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## Introduction

The task before the international community is to help the people in Kosovo to rebuild their lives and heal the wounds of conflict.

—UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

I don't think there's anybody out there who has ASKED the questions we're trying to answer. Who do I talk to?? If you talk to Americans, anybody who created democracy in America is dead. I reckon my job is to walk out of here, turn over whatever I'm doing to the municipality, and this thing will run by itself. We have to build 5,000 odd houses, get everything working again, get a reconciliation between the Serbs and Albanians . . . the brief has not been written on how to do this.

—Terry Peterson, UN municipal administrator,  
Banshik, Kosovo, 1999–2001

The tasks facing any international intervention are huge. To get an idea of the coordination and cooperation required of both international organizations and local populations in an intervention such as those in Kosovo or Afghanistan or Iraq, picture a place where decades of corruption have been followed by war, uprooting what normal life there had been. A place where many houses and public buildings are heaps of rubble, where electricity is constantly cutting out, where running water is only sporadically available. A place where roads are potholed disaster areas at best, rutted dust tracks at worst; where if you have cancer, treatment is not an option. A place where unemployment levels reach 75–90 percent, where the streets of small towns are thronged with teenagers at the end of each school shift (schools typically run several shifts a day because the demand exceeds the facilities), where there are no jobs to absorb the thousands leaving school each year. A place where the taxation and banking system is nonexistent, where government departments either did not exist before or were run by members of a regime that has been ousted, where records of titles to property have been destroyed or stolen by the departing regime, or simply lost in the chaos that followed that departure.

These challenges overlie the ethnic divisions and vividly remembered political mistakes that produced the conflict. The marks of neighbors killing neighbors and stealing their belongings, and the brutalization and disappearance of family members, leave a bitter legacy. The regime that has been ousted and the prior local opposition to that regime (usually the armed wing), who are frustrated about their loss of power, tolerate the international organizations comprising the intervention at best and threaten them and target them for assassination at worst. The local populations in the middle, usually represented by the supporters of what had been the peaceful or constitutional opposition, as well as the members of the same ethnic group as the former regime who had never endorsed its means or ends, struggle to be heard above the din of threats from factions that are defeated or disarmed in theory but very much armed in practice. This has been true of extremist elements both among the Serbs remaining in Kosovo and in the former Kosovo Liberation Army; in Afghanistan, of the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, as well as various warlords and their factions; and in Iraq, of the former Baathist regime and Shiite cleric-politicians with Islamic state ambitions. The international intervention in each case has to try to get past the legacy of hatred, to persuade all ethnic groups to participate in the rebuilding of society, both the physical reconstruction and the building of local and national institutions. The international intervention also has to figure out how to do this, how to coordinate the efforts of all the organizations involved, both international and local. As Terry Peterson says, “the brief has not been written on how to do this.”

Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan are among the territories struggling to democratize and develop economically at lightning speed in the early twenty-first century under the auspices of an international intervention, sometimes sanctioned by the United Nations, sometimes not. All can usefully gain from lessons gleaned from the efforts of participants in this process in the other countries or territories. Kosovo was a bold initial foray by the international community and the local populations into a cooperative drive toward democracy. It is on an unprecedented scale: effectively, Kosovo has become a territory under temporary international authority. Given the earlier start in time, and hence the opportunity to make mistakes that other interventions can learn from, the experiences of the people and organizations involved in the intervention in Kosovo have an increasingly practical importance for those working in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries involved in democratization and postconflict recon-

struction. The origins of the problems may differ, as may the agencies and nations involved, and the situations on the ground may vary in the degree of chaos, but in all of these places, organizations and populations are struggling to coordinate reconstruction and democratization. A close look at the reasons for successes and failures of the interorganizational and interpopulation efforts in Kosovo yields lessons that may be useful elsewhere.

### The Origins of the Book

This book originated in observations I made in Haiti and Kosovo between 1997 and 2000 on the relationships among civilian organizations (NGOs, international police, and UN agencies) and between those organizations and military units participating in the intervention. I went to Haiti in the summer of 1997 as a research assistant to a professor studying the effect on the U.S. military of participating in Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW).<sup>1</sup> Through a personal connection, we stayed with an Irish nongovernmental organization (NGO), Concern Worldwide. We took the opportunity to interview its personnel and those of other NGOs active in Haiti at this time, such as CARE International and World Vision, about their perceptions of and contact with the U.S. military. During this trip, I also met with members of a UN police mission and military personnel from Canada working under the same UN mandate as the U.S. military contingent.<sup>2</sup> There was, however, minimal actual cooperation among the international agencies in Haiti. Most of the NGOs there were barely aware of the existence of the international peacekeeping mission, and when it was pointed out, they did not feel that it had any relevance for their work. The U.S. military in turn responded to the occasional requests for help (transport or logistical) from individual NGOs but did not see this as an integral part of their mission. They had next to no contact with local people or organizations, including the UN personnel. There was considerable disgruntlement about being part of a UN mission among the U.S. military personnel, who were unhappy about being under a non-U.S. command and questioned their suitability for this type of mission. Communications between different organizations were also hampered by the lack of a communications infrastructure. There was no common phone system—landline or mobile, no use of e-mail between organizations, and no common space on the Internet.

Three years later, in 2000, as part of the same ongoing project looking

at the effects on the U.S. military of participating in peace-building operations, I spent ten days at Camp Bondsteel, the home base of the U.S. military in the U.S. sector of Kosovo. In stark contrast to Haiti, the military leadership there viewed their joint operations with civilian organizations as *the* key factor in the success of their mission. The soldiers themselves were enthusiastic about the opportunity to help people, to get good training experience, and to travel. A visit to Novo Brdo, a municipality in the U.S. sector, which had a U.S. company based in a building in the center of the town, demonstrated a remarkable shift from Haiti. “We’re soldiers, police officers, firefighters, drivers, mediators,” the soldiers reported, and they participated in weekly councils of all the organizations involved in the UN mission in Kosovo—the UN civil administration (UNCA), the local government, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and NGOs—and worked with them in a coordinated and conscious fashion. At the end of the research trip, we went to the airport outside Kosovo’s capital, Pristina, to fly home. At the entrance to the airport, the head of the team encountered an old acquaintance, Terry Peterson, who was working as a municipal administrator for the UN in a municipality in the north of Kosovo. During the ensuing conversation, I expressed an interest in coming back to further investigate the interorganizational cooperation, and limits to cooperation, that I had witnessed. Peterson was enthusiastic about the idea and gave me his business card, telling me to get in touch when I was ready to come back. A year later, I landed at Pristina Airport to begin an intensive period of research in two municipalities, based with the two UN teams but with roving access to the militaries, NGOs, OSCE, and EU in both locations.

### Map of the Book

In Kosovo, the United Nations embarked on a massive undertaking, unprecedented in both its scope and structural complexity. This was the first intervention that had been designed so that other multilateral organizations were full partners under UN leadership. Interventions in the twenty-first century require more than just one organization or a handful of organizations working independently. They call for a multiplicity of organizations of different sizes, styles, and purposes working together in a coordinated way. This book, among other things, compares the fate of the two municipalities, or localities, of Banskik and Thezren in Kosovo in 2001, two years after the intervention got under way in 1999. Although

similar in demographics, geography, and socioeconomic status, the two municipalities were heading down different paths by 2001. Banshik had made progress toward the goals of the intervention—institution building, democratization, and reconstruction—while Thezren was stagnating. The crucial difference was in the ability of the international organizations in Banshik to cooperate as if part of one organization, as what is known as a “network” organization. In a network organization, a number of traditionally hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations come together to temporarily form a single organizational entity to pursue specific goals. Once those goals are attained, the temporary network organization disbands. The organizational integrity of the participating organization is not harmed by this temporary organizational cooperation with other organizations. To operate effectively, the boundaries of the network organization need to be fluid. The network organization’s constituents, the people and organizations that are the focus of its efforts, must also be included. Banshik managed to make considerable progress toward pulling local organizations and populations into the process of institution building and reconstruction. Indeed, one might argue that this very process of cooperation was itself the content of democratic institution building.

In contrast, in Thezren, the international organizations stayed behind their traditional, hierarchical organizational walls. They functioned reasonably well as individual organizations alongside other organizations. But they did not cooperate in a meaningful, interdependent way with the other international organizations and local populations. In an environment that was so complex, with every organization dependent on others to carry out its own job, and with the task of pulling hostile populations together, this focus on a traditional, bureaucratic, hierarchical approach resulted in a very poor level of cooperation.

This book deals with Kosovo, but it has relevance for interventions anywhere in the world, including the challenging situations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Most scholarly and policy books and articles on interventions have been written from far away, by academics and policy-makers steeped in theory and history, content with producing a macro analysis. In the process, it is easily forgotten that it is flesh and blood people working who are in the interventions and are on the receiving end of interventions. An account based on fieldwork in an intervention that grounds those experiences in theoretical perspectives yields insights that are not specific to any particular intervention but are relevant anywhere organizations are trying to cooperate. This is an account of the everyday

behavior of both the internationals (a term used to denote any non-Kosovar working for UNMIK or KFOR) and the local people, and of its impact on the intervention. As such, I hope it will contribute to our understanding of how human behavior helps create organizations and institutions such as those in UNMIK.

The first key argument in the book is that in a situation with several different types of organizations, the network organizational form is the best way to organize a coherent mission. For a network organization to be effective, it must produce an institutional culture, or a shared identity and understanding of how things are done, that will serve it throughout its existence.

Four factors that shaped the institutional culture of the network organization of organizations in both Banskik and Thezren—the type of leadership, the degree of formality in the organizational network, the degree to which work relationships were embedded in social ones, and the degree to which behavior reflected transparency and accountability—were produced by everyday acts. They were critical in fostering a network institutional culture where trust was continually produced, people identified not only with their own organization but with the mission as a whole, information was freely shared, and problems were tackled in a collaborative way.

The second main argument of the book is that the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is a key variable in the workings of international interventions. ICTs, which include the Internet, e-mail, mobile telephones, satellite technology, and radio communications, play an essential part in any interorganizational effort at democratization, institution building, and reconstruction.

In Chapter 1, I introduce Banskik and Thezren and discuss how the flag issue captured the differences between the international organizations' approaches in the two municipalities—and the consequences. An intervention comprising diverse organizations requires leadership and an organizational or institutional culture that is all about generating trust and inducing participation. In Kosovo, this proved to be an essential addition to the traditional, bureaucratic leadership typical of international organizations, particularly the United Nations. The municipality of Banskik did generate an institutional culture that was appropriate for the network of organizations working together, but Thezren had great difficulty in doing so. In this chapter, I also give a brief history of the background to the intervention in Kosovo and describe the setup of the international intervention itself.

The second chapter is theoretical and can be skipped by nonacademic readers or readers who want to go straight to the substantive findings of the book. (However, it might be useful!) The complexity of international interventions requires an interdisciplinary approach, because it is impossible to understand a modern international intervention from the standpoint of a single discipline. I use organizational sociology, economic sociology, symbolic interactionism, and cultural sociology to throw light on issues usually studied in international relations, political science, or in political sociology. I explain the great need for and, with the advent of new communication technologies and accompanying changes in organizational form, greater capacity for interorganizational cooperation, using the idea of a network organization. I focus on the parallels between the use of this organizational form in the private sector and in interventions. In both the private sector and interventions, traditionally hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations are in a process of shifting from only working inside their own organizational walls to having to cooperate together on particular projects. They have to come together temporarily to form a network organization, disbanding once the goals of the project (or intervention) are achieved.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I document and compare daily working life among the international workers and organizations in the two municipalities of Banshik and Thezren. The personnel and organizations in the former aspired to a networked intervention; the personnel and organizations in the latter were persistently traditionally hierarchical in working behind individual organizational walls with traditional institutional cultures. The processes and consequences of both approaches are very significant for understanding institution building and democratization. The international intervention in Kosovo was attempting to grope toward developing the characteristics of a network organization: where expertise, not rank or status, gets precedence; decisions are decentralized to the local level; cooperation with other organizations is a priority; communication channels are not prescribed, but it is possible to communicate with anyone inside the organization or beyond its boundaries, as needed; the culture of the organization is more informal than formal; and identification is not just with your own organization but with the network organization—in this case, the intervention—as a whole. The network of organizations in Banshik produced an institutional culture appropriate to the network organizational form; Thezren did not. I explore the factors—appropriate leadership, informality, social embeddedness, accountability—that produced the network institutional culture in Banshik and show how

these factors did not exist in Thezren, leading to an institutional culture that was inappropriate to the network organizational form.

Chapter 5 looks at the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the international intervention in Kosovo. ICTs play a critical role in network organizations, but our knowledge of the interaction of technology and people and organizations in this type of environment is very limited. I look at what did happen and at the potential of such communications. How did ICTs assist the network organization of UNMIK? Did they contribute to forming a distinctive mission culture? How important was face-to-face interaction in a technologically enabled environment? Traditionally hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations such as the UN Secretariat, militaries, and police forces are struggling to use ICTs and new organizational forms stemming from technology to streamline their organizations and make them more responsive, while at the same time retaining control both within the organization and of their immediate environment in an international intervention such as Kosovo. Chapter 6 is a salutary reminder of the importance of face-to-face communication in building trust. Such personal interaction cannot be replaced, but can certainly be complemented, by the use of ICTs.

In the last section of the book, Chapters 7 and 8, I examine each of the organizations working in the intervention in Kosovo and show how at least some of them transformed themselves into successful hybrids, part hierarchy, part network, capable of maintaining their hierarchical integrity while simultaneously participating in a network organization.

This book addresses the questions everyone wants answers for: How do you get from the chaos of a postconflict society to one with functioning institutions based on cooperation? What role do international organizations and actors play in this? How is the necessary cooperation between all the participants—international and local—achieved? How can the idea of a network organization contribute to democratization efforts in international interventions? What difference does globalization and the information and communications revolution make to the processes of democratization and postconflict reconstruction? The interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq are evolving in ways that are different from that in Kosovo. But the basic challenge of cooperation between the international organizations and between those organizations and the local populations remains critical.