lives helping. NGOs working on truth telling can shed light on these positive stories from the war and promote the remembrance of these heroes, for

example by erecting statues or by gathering stories of people who helped or were helped by others.

Civil society should pressure the governing bodies in eliminating manipulations. The civil society should work more on pressuring the governing bodies for a fair approach to the issue of truth telling/finding. In general manipulations with regards to the number of victims are known to exist and they should be eliminated. These manipulations mainly arise because there are people within the government that have been involved in brutal actions during the war.

Annex 1

Fact sheets organizations

participating in

Working group on sharing lessons learned regarding
grassroots truth telling

Roundtable - Truth telling in Kosovo: Which Way Now?

12 september 2008

- Center for Nonviolent Action (CNA)
- CBM Mitrovica
- Family Associations Coordinating Council for the Missing Persons of Kosovo
- Forum of Tuzla Citizens (FTC)
- ForumZFD
- Humanitarian Law Center (HLC)
- IKV Pax Christi
- Integra
- Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT)
- OGI/CCI
- Prehja NGO

These fact sheets were prepared by the organizers of the round table in order to give the participants background information about all participating organizations in the working group on sharing lessons learned. Furthermore, the fact sheets include contact details of all organizations so the participants could keep in touch afterwards.

Centre for Nonviolent Action (CNA)

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What is CNA?

CNA's mission has been to work on the building of lasting peace in the region of the former Yugoslavia through the promotion of the cultures of nonviolence and dialogue, and through the trust building among individuals and groups, as well as constructive dealing with the past as one of the key elements of peace building.

CNA has been striving to achieve a society of lasting peace where the development of critical thought, taking responsibility for society and community, the encouragement to reassess one's own attitudes and the acceptance of the diversity are cherished. To achieve these social values, CNA applies different kinds of activism, while focusing on peace education, publishing and video production.

Seven people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia are the nucleus of the Centre for Nonviolent Action. CNA has offices in Sarajevo and Belgrade and works on peace building in the region of former Yugoslavia, from Macedonia, across Kosovo and all the way to Croatia.

Truth telling/finding projects of CNA

Since 2002, CNA has increasingly focused on activities that aim to initiate and support a self-critical process of 'Dealing with the Past' in Yugoslavia's successor states. For example, CNA organised public discussion forums and training sessions in which war veterans from all sides (i.e., former combatants of Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian origin) have been enabled to speak about their personal experiences and opinions.

In addition to training manuals, the team has produced books, film documentaries for TV and video screenings that seek to motivate people to critically and honestly reflect on their roles and personal responsibility before, during and after the wars. For example, CNA has published a book called 'I can't feel very well when my neighbor does not feel well', containing interviews about reconciliation with 'ordinary people' from all over former Yugoslavia. CNA also supports local NGO networking activities and helps them to implement their own peace building concepts.

The main activities of CNA are peace building trainings, where participants from all former Yugoslavian states come together to learn and to share their past. The participants range from teachers, veterans, journalist, 'ordinary people', NGO employees to sometimes government officials. These participants are recruited through invitation letters to individuals and organizations, and need to fill out application forms to show their motivation.

With the peace building trainings CNA tries to empower participants to act in promoting peace in the society. There are about 3 or 4 trainings each year of 10 days each, including many exercises and discussions. Motivated participants could take part in advance trainings and could get involved in other activities of the organization.

The greatest challenges in 'truth telling' during the trainings are how to deal with nationalism and how to handle the 'blaming game'. CNA tries to support this by

creating a safe environment where everyone could share their stories and by talking about personal experiences before tackling common responsibility.

CBM Mitrovica

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What is CBM?

CBM is a local multiethnic NGO from Mitrovica, founded in 2001 by then IKV, and works independently since 2003. Its mission is to identify and advance the common concerns of Mitrovica's citizens, to empower communities to work together and establish means of peaceful coexistence, and to facilitate contact and dialogue between citizens of different ethnic backgrounds. CBM initiates and coordinates several projects, including the multi-ethnic M-magazine, a pop/rock music school, a women centre and return facilitation. Director Valdete Idrizi has received the 'International Women of Courage Award' from Condoleezza Rice in 2008.

Truth telling/finding activities of CBM

One of the projects of CBM that (indirectly) concerns truth telling activities is the 'Return Facilitation' of 30 families (25 ethnic Serb and 5 ethnic Albanian) to their pre-war properties in the Runik/Rudnik village of the Skenderaj/Srbica municipality. CBM has been involved in the dialogue between the IDPs and the receiving community of Rudnik since 2005, including successful go-and-see

visits and confidence building between returning and receiving communities. Besides offering support for possible income-generation and reconstruction of houses and infrastructure, the project also includes the promotion of inter-ethnic dialogue through common trainings on dialogue and coexistence.

Family Associations Coordinating Council for the Missing Persons

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What is Family Associations Coordinating Council for the Missing Persons?

The Family Associations Coordinating Council for the Missing Persons of Kosovo, was established in July 2001 as the coordinating council of Albanian family associations for research of the war victims and the missing persons in Kosovo by the foundation “Kujtimi” (Mitrovica), NGO “Loti dhe Shpresa” (Kacanik), “Shpresimi” (Therande), “Shpresa dhe Kujtimi” (Fushe Kosove), and “27 April” offices for the imprisoned people and the missing persons in Gjakova.

This coordinating council was created to give more attention to the faith of missing persons in Kosovo and to increase the pressure on the institutions and international organizations to act upon the cases of missing persons. The council publishes important documents and reports about the missing persons in Kosovo and succeeded in solving the cases of more than half of the missing persons in Kosovo. Furthermore, it gives support to the families that have to miss their most beloved ones.

In the past years more organizations from Kosovo joined the FACCMFK, including “The Office for the Imprisoned People and for Missing Persons” (Kline, Peje), “The Society for Enlightening of the Luck of Imprisoned People and of the Missing Persons”, (Pristina), “Kreshniku” (Krushe e Madhe), “Loti dhe Kujtimi” (Podujeve), “Rrezja e Shpreses” (Ferizaj), “Liria” (Glllogjan), “Kujtesa” (Malisheve), “Pengu I Lirise” (Skenderaj), “Pektor” (Podujeve), “Ankthi” (Kamenice) and “Shpresa dhe Kujtimi” (Kline).

Truth telling/finding projects of Family Associations Coordinating Council for the Missing Persons?

Besides its main tasks of given attention to and register missing persons, the organization has successfully lobbied for the implementation of a commission on missing persons in Kosovo, a proposal that is now implemented by the Kosovar government. Furthermore the coordinating council enforced several projects in the field of truth telling and finding in Kosovo and members participated in workshops about war crimes and victims in Kosovo. Because its donor (ICMP) is being reformed, this Association is currently not able to realize plans to fulfill its objectives.

Forum of Tuzla Citizens

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What is Forum of Tuzla Citizens?

Forum of Tuzla Citizens (FTC) is an NGO from Tuzla, founded in 1993 by citizen-individuals. FTC is open to every citizen who cares for the preservation and development of the traditional democratic, urban, cultural and ethnic values of Tuzla and BiH as a multi-national and a multi-religious civic community. Among others, FTC supports punishment of all war criminals, the return of all displaced persons and refugees to their ancient hearths and the return of their property, starting a process of mutual trust re-establishment, and encouragement of democratic activities and active participation in constructive peaceful initiatives.

Truth telling/finding projects of Forum of Tuzla Citizens

'How to reach truth' (ongoing): The main objective of this project is to ensure a stable foundation for the building of a peaceful, non-conflict and affluent future of the nations and states of the Western Balkans through facing with the past. This project has a regional focus and includes BiH, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Kosovo. The specific aims are:

- ✓ to initiate civil discussion about the events from the past war at the territory of former Yugoslavia, focusing on several specific sub-regions;
- ✓ to tell your own story and to hear their story (other and/or different) story;
- ✓ to reach understanding of the other and different through open dialogue about the past;
- ✓ to establish the minimum quantity of truth that is acceptable for all;
- ✓ to reconsider the influence of religion on the events in the past in the focus areas, with the presence of religious leaders, and to use their presence for promotion of joint values of all nations in the region.

FTC has organised/is organising public debates, titled 'Facing with the Past–The Truth for All' in

- Trebinje (BiH) - Dubrovnik (Croatia) - Podgorica (Montenegro)

- Velika Kladusa (BiH) - Zagreb (Croatia) - Belgrade (Serbia)
- Mitrovica (Kosovo) - Belgrade (Serbia)
- Vukovar (Croatia) - Belgrade (Serbia) - Sarajevo (BiH)
- Brcko (BiH) - Belgrade (Serbia) - Zagreb (Croatia)
- Beograd (Serbia) - Pristine (Kosovo) - Sarajevo (BiH) - Banja Luka (BiH)
- Mostar (BiH)

Other activities include TV and radio shows, a regional conference in Tuzla (BiH), booklet and bulletins and website updates.

Forum ZFD: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst

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What is Forum ZFD?

The Forum Civil Peace Service (*forumZFD*) is an association of various German peace movement and non-profit organisations aimed at creating and strengthening the instruments of civilian conflict resolution by non-violent means. Since 2000 ForumZFD has been active in Kosovo. The main goal of the projects is to support an active civil society in Kosovo in favor of a lasting peaceful coexistence in the region. Forum ZFD supports civil society organizations and individuals to enhance their impact on the peace process and address non violence and reconciliation, for example through support to a multiethnic peace platform called 'Pro Peace'.

What truth finding/telling activities does CCI/OGI employ?

In may 2007 a research was conducted by ForumZFD on ‘Dealing with the past’ in Kosovo. At the moment ForumZFD is planning and organizing a new program for the coming years which will focus on “dealing with the past” in Kosovo.

Humanitarian Law Center - Kosovo

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What is HLC?

The Humanitarian Law Center (HLC) helps post-Yugoslav societies re-establish the rule of law and come to terms with the legacy of large-scale past human rights abuses, in order to prevent their recurrence, to ensure accountability, and to serve justice.

HLC was founded in 1992 by human rights defender Nataša Kandić to document human rights violations committed during the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and to provide legal aid and protection to victims of past human rights abuses before national courts.

Over 30 dedicated professionals, with expertise in human rights and transitional

justice, work for HLC. The organisation has offices located in Belgrade, Serbia, and Pristina, Kosovo.

What is HLC Kosovo?

The office of the Humanitarian Law Center in Kosovo (HLC-Kosovo) is working to document facts that will assist Kosovo society to deal with the recent past, while at the same time promoting the protection of minority rights, whose unsatisfactory situation is largely a legacy of the recent past. HLC Kosovo seeks to counter denial and political manipulation of human losses, and ensure the integrity and transparency of war crimes trials dealing with those losses. It also seeks to promote and monitor the protection of minority rights, which are fundamental to Kosovo's democratic development, to prospects for minority return, and ultimately to a peaceful relationship between Kosovo and Serbia.

Truth telling/finding activities of HLC Kosovo

'Kosovo Memory Project': HLC researches war crimes and human rights violations in Kosovo in order to prevent manipulation of the number of victims, to build historical memory and to educate future generations about the legacy of the past.

HLC researchers are collecting and analyzing data about every single victim which has lost life during 1998, 1999 and 2000. From the beginning of the research in 2005 HLC has already collected the data of about 12500 victims. After the field research case studies will be drafted and a book will be published with the data of all victims and the short description of the circumstances of the incidents in the second half of 2009.

This project will help the society to deal with the past, could be useful for courts in the region and could help in implementing a program on transitional justice.

'Promoting Minority Rights': Through this project Kosovo HLC is monitoring the implementation of legal instruments for protection of minority rights, such as laws and Kosovo Constitution. HLC launches its reports every 4 months and organizes Round Tables. Also, HLC does the advocacy on this issue such as open letters to Kosovo institutions, press releases etc.

'Monitoring War Crimes Trials': In the Monitoring War Crime Trials project HLC has monitored all the trials in Kosovo which have to do with war crimes, politically or ethnically motivated crimes. HLC has launched its report by the beginning of this year.

IKV Pax Christi

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What is IKV Pax Christi?

IKV Pax Christi is the largest Dutch peace and conflict resolution organisation with more than 20.000 donors and members. It works with local civil society partners in 25 countries spread over 4 continents. Its mission is to support local communities and civil society organisations to promote peace, justice, rule of law and truth telling.

IKV Pax Christi cooperates since 20 years with local civil society organisations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo, with a focus on:

- ✓ Promoting genuine truth telling and truth finding
- ✓ Promoting interethnic dialogue, understanding and cooperation
- ✓ Promoting interfaces for intra-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding
- ✓ Promoting inclusive local governance and constructive citizenship

The organisation also educates and engages the Dutch public on developments in the Western Balkans.

Truth telling/finding projects of IKV Pax Christi

IKV Pax Christi supports several truth telling/finding activities at the grassroots level. These activities focus on a process of truth telling/finding from bottom-up, both on a local and a regional level. Currently, IKV Pax Christi is supporting the regional projects: 'People and Memories Talk' project of OGI/CCI and the project 'How to reach truth' of Forum of Tuzla Citizens. IKV Pax Christi also supports Integra's research on attitudes towards truth-telling in Kosovo and the round table 'Truth telling in Kosovo: Which Way Now?'

In the past IKV Pax Christi has also been involved in getting the facts straight surrounding the fall of the enclave Srebrenica and the role of the Dutch government, Ministry of Defence and Dutchbat therein. IKV Pax Christi published a book critical of the government re. this issue: 'Srebrenica; de genocide die niet werd voorkomen' ('The genocide that wasn't prevented') by Mient Jan Faber (2002). IKV Pax Christi has long supported the Women of Srebrenica in their Truth and Justice campaign and e.g. funds their Documentation and Information Centre. Through lobby and advocacy IKV Pax Christi aims for official contacts with and a full apology by the Dutch government towards the Srebrenica survivors. IKV Pax Christi co-organises the yearly Srebrenica commemoration on

the 11th of July in The Hague. IKV Pax Christi also supports the law cases of the Family Mustafic and Hasan Nuhanovic against the Dutch State.

Integra

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What is Integra?

INTEGRA NGO is an organisation formed by young people who are committed to giving their contribution to the recovery and development of Kosovo. Its work is guided by the principle of good governance and full enjoyment of human rights, regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and political belonging. This is essential for the construction of a democratic and tolerant Kosovo, fully integrated into the European community. Integra is organised in three departments: European integration and democratisation, reproductive health, and culture.

Truth telling/finding projects of Integra

'Tell them your truth, respect theirs' (ongoing): The objectives of this project are to get a better understanding of the attitude of the population in Kosovo towards interethnic relations and truth telling and to identify possibilities for NGOs to do truth telling at the grassroots level.

This project started in 2007 with an opinion poll to analyse attitudes of people living in Kosovo towards their past experiences and their willingness to communicate their past to each other. The research also included recommendations concerning bottom-up truth finding processes and 'telling personal stories' on a local level.

In addition in 2007 a dialogue meeting took place in Mitrovica, in which young Serbs and Albanians shared their experiences of conflict.

Integra is the organiser of the roundtable 'Truth telling in Kosovo: Which Way Now?'. The roundtable will focus on discussing research findings, generating policy recommendations and sharing lessons learnt of NGOs working on truth telling/finding at the grassroots level.

Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT)

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What is KRCT?

The Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT) is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization that was founded in 1999 with the mission to provide treatment and rehabilitation for Kosovar torture victims. KRCT continuously works to expand its staff's and the public sector's capacity to provide services on trauma and torture related issues. KRCT is also engaged in promoting the respect of human rights for all of Kosovo's ethnicities and in the prevention and eradication of torture and any form of ill-treatment.

Truth telling/finding projects of KRCT

KRCT collects information, documents and other materials relating to torture and torture survivors. It intends thus to stimulate explorative activities for the legal defense of torture survivors. Through its documentation and research activities, KRCT identifies and incorporates new instruments in order to improve the quality of the Rehabilitation Department. KRCT furthermore publicizes and deploys materials of torture victims and gives advices to governmental and non-

governmental institutions regarding the defense and improvement of the status of torture survivors.

The organization offers psychological and social support to victims and provide a safe place where victims can tell their full story. Since 1999 more than 13.000 clients had the chance to express their problems for about two hours. KRCT emphasizes that it is important that they are one of the few organizations that really listen to the victims.

KRCT has developed a valuable database that contains all information relevant to torture-related psychological consequences. When clients register, their full record (comprising intake, progress, end of treatment and other details) is entered into the database. The gathered information serves the needs of research and analysis, as well as publishing purposes, and therefore goes beyond the individual use for the benefit of torture survivors in general.

OGI / Committee for Civic Initiative (CCI)

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What is OGI/CCI?

The CCI is a non-governmental organization from Nis, Serbia, consisting mostly of university professors, which through instigation and coordination of civic initiatives, social research and education of citizens, representatives of

organizations and institutions, aims to contribute to democratization and European future of Serbia and the region of Western Balkans.

The organization mainly focuses on informal education and social research, organized in five sections: education for democracy, transitional justice section (including 'Not in my Name'), European integrations, cultural policy, and civic actions.

Truth telling/finding projects of OGI/CCI

'Not in my Name' (2007): OGI/CCI organized a series of workshops in Nis (Serbia) and Psijek (Croatia) for youngsters, political and social activists and journalists, about truth telling and dealing with the past. Experiences and ideas of activists and trainers were published in a book.

'People and Memories Talk' (ongoing): Regional project focused on recording of memories of victims and participants of the former Yugoslav wars. The aims are to contribute to the process of dealing with the past in this area, strengthening individual and collective capacities for reconciliation, and creating preconditions for a continuous recording of the memories of citizens in the former Yugoslavia.

The outputs are training of a group of 50 to 70 activists, recorded memories of 100 citizens, four published books entitled 'People and Memories Talk', and informing and sensibilising the public at large in Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Macedonia.

Regional project partners are Humanitarian Law Centre (Serbia), Centre for peace, non-violence and human rights (Croatia), CNA, Luna (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Integra, CBM (Kosovo), Mladinska alijansa (Macedonia) and Postpesimisti (Montenegro).

Prehja

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What is Prehja?

Women's Center Prehja is a non-governmental organization founded in Skenderaj in 2003, to strengthen and promote women values in the region. Activities developed throughout 5 years were mainly capacity building activities such as: trainings, professional workshops, and educational campaigns. Different campaigns and activities involved promotion of health issues, education on Human rights, and integration of local minorities in decision making processes and improvement of their daily conditions. "Women's Center PREHJA" focuses its work on achieving visible results in regard to the freedom of movement, economic sustainability through income generating projects, and improvement of women's role in the society, respectively in Skenderaj and region. All activities are based on grass root initiatives and the input received from the members of local communities.

Donors who supported Prehja and it's different activities until now were: Freedom House/USAID, GTZ/DIR, KIP/CBM, FDI, Syri i vizionit, OSCE.

Truth telling/finding projects of Prehja

In 2007 Prehja coordinated a 8-months during program, funded by Freedom House, with the aim to bring Serbian and Albanian women together to talk about (social) issues that affect both groups. The main issues that were discussed were the war and the cases of missing persons in the community, through which this project contributed to 'truth finding' in Kosovo.

The project started with separate meetings for both groups during which pressing issues were indicated by the women themselves. The women indicated that they first wanted to talk about the past and missing persons before other issues could be brought on the table, and both groups supported this. During joint meetings women from both sides talked about events during the war and asked or answered questions to other women.

Afterwards other topics were discussed, but the fact that the women openly talked about their past experiences was the most important success and two cases of missing persons were solved.

Annex 2

Preliminary Agenda

Roundtable - Truth telling in Kosovo: Which Way Now?

Organized by: Integra NGO, Kosovo

Languages: Albanian, Serbian and English

Date: 12 September 2008

Place: Hotel Victory, Pristina

09.30 – 10.00

Registration of the Participants

10.00 - 11.00

Plenary:

-Welcome by Moderator Mr. Ilir Dugolli;

-Presentation of the research and its main findings by a member of the research team

11.00 - 11.20

Coffee break

11.30 - 13.00

Part 1 Working group meetings

-Working group on policy recommendations regarding truth telling/finding in Kosovo. Moderator: Mr. Ilir Dugolli

-Working group on sharing lessons learned regarding grassroots truth telling. Moderator: Ms Ilire Agimi

13.00 - 14.00

Lunch

14.00 – 15.30

Part 2 Working group meetings

15.30-15.50

Coffee Break

16.00 - 17.00

Plenary:

Presentations of outcomes of working group meetings by Moderators

17.00 – 17.15

Evaluation

Annex 3

Project: Truth Finding in Kosovo

Activity: Roundtable for Truth Finding Research Recommendations – **Truth telling in Kosovo: Which Way Now?**

Subject: List of Participants on the Event of September 12 2008

1. Working Group on policy recommendations regarding truth telling /finding in Kosovo – moderated by Mr. Ilir Dudolli
2. Working Group on sharing lessons learnt regarding grassroots truth telling – moderated by Ms Ilire Agimi

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