



Gender, Power and Peacebuilding:

The struggle for gender equality in post-war Kosovo

Linda Guðmundsdóttir

Lokaverkefni til MA-gráðu í mannfræði

Félagsvísindasvið



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

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Abstract

When the conflict in Kosovo came to an end in 1999, a period of peace building and international intervention took over in the country. In this post-war and present development setting, power is being shaped, established and resisted against through actions and ideals. In this thesis, the power relations between local women's NGOs and the international community in Kosovo's peace building process will be analysed through a post-colonial and feminist theoretical standpoint.

This thesis is based on fieldwork carried out in Kosovo between September and November 2010. Seven formal interviews were conducted with local NGO members as well as a dozen informal interviews with other local actors and international aid workers.

Despite various gender equality measures being installed during Kosovo's post-war development, gender equality issues repeatedly fall second to other, more important development issues. Meanwhile, women have been marginalized in the official peace building measures and local initiatives have repeatedly been shunned by international aid agencies. I argue that gender equality mechanisms used in post-war development, such as res. 1325, fail because of two tendencies: First; they tend to be built around essentialized notions that simplify men and women into natural categories rather than focus on the social factors that fuel gendered inequality. Second; such measures never question the frame within which they are created and therefore never encourage structural changes.

Útdráttur

Eftir að stríðinu í Kosovo lauk árið 1999 tók við friðaruppbygging og þróunarstarf í landinu sem enn er í gangi. Skoðað verður valdakerfið sem einkennir samband Kosovóskra kvennasamtaka og alþjóðasamfélagsins út frá kenningum póstmóðernisma og feminisma. Þá verður fjallað um þær leiðir sem alþjóðasamfélagið notar til að viðhalda völdum sínum innan slíkra friðarferla og atbeini heimamanna í slíkum aðstæðum.

Þessi ritgerð byggist á vettvangsrannsókn sem framkvæmd var september til nóvember 2010. Formleg viðtöl voru tekin við sjö meðlimi frjálsra félagasamtaka kvenna ásamt því að tólf óformleg viðtöl við heimamenn og alþjóðastarfsfólk voru skráð niður.

Þrátt fyrir ýmsar reglugerðir og lagaramma um jafnrétti kynjanna sem sett hafa verið fram í Kosovo síðan stríðinu lauk þá hafa jafnréttismál jafnan verið stimpluð sem aukamálefni sem tekið verður á eftir að mikilvægari málum hefur verið komið af borði. Á sama tíma hafa Kosovóskar konur jafnan ekki fengið að vera hluti af þeim friðarumleitunum sem átt hafa sér stað í landinu. Tel ég ástæðu þess meðal annars mega rekja til þeirrar hugmyndarfræði sem liggur að baki mörgum alþjóðlegum jafnréttislöggjöfum og samþykktum sem iðulega er byggð á tvíhyggjuhugmyndum. Slíkar tvíhyggjuhugmyndir þjappa konum og körlum upp í einhæfa flokka sem styrkja enn frekar kynjaðar staðalímyndir og vinna því hvorki gegn ójafnrétti kynjanna né ráðandi valdastrúktúr.

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PREFACE

This thesis outlines the results of a MA research in cultural anthropology at the University of Iceland. The study was supervised by Dr. Kristín Loftsdóttir, professor at the department of Anthropology at UI. The thesis accounts for 60 ECTS out of 120 ECTS required to attain a MA degree in anthropology from the University of Iceland.

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INTRODUCTION

When the conflict in Kosovo came to an end in 1999, a period of peace building shaped by international intervention took over in the country. A year later, the United Nations Security Council put forth resolution 1325, advocating women's equal participation to peace building processes and women's access to decision making roles in post-war development (UNSC/RES/1325, 2000). This thesis is based on fieldwork research and formal interviews conducted with seven members of local NGOs in Kosovo late in the year 2010. This was during the tenth anniversary of UNSCRes. 1325 on women, peace and security and a decade after the war in Kosovo had ended. In this post-war and present development setting; barriers, resistance and power shape the ideological notions used by all actors who work to develop the Kosovar society. They also shape the experiences of the people living there with some having access to peace building procedures, while others have less power to influence it.

Foucault explains that discourses, the way in which we describe people or practices, are shaped by those in power - those who can make their voices heard and who have the social leverage to influence other people to accept what is said as fact, as truths. This is how ideas are built, reinforced or changed (Michel Foucault, 1968 [2002]; 2003). Foucault's theories of discourses and power form a baseline for the works of many scholars of post-modern, post-colonial and third world feminist schools. It is through this lens, of post-colonial, feminist theories that this research looks at how women activists working in local NGOs have experienced the peace-building process, how they feel about local involvement in Kosovo's post-war development and whether they have faced barriers to participate in such peace building measures.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the power structure established by international intervention, shedding light onto the lack of local involvement in Kosovo's path towards development. While looking into the power structure surrounding peace building, this thesis aims to critically analyse international gender equality mechanisms used in peace building with the lens of post-colonial and feminist theories. I argue that through gender essentialized ideas embedded in such mechanisms, women's place on the margins of peace building efforts is perpetuated. Similar studies have been done in the Balkans; for example on Donor pressure on women's NGOs in Bosnia after the Yugoslav war (see Elissa Helms, 2003A and Elissa Helms, 2003B), and the gender specific outcome of the Yugoslav war based on specific case studies (Svetlana Slapšak (Ed.), 2000). Various women's NGOs have published books and

reports, either criticizing the lack of interest in gender equality and gender related issues in the peace-building process in their country (see for example Kosovo Gender Studies Center (KGSC), 2010; Kosova Women's Network (KWN), 2009) or to bring attention to women's actions in Kosovo's history and its post-war environment (see for example Nicole Farnsworth, 2008; KGSC, 2010; Luljeta Vuniqui, 2008). This thesis is an attempt to make a further contribution to these criticisms and writings.

Gender issues in Kosovo

Despite various development actions and gender equality mechanisms established in Kosovo during a period of international intervention which started in 1999, Kosovar women have a disadvantage within their society. They face a higher unemployment rate, have less opportunity to education especially in rural areas, and have less access to any kind of decision making roles within the society (KGSC, 2010). Gendered violence such as domestic abuse and trafficking also places a threat to them. They have also been heavily unrepresented in the peace-building process (KGSC, 2010; Vjollca Krasniqi, 2007; Luljeta Vuniqui, 2008). During the last decade though, various local and international legislation and frameworks have been introduced to tackle gender discrimination and violence. A thirty per cent quota system in parliament is one example, and UNSC resolution 1325, which focuses on women's participation in peace-building, is another. Despite this there is a general lack of implementation of such mechanisms and women continue to draw the short straw when it comes to shaping Kosovo's future. As this research will show, this is a result of certain ideological barriers that place gender issues and women's participation in a category that comes second to many other development issues. Gender mechanisms aimed to sustain gender equality are often born from a feminist critique but as they are incorporated into development and peace building processes they end up white washed, diluted or even resented. NGOs working on empowering women in Kosovo's peace building era face a number of barriers in their work, with international and local officials deeming gender issues as second class. Meanwhile donors influence the projects that get funding through their criteria that often contradict the need of local actors.

Why look into NGOs?

Many local Kosovar NGOs were formed because of certain social needs that occurred after the war due to various other (State) mechanisms not functioning properly, such as social welfare and psychiatric clinics (Nicole Farnsworth, 2008). Some of the NGO members

interviewed had started their organisations at this time, helping people with post-traumatic stress or assisting refugees to find lost family members. Other respondents founded their organisation precisely because they wanted to make peace between ethnic lines, gathering women together, both during and after the conflict, to talk about their experiences and create alliances¹.

The end of the war also brought about a set of new and very gendered problems. Many women suffered from physical, social and mental effects of war rape, while trafficking increased with the presence of International Aid staff (KGSC, 2010). Gender inequality was side-lined as a development issue and many members of women's grassroots organisations established before the war, continued working as NGOs during the post-war era, focusing on gender issues. Other new NGOs were also established during this development era. NGOs differ in scope and work focus,² nevertheless they do share one thing: They are funded mostly by international agencies and organisations. What most of my respondents experienced, and this will be discussed later, was that NGOs are heavily dependent on their donors and the donor's demands for certain kinds of projects, often brushing aside local initiatives.

I argue that local women's NGOs are a part of a multi-layered net of social and political actions where power is constantly being contested and reinforced. Although, NGOs working on gender related issues, and women in general, are marginalized in general peace-building operations, they still have agency and form alternative peace-coalitions, organize behind the scenes peace-talks between women and find venues to object to the masculine structures of both international agencies and the local government. But their existence is dependent on these agencies through funding and regulations, so they balance themselves somewhere between compliance and resistance, trying to keep their organizations running, their income stable and still searching for avenues to enhance women's involvement in this political sphere.

One can raise questions on the influence of resistance movements that are, in many ways, dependent on the power it objects (like NGOs through funding from international agencies). Human rights lawyer Rajagopal (2003) says that the law divides resistance into two

¹ For further information on women's peace alliances in Kosovo and the Balkans see for example: Rogova and Farnsworth (EPLO report), 2010; Sarah Maquire, 2008.

² Over five hundred women's NGOs were listed in Kosovo during the time of the fieldwork conducted in this research, still a large portion of them turned out to be dormant or non-functioning.

categories – legal and illegal, justifiable and non-justifiable. This means that the state only accepts certain ways or categories of resistance that isn't a potential threat to the state's own existence. By categorizing resistance as legitimate, and making it a part of the system, the state gains control over it, making it blunt. Meanwhile other types of resistance are forcefully silenced by the state. Lila Abu-Lughod insight on power and agency is shown by her words: "where there is resistance, there is power" (1990: 42), showing resistance as an indicator of an overlying power structure. Agency thus reveals in a way the power that fuels resistance. Abu-Lughod (1990) has pointed out that resistance, or what will be referred to from here on as *agency*, is a tool to look at power, to understand how it operates and to decipher its discourses. If we acknowledge that agency is a way to look into power, then women's NGOs and their ability to act and resist within a post-war development setting become a way of analysing the development discourses and the way power is exercised in such a setting.

Methods and analysis

This research is based on seven semi-structured interviews conducted with local NGO workers in Kosovo, along with over a dozen informal interviews and meetings with both NGO members and international aid workers, conducted between September and December 2010. Due to the number of NGOs in Kosovo, and not least 'women's NGOs'³, the criteria for this research was narrowed down to those organizations working towards one or more of the following issues: 1. Peace building. 2. Ethnic co-operation and 3. Empowering women in decision making. These criteria were chosen because out of the array of issues that NGOs work on in Kosovo today, these three seemed to fit best with the topic of peace building. The fieldwork material gives insight into local perspectives and well as ideas shared by people working with international donors and multi- as well as bi-lateral development agencies. In addition, discourse analysis was used on various reports and documents concerning the development process within Kosovo.

However, this research is inevitably shaped by my own background as a feminist, an anti-capitalist and a female outsider from a Scandinavian country. This is an ethnographic research done according to anthropological traditions in which the ethnography is seen as a process where one goes into the field, gathers different sets of data and writes it up in

³ A term used to describe those NGOs working on gender related issues, although it must be noted that their members are not only women, nor do they only work for women.

connection to a certain theoretical frame (Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, 1996). This tradition also acknowledges the connection between the researcher and her conclusions and requires the anthropologist to be visible in the text and reflexive in her accounts (Barnard & Spencer, 1996; Russel H. Bernard, 2006; Charlotte Aull Davies, 1999; Martyn Hammersley & Paul Atkinson, 2007; Kristín Loftsdóttir, 2010). As Kristín Loftsdóttir (2010) says, by being visible and giving accounts on your own experience, one draws attention to the political and personal aspects of fieldwork.

As many anthropologists have noted, anthropological research is not conducted in order to generalize, or to analyse micro settings and then apply them to macro phenomena (Barnard and Spencer, 1996; Bernard, 2006; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Kristín Loftsdóttir, 2010). Its purpose is to shed light on lived experiences, often the lived experiences of those who do not possess dominant positions in society (Davies, 1999). Although as Davies points out, such experiences can be indicators for bigger trends. Anthropology is thus a research of ideas that people have on their own existence, where one touches upon realities that are fragments of bigger social connections (Kristín Loftsdóttir, 2010). Although drawn from my own experience in the field, this research is an attempt to give voice to different sets of opinions raised by the people I met, and to look at how those opinions shape the lived experiences, barriers and agency of women working in local Kosovar women's NGOs.

Overview of the thesis

The research starts with two theoretical chapters. The first chapter builds on post-colonial theories and discusses image building of the 'West' and the 'Rest' and how such images have moved from colonialism to modern day international intervention. The second chapter moves on to talk about women in peace-building, with a focus on various gender equality mechanisms in both development and peace building processes. There is a correlation between such gender mechanisms and sadly they tend to fail, or become blunt as they are incorporated into bureaucracies. I argue that the overemphasis on women instead of gender relations when dealing with gender inequality puts the burden of reform solely on women. Also, such trends often build upon essentialized notions of men as agents of war and women as victims thus only widening gender gaps, while denying women agency.

Chapter four explores the history of the Balkans and the causes of recent conflicts within the region. It ends with a discussion of the history of women in Kosovo, especially the case of women NGOs and touches upon the role of Kosovar women in civil society during the

last 30 years. Chapters 5 and 6 explain the methodology used for this research, and discuss the ethical dilemmas encountered in the field. This is by far the most personal part of the thesis, as it draws heavily on my own experiences.

The last chapters, number 7 and 8 are based mostly on the interviews, field notes and other analysis of data retrieved in the field. In these chapters I analyse the power structures the women NGOs are a part of, using both my own field material as well as other scholar's writings. I argue that 'othering' processes are at the core of the development and post-war reconstruction within Kosovo and are used in order to legitimize foreign intervention and the power of international agencies over the post-war development process. I look into the effects of Donor policies on NGOs actions, while discussing local participation in the peace building process in Kosovo. I then move on to talk about gender equality and the barriers that restrain the use of many already established gender equality mechanisms and laws in Kosovo. This part of the thesis ends with a discussion on agency. The thesis closes with a discussion on general findings.

Post-colonial theories

Analyzing power

Post-colonial theories are heavily influenced by Michel Foucault's work; still I will refrain from giving a long-winding overview of all his ideas here. There are certain theoretical notions worth mentioning though, because they are relevant to this research. These are Foucault's theories on *power and discourses* on one hand and *governmentality* on the other. From there I will narrow my theoretical discussion and arguments down to post-colonial scholars and feminist scholars that have mainly focused their attention on development and peace-building.

Social scientists have for a long time tried to decipher the social structures that influence people's lives within their societies. Foucault's theories on power, knowledge and discourse have had a profound influence on scholars of different disciplines, anthropology included. That is not to say that his work has not been contested or criticized, on the contrary, but the foundations of his ideas still shaped and were added upon by many scholars, especially post-modern, post-colonial and feminist ones.

Knowledge is power and what we deem as truths are indicators of power structures (Michel Foucault, 2003). This is probably one of the most known, and most built upon theories of Foucault. As the French scholar explains, truths are established by those in power. Societal elites decide if we talk about things and thus how we talk about things, how things are defined and what knowledge falls into general norms. The state, for example, is a power structure that works hard on normalizing knowledge that reinforces the state's autonomy and power over its subjects. That's the power of knowledge, of justified truths – it legitimizes dominance. If we believe certain strands of truths, for example that a certain system is allowed to hold us captive if we do not abide to its law (like our police and prison system), the system at hand (the state) can legitimately remain in power. Meanwhile, this system works hard to exclude or even exterminate knowledge that is deemed unnecessary or invalid, especially if that knowledge opposes those truths that the state systematically tries to withhold (Foucault, 2003;1968 [2002]). This is how systems reinforce power and it is done through what Foucault called *discourses*. Discourse is the way we talk about things, the way we define subjects and ideas and they are usually controlled by elites. Discourses are the wheels that keep the power systems going. Through discourses power is maintained because they justify

certain realities as truths and explain dominance as a natural order of things (Foucault, 2003; 1968 [2002]).

One of the main criticisms of Foucault has been the way he portrayed power elites and systems of governance as almost non-human and untouchable systems; and for not including the complexity of everyday lives and people's agency. Although this is an interesting debate, it is beyond the scope of this thesis. Foucault's analysis is over 30 years old and has been shaped and some might say improved by various scholars that succeeded him. Some of them will be mentioned later in this paper. In Foucault's defence I would like to point out two things though – he made it perfectly clear that power was not *owned* by somebody; rather that power is a connection between two or more entities and individuals. One therefore does not simply have power or not, one's power is always relevant to the position she holds to others (Foucault, 2003). As an example: a man might not hold great powers against the police, while he might hold power within his household.

One of the most valuable gifts Foucault gave us as scholars and as subjects, is the notion that our ideas about things that generally are seen as truth, are in fact shaped and constructed through a system of power – and therefore, can be contested. Thus, although he doesn't talk much about an individual's powers to act, ideas of agency are still present in his theories – or at least, they can be introduced into his theories.

Let's move on to his second theory used in this paper. Foucault's preoccupation with analysing power left us with an interesting theoretical notion called *governmentality*. Jonathan Xavier Inda (2005) and Clive Barnett (1999) give a very good explanation on how Foucault's ideas of government, governance and governmentality can be applied when analysing systems of power. First of all we have to move away from our general definition of government (as the ruling parties of our countries). Governmentality plainly stands for a modern mentality of governing, where control is legitimized and withheld by establishing and reinforcing ideas that make subjects control themselves (Barnett, 1999; Inda, 2005). It is a mentality of governing, a way of control without having to constantly use open force. In a way, it's the opposite of direct power or force which is used to punish those that break the rules of a system (Clive Barnett, 1999). This way of governance through self-governing of the subjects is applied by most governments today: subjects are introduced to regulations which are explained as norms while ideas of certain behaviours are shown as good citizenship. Therefore, by following these guidelines made by government, people conform to control.

According to this Foucauldian sense of government, government is any system of power that uses this kind of governance as a way to control, shape and regulate people's

behaviour (Inda, 2005). Inda points out that this insight of government helps us analyse political powers and understand them. Scholars *can use* governmentality to look into how governments shape subjects. They can *apply* governmentality when analysing the discursive tools governments use to make people fulfil certain criteria of ideal subjects. Governmentality, simply indicates a mentality of governing and can thus be used as an analytical tool to decipher power structures.

By analysing governmentality in a secluded arena, we not only see the way subjects are controlled by government, but also how subjects respond to such control, comply with it, protest and fight it (Inda, 2005). As Barnett (1999) points out, this theory of governmentality gives more room for agency than many other of Foucault's theories of power. By applying governmentality, scholars can look into people's agency as well (Jonathan Xavier Inda, 2005). Still, as Inda points out, it can be equally useful to look into what knowledge and perspectives governments dismiss, which behaviours are classified as unacceptable and which societal problems are deemed important to tackle (or not to tackle). Analysing the ways governments work to improve said societal problems also tell a tale about their priorities. These are all indicators of the government's mentality and therefore can be analysed through the lens of governmentality.

It is with this understanding of governmentality that the power structure in the peace building process in Kosovo will be analysed. The last chapters of this paper reveal the measures and discourses used by both the international community and the local government concerning Kosovo's development and gender equality. Governmentality is thus the lens used to spot indicators on the mentality of governance in post-war Kosovo, while certain filters of post-modernists thoughts are the tools of analysis.

Imagining others

There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces. Above all, authority can, indeed must, be analyzed. (Edward Said, 1978: 19-20)

One of the most efficient ways to control is by reinforcing the idea of your own superiority by shaping negative images of others. This is one of the backbones of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which, like many of Foucault's writings, has heavily influenced post-colonial theories (Ólafur Rastrick, 2006). Said draws from Foucault's insights on discourse, but he was

also one of the scholars who criticized Foucault's theories for lacking ideas on resistance against power (Rastrick, 2006; See also Said 1978; 23).

As Said points out, those in power are in a position to shape the image attributed to less powerful groups and such images are shaped through discourses – that is by talking about others in a certain way, defining them in a certain way and explaining them in a certain way that then becomes a dominant and later normative way of seeing others. He explains the way the Orient has always been explained by the West, usually as the opposite of the West itself; meanwhile, reinforcing a more positive image of the West. The Orient, in fact, has been defined by colonialists, European travellers, historians and scholars alike. That has resulted in an array of imageries portraying the West as rational, masculine and dominant as opposed to the emotional, mysterious, subordinate and feminine East (Rastrick, 2006; Said, 1978).

Said says that this has been the case from when Napoleon first invaded Egypt in 1798. An almost mythical image of the Orient was created, reinforced and recreated by the West, an image closely connected to the West's own interest in dominating the area. These mythical ideas were again and again put forth as a description of the nature of the Orient, as truths and as such truths were used as an excuse to justify control over it (Said, 2006). The Orient had to be tamed because from a European stand point, it was not.

As an interesting addition to Said's Orientalism, Božidar Jezernik wrote the book *Wild Europe: the Balkans in the gaze of Western travellers* (2004). There he gathers the travel histories of Europeans in the Balkans since the mid Sixteenth century, revealing how it was always described as a Wild, barbaric place, as part of the Asian Orient and the Other. Jezernik concludes that such accounts tell more about the culture of the observers; of the way Europeans wanted to see themselves in opposition to the Balkans (2004).

This kind of "othering", of seeing others as a binary opposition, or a negation of one's self, does not only show the ideas used to define those others, it also shows what kind of ideas we want to connect to ourselves. That is, by putting forth negative images of others, and making it clear that these others are the opposite of the West, cultural stereotypes about the West as positive have been reinforced. Through such images Western dominance over other regions has been justified. In fact, Europe's very identity, Said argues, is shaped around its notions of superiority against everything non-European (1978). This notion can be expanded to incorporate most of today's so-called Western, "developed" countries. David Sibley (1995) writes about Europe and its borders and has built upon Said's theories. He says the boundaries we make between us and others are formed through cultural imagery. These boundaries are raised between opposites, between good and evil, or things clean and unclean and we apply

such binary opposites to *us* and *others*. This is clearly indicated in the examples used by European countries to define themselves as civilized as opposed to the unstable and uncivilized rest of the world (Sibley, 1995). It is a construct of „Us“ against „Others“ just like in Said's theory on Orientalism where cultural myths are used to shape ideological boundaries between the East and the West, and as myths go, the Orient then, is not a natural portrayal of a place, it is a creation of an idea (Said, 1978; Said, 2006).

But even though images of the Orient are a creation, they are not just empty ideas. Such images are a part of a system of knowledge, created through discourse. It is with Orientalism that dominance is justified, that colonialism was normalized, that racial categories persist. And domination is a powerful factor to those subjected to it. This is a point Said himself puts forth as a person having grown up in a former British Colony. He says that the images of the Oriental person, which recently has moved to the ‚Arab‘, is cloaked by racism, cultural stereotypes and dehumanizing ideologies that form barriers for the Arab subject to act (p. 27). Orientalism, or any kind of system of authority, has an effect on the subjects it strives to control. Said makes it clear though, that this system is not a power in itself, it is a tool formed through multiple connections where individual writings and actions can, and do add to it, but where individuals can also resist to it (Said, 1978; Said 2006).

Analysing (post-)colonialism

Post-colonial theory, forces us to position ourselves as scholars and be aware of the colonial backgrounds that scholarly knowledge itself is built on (Said, 1978; Said 2006). It forces us not to fall into the trap of seeing distinctions between for example; us and others, Europe and Eastern Europe – as natural. It forces us to become evolved in specific situations, fragmented realities, and to look at those fragmented realities as true accounts of personal experiences. It also forces us to analyse the power structures at hand in those specific situations. Analysing fragmented realities in specific (post-)colonial situations, instead of power in general, is precisely what scholars are doing more and more⁴.

When analysing colonialism or post-colonialism, it is important to look into fragments of life and look into the power structures at hand within specific settings. Still, as Anne McClintock warns, we must not get caught up in binary notions about the dominant and the

⁴ (see for example Krasniqi (2004) in her analysis on UN peacekeeping posters in Kosovo; Kristín Loftsdóttir (2009) in her article invisible colour and Helms (2003A and 2003B) with her research on women NGOs in Bosnia).

dominated when looking into colonialism. We are all meshed up in a complex system, a net of historical events, of power, imagery, discourses and dominance that is constantly shaping and misshaping itself like an amoeba. In this regard, I find Mary Louise Pratt's notion of „contact zones“ (1992: 6) useful, where she points out that colonial encounters are engaged in contact, and this contact produces events and images that shape and reshape people's dominance and resistance. So, while Said's Orientalism, Foucault's analyses of Power and Discourse and Escobar's criticism on development (see below) are useful ways to analyse how powerful groups advocate ideas to reinforce hierarchies, to see the 'big picture' in the power structure at hand – we must not dismiss the complexities of power relations, or the lived experience of people in (post)colonial settings. We must also look into the fragments of realities, the small discourses of resistance within colonial settings.

Categorizing others

Just as the idea of the West and the Rest are created through discourse, so too are images of the developing world. The anthropologist Artruro Escobar criticized the distinction made between the developing and the developed countries in his book *Encountering Development* (1995). He viewed development as a tool of repression used by the West to subjugate the Third world; and as a continuation of colonial domination. Escobar's writing gave new ground to analysing and criticizing development, and his writing is based on both Foucault's theories on power, knowledge and discourses and draws from Said's Orientalism. Escobar said that development makes us categorize people with terms which have embedded meanings – like *underdeveloped*, *poor*, or *in need* (Artruro Escobar, 1995).

Escobar stressed the need to acknowledge that the development discourse rendered us power over people in the developing world. In fact, according to Escobar development discourse *created* the developing world – as an idea, as a boundary around Europe's and North America's civilized selves. Through these discourses the first world created negative cultural stereotypes of the Third world (as precisely underdeveloped, poor or in need). Escobar also criticized the classifications of First, Second, and Third world because they not only had embedded meanings (with the West in the first place), they also simplified people's lived experiences and a country's place into a development category. According to him, such categories did little to explain the complexities of people's lived experience or the variety of class within countries (Escobar, 1995).

Development, as Escobar noted, is in its nature Eurocentric because it is based on Western systems of knowledge. Calling a country “underdeveloped” is thus not a fact; it is a

view of that country's situation, seen from the perspective of a more powerful state. It is through this perspective that development practices are conducted (1995). James Ferguson adds to this notion and says that the systems of knowledge we use in development processes affect the decisions made within those processes (James Ferguson, cited in Kristín Loftsdóttir, 2009). As Kristin Loftsdóttir talks about, the actions taken in development are mostly based on (Western) ideologies of modernity and prosperity (2009). This is precisely the case in Kosovo where the peace building process has been shaped by development discourses on economic growth and good governance (Valur Ingimundarson, 2004).

Kosovo might not fit into general development categories, as it lies on the boundaries of Europe and is not a former European colony. Suvi Keskinen, Salla Tuori's, Sari Irni and Diana Mulinari (2009) refreshing compilation of articles on modern colonialism reveals how Western countries have lately applied the same discursive methods on countries on the periphery of Europe as they formerly did for example in their African colonies:

Since the fall of the socialist systems at the beginning of the 1990s and the intensified economic, political and scientific cooperation across the former 'iron curtain', many feminist researcher from Central and Eastern Europe have pointed out the similarities in the way in which the 'Third World' and the 'Second World' are constructed by the 'First World'. In much the same way as the Orient and Africa were constructed as the 'other' by the Europeans of the colonial period, Eastern and Central Europe have now been represented as the underdeveloped and dependent opposite of western Europe. These othering processes are supported by the economic and political domination, as well as the discursive power, of the Western countries (Regulska 1998; Slavona 2006). (Keskinen et al, 2009: 2).

As Keskinen et al. say, exporting civilization has always been an essential part of colonialism. And, according to them, that is precisely what Western European countries are doing today. The lure of various civilizing processes is something many countries take part in, in the name of international relations and intervention. Such “(post)colonial practices” (2009:1) are upheld and valued as a natural part of a civilizing process of trade, peace or development.

While engaging in such post colonial practises, these countries uphold ideas of others and themselves (Keskinen et al, 2009; Kristín Loftsdóttir, 2012). Scandinavia for example, with its big budget on peacekeeping, is seen as the good guys, capable and civilized and exemplary to other rich countries. The image portrayed of the Scandinavian countries is a binary opposition to the undermining images of those it seeks to aid.

Many are likely to disagree with this critical view of today's aid system, saying that aid policies have changed a lot, giving developing countries more autonomy over their fate. It is true that the discursive focus has changed, where, as Goetz and Sandler point out; countries

own their own development (Anne-Marie Goetz and Joanne Sandler, 2007). That might well be how we talk about development today, with shifts going from *partnership* to *ownership*, swirling between new discursive forms that have likely taken some heed of scholar's and actor's criticism; but it never really alters the system at hand. This sort of discursive whitewashing through policy changing will be discussed better in relation to "gender mainstreaming" projects, in the next chapter. But before this is discussed, it is intriguing to look at the gendered discourses used in colonial enterprises.

Theories on Gender and peace building

Gender and (Post-)Colonialism

“Bad patriarchies”

The need to save women has repeatedly been used as a reason for action in inter-global relationships. Probably the most known cases being when the Bush administration pledged that one of the reasons for invading Afghanistan was to help the local women (Keskinen et al., 2009; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak; 2004). Spivak called it “the old topos of intervening for the sake of women” and added; “It is to save Afghan women from terror that we must keep the peace by force of arms.” (2004; 92). These slogans about saving women from bad cultures, usually have a very gender essentialist ring, with women being displayed as victims that need saving from the mean men in their countries. The women are non-active, the men are agents, working either as (exotic) villains or as the (civilized) saviours. This is a clear example of David Sibley’s (1995) notions of how we apply images based on binary opposites onto ‘us’ and ‘others’. This is also quite clearly, an example of how the international community renders women short of agency in their discourses on state building and intervention.

Gender has been used since the beginning of colonialism. Kristín Loftsdóttir stresses the importance to understand “how gendered ideas of the present are embedded in past colonial context.” (2012: 42). Abu-Lughod says that saving women has been used as a reason for foreign intervention both during and after colonialism (2002). In fact, colonialism cannot be removed from its connections to gender and gender relations – its images and practices are based on gendered notions (McClintock, 1995). As discussed above, the discourse about the superiority of Europe system of rule has been used in colonialism and also peace building processes and the same can be said about the discourse on Europeriority in gender equality issues.

Keskinen et al. say that gender equality discourse is at the heart of discussions on nation and peace building and that these discourses go hand in hand with ideas of ‘bad patriarchies’ (2009: 5) often in far away, non-Western places. Within this discourse, women are seen as victims of their cultures (this is especially common today when referring to Arab countries). Such victimized women, according to this discourse, need saving from the hands of civilized, gender equality-centred Europeans (read European men). It is a discourse which

only acknowledges non-Western patriarchies as oppressive and idolizes many Western states as gender equality utopias (see a discussion on how gender is used in today's foreign relations in Keskinen et al, 2009; Kristín Loftsdóttir 2012). Thus discourses on women issues, gender equality and women's active participation in society, have also been used as measures to define which countries belong to the elite nations – to the socially developed world. Yet, even within the Western nations, gender equality hasn't been achieved (Keskinen et al, 2009). Kristín Loftsdóttir discusses this trend in Iceland, saying that Icelanders removed themselves from Iceland's racist history and find a niche to talk against Islam in Iceland by referring to gender inequality in Muslim communities; "References to women are thus used as a way to dwell on the criticism of Muslims in general, and to the glory of European societies." (2012: 47). At the same time, the Icelandic government has claimed Iceland's status as a nation among nations with its focus on international intervention where the aim is to teach developing countries to become prosperous, just like Iceland has (Kristín Loftsdóttir, 2012). The idea that Iceland and other Nordic countries have achieved a high level of gender equality is used as way to depict such countries as more civilized than their poorer counterparts. Women's rights are basically used as a discursive tool for Orientalism.

Chandra Mohanty's critical writing about the creation of third world women as an idea used by the West to represent their others is worth noting here. Mohanty's criticism, which was mostly aimed at Western feminists and their representation of women of the South as a homogeneous group, was that women of poorer countries live in very different settings within and between their countries (2003). That their lives are not just shaped by oppression and that even though they live in oppressive situations, their experience of oppression is diverse. Judith Butler (1990) wraps up Mohanty's and other third world feminist's criticism in a beautiful way:

The notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists. Where those various contexts have been consulted within such theories, it has been to find "examples" or "illustrations" of a universal principle that is assumed from the start. That form of feminist theorizing has come under criticism for its efforts to colonize and appropriate non-Western cultures to support highly Western notions of oppression, but because they tend as well to construct a "Third World" or

even an "Orient" in which gender oppression is subtly explained as symptomatic of an essential, non-Western barbarism. (Judith Butler, 1990: 3)

Such images of “bad patriarchies” do not only strengthen the West’s control over the Rest⁵, they also reject women’s multiple realities. More importantly, they reject their agency. When we see women as victims of a post-war, male-oriented structure, we naturalize their inequality as a part of a barbaric culture (Abigail Hunt and Rosario Undurraga, 2009; Johanna Valenius, 2007). This tendency, from colonialism, to post-colonialism and even within early Western feminism simplifies women and men into singular categories, and refuses their diversity.

Women and men as natural categories

The core of (anthropological) feminist critique is and has always been against the notion of men and women as natural categories (Henrietta L. Moore, 1988). Therefore when doing research, our main aim should not be to plainly look at women, but rather to look at the way gender is constructed within power structures. Just like other social categories, gender is socially constructed, made by the ideologies that we attribute to the sexes, or as Moore puts it; „The inevitable fact of biological difference between the sexes tells us nothing about the general social significance of that difference“ (Moore, 1998:7). That social significance can be seen in the ideologies and notions attributed to men and women.

This core of feminist criticism has influenced anthropology, with anthropologists drawing more and more from feminist scholars in the last decades (Moore, 1988). Feminist theory has thus helped shift anthropologists gaze to a wider array of subjects, for it had mostly left women unquestioned and unmentioned before. One of the main emphases of feminist anthropology has been to stop the trend of adding ‘women’ into the equation in ethnography - of putting them in sub-chapters in ethnographic writing. Instead, feminist anthropologists have focused on a gendered analysis where gender itself is seen as a variable that shapes people’s realities within our history, economies, politics and society at a whole – just like class or racial categories can do (Moore, 1988).

⁵ It is worth noting that the West here is not used as a natural category, but as an analytical one. I am perfectly aware of the diverse set of power structures, people and ideas existing within the West.

Now, another important theoretical thought has to be noted here and that is the notion on *intersectionality*⁶ it is a term which is an offspring of Third world feminist critics, who have pointed out that gender is not the only factor that shape women's (and men's) lives; it is interactive with other factors such as colour, age, nationality, class and ethnicity (Jahan, 1995).

Women's and men's realities are thus never solely based on their gender. For example, Kosovar men's identities are heavily based on ethnicity but also on very masculine notions. Being men generally gives them a head start against women in their society when it comes to decision making and top level position (see conclusions). But at the same time, their ethnicity also plays a role, with the Albanian Kosovars being a majority and thus dominant against their Serbian counterparts. But even the Kosovar Albanian male is subjected to international rule. Because of his background, often because of his unemployment or poverty – he falls lower in the country's political hierarchy where foreign bodies such as the EU, NATO and the UN hold the reigns. There is thus, a certain stratification of power with poor women of minorities often being least likely to succeed in getting their voices heard (Cynthia Cockburn, 1998). Cockburn points out that a person's individuality, its place within a hierarchy, within a gendered group and its position within a certain historical time are all there at the same time. That person is never just a victim, or an aggressor of war. This brings us back to what was said in chapter two about people and power: People are never totally powerful or totally powerless but are placed within a net of power, while images, discourses about people of different genders or ethnicity, are an indicator of the power system at hand.

As discussed in the previous chapter, peace building is a social engineering process, where people fight to maintain access to power and discourses are used to normalize the rule of the processes while other discourses are rejected as a part of agency against power. Gendered notions, or discourses, affect how women and men are incorporated into peace building in Kosovo. Drawing from Moore's feminist anthropology and other feminist thoughts we see that 'woman' is not an analytical category, and the barriers against women's struggle are not a natural response to women's traits, but – 'women' can be analysed as an ideological category, which has been created through discourses. So, by looking into the

⁶ See Rounaq Jahan, 1995 for a further discussion on intersectionality and Third world feminists and Mohanty (1998 and 2003) for the criticism on the lack of intersectionality in feminist writing.

discourses used about women and peace building, and analysing the discursive and structural barriers faced by women to take part in peace building, we get a better understanding on how gender shapes women's experiences in post war Kosovo, and we see how peace-building is a gendered enterprise.

Gender essentialism in war and peace

Images, symbols as well as actions are indicators of otherness, of inequality. Men's hierarchy is based on certain symbols and notions of masculinity, where femininity becomes the opposite of those privileged notions. In militarism masculine notions revolve around ideas of bravery, valour, aggression and loyalty to an entity (like the state) (Cockburn, 1998).

A general gendered idea is that men make war while women and children are peaceful victims of conflicts. As Cockburn points out; war is definitely gendered, and the world of military and arms is predominately masculine (1998). But even though there is a masculine discourse used to perpetuate war, men can be victims of war, just as women are no less participants in conflicts. These masculine notions favour men during conflict (despite them also suffering from it), and help shape what actions are taken after the conflict is finished (Cockburn, 1998). It means that the hierarchy established during war, transcends into peace era. Because of some men's already favourable position during conflict, their needs remain highlighted while an array of women's and underpowered men's needs are kept marginalized when peace is established. So it is in this way that the inequalities established between the sexes during wartime transcends into peace building eras. As Mark Wolfgram points out – if men – and only certain men, have access to all the negotiations happening during peace building times, without ever representing marginal groups, their interest will be served above others in the peace building process: They get to shape and create the peace that is beneficial to them, and they get the power to keep their favourable positions.

During war, women generally loose access to resources – food, jobs, loans, as well as access to politics and public decision making (Cockburn, 1998). With the upsurge of nationalism, like we saw in the second Balkan wars, the emphasis on family value changed with women being encouraged to stay at home to give birth to the nation's children and take care of the old, while men were encouraged to defend their country and take control of national matters (Cockburn, 1998). When it comes to making peace treaties, it's those same men that get to make the decisions on how to make peace.

The sad side of this story is that it's the combatants that that get to control peace measures. Cockburn (1998) says that it is banal to accept when the same patriarchy, former

soldiers of war and flag bearers of the masculine images that perpetuated conflict, get to shape the peace building process. As Steinberg's article about the conflict in Angola reveals, civil society actors and Angolan women were shown that the peace building process was not made for their benefit, but for the former aggressors of war. In this way, amnesties are giving to warring sides, often relieving them of responsibility of their actions both in war and peace times (2010). In Angola, this had devastating effects. Women lost faith in the peace process because the efforts used largely increased the risk of violence against them. So, when Angola faced a recurrence of violent outbreak, many women did not oppose to the violence simply because peace had not made them any safer from it (Steinberg, 2010).

Cockburn says this is generally the case in peace building; women are kept from official negotiations, treaties are signed without any women present, without the issue of gender inequality discussed – meanwhile an emphasis is made to have all ethnic or national entities present (at least as a token gesture) to enforce participation between different inhabitants (1998). It goes to show that building peace like this is bound to privilege some and keep others marginalized.

These gender essentialized notions are also eminent in international intervention and affect how we do peace building. According to Valenius, (local) women are generally seen as apolitical, non-men and passive by international organizations working in post war development (2007). As strange as it may sound, one of the most devastating barriers against women's input in peace building is this notion of them as passive and peace loving. While notions of motherhood and images of women's peaceful nature can to some extent counteract against violence, such images also work to reinforce gender divides and gendered notions, fastening people even more in their presupposed gender roles (Prue Bates, 2000). Using gender essentialism to counteract war, is basically counteractive. In fact, Bates says that building peace on such notions is at its worst harmful, and at its best fruitless, because it reinforces militarism and sexism. What happens as well is that if we constantly look at women as pacifiers and peace loving, they are robbed of their agency in peace building and they are not held accountable for their actions in war. Likewise, by looking at men as aggressive we dismiss them as victims of war and reduce their responsibility for making real, sustainable peace. Sylvia Chant and Matthew Gutmann (2002) say that men as a gendered category have not been included in development programs, and that it has not only negatively affected men, but the category as a whole. By leaving them out of the gender-picture, they are not made responsible for change when it comes to gender issues (2002). Bates advocates that in order to succeed in bringing people of both genders into peace building, we should refrain

from these stereotypes and make an effort to decipher the system at hand and analyse the power structures that hold it together (2000).

Gender essentialism thus imports negative traits that affect people's access to peace building. If we draw from what's been said above, the effects of such discourses are multiple. First of all women are not seen as agents because the emphasis is on women's passive nature; second, because women are put into a simplified category, women's issues are seen as a natural trait of that category instead of being a result of a power structure; third, issues concerning gender equality are seen as solely relevant to women, because women are seen as gendered while men are not and the inequality rooted in gendered notions are seen as a product of a natural category (Cockburn, 1998; Bates, 2000; Valenius, 2007).

Such a discourse derives from a political agenda and has always been heavily embedded in colonial notions and actions. As Chant and Gutmann (2002) say, the construction of gender myths, especially about third world people, for example such images of non-Western men as idle and incapable, has been used to serve Western political agendas and used to explain why policies and neo-liberal reforms haven't worked. Different sets of ideas about women and men are transcended; images built, reconstructed and destroyed as a part of a power build up. Sometimes, colonial powers build on negative images of bad patriarchies, like discussed previously, sometimes on images of the lazy (male) local and in other times the masculine notions established in the local culture are taken for granted. One thing is for sure, women are almost always introduced as passive.

Here I will give an example of 'gender mainstreaming', a gender equality measure used in development. Later I will compare it with the way gender is handled in res. 1325 which is a UN Security Council resolution used to integrate women's issues into peace building processes (UNSC, 2000). By comparing these two, we see many similarities between them and realize how gender essentialized discourses are repeatedly used in international intervention.

Gender mainstreaming in development

...after three decades of feminist activism in the field of development – both at the level of theory and practice – most development institutions have still to be constantly reminded of the need for gender analysis in their work, policy-makers have to be lobbied to 'include' the 'g' word and even our own colleagues need convincing that integrating a gender analysis makes a qualitative difference. (Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay, 2007: 135)

The peace building process in Kosovo is based on development paradigms. Therefore it makes sense to look into the ways gender issues have been incorporated into development processes in general, and see how these methods transcend into peace building processes.

As quoted above, Mukhopadhyay points out the inability of the development sector to tackle gender inequality, despite various efforts to do so. Other scholars have also made this observation, saying that despite gender and women's issues becoming recurrent slogans in the development business, the same extent of change has not followed⁷: Women are still poorer and underrepresented. Gender division of labour remains largely unchanged, gender violence is still endemic and difference in income is still a reality (Goetz and Sandler, 2007).

Gender essentialism directly affect people's lived experiences, and however diverse women's lives are, we cannot forget, As Goetz and Sandler (2007) note, that there is a profound crisis in women's lives: "For the most part, however, callous indifference meets the suffering of women the world over. The fact that up to 6 million women die of gender related violence every three years ... does not plague the conscience of the way that holocausts and genocide do. Women's suffering is too normalized to generate shame and outrage." (Goetz and Sandler, 2007: 163).

In 1995, as it became increasingly clear that women's needs were not issued in development and women were not thoroughly a part of development processes, the UN adopted a strategy called „gender mainstreaming“ (Cornwall et al., p. 3). It followed the UN decade for women (1975-1985) and was a tactic aimed to integrate gender equality measures into development, shifting from a focus on *Women in development* (WID) to *Gender and development* (GAD). The shift was supposed to move the focus away from women specifically, to the wider context of gender relations (Ramya Subrahmanian, 2007). This focus on gender was based on ideas from feminist battles which showed the social relationships that fuel gender inequality. By “mainstreaming” gender, women were then supposed to be integrated into both policy and practice in development (Cornwall et al., 2007). Southern feminists have criticized how development agencies and Western governments have worked on issues connected to women in the third world since the 70s (Jahan, 1995). Many pointed out the importance of what is now known as intersectionality – at looking into how inequalities are linked and how people's positions is not just defined by gender, but by many

⁷ See for example: Molyneux, 2007; Goetz and Sandler, 2007; Cornwall et al., 2007.

variables such as colour, class and race⁸. The criticism was also aimed at development agencies for not changing hierarchies within their own structures, and for always seeing inequality as linked to traditions in developing countries (Jahan, 1995).

Southern feminists in the 70s onwards, criticized both the focus on WID and also the integration of gender through “gender mainstreaming” efforts in GAD (Jahan, 1995). They pointed out that social structures, macro-policies and development paradigms had to be analysed if we were serious about changing the position of women. Without such a change in development ideology and agenda, simply adding women to the formula would not work. What was needed was a transformation of development paradigms (Jahan, 1995). This criticism is still valid. But the reaction of development donors was an agenda called *gender mainstreaming*.

What is interesting is that Western feminists advocated this kind of integration of gender issues into the development system, and said it would advocate greater participation of women in development. As Jahan points out, many Southern feminist rejected this by stating that a greater integration into a system that already subordinated them would increase their unequal status: “The objectives articulated by the donors, on the other hand, emphasized women’s development with very little reference to a vision of alternative development. The donors highlighted gender equality but did not link it with success in other struggles for equality; they stressed integration and mainstreaming but did not criticize mainstream models and practices.” (Jahan, 1995: 27) The idea of changing the system at hand was swept off the table and “gender” was added to the development melting pot. Priorities based on gender considerations didn’t shift while gender slogans became popular, along with battles for gender quotas and micro finance projects for women, but always within an already established development agenda which evolved around neo-liberal ideas of growth and Western ideas of development (Valenius, 2007; Goetz and Sandler, 2007; Subrahmanian, 2007).

Gender mainstreaming became an instant hit within the development sector, a highlighted issue among the international community, which quickly introduced a wide range of “gender mainstreaming” measures. Subrahmanian (2007) says that it even succeeded in bringing women into the development equation, or at least it made it clear that they had not been a part of it before. But as many scholars also pointed out, the gender and development

⁸ See for example Mohanty (1988) and (2003).

category soon became hollow, white-washed and diluted – a reoccurring slogan that quickly wore out (Cornwall et al., 2007; Subrahmanian, 2007; Mukhopadhyay, 2007).

Gender inequality has proven to be much more intractable than anticipated. In several arenas women's capabilities and quality of life have worsened, not improved; legislative reform is not matched by changes in political and economic realities to enable women to use new laws; gains in one sphere have produced new, detrimental forms of gender inequality; women everywhere are having to fight to get their voices heard, despite new emphases on democracy, voice and participation. At the same time, arguments made by feminist researchers have become denatured and depoliticized when taken up by development institutions. For many, what were once critical insights, the result of detailed research, have now become 'gender myths': essentialisms and generalizations, simplifying frameworks and simplistic slogans. (Cornwall, Harrison & Whitehead, 2007: 2).

Cornwall's et al. (2007) criticism against gender mainstreaming is that it was heavily based on simplified notions – actions and framework were built upon gender essentialist ideas, on gender myths. Valenius has also made this point, saying that gender mainstreaming efforts in development were from the onset heavily based on already existing ideas of women as either peaceful caretakers or victims of war (2007). Such myths on women's victimhood have left the international community being unable to see women as agents and from taking any real actions (2007). Rosalind Eyben (2007), says that using gender myths has always been a tool for advocating women's empowerment or issues in development. When the focus shifted from women to gender, images of boys and girls replaced images of the female-child. At the same time, images of women raising their fists in the air replaced the classical development image of an unhappy, pregnant and poor (African) woman. As Eyben says, myths can produce action, but they can also counteract feminist action, creating new gender myths, or establishing existing gender myths in order to push through a certain *development* agenda, and not necessarily a feminist or gender equality agenda (2007). In brief, it widens the already existing gender gap, along with the inequalities and privileges allocated to each side.

Everjoice J. Win (2007) says that women in the third world have been defined by outsiders by these sorts of development images. In that way, women of Africa have an image of being poor, powerless and pregnant because that's how the development sector has traditionally depicted them. Images are used to provoke sympathy among richer people in the world in order to get funds, but these images only work to reinforce those negative realities depicted (2007). In that way, gender mainstreaming, using gender myths that portrayed women in various positions, only reinforced the idea that gender was a women's struggle, a

soft issue and therefore, a second class issue compared to other development struggles (Cornwall et al., 2007; Win, 2007).

According to Goetz and Sandler, gender mainstreaming has been advocated precisely because gender is a second class issue and not seen as viable to the development structure itself (2007). It is a method of assimilation, and not about infiltrating or influencing the system. Gender essentialist notions or myths if you like, are a part of a bigger bureaucratic procedure where dominant discourses are created or withheld in order to sustain a certain hierarchy within the development sector (Hilary Standing, 2007).

This idea is very close to Edwin Ardener's theory of muted groups, but he said that dominant groups in society create and control the dominant modes of expression (cited in Moore, 1998 [Ardener, 1975]). Muted groups are silenced by structures of dominance and if they want to express themselves, they have to do that through dominant ideologies. If we look at development through this theoretical lens, gender mainstreaming became the allocated niche in which gender could be discussed within development, while other methods towards gender equality were not deemed acceptable. Hilary Standing (2007) explains the processes through which gender equality issues have become watered down in the bureaucratic arena of development. As she says, gender in development is defined as a soft issue which then is forced through by development agencies. The aid elite produce a certain kind of discourse around gender issues and alternative views are silenced or shamed. At the end there is a very narrow frame that is accepted when working on gender issues within development, and these issues become usually applied with a top-down approach: "First there is an agenda driven by outside agencies, often as part of the conditionality for aid. In this case, gender is to a significant extent an externally imposed (and in parts of the bureaucracy resented and not understood) requirement for continuing support." (p. 103).

Gender mainstreaming thus builds on gender myths (whether it be seeing women as caretakers, or women in Africa as our strong sisters in need for help from their Western counterparts), overemphasizing the connection between women and gender and ignores the gender relations between men and women. It also doesn't include context nor the complexity of people's situations and shows a narrow understanding of diverse processes, simplifying them solely as 'women's issues' and places the 'woman cause' within institutions with often little mandate and power to affect real change (Subrahmanian, 2007: 113; Goetz and Sandler, 2007). What happens is that the focus is all on the *difference of sexes*, not on *gender relations*, and that, as Woodford-Berger says, does little to help gender issues (2007). It takes the focus away for a mutual responsibility and all-in-all general benefits of gender equality (Prudence

Woodford-Berger, 2007). Valenius comes to the same conclusion and says that; “Gender mainstreaming is being developed in a context where gender is understood as a difference between men and women and not as a system of femininities and masculinities and power hierarchies between them,...” (Valenius, 2007: 513).

Sara Hlupekile Longwe claimed in her article from 1997, written on gender policies in development, that gender equality policies evaporated what she referred to as “the patriarchal cooking pot” of development agencies (p.148). She concluded that bringing gender equality policies and measures into the development discourse upsets the masculine culture of such agencies, where the top positions are generally held by men which are used to having women around them in a subordinate position. Cornwall et al (2007: 3) point out that; “Arguably, the ready adoption of gender mainstreaming by development institutions may itself reflect the fact that working with a technocratic category may be a more attractive proposition than achieving gender justice.” Subrahmanian suggest that this is maybe exactly what the development industry prefers, instead of a complex transformative agenda for gender. Enforcing equality for women means disprivileging men. “Talk of women’s empowerment, while attractive because of its progressive ring, also suggests disturbing a particular equilibrium that is often viewed as a part of some natural or created social order.” (2007: 115) Development integrates and (barely) tolerates gender equality as a technical and cross-cutting category, but with deep-seated resentment and resistance rejects the political edge of it because gender equality threatens hierarchies in development institutions, societies and families – it aims to shift male prerogatives to resources and rights (Mukhopadhyay. 2007: 138ath).

As Mukhopadhyay says, the development process is “a planned process of change in which techniques, expertise and resources are brought together to achieve higher rates of economic growth.” (Mukhopadhyay. 2007: 137). Development, despite trends and new policies, is about a certain economic path – this is why the development industry hardly tolerates feminist agenda and involvement, because the political agenda of feminist is usually to redistribute power, resources and create opportunities to those that are disadvantaged, which in many cases are women. This is usually not the goal of neo liberalist agendas (Mukhopadhyay, 2007).

A good example on how gender falls back in development hierarchies is the structure of the United Nations. Goetz and Sandler, scholars who have both worked within the UN, give an example on how UNIFEM (now UN women), is not capable of participating to equal lengths in UN committees of high delegacy (such as those that set out the priorities for peace

and security). UNIFEM is excluded from executive boards, meetings and committees within the UN because the head of UNIFEM does not hold an equally high status as the heads of the other UN bodies (Goetz and Sandler, 2007).

Goetz and Sandler point out that this in fact is not uncommon, Ministries of Women and gender units of international agencies often face the same obstructions towards decision-making, with their chairperson having a lower status than those of other ministries or agencies (2007). As they point out, the barriers that affect UNIFEM, or other organizations, ministries, women's networks or agencies is that they are not included in the venues where decisions are made, decisions which they then try to influence and change at a lower level (Goetz and Sandler, 2007). As Goetz and Sandler point out: "The pervasive positioning of gender equality in the lower ranks of hierarchies and bureaucracies sends a clear message to colleagues: it is *not* [original emphasis] important." (Goetz and Sandler, 2007: 165).

The reason for the quick turn of gender mainstreaming into hollow slogans, while gender issues became second class development issues seem to be twofold if we compare scholar's criticism. First of all development agencies focused too much on gender myths instead on tackling social inequalities and discourses that create gender inequality. Second, gender issues were dismissed by development staff and governments as women's issues. There was a great emphasis on empowering women, strengthening them, teaching them skills and educating them, but the focus was never on challenging masculine structures or what Subrahmanian calls "cultures of masculinity" within the societies at hand, let alone within the development institutions or governments (2007: 118). "Gender mainstreaming" was in that way removed from its original feminist ideas where the agenda was to eradicate the real source of inequality and some scholars have stated that it only reinforced already existing gender myths and divisions, creating institutional barriers against real gender equality within the development sector (Subrahmanian, 2007; 112).

Gender mechanisms in peace building

Resolution 1325 – incorporating women.

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

Reaffirming also the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,[...] (S/RES/1325, 2000: no page)

There are various measures taken in order to enhance women's positions in post-war countries, such as establishing a gender quota within governments or laws to counteract violence against women. But such measures don't count for much if they are not implemented and as the results in the final chapter of this thesis reveal, implementation of gender equality measures is a genuine problem in Kosovo. The same can be said about UNSRC's resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (Valenius, 2007). The reason why I use res. 1325 as an example in this theoretical analysis is twofold: First, it was mentioned by my respondents and heavily discussed at the time of fieldwork by many people in the field, because October 2010 marked the tenth year anniversary of the resolution. Second, it is in many ways based on similar discourses as GAD and gender mainstreaming were.

The resolution itself gives valuable insights and reminders to international bodies, stating among other things the necessity of incorporating women in peace building, acknowledging women's different needs in conflict and peace and ensuring the protection of women from gendered based violence in the fore- and aftermath of conflict (UNSC, 2000)⁹. Although its contents would seem basic to some, it was a groundbreaking document as it was the first time the international community gave out the message that women could and should be agents in peace building. Ten years later, Anwarul Chowdhury, the former president of the Security Council still stated the importance of the resolution:

When in March 2000, the Security Council expressed for the first time in its history of 55 years its conceptual acceptance that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and affirmed that the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for peace and security, the international community was charged with expectation. (Anwarul Chowdhury, 2010: no page).

Women's International League quote Mr. Chowdhury's words and continue to say that the resolution's acceptance was welcomed with enthusiasm "hoping that there would be progress in paying attention and respect to the unrecognized, under-utilized and under-valued contribution by women to preventing war, to building peace and to engaging individuals and societies [to] live in harmony." (2010: no page) They add that by adopting res. 1325, the Security Council put the responsibility on the international community to implement the

⁹ See appendix for a full copy of the resolution

resolution and take actions to ensure gender equality in the peace making processes (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 2010).

In many ways, the celebration surrounding res. 1325 reminds us of the optimism that followed the initial years of GAD and gender mainstreaming. Unfortunately, there seem to be more similarities between these two trends. Still, during more than a decade of res. 1325 existence, scholars and activists alike have had very mixed feelings towards the resolution. “The power of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and security as an advocacy, monitoring and policy tool should not be underestimated.” Says Sarah Maquire; “It has served as the basis for the development of Kosovo’s key gender legislation, strategies and policies and for the inclusion of civil society, especially women’s organizations, in political processes and decision making.” (2009: 8).

Still, gender issues have not been a priority in the peace-building process in Kosovo nor has res. 1325 been implemented fully in Kosovo, or other countries for that matter (KWN, 2009; Valenius, 2007): Human rights of girls, especially minority girls, continue to be violated. Domestic violence perpetuates without much effort to stop it and Kosovo’s women and female children seem to be increasingly at risk of being trafficked (KWN, 2009). The local courts are failing to tackle these issues and are failing to implement laws on gender equality. This is the result of a 2009 report on the implementation of 1325 in Kosovo (2009) and Luljeta Vuniqui, a Kosovar scholar has come to the same conclusion (Vuniqui, 2008).

Numerous reports have been written on the successes and lack of successes of res. 1325 to ensure real gender equality in post-war setting (see for example CARE, 2010; Council of the European Union, 2008; Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS), 2009; GenderForce: 2007; Kosova Women’s Network, 2009; Antoina Potter, 2011). One thing is for sure, many anticipated real change to happen with this resolution and find themselves wondering why it hasn’t worked out.

Maquire points out that despite the gender discourses and gender equality measures taken following res. 1325, such discourses may not transcend into the dominant state security emphasis (2009). Also, gender mainstreaming at policy levels has been without clear strategies. There has been an emphasis on gender mainstreaming in peace building, on incorporating gender equality focuses on all levels of peace building, but res. 1325 offers no guidelines on how to do so. This might be one of the problems and this is a point that Steinberg makes as well. He argues that res. 1325 was a product of its time and it lacked from the onset confidence:

Thus, its language is hortatory rather than directive: it “urges,” “encourages,” “requests,” and “invites” rather than “demands” or “instructs.” The resolution lacks time-bound targets for achieving its goals, accountability or measurement provisions to secure its implementation, working groups or special representatives to monitor and prod action, new funding or personnel dedicated to the issue, reporting mechanisms vis-à-vis the Security Council, watch lists of countries failing to meet its objectives as a naming and shaming exercise, or provisions for sanctions against state and non-state violators. Contrast this approach with that of UNSC Resolution 1612 on children and armed conflict, which was passed five years later and included each of these provisions. (Steinberg, 2010: 3).

The answer to this has been to develop what are usually referred to as NAPs or National Action Plans for the implementation of gender equality mechanisms such as res. 1325. Hunt and Undurraga say that the National Action Plan for res. 1325 is a tool for implementing liberal feminist agenda and a method to achieve gender equality. But they say that liberal feminism has been criticized for looking too hard on women as active agents, meanwhile ignoring structural barriers that hinder them to act. Without mentioning social transformation as a main way to achieve gender equality, making NAP is inefficient. NAPs then become diluted statements, without any political agenda, just like gender mainstreaming in development has always been (Hunt and Undurraga, 2009).

Mukhopadhyay (2007), makes an interesting discovery when she asks who will hold the UN, or other international bodies responsible for not following up on gender issues and the implementation of res. 1325? The answer, of course, is nobody. The fact is, that res. 1325 has become problematic and although its slogans might not have become as tiresome as those used in GAD, they are losing their edge, their shaft and their force, slowly but steadily.

Valenius argues that res. 1325 is based on ideas of women as victims and that is barely mentions men or the structures that create gender inequalities (2007). I agree and disagree with this analysis as I think the resolution does portray women as agents of peace as well as victims of gendered violence in war. But it is true that res. 1325 never mentions men: Neither their victimhood nor their responsibility in achieving gender equality. It is as though women and men are not gendered and the relationship between them is not a result of a social order. The problem with res. 1325 lies perhaps not in what it says about women, but partly in what is not said about the relationship between women and men.

In my view, the main fault of res. 1325 is twofold: First, It is based on gender essentialized ideas, although not solely on the idea of women as victims. It portrays women as a unified, natural category. Meanwhile, men are not seen as gendered and their multiple suffering and responsibility in war is completely blurred, thus creating an interesting spin: Res. 1325 sounds like a call from powerful men to other powerful men to incorporate women

in the game of war, thus putting responsibility onto male elites and women of the world to ensure gender equality. Non-elite men are excluded from this plea. Why? Although always a rhetoric discussion, I will share my analyses on this question. Here comes the connection to post-colonial theories discussed previously.

Looking back at the theoretical framework of this thesis we see that these ideas are linked: Foucault's theories of discourse explain how elites establish their power through modes of expressions, through ideas formulated in words later put into actions (1968[2002]; 2003). Escobar's criticism (1995) on development as a post-colonial enterprise draws on this idea and so does Said who claimed that the West created images of its other's in negation to itself (1978). If we connect this with discussions of 'Bad Patriarchies' where throughout colonial history, and no less in recent peacekeeping missions, Western states have built upon the notion that it is our duty to save women from their (mostly barbaric) countrymen, this trend becomes more obvious: The international community does not talk about non-elite men because those are the men it is trying to save women from. It points its claim specifically towards those men that it is making treaties with, giving out the message that civilized countries acknowledge gender equality as important. Gender essentialism, based on Eurocentric notions of Western superiority, is established yet again.

Importantly though, and in my view the second fault of res. 1325 is that through the notions expressed there the international community fails to see its own structure as a patriarchy. In its tendency to look at women as a unified entity of victims and potential pacifist peace builders, the resolution signifies the needs to incorporate women into a system of peace building but it makes no claim to change the system at hand.

As will become clear in the last two chapters of this thesis, despite the international community's pressure on local Kosovar agencies to follow gender equality measures, international bodies and agencies have failed to do so themselves. Kosovo's post-war era has been a long winding development process heavily embedded in foreign intervention since the end of the war in 1999 (Valur Ingimundarson, 2004). The intervention has not stopped thirteen years after armed conflict was officially over. Before looking into Kosovo's recent affairs and the situation on the ground as it presented itself during this field research, Kosovo's history and the string of events following the war will be briefly introduced.

History of Kosovo and the Western Balkans

Geography and ethnic divisions

Kosovo is a small territory of 10,887 sq. km in Southeast Europe. It is landlocked and borders Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia and Serbia (EconomyWatch, 2011). It lies on a high plain 400-700m above sea level and is surrounded by high mountain ranges, the highest peaks of which are over 2,5 km (EconomyWatch, 2011). The climate is relatively pleasant although temperature can drop in winter due to the high elevation of the plateau. A new census, the first since 1981¹⁰ is to be expected in 2012.

Most figures available today are rough estimates from the local or international government, but they still shed a light on the demography and population of the country. According to a 2006 estimate, the population of Kosovo is around 2.1 million people (Statistical Office Kosovo (SOK), 2008). Albanians account for the majority, being 92% of the population, Serbians 5,3% are the biggest minority and the rest of the population are a number of smaller minorities (SOK, 2008). Similar results are shown in SOK's Demographic, Social and Reproductive Health Survey from November 2009^{11 12}

Kosovo's northern borders are contested as its independence has not yet been acknowledged by its neighbouring country Serbia. A relatively big part of the Serbian

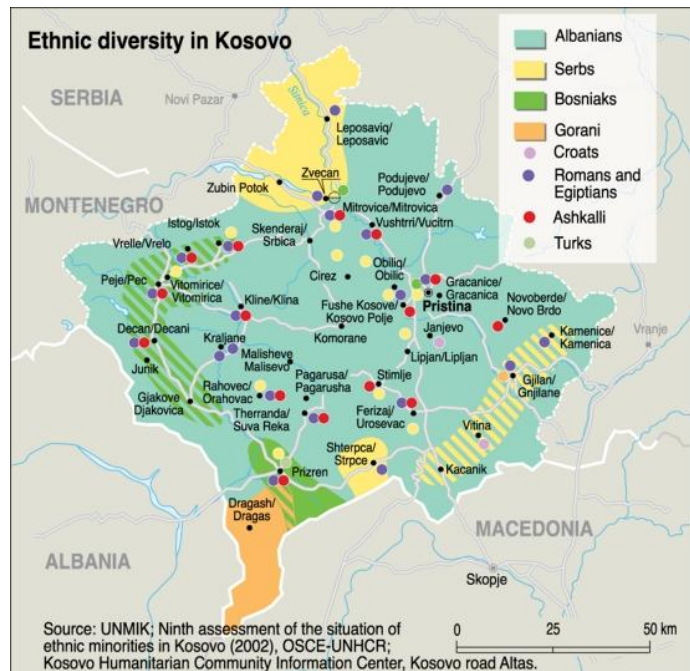


Fig. 1. Map from 2002, Ethnic division within Kosovo

¹⁰ Unofficial estimates were done in 1991 and 2006

¹¹ According to EconomyWatch (2011), the population is: Albanians 88%, Serbs 7%, and 5% are other minority group members (Bosniak, Gorani, Roma, Turk, Ashkali and Egyptian).

¹² Please note that the map shown is from 2002. The sizes of settlement are likely to have changed due to resettlement of refugees of minority groups, although the position of the communities are more or less similar.

minority lives by the northern borders, although small communities or enclaves of all the minorities are scattered around the country.

Historical events in Kosovo, former Yugoslavia and the rise of nationalism

History isn't just a series of events; it is a story, with a storyteller and that storyteller (Bonnie G. Smith, 1998; Nicole Farnsworth (ed.), 2008). It is a combination of occurrences and truths, put together to form an idea of an event, of an era or a people. It always involves interpretations where one puts together common notions of events and leaves out others (Farnsworth (ed.), 2008). This of course, does not make it false. I see it as a forest full of paths to a certain point in time, to the present. The storyteller decides which chronological path to follow, often shifting and taking turns as the paths interlink with each other, but almost always taking the paths most commonly travelled.

Writing the history of the Balkans is never an easy task to undertake, let alone in only a few pages as a sort of introduction to a current topic. The history of Kosovo is no different. There are many sides, many contesting truths depending on people's own lived experiences. There will always be issues underlined as important events and people introduced as key actors, while others remain forgotten. And it is always prone to be gender, ethnic and class specific (see for example Smith, 1998 on discussions of gender in history and female historians).

Some of my international friends in Kosovo voiced out their opinion that the history most commonly told had a certain bias towards Albanians, against the Serbian state. All of the books I read were in English, and yes it sometimes seemed that the minorities within Kosovo had little voice in the text. I of course, am influenced by the history books I have read, stories I have heard from people I know and am thoroughly aware that what I write will always reflect this. I do not intend to draw out who was the “bad guy” and I apologize in advance if any of the accounts written here offends anybody. This remains a sensitive topic. To Albanians, to Serbians and of course to the other minorities that rarely have any kind of voice. In my mind it is obvious that people of all ethnicities from Kosovo suffered greatly because of this conflict.

The rise of Nationalism and the use of nationalist imagery

The current case of Kosovo – the border disputes between Kosovo and Serbia and the multivocal ideas about Kosovo's Independence, is intertwined with the formation and

disintegration of Yugoslavia and nationalistic ideologies of the 20th century. It is a result of political dimensions and conflict in the area.

Kosovo is important to Serbs and Albanians, as they both inhabit the geographical plateau along with several other minority groups. The issue of other minorities is a very important one, but not one that will be specifically raised in this paper. The smaller minority groups represent a small percentage of inhabitants and therefore are thoroughly ignored or underrepresented in most stories and accounts on Kosovo. Ever since the first historical accounts of the region, Kosovo has been a habitat for different groups of people migrating back and forth, mixing and evolving (Noel Malcom, 1998). The modern borders of the Balkan countries are, like the rest of Europe, recent formations based on series of events and historical interpretations. Kosovo is no different, its borders have shifted, changed and parts of it disappeared many times, while groups of people have migrated to and fro this high altitude plain (1998).

Kosovo is also a political sphere, full of ideologies that have – especially since the late 19th century, been framed with nationalist notions and agendas. The battle at Kosovo Polje in 1389 is one of the events that has been revisited and interpreted in the course of history. It was a fight between Prince Lazar and the Ottoman sultan Murad over a stretch of land which is roughly central Serbia of today and Kosovo's northern territory (Tim Judah, 2000: 8; Malcom, 1998)¹³. The fight itself was fought on the plains of Kosovo, (Kosovo Polje/Fusë Kosove), just outside modern Prishtina. The battle became a myth, a part of Serbian history and in the eyes of Serbs it marked a symbol of a bitter defeat followed by centuries of Ottoman control in the region (Judah, 2000)¹⁴. Kosovo Polje became important in nationalist propaganda later on and just before the end of Ottoman rule in 1912, during a war between Serbian and Montenegro forces against the Ottomans, the message was clear – Kosovo Polje, the battle wrapped in the tissue of Serbia's past, had to be avenged (Judah, 2000). As time moved on, this battle and the notion of Serbia's claim over Kosovo was revisited a few times.

Serbia lays claim on Kosovo for another historical reason – the Serbian Orthodox church has its origins in Kosovo and the Patriarchy¹⁵ is based in Peja/Peć¹⁶, in the Northwest

¹³ The area in question at the time of this battle lay mostly at the center of modern Serbia, in the Morava valley but stretched to the Northern part of Kosovo as well (Judah, 2000). It was, and still is a mining area, and in the middle ages provided Serbian monarchs as their main source of income.

¹⁴ In reality, the Ottoman didn't really take over Serbia until 1459, half a century later. (Judah, 2000)

¹⁵ The residence of the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox church.

of Kosovo (Malcom, 1998). Because of this, Kosovo has been referred to as the Heart of Serbia, or Serbia's most precious jewel.

These images or the feelings that associate them are not what caused the conflict in Kosovo. Just like the second Balkan war, the conflict in Kosovo was not a question of centuries of ethnic hatred like so eagerly portrayed in the media (Malcom, 1998; IICK, 2000). They were both a response to injustice and brutal control, fuelled by nationalist propaganda. Ethnicity is never so static that it stays unchanged for centuries, it is a continuous space of ideology which is constantly being shaped and reinvented, and it intersects with other issues of identity such as class, gender and age (Eriksen, 2002). As historian Noel Malcom (1998) points out, there is a long path from people defining themselves as ethnically distinct from others, to actually normalizing the killing of those they see as ethnically different or as "Others". This transformation takes a lot of political will, power and other circumstances for conflict to escalate and mass murder to be put into action.

By 1912, Serbia was already waging a propaganda battle, describing exaggerated Albanian atrocities against Serbs in Kosovo, to Western envoys. The issue was also raised, that there was a risk of the Ottoman seizing the area and that this meant a bigger part of Europe would fall into Muslim hands (Malcom, 1998). This anti-Ottoman revolt was later declared a war against the Ottoman Empire, waged by Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece. The Ottoman army was swiftly defeated and Kosovo fell into the hands of Serbia. Many of the atrocities made of the hands of Bulgarian and Serbian forces towards the Muslim populations of Albania and Kosovo were hidden by the euphoria of the victory. References to medieval history were plentiful, the battle of Kosovo Polje laminated in nationalist ideals where among other ideological justifications used for domestic audiences in Serbia and international commentators in the (now-called) West who were touched by this romantic view and the argument that this would raise "the level of civilization to the region" (Malcom, 1998: 253). Some remained sceptic and even others feared that the Serbian state was moving to exterminate the Muslim Albanian population in the area. Tales were heard of massacres and mutilations of the hands of Serbian and Montenegrin soldiery against Albanians, along with forced conversion of faith, deportation and oppression.

¹⁶ Albanian/Serbian town name.

A kingdom that later became known as Yugoslavia was formed after WWI. Kosovo Albanian revolts were common and through them a nationalist ideology was established, towards Albanianism and “a Greater Albania” which including Kosovo, although this view never became a reality (Malcom, 1998). Thus Albanian nationalism within Kosovo, which was also based largely on historical ideology, rose and fell in accordance with Serbian dominance over the population of Kosovo.

The Communist party gained power in Yugoslavia after WWII, with Tito reigning until 1980 (Malcom, 1998). Up until that time, Albanians (and in many cases Serbs and other minorities as well) living in Kosovo had suffered greatly from oppression and forced migration. Tito granted Kosovo Albanians a number of rights and after decades of oppression and resistance, Kosovo became an autonomous territory within Yugoslavia. He is remembered by many Yugoslavs with affection. Nonetheless, by the end of his era, the economic situation in the whole region had deteriorated and in the years after, people became more and more dissatisfied. This led to a student revolt in Kosovo in the early 80s (Nicole Farnsworth (Ed.), 2008)

Serbian intellectuals and academics were dominant in the nationalist discourse created in the 70s and 80s and even onwards (IICK, 2000¹⁷). Negative images of Albanians were eminent and accounts of historical events already romanticized and censored in the early 19th century were revoked. The media was quick to take part in this image building and before long, the life of people within Kosovo had dramatically worsened with higher ethnic tension, discrimination against non-Slavs along with economic decline and very high unemployment.

When the Yugoslav war broke out in the early 90s, Milosevic – who was now in charge, tightened Belgrade's grip on Kosovo. With Kosovo being regarded as a region within Serbia, but with a very large majority of non-Serbs, fear grew that Kosovo-Albanians would follow the example of Bosnians, Croats and Slovenes that were fighting for their independence from the Yugoslav federation (IICK, 2000). The Albanian population suffered greatly during the next decade which can hardly be described as anything else than an apartheid-like time of oppression (Judah: 2000; Malcom, 1998).

¹⁷ See a discussion on this on p. 33-34 in IICOK's report.

History is herstory too

Kosovo Gender Studies Centre published a fascinating book called ***History is Herstory too***, on women's history and activism in Kosovo, edited by Nicole Farnsworth in 2008. It is a gripping account of how social events mobilised people in Kosovo's recent history, giving special attention to Kosovar women. According to this book the women's involvement in Kosovo's historic events has always existed, although it might not have been properly noted by historians. Women fought and resisted against oppression in various forms in the last centuries, they were also agents within their communities (2008).

After the late 1960s, a massive women's movement started to rise, that later became an integral part of civil society in Kosovo, especially during Serbian oppressive measures in the 1990s: "With the fall of communism, substantial losses in their rights, and broad job dismissals during the 1990s, the Albanian population would unite in support of the national cause and against the oppressor (Farnsworth (Ed.), 2008: 38). Women were no less active in establishing a parallel system of health care, education and governance in this era and they were dominant in certain social campaigns, such as the elimination of blood feud among Albanians. Having visible female activists in the field, who were involved in public matters, seemed to enhance women's engagement within their homes as well (Farnsworth, 2008). Women had become involved in national movements between the years 1968-1981 (see Farnsworth, p. 60). During that time many had gained experience and respect from people around them, networks had been established and ideas exchanged. When it came to the 80s, the women's movement in Kosovo started focusing more specifically on gender related issues: "The deterioration social, political, and economic situation led a group of women to discuss how they could challenge stereotypes, question politics, and contribute to decision-making... [during this time] for the first time Kosovar women attempt to form a movement independent from both the old socialist structures and the new Kosovar political parties." (Farnsworth, 2008: 60). While still involved in what was known as the Albanian national cause against the Serbian government's oppression, many women shared the sentiments that something was missing and that needs of women were not being met. Despite their presence and participation in the national cause, women had a hard time breaking gendered barriers and were told to wait with the issue of gender equality specifically, until the issue of Albanian's freedom had been solved (Farnsworth, 2008).

What is interesting about this first independent women's movement is that it took a stance from the onset to not be ethnic specific: "The revised declaration had three principles rather unique for the time. First, the declaration emphasized the association would include all

women who wanted to join, no matter their nationality, ethnicity or religion. The uniting factor for the women's association was to be that they were women. Their identity as women was to come before their ethnicity, nationality or religion." (2008: 62). Gender was played up, while other part of social identity was played down in order to unite women and become a force that would challenge male prerogatives and also work independently of any political parties. Women were absent from leadership in this fluent era where political coalitions were being formed, often based on nationalistic visions. Still, this movement was not removed from nationalist agendas; it was political although originally not connected to a political party. It was an association created in order to amplify Kosovar Women's voices in what were considered important issues of social welfare and fights against oppression. It was created as a way to get heard in an arena of social transformation. This independent movement was quickly incorporated into the Albanian liberation party (LDK). Women within the party soon felt though that they were only sent to take care of women's issues within their political parties, while the male leadership dealt with "more important issues" (p. 70). Many of the women associated in this movement would later start their own NGOs, specifically focusing on gender equality or human rights issues in Kosovo.

The conflict in Kosovo

Brutal images of war and war crimes in the early 90s (for example in Rwanda and in Bosnia) kept people's gaze away from Kosovo. There were warning signs showing the escalation towards conflict in Kosovo and the international community has been heavily criticized for not heeding to such signs and taking action earlier (See for example IICK, 2000). As Yugoslavia disintegrated, Albanians suffered greatly. After two decades of semi-equal rights to govern themselves, anything Albanian was restricted with schools, books and the whole system of governance being run in Serbian and by Serbs. This, as previously mentioned, created a parallel system of governance from 1991, where Albanians ran an underground system of elections, schools, health, etc. The system was incredibly efficient taken the situation it developed in, and the level of Serbian opposition against it. It is within this setting that a lot of women activists emerged, later forming NGOs. Some of them even started organizing meetings and coalitions at this time with Serbian women activist who opposed Milosevic's rule of war and oppression (KGSC, 2008). Ibrahim Rogova became the leader of Kosovo Albanians in this era (and later the president of Kosovo), advocating peaceful resistance against the Serbian state. Unfortunately his message of peaceful activism didn't convey despite efforts. By 1998 the parallel system was growing weaker and weaker. Many

Albanians had lost hope in gaining their rights through peaceful resistance after years pleading for international assistance. The Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK), a group led by nationalist agenda gained momentum and in February 1998 the situation in Kosovo had escalated in to full blown violent conflict between Albanian and Serbian forces. The conflict lasted from February 1998 until June 1999, when NATO intervened. 10.000 people were killed in the war, most of them Kosovo Albanians. 863.000 people became external refugees and over half a million internal refugees. That means that almost the whole population became displaced. Malcom states that in recent time, Kosovo has arguably been “the area with the worst human rights abuses in the whole of Europe.” (Malcom, 1998: p. xxvii)

A NATO’s air strike on Belgrade made the Former Yugoslav’s Army retreat from Kosovo and sadly the tables were turned. Albanians attacked Serbian and other minority citizens despite the presence of 40.000 NATO soldiers, a fact that in hindsight, has been heavily criticized (IICK, 2000; Valur Ingimundarson, 2004). Still today, many Serbian refugees have not returned, the city of Prishtina is almost entirely inhabited by Albanians and minorities of Kosovo live mostly in ethnically distinct communities.

Building peace in Kosovo.

The end of the war marked a new era, a time of hope for the Albanian majority and transition for the population in whole. Kosovo became a UN protectorate and the UN and NATO forces were welcomed at first, especially by Kosovo Albanians while their Serbian, Roma, Askali and other counterparts suffered greatly, living in closed off enclaves protected by UN soldiers (Farnsworth, 2008). Economic and social development marked the next years, with a great emphasis made on ethnic reconciliation. As time passed, tension eased and formal peace has established, except in the northern part, bordering Serbia, where riots have emerged and heavily armed peace keeping forces remain. As Farnsworth notes, the peace building process has proved to be far from a quick fix. Despite the end of armed conflict, social, economic and political battles through the development process (2008). Kosovo became a development protégé after the war and the presence of international aid workers, soldiers and foreign police officers have ever since been a reality, although their presence has declined in the last few years (Farnsworth, 2008). In 2008 Kosovo declared independence. All of its neighbouring countries have acknowledged its independence except Serbia and in the minds of many Serbs, it still remains the heart of Serbia.

During this period of transition women led NGOs arose. Some had been formed in the previous years, working now on various gender specific matters in the country and advocating

to decision-makers the various needs of local women. Before the development process started a few dozen NGOs had been active in Kosovo but that number rose considerably and by 2005 around 2500 NGOs were listed in Kosovo, 600 of which were led by women or focused on assisting women (see Farnsworth, 2008: page 167).

The reason for such a large number of women's NGOs is manifold as Farnsworth notes – NGOs founded by ethnic minority members focused mainly on helping minority women with isolation as they feared leaving their houses and enclaves because of ethnic tension. Such specific post-war needs triggered many women to start a NGO. Some NGOs worked specifically to help women within the society voice their ideas within a frame that otherwise left them marginalized in decision making concerning the country's progress. Other NGOs were established to create jobs for women. The presence of donor agencies encouraged the creation of NGOs because funding came in abundance. But as the next chapters reveal, this funding often came with donor requirements. By 2002 the media had shifted its glance towards other on-going conflicts in the world and donors slowly but steadily receded after what can easily be described as a development spending spree in the first initial years (see for example p. 170-173 in Farnsworth, 2008). International agencies turned their focus on government bodies within Kosovo, tunnelling funds towards local government and away from NGOs. Women's NGOs access to funds became less and less, despite gender inequality in the country prevailing (Farnsworth, 2008; see also SOK, 2011 for newly statistics about the gendered economic and social divides in Kosovo). It was in this setting that the interviews and fieldwork for this study were conducted.

Methodology and Fieldwork

Ethnography as site, process and product

Ethnography is a way of researching human actions and ideas within a certain frame or context. Ethnographic fieldwork has been central to anthropology since the early twentieth century (Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland & Lyn Lofland, 2001; Charlotte Aull Davies, 1999; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It is a method used to analyse and understand human actions and their connections to a wider social network (Atkinson et al., 2001; Barnard & Spencer, 1996A; Davies, 1999; Wayne Fife, 2005; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography is a term used to explain a certain way of research, but also the final outcome of such a research. Thus doing ethnography means that you can at the end produce an ethnography (the written outcome of your research) (Barnard & Spencer, 1996A). But what does ethnography entail and how is it different from other research methods within social sciences? Well, traditionally ethnography has been defined by its focus on fieldwork and participatory observation, the two fundamental research methods of anthropology (Atkinson et al., 2001; Russel H. Bernard, 2006; Davies; 1999; Fife, 2005; Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Scheyvens & Storey, 2003). Although these two methods still prevail within ethnographic research, anthropologists have started to incorporate an array of other methods, both qualitative and quantitative, into anthropological research (Atkinson et al., 2001; Bernard, 2006; Fife, 2005; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Fife mentions something he calls the anthropologist's toolkit, where an individual researcher has an array of research methods to choose from and must at each time choose those methods that best fit a specific research topic. That means that the researcher can use anything from discourse analysis, to grounded theory, to group interviews to participatory observation, depending on what suits the research best (Fife, 2005).

Anthropology does not cloak itself in the assumption of being science, nor do anthropologists go around collecting "unbiased facts" about people. It is a subject that deals with humans and thus acknowledges that human behaviour and actions are heavily interconnected with their place within certain social settings (Bernard, 2006; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Elizabeth Mertz, 2002). People live in complex realities and anthropology tries to understand how people experience those realities. Anthropology, through its emphasis on fieldwork and ethnographic research, also tries to shed light on how macro phenomena affect people's micro processes and actions (Davies, 1999). Relativity is important in

anthropological research and writing, where Western norms or the cultural belief systems of the researcher are not emphasized (Alan Barnard & Jonathan Spencer, 1996A). Rather, the researcher shed lights on the experiences and the actions of the people she encounters in the field. Still, reflexivity has become a key component of anthropological writing. This means that the researcher should be aware of her own role in the knowledge produced through ethnographic research. It is through reflexivity that the researcher must acknowledge her background and her standpoint while staying true to the accounts given to her by her subjects in the field (Barnard & Spencer, 1996B; Bernard, 2006; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

This research is based on these insights and ethnographic methods. The data collected was done so during fieldwork conducted in Kosovo between September and December 2010. During fieldwork, a number of meetings and conference were attended which focused on gender equality in Kosovo in one way or another, observations were made while I was in the field, especially while spending time with friends working for international aid agencies. Around a dozen informal interviews and conversations were noted as well as seven semi-structured interviews conducted with local female NGO workers. Also, a number of reports and resolutions were viewed through the lens of discourse analysis.

Gupta and Ferguson say that the field is a site where knowledge of the respondents and the researcher interlinks, were it allies to produce a representation of realities. But as Gupta and Ferguson point out, and this is important – the field should not be viewed as a simple geographical space (1997). The field for this research was Kosovo, yes. But it doesn't encompass the whole of Kosovo as a country or a territorial space. Still, it investigates far more venues than just Kosovo – the international community outside and within it along with treaties signed and passed in international and local domain. This research is about fragments of realities, of lived experiences within Kosovo which are linked with global affairs. These experiences are also viewed through me as a researcher and as a Scandinavian feminist and anti-capitalist.

Mertz (2002) says that we cannot look away from the systematic power that affects the subjects of our research. By doing so, we participate in concealing such a power, we turn our gaze away and subsequently distort the truth (2002). It is useful to keep this in mind and also to consider Gupta's and Ferguson's notion of the field as political sphere, where unequal power relations are discovered and deciphered. By using ethnographic insights, this research looks critically into the power structures at hand in Kosovo's peace building process and

gives accounts of the lived experiences of women working on gender equality through NGOs in that specific post-war setting.

Methods, contacts and interviews

Before going to Kosovo I met up with a few contacts in my home country that had either lived in Kosovo or worked in fields concerning women and peace building in the Balkans. They were a valuable source of information, paving the path I would later follow. Meeting them made me realize what I wanted to explore and what I didn't, and I got a list of e-mails and numbers to call when I arrived to Kosovo. A handful of eligible NGOs were also found online before leaving for the fieldtrip. A background research on the topic had thus already started before leaving Iceland.

After arriving, the search for NGOs started. I found out that over 500 women's NGOs were listed in Kosovo, but quickly discovered that many of them were not active or functioning any more. A lot of NGOs last only a short while and others change names, addresses or locations. So the rotation is frequent and for an outsider it is not always clear where to start and which NGOs to talk with. I narrowed down the criteria to women's NGOs that had a focus on one or more of the following fields: 1. Peace building. 2. Ethnic co-operation and 3. Empowering women in decision making. By doing this, I felt assured I'd be talking to NGOs working with gender equality measures and peace building.

The staff at UNIFEM (now UN-women) were the first contacted and they greeted me with open arms, giving me access to their small "library" of reports and books. Among them a report of women's NGOs, published by the Kosovar Centre for Gender Studies, which had over 500 women organizations listed. With these reports and initial contact I started sieving through a jungle of NGOs, making a list of those who fit my criteria.

Pride and paralysis in the field

One kind of shock comes as the novelty of the field site wears off and there is this nasty feeling that research has to get done. Some researchers (especially those on their first field trip) may also experience feelings of anxiety about their ability to collect good data. (Bernard, 2006; 380).

Maybe being an anthropologist is about constantly doubting yourself and your project. At least, my initial "real" fieldwork feels like a session of constant self-doubt. The fact is that I became terrified, just plain terrified. I felt numb, dumb, lost, alone and lonely during my first weeks in Kosovo. The initial week, I was active going out, visited Unifem and already had a list of NGOs to contact. After that I spent a fortnight in my flat, on Facebook and watching

Will & Grace. I would maybe read a bit, or study a bit, or investigate online a bit. Occasionally I would go out clubbing. Apart from that my days were a dull haze of depression. I didn't get it - wasn't this what I wanted? Hadn't I been excited about doing this fieldwork?

I realized I was scared of getting a 'no', or worse, being told off by locals that I had no clue what I was doing. I convinced myself that I wasn't ready for this, I hadn't done enough background research to ask the right questions. Why would these women who fight vigorously for the right of people in their society - why would they want to speak to me?

I was mentally paralyzed. I spent that September battling with these feelings and spent two full days trying to put together simple emails to send out to the first set of NGOs. I knew that as soon as I sent them away, my future and the research would be at the mercy of these people. And that's scary stuff. So I stalled again, and once more sunk my head in reports and paper instead of putting myself out there and contacting the people I wanted to talk to. On the third week I finally (wo)manned up, decided to go with sincerity and sent the emails away. The next couple of months were a roller coaster ride that felt like it was over before it ever started.

Contacting NGOs

The emails sent out were to contact NGO members in order to interview them. As I had limited financial resources and a short time I felt that I couldn't depend solely on participant observation, that would require a longer stay and closer connection to people in the field. Bernard says that what he calls "rapid assessment" (p. 352) is not uncommon within Anthropology. This is when the researcher goes to the field with a list of questions, a focused topic and use a few methods combined in order to make the analyses more concrete (2006). This was precisely my goal, to conduct interviews on certain topics, although giving respondents a chance to share their own thoughts on peace building and gender at the same time.

Twenty four e-mails were sent that first night and almost half of them returned as the email address didn't exist anymore. At first, my stomach sunk a little with each return demon, but after about two hours of writing emails, copy-pasting, adding, fixing and re-wording them for each NGO - my spirit started going up. For the first time in a couple of weeks it actually felt like I was doing something. Each time a letter got through, a rattle of joy rushed through my body. Maybe someone would actually receive it and read it. And maybe, just maybe, I might even get a response for some of them.

Out of the 41 initial emails sent out, 13 were sent back as the email accounts were no longer active. Only a few responded. And out of them some were positive about granting an interview. The same applied to calls that were made.

Some of the NGOs I met with I found in the list published by the Kosovar Centre for Gender Studies, although it was almost five years old. Other NGOs were found by word of mouth and a few others on the internet. They were all contacted either by e-mail or phone as finding addresses is hard to do in Prishtina. Many streets and houses are not marked nor numbered and many offices are in residential buildings, back alleys or people's homes. Dropping by is therefore no easy task for an outsider. After the initial three weeks of dusty Prishtina, going to conduct my first interview in Peja came as a relief. The beauty of the surrounding Rogova valley and mountains and the fresh air revitalized me and left me with more hope in my heart. The warm welcome I got from my respondent, a Kosovar Albanian woman in her fifties, made me remember why I had become so mesmerized by the Balkans and why I had initially set out for this task.

As one drives along the countryside of this small hilly country a different view appears than that of Prishtina, the capital. The roads wind down cliffy slopes into green mini valleys with small villages or towns. Some are Serbian towns, or enclaves. Some are Albanian. Others are inhabited by the smaller minorities of Kosovo, Roma or Askali. The division of towns into ethnic entities is a reality heightened even more by multilingual road signs that have been violently graffitied, leaving usually only the Albanian town name or in a few cases the Serbian town names. Mitrovice/Mitrovica¹⁸ is Kosovo's northern city based close to the Serbian border. It is divided in two with Serbs living in the North and Albanians in the South and has the biggest concentration of Serbian people in Kosovo.

Orthodox monasteries are some of the regions cultural and historical jewels, although for Albanians they are a token of something Serbian and in some minds have negative connotations. They are heavily guarded by troops and tanks. The Orthodox Patriarchy is based in a town called Peja and barracks mark its entrance. When I visited it I was greeted by four Italian KFOR soldiers, residing in a camouflaged bunker where I had to show a passport to go in. It was a strange entrance to an otherwise pristine and peaceful place.

¹⁸ Serbian and Albanian name of the city.

Bigger villages and smaller cities like Rahovec, Prizren, Gjakova and Peja all have their distinctive features, but also a mixture of Balkan and Ottoman heritage, with small stone paved roads, mosques, kullas and markets where one can get heavenly *burek* (filled pastries), *cevapi* (a sort of kebab with soft warm bread, beef, chili and sometimes onion and cheese), *baklava* (a sweet pastry), Turkish delights and Turkish coffee. Although, all these things are available as well in the city of Prishtina, the Turkish coffee has for the most part been replaced by cosmopolitan style macchiato.

Driving around the countryside and conducting my first interview marked a breakthrough in my research.

Gatekeepers

Fieldwork is a funny business. It is in so many ways dependent on luck and coincidences. And gatekeepers. I had my eyes on a few NGOs before going to Kosovo, these were well established organizations, that had websites I had managed to explore before the field trip. They were relatively small, run by local people and very active in publishing reports. These were in some ways the “big profile” women’s NGOs in Kosovo while still being local grass root organisations, developed by known activists in the Civil Sector who were visible in public debates. I was worried they wouldn’t have time to meet me but was thrilled when I got positive responses from them.

I had no idea until a much later that one of my contacts, a Kosovo Albanian woman I had met through an Icelandic ex-pat, knew all of these women I had initially sought out to contact. In the first weeks as I was struggling to send out emails and finding NGOs, she contacted a few of them and asked them as a personal favour to grant me an interview if I would ask them for it. This was Nita¹⁹, one of my two initial local contacts both of which became very dear to me. Me and Nita were sitting at a café close to the end of my stay when she finally told me, with a great smirk on her face, that she had contacted some of the NGOs when I was struggling to make contact with them in the first weeks. We both burst out in laughter when she made fun of how amazed I had been at the time, when all the NGOs that she happened to know greeted me with open arms.

¹⁹ pseudonym

Nita is someone I would define as a gatekeeper because she helped open up access for me to meet these women and conduct the interviews. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) say that it can be hard to access the field, to access people and sometimes gatekeepers come in handy in order to open up the field for us to enter. They chose who should be interviewed and who shouldn't, and usually they do this in good faith or based on their own contacts. But still at the same time, it is important for the ethnographer to try to select others as well for interviewing. Who you talk to is therefore based on, among other things, luck and a certain opportunity cost. You are sampling within cases, not across or between them and the sample you get is based on snowball effect. And this sample is what you later use to shed light on certain perspectives (Hammersley and Atkins, 2007). Of course, choosing informants or being given contacts isn't the only variable that affects who at the end gets interviewed and who doesn't. The people you contact also have a choice whether or not they want to meet you.

The NGOs

At the end I met up with seven people working in different local NGOs and took semi-structured interviews with them. Semi-structured interviews, as Barnard points out, is when you have a scheduled meeting to discuss a certain topic, often within a specific timeframe. Depending on people's schedule this time frame can become very narrow and this was the case with my interviews as they were often conducted during the women's lunch breaks or heavily scheduled office hours. As semi-structured interviews go, themes had already been decided upon before arrival, although allowing for free conversation to flow within an array of connected topics.

All of the seven respondents were women, and in most cases the directors of the NGOs. Almost all of the NGOs I interviewed had been running for years, most of them since the beginning of the peace process or even earlier. Thus, what I ended up with was a profile of NGOs, who were well established, working on various campaigns but all within the framework of gender equality, ethnic cooperation, empowerment and/or peace building. They were, apart from two, all situated in Prishtina. The women I met were all educated, and most had University degrees and a long record of working with either women's or human rights issues. Many of them had been active within Civil Society since the 90's, although a couple of them were female University students.

Although most of the NGOs had a mixed staff from different ethnic background, and often made an effort to do so – all of the women interviewed except one were Albanian. It proved harder for me to organize a meeting with some of the Serbian women's NGOs I

contacted. Living in Prishtina obviously affected this because very few Serbs live there and those that I did find, which fit the criteria didn't speak English. Having to organize a time suitable for travelling for me and an interpreter resulted for example in one meeting being cancelled.

I consider this one of the shortcomings of my research along with the fact that I did not interview any RAE Women's NGOs²⁰. And it is something I would have loved to explore if I would have had more financial resources and time to expand my network. Meeting up with people working in more rural parts of Kosovo could also have added a different insight. This is a task worthy for future research, either by me or somebody else.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, over a dozen informal interviews were conducted with people that were either working in NGOs, within the Civil Society or with donor agencies. Informal interviews can be anything ranging from spontaneous conversations, irregular encounters with people in the field and conversations revolving around the issue of one's thesis (Atkinson et al., 2001; Bernard, 2006). The difference with these and semi-structured interviews is that the latter are more formal, structured and often recoded, while one must write down notes from informal interviews as soon as possible. Informal interviews are thus a big part of fieldwork (2006).

The interviews conducted, along with formal and informal conversations are what make the basis of my analysis. The questions and inquiries were formed through background research on the topic, but they were also heavily influenced by observations and participation in the field. Reading various reports and other data during the course of fieldwork also helped in defining questions and themes for this research. The proceeding chapters explain my analysis and conclusion. They are drawn from these fieldwork methods.

²⁰ Representing the Roma, Askali and Egyptian minorities.

Me in the field

The path to Kosovo

I had a flair for the Balkans before going to Kosovo. I had spent some time traveling around the Balkans a few years earlier when I was living as a student in Ljubljana. A fair deal of my course work there had been on the conflict in the region and its effect on women. A few years later I stumbled onto an Internet article about women NGOs in Kosovo and their efforts to build dialogue between different ethnic groups. The more I read on the topic, the more interested I got. And the more I heard about the civil movements in the 90s and the Women's NGOs working there today, the more certain I grew that these were the people I wanted to see and that women's engagement in the peacekeeping process was a topic worth exploring.

People at home seemed to think I was mad. After announcing my decision to go to Kosovo all sorts of responses came up in dialogue with both family and people I barely knew. Many of the ideas expressed were based on gruesome news reports from the region. My aunt for example suggested that I should put a helmet and a bullet proof vest on before entering the country. These sorts of ideas followed me on my long-winded travel from Iceland to Kosovo. On my way, I stopped for a few days during a transit through London and my friends there also issued their concerns and astonishment. What was I thinking going to such a dangerous place? Trying to point out to them that London could be a rather dangerous place at times, and that Prishtina according to crime rate figures, was much safer didn't work. It didn't seem relevant; it was as if I had declared that I was going backpacking through the gates of Hell. This attitude, in fact was nothing new to me. I got similar responses from some people a few years back when I went as an exchange student to Ljubljana. The fact that these were countries that used to be a part of the former Yugoslavia seemed to trigger warning bells for some people, albeit of course not everybody. In the minds of many it seemed like a wild, dangerous area.

The funny thing is that on my journey to Kosovo, I also stopped in my former hometown Ljubljana to meet up with old friends. What surprised me was that there as well, the negative stereotypes of Kosovo and Kosovars were eminent, the same stereotypes that Slovenians try hard to dislocate themselves from, by expressing their central European roots instead of their Balkan roots. I was told tales of Kosovars coming to Slovenia for carpentry work, only to bail as soon as they got paid. Kosovars were according to these accounts

dishonest brutes with no nationality. After spending time shimmying off the myth of danger in the former Yugoslav countries, it was a surprise to be warned by Slovenians that Kosovo was a dangerous place to visit.

It was striking how openly people shared their negative opinions on Kosovo or on the Balkans in general without ever having been there. A lot of time was spent on my behalf, assuring relatives that I would come home in one piece, trying to consolidate the feminist within me when people openly dismissed women's struggle and agency as unimportant and trying to clear all kinds of misconceptions about the region and its people.

Of course, I also met people who did not express anxiety, fear or open prejudice towards my destination. It wasn't long from when I first started talking about going to Kosovo, that friends and associates started giving me contact details with people who had been there, most of them Icelandic ex-pats that had worked for various international institutes. All of them were helpful and some provided me with local contacts in Kosovo that would later prove to be very valuable for my research. These people gave me all sorts of practical info on Prishtina, visas, borders and send me packing with a list full of greetings to their Kosovo friends.

Being a reluctant feminist

I must confess that writing a thesis on women was something I myself was reluctant to do at first. I was always a shy feminist in the sense that I didn't like confrontation and have often admired my more devoted friends for constantly pointing out the inequalities women experience in both the public and private sphere. I live in a Nordic society, and many people see Scandinavia as a gender equality utopia. But even in this so-called gender utopia, I was uncomfortable at first by the level of confrontation I had to put up with because my thesis was about 'women'.

Some friends and family members didn't only express astonishment towards my destination, but also over the fact that my research topic was placed in a post-war setting and dealt with peace-building. A lot of people told me it was „hard core stuff“. This opinion sometimes shifted when I told them that the thesis was on local women's access peace building. The terrible W-word seemed to be enough to make them roll their eyes, or even

openly share their resentment on the topic.²¹ Surely, it would be a better topic to look at the peace building process “in general”, they suggested. The idea that history is based on men, and women are often not included in peace building didn’t seem to be an issue that everybody had considered or cared about.

I was also discouraged by the feeling that doing a thesis on gender, on *women* and peace building, would mean that a lot of people would dismiss it. Having “gender” or God forbid “women” in the title is likely to put people off it. Many think such issues only concern women, or even certain types of women (i.e. feminists). Basically, I felt that I would be making a lot of effort only to end up preaching to the choir. I myself, therefore almost fell into the gender trap, imagining that this sort of topic was not “hard” enough or cutting-edge enough.

Fortunately, listening to people’s ideas towards my research and experiencing many people openly advocating that I dismiss the topic as irrelevant made me stronger in my belief that it was, in fact, very relevant. The research process shaped me greatly and made me more determined than ever in my feminist standpoint. I hereby confess that I came out of the feminist closet through this research.

The field – first impressions

Unless you are a full participant in the culture you’re studying, being a participant observer makes you a freak. (Bernard, 2006; 360)

I arrived in Kosovo at the beginning of annual the pepper season, in September 2010. The weather was still warm and the markets and shops were filled with harvest of beautifully coloured peppers traditionally used to make, among other things, *ajvar* (a spicy pepper paste or spread).

The transitional period Kosovo is going through today is almost tangible. To me, it was like Pristhina, the capital, was in a race to become like every other Western city in the world. The influences from different periods are obvious in the city: Commercial buildings stand next to old Communist towers now housing the headquarters of the international

21 There was even an incident where I went to apply for a small travel grant at my municipality at home and got an enthusiastic response to my introduction of the research. I talked about Kosovo and peace-building but as soon as I mentioned women, the man leaned back in his seat and said “I don’t think we can sponsor this. Maybe you should go to some of these women friendly organizations and try there”. Needless to say I did not get the grant.

peacekeeping missions, with small shops and cafés scattered around them. Old kullas²² and small stone paved roads with occasional mosques are plotted here and there in between the giant Communist and Capitalist structures. The kullas are a decaying feature of an Ottoman past. Many of the old Ottoman houses were replaced by Communist blocks a few decades ago, and today the Communist blocks are being replaced by Capitalist estates. Each transitional period seems to have made an effort to erase the last one. The result is a city which looks like a big construction site, all torn up with half assembled buildings rising on every corner.

By the grace of one kind person who was working for an international agency, I got a room to stay in Prishtina almost as soon as I arrived in the city. The house was situated at the bottom of one of the hills surrounding the city, a few minute walk from the centre of town. I lived on the top floor and from my balcony could observe the construction madness going on in the city.

It is a strange feeling standing in Pejton, the neighbourhood where most of the international agencies have their offices, during mid-day lunch hours. Expensive cars drive on the roads among a few broken down local cars with American flags hanging out the window. Groups of young attractive local women and men come here to strut their stuff, almost like they are waiting to be discovered, to be recognized. People in suits swarm the cafes in this area, Pristina's hippest part, where most of the internationals work and hang out.

Kosovo's transition has been fuelled by the scent and promises of money and ideas about economic development. Everywhere, shops and small services put out signs and print menus in English, accommodating to the international community nestling in the city. My first impression was that the city's economy seemed based on the presence of foreigners – taxi services, dry cleaners, cafés, bars, restaurants and shops. I wondered then and I still wonder what will happen when all the internationals will leave Kosovo.

Every day as I left my flat to go into town, builders were busy pounding up walls of big housing structures and in the course of the three months I was there, new houses had risen in my neighbourhood, almost complete. My balcony gave me a view of the side street below, where a family of a few people lived in a small single floor house of corrugated iron of mixed colours. It was a contrast of poverty against the beautiful, big new house I now lived in. A

²² A type of traditional Ottoman houses.

house far more luxurious than many of the student accommodations I had grown accustomed to in my home country. My house was framed with a black metal fence, within which colourful flowers in a well-kept garden blossomed and with a EULEX²³ vehicle parked in the driveway. My joy over the accommodation was quickly mixed with unsettlement. I had immediately become part of a class structure within the society and easily penetrated it to the upper levels because I was a foreigner, a Westerner. I was reminded of Scheyvens and Storey's words: "[...] researchers from the 'first world' will often enter local society further up the hierarchy than their respective position 'at home' [...]" (2003: 18). According to them, just the fact that the researcher, given that she is from a majority white, Western state is doing research in a development setting usually means that she is privileged (2003). Crang and Cook (2007) also mention that the researcher can be defined differently than they would expect at home. As for me, I wasn't anymore just a student in my home country. Being foreign automatically put me in a category with the 'Internationals'²⁴ in Prishtina. But I didn't even really fit into that category. And as time progressed, I felt that maybe it was a category I didn't want to be associated with.

Me in the field

Without maybe over analyzing your own emotions and feelings in the field, it is necessary to be self-conscious of how the field makes you as an ethnographer define and redefine your self, and how that self is shaped and influenced by the social interaction with others in the field. (Davies, 1999)

I had a dream of working in development before coming to Kosovo. Choosing to do my thesis on peace-building was thus no coincidence. It didn't take long for all my visions to be crushed. Only two weeks after arriving to Kosovo, my interest of maybe working for International Agencies had faded slowly but steadily. I met lots of 'Internationals'. And they were nice. And they were welcoming to me and gave me advice and helped me out with knowing my way around the city. But a feeling that started as curiosity eased into astonishment and later stirred within me a notion of resent against the development processes. The city was full of people with fancy degrees from what would traditionally be described as the richer nations of the world. They fell into a net of hierarchy within the various

²³ EU mission in Kosovo

²⁴ 'Internationals' being an unofficial reference for those that come there to work for multilateral and bilateral organizations and foreign NGOs. Basically people working in the development business in one way or another.

development agencies they were serving, but still earning much more than the locals working within the same agencies.

My first weeks in Prishtina were spent wandering around the city at day, reading reports and then at night going out to smoke filled bars to meet up with recent acquaintances. In some ways it felt like a new session as an Erasmus exchange student, except for all my friends being other foreign exchange students, they were young foreign professionals working temporarily abroad.

In my naivety I had expected to meet people dedicated to the society they were working and living in, but found myself in a stream of conversations about everything that Prishtina lacked to be a metropolitan and about everything that was wrong with Kosovars. The negative stereotypes I had encountered throughout all my travels from Iceland could also be found in Kosovo. I would sit with new international acquaintances sipping on mojitos, listening to tales of all the exotic places they'd been to, hearing some of them complain about how little leave they got each year, how some other places, like Iraq were more lucrative because of hazard bonuses and how annoying it was that they had to go all the way to Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, to either get a McDonalds or buy decent organic food for themselves. Comments about the barbaric features of the Balkans were not uncommon and one man I met, a EULEX police officer, described Kosovo as "the armpit of Europe". The discourse seemed to circle around the notion that anything that went wrong with the development process had to do with the nature of Kosovars. The idea that development in itself could be problematic wasn't a topic I encountered regularly.

A few people I met, working for the International community, also shared their negative thought on NGOs when I told them about my research project. One plainly said: "Yeah, I mean I guess it's a good idea going in the field like that and talking to the NGOs. But you'll see that a lot of them are shit". Another defined local NGOs as "Unprofessional".

These nightlife sessions left me walking home night after night with a bad taste in my mouth and a feeling that took me months to define. I wanted to go home as soon as I came to Kosovo. I later realized it was because I had entered a world I didn't like and within which I didn't belong. Many of the international aid workers found it hard to position me as well. "Oh, you're not with the mission?" wasn't an uncommon response when I told people what I was doing in Kosovo. People seemed to find my presence puzzling, my research vague or without any purpose. Some internationals found the whole "gender thing" tiring, others as mentioned before, found local NGOs too unprofessional to be taken seriously. I felt tremendously out of place with most of the people I met during my first weeks in Prishtina.

And my discomfort was heightened by my inability to freely speak my mind and criticize many of the things I heard. It wasn't until a bit later, when my social network started expanding that I found a space where I felt I could express my thoughts freely.

Fieldwork is about observing how people talk about their social connections, their everyday lives and struggles in order to make sense of that in a wider social and theoretical context (Barnard and Spencer, 1996). I came into this setting as an anthropologist looking into a certain power structure through a certain theoretical framework of feminism and post-colonial theory. Although the Internationals themselves are not the subject of this research they are a link in the power structure that women's NGOs in Kosovo find themselves in.

It is worth mentioning that the information given by informers is always linked to their particular social settings and their relationships within a certain society, their identity and connections. They are therefore not characteristic of that society, or of a group of people, although they can be indicative (Davies, 1999). The people I met can be seen as indicators of a certain mindset, and as bearers of a certain development discourse; but should not be viewed as describing the mindset of the international community as a whole.

The purpose here is not to make generalizations about how everybody working in development are a certain way, but rather to describe first impressions on a set of people, that are consequently a part of a power structure and thus in a certain position towards the local inhabitants. Let's not forget that these are the people that make decisions on funding or follow orders that affect the development process in Kosovo.

My initial contact with the International development sector and peace building mission in Kosovo, although personally disappointing, became a valuable experience. Some of the negative feelings I encountered took me months to define and come to terms with, others were valuable in helping me define my questions for the NGOs. These first impressions also made me thoroughly enjoy when I met people, both local and Internationals, that shared my concerns and had profound respect for local perspectives.

Crang and Cook (2007) talk about the tensions and the discomfort of being part of opposite community – or of studying a community that is opposite some of the venues you are otherwise a part of (for example as me, being foreign and hanging out with internationals while studying local NGOs) and the tensions that can build up within yourself when going from one to the other.

After a while, when my research process had started and I had made local friends I found myself exposed to negative stories from both sides. While the many of the international I met referred to Kosovo as underdeveloped, the people as incapable or unprofessional and the

place as “dirty”, some of my local friends talked about the international agencies as corrupt, the internationals as condescending and indifferent to local needs. One NGO staff member, who also runs an Albanian school for foreigners said: “Maybe it’s my national pride, but it really bugs me. All these internationals who don’t try to learn the language, don’t try to get to know the culture. For them it’s just nice, they get money, nice cars, houses paid. And then when they finish, they can leave and go home or to whatever place is next.” A male friend commented once on my clothes and hairstyle, complementing them and said that most ‘internationals’ didn’t even bother combing their hair, because for them Kosovo isn’t fancy enough to make an effort to look good.

These glimpses of resentment, although not shared by everybody I met, later became clear in my overall fieldwork data as portrayals of the development processes, the power mechanisms at work in development and people’s resistance against them. This frustration often hindered dialogue between local stakeholders and development agency workers concerning certain projects and a couple of ‘internationals’ I met, shared their anxiety with me, saying that they often felt they were stuck in the middle between people who refused to listen to each other. In one example, a young girl, working as a volunteer for a big international agency was given a task to help organize an event, funded by the agency and involving local Women’s NGOs. She spent two weeks running between her boss and NGO managers, neither making compromises for the event, the international agency following a rigid protocol and the NGO leader criticizing exactly that.

One of the results of my encounter with members of the development community was me having to criticize myself and my own initial agenda. I had come to Kosovo because of an “interest” in peace building and because I had a dream of getting job in the future based on this interest. When I arrived, the *realness* of peace building hit me. This wasn’t just a topic for a thesis, this was people’s lived experience and it was already full of individuals and institutions competing over the power to define it.

The research I had come to do all of a sudden seemed absurd. Was I any better than the other foreigners using Kosovo’s disruptive past and present need as a jumping start for a career? Although my research topic had been chosen out of interest in the field being studied, had I not also had an agenda to do a master’s thesis that would advance my future prospects? Realizing that my research topic was not just based on real situations, but also real people’s lives, deaths and tragedies, forced me to look very critically towards myself and my agenda.

What if you don't like the field?

The hierarchy between the international community and the local community wasn't the only part of the field that was uncomfortable for me. It was also hard to admit to myself that I disliked a lot of aspects of the field itself. I was supposed to be an anthropologist, completely unbiased and ready to shed my social-fur as soon as I entered an unfamiliar setting. I was supposed to be a master in adjusting to new settings with an open mind and insatiable curiosity. Instead I found myself annoyed by the dust, the pollution, the internationals, the capitalist desires of the locals, the garbage and not least the masculinity that was eminent everywhere. I was utterly disappointed in myself as an academic.

This alien feeling also had a great impact on me as a researcher. I was confused as to what role to choose. Sitting, listening and observing these conversations that I had been kindly invited to join left me feeling dishonest because a lot of the time I strongly disagreed but did not voice my opinion. Was anthropology really so deceitful by nature or was I doing it wrong?

According to Bernard (2006) many fieldworkers report that they go into a state of euphoria in the initial period of fieldwork which is exactly the opposite from my experience where the thrill didn't come until later on in the process. Bernard says that can also happen in fieldwork, but many find it uncomfortable to admit. As an example he mentions Rosalie Wax's (1971: 67) first impression of the field. She arrived and felt absolutely horrible and expected that she would feel much better the next day. She was wrong (Bernard, 2006).

I came and found myself in a place, which at first sight wasn't so appealing to me. Everywhere I was surrounded by masculinity: The institutions were masculine, the ideas were masculine, the power was masculine, the outdoor spaces were filled with men with overinflated masculine egos and my friends were either masculine or accepted the patriarchal system they were a part of. I was torn between the feminist/anti-capitalist activist and the anthropologist within me. I felt like an inadequate anthropologist, a bad researcher who had lost the battle as soon as she stepped out of the bus in Prishtina, taking one look at the bus station toilets and immediately wanting to go home.

After all my anxiety in the field, Barnard's guide to ethnography felt like it was written for me. I read it when I got home and many notes proved more than useful, in fact they were plain reassuring. According to him, I actually felt what most anthropologists feel. Apparently almost all fieldworkers talk about feelings of either shock or depression during some period in the field (Bernard, 2006).

Messy Anthropology

When you enter the field, despite all the background you have in anthropology, in theory and in ethnographic research, you are yourself and you become the filter through which the research is executed, written down and produced (see for example: Bernard, 2006; Crang and Cook, 2007).

You can read a whole shelf on neo-colonialism, euro-imperialism, power and discourse. And a whole lot more than that on research methods or feminism. Then you go to 'the field' - this place which is supposed to be the object of your study. This arena, this town, this country or this culture that you, a strange little anthropologist to be, have chosen to discover, or at least to try to look at as close as you can. The main thing you discover is that this field is plain messy - and it has you in the middle of the analysis.

Crang and Cook weren't joking when they said that fieldwork was problematic (2007: 152). This ethnography business was proving to be mind-bogglingly complicated. The longer I stayed, the more nervous I became. And it was always the problem of me and my connections that got in the way. How much could I write about my negative experienced without insulting some of the people I had met in the field? How could I criticize people's connections within a power net in this thesis, while I rarely verbally challenged their views in the field?

One makes friends in the field and meets acquaintances and colleagues. One listens to them all and because you have been taught this paralyzing thing called 'relativity', you accept their ideas, at least in a professional way. And even if you do disagree with them, you have this strange ability to find them curious, or interesting. This means that you dismiss nothing, but still start to build a sort of resentment because there is something very wrong with the whole picture and some of these ideas reflect the very core of the problems some of your *other* new friends are talking about. You start to see a power structure, a net. And somehow you are tip-toeing from one end to the other. Trying to balance yourself on a fragile web of social connections.

I realized far into my fieldwork period that was trying to please everybody. I had all of a sudden become a waitress, bringing in all the orders to be served and I lost sight on my own objectives, my own aims and in fact, the focus of this thesis: To study local women's NGOs, In Kosovo, and try to put on paper *their* ideas about the barriers facing them. I felt a sigh of relief when I finally got back to the topic.

Post-colonial enterprises in present-day Kosovo: The peace-building process, local initiatives and donor requirements

As said before, this fieldwork was conducted in the fall 2010, two years after Kosovo's independence, ten years after res. 1325 on women, peace and security had been passed by the UN²⁵ and eleven years after the war. In a decade, Kosovo had gone through many changes and a lot of reform; with legal, banking, roads and telecommunication infrastructures and democratic institutions put into function (Vuniqui, 2008). A Gender quota in parliament established in 2002 is one example. Though, as Vuniqui points out, the period of reconstruction also brought about negative development and development failures; with power cuts remaining a problem, the justice system not being able to tackle corruption and social problems, such as gender inequality, still prevailing (2008).

Straight after the war, the focus of peace building operations was aimed at reconstructing and stabilizing the society (Vuniqui, 2008; Valur Ingimundarson, 2004). A UN mission was established in Kosovo, called UNMIK. The mission enforced a grand scale civilian presence and Kosovo became an UN protectorate meaning that the UN had administrative powers while Serbia maintained sovereignty over the territory (Vuniqui, 2008; Wolfgram, 2008). NATO also installed a mission in Kosovo (called KFOR) which aimed at guaranteeing civilian security for local inhabitants during the post-war era. UNMIK has transferred most of its power over to the local government after the country's independence in 2008 (Vuniqui, 2008). After the UN retreated from administration, the European Union established a mission (EULEX) which aim is to oversee the justice system, police and customs and tackle corruption in ministries.

Today, peace has been restored in Kosovo, security has been established in regions outside Mitrovica/e²⁶ and the foreign missions have been pulling out dramatically in recent years. Still, during this fieldwork there remained a high presence of international agency workers in the country.

²⁵ The women's stand point on 1325 will be discussed in the next chapter.

²⁶ Mitrovica/e borders Serbia and has a high concentration of ethnic Serbs. The city is split in two almost, with a bridge dividing the Albanian and Serbian inhabitants. Clashes between the communities have occurred in recent years. The different grammar of the name of the town (Mitrovica/Mitrovice) depends on whether it's used by an Albanian or a Serbian language speaker.

Many NGOs were established soon after the war and in the years after. While some were foreign based NGOs, others were established by local actors. But these NGOs have largely depended on donations from foreign, mostly Western agencies and organizations. These results are based on semi-structured and informal interviews conducted with local people working for small scale NGOs.

One must not forget, and it didn't fully hit me until I arrived in Kosovo, that the women I interviewed to *experienced* war. They lost people, property or both. Some fled the country during the war and lived in refugee camps. Some even started their NGOs in these refugee camps, where they served as consultants for traumatized people, or worked as advocates looking for missing family members. They were personally affected by a violent struggle fought on ethnic lines and this context mustn't be taken away from them or these interviews conducted ten years after the war. The fact that all of the respondents are actively engaged in co-operating with women of other ethnicity is also important to keep in mind while reading through the next chapters; as the interviews are, among other things, about their ideas on local initiative towards peace.

Local participation in Peace building

One of the reoccurring themes in the interviews was about the development process after the war and how much Kosovars themselves had led that process. Many of the respondents were very critical of both how peace had been enforced and how little voice the Kosovars had had in the development process after war. Most of them agreed that the process had been shaped by the international community. One respondent, when asked if Kosovars themselves had led the development after the war, had this to say:

No. I don't think so. I mean, no. They [Kosovars] were definitely no decision makers, they have not... eh, I mean to the extent that an independent state could and should. So, as we are a very poor country, you cannot decide. You have no means to decide without the developers, UNMIK, without the big multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies and institutions like IMF and the World Bank and other big donors and development agencies. So, they eh, pretty much – or EC [The European Commission], and their

programs pretty much influence our policies. I mean our government policies and their action in development (Mirjeta, November 2010)²⁷

Mirjeta wasn't the only interviewee who had this view of complete foreign control of the development in Kosovo. For many it was clear the peace building process had not been led by Kosovars themselves, and definitely not the local NGOs or grassroots organisations. A Serbian woman working for a NGO based in the outskirts of Prishtina, and an elderly Albanian woman working for another within the city, both pointed out that only people in power could make decisions in a peace-building process like the one that's been in Kosovo the last decade. Initially it had been the "Internationals" and Western governments. In 2008 the local government in Kosovo had taken over, and the power was really only in the hands of the ruling party. So even if the power was put into the hands of locals, it was in the hands of a few local people that had the power to decide the priorities in such a development. These few people in power (the top within the governing political party) shape the course of the country. This was mainly because they were the ones deciding where to spend the budget, whether to spend it on schools, on road work, or on gender issues. Afërdita shared this view:

Me: But what about the development here in, in the last ten years. Do you feel that eh, do you feel that people from the local community have been the ones to make the decision on how Kosova should develop after the war? [...]

A: /[[laughs] no. No no no no. [Says acidly:] What we have requested and we want, completely they will do different.

Me: Are you not shaping that direction?

A: No.

Me: The local community is not shaping the direction this country is going to?

A: No, it's coming from... somewhere else.

[Silence].

(Afërdita, December 2010)

²⁷ All names, even some places have been changed to ensure anonymity. This follows procedures within anthropology. This is done for various reasons in this case; to protect the women and their organisations, and also so people involved in this arena will be less able to take sides when they read this, as Kosovo is a small country and people might already have preconceived ideas about the interviewees.

Vlora, a founder of a small, two-employee NGO based in a rural setting in West Kosovo had a slightly more positive feeling towards the international community. In her mind, the international community tried to help them out a lot: NGOs in Kosovo and Kosovars in general. She was more concerned about local corruption and other NGOs being corrupt and said she just hoped that EULEX wasn't corrupt as well as those that were in charge before (UNMIK). She did feel though that sometimes the international community didn't listen to local perspective: "You know, they are in the middle of this. If we decide for ourselves to do something for Kosova, they say no you have to change this or that sometimes." (*Vlora, October 2010*). When asked whether decisions are made solely by the international community Vlora said; "a bit maybe" and when asked whether Kosovars themselves had led the post war development she signalled with her hands and said "yes and no. The international Community has decided a lot of things of course." Although Vlora had a relatively hopeful view towards the international community, especially the newly established European mission of Eulex, she still admitted that a lot of the decision making was done by such international actors. At the same time she expressed her distress for her son and other young Kosovars that wanted to go to Europe for work or education. I later met her son and the three of us discussed this at great lengths – Kosovar youth faced many barriers when wanting to go abroad and many felt landlocked within their own society. Still, Vlora made no connection between European intervention in her country and such barriers. In fact, she hoped such an intervention would at some point help Kosovo being established as a part of Europe.

During my fieldwork I noted this discussion about the boundaries of Europe a few times. One NGO worker, in an informal encounter asked me what I was doing in Kosovo. After listening to my answer, he brusquely asked whether I thought it was ok for me to come to his country while he had no chance whatsoever to come to Iceland. We were sitting at an outside bar in a small town in central Kosovo with a few common friends, which were all new acquaintances of mine as I had only been in Kosovo for a couple of weeks. The atmosphere got a little thicker and the only thing I could do was to answer sincerely that no, I did not think that was ok. Some of the people there hushed the discussion by making jokes and quickly altering the mood of the crowd to a more positive turn. Still, I was reminded that in the mind of some Kosovars, I was a part of a hierarchy which they resented.

New discourses have emerged locally, derived from negative images of Kosovo and young people's frustration of having little freedom to travel to Europe. They are used by

young Kosovars to protest against dominant ones, for example by referring to themselves as



Photo taken by author

Ghettopeans (a term which was also used as a headline for a rock concert in Prishtina in late 2010), or calling Kosovo *the quarantine of Europe*. Kosovar political movements have also surfaced, such as Vetëvendosje (e. *Self-Determination*), an Albanian nationalist movement, later running for government, which used graffiti to present their political statements. This graffiti had a lot of embedded meaning, it used EU and development agency jargon, often flipping it on its side. The picture above is an example of this, engraving UNMIK (the UN mission which was heavily criticized for its conduct in Kosovo) and EULEX (which had become the new face of development in Kosovo) into a logo and crossing over both. The text below translates into: I vote, you vote, he/she votes, we vote. *they profit*. By using discourses of democracy to criticize the structures working on democratising Kosovo, Vetëvendosje sent out a strong message which can, arguably, be seen as an act of resistance and agency against power.

Fatime, a young law student working for a human rights organization was one of my respondents and became a good friend as well. We would go out to events occasionally and

the rock concert mentioned before was one of them. During that concert Fatime translated many of the lyrics which were mostly against the local government, although the criticism was heavily cloaked in metaphors. She said that Kosovar people found it hard to speak directly against the government and against power in general. During the interview I had conducted with her before she criticised the local government, saying that they were in charge now of decision making concerning the country's development. The international community in recent years had shifted their gaze more towards supporting certain issues like gender or minority rights, she said. Despite this, she still found the international community ignoring local expertise. She and Vlora were those from my respondents who shared the most positive view towards the international agencies operating in the country. However, they also had their criticisms; admitting that a lot of the power had been exercised from abroad and that local expertise was seldom recognized, instead foreign experts with little knowledge on local culture were hired

Local versus foreign expertise

After the war there came experts from Europe, from America, from the world, to tell us what to do in our countries. And they led our country. They pushed us away. (Lule, October 2010).

Vjollca Krasniqi (2007), citing Jane Parpart (1995) says that "the 'development expert' is a throwback and a continuation of colonial violence." (2007:7) The need to buy troops from off shores: Westerners that, as she points out: "[encompass] practically every aspect of Kosova's political, economic, and social life. Development experts, soldiers, diplomats are the main actors in this 'reconstruction' process." (2007:7) She says that "Local expertise, knowledge, cultural experiences are to be discarded or seen as being not valid (2007:7)". This is how certain expertise is silenced and other valued, thus keeping a system of control going.

The matter of local expertise and foreign experts was an issue I probed for in the interviews and they became widely discussed by my respondents. Most of the women were educated, often human rights lawyers, scholars or business consultant and felt they had the expertise to advocate about issues concerning Kosovo's development. They lamented the international community's tendency to bring in foreign experts to Kosovo as advocates instead of asking local people for advice. When asked whether they were consulted on gender issues or civil society issues most of them said that rarely happened. "They don't see the expertise in us" as Jelena pointed out was not an uncommon answer. Some said there were cases where they were consulted. Afërdita was one of them:

They are engaging the people here, yes because several times I was engaged in different as a local expert. I have done such a lot of analyzing and reports but usually, all the time you have in the head an international expert. And for him, for sure, they should pay a lot of money compared to what they have paid us.

When asked how much they got paid she answered:

the international experts are paid, depend on the different organisations, or institutions – the internationals (yeah), they get paid eh, 800 Euro to 1000 Euro, per day. When they come to do any kind of survey. It's different rates for different organisations, it's not the same for all. For who you are working. For locals, its 150, and before it was 300 per day. For locals. And now its lower. Its eh, 100-150.

A friend of mine and an Albanian teacher expressed her frustration towards international staff's pay. She was working as a part-time teacher and a full-time NGO worker where two Scandinavian people were in executive positions in an otherwise 6 staff organisation. According to her, over 70% of the total funding for the NGO went into the salaries of the foreign staff and benefits. The 30% left was used to pay local staff and finally to fund the projects the NGO was working on. When she expressed this disappointment to her family, she was told to be grateful to have a job.

On the issue of local expertise however, Jelena said that initially the international community had been as she expressed "enthusiastic" towards grass root organisations as advocacy groups. In some cases they had been asked to analyse human rights issues, asked about laws and implementation, about women rights and resolution 1325. But today, this interest had faded in the last few years and NGO members were working less as advocates for international agencies than before. This might also be connected to the fact that international agencies had for the last few years shifted their attention from supporting NGOs towards supporting the Kosovo state.

Vlora said that the international community rarely sought advice from NGOs or other parts of the civil society sector but local institutions, schools and other agents did and she often acted as an informal consultant between such agents and government or international agencies. An interesting spin to this was something Afërdita mentioned, she said that agencies asked for her expertise: „Yes. Yes. It's happens. (Me: ok it happens?). Yes, and all the time. For example when they come with a new program and they writ[e] us [when] they are doing a brainstorming. But after that if you go to apply to the project, it is very difficult to get it.“ She said that local expertise was used like this but such projects were usually executed through the agencies themselves and not allocated to NGOs. Thus, local expertise was used, but local

people were not paid to work on such projects, as they were executed by international aid workers. She added that a big majority of donor money goes back to the funding countries because projects are run by and executed by foreign staff and not local stakeholders.

A more severe story came from Lule who gave me examples of how, despite efforts made by her and other local actors to give instructions regarding the peace process, their suggestions had not been taken seriously. In one case they were advocating on which places were unsafe for Serbian returnees shortly after the war, when the international community put a great deal of effort into refugee and minority returns: „But, they did a stupid thing. We told them: Do not take people - [to] two villages that were in Drenica region - Do **NOT** go to Drenica yet. (hm). They did. They [the returnees] were killed.“ (Lule, October 2010).

Asked why local people were not consulted and local expertise not sought by the international community, Lule answered that it had no interest in consulting locals because the international agencies could never see them as having any kind of expertise. She also indicated corruption within the foreign aid system, saying that the internationals would never have come if they didn't benefit from itself. As she pointed out, development is lucrative, contract deals are made while privatisation has left a few local and Europeans very wealthy. People from Europe can get good jobs with extortionate salaries while working for international development agencies.

And, for them if you develop this country economically it means that you have to leave. So.. But no, it was heaven on Earth – no Heaven in Europe, huge salary, nice life,.. beautiful women – stay here, prolong the mission. (Lule, October 2010)

According to some interviewees, the international missions in Kosovo not only exercised power over the local population, they misused it and directly benefited from it. This was the reason why Kosovo was still in problems, and why gender issues were not addressed, because they were not lucrative and undermined the structure of power that already was in place. Keeping status quo was not a failure of the mission, it kept business going as usual. And the reason they could do this was because the international community, when it came, put Kosovo under UN administration.

Valur Ingimundarson says that the discourse in post-war development is centred on the idea of all societies working together for peace in today's globalized world. The fact is, though, that the discourse does not break down hierarchies, it “actually reinforces Western supremacy in world politics” (2004: 68-69). Although development has taken many paradigm shifts in the last decades, focusing now more on participation, social development and gender

issues, it is still largely the North that makes the decisions for the South, like it is still mostly men in decision-making roles making decision for underrepresented men and women alike. The criteria that define a developed country are based on Western ideologies, where the West is defined as having superior systems of rule (Valur Ingimundarson, 2004; Caroline Robb, 2004). “Aid”, as Robb points out, “, by its definition, is a manifestation of inequality.”, reinforced by the idea that outside knowledge is superior; a system dominated by the interests of the powerful (2004: 2).

Now, it can hardly be argued that today’s development in post-war Kosovo isn’t owned by Kosovo at all. The Kosovar government has officially been handed the reins from the international community but before that happened, it was made very clear to the people of Kosovo that they were not capable of governing their country unless they would abide to certain criteria that distinguish between good and bad states. One of the clearest statements of such sorts made by the international community was the document ‘Standards before status’, a response to many local people’s dissatisfaction over not having gained independence.

‘Standards before status’ (State-building, modernization and democratisation)

Post-war reconstruction *is* a discourse. It is a discourse which talks about the obligation of the West to modernize and democratize the Rest. The south is seen as a blank space to fill. And into those spaces the West can write things such as "civilisation, progress, modernization, and democracy" (Withworth, 2004; 39, quoted in Krasniqi, 2007; 7). After the war in Kosovo, the United Nations placed Kosovo under UN rule, making it a UN protectorate. Shortly after, when the novice of international intervention had worn off and voices of independence rose among the Albanian majority, the international community introduced *Standards before status*, a policy announcing that the people of Kosovo could not expect to gain autonomy until it’s state had reached certain standards. Those standards were based on development paradigms such as neo-liberal ideas of establishing a free market economy; establishing a rule of law; democratization; ensuring minority freedom and refugee returns as well as a dialogue with the Serbian government (Krasniqi, 2004). Valur Ingimundarson criticized the policy shortly after it was published and said it was a colonial process with hidden political agendas where structures and rule were imposed without the involvement of local people: “[...] the UN is, indeed, acting very much like a neo-colonial power in Kosovo, with the assistance of NATO, the EU, and the OSCE. Despite having won a mandate to govern locally through the election process, Albanian political leaders – representing the majority of the population – are in a totally subordinate position.” (70-71).

Valur Ingimundarson states that *Standards before status* was a tool used to justify the foreign presence in Kosovo, giving out a clear message that the people of Kosovo would be able to rule their country, *but* not until they complied with the criteria set forth in the policy. The main criteria fell under the catchphrase ‘democratization’ (Krasniqi, 2007; Valur Ingimundarson, 2004). Valur says that the very notion of democratization is paternalistic; set to produce results for Western interests and to impose political values or culture onto others (2004: 69). Moreover, he notes that whatever has counted for Kosovars, does not count for the international community. “The UN is immune to what it is demanding of the Kosovo Albanians: accountability, transparency, and competence.” (p. 71). Criticism against the international community for human rights abuses, connection to human trafficking and cases of private profits in privatization processes among top UN executives had at the time been raised in Kosovo (KWN, 2009; KGSC, 2010; Valur Ingimundarson, 2004). But very few external monitors for the UN and the ‘internationals’ were established, meaning they often fell out of reach of the law (Valur Ingimundarson, 2004).

Admittedly Kosovo was in a bad state at the time *Standards before status* was introduced. The economy was down, unemployment was up and ethnic tension was high. But as Valur Ingimundarson (2004) points out – even though the Kosovars were dependant both economically and security wise on the West, and even though most of them did prefer UN rule to Serbian domination (at least the Albanian majority), it did not justify that the international community could refuse to grant self-determination to the people living there. “The line between international administration over a territory and neo-colonialism is a thin one – even if it is based on temporary consent or seen as a lesser evil” (p. 81)

Like other colonial enterprises, the dominant states had their own interest at stake in the process undertaken in Kosovo. There were political elements at work here, with Russia backing Serbia, Kosovo’s former ruler, and some EU countries not wanting Kosovo’s independence in fear of their own minority issues escalating (such as Spain’s Basque population). *Standards before status* and especially the focus on democratization of the Kosovar state was also a tactic to maintain stability in the region (Valur Ingimundarson, 2004). The Balkans lie on the margins of the EU. Controlling the events in the region, and stabilizing the area according to EU norms, would help decrease both immigration into EU countries and possible threats to European states.

The international community, through its demands to the local government and the local population gave a clear message about Kosovo: it was not capable of independence. At least not until it had reached the standards compatible to that of other Western countries. But

this kind of top-down approach from the international community characterized the peace-building from the onset. One example of this was the way in which international agencies emphasised ethnic reconciliation in various forms and as explained below; often without listening to local needs.

"I found an organisation, to do, to do the work" (Lule, October 2010)

– pushing for ethnic reconciliation

Straight after the fighting stopped in Kosovo and the international missions were established, local actors were encouraged to work on reconciliation between ethnic groups, regardless of NGOs own mission. The idea was that by reconciling people of different ethnicity and enhancing minority security, peace would be established. It's not an absurd idea, but the way it was enforced was criticized by some of my respondents. Most interviewees said there had been a pressure from donors from the onset to comply with their priorities. Ethnic reconciliation was one of them. It was a buzz word in the first years after the war and a big priority of international donors. But it was often implemented with a top-down approach. When asked whether the international community has emphasised that NGOs work on inter-ethnic dialogue, Lule, had this to say.

L: It was always a pressure.

Me: Mhm

L: And I can share two stories. One is ehm, .. In '99 October, not many months after bombing, after war, (yeah), ehm, an American organization came to me and said "I have, [changes her voice and acts out an American accent] I wanna give you ten thousand dollars to do a reconciliation project" and I said "Excuse me? .. Take the money and go home and we call you when it's time for reconciliation." (yes) Two weeks later he called me, he said "I found an organisation, to do, to do the work"

Me: Really?

L: That speaks to you, huh?

Me: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

L: That should be your title [takes a puff of her cigarette and smiles, looks sideways towards me with a tease in her eyes. Blows the smoke out. I laugh, also holding a cigarette in my hand and smoking. I'm sitting opposite her, on the other side of her small desk. She continues her story]. Anyways, so I said: It's gonna fail (mhm) and it did fail.

Stories like these were not uncommon among local civil society members, although Lule is a storyteller and passionate activist by heart and her way of telling a tale leaves the words printed in your mind for a long time. She had worked on women's emancipation for decades and is a director for a Prishtina based NGO. Lule, a Kosovo-Albanian, was active during occupation times, going to undercover meetings with Serbian women organizations within Serbia, at times when inter-ethnic meetings were very risky. The meetings, according to her, taught her not to hate Serbs, but the Serbian government. It is a legacy that she's carried through to this day, working alongside Serb women and women of other ethnicities before, during and after the war, forming coalitions and engaging in non-official peace talks between women.

At the same time, she has lost funding because of donors' requirements for projects to involve ethnic reconciliation. The fact that she has spent the last twenty years co-operating with women of different ethnicities does not give her funding. On paper, she isn't filling the criteria on engaging minorities in her NGOs projects.

Donors come with their own agenda, own vision and often their own experts as many of my respondents noted before. These donors can be anything from small religious organizations to big multilateral agencies. Most of the former Yugoslavia countries got funding from Western agencies during their peace-building process (Helms, 2003A; 2003B). Donors come with money, but money is distributed according to a set of requirements made by donors. As Helms points out, funding shows the will of the donor countries and agencies (2003A; 2003B). Funding is thus the main way the international agencies exercise their powers. And as Helms points out, local women's NGOS in the Balkans have often been pushed to put a superficial emphasis on ethnic reconciliation in order to get funding.

When asked whether the international community had put pressure on local actors to work on ethnic dialogue, Mirjeta, a scholar and director for a NGO with a small number of local staff said yes, that was the case and added that the international community hadn't had any understanding of the situation local actors were recovering from.

M: Oh yeah that was from the beginning! Yeah it was very big [pressure]. From my point of view, it was imposing something; there was no, no ground for it. There was no circumstance). It was, it was... impossible to - I mean, everything that is imposed or forced in a way [laughs], from top down approach is ehm, is judged to fail, its judged to fail for sure.

Me: does it also maybe shows a lack of comprehension, lack of understanding of/

M: Of course! Of the reality of the people, of the country. They just asked for inter-ethnic dialog. Or even it was... eh called ehm...

Me: Reconciliation?

M: Reconciliation. Sorry yeah, (mhm) thank you.

:

M: Reconciliation.. I mean [laughs a little, but then adds in a sad voice:] we came from different countries of the world (yeah). We found our family members dead, killed, tortured. We found no home because it was burned. And in meanwhile, they expect from these people [her voice breaks a little], to reconcile.

Me: Yes, [I try to hold off the tears filling up my eyes]

M: I, I mean - immediately. Now.

Me: Now.

:

M: [her voice had been a little tense before, she sighs and her voice gets a bit calmer]. The whole, I mean, you cannot go to a village where 200 men were killed. And say: [says with a sarcastic tone] 'yeah, now we are going to reconcile.' It [the message] was: 'What has happened, happened. Now you are going to forget about it. Just for a, you know, in a click! (yes). And now we are starting a brand new history. And we will forget about the past and'.. I mean yes, but you need to go through a process, you cannot just do that like that. Its like coming from the sky. I mean, many mistakes and many many, much money was wasted on these kind of ridiculous reconciliation projects.

And what happened was that donors came with requirements, and NGOs either complied, or new ones were formed to fulfil these requirements and work on donor based projects.

M: Some organizations were saying 'Oh we are going to reconcile, we are going to play football with minorities, I mean - this kind of projects that were...

Me: So like, they were finding projects that were..to/

M: /Yeah.

Me: Because this is what you could get money for or?

M: Many organizations would get money for this kind of projects. Yeah for reconciliation, for the dialog. I'm not against to start a dialog. But you need preparation. It needs to come from the people. As a need (yeah). Something that they see that matters, as a, as a

way of eh.. overcoming this big conflict, to settle things. But not because it's what donors want. So yeah..

Vjollca Krasniqi, a Kosovar scholar (2007), says that the conflict between Albanian and Serbs had to be forgotten or suppressed and states that this kind of approach was embedded within the neo-colonial ideas that formed the development business in Kosovo. She adds: „the post-war peace-building discourse encourages amnesia over ethnic cleansing and the erasure of memory of racist exclusions of Albanians during the regime of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic in the 1990s, of missing persons, rape, robbery, and exile.” (Krasniqi, 2007: 8). But Wolfgram (2008) points out that the atrocities committed by the Albanian force were also silenced, with an overemphasis on ethnic reconciliation mitigated by international donors. The effects on such historical blindness, and on this emphasis on the ethnic identity of people while making peace (instead of class, religious or gendered identities for example, or the intersection of such identities), can not only miss the very goal it is trying to achieve, it can also add to the division between ethnic lines (Helms, 2003A; Krasniqi, 2007)

Helms in her research on women NGOs in Bosnia says that donor requirements enhanced ethnic boundaries because the women working in NGOs constantly had to produce number of individuals from different ethnic groups to fit the criteria for funding. Instead of gender issues being in the forefront among NGOs that were founded to focus on such matters, everything evolved around fitting an ethnic quota for the donors (see Helms 2003A and 2003B). Although the women I talked to didn't say donor requirements had increased the ethnic gap, many said that it had led some of the NGOs working on gender issues astray, looking only into ways to get funding instead of being able to work on issues they felt needed addressing.

The peculiar thing is that despite the donor's focus on reconciliation between ethnic groups in Kosovo, local initiatives towards such reconciliation were sometimes undermined. Some of my respondents felt that even if they were multi-ethnic, some working on their own reconciliation meetings and projects, the international community dismissed their efforts and initiatives, or later tried to take over the process in the name of agency expertise. Lule told me this story as an example of how the international community had responded to an action she wanted to do for ethnic dialogue shortly after the war:

Lule: So when me and [her Serbian colleague] were working, I said to her: “Should we bring a group of women, of Serbs and an Albanian group to sit together and discuss...something that [is] important to us both?” [...] And we met in OSCE building, because it was then not possible for Serbs to travel up and down and.. dangerous, it was very dangerous

(mhm). [...] So Serbs and Albanians we sat down, and after talking we said “let’s do a round table” and bring these issues. We made the plan, who would speak – Serbs, Albanians, speaking. And then we said to OSCE: “can you help us with women, Serbian women, for transport?” (mhm). Because we want[ed] to meet in Bresovica which is a place where many Serbs live (ok). [...] And OSCE said “sure”. [Stops speaking, reaches for an ash tray that’s on the table] And guess what they did? I gave them this, agenda, to be printed. Eh? They, they had offered to help (yeah). They brought back the agenda, [stands up and walks to a bookshelf]. Linda, you would not believe this. It was OSCE logo here [points at the top of an A-4 paper she’s pulled out of a paper pile on the shelf] and here, in our agenda they put their people, to speak.

Me: What?

Lule: Yes. And I said, eh... “No, no no. We are the speakers” (yeah). I [says in a careless way] didn’t care about the logo first. But when I saw the speakers, ...[OSCE said] ”But they’re experts on peace building” [...]

She continues to tell me the story and about how the OSCE told them they would not be able to help the women with their meeting unless it was done under OSCE basis. Lule paced around her office with a cigarette in her hand while sharing this story. I was sitting by her desk also with a cigarette in hand. The office air was filled with smoke and her theatrical and enchanting way of storytelling. Us both giggling when she rose up and acted out a heated argument she had had with a OSCE staff member because of how they handled this issue. A few seconds later, lowering our brows in seriousness when she sternly told me how the OSCE had not seen the value of local initiative, of local women trying to negotiate peace. She told me about a member of staff trying to convince the women organizing the meeting to have international speakers and to let the OSCE be in charge of the process, how that person had failed to see the real value of this initiative: The OSCE had a group of Serbian and Albanian women together, trying to bridge ethnic barriers. Trying to make peace.

She continues her story

We did the meeting [without the OSCE]. I drove. My friend drove. Risking both lives. But especially Serb lives. Brought them to the meeting. We had the meeting. And, I want to tell you something. Neither did the OSCE, neither did UN recognize local initiatives, on peace building. Why? It was not under their logo. And it was not under their initiative.

Cases of dismissing unofficial local peace talks were mentioned by those four respondents who had worked in NGOs since the end of the war. They talked about donor pressure towards ethnic reconciliation and said it had almost been like a rush to make Serbs and Albanian get

along, while not listening to them on how it was best to do so. They were told to look towards the future, to “forget the past”. For them, even just suggesting this was an insult and many had tears in their eyes when they shared the painful memories of times of war and the immediate period after the war. How could such a past be forgotten easily? According to them the international community failed to acknowledge how personal war was, how deeply it stirred people’s emotion and that trust could only be built if the local community wanted it.

My respondents criticized donors for their top-down approach in applying projects and pressuring local actors to base their projects on donor’s strategies. They insisted that such an approach would never be successful because it was usually out of touch with the community;

[...] it’s a big mistake by the donors because the donors they come here to support, to help, and to develop. But they come with their own strategy and their policy. And they are not, usually they are not based on the community and their reality (Afërdita, December 2010).

Despite this criticism they admitted that NGOs needed money, that they were in fact dependent on the donors. They said that even though they tried to propose their own projects and work on issues that for them were an important part of peace building and development within Kosovo, they often found themselves having to comply with donor needs or work on such projects without funding. Cornwall et al. (2007) say that the need for funding can produce complicity, the desire to get funding for certain projects can mean that you have to accept some or many objectives made by those who contribute the money. For some respondents, adapting was the only solution to get projects focused on gender issues on the agenda. Afërdita was one of them, for her it was clear that if NGOs were to survive and continue working on their issues, they would need to conform to donor’s criteria in order to sustain themselves: “But the old organisations, if they want to survive and to continue to work, they need to adapt to the donor strategy”. For Fatime conforming to such criteria wasn’t a big issue as she felt it went hand in hand with the aims of the organisation she worked for:

The Donators – usually, usually, when they have the calls for proposals and whatever, they always put it that: „We give a lot of attention to projects that include minorities“, so it’s become a routine now, that, and I think its sort of an opinion that if you have a program with minorities than you’ll get it easier (yeah). Because the focus of the International organisation and everyone, is sort of directed towards including more of the minorities and.. so, all the projects, almost all the projects that we deal with always include minorities. Because, as I said, we do human rights, and human rights includes... – one thing that we’re not going to do is discrimination. (Fatime, October 2010)

All of the women interviewed shared one fear though: They were slowly but steadily losing funding. A decade had passed since Kosovo started its development path and donors were shifting their gaze to more recent conflict. Gender equality issues had not been a priority during the peace building era and as donors started to retreat from Kosovo, such issues became even more marginalised.

Gender equality proved to be an issue woven into the power structure between the local NGOs, the government of Kosovo and the international community as will be revealed in the next chapter. Whereas ethnic reconciliation was enforced and encouraged, gender equality, according to all my respondents, remained a side issue: mainstreamed and withered in a jungle of development issues.

Gender equality and the lack of implementation of gender equality mechanisms

In Kosovo, the gender essentialist notions that had grown strong during the conflict were equally enforced by international action in the peace building process. Local women were kept on the margins, their grassroots' work on ethnic reconciliation idolized as a natural feminine and pacifist phenomenon, while the same men that fought the war were given the reins to the state under the supervision of international actors (Luljeta Vuniqui, 2008; Wolfgram, 2008; Valur Ingimundarson, 2004; Vjollca Krasniqi, 2007). This kind of gender essentialism was therefore present in Kosovo's peace building era. In fact, I argue many gender equality measures taken in the country and elsewhere have been embedded with such essentialized notions that portray men and women as natural categories, rendering gender equality as a second class issue among other development issues.

Gender, unlike, say race or class, isn't seen as political, such social relations and their implications often become invisible which makes the idea of social change connected to gender unimportant, or even impossible (Valenius, 2007: 513; Subrahmanian, 2007). Subrahmanian says it's almost like a large part of the development industry does not fully understand what *gender* means: that gender is a social construct, a formation of ideas about groups of people, which often hinders them from social actions. As she states; without having conceptual clarity towards gender, inadequate policies and practices follow (Subrahmanian, 2007). In a report from 2009, published by Kosovo Gender Studies Centre it is claimed that staff from international organizations in Kosovo show "a superficial understanding of UNSCR 1325 as well as gender mainstreaming" (KGSC, 2010: 7) often describing gender issues as if they only concern women, instead of interrogating the different values given to men and women in society. As discussed in chapter two, "gender" has become a hollow term in development because it is based on gender essentialized notions and top-down approaches. Meanwhile integral gender mainstreaming is often not practiced because of the lack of staff's knowledge and interest in such issues. Gender issues thus end up as a rhetorical, subaltern side step in general development projects (Subrahmanian, 2007; Valenius, 2007; Eyben, 2007; Standing, 2007, Cornwall et al., 2007).

This inability of the international community to focus on gender instead of women, or add-women-and-mix emphasis was detected during my own fieldwork while communicating

with some international aid workers. Volunteers working for high profile international organizations which focus their work on gender equality, said they hated having to give out projects and support only to women and having to reject men and their proposals, pointing out that they liked “both men and women”. This showed first of all that the organization they worked for didn’t have a gendered focus (although stating that they did) and didn’t see the value in involving men in gender issues (although at the same time claiming to be working for gender equality). It also showed the internationals own inability to spot that the problem was with their organization not allocating funds and defining projects with a gendered view. Instead the volunteers expressed their irritation towards “these women’s issues”.

Another international aid worker said she was exhausted with all these NGOs always demanding a clearer gender focus within every sector of development, saying that “women” were put into consideration as a cross-cutting matter (i.e. gender mainstreaming) and, expressing its absurdity – she said that if the international community always had to specially focus on these issues, agencies would have to hire a gender specialist in every department. To her, the international community had better things to do with their time and funding, they were working on, as she pointed out, serious issues. Some of the NGO respondents claimed that this focus on women, and not gender based inequality, showed how little understanding their donors had on gender issues. According to them, effective change towards gender equality would never be achieved by such a focus on women and not gender relations; some added that it was impossible without the involvement of men.

The two recurrent themes that came up during the interviews were about the structural and ideological barriers towards gender equality issues on one hand, and the lack of implementation of gender equality measures such as laws and resolutions on the other, which often left women aside in any official peace building measures. These themes will be discussed below.

Implementation

As noted before, the peace building mission in Kosovo increased the rate of trafficking of girls and women to accommodate for international peace keeper’s participation in the local sex industry (KGSC, 2010). Yet, such extreme examples are not the only negative and gendered outcome of the peace building process. Gender equality was from the onset side-lined as a second class social problem; deemed a soft issue which should be solved after the real stuff was sorted (Vuniqui, 2008; KWN, 2009; Valenius, 2007).

Vuniqui (2008) says that one of the biggest failure in post-war development in Kosovo concerns gender issues. She says there has been a general lack of implementation and will amongst international agencies to work on important projects concerning gender equality in the field. These were exactly the sentiments of my respondents. They said that in Kosovo, gender issues had not been a priority in the post-war development era. It has certainly not been as important as the emphasis on economic restoration, ethnic reconciliation, minority justice or even fixing road structures. Yet, as my respondents pointed out to me, there are real indicators of gender inequality in Kosovo, and such indicators help raise the issue to some extent.

The poverty and the undermining status of women, especially rural women, was one of the issues discussed and a real worry for a lot of my respondents. They said poor women had very little support, from their families, from the government or from the international government. Shpresa raised her concern specifically about women who had been sexually assaulted and the number who had been trafficked during the last decade, saying that many of them ended up being shunned by their families with nowhere else to turn but to those NGOs working on either post-traumatic stress or women's emancipation.

Me: Ok. And is the government, is the government not showing interest in this matter of trafficked/

S: /No, no no.

Me: Ok.

S: I call government

Me: Yes.

S: We cooperate with them.

Me: Yes.

S: But they, they told us we can't do nothing, for them.

Shpresa said that at the beginning of the peace building process, international agencies had supported and funded projects for such needs but that had decreased. Now most of the aid money was going through the local government which still had not established a good social system that people could fall back on. According to her, the local government had very little interest in the cases of trafficking victims, or other issues relating to women's right and security. Trafficking, although really a topic for another thesis, is a clear example of both the

negative gendered impact of the peace-building process, which then becomes shunned and side-lined by authorities who refuse to take any efficient actions against it. Another respondent had this to say about the local authority's way of dealing with gender issues: "Mh, you can see wherever it is about gender they say there is no money to implement this. Yeah there is money to throw on roads. Not on gender of course." (Lule, oct 2010). Vlora also had a similar story to tell: "They [local government] say they want women's rights. They say it is important, but they don't support it." (Vlora, October 2010). When asked whether the government regarded gender equality in general as important, Mirjeta sighed and shook her head, said that the current government had inherited mechanisms that had been put in place by those before them and the international community.

M: We have these gender equality mechanisms [*Sighs*], we have the agency for gender equality, but eh, no interest was shown/

Me: for implementation?

M: for any implementation, I mean they are doing all that they **must** do, by the law (yeah) or you know, not all that they, something that they need to. The minimum of what they have to.

(Mirjeta, November 2010)

Jehona stated the same: "There is no political will to implement. No political will. Both by international and local [government]. No political will. To implement gender policies." Yet, Implementation, as all of my respondents pointed out, is the key for any kind of gender equality measures to work. As interviews were conducted and issues were discussed between me and the NGO staff, the issue of implementation became more and more obvious. In fact it was the most commonly cited obstacle towards any kind of gender equality issue or action taken to improve women's lives, and a problem that none of the women interviewed left unmentioned. The problem was not that the law is unjust, or that there aren't any legal frameworks or agreements on gender equality in Kosovo. There are, but they were just not enforced. A report from KGSC claims the same: gender issues remained a so called cross-cutting issue for international agencies in Kosovo, meaning that gender is part of a mainstreaming policy where it often falls behind other issues because it is not clearly defined or funding to it is not specifically allocated (2009).

All other donors [except Kvinna till Kvinna and Unifem] have gender as a cross-cutting, or women as a cross-cutting issue...That can mean everything and nothing. They are not obliged to fulfil, many of

them don't have a mandate to evaluate success and failures or don't at all get how these impact, I mean how their projects, how their activities impact women's life here or... how were women included, how were they included in, in their projects, or [whether they] benefited? Or - rarely you can see if there is any, eh any evaluation afterwards, by, eh, by donors you know... Although they state in there, and they do state in their policy documents that gender is cross cutting and da da da but then you cannot track where - who are the beneficiaries..." (Mirjeta, November 2010).

There seemed to be an on-going discourse where the idea of gender equality had goodwill both among the local government and the international agencies. Employees of such bodies claimed that they wanted it, that they supported it. Still little was really done to support such issues.

Gender issues, my respondents told me, were also often considered a problem that affected only women and thus, in the minds of many locals were only important to women. Some stated that this was the reason why issues related to gender equality usually gave way to other more important or „general“ issues, like security²⁸ or infrastructure issues. According to Mirjeta the government and the international community had been focusing on things that were important to them, and that did not include gender issues. She wasn't the only one talking about other issues outshining gender issues.

In Kosovo it's hard to tell. Really, like. We have a lot of really good laws. Even a woman can be head of our state. But the implementation like, very very low scale. Because, I don't know, people have a lot of other problems and their like : "We don't have time to deal with that." (Fatime, October 2010).

Vlora was hoping things were getting better for NGOs working on gender equality than they had been before and placed that hope upon the European Mission in the country (EULEX). She said she hoped that EULEX wasn't corrupt like UNMIK and her own government, that they would pay closer attention to achieve gender equality in the country. Fatime also had hopes for the international community and said that international actors were much more eager to push for gender equality; the local government were the ones sustaining barriers that prevented women from participating in decision making. She also said that local culture produced barriers for gender equality frameworks to work:

²⁸ Albeit the security of trafficked victims, or other people affected by gendered violence fall beneath such "general" security radars.

F: Lack of implementation, that is the problem. This is why we have many projects dealing with increasing the awareness, especially with women, about their rights guaranteed with law.

Me: Ok

F: But sometimes there is a problem, it's not that they don't know it, they don't claim it – because of traditional issues and everything, the social issues. They don't want to lose – its like if you claim your heritage, then you destroy-, cut your relations with your family. [...] because they will be like: „You took my property.“ That's a man thing, it's their property. That's the general opinion.

(Fatime, October 2010)

Other respondents talked about this too, that local people in Kosovo undervalued gender issues. Just the idea of NGOs working for women's rights was a contested one in some communities at the beginning of the development era. Sphresa mentioned that she faced a lot of barriers in her local community when she started the NGO. She said she sometimes had doubts about whether all her efforts really made a difference, but when she thought back and remembered how it had been before she realised how much has changed: “[It was] Very bad, because it was something new and something who organize only women, and women have to stay at home, and what you are? [...] We [are] men and must do, to take decisions and this and that. But if you are doing more things, more things, and they start to think “Oh no, this is good”, in their man mind, they start to change things.” (Sphresa, November 2010) She said that although these negative notions towards women led NGOs had decreased; there was still a lack of interest in gender equality issues in Kosovo in general.

Other respondents also criticized local government and culture but were also very sceptical towards the interest of international bodies in gender issues. In their minds, the international community was no less a masculine structure than other governing bodies in Kosovo and it did very little to promote either gender equality, or open access for women to take part in the development processes going on in Kosovo.

For example with Peter Faith [Head of UN mission in Kosovo], somebody told to them it is good to meet women and eh, other [representatives] before him, have some contacts with women, but eh, I think they didn't have eh, big impact, big pressu.. big eh, how to tell you, big eh.. they didn't care, so much about women's opinion.“ (Jehona, November 2010).

Afërdita said that “the internationals” actively pushed for gender equality and tried to include women, she had no doubt about that. But she also added that often the reason behind such

actions were not necessarily to achieve gender equality. International agencies were happy with reports from the government about equality measures, even though they might just be on paper. The internationals also had their own agenda and had to answer to their donors or governments and including gender equality success stories looked good in reports.

With such a lack of interest towards gender equality measures in all corners of the Kosovar society revealed in the interviews, it came as no surprise when all of the respondents stated that women had been heavily ignored in all official peace building efforts in Kosovo.

Women's access to peace negotiations and post-war development

During the Balkan war and after it, women made up for the majority of people working in NGOs and local grassroots' organisations in the Balkans (Helms, 2003B). Even though women did promote fighting directly and indirectly in the Balkan war, most of the violence was perpetuated by men and organized from above by ruling male elites. Because of this, many women's grassroots groups thus seemed to have easier access advocating between ethnic lines and managed to start dialogue between women of different ethnicities before the local and international government did. Such local organisations have from the beginning and all through the peace building process, been very active in bringing members of different ethnic groups together to discuss their experiences of war, thus forming dialogue and trying to ease ethnic tension (Helm, 2003B; Sarah Maquire, 2008). It seems that the gendered foundation of war, and the way women were mostly kept out of the conflict, did work in favour of such peace building efforts among grassroots' organisations. This was something noted by a couple of respondents who had been active in civil society before international intervention began. They said that building peace had not been as hard for them because they had not been soldiers in the war. Such meetings between Serbian and Albanian women after the war was very emotional though and establishing contact during conflict and during occupation times was at times hard and even dangerous. Still, those who participated in them said that crossing ethnic barriers had been much easier for them than many of their male counterparts.

Helms says that the international community picked up on this very early in the peace building process and started cooperating with grassroots organisations, often referred to as "women's NGOs". The idea that women were peace loving, nurturing, passive and not as nationalistic was one of the appeals for the international community to work with these NGOs (Helms, 2003B). The emphasis in that cooperation was thus on women as a simplified category, not on altering the masculine structure that produced such gendered realities in both

peace and war. This gendered distinction was something mentioned in the interviews and something, would I go back to do further research, I would like to ask more about. A majority of my respondents stated that women “did” peace differently. That they were more emotionally open and thus found it easier to come together and openly share their memories of terror and trauma with all the associated breakdowns that came with that. They feel that their feminine traits helped them in such meetings, while masculine emotional reservations did not help men to come together. The interesting point is though, a couple of them connected it to a certain nature of things and said that women were naturally one way, while men were another. Some of the Bosnian women in Helms research believe in “strategic avoidance” (p. 2) - That is, not focusing on ethnic differences but avoiding them and focusing on their common goals as women instead (2003A). Although such an image of a unified experience of women can be contested, Helms respondents insisted that they had not made the war and that they shared a vision of rejecting nationalist divisions. Thus “strategic avoidance” became a tool for ethnic cooperation. By avoiding sensitive ethnic topics, playing down the importance of ethnic division and playing up gender instead they found a common ground.

This is an interesting point in light of the criticism in this paper against gender essentialized notions in development and peace building. Playing up gender, instead of other treads of their identity becomes a way of reconciliation, of trust building and an example of agency as you take gendered notions and make them your own. But this method might also have undermined their venture. The international community noticed the efforts made by local women to bridge ethnic gaps, but it also picked up on the gender essentialism used by local actors mixing such notions with its own established gender essentialized ideas. This might be one reason why it failed to acknowledge women as possible agents of official peace building.

The international community dismissed local women’s agency by ignoring statements and proposals from such organisations and made no effort to invite women to equally participate in negotiations. Most respondents made it very clear that those women from various ethnic and social backgrounds, even those in power and those known within the civil society movements, had been shunned in all official peace building measures in Kosovo.

Me: So in this whole development process that’s been for the last ten years, or more, or yeah, have women been involved in decision making?

Lule: Not in peace negotiation.

Me: I mean in, in the, in any of the official

Lule: No

Me: I'm talking about in the official-

Lule: No.

Me: And is it both within the International [community] and the local?/

Lule: /Yeah. Both

Lule continued by saying that both international and local bodies failed to include any women in peace negotiations. In the years that came after initial negotiations, women had been active in grassroots organisations, working on peace, working on reconciliation and making dialogue between different ethnic groups, but they had rarely been included in official meetings and treaties. Most respondents agreed with this: Kosovar women had neither been included as members of boards or committees, nor had gender equality issues been a part of the requirements within peace operations.

Vuniqui has criticized this saying that: "One of the most obvious shortcomings during this period has been the lack of women in the crucial post war processes in Kosova." (Vuniqui, 2008: 7) Very few female ministers or mayors have been appointed and during the negotiation of Kosovo's status leading towards the country's independence, no women were a part of the Kosovar Negotiation Team. Peace building became a privileged masculine enterprise, much to the disappointment of many Kosovar women. One of Elisabeth Rehn's and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Kosovar respondent expresses her disappointment in an understandably frustrated way, in a report on women's role in peace-building from 2002;

"It is really amazing," said one Kosovar women working as a secretary in UNMIK," that the international community cared only about Kosovar women when they were being raped – and then only as some sort of exciting story. We see now that they really don't give a damn about us. What we see here are men, men, men from Europe and America and even Asia, listening to men, men, men from Kosovo. Sometimes they have to be politically correct so they include a woman on a committee or they add a paragraph to a report. But when it comes to real involvement in the planning for the future of this country, our men tell the foreign men to ignore our ideas. And they are happy to do so[.]" (2002: 125)

Mirjeta blamed the international community for the lack of Kosovar women in the country's peace building efforts;

M: they failed to include women in peace talks. And when UNMIK was in ruling and governing the country they could influence everything. They could remove everyone from our government at that time, provisional [government], eh../

Me: /So they had all the power?

M: They were kings here. I mean SRSB [Chief of UNMIK] was king here. Eh, so he can do anything he wanted, but he was completely like our leadership is not willing to include women.

Valenius says that Kosovar women were therefore not given agency by the international community because nobody believed they had such agency within their own society. For many NGOs, this was a disappointment as they had been optimistic that the presence of foreign troops would give women the chance to participate in peace negotiations (KWN, 2009; Valenius, 2007);

When the NATO bombings ceased and the Serbian forces retreated, local women activists believed that the international organizations would include them in the reconstruction efforts. This did not happen because the international community thought that women could not be and/or were not allowed to be agents of their own future. (Valenius, 2007: 514)

'Practice makes perfect'

Krasniqi does an interesting discourse analyses on development posters put up around Kosovo shortly after *Standards before status* was introduced. The reason why I mention this research specifically is because I believe the posters show a certain mentality of governing. Through such posters the development agencies use imagery to describe how they see Kosovo's post-war development and also to send out a message on who will eventually take over that role and how those taking over should rule Kosovo.

As Krasniqi says, the images used in these posters are closely intertwined with the rhetoric of the peace building process, where slogans of democratization and progress are welded together. The images represent the power structures at hand, how power is negotiated, through which ideas domination is established and rejected. Also, in the meantime, gender identities are being reconstructed, reconfigured and redefined through the discourse used in such posters. The posters analysed by Krasniqi were both development advertisement from the UN and political advertisement from local government parties on the other, both aimed at the Kosovar public (2007). Gender, or gendered images, play a role in the posters Krasniqi says (2007): The international community uses gendered images to impose Western values, policies and norms; while the local politicians use such images to maintain their domination of the public sphere.

Development advertisements from foreign agencies are interesting as a phenomenon in itself. Such posters were still present when I went to Kosovo, although most of them were from NATO, not the UN. The NATO posters I noticed published self-proclaimed success

stories of the NATO mission in Kosovo. NATO also ran a radio station that during commercials played an American voice reciting their slogan – “Radio KFOR, the radio station that *cares* about Kosovo”. The publicity stunts used by the international community during my stay in 2010 were thus mostly used to invoke a positive feel toward NATO and its mission in Kosovo. Kristin Loftsdóttir uses the concept of developscape in her article *Invisible colour* (2009) to explain how the globalised nature of development shows a movement of various things such as goods and people, but not at least images and ideas that have an impact on people’s daily life (2009; 1). She says that advertisement and billboards used in development have embedded ideas about those portrayed in them (see p. 6).

In the posters analysed by Krasniqi, men are shown as the nation, boys as state-building. Women are mothers and care takers while the boys are in control of the public sphere. Women are shown as passive, because while they are a central image for the future of the nation (the mothers of the nation), they are still muted. The UN did not send a message to the women about what they had to do to rule the nation, because simply they did not believe that it would be women ruling the nation. Women are never shown in a leading position in the posters, because the UN expected it to be men filling such positions (Krasniqi, 2007).

These gender essentialist images used by the UN to portray proper peace building procedures were quickly picked up by local politicians who in their political campaigns used similar posters which also showed women as mute, in the background either in their traditional wear or their traditional roles as mothers. The politicians themselves were placed in the centre wearing suits, portrayed as modern, progressive and in control (Krasniqi, 2007).

Both Krasniqi and Valur Ingimundarson come to the same conclusion about UN peace building posters in Kosovo. But I find Krasniqi’s analyses interesting for it shows a gendered portrayal of how the international community advertises peace building. It reveals a gendered narrative about nation building and development which is based on binary oppositions between men and women, as well as between the internationals and the locals. The local political posters do the same, showing the fantasies of local political parties about who should run the state and how.

Through these images we find a construction of masculinity and femininity and also of the democratic and non-democratic subject. As Krasniqi states, these posters are a site of power production where “othering” takes place through discourses (2007). Such posters were headlined with the words: “practice makes perfect” and revealed a young Kosovar boy representing the Kosovar state (Krasniqi, 2007: 4; Valur Ingimundarson, 2004). These posters were thus used by the UN to state the political conditions for statehood – the criteria Kosovo

had to fit into before it would be granted authority over its own affairs. At the time, Kosovo Albanians were raising more openly their will to declare independence from Serbia but the international community answered with a series of such promotional posters. According to them, Kosovo, quite simply, was not ready to be independent; it had to grow up first. As Krasniqi and Valur Ingimundarson both point out, the entire Kosovo society was infantilized through such an image display (2007; 2004). The images are "colonial notions" (Krasniqi, 2007: 5) where Kosovars are shown as naive and un-democratic, in opposition to the rational and democratic West. Through such notions the extension of management of Kosovo by international agencies is legitimized.

An interesting spin-off is the way this infantilized image of Kosovo was later applied by Kosovars themselves claiming to be "Newborn" after their independence and calling themselves the "Young Europeans" because of the low average age of their population. These discourses were common when I was in Kosovo and I argue that this is a product of what Pratt (1992) calls 'contact zones', where despite symmetrical relations of powers, contact between colonizers and colonized (in this case developer and developing subjects) make relations between them in some way interactive. Ideas between people bounce back and forth, creating new ideas, sometime reinforcing the old ones, sometimes giving people more control of the discourses that subjects them to power. In the case of these common new discourses, Kosovars took the way they were infantilized and made their own references to it.

Interestingly, despite structural barriers at the top of international peace building hierarchies towards gender equality, Kosovo's male dominated structure is often given as the reason why gender equality measures haven't worked in the country (Valenius, 2007). The rhetoric around peace building usually goes one way with wars being waged in the developing world, while the rich countries strive to establish peace (Cockburn, 1998: 20). This kind of democratization discourse is part and parcel of the peace building process where the control is claimed by the international community, while the responsibility and blame for any misshaping are shifted to the local people (Valur Ingimundarson, 2004). The idea is that Kosovo is a rooted patriarchy where gender equality is near to impossible to achieve. For those that follow this view, the problem lies in Kosovo's persistence of clinging to their culture. Although the masculine privilege in Kosovar society will not be disputed here, this idea will be. I argue that there are more factors that contribute to gender equality measures failing in Kosovo. Some of these factors are created by the international community and heavily embedded in peace-building and neo-colonial trends in development where local

women's involvement was not recognised and gender equality issues deemed second class to other development issues.

A part of the problem is that while international agencies advocate gender equality, even sometimes pressuring aid recipients to achieve certain gender equality standards, many international agencies fail to follow such measures themselves.

The patriarchy within peace building

Many of my respondents and scholars alike have criticized the International Community, (no less than local governments) for not following gender equality measures within their own structures, while in the meantime it advocates to the recipient countries to comply with international agreements and resolutions such as UN res. 1325: "The irony that Kosova's new government is required to comply with gender mechanisms that are not evident in UNMIK's own structures has been often overlooked." (KWN, 2009: 13). As KWN's report points out, none of the seven UN SRSGs in Kosovo (chiefs of mission) have been women. The top structure within the international community, the multilateral organizations and the UN Security Council has been dominated by men while local female specialists and representatives have been ignored. They say there is a male culture in the international agencies' structure that controls the peace efforts made in Kosovo (KWN, 2009).

A couple of respondents said that while the international community had pushed Kosovo's government to follow rules and regulations on gender, it had completely ignored such rules itself when working on peace in the country. They both mentioned res. 1325 as an example of this.

Resolution 1325 stresses, among other things, the importance of women's full participation in peace-building and decision making roles and advocates for cooperation with local women's grassroots organisations in peace making (UNSC, 2000). The reason why I got interested in this document is because before coming to Kosovo, I talked to a couple of expatriots who suggested it would be good to do my thesis on 1325 and its implementation. Although I was never really interested in doing an evaluation of an UN document as my research topic, it intrigued me and it opened up an arena of topics while conducting my interviews. This was a resolution put forward by the international community to make an issue out of women's access to peace, but how valuable was it? And what did local women think of it? As the NGOs interviewed were working in one way or another on women's emancipation and peace efforts, I was curious about what the resolution meant to them, or if they at all gave it any thought. What I found striking was that they not only criticized the

Kosovar government for ignoring it, but also the international community for not following their own resolutions. When asked whether the international community was following res. 1325 within their own structure, Mirjeta had this to say:

M: No they are not. We know that UNMIK was male dominated structure completely. Ehm.eh Eulex as well. EC [the European Commission] in some, I mean European Commission here, and the Liaison Office (mhm), ehm they kind of have, but no, I mean the leadership - the top leadership (mhm, is men), is men. So no difference at all so they are not giving any good example for our government [laughs], to have eh, to make changes. I mean the..explanation that they give is eh, that, eh, member states are not appointing women so they can not change that.

ME: Is this the explanation they give?

M: Yeah, definitely. This is the explanation that was given to me recently when I raised the issue.. They said we cannot impose the member states eh, what they can send, eh whom they are sending.

She notes that this, as an excuse is a false one, as the international community pushes her government repeatedly to impose things on institutions and municipalities, in the name of following UN resolutions, or EU standards of procedure. The international community goes to lengths to advertise the value of following international policies but when it comes to following it themselves they do not give a good example.

M: It's very technical like, "we cannot do anything" [shakes her hands in a dismissive way], but they can do everything. [laughs]. But there is no political will.

This research was conducted on the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 and during my stay in Kosovo the UN broadcasted a panel where representatives talked about the ten years of the resolution in a fairly uncritical way to say the least. A similar event was held in Kosovo, where various international staff and local ministers were invited to a cocktail party to celebrate the anniversary of the resolution. A couple of weeks before this party, I conducted an interview with a NGO leader who shared her thoughts with me.

/Ten years I am sick and tired with 1325. (yeah). And eh, now Peter Faith [head of UN mission in Kosovo] is doing a meeting on November 3rd and he will invite high representatives in Kosova. [..] For me it's not [a] celebration.

(Lule, October 2010)

Goetz and Sandler (2007) have pointed out that more energy is often put into what they call “treaty signing ceremonies” (p. 166) around development issues, than actually transforming such document into action. Some scholars and international aid workers had warned that October 2010 should not be a celebration because res. 1325 had not been adequately put to use. Steinberg for example said that the anniversary should be used to further urge the need to take action and counter the most serious problems facing women in war torn societies (2010). Paula Donovan, a co-executive for an advocacy organisation on AIDS and an advisor for the UN AIDS envoy, in a short internet article published by a women’s advocacy page, said that res. 1325 had down-right “failed women” (Donovan, November 2010: no page), she added:

But even the thesaurus’ worth of euphemisms on parade in the Security Council that day could not disguise the U.N.’s wretched failure to act on its own resolution to clear space for women at all peace tables, both real and metaphorical. The unforgivable fact is that during the decade under review, women’s participation in formal peace processes actually declined; their participation in conflict resolution and peace-building is less evident in 2010 than it was before Resolution 1325 passed. (Paula Donovan, November 2010: no page)

She describes the UN broadcast from the anniversary of res. 1325 in an ominous way, describing how words such as “groundbreaking” and “historic” had been used again and again to explain the resolution. These were my sentiments exactly, I remember sitting in my living room in Kosovo, watching the broadcast online and seeing people step up to the rostrum one by one, in front of a rather bored looking crowd. People were coming and going, getting ready for their own speeches. A few people in the crowd seemed on the verge of dosing off. Meanwhile, most of the speakers talked about how great res. 1325 or about how more efforts should be made to achieve the things it stood for – or both. Donovan criticizes how the speakers, one by one, while condemning atrocities (like the mass rapes of Congolese women) made in the aftermath of the resolution, referred to the ten years gone by as a preparation for the future: “Had the victims of those particular mass rapes been present in the Council chambers — had they been invited to sit in, representing the millions of women who have been thrust into the centre of conflicts but barred from the centre of peace building over the past ten years — it seems unlikely that they would have taken courage or solace from the Council members’ commitment to wind up the world’s longest and most deadly dress rehearsal, and finally let the performance begin.” (Donovan, 2010: no page)

Donovan continued by saying that if the Security Council member had wanted to convey a serious message, they should have apologized to Congolese (and other) female victims of war. The UNSC should have taken responsibility and admitted how their own

actions and treaties had had a devastating effect on those women (among others). But they did not; res. 1325's tenth anniversary was as uneventful as the resolution itself has become blunt, as disappointing as res. 1325 itself is to many. In Lule's mind, my respondent that had stated she was sick of res. 1325, the resolution could not be celebrated unless it was actually implemented and had successfully brought women to the decision-making table. That, according to her, was not the case.

They do only awareness raising by the time that it comes anniversary. Only then!. But every time they call it.. "Celebration 1325". What celebration [are] you talking about? [...] You guys are celebrating, not me. Because I don't see any implementation (Lule, Oct 2010).

The celebration of res. 1325 in Kosovo was held. Among the people attending were some of my personal friends and a respondent that later recounted the event. When asked how it had been, one of my international friend said; "Oh, you know the same. A bunch of guys in suits making boring speeches, cocktails,... nice snacks." Another friend, working for an international women's organisation said it had been mostly men talking about how successful res. 1325 was and that at the end, a token female NGO person had been invited to speak on behalf of Kosovar women.

This image of suit clad male international high representatives celebrating a resolution that local women said had not really been put to use is an interesting one. It brings forward an uncomfortable imagery of patriarchy celebrating ten years of non-implementation.

Advocating change: NGOs and Agency

Lule said that the international community used 1325 to show as she put it: "once a year that they are meeting women." (Lule, October 2010) She also noted that she used res. 1325 herself as a tool to push gender matters through, to remind people in decision making roles to do something about gender equality issues in the country. Three other NGO members said the same – they used 1325 to point out failures in gender issues. What is more, they said that res. 1325 was useful, but that there were specific chapters of it that were most relevant to Kosovo – the ones about incorporating women in peace building measures. Through this selective approach of res. 1325, they shaped it into their own tool and applied it according to their needs, their visions and priorities.

Sherry B. Ortner talks about something she calls "the agency of projects" which is about "people having desires that grow out of their own structures of life, including very centrally their own structures of inequality; it is in short about people playing, or trying to

play, their own serious games even as more powerful parties seek to devalue and even destroy them.” (2006: 147)

When we look at people’s agency we have to examine it as we examine power in a Foucauldian sense, as something that is not just own or not owned, but as a complicated set of actions of dominance and resistance within a social setting. Abu-Lughod reminds us about the complexities of power which can have many layers, with individuals exercising their actions against barriers in some arena while acting openly in others (1990).

If we look at agency in this context and apply this understanding to the reality of local women working for NGOs in Kosovo, we see that they use their position to raise issues, to resist to dominant masculine values. I have tried to show the way in which these women react and talk about the power structure that surrounds peace building in Kosovo.

Of course each of these women – despite being fairly consistent in their views as a group, have individuality. They are each a part of numerous relations within their public and private lives where the many social aspects of their identity intersects. I am not trying to undermine this part of their reality by talking about them as a group, nor is it my intention to preview them as direct opposite to international or national systems of power. They become a group because they are a part of the same system and have chosen the same venue to work on similar issues. They are not a binary negation of government, in fact they are very much a part of governing structures. They rest somewhere between the “people” and the government and this is precisely how they define their status within the Kosovar society: as advocates for people, putting pressure on those who make decisions at the top. Still, their place is more complex than this. Ortner in her writing on agency, says that should be seen “as a disposition toward the enactment of “projects””. Agency in this sense, is a fluid transfer of actions, although the social relations that frame them can be hard to deliberately topple (2006).

I argue that local women’s NGOs are a part of a multi-layered net of social and political actions where power is constantly being contested and reinforced. As discussed previously, the NGOs interviewed act against normative gender distinctions. Still at the same time, the NGOs are heavily dependent on governing bodies through funding. They therefore rest somewhere between resistance and compliance, trying to balance between actions and sacrifice in the hope that their own agenda of achieving gender equality breaks through the barriers of traditional peace building measures.

Conclusion

The end of the conflict in Kosovo in 1999 gave way to a new era of international intervention and post-war development. Many women formed NGOs during this time or turned their previous grassroots organisations into NGOs and through them started advocating for the rights of undermined communities and working on gender equality issues. Some of them emphasized on peace building and made an effort to bridge the gap between the ethnic lines of Kosovars by organizing meetings of reconciliation. Despite these efforts and despite gender equality laws and mechanisms in place in Kosovo, local women were shunned from official peace building measures and gender equality was pushed aside as a second class, soft issue to be dealt with after the more important development issues had been solved.

Governmentality, as Inda points out, is a tool to analyse the mentality of power structures. By looking into the actions and ideologies used by governing forces, we get a glimpse into the mentality behind ruling elites and the notions used to justify their dominance. In this thesis, theories from post-colonial and feminist scholars have been applied to make sense of the underlying power imbedded in international intervention and peace building measures in Kosovo. Notions of Western superiority cloaked in discourses on democracy and standards of governing were strong during the post-war era in Kosovo where the international community preferred international experts instead of local perspectives, where UN advertisement conveyed messages to the local population that they would not be granted independence without complying with international criteria of statehood and where local initiatives for peace were heavily ignored. A stratification of power was maintained through such notions of Western supremacy with international agencies holding the reins and steering the course of the country and its people.

The peace building process was also and still is, a gendered enterprise (Cockburn, 1998). While advocating democracy and statehood, the international community did not address the women in Kosovo because it did not view them as agents in peace building and state making. Still, through international intervention the idea of women's rights and gender equality is repeatedly revoked, a tendency drawing its decent to colonial times (Pratt, 1992; Spivak, 2004). For some reason, while men have invaded and intervened in foreign countries convincing their surrounding that the women there need saving, they have been less eager to actually listen to those same women after they have successfully conquered such places.

While the international community ignored women in peace building measures in Kosovo, pushed gender equality measures aside and failed to follow res. 1325 within their own structures, Kosovo's patriarchal society was often given as a reason why gender equality measures did not work (Valenius, 2007) while failures in development processes were equally blamed on the local population (Valur Ingimundarson, 2004).

I will not argue against the idea that Kosovo is a patriarchy, in fact many gender equality measures have failed in Kosovo because local government officials have no interest in them. But I argue that there are other factors that contribute to such failures as well and that these factors are embedded in the measures used to achieve gender equality as well as in the structure of the international community itself.

Gender equality measures in development have been criticized by scholars for basing their work on gender essentialized ideas that divide men and women into natural categories, instead of looking at gender as a social relationship between the sexes – A relationship that can produce inequality. Such measures have also been criticised for focusing on the incorporation of women into structures, but never allowing any structural changes to occur that change the prerogatives within it. I've argued in this thesis that these are also the underlying factors that have made the implementation of gender equality measures, such as res. 1325 difficult in Kosovo. My analyses on Res. 1325 shows that International (read Western) governing bodies do not view themselves as patriarchies.

The lack of implementation affects NGOs working on gender equality issues in Kosovo, but it also forms the basis of their work as they advocate for change and try to pressure international and local governing bodies to incorporate women more in peace building measures and to pay attention to gender equality issues. Still, as noted before, NGOs are dependent on these governing bodies through funding and thus find themselves on a tightrope between compliance and resistance.

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Appendix I

United Nations S/RES/1325 (2000)

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1

S/RES/1325 (2000)

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and *recalling also* the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

Recalling also the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, *Expressing* concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and *recognizing* the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution, *Reaffirming also* the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

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Emphasizing the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls, *Recognizing* the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard *noting* the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

Recognizing also the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

Recognizing that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

Noting the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;
2. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decisionmaking levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;
3. *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;
4. *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;
5. *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and *urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures, *invites* Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;

7. *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;

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8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;

9. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;

11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;

12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;

13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;

14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;

15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;

16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to

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submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;

18. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.