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**“...THE CONSULTANT WILL FIX IT...”**

An explanatory study of the EU development assistance implementation in Kosovo  
and the implications on the country's incentives for autonomous development

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## **Abstract**

Since the end of the 1999 war, Kosovo has received high flows of development assistance, thus becoming among the top beneficiaries per capita worldwide. The EU is the largest donor to Kosovo that aims to support the country's development as well as the EU accession process. Despite the fact that development must be, primarily, autonomous, i.e. which cannot be imposed, but rather must come from within, no one in Kosovo discusses the influence of externally driven development actions through assistance on the country's incentives for autonomous development. In this spirit, the study tries to explain how EU development assistance affects the Government of Kosovo's incentives for autonomous development. The study finds that, *first*, the EU applies a direct approach, service-buying, and high reliance of the assistance in external experts; whereas, *second*, the Government of Kosovo's ministries lack the motivation to engage and capacities to absorb the assistance. As a result, the EU assistance ends up doing the work for ministries instead of building their capacities for self-development, thus turning into a 'safety net' for recipients by covering the consequences of their inaction. These two problems constrain the country's incentives for autonomous development.

Keywords: development assistance, autonomous development, incentives, EU, Kosovo

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Most importantly, I dedicate this work to my country, Kosovo, and to all the people who sacrificed to build it. I hope the day will come when Kosovo will not only be receiving assistance but also providing it.

## **List of Abbreviations**

EU - European Union

GIZ - Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH

GoK - Government of Kosovo

IPA - Instrument for Pre-Accession

MEI - Ministry of European Integration

MDG – Millennium Development Goals

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

On 11 March 2019, the Minister for European Integration in the Government of Kosovo (GoK), among others, proudly stated that “the Government of Kosovo is on a *good path* of benefiting from the EU funds[...] and Kosovo is the biggest beneficiary of the EU development assistance in Western Balkans and the second biggest in the world per capita” (Kosova Press, 2019). But, is this a good path? Studies find that development assistance generates negative outcomes for governance in the long-term such as weaker incentives to establish and shape effective public institutions (Jones and Tarp, 2015:266), undercuts the incentives of governments to develop themselves (Moss et al. 2006:17), and tackle their development problems (Booth, 2011). Getting more assistance is not favourable because it shows the incompetence and inability of the country to deal with its own problems and, in this regard, interviews conducted for this study frequently noted the high reliance of Kosovo’s actions on the EU assistance and external consultants. In light of these challenges, how can we problematize the influence of development assistance on development as an autonomous process<sup>1</sup>, i.e. which cannot be given but must be a do-it-yourself process? This question captures important parts of what this thesis will focus on.

The fact that development assistance may turn into a development problem has gained global attention. There have been tectonic shifts in frameworks, principles, methodologies, and goals on development assistance implementation in the last two decades. From Paris (2005) to Busan (2011) principles and from MDGs to SDGs era all present global movements towards shaping how development support is conceptualized and implemented (Fukuda-Parr et al., 2013). One of the underlying issues raised by Oldekop and 44 other authors (Oldekop et al, 2016:73) for the post-2015 agenda is how to implement development interventions that affect incentives of developing countries in a way that induces long-term, instead of short-term development. This is the broad global development issue to which this study contributes.

Gibson et al. (2005) argue that much of the development assistance failure is related to the way the incentives are affected, which in turn produces inefficient and unsustainable development outcomes. This is particularly relevant to countries that receive a high level of assistance such as Kosovo. The EU, particularly since 2007 (see section 1.1.), has provided development assistance

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<sup>1</sup> In theory part, the thesis further defines development as an autonomous process.

for Kosovo's institutional development, thus playing a key role in development reforms. Rhetorically, the EU advocates for the idea that development outcomes are dependent on the ability of the recipient countries to help themselves, and that the EU's assistance role should be to help these countries achieve their development objectives (Council of the EU, 2011). However, reports find that the EU development assistance has a "limited effect" on Kosovo's institutional development (Nugteren and Ymeri, 2013:47-48) and that there are "systemic weaknesses" characterizing the assistance implementation mainly related to the lack of administrative and absorption capacities, and clarity on country's ownership (IBF International Consulting, 2015:7). A report of Aigner et al., (2017) argues that the GoK ministries are facing a high level of dependency on the EU assistance in terms of taking actions for their self-development. In this spirit, the goal of this thesis is *to explain the influence of the EU development assistance in the GoK's incentives for autonomous development*. To achieve this goal, the study approaches the EU assistance to Kosovo from a helper-doer relationship perspective, and it will seek to answer the following question:

*Applying the helper-doer relationship, how does the EU development assistance affect the Government of Kosovo's incentives for autonomous development?*

The thesis is based on the idea that development<sup>2</sup> must be, primarily, autonomous and come from countries' intrinsic motivation to take actions for their self-development. Incentives, on the other hand, are understood as "rewards and punishments that are perceived by individuals to be related to their actions and those of the others" (Ostrom et al., 2001:xiv). Basically, this includes how a development action is motivated; and, what happens if you do it or if you do not do it. Incentives structure the way actors behave and, in this vein, given the autonomous nature of successful development, the assistance is useful only as long as it strengthens countries' incentives and capacities for autonomous development. The research focuses on the EU assistance given in the form of financial, capacity building, and technical help to strengthen public institutions (mainly

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<sup>2</sup> Apart from autonomous nature of development, the study understands development as a process that attempts to change conditions that make a better life for everyone (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). In the context of Kosovo's autonomous development, the thesis emphasizes GoK's incentives (i.e. recipients' government officials) to take actions and strengthen institutions for self-development.



directed at human resources) for development actions. In this regard, it analyses a large scale assistance project which deals with strengthening capacities of public institutions.

The thesis is structured in six chapters. Chapter 1, in addition to the introduction, presents the background with key figures, institutions, and documents of EU development assistance implementation. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the literature review and focuses on the main frameworks, principles, concepts, and research conclusions that were useful for the thesis to better conceptualise the primary data. Chapter 3 presents the helping people help themselves theory and elaborates its central concept of autonomy-respecting assistance. It further explains the main components of this type of assistance and problems that emerge in a helper-doer relationship. Chapter 4 elaborates the methodology used for the study, mainly presenting the philosophical underpinnings, research design, methods, and data analysis of the study. Chapter 5 presents the primary data and analysis through a discussion mainly guided by theory, but also concepts from the literature review. In the last chapter, thesis sums up the research conclusions and contemplates about future research.

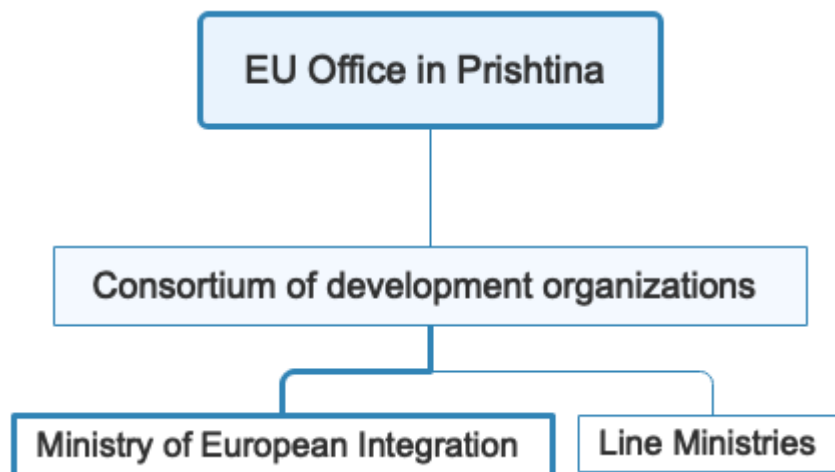
## **1.1. Background**

Kosovo is a lower-middle income country (World Bank, 2018) facing major socio-economic problems. Two decades after the war that ruined its economy and infrastructure, the country's unemployment rate is at 33 per cent, and around 17.6 per cent of the people live below the poverty line (CIA, 2019). Kosovo receives high flow of assistance from the EU and other donors (see World Bank, 2019), and the assistance plays a vital role in every aspect of Kosovo's development. Among all donors (e.g. see Government of Kosovo, 2016), the EU is the biggest donor to Kosovo (EU Office Kosovo, 2019) and its assistance is directed, particularly, towards strengthening the GoK capacities for development reforms to increase the development of the country and also approximate the country with the EU. This assistance is delivered through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), which is the main financial instrument through which assistance is provided for reforms and capacity building to countries that aspire to join the EU (European Commission, 2017). The IPA is introduced in January 2007, and there are two delivery phases of this instrument. The first phase included the period 2007-2013 IPA I with a budget of €11.5 billion;

whereas the second phase, IPA II, includes the period 2014-2020 with an allocated investment budget of €11.7 billion. Kosovo is among the key beneficiary countries of this instrument and, as part of 2014-2020 IPA II (European Union, 2014), the EU has allocated €645.5 million assistance to support Kosovo's development actions, with the most significant amount dedicated in the sector of Democracy and Governance (EPIK, 2019:4).

The main player on coordinating the EU assistance, and other donors, is the Ministry of European Integration (further: MEI), which has established inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms. In this way, the MEI coordinates the cooperation process between line ministries<sup>3</sup> and donors, including the EU. The chain of development assistance implementation on capacity building and technical assistance functions as follows: the EU Office in Kosovo award tenders, usually, to a consortium of development organizations; the consortium organizes project activities under the auspices of the EU; the MEI, which is the coordinator and beneficiary at the same time, facilitates the implementation process standing in between EU Office/consortium and line ministries.

**Figure 1: Development Actors in EU Development Assistance to Kosovo**



**Source:** Author's Construction, 2019

The Indicative Strategy Paper (European Commission, 2018) is the key framework supporting the implementation of the EU development assistance to Kosovo as it defines the key areas where development actions are needed. The logic of this is as follows: the GoK ministries should be able

<sup>3</sup> Line ministries are all other GoK ministries apart from the MEI.

to identify priority development actions for reforms within their scope of work; and then they should be able to develop action projects, secure funds, and implement those actions. However, due to weak government capacities, the GoK ministries struggle to take these actions. To counter this, around three-quarters of the EU assistance (Aigner et al., 2017:10) is dedicated to supporting Kosovo in taking these actions for self-development.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1. Development Effectiveness Notion: An Attempt to Improve Development Cooperation**

There are noteworthy principles agreed between countries, under the notion of development effectiveness, which aim to improve the way development assistance affects recipient countries. Development assistance effectiveness is understood as improving ways in which development assistance is provided, for it to achieve its stated objectives (Lightfoot and Kim, 2017:1).

Building on the Paris Declaration (2005) and Accra Agenda for Action (2008), development actors, including the EU, agreed on Busan Partnership Agreement (2011) that outlines four principles for development effectiveness. *First*, developing countries must have ownership of development priorities and lead development actions; *second*, development assistance should focus on results that produce lasting impacts and enhance countries capacities to achieve development objectives by themselves; *third*, development cooperation should be based on inclusive partnerships which means that developing countries are partners and not passive recipients of assistance; and *fourth*, development assistance should be based on transparent and accountable cooperation which avoid asymmetries in information or motivation,

Hayman (2009:582-583) complements the four principles by arguing that development effectiveness is a framework that requires a both-sided commitment: donors should be committed to helping national governments through financial or technical assistance to strengthen their capacities; while, recipient governments should be committed to helping themselves through undertaking reforms and improving governance. In this regard, development effectiveness conceptualises a cooperation model which sees development assistance as successful only if it strengthens countries capacities for self-help. However, these principles provide a rigid framework that lacks the explanatory power on understanding the donor-recipient interaction.

### **2.2. Perspectives on the Influence of Development Assistance in Development**

There is an ongoing debate on whether and how development assistance influences the development of recipient countries. One camp of scholars argue that the relationship between

assistance and development is fragile and often ambiguous; the assistance undermines long-term development of countries and this way it should change its form or stopped; development assistance is allocated and implemented through a top-down approach which undermines ownership; using a direct social engineering approach leads the assistance to have counterproductive effects on incentives for self-development (Bauer, 1972; Easterly, 2006; Moyo, 2009; Bourguignon and Sundberg, 2007). The other camp mainly represented by Jeffrey Sachs (2005) argues that development assistance indeed can play an essential role on development and thus more assistance is needed for a 'big push' to help countries get out of the cycle of underdevelopment. In fact, as Ord (2011) shows, there is evidence, particularly in health and education sector, that support claims of positive impacts of development assistance.

In between these two extremes, the study has also analysed a group of authors who argue that development assistance can play a positive role in development, only if delivered in a context that has certain conditions. Development assistance will have positive impacts if it is provided to countries that have a good quality of state institutions, and that can implement policies (Burnside and Dollar 2000; Collier and Dollar, 2001). Dollar and Easterly (1999) argue that the assistance can generate sustainable changes if it is met with a strong national commitment for self-development; this way ensuring developing countries' ownership on assistance projects is crucial for the latter's success. The assistance, to generate positive lasting changes, should be allocated in a compatible way with the institutional absorptive capacities of countries (Feeny and McGillivray, 2009).

Despite fierce academic debate between these broad perspectives, a significant challenge remains to understand 'under the surface' influence of assistance in the development of recipients' countries. Bourguignon and Sundberg (2007) argue that this is, largely, a result of keeping in a 'black box' the *causality chain* that explains how things occur from the time of development assistance intervention till the outcomes. The section below discusses some of the studies that have tried to open the 'black box'.

### **2.2.1. Development Assistance, Governance and Autonomous Development**

Starting from the last century, Bauer (1972) observed that the way how development agencies are giving their assistance is distorting recipients development priorities, creating dependency, and preserving the incapacity of countries. In this way, it is obstructing development by making recipient governments more passive (ibid:95). Building on the work of Bauer (1972), Moyo (2009:54-55) argued that massive flows of direct development aid are creating a culture of laziness and dependency, prevailing insouciance, and lack of urgency for developing countries' officials to deal with development problems.

It is argued that, *a priori*, providing capacity building and technical assistance to strengthen institutional capacities of countries' is among the most effective ways to help them own the development process (Toornstra and Martin, 2013:89). However, Martens et al. (2002:3-4) argue that the EU assistance outcomes and influence to recipients is largely determined by incentives created from the way assistance is implemented or incentives embedded into the institutional context. Pedrosa-Garcia (2017:7) uses the concept of *embeddedness* to describe that assistance can fail to strengthen capacities of countries due to the lack of the latter's willingness to accept the embeddedness of the induced reforms. In some cases, donors interest to support reforms may go against the interests of recipients' officials. Similar conclusions were drawn by Alesina and Dollar (2000:55).

Martens et al. (2002:25-26) find that the EU assistance has historically faced such challenges (e.g. in Central and Eastern Europe) mainly because development reforms, genuinely, are home-grown and an outcome of domestic incentives, while extensive external stimulus can distort these incentives. On the other hand, at the moment that development assistance starts incentivising projects for reforms and 'pushing' recipients to engage, it is hard to say that reforms will be embedded (Deaton, 2013; Ravallion, 2014).

Central to the argument that the assistance may undermine governance is the idea that governments more dependent on foreign assistance tend to have weaker incentives to be in the driver's seat of development and nurture effective public institutions (Jones and Tarp, 2016:66; Moss et al. 2006; Booth, 2011:s11-s13). Busse and Gröning (2009) research on the impact of official development

assistance (ODA) on governance, using a large scale of data across time and countries, argue that the impact on governance is not of a large scale, however, it is negative and the increase of assistance leads to the worsening of governance. Similar results are found by other researchers as well (Rajan and Subramanian, 2005; Deaton, 2013).

Some researchers coined the term *aid curse* to describe the negative influence of assistance to countries' development mainly through its effects on institutions<sup>4</sup> (Moss et al. 2006; Djankov et al. 2008); although they recognize (Djankov et al. 2008:193) that the research should further explain specific mechanism of *how* and *why* assistance can affect development. In this regard, studies call for changes on the methodology of assistance implementation because a direct and high level of assistance is preserving the weakness of local institutions; thus, making autonomous development difficult as recipients are creating a 'cosy accommodation with assistance dependency' (Bräutigam, 2000; Mule, 1996). A group of studies argue that this dependency and its effects, such as moral hazard, perpetuate a cycle of the lack of incentives for reforming inefficient institutions and adopting good policies, which in turn weakens countries' autonomous development performance (Heller and Gupta, 2002; Moss et al., 2006; Knack, 2000). Development assistance can buy only short-term reforms and if there is a lack of 'development-promoting institutions', assistance inflows that continuously 'buy' reforms with their 'technical experts' will turn into counterproductive assistance as it disincentivises mobilisation of domestic resources (Sumner and Mallet, 2013:33; Svensson, 2000).

Also, a high level of assistance creates a burden for recipients' administrative capacities to coordinate and a lack of resources to benefit (Easterly, 2002; Lensink and White, 2001; Durbarry et al. 1998; Burnside and Dollar 2000). Some studies reach the conclusions that the assistance contributes to building and sustaining a bad structure of incentives for recipients' by fueling and tolerating the degree of existing corruption; that large amounts of assistance provide exceptional resources for patronage and clientelist government systems; and it encourages rent-seeking (Mattesini and Isopi, 2008, 18-19; Bräutigam, 2000; Brautigam and Knack, 2004; Moss et al., 2006:14-18; Alesina and Weder, 2002).

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<sup>4</sup> Studies show positive relationship between the quality of institutions and development. This is important for the notion of development as an autonomous process. Among others see Rodrick (2004), Hall and Jones (1999), Easterly and Levine (2003), and Acemoglu and Robinson (2012).

Riddell's (2014:39-40) argument that the idea that 'rich outsiders' assistance that does the work for developing countries is necessary for development is false; development can and does occur primarily without assistance, although it can be supported indirectly by the latter but without taking the lead on it. Deaton (2013) contributes in this regard with the concept of *aid illusion*, which refers to the belief of countries that they can solve their development problems through development assistance from rich countries. This illusion, however, is considered not just wrong but also harmful (Ravallion, 2014:967). As the study will present below, development assistance illusion plays a vital role in how Kosovo's autonomous development is affected.

Donors and recipients engage with each other through a collective action to conduct development actions. However, there are several types of collective action problems, related to incentives, that emerge at the operational level of assistance which may distort its intended objectives and, thus, harm the development process.

### **2.2.2. Collective Action Problems in Development Assistance**

Despite how much resources are spent or how well-intentioned development assistance is, collective action problems can make things go wrong at the operational level, particularly in terms of incentives. Development assistance is collective action in a way that it includes a situation where inputs of several individuals are required to achieve a joint outcome (Ostrom et al., 2002:5). Collective action problems refer to a situation where all individuals would be better off cooperating but fail to do so because of conflicting interests between individuals that discourage joint action; actors choosing actions that produce less desirable outcomes compared to other options; and, the generated incentives preventing parties involved in the action from adequately achieving goals (Gibson et al., 2005; Ostrom et al., 2002; Poteete et al., 2009).

These problems mainly stem from inadequate motivation and missing and/or asymmetric information<sup>5</sup> (Ostrom et al., 2002). The first category includes four main motivational problems (see figure 2). Of particular importance for the thesis is the Samaritan's Dilemma which is related

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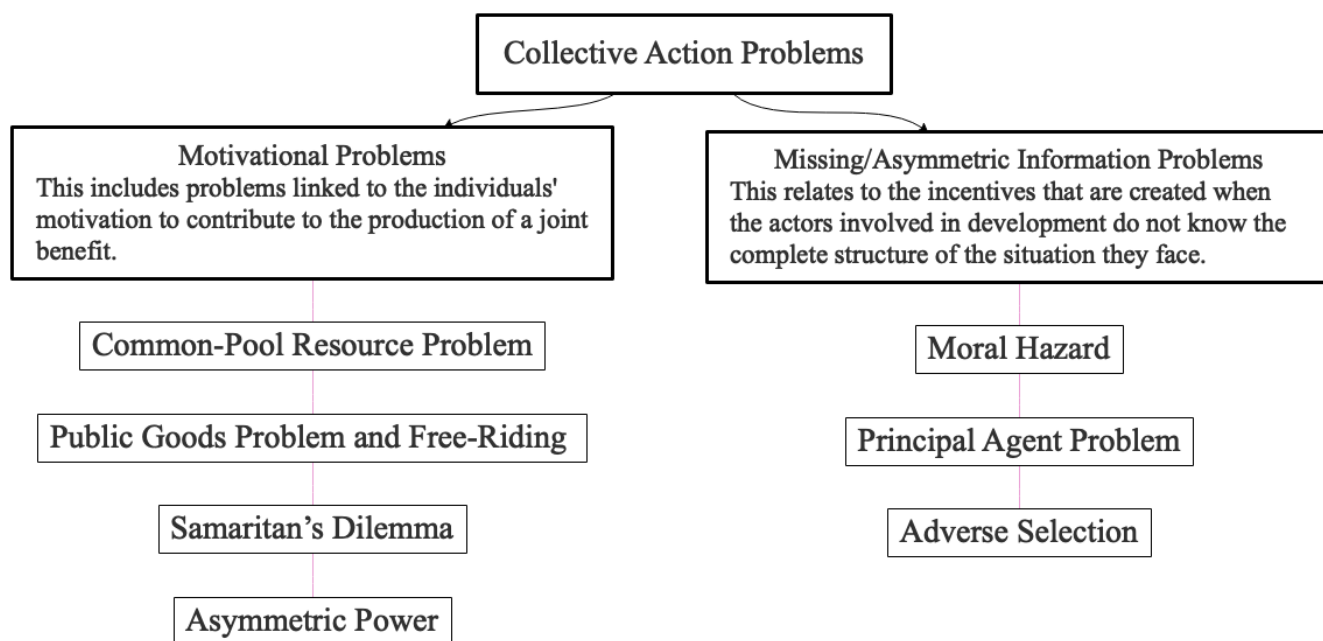
<sup>5</sup> The literature divides into motivation and information problems. However, these problem are cross cutting, and one of them being motivation problem can have elements of being informational problems also.



to the dilemma of how are the recipients' incentives to give efforts for their development affected by helpers' assisting (Gibson et al., 2005). In such situations, if the donor always decides to provide assistance for countries national problems, this tends to make them believe that whenever they face problems, the assistance will solve it (ibid:11-12).

The second category of missing and asymmetric information includes three main problems (see figure 2). From the three, Moral Hazard<sup>6</sup> and Adverse Selection problems are important for thesis as they present situation where availability of development assistance or wrong decisions lead to the creation of a bad incentive structure in the donor-recipient interaction. In such situations, this interaction is characterised with wrong selections of steps to follow and decisions to take (Gibson et al. 2005:4-5; Ostrom et al., 2014:6), which starts a cycle of negative influence on the recipients' incentives to contribute on joint outcomes.

**Figure 2: Collective Action Problems at the Operational Level of Development Assistance**



**Source:** Author's construction based on Gibson et al., 2005; Ostrom et al. 2002; Ostrom et al. 2014; Hutchison et al. 2014:57-72; Poteete et al., 2009; Koch et al. 2017:455-473.

<sup>6</sup> Thesis defines the moral hazard in theory.

### **2.3. Summary**

The reviewed literature helps the thesis explanation, particularly on understanding the ways how development assistance has influenced development, governance, and incentives for self-development throughout the years. Also, some concepts such as embeddedness, aid illusion, or collective action problems will help the research to construct the analysis. However, the study argues that there is a gap in the existing research. The notion of development effectiveness and regression-based conclusions on existing studies provide a rigid framework to assess the effects of development assistance. Somehow, speaking on the words of Fischer (2010), the literature debate has ‘missed the point’ on tackling the structural issues when it comes to the ways development assistance and development interact. Thus, this study moves beyond this broad and aggregate analysis by taking a closer look to the development context and structural issues embedded in the interaction between a donor (helper) and a developing country (doer), which may turn the interaction between development assistance and development into a negative relationship. To do so, this study applies the helping people help themselves theory.

# Chapter 3: Helping People Help Themselves Theory

The theoretical framework is structured mainly after the work of David Ellerman (2005) on helping people help themselves theory, and complemented by the work of other authors. The point of departure of the theory is to analyse the helper-doer relationship where the helper is the party that provides assistance (EU), while the doer<sup>7</sup> is the receiver of the assistance (GoK ministries). The theory argues that the best strategy to produce sustainable policy changes in this relationship is that helpers do not act against the doers' autonomy in development. However, most of the studies analysing the helper-doer relationships in different contexts<sup>8</sup> agree that there is a fundamental conundrum in this relationship related to providing assistance that does not undermine incentives for autonomous development. In this regard, this chapter will further elaborate on the autonomy-respecting assistance concept, which is central to this theory and thus, the thesis goal.

## 3.1. Autonomy-Respecting Assistance

The main idea of this concept is that helper's development assistance should strengthen the doers' capacity for autonomous development<sup>9</sup>. The thesis bases the idea that successful development must be, primarily, autonomous on a wide range of studies (Ellerman, 2005; Eade, 1997; Carmen, 1996; Carmen and Miguel, 2000; Rahman, 1993; Galtung et al, 1980; Gran, 1983), which argue that change occurs as a result of inside-out rather than outside-in forces; and of intrinsic incentives rather than extrinsic incentives. It is evident that Ellerman's conception of the autonomy-respecting assistance is similar to Immanuel Kant's (1784) concept of autonomy and Amartya Sen's (1999) concepts of capability, agency and development as freedom, which is understood as the drive of the doers (developing countries) to take actions for their self-development.

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<sup>7</sup> The term 'doer' entails an active role of the agent. However, by using this term to refer to GoK ministries as recipients of the development assistance, the thesis does not assume that in practice these 'doers' have an active role. Moreover, as Ellerman (2004a:150) emphasizes, thesis uses the term "doer" not juxtaposed to "thinker"; for the thesis, doers are juxtaposed to turn into passive recipients of assistance.

<sup>8</sup> These authors include: teacher and learner (Dewey, 1916, 1957; Kierkegaard in Bretall, 1946), community organizer and community (Alinsky, 1971), therapist and client (Rogers, 1951), manager-worker (McGregor, 1960), and development agency and government (Ellerman, 2005; Hirschman, 1973; Schumacher, 1961, 1973; Ostrom, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Thesis uses concepts of 'autonomous development', 'self-development', 'self-reliant', and 'self-help' as synonymous.

Development as an autonomous process means that the doers have the motivation and take actions to address their needs (Ellerman, 2005; Sen, 1999), and this motivation cannot be externally supplied through assistance. Actions that are externally supplied tend to be heteronomous<sup>10</sup> (Ellerman, 2005), and go against the incentives for autonomous development.

In this regard, development assistance is autonomy-compatible and effective in generating sustainable policy changes, as long as it is non-distortionary (Ellerman, 2005). This means that development agencies do not take the lead in addressing development problems. A non-distortionary assistance ‘affects the [development actions] only by affecting the resources, not by changing the relationship between resources and [development actions]’ (Ellerman, 2001:2). From this, it can be argued that the assistance can fill the gap of the needed resources for a project to take place and it is still non-distortionary; however, if the offered assistance is taken for granted and it covers the failures of countries by directly doing their work, then it becomes distortionary.

This is in line with the Jane Jacobs (1984) idea which argues that a country has two choices when it comes to development: either take the lead to develop yourself or do not develop. Any assistance that distorts the incentives for development as a do-it-yourself process turns out to be harmful in the long-term. Ellerman (2000, 2001) argues that autonomous development actions have an internal *locus of causality*<sup>11</sup>, meaning that these actions should emerge and be controlled by the doers. Development assistance is autonomy respecting as long as it does not take over the locus of causality of actions. Moreover, for helpers to strengthen capacities of doers for self-development they must ensure that their assistance is internalised by developing country and that the latter has control over the activities’ locus of causality. When development agencies deliver direct engineering assistance, they tend to switch the actions’ locus of causality from internal to externally-driven; this, in turn, tends to constrain developing countries’ incentives for self-development (ibid). The strategy of development actors to ‘engineer’ outside-in solutions for developing countries’ problems, without finding the inside impetus for action, is counterproductive in a way that it overrides incentives for self-development. Ellerman calls this as a ‘social

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<sup>10</sup> Actions are heteronomous when taken due to external forces. In Kantian philosophy (1784), which is at large extent inspired by Jean Jacques Rousseau, heteronomous actions are considered as actions that go against the autonomy of subjects to use their own reason and understanding.

<sup>11</sup> Thesis uses ‘the locus of causality’ and ‘autonomous activity’ interchangeably. Both refer to internally motivated and managed actions.

engineering' or direct approach to assisting. In the same spirit, Prussian philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt argued that actions that do not become an internal part of people's nature will always remain as alien to them; even if they cooperate in those actions, that is done only mechanically and not with authentic humane energy (Humboldt, 1963).

The theory suggests an opposite form to direct assistance. Ellerman (2005) argues that the assistance of helpers to doers, not to counteract the autonomy of development, should be delivered based on an indirect approach. For the indirect approach, less involvement of the donor is more (Ellerman, 2005:12). This approach does not supply the direct motivation to the doers to undertake an action, but it tries to find the motivation within the doers and provide assistance on that basis (Ellerman, 2007:566). The studies mentioned above analysing the helper-doer relationship agree that indirect help does not go against the doers' autonomy in development due to its enabling rather than controlling nature. The most comprehensive definition of the indirect help encountered by thesis is one of Dewey and Tufts in their book *Ethics* (1908:389-390):

*The best kind of help to others, whenever possible, is indirect and consists in such modifications of the conditions of life, of the general level of subsistence, as enables them independently to help themselves*

Based on Socratic indirect teaching philosophy (see more Versenyi, 1963:110-128) and the work of other authors mentioned above, Ellerman (2005) argues that the indirect approach helps the self-activation of countries to lead the development efforts. Any intervention of a development agency should be autonomy-respecting and indirect in a way that it puts recipients in the leading role of actions because ownership on development outcomes results from self-directed activities (Ellerman, 2000:11). This means that the assistance should be *internalised* from the doers in a way that they will adopt assistance projects as their own and take the successes as their own accomplishments, which in turn will generate a change that is self-maintaining (see more Charles Handy, 1993:145). Otherwise, the lack of internalisation and not putting the doers on the lead of development efforts 'will [...] short-circuit people's learning activities and reinforce their feelings of impotence' (Ellerman, 2001a:16).

In the spirit of doers leading development efforts, Ellerman's (2005) model shapes theoretically main elements of autonomy respecting assistance. The *first* aspect is that helpers should start from

where the doers are. In a practical sense, this means that helpers have to design their assistance based on the current state of the doers and the tendency to execute projects based on ‘an imaginary clean slate’ will create outcomes that cannot be absorbed (Ellerman, 2001a:7). *Second*, development assistance should see through the doers’ eyes. The idea is that the actions of a project should be guided by doers ‘knowledge, conceptual framework, values, and worldview, and not those of the helpers’ (Ellerman, 2000:4). Albert Hirschman (1971:185) argued that when an aid agency is trying to help a country, it should first get familiarised with the country’s conditions, problems they face and available tools to solve them. Using the approaches from other disciplines, those who manage development assistance should base it on the spirit of what Dewey (1916:165-170) called learner-centered pedagogy where the help of the teacher to students should be done in a way that encourages an active participation of students in acquiring knowledge by finding their own way to knowledge. The help of the teacher should not be conducted of telling the student the answer or solution, but rather providing advice, guidance and feedback (ibid). Or, what Carl Rogers (1951) called client-centered therapy in the field of psychology, where the counselor’s attention should be on the internal part of the person and then design assistance that is compatible with the capacity of the person. This logic of thinking is used in development assistance to argue that when providing assistance, the helper needs to see through the eyes of the doers in order to provide an assistance that can be absorbed, which in turn successfully capacitates countries for self-development.

*Third*, helpers cannot impose change on doers because a transformative change occurs on the conditions of internally motivated projects (Ellerman, 2001a:7). Helpers impose a change in situations where the assistance does not comply with the motivation of the doer, and, as a consequence, it externalises the locus of causality of actions (see above). Subsequently, this causes passivity and superficially conforming behaviour (Ellerman, 2000:4). Institutions capacities’ are built as a by-product of their active participation in learning and its authentic activities; hence the purchased performance is not a sustainable capacity building for self-development (Ellerman, 2005). In fact, this is heteronomous intervention because, based on *bait and switch* theory, donors continuously use external incentives (bait) hoping that this will lead to strengthening recipients’ internal incentives (switch) for self-development actions (Ellerman, 2001a:12). This approach affects the incentives of the doers in a way that it raises instincts to escape from responsibility (Dewey, 1916) and show indifference to the helpers’ assistance (McGregor, 1966).

*Fourth*, help as benevolence and guaranteed is ineffective because it has the risks of strengthening the doers' incapacity for beneficial self-activity (Ellerman, 2005). By playing an active role in performing responsibilities and solving their own problems, people gain self-respect and confidence in their capacity, which in turn avoids them being passive and puppet-like receivers of assistance (see Alinsky, 1971:123). An ongoing ineffective assistance creates a vicious cycle of a lack of confidence in people's ability to perform their responsibilities. It tends to "render others dependent, and thus contradicts its own professed aim: the helping of others" (Ellerman, 2001a:14). This further reinforces a cycle of tutelage<sup>12</sup> and dependency.

### **3.1.1. Undermining Incentives: A Critique of the Standard Model of Development Assistance**

Next on Ellerman's (2005) helping theory is the critique on the standard methodology of delivering development assistance, known as knowledge-based development assistance where helpers use a direct social engineering approach (see above). Development agencies claim a monopoly on the 'development knowledge' and available answers for development problems, and it is based on an old fashioned pedagogy in which the learner is a passive actor who 'needs' knowledge. The simplest way to capture this model is through an old Chinese saying of help as 'giving people fish' (Ellerman, 2005:122). There are problems related to ownership, self-efficacy, cognitive-dependency, and moral hazard associated with the model. These problems perpetuate the cycle of unhelpful help, which in turn undermines doers' incentives for self-development.

Building *ownership* of the doers over development assistance outcomes is the most crucial aspect of the way development agencies influence recipient countries' incentives for self-development. Ownership in assistance refers to the recipient country taking responsibility for their development by leading development actions themselves (Hayman, 2009:583; OECD-DAC, 1996:14). In this spirit, in the development assistance context, it makes sense to understand ownership as "a state

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<sup>12</sup> Tutelage is a concept in Immanuel Kant's (1784) enlightenment philosophy, which refers to the people's "inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another" (Kant, 1784:1). Thus, the first step to enlightenment is people's release from self-incurred tutelage which means breaking the cycle of the lack of self-activation and dependency on others reason and knowledge.

of being or feeling responsible for solving a problem [or] addressing an issue’’ (Hayman, 2006:7). Following the logic that people better own fruits of their labour, ownership is built when the doers lead actions and are active participants in generating development outcomes. However, Ellerman’s (2005) critique in this regard is that helpers tend to take the ownership of the assistance projects just to ‘show results’ which is highly demanded by development agency management structures and the problem is that ‘‘the more the agencies take responsibility for developmental outcomes, the less ownership on the part of the developing countries’’ (ibid:124)

A development project that does not put its recipient into leading actions and thus does not build ownership tends to exacerbate self-confidence and *self-efficacy* of countries to see development as an autonomous process. The standard methodology of ‘pouring’ knowledge to developing countries treats them as actors that need to be helped, or to be shown the way; and this way of helping reinforces their passivity and perceived lack of self-efficacy (Ellerman, 2005:126). Subsequently, this contributes to, what psychologists call, enforcing the *externality*<sup>13</sup> factor to the doers which refers to a psychological state of doers thinking that processes in which they are involved are controlled and determined by external forces. Seeing the locus of causality of the actions as external, doers’ tend to think that their actions are ineffectual. It plays a negative role on the doers incentives for autonomous development (Ellerman, 2005) because it creates conditions of learned helplessness and apathy and the belief that helper’s assistance will fix their own problems (see more on *self-efficacy* Bandura, 1995; *locus of control* Rotter, 1966:25).

Apart from not building ownership or reinforcing the lack of self-confidence on the doers’ actions’ efficacy, the standard model of assistance by ‘pouring’ knowledge to passive doers arises the problem of *cognitive dependency*. Cognitive dependency problem includes when a developing country institutions lack the self-confidence to use their reason, intelligence, knowledge, judgment and other cognitive skills. A country turns into assistance dependent when it cannot achieve the X development objective without assistance for a foreseeable future (Bräutigam, 2000:9; Lensink and White, 1999). Among the most common ways of assistance creating this dependency is when most of the project operations are conducted with external consultants (see more Kothari, 2005; Roth, 2015). Borrowing some concepts from Senge (1990) studying learning organisations, this

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<sup>13</sup> This should not be mixed with the externality in economics.



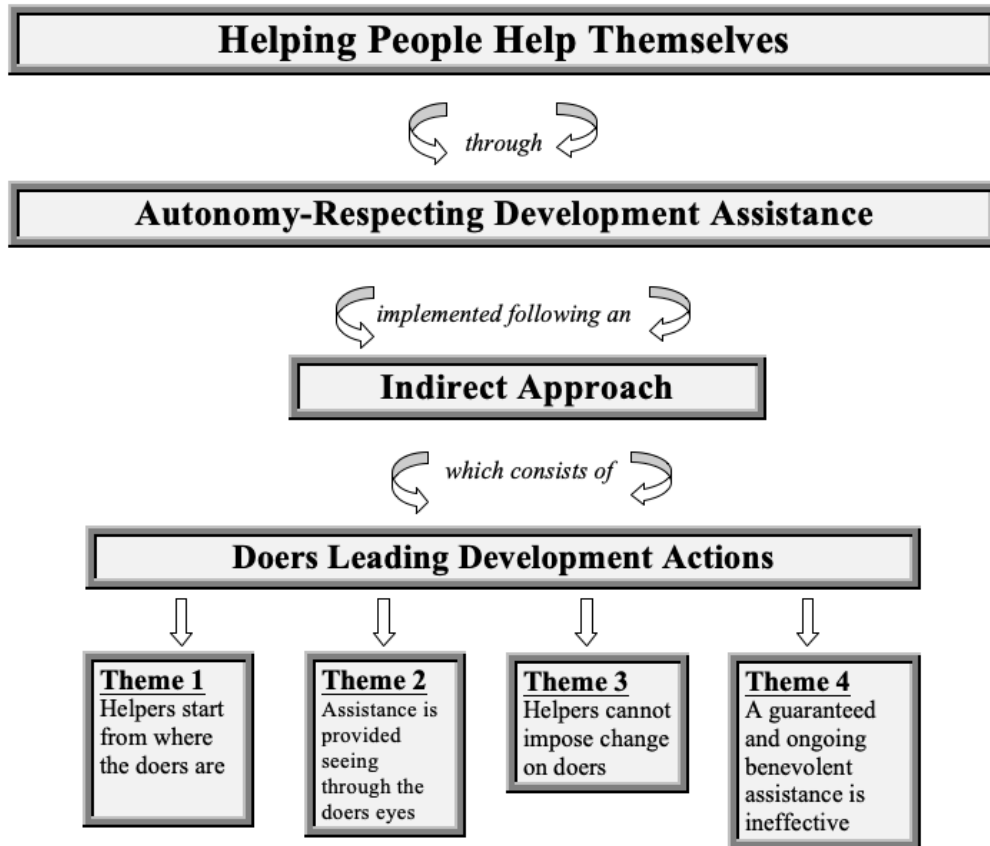
‘shift of responsibility’ to consultants generates ‘dynamics of addiction’ and dependency for the doers.

Lack of ownership, cognitive dependency and doubts on self-efficacy are related to aspects of motivational problems such as *moral hazard*, which characterises the development agency-developing country cooperation. Moral hazard is a phenomenon where a guaranteed assistance leads to developing countries’ not taking responsibility for self-development; this way, the assistance ends up covering the failures of doers by doing their work, instead of helping them for self-help (Ellerman, 2005; Ostrom, 2002). In such circumstances, assistance weakens incentives of developing countries’ institutions to development as an autonomous process. In this regard, Robert Marjolin (1989) argues that the idea of having assistance to always rely on has destructive effects of willpower to engage and see development as a self-development process.

### **3.2. Operationalisation of Theoretical Framework**

This framework will be used for explanatory reasons, and it does not claim to provide any predictions for change. The thesis uses concepts and analytical lenses of this theory to, *first*, explain how the EU assistance affect the GoK ministries’ incentives for self-development; and, *then*, explain the variables that contribute to the way how it incentives are affected. The theory is operationalised through using concepts discussed above such as autonomous development; direct and indirect assistance; heteronomous intervention; actions’ locus of causality; ownership, moral hazard, dependency, and other. Based on a wide range of sources, the thesis has constructed a diagram that presents the main elements that underpin the assistance that respects the autonomy of development.

Figure 3: Diagram of Theoretical Framework



Source: Author's Construction, 2019

# Chapter 4: Methodology

## 4.1. Philosophical Worldview

The study is embedded within the meta-theoretical tradition of Critical Realism (CR) aiming to unveil the link between existing theories and real processes. Specifically, it will try to explain the influence of the EU development assistance in enabling or constraining Kosovo’s autonomous development. CR emerged as a philosophy concerned with the revindication of ontology (the study of being) arguing that we cannot restrict our statements about the world (ontology) to the statements about our knowledge of the world (epistemology) (Bhaskar, 1975, 1998). Whenever we attempt to reduce the reality into what we know than that is called ‘epistemic fallacy’. In this spirit, CR assumes that there is an objective reality that exists independently from us; this reality (ontology) is stratified composed of real world (structures/mechanisms), actual world (events), and empirical world (experiences); although finding absolute truths for social phenomena or processes is impossible, the reality can be understood through understanding the real world which is unobservable and that causes the actual and empirical world (Bhaskar, 1975, 1998; Collier, 1994; Danermark et al., 2002; Sayer, 1992; Saunders et al., 2009; Wyn and Williams., 2012).

**Table 1: Ontology of Critical Realism**

| <b>Ontology of Critical Realism</b> |                       |                         |                            |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                     | <b>Domain of Real</b> | <b>Domain of Actual</b> | <b>Domain of Empirical</b> |
| <b>Mechanisms</b>                   | X                     |                         |                            |
| <b>Event</b>                        | X                     | X                       |                            |
| <b>Experiences</b>                  | X                     | X                       | X                          |

**Source:** Bhaskar (1975:13)

This is important for the research because it enables to develop an explanation that avoids the epistemic fallacy i.e. avoids a straightforward explanation of only what is observable (domain of empirical), but take an in-depth look into explaining the mechanisms (domain of real) that play a role on how the EU development assistance affect the GoK's incentives for self-development.

## 4.2. Research Design

In line with CR philosophy, the thesis has an explanatory nature (Creswell, 2014:42) as it aims to explain the influence of the EU development assistance on Kosovo's incentives for autonomous development. It first deducts expectations from the theory discussed in previous sections and complements this by an inductive approach to identify patterns that are potentially not well-explained by the existing theory. The research adopts a qualitative case study design. The case study is recognized as the primary research design of the CR philosophy (Wynn and Williams, 2012:803; Ryan et al., 2012:305-306; Easton, 2000). The thesis reflects on three crucial aspects of applying case study research strategy:

1. **Specifying the research question.** Based on the CR epistemological principles presented above, *how* and *why* questions are crucially related to an explanatory case research (Yin 2003; Wynn and Williams, 2012:804). The research question seeks to explain how the EU enables or constrains incentives for autonomous development. It includes explaining also *why* this occurs, by looking into the interaction of contextual variables which relate to the question.
2. **Case selection process** (see more Ragin and Becker, 1992; Flyvbjerg, 2006). In line with its explanatory character, the orientation of the thesis is retrospective looking into activities that have happened now backwards. In this way, the study has selected a case (EU assistance project) bounded by time and sector and collected detailed information using qualitative methods.
3. **Generalizability.** The thesis aimed to improve the generalizability by applying a strategic selection of the case (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Based on the CR philosophy, the generalisation tendency in case study research is a generalisation to theory (Yin, 2003; Wynn and

Williams, 2012). This means that the research will use existing theoretical statements to explain occurrences in the helper-doer relationship; but, also, it will look to refine the theory by trying to see if there are under-explained issues.

#### **4.2.1. Case Study: Project Preparation Facility for the Ministry of European Integration**

The project<sup>14</sup> aims to contribute to strengthening the technical and administrative capacity of the GoK ministries to identify, prepare and implement development actions<sup>15</sup> within their scope of work. This project is financed by IPA funds in the sector of democracy and governance, and it has been implemented from July 2016 till March 2019. The project is implemented through conducting capacity building training in areas such as – but not limited to – developing and managing development projects, monitoring, reporting, and other. The project’s objective is to strengthen GoK ministries’ capacities and support them to take these actions, which include various types of typical government actions such as government reforms, projects to improve services, improving the functioning of ministries, and other. The direct beneficiary of the project are the GoK ministries. The project is awarded by the EU office in Kosovo; implemented through a consortium led by GIZ International Services; and coordinated by the Ministry of European Integration-MEI, which is a direct beneficiary at the same time. Other GoK ministries are related to the project only as beneficiaries. It is important to note that the study does not look if the project accomplishes its outputs or outcomes, but it only uses the project to locate the donor-recipient interactions. Specifically, to see the donor’s actions (approach implementing activities) and recipient’s reactions, and then analyse the patterns of interaction.

The project was purposefully selected as a case study following an information-oriented (or purposeful) selection strategy (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The selection is based on two main reasons. The *first* reason for selecting this project is that it is considered a large-scale EU project in term of actors involved and resources, which makes it potentially rich in information and possesses higher potential to learn on the issues that are important for thesis goal. *Secondly*, the project’s nature is

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<sup>14</sup> The researcher had no access to the main document of the project. The researcher describes the case study project based on the interviewees description and projects’ main webpage (<http://ppfl-kosovo.com/>).

<sup>15</sup> To specify, a development action may be any type of action that contributes to Kosovo’s development (e.g. a project to improve waste management; writing a strategy for any sector; and other). The idea is that the GoK should have competent human resources that are able to take and handle these actions for their development.

to support Kosovo's self-development through strengthening the institutional capacities of the GoK ministries to take development actions.

### **4.3. Research Methods**

CR philosophy argues that good science should be driven by questions, not by methods (Moses and Knutsen, 2012:13). In this regard, the research has selected methods that it found appropriate to address the research problem, which included mixed qualitative methods: 1) semi-structured key informant interviews; 2) analysis of primary documents; and, 3) field reflection memo writing.

#### **4.3.1. Interviews**

The thesis has used interviews as a method for intensive research (Sayer, 1992:241-251; Kemp and Holmwood, 2003:172), which generates in-depth interpretative data. As a result, 9 key informant semi-structured interviews have been conducted (see Appendix A), from which 8 in Albanian language and 1 in English. The interviewees were selected following a *purposive sampling* based on their direct involvement through managing, coordinating or participating in the project. The main target were coordinators<sup>16</sup> and/or beneficiaries of the project due to their in-depth knowledge of the methodology of the assistance project implementation. It is important to mention that the interviewees were involved in several EU assistance projects, hence their comments sometimes were reflecting the specific case and beyond. An Interview Guide (see Appendix B) was compiled at the beginning of the research following the guidelines of Bryman (2012:472-473). The researcher decided for 9 interviews after witnessing a saturation in the collected data (Tracy 2010; Bryman 2012; Bowen 2008).

#### **4.3.2. Primary Documents Analysis**

The study has analysed several primary documents such as IPA establishing document (see section 1.2); the EU development cooperation strategies; Indicative Strategy Paper (see section 1.2.); and, case study project documents (online). These documents are relevant because they helped the

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<sup>16</sup> To increase the ownership of the assistance, some of the direct beneficiaries are also the coordinators of the project from the recipients' side. The research relies at a large extent on the information received from these coordinators as they are considered to possess in-depth information on the process of assistance implementation from both implementer and beneficiaries sides. (see Appendix A).

thesis to understand what are the rules in use through which development assistance operates; and, how and why things are done in their way. Understanding these rules was very useful for conducting interviews.

### **4.3.3. Memo-writing**

Memo-writing (Charmaz, 2006:72-95) was used to internalise, condense, categorise and reflect on all the received information daily, in order to identify repeating themes and categories. In this vein, memo reflections played an essential part in the analysis process.

## **4.4. Data Analysis**

The analysis process was an iterative and reflexive process. The transcribed primary data were reviewed to identify the emerging themes which speak to the theory. Excel sheet was used to organise the primary data on a thematic categorisation such as ‘dependency creation’, ‘incentive structure’, ‘methodology of implementation’, ‘planning’, ‘incentives to contribute’, and other. After this initial step of organising data, the thesis applied *three* steps based on the critical realist standpoint to advance the analysis process. The *first* step was identifying demi-regularities, which refer to the patterns or tendencies in the empirical data (Danermark et al., 2002:70). The *second* step included the theoretical redescription (abduction) of the main patterns identified in step one (demi-regularities). Through abduction, the thesis has raised the level of engagement with the theory and literature by trying to interpret identified patterns through a set of theoretical ideas or concepts (Fletcher, 2017; Danermark et al., 2002: 205). The *third* step included retroduction, which aims to explain the underlying variables that cause the identified (demi-regularities) and theoretically redescribed (abduction) patterns (Fletcher, 2017). The study uses retroduction to explain underlying variables in the helper-doer relationship, which affect the GoK’s incentives for autonomous development.

## 4.5. Research Site and Actors

Research is conducted in Prishtina, which is the capital city of Kosovo. The researcher has interviewed GoK ministries staff (staff directly involved with EU development assistance as coordinators and beneficiaries), and the team leader of the EU project from the implementer side.

*Figure 4: Map of Kosovo*<sup>17</sup>



## 4.6. Reliability and Validity

The thesis improved the reliability and validity of the research mainly through three main ways: *first*, the researcher did extensive reading of the context in particular rules in use, actors and project (see primary documents analysis). This helped to understand the answers of respondents and prepare follow-up questions or further points of information. *Second*, the use of mixed qualitative methods enabled carefully studying primary and secondary data, which included also reviewing evaluation reports related to the EU development assistance to Kosovo. This also served well for the purpose of data triangulation. *Third*, interviewees were chosen from different backgrounds, which worked in different positions and ministries involved with the EU development assistance.

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<sup>17</sup> Source from Google images.



## **4.7. Ethics and Positionality**

The researcher has constantly reflected on important ethical issues such as consent, anonymity, objectivity, and other (Saunders et al., 2009:188). The researcher has explained the reasons for research, offered the chance for clarification questions, and sought the consent of interviewees. The researcher has prepared the consent form and offered to respondents for signing (see Appendix C), which gave the right to interviewees to stop the interview at any time they want. Also, the researcher was reflexive when it comes to positionality. The researcher, due to his background of being from Kosovo and earlier experience with local development institutions before, felt that his positionality has been unstable, dependent on the changes of context, particularly actors, where the boundary of being seen as insider or outsider got blurred throughout the research process (Sultana, 2007:382).

## **4.8. Limitations**

First of all, this study has philosophical limitations. Development assistance is a social setting composed of human actions, which means that the study deals with a reality in an open system, rather than a closed system, characterised by a continuously changing environment. In such settings, there are no universal rules but only context-based. Due to this reason and the fact that the subject of the study is only one EU assistance project, although the interviewees were reflecting on their experience with other projects also, the researcher does not assume that the explanation generated in this context is generalizable.

Second, although the researcher interviewed the team leader of the assistance project, the study largely relies on the assistance recipients' side as it aims to understand how they are affected. As a result, the EU officials are not interviewed.

Third, in terms of methodological constraints, the interviews may be characterised by miscommunication of opinions. To deal with it, the researcher had to gain a substantial amount of information from primary and secondary documents in order to interpret or intervene with follow up questions in cases of miscommunication. In this regard, the researcher also recognises that the

explanation built in the thesis is based only on what he reached to observe; while there are still parts of the studied area which were unobservable mainly related to actors' motives or behaviour. This limits the study's explanation.

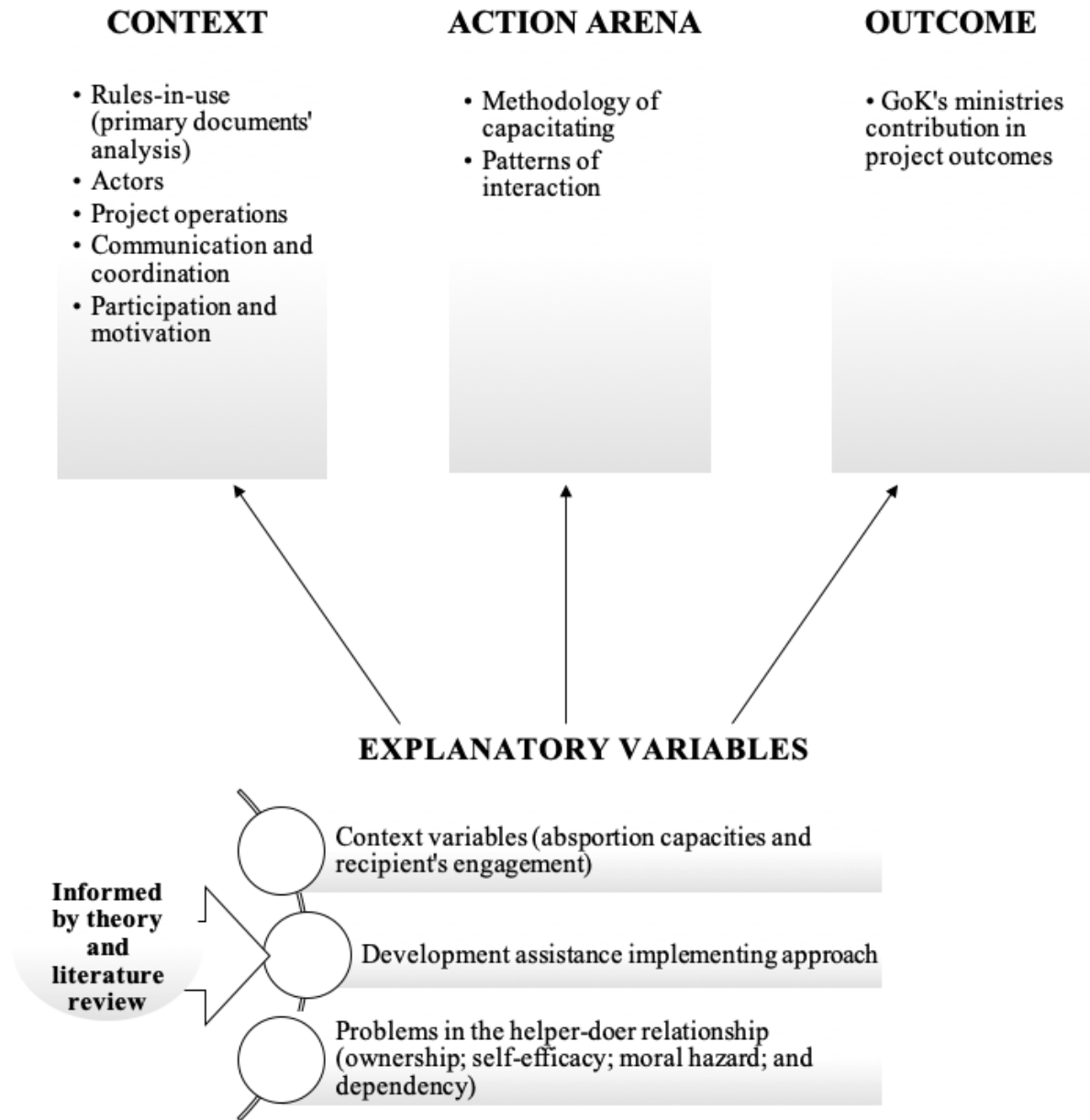
Fourth, the theory focuses more on the helpers and certain 'steps' that they should follow when providing assistance. Although the theory provides a solid explanation, the thesis understands that the reality of development assistance is more complex and sometimes it is not just a matter of following certain principles such as indirect approach to make assistance work. In this regard, the helper-doer relationship perspective needs further development, particularly on the doers' reactions to assistance.

Fifth, the lack of similar studies is a worth-mentioning limitation because the thesis was not able to build on other studies that have applied the helper-doer relationship analysis in development assistance, apart from Ellerman (2005) developing the theory. In this regard, a challenge was also the lack of studies that analyse how Kosovo's autonomy in development is affected by the EU and other donors' assistance throughout the years.

## **4.9. A Framework of Research Conduct**

Being aware of the amount of documents, the number of actors and interactions, and complexity of development assistance structure, the researcher has compiled a framework of research conduct. This framework guided the thesis through data collection and analysis process.

*Figure 5: Framework of Research Conduct*



**Source:** Author's construction, 2019

The study built an interview guide (see Appendix B) that focused on understanding the context, action arena and outcomes because the way how actors interact across these aspects determines how incentives are affected. In the context part, the thesis has looked into the rules-in-use (see

section 4.3.2.) and actors. In this part, the study has gathered information also on the project operations; communication and coordination; and participation and motivation.

In the action arena, the focus was on understanding the methodology of capacitating and patterns of interaction between the EU/GIZ-led consortium and MEI/other ministries. The action arena is important because here is where the activities of donor and recipients take place and also where incentives are affected. The researcher has located activity situations of the project and has tried to understand the structure in which actors operate and the way how activities are implemented.

The third component is outcomes focusing on the GoK ministries engagement to the project. The project itself is supposed to capacitate the GoK to do the work that serves to Kosovo's development. Looking into the GoK ministries contribution on the project development outcomes is an important aspect of understanding the incentives of recipients to take actions for their own development. This is related to how things occur in the action arena.

An important component of this framework is the explanatory variables informed by theory and literature review. This component, and the whole framework in general served as an analytical approach of the thesis to gather, understand and explain the primary data.

## Chapter 5: Data Analysis

Applying the three steps of analysis (see section 4.4), the study has identified the demi-regularities, which include the major patterns in the data collection; and, further, it has theoretically redescribed (abduction) these patterns. In this spirit, the subtitles below present the major findings and patterns in the data analysis process. This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, the study describes the direct approach of the EU development assistance to Kosovo. Second, it presents the service-buying nature of the assistance embedded into the direct approach and the main problems associated with it. Also, it explains a pattern of unhelpful development assistance, which constraints incentives of the GoK ministries for autonomous development actions. Third, the study presents an explanation of why the EU uses the direct approach in assistance through understanding the interaction of contextual variables.

### 5.1. Direct Approach in Development Assistance: There is No Outside-in for Inside-out Change

To begin with, it is important to point out that the EU development assistance is considered as needed and important for Kosovo's institutional development. A GoK Senior Officer on development assistance acknowledges that the goal of the assistance<sup>18</sup> is to help ministries *'create a functional institutional structure able to identify, develop, implement, and monitor government's development actions'* (Key informant, 2, 2019). In this vein, the EU assistance is there to help them do their work and strengthen their capacities to take actions. However, there is an obvious tension related to the discrepancy between how assistance is written to help and how it actually helps. With the most careful words, one of the interviewees stated that *'the project could have gone better'* particularly because *'we have not had clear ownership on the project; or clear responsibility related to the project'* (Key informant 7, 2019). One common aspect of most of the answers was that interviewees (recipients of assistance) would blame their ministries and hold responsibility for the failures of the EU assistance mainly relating it to the lack of their commitment to making the best use of assistance. Instead of having an internalisation of the assistance itself,

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<sup>18</sup> The thesis will use the term "the project" and "assistance" interchangeably mainly due the fact that interviewees were referring same way.

the recipients internalise only the failure to play their role. This is as accepting that you have a role to play, but still being reluctant to do it. This internalisation of failure, rather than responsibility, is related to the fact that, despite if the GoK ministries act or not, the assistance turns into a ‘safety net’ for the ministries to cover the consequences of their inaction.

In this regard, the EU applies a direct approach to development assistance, which is distortionary. The distortionary nature of assistance starts with the GoK ministries not knowing what they want which is captured by the Team Leader of the project that stated *‘there is a lack of basics from the recipients’ side such as what they want? Why? And how that helps?; such a situation is causing that for example, the EU comes in and says we think you have this need’* (Key informant, 4, 2019). This shows a way of a top-down approach in assistance because the EU is determining at the planning phase about the assistance that will be implemented. Based on this, speaking on the words of Ellerman (2001), the EU’s assistance is not filling the gap of the needed resources, but it is determining the relationship between resources and development actions. This suggests to not respecting development as autonomous.

Interviews revealed how this approach is manifested in practice. When asked about how would you describe the approach of the assistance implementation, the Head of Division on planning and coordinating development assistance, reflecting on this project and other EU projects, stated that *‘the fundamental structure of these type of development assistance projects is that they directly carry out some of the responsibilities that our ministries should do and this is a problem in terms of generating long-lasting impact’* (Key informant 3, 2019). On the other hand, confirming this statement, the Team Leader, when asked about the successes of the project, stated:

*‘Our development assistance has produced several outputs. However, the problem is to what extent we have assisted and to what extent we have done it. Technical assistance should be about helping others do their job, rather than doing the job for them. Unfortunately, the current technical assistance is doing the job itself rather than helping ministries to do the job. This is a challenge for the sustainable impacts’* (Key informant 4, 2019)

Drawing back on the theory, the direct approach is inconsistent with the nature of development because outside-in solutions for internal problems, without meeting the GoK ministries impetus to

lead development actions, override incentives for self-development. The main inconsistency of this approach is that the assistance takes the ownership of development actions (Ellerman, 2005). This, in turn, undermines the ownership of ministries on those actions.

In this vein, there is a harmful vicious cycle of the EU's direct assistance on the GoK's ministries ownership on actions. The cycle starts with the direct approach externalising the locus of causality (see section 3.1.), which results from assistance taking over the *driver's seat* of development actions and turns ministries into passive recipients of assistance and strengthens their feeling of impotence to take actions. This subsequently generates only superficially confirming behaviour, but not the institutional capability for an autonomous development (Ellerman, 2000; Moyo, 2009). In line with this, the researcher observed that there is a passive participation of ministries in assistance actions. This is an incentive problem related to the way how development assistance is provided to Kosovo. In this regard, the Team Leader of the project noted:

*“The fault here is more because donors have financed what they wanted and what they think is best. This approach has caused problems such as lack of ownership; lack of commitment; lack of controlling and lack of knowing what is happening from the GoK's ministries. This has caused a lack of interest and motivation to ministries to actually learn, do, and take from our assistance. I feel that they do not feel powerful enough to do things; and this causes reluctance” (Key informant 4, 2019)*

When asked about how the project is initiated, confirming the above team leader's statement, one of the beneficiaries stated:

*“This project started the implementation in Kosovo based on the other region's countries' experiences. However, it is a little problematic that the project is replicated in Kosovo based on other countries experiences without any prior analysis if it is suitable enough for Kosovo” (Key informant 3, 2019)*

The final part of this cycle is that pouring development assistance to passive recipients' ministries constraints their self-activation, which in turn again disables them to have control over the actions' locus of causality. Self-activation is crucial for recipients to create ownership over development actions. On the other hand, ownership has critical importance for the impacts of development assistance; as stated by an interviewee, *“it will take time for the long-lasting positive impacts to*

*be there, till ownership is there'' (Key informant 4, 2019). In this spirit, the vicious cycle explained above violates ownership, which is one of the underlying reasons that disables assistance potential to capacitate recipients for self-reliant development.*

Based on the theory, the study argues that the main mechanism that reproduces this vicious cycle is the development assistance controlling and directly undertaking, rather than enabling, ministries' actions. Therefore, there is no outside-in way for inside-out change and the attempt to do so is self-defeating with the nature of development.

## **5.2. Service-buying Development Assistance: Covering the Costs of Unchanging, Rather than Helping Change**

*''But, over time, development experience has shown that when external experts *alone* acquire, analyze, and process information and then present this information in reports, social change usually does not take place; whereas the kind of "social learning" that stakeholders generate and internalize during the participatory planning and/or implementation of a development activity *does* enable social change''*

(World Bank 1996, 5)

Digging deeper into the practice of assistance, the research finds that its primary characteristic in implementation is using the money of assistance to buy services for the GoK ministries. The main problem is that these services are typical development actions which the GoK ministries should do. This service buying nature of assistance, embedded into a broader direct approach, is captured by one of the interviewees stating that *''in practice the project only pays for the service; the project pays for the technical experts to do the service that our ministries should do as part of the project''* (Key informant 2, 2019). When asked about the services conducted by assistance through external experts, one of the direct beneficiaries stated that *''they pay external experts to do the services that are supposed to be carried out by us through project capacitating ministries'' (Key informant 1, 2019).*

Development actions are being bought as services through technical assistance, and the GoK ministries do not participate in producing those. When asked about the role of the consultants in



the project and their interaction with ministries, one of the direct beneficiaries and coordinators of the project stated that *“the assistance through its consultants develops actions which in fact should have been done by ministries”* (Key informant 2, 2019). Based on the primary data, this type of service buying assistance constraints incentives for self-development mainly through the mechanism of covering the costs of unchanging for the GoK ministries by preserving their incapacity to take actions. The concern in this regard is that the GoK ministries are not leading development efforts in the area of assistance.

Based on the theory, literature review and primary data, the research identifies two main problems associated with the situation when the assistance takes over the GoK ministries leading role in actions: one is related to the failure of the assistance to capacitate for self-development and the other to the bad incentive structure created by the service-buying assistance.

*First*, the assistance fails to capacitate the GoK ministries for self-development mainly because it is not internalised in a way that assistance outcomes are externally produced *for* ministries and *do not* result from their self-directed activities. Drawing on Handy (1993) and Ellerman (2005), when recipients do not internalise assistance actions as their actions, capacity building for ministries fails because change (delivered outcomes) is not self-maintaining. The Director of development assistance reflects on the internalisation of assistance as follows:

*“The problem is that the work that we have to do is packaged in a form of development assistance; this is contradictory in itself; we need another approach of development assistance which will help ministries through advise, tools, or useful work methodologies; this way ministries could be able to internalize the projects and their outcomes”* (Key informant 7, 2019).

When asked about the approach of how the project is being implemented and the beneficiaries involvement on it, the Team Leader stated that

*“Due to the high flow of assistance to Kosovo, development assistance activities are taking place in the project itself rather than public administration as it should be. This approach has created conditions of ministries’ not being the doers and owners of an initiative from the very beginning. Considering this, everything that*

*our assistance builds on those conditions is not sustainable'' (Key informant 4, 2019)*

Based on this, the lack of internalisation causes that the importance shifts from recipients' building their capacities to assistance project finishing its planned activities. This approach causes fatigue, due to overwork, on the recipients towards such assistance:

*''In fact, as coordinators of development assistance, we hoped that the project is going to help us better perform in our responsibilities, and not to overwork us. It takes a lot of time for me to attend all the meetings with project and other similar projects on conducting their activities but without an impact on ministries capacities. Through advice and help, the project should have diminished the burden on us to better perform in our work; and not turn itself into a burden'' (Key informant 7, 2019).*

The study argues that beneficiaries tend to feel like they are there to help the project finish its activities, and it is not the project there to help them strengthen their capacities. This is in line with observations of Ellerman (2005) and Easterly (2002) on assistance projects turning into a high burden for governments' weak capacities. Easterly (2002) relates this to the pressure for money moving from development assistance management structure; while, in the same spirit, Ellerman (2005) relates it to the pressure to show results which then leads implementers of assistance to take the lead on development actions just for the sake of showing results asked from the donors' management structures.

Based on the above information, the direct service buying assistance on the one hand and the lack of internalisation on the other cause that the assistance fails to respect the autonomy of development both as the mean and the end. Autonomy is not respected as a mean because assistance is not implemented *through* respecting autonomy; it directly pays technical experts to do the work of ministries and this approach is not compatible with the recipients' self-reliant developments. As a result, the autonomy of development is not respected as an end because assistance fails to strengthen the GoK ministries capacities for self-development; thus failing to *strengthen* the autonomy of development.

The *second* problem is related to the creation of a bad incentive structure. Deducting interviews' data, this approach has created a system that reproduces dependency of the recipients' in assistance projects; and, a system of services (development actions) that cannot be provided without the existence of assistance. A Senior Officer on development assistance describes this in a way that actions are taken only as long as assistance exists and as long as it stops we turn to the point zero (Key informant 2, 2019). In this way, the assistance is reproducing the need for itself, which is contradictory because development assistance is relevant as much as it makes itself irrelevant; and not as necessary. The main effect of this contradiction is that the assistance contributes to maintain and cover the costs of ministries inaction and unchanging. One of the direct beneficiaries stated that

*“assistance should have trained us to do the work that it is doing or at least it should have tried; probably in the first year we would do it bad but by the time we would improve; but this is not happening. Everything is done by the assistance now and we as ministries do not deal with it” (Key informant 6, 2019).*

When asked about the participation of the ministries in conducting development actions as part of the assistance, a direct beneficiary at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare stated

*“ such projects that directly pays consultants to take development actions for ministries, has somehow made us less engaged to do that work. A consultant for 10 days takes my yearly salary; when the consultants get this payment to do the work, we do not feel able to contribute that much” (Key Informant 1, 2019)*

Interviews with recipients' reveal that the lack of their engagement in the assistance actions is also related to the lack of right incentives that recognize the contribution of the staff. Despite the fact of how much they contribute, there is no form that the staff's contribution would be recognized and in fact, the project itself would take all merits. Beneficiaries' think that the fact if you contribute or not still produces the same outcomes: the work is done and the assistance takes merits. This is captured by the words of one of the coordinators which states that

*“By sending most of the money on consultants payments this type of development assistance does not leave that much space for us to take on responsibilities. The project does not create any single incentive for the staff to engage in generating*

*development outcomes of the project. This is because despite how much we will contribute still the consultant takes the money; on the other hand, the ministries' staff contribution is not mentioned and its successes are presented as assistance successes'' (Key informant 2, 2019)*

Interviews reveal that this wrong incentive structure emerges as a result of the EU's direct approach and GoK's ministries haphazard approach to development. The Team Leader, based on his experience working with similar projects also, believes that *'not knowing what the beneficiaries want and as a result of development assistance pushing what they think is best creates some incentives where GoK ministries are not the doer and owner of development initiatives from the very beginning; whatever is produced after is not sustainable anymore'' (Key informant 4).* This is related to the internalisation of failure (section 5.1.), and it is supported by recipients which state that

*'there is a mix on ownership from our side; this is related to the fact that we as institutions do not have clear position towards development assistance; we do not communicate with one voice; we do not have the same starting point, and all this creates confusion'' (Key informant 7, 2019)*

*'It is a problem for this project in particular and development assistance in general to produce sustainable change. Things are ad hoc in our ministries; there are no established processes to which everyone knows how is contributing. For example, I have a plan to make some changes in the donors' database and also in some forms of monitoring and reporting; if on Monday I would leave the job, no one would do it...there are no processes'' (Key informant 3, 2019)*

This haphazard approach of ministries on the use of assistance is described by a straightforward answer of one of the Senior Officers which stated that *'well sometimes the key interest for administration is only to get the assistance because that has some short-term benefits such as study visits or per-diems payments, but the decision to take the project is not that much based on the assistance objectives; the primary concern is to get the project, the fact if its objectives are achieved or not is a secondary issue'' (Key informant 5, 2019).*

The two problems elaborated above maintain an assistance that covers the costs of unchanging rather than helping change. The study observes that these problems generate a pattern of unhelpful EU development assistance to Kosovo; and, as Ellerman (2005) argues, unhelpful help is counterproductive for recipients' autonomous actions.

### **5.2.1. The Pattern of Unhelpful Development Assistance**

The thesis has structured the explanation of this pattern on four main causally-related parts, which capture the process of development assistance covering the costs of unchanging.

The *first part* of the pattern is that the assistance is planned in a way that does not take into consideration the contextual factors. Almost all interviews with recipients reveal that there is '*no prior feasibility study*' to assess if ministries are willing to take responsibilities of the assistance or able to absorb it. For example, the project starts with the idea to put ministries on the lead of actions without knowing if that is doable. Drawing back on theory, this means that development assistance does not start from where the doers are but from an imaginary state of them. As long as development assistance starts to be implemented, it becomes evident that ministries do not play their role in the implementation. This brings the assistance to the *second part* of the pattern that is captured by the words of one of the coordinators and direct beneficiaries which states that '*during the implementation process, it became clear that the assistance cannot be implemented through our ministries and the immediate response of the donor in front of this situation was 'let's engage some external experts*'' (Key informant 2). Interviews reveal that the main part of negative implications in the incentives of ministries' for self-development occurs at the moment that assistance starts relying development actions on external experts, rather than ministries. In this regard, one of the coordinators stated that '*particularly at the moment when consultants are involved to do the work of the ministries, there is no chance that the staff of ministries would get active; it is created a dependency on consultants*' (Key informant 8). The research observes that the need to rely on consultant comes from the gap between project responsibilities and recipients' skills and willingness to contribute. The project hires external experts to reduce this gap and thus make the assistance implementable. However, based on the theory, this form of assistance drives

a change that is imposed due to its externally motivated nature, which cannot be embedded as a sustainable change in the ministries' capacities.

This brings us to the *third part* of the pattern. There is nothing wrong with the engagement of the consultants *per se*. However, the problem stands on the approach used thereafter from the project and consultants. A paradoxical situation is created because the development assistance through consultants works in a way that goes against the assistance goal. They do it through directly taking actions that belong to the ministries, instead of only assisting and building capacities of the ministries. One of the direct beneficiaries stated that *'consultants do all the work, and in some cases without consulting or meeting with us'* (Key informant 1). This is also confirmed by other key informants. Consciously or unconsciously the project and consultant miss the point of assistance entirely. Drawing back on theory, institutions capacities' are build and change occurs as a by-product of the institutions active participation in learning and implementing authentic actions. Externally driven changes are bought changes; these, in turn, generate only bought behaviours which do not result in a long term change.

The *fourth part* of the pattern is that the GoK ministries create an illusion on the potential of the assistance to solve their problems. Interviews, particularly with coordinators, team leader, and director, reveal the reliance of ministries on assistance by stating that the staff does not take actions in the area of assistance because *'they know that the project will do it'* (Key informant 3) or *'the consultant will fix it'* (Key informant 2, 2019). In this regard, confirmed by other informants also, one of the interviewees through self-critical words states that

*'ministries do not show any interest anymore to take actions that the assistance is doing. The only thing they ask is 'when the expert is coming'; as an example, the assistance once stopped taking consultants and asked ministries to start developing actions by themselves and none of the ministries including ours took any action on this; there was no step taken. The only thing you could hear is 'we are waiting for the project's consultants'''. (Key informant 2, 2019)*

Deaton (2013) and Ravallion (2014) explains that the illusion in foreign assistance to solve countries development problems is harmful, and it enforces their inability for self-reliant development.

This pattern of causally-related parts generates a dependency of ministries on development assistance, which is constantly reproduced, and this dependency causes the need for continued assistance projects. This pattern shows a clear case of shifting the responsibility for development actions from the GoK ministries to the assistance and its external consultants. Based on the arguments of Senge (1990) on studying learning organisations, this shift generates illusion and dynamics of addiction to the assistance.

The study argues that the illusion of ministries that the assistance will solve their problems is embedded into a broader moral hazard problem created by high flows of development assistance in Kosovo. Ellerman (2005) and Ostrom (2001) argue that the moral hazard situation weakens recipients' incentives to give proper efforts to generate development outcomes. Applying the words of Robert Marjolin (1989), one of the Marshall Plan architects, in this context it could be argued that the idea that there will always be an assistance to rely on has destructive effects on the GoK willpower to engage and see development as autonomous. In this line of thinking and based on the above mentioned quote of the key informant 2, but also in other occasions when interviewees mention that '*ministries do not feel powerful enough*' (Key informant 4, 2019) or '*ministries staff contribution is not recognized either by assistance nor by ministries*' (Key informant 2, 2019), the study argues that the lack of interest is related to, what psychologists call, the *externality* factor. Based on the theory, the dependency and lack of ownership on actions created by the direct approach of assistance contribute to enforcing the *externality* factor to ministries in a way that they think that external forces control development process in the area of assistance. Thus, the contribution of ministries is irrelevant and these forces will cover any consequence of ministries' inaction. This belief of the GoK ministries' that the locus of causality (see section 5.1) of development actions is external has created conditions of apathy, learned self-helplessness, and an illusion that the EU's assistance will fix their problems (see more on *self-efficacy* Bandura, 1995; *locus of control* Rotter, 1966:25).

Through explaining the direct approach of the EU development assistance in section 5.1 and the type of service-buying assistance and its related effects presented in section 5.2, the research argues that such structure of assistance implementation constraints the GoK's incentives for self-development. However, the explanation of why this occurs is not as straightforward as the conclusion of how this occurs. In the section below, the thesis includes a discussion in this regard.

### **5.3. Opening the ‘Black Box’: The EU’s Heteronomous Interventions Constraints Recipient Officials’ Incentives for Self-development**

Going back to the argument of Bourguignon and Sundberg (2007), the black box of development assistance should be opened, which includes understanding the arrangement of donor-recipient relationship and the influence in development. In this regard, sections 5.1 and 5.2 argue that the EU’s direct approach and service-buying development assistance to Kosovo is heteronomous. Based on the theory, this means that development actions as part of the assistance are mainly based on external forces; thus, those go against the autonomy of the recipient subjects. Externally driven actions turn the GoK ministries into passive recipients of assistance and constraints the latter’s incentives to address their developmental needs. Based on the analysis presented above, the most straightforward and logical conclusion would be that this is a major EU intentional or unintentional wrongdoing. In general, there is a tendency in the current research (see literature review), when arguing why development assistance is not working to present it as a result of donors’ wrongdoings. This study goes beyond this and argues that the EU’s direct and service-buying approach is a result of a pragmatic adaptation of the EU with the recipients’ conditions. This path creates a pattern of EU’s pragmatic choices to provide assistance in an implementable way.

Before discussing this pragmatist pattern, the study revisits the theory. Ellerman (2005) argues that when donors provide development assistance, they have two paths to follow: one is a social engineering path that uses a direct approach of taking development actions and producing results, which distorts doers’ motivation on engaging with the assistance (Ellerman, 2001a:5). The *other path* is the helping non-distorting autonomy-respecting assistance that helps countries help themselves, through an indirect approach to assistance. Interviews reveal that the EU’s intention is to help the GoK ministries following the second path; however, in practice, it ends up following the first. In this regard, one of the key informants of the project stated

*“At the beginning we have understood and it is told to us that the project will only give small assistance through comments or ideas while the ministries will do the major development actions as part of the project. For example, one of our*



*ministries would draft a development action and then the project through its experts would assist on only providing feedback on that. But this does not happen. Most of the time everything is done directly through external consultants'' (Key informant 2, 2019)*

At this point, to understand the broad picture and the *why* part of the *how* question, the most compelling need is to understand why assistance is delivered through a direct path although it aims to provide indirect help. The research finds that this is mainly a result of the EU making pragmatic choices to fit the GoK ministries conditions and their lack of willingness and ability to take actions. This pragmatic adaptation could be defined as the choice to deliver development assistance in a way that is implementable in the recipient's conditions. The EU's pragmatism on fitting to the context is captured by key informants which state:

*''Based on my experience on planning and coordinating EU development assistance to our ministry and other GoK ministries, I can say that EU's approach on implementing development assistance is just adapted to us. It can be direct or indirect or whatever form we want that'' (Key informant 3, 2019)*

*''This direct approach of the development assistance is because our ministries don't show the interest to do its work; the response to this is that assistance does it through its consultants'' (Key informant 8, 2019)*

Deducting primary data and using concepts from theory and literature review, the thesis constructs an explanation of the EU pragmatic adaptation pattern, which stands at the foundation of the EU's direct and service buying approach.

The pattern starts with dilemmas. Slightly different from Ellerman, the research finds that the EU's dilemma to assist is not on choosing between direct or indirect path; but between a direct path or stopping the assistance. The EU faces the problem of, what James Buchanan (1975) and Gibson et al. (2005) call, the Samaritan's Dilemma on continuing to deliver assistance or stop it. Based on Ellerman (2005:33), the Samaritan (EU) decides that for all parties is better off to continue providing assistance and support development actions in Kosovo, which in turn would approximate Kosovo to the EU. The EU's pragmatism on assistance is based on a *bait and switch* principle (Ellerman, 2001a). This means that the EU continuously uses the direct approach on

implementing development actions (*bait*) hoping that this will lead to strengthening recipients' internal incentives and a momentum of ministries taking the lead on actions (*switch*). However, given a long time of the EU providing development assistance to Kosovo, in practice, the assistance has not been bait and switch; but, instead, all bait and no switch. Actions conducted through consultants of assistance are presented as successful capacity-building and technical assistance outcomes, and there has not been a clear reporting on this regard in order to improve the assistance:

*“A big problem is that there is only a basic reporting of the assistance; if a particular ministry received assistance for specific action all what's reported is resources spent and the field; while there is not enough information on how it was delivered and impacts” (Key informant 3, 2019)*

All bait means that the EU enters in a cycle of providing direct assistance and buying ready-made services (consultants' actions) for the GoK ministries hoping on the momentum of the switch from the ministries. Briefly mentioned in 5.2., this all bait cycle and lack of switch is also captured by one of the interviewees which states

*“The assistance starts to do the work for us with the idea that ministries will take the responsibility after some time; but that did not happen. For as long as the assistance is being implemented development actions in the area of assistance will be conducted; at the moment that assistance is stopped we turn to the point zero; none of those actions can be taken” (Key informant 2, 2019)*

Interviews reveal that, apart from reasons presented in previous sections, there is no switch moment for the reason that the assistance is not absorbed from the recipients' and this is related with the recruitment practices in the public administration<sup>19</sup>.

In the vein, the pattern of pragmatism is characterized by making small compromises. The cycle of small compromises starts with the decision to provide assistance that cannot be absorbed; it continues with hiring external experts just to maintain the implementation of assistance; and it is

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<sup>19</sup> Some of the interviewees go beyond on stating that the staff cannot absorb the assistance because they are unqualified for those positions and they relate this with elements of patronage and clientelism in Kosovo's public administration (Key informant 2, 3, 5, and 7). However, this goes beyond the scope of this study.

perpetuated with endless assistance projects that present “purchased outward performance” (Ellerman, 2001:12) of ministries as successful implementation of the assistance. These small compromises could be conceptualised as adverse selection collective action problem in the assistance implementation. The research argues that the total cost of these adverse selections (Gibson et al. 2005:4-5; Ostrom et al., 2014:6) is a cycle of harmful influence on the recipients’ incentives to contribute on development outcomes.

As argued, this pragmatist pattern of all bait does not meet the switch from the GoK ministries. Using the Kantian concept presented in theory and also primary data, the research explains that this is a result of the GoK ministries’ self-incurred tutelage, instead of self-enforced action. The self-incurred tutelage refers to the GoK ministries inability to make use of their capacities to address their development needs, but instead wait for externally directed activities. It generates a feeling of comfortability with assistance and it goes beyond what the EU can do, apart from stopping the assistance. The self-incurred tutelage of the recipients’ as a response towards the bait strategy is in line with the arguments that the assistance inflows that continuously ‘buy’ reforms turn into counterproductive because it disincentivises mobilisation of domestic resources (Sumner and Mallet, 2013:33; Svensson, 2000). Borrowing concepts from Dewey (1916) and McGregor (1966) which have analyzed helper-doer relationship, the EU’s pragmatist all bait and no switch assistance results into a learned cunning and slyness (Dewey, 1916:31), and passive acceptance and indifference of ministries towards the assistance (McGregor, 1966:11-12). As a result, change is not embedded in the institutions (see section 2.2.1).

Beyond enabling or constraining incentives, there is a long-term problem with this pragmatism and lack of strictness on providing assistance only in conditions when Kosovo shows strong incentives for self-development actions. This concern is captured by one of the interviewees, which stated:

*“it depends how you see the development assistance success; it is true if you look on the number of development actions taken. For example, with the help of development assistance specific strategies are written and a number of reforms and development actions are taken; but if you take a closer look none of that is done by us; and we have not strengthened our capacities to do that” (Key informant 5, 2019).*

The arguments mentioned above show that the EU's assistance is heteronomous and thus constraints the GoK ministries incentives for self-development. Reflecting in three above sections, there are three key variables that maintain the heteronomous character of the EU assistance to Kosovo: *first*, direct approach as a service-buying development assistance, which results from the EU's pragmatism in assistance implementation; *second*, lack of absorbing capacities and self-activation of the GoK ministries; and *third*, dependency creation. There is a structural problem in this nature of assistance and its variables, which is not as a result of causally related variables, but instead of mutually reinforcing variables. This means that the problems go beyond cause-effect analysis because these variables mutually maintain and reinforce each other. In the thesis understanding, this means that as much as the first causes the second; the same way the second causes the first. For example, lack of the GoK capacities for development actions legitimizes the intervention of the development assistance; further, lack of recipients' self-activation and absorption of assistance is maintained from the direct approach of assistance; then, the direct approach of assistance maintains, instead of strengthening, the lack of ministries capacities for actions; which again brings the cycle to the legitimized existence of the assistance. The result of this is a dependency creation of recipients' in assistance, which is the gravitational force that drives this whole system of the heteronomous assistance interventions.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study attempted to explain the influence of the EU development assistance on the incentives of the GoK ministries, specifically recipient officials, for autonomous development. In the literature review, the thesis argued that broad and rigid development effectiveness principles and the statistical correlations on the current research lack the power to explain context-based inconsistencies of development assistance vis-a-vis development. In this spirit, the study located the EU-GoK interaction into a helper-doer relationship as a way to achieve the research goal.

In the first section of the analysis, the study finds that the EU applies a direct approach in implementing the assistance to Kosovo and in this regard there is an inconsistency between this approach and the autonomous nature of development. In particular, this approach externalises the control of development actions from ministries to external forces. It has created conditions of passivity and lack of self-activation of ministries, which goes against the creation of ownership on development actions in the sense of ministries taking responsibility for these actions.

The second section takes a closer look at the direct approach application modality. The study finds that the assistance buys services (development actions) for ministries as ready-made solutions for their problems. This generates two associated problems: first, the goal of assistance to build GoK's capacities for self-development fails; and, second, it creates a bad incentive structure. As a result, it creates a pattern of unhelpful assistance to Kosovo characterised with illusion and dependency creation of recipients in assistance.

The third section has tried to develop a deeper understanding of the heteronomous nature of the EU assistance to Kosovo, which constraints the GoK's incentives for self-development. The study identifies a pattern of pragmatic assistance adapted to the GoK's conditions based on the idea of *bait and switch*, which in practice turns out to be all bait and not switch. This reproduces a system of lack of capacities, direct assistance, lack of absorption and capacity strengthening, and dependency, which mutually reinforce each other. This, in turn, continuously generates vicious cycles and patterns of unhelpful assistance that constraints incentives for self-development.

To conclude, the thesis argues that the above findings reflect a fundamental problem with the short-term type of development incentivised from this approach of assistance. Development is treated as

a technical process where you take development actions as ticking the box, although only with external resources, rather than a quality process where Kosovo's institutions are prepared for self-development and EU accession. This form of EU-GoK interaction in development assistance is creating a 'bubble' of progress being held by external resources rather than Kosovo's institutions. This bubble is very easily dissolved because the assistance and consultants will not always be there to 'fix it'.

## **6.1. Contribution**

The research contributes to nurturing the helper-doer relationship as an alternative perspective on analyzing development assistance, which goes beyond the prevalent analytical approaches in existing research. The study identifies context-based patterns of unhelpful and pragmatic assistance characterising the interaction between the EU and the GoK. These patterns of explanation do not fall in categories of the existing research, and this study adds those to the current debate on explaining the influence of assistance in development. Moreover, these patterns show and result from the 'tension' between the EU's assistance actions and recipients reactions. In this way, of particular importance for complementing the theory are the recipients' reactions towards the assistance, as this is under-explained in the concept of autonomy respecting assistance (Ellerman, 2005), which focuses more on the helpers' side.

However, the researcher is aware that this understanding of development assistance is context-based. Given the diversity of contexts and actors in which development assistance is implemented makes it difficult to extend this understanding in other contexts. To realise that, similar studies need to be conducted in different contexts as a way of generating knowledge that improves the potential of development assistance to help countries help themselves.

## **6.2. Further research**

There were issues raised during the writing process to which thesis could not answer. First, there is a need for further research on the influence of development assistance on the countries clientelist systems. The study encountered that the GoK lacks capacities to absorb the assistance due to unqualified staff, for which some of the interviews raised questions for the clientelist employment

in the public administration. There is a need for more research on the effects of providing direct assistance to countries characterized by clientelism. Is development assistance 'protecting' countries from the consequences of their clientelist systems inaction?

Second, during the research process recipients would relate the fact that the 'chaos' on the ministries work is convenient for implementers and the donor does not spend resources on dealing with that 'chaos'. This raises important questions such as why Samaritan (EU) continues to provide assistance even though it will not be absorbed? Do the headquarters that approve funding know for the failures of their development assistance projects? How does EU awards assistance projects to consortiums? How do implementers of projects report accomplishments? Or, do they sell the outcomes of the project delivered directly and entirely through technical experts as 'successful' capacity building?

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Interviews: Table and Note on the Profile of Respondents

The table below presents information related to the respondents. The thesis has given particular focus to coordinators of the project and the Ministry of European Integration-MEI. To strengthen the ownership on the assistance, the EU Office and GIZ-led consortium have delegated responsibilities in coordination but also on decision-making of the project to the ministries, specifically MEI. There are coordinators within the MEI which cover all other ministries in terms of coordinating, communicating, and supporting that ministries do their part in the project. However, it is worth emphasizing that these coordinators are regular MEI staff, which are also direct beneficiaries of the project. They present the most important respondents as they are fully engaged on coordinating project activities and ministries' engagement on them, and also benefiting themselves from the project's capacity building and technical assistance.

| <b>Interview Number</b> | <b>Position</b>   | <b>Institution</b>                        | <b>Date</b>   | <b>Relation to case study project</b> |
|-------------------------|---|---|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Key informant 1         | A.S. - Head of Division for policy coordination                                     | GoK, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare | January 2019  | Direct beneficiary                    |
| Key informant 2         | F.J. - Senior Officer for Development Assistance                                    | GoK, Ministry of European Integration     | January, 2019 | Coordinator and direct beneficiary    |
| Key informant 3         | F.R. - Head of Division for Planning and Coordination of the Development Assistance | GoK, Ministry of European Integration     | January 2019  | Coordinator and direct manager        |
| Key informant 4         | M.G. - Team Leader  | GIZ-led consortium awarded from the EU    | January 2019  | Team Leader on Project Implementation |
| Key informant 5         | V.J. - Senior Officer   | GoK, Ministry of                          | January,      | Overseeing similar EU                 |

|                 |  |  |               |   |
|-----------------|--|--|---------------|---|
|                 |  | European Integration                               | 2019          | financed projects   |
| Key informant 6 | E.O. - Senior Policy Analyst                             | GoK, Ministry of Justice                           | January, 2019 | Direct beneficiary  |
| Key informant 7 | F.C. - Director of Department for Development Assistance | GoK, Ministry of European Integration              | January, 2019 | Member of Project Steering Committee; Coordinator; and direct beneficiary |
| Key informant 8 | N.L. - Senior Officer for Development Assistance         | GoK, Ministry of European Integration              | January, 2019 | Coordinator and direct beneficiary  |
| Key informant 9 | E.M. Senior Officer for Donor Coordination               | GoK, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology | May, 2019     | Direct beneficiary  |

## Appendix B

### Interview Guide<sup>20</sup>

**Lund University**

**International Development and Management**

*Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Project Beneficiaries and Implementers*

**Date:**

**Name:**

**Institution:**

**Position:**

#### **I. Starting questions**

1. Do you need any further clarification about the goal of the interview? (GIZ)
2. For how long you are working in this position? (GIZ)
3. Can you describe the background of how you became part of the project? How you were notified? How you were invited? What was told to you?

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<sup>20</sup> All the questions are asked to development assistance recipients. Whereas, questions that are marked with sign (GIZ) are asked to project implementers too.

## **II. Project and roles**

4. Can you describe how has this project been initiated?
5. What is your role in the project in terms of responsibilities and tasks? (GIZ)
6. How would you describe the goal of the project? How would you describe the project activities and their relevance for the project goal?
7. Have you been involved in this project from July 2016? If not, have you overlapped with your predecessor? How do you think this (joining later/overlapping/ or not overlapping) has affected your ability to perform well in this post?
8. From your experience, has the project experienced major personnel changes and how do you think it has affected the project? (GIZ)
9. How many actors are involved? On average how many people have participated in the project activities? (GIZ)

## **III. Communication and reporting**

10. How would you describe the interaction with other actors? (GIZ)
11. Who reports to you? How would you describe the quality of that reporting? How would you describe the importance of reporting for the project? (GIZ)
12. To whom do you report in this project? Why do you report and why do you think that is important for the project? (GIZ)

## **IV. Motivation**

13. How would you describe the motivation of the participants to participate and benefit from the project? (GIZ)
14. How would you describe the motivation to grasp the results of the project? For example, if the project has hold trainings on preparing the staff to write action documents, why a staff of the MEI or other ministries, would not apply that in its workplace? Can you mention specific factors? (GIZ)
15. Why participants may be motivated? (GIZ)
16. Why participants may not be motivated? (GIZ)
17. How would you describe the impact of the 'Motivation of the Participants' on the project success? (GIZ)
18. Do you use any method to increase the motivation of the participants? (GIZ)

## **V. Methodology of project implementation and recipients' engagement**

19. What is the role that you as recipients are supposed to play in the development assistance projects? And, specifically, in this project?
20. How would you describe your engagement on project activities? How would you describe the role that you are supposed to play and the one that you are actually playing?
21. What happens if the ministries do not reach to perform on finishing their tasks? (GIZ)

22. Why ministries' may not finish the tasks that they are supposed to do supported by the development assistance project? (GIZ)
23. How the project responds in such cases? (GIZ)
24. How would you describe the methodology (the way of doing things) of the project implementation as a recipient?
25. The project aims to strengthen your capacities to undertake development actions. How would you describe the approach of the project to do this?
26. What is the role of the consultants (or technical experts) in the project? (GIZ)
27. When and why does the project decides to engage consultants? (GIZ)
28. How would you describe the way how they help you to draft and implement development actions?
29. Could you tell us a bit about the profile of the consultants and if there is any challenge in your interaction with them?
30. How often are consultants engaged to help you to perform on similar tasks?

## **VI. Sustainability and Ownership**

31. Ministry of European Integration is mentioned as central to this project: how has the project worked with you during the process?
32. How do you apply in practice the skills gained from the project?
33. Who identifies development actions needed to be implemented and that contribute to the Kosovo's EU approximation efforts?
34. Who writes the action documents for reforms (or similar) and who carries it out? (GIZ)
35. This project emphasizes concept of the sustainability. How do you understand the sustainability? How would you describe the sustainability of this project? (GIZ)
36. How would you describe challenges during the execution of the project between you as a direct beneficiary/coordinator/implementer and other actors? (GIZ)
37. How would you describe the ability of the participants to handle and create ownership over project results? (GIZ)
38. How would you describe challenges during the execution of the project between you as the implementer of the project and beneficiaries and other actors? (GIZ)

## **VII. Outcomes**

39. How would you describe the way how this project has capacitated your ministry?
40. If it has not, what should have happened differently in the way how project is implemented to capacitate your ministry to gain autonomy on doing specific tasks?
41. Could you comment on the challenges that diminished the successes of the project? Just to make the question more specific, have you noticed specific challenges related to design flaws; recipients' failure to absorb; implementers failure to cooperate with the recipient; donor's failure to monitor, an other?

42. In all the chain of actors involved in the project: EU-GIZ-MEI-Other ministries, which part generates challenges that impact success or failure of the project? (GIZ)

### VIII. Financing

43. This project is development assistance in a form of a grant. How do you see the influence of this in terms of ministries engagement on the project?

## Appendix C

### Letter of Consent

This is a letter of consent of your participation in *an explanatory study of EU development assistance implementation in Kosovo and the implications on the country's incentives for autonomous development*. Your participation in this study is important because you are involved in the coordination or joint implementation of the EU financed projects and possess important information on the challenges that EU development assistance faces in its operational level.

The research is being conducted as part of completing the Master's of Science degree in International Development and Management and it will be presented and submitted as the final thesis at Lund University. This interview will be recorded and transcribed and then used during the data analysis process.

The interview and all opinions expressed on it will be treated in full confidence and anonymity. You have the right to refuse to answer questions, require the stop of the recording, and leave the interview at any time. During the interview, you have the right to ask for clarifications. Moreover, you have the right to request the transcribed interview text for verification before the thesis is submitted on May 2019. Thus, you express the following **CONSENT:**

*I have understood the information written above and I give my full consent to participate in your study. I have also received a copy of the consent forms.*

Participant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

