

**UNRAVELLING TIME:**  
**The Process of Closure in Short-Term**  
**International Development Missions in**  
**Kosovo**

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## **DECLARATION**

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I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is the result of work carried out by me and written by me only. Except where specific reference is made to the work of others, the work is original, and does not infringe any third party's copyright or contain any confidential material.

Virginia Stephens

April 2018

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This thesis is about the influence of time on everyday development practice in short-term temporary international development missions, and seeks to explore what that means for our understanding of development organisations and their everyday operational practices.

Interdisciplinary in nature, this study draws upon ethnographic fieldwork of EULEX, a short-term European Union civilian mission deployed to Kosovo, and brings together sociological theories of time, organisational closure and development. I start from the premise that development practice is about working oneself out of a job; once a development organisation has achieved its goals and objectives there should, in theory, no longer be a need for it, and the organisation can close and withdraw from a host country. In this sense, if the ordering principle of a mission becomes about its very end – symbolized by what I term its ‘closure’ – the influencing role of time becomes ever more important to examine, particularly when that mission is indented to be short-term and temporary.

While I show that closure is integral to structuring and ordering development’s everyday working relations and activities, my aim is to cluster together sociological research about time, and recent advances made on the everyday of the development worker to render visible the processes of time in international development that perpetuate particular ways of ‘doing’ development. The underlying claim is that whilst ‘closure’ encourages different activities and rhythms of time, it also creates a dynamic temporal framework within which the everyday is constantly created and recreated.

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## TERMINOLOGY

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Kosovo in this thesis delineates the territory which unilaterally declared independence on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2008. Kosovo's status as an independent state is still disputed, with 116<sup>1</sup> of 193 UN member states having recognised its independence (United Nations, n.d.). This renders certain terms problematic. Not wanting to engage into debates beyond the scope of this research over what local spelling preferences are, I use the conventional English spelling of terms such as Kosovo (rather than the Albanian term Kosova) which I understand to be neutral with regards to political and territorial debate. In this vein I also I refer to the Albanian community living in Kosovo as Kosovo Albanians, and to the Serbian community living in Kosovo as Kosovo Serbs, only where it is important to make a distinction on the basis of ethnicity. The people of Kosovo are referred to as Kosovar rather than Kosovian although it can generally be assumed that the use of the term Kosovar refers to ethnic Albanians who represent the numerical majority of the territory of Kosovo.

For stylistic reasons, I use single quotation marks to denote any problematic and sometimes contested terms. Where there are direct quotes I use double quotation marks.

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<sup>1</sup> Barbados being the latest state at the time of writing to recognise Kosovo on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018 (KosovoThanksYou, 2018).

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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CAST	Counselling and Support Team
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIVCOM	Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management
CMPD	Conflict Management and Planning Directorate
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DFID	Department for International Development
DHoM	Deputy Head of Mission
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
ECLO	European Commission Liaison Office
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues
ED	Executive Division
EU	European Union
EULEX	European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HEAT	Hostile Environment Training Course
HoM	Head of Mission
HQ	Head Quarters
IBM	Integrated Border Management / Integrated Boundary Management
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICO	International Civilian Office
ICR	International Civilian Representative
IGO	Intergovernmental Organisations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMG	International Management Group

ISC	International Steering Group
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KIPRED	Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
MIP	Mission Implementation Plan
MPT	Mobile Prosecution Team
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPLAN	Operational Plan
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PER	Performance Evaluation Review
PISG	Provisional Institutions of Self-Government
PPIO	Press and Public Information Office
PSC	Political Security Committee
Resolution 1244	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244
SD	Strengthening Division
SITCEN	Situation Centre
SPRK	Kosovo Special Prosecution Office
SU	Stabilisation Unit
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation

## PREFACE

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Once upon a time the people of the World woke up to peace, justice and equality for all.

Imagine that as a future.

Now imagine that in order for this to happen, you are truly motivated to work long hours, navigating through intense and heightened emotions, to then reach this goal and....

.... and then what?

What is the point?

Is the hope still there? Are the motivations still important?

Is that initial belief, the one that drove you to spend all that time on such an endeavour, still there? Is that end point still as interesting or tempting?

Is that really where you want to end up?

And what does that actually mean both for you and for the World that awakes in peace, justice and equality for all?

No - I don't believe in international development because I do not believe we can get to that ideal end point of sustainable peace, love and happiness for all. Not that I wouldn't want any of that to happen – on the contrary, if only it could! But it won't. I don't say this because I'm a cynic, or because I have a crystal ball that tells me otherwise. I say it won't happen because I believe that the inspiration, creativity and pure human will power that can drive a person, a project or an organisation gradually weakens and tires over time, losing its focus and often disappearing altogether.

I also believe that a fear of human capacity feeds the presumption that the future won't be any better. Sadly, the goal of successful development, regardless of how it is measured or defined, through time gradually becomes unrealistic and perceived as utopian. Indeed, young new arrivals to 'the field' of development tend to be labelled as naïve and idealistic, usually by those who have been in 'the field' for longer or who

consider themselves more experienced. With the linear and cyclical unfolding of time, a cynicism sets in and the goal of 'development', whatever it may mean to each individual, organisation, host or deploying country, moves further away into an unachievable future. And so it becomes lost.

That end point is where the concept for this thesis starts.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 MOTIVATION AND BACKGROUND

I had studied about the Balkans during my Masters programme and soon realised that talking about Kosovo triggered dismissive responses from tutors, as if I were being taken off track into an unworldly or uninteresting territory. During this time I had also met Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs in London. Bought up bilingual, defining one's identity has always been important to me personally and something in the people I met from Kosovo triggered my interest; I felt drawn to a culture I saw placed at the intersection of tradition and modernity, struggling to define itself and to be accepted. The only way I felt I could satisfy my interest in this culture was to visit Kosovo, so I purchased a one way ticket to Pristina in January 2007.

Initially I wanted to travel to Kosovo to learn Albanian and about Albanian culture. Triggered by worried parents however, I applied for an internship with the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), a local organisation supporting minority communities throughout Kosovo. It acted as a reassuring excuse to travel to Kosovo with. When I first landed in Pristina airport, I was thrilled, and as the taxi ride into Pristina took me through dark streets busy with people homeward bound, I fell into a child-like daydream – excited about embarking on a new chapter of discovery about a culture and history I wanted to know more about. To my surprise, that experience very quickly became about 'international development' into which I was propelled; my three-month internship led on to volunteer work researching human trafficking, and eventually to paid work, first with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and then ECMI, the organisation I had first interned with. Although it had never been my intention, in total I spent two years living and working in 'the field'<sup>2</sup> of 'development'.

What struck me most during these two years living and working in Kosovo was the culture shock I experienced not from the 'local' population or my new environment (Oberg, 1960), but from the international community in Kosovo with whom I had

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<sup>2</sup> The space that denotes 'the field' is one which is imagined and constructed (see for example Seeger, 2014; Apthorpe, 2011a, 2011b), rather than a place of development assistance. For an excellent distinction between the two see Smirl, 2015, Chapter 1.

falsely assumed I shared a culture, values and beliefs.<sup>3</sup> When I would introduce myself to internationals during my first few months, I would regularly be met with looks of disbelief; how was it possible that a young British woman was in Kosovo not because of career choices, by accident, following a loved one, or for financial reasons, but out of pure curiosity?!<sup>4</sup> The surprise would then turn to mistrust, and eventually, I was believed to be a spy,<sup>5</sup> why else would I *really* be living in Kosovo? This piqued my curiosity in those asking the questions, and from this point on, my interests shifted from the local culture and identity to the international community.

It first seemed to me that the internationals working towards Kosovo's development would permit themselves behaviours that they would not necessarily permit from themselves, or from others, back home, and acted as a group in ways that seemed to contradict individual beliefs and the broader aim of development.<sup>6</sup> My culture shock felt so much the greater because the internationals I met were, for the most part, white Europeans, like me; yet despite their familiarity, they appeared so foreign. Most internationals were there for work, working for the close protection corps, the police, donor organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs). Many were well meaning, intelligent and motivated by their work, while others appeared to be doing or killing time in a mission or on a short-term contract, often blaming, resenting or mocking the locals they were tasked to help and support.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Oberg first presented the term 'culture shock' to explain the experience of one's difficulty in orienting oneself to a new, unfamiliar, environment. He described it as a series of emotional reactions "precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life." (Oberg, 1960, p. 177).

<sup>4</sup> It does not fall within the scope of this study to discuss the motivations of development workers in detail, nor their altruism (see, for example, De Jong, 2011, pp. 27–31; Roth, 2015, pp. 51–52; and White, 2015), however, that a diverse range of motivations exist is important to note (see, for instance, Fechter, 2012 on reconciling altruistic motives with career objectives; Kaufmann, 1997 on the mixed motivations; and Roth, 2015 on possible pathways into aid).

<sup>5</sup> The rumour that I was a spy was later recounted to me by a friend who explained why some of my compatriots had broken ties and distanced themselves from me.

<sup>6</sup> This issue has become particularly pertinent considering the Oxfam and related scandals that have emerged recently (see, for instance, Dearden, 2018; Kern & Prange, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Schwandner-Sievers has noted that there has been an almost racist attitude towards Albanians by internationals despite some appreciation for Albanian colleagues (Schwandner-Sievers,

As a group they intrigued me; constant partying, regular weekend escapes to neighbouring countries or holidays back home, extra-marital relations, attitudes of self-importance, fascinating stories of everyday adventures, exciting travels, interesting jobs, friendships created by circumstance and amongst whom anyone new to the community was deemed a potential lover. Although such rich and differing group profiles are typical of expatriates in developing countries be they development workers (Rajak & Stirrat, 2011; Stirrat, 2008), humanitarian professionals (Hindman, 2002), aidworkers (Roth, 2015) or peaceworkers (Autesserre, 2014), I had not prepared myself for what to expect from the white Europeans doing development in Kosovo.<sup>8</sup> As a result, I had been unaware of the traits of a development community who live transnationally and separately, or (dis)connected, from the local context (Verma, 2011; Nowicka, 2009) and often engage in monocultural experiences (Eyben, 2011, p. 152) within highly securitised spaces (Smirl, 2015). I soon realised that I needed to understand the mechanisms that produced or encouraged the (dis)connect between people, their actions, their beliefs and their social practices if I was going to understand this community at all.

This research thus stems from a self-reflexive<sup>9</sup> desire to digest my lived experience during two years living and working in Kosovo.<sup>10</sup> As international development workers grappled with their temporary setting in their everyday working practices and relationships, each seemed to navigate time's tensions and its various rhythms differently. It was my curiosity in these issues that later led me to start this research, and to eventually consider that the concept of development practice needs temporal

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2003, p. 202), and Venner has attested to the low expectations held by international actors towards their Kosovo counterparts and beneficiaries (Venner, 2014, pp. 125–128).

<sup>8</sup> The literature on whiteness in development is extensive (see for example, Chung, 2012; Easterly, 2007; Goudge, 2003; Hunter, 2010; Leonard, 2012; Pink, 1998; Syed & Ali, 2011), although not the focus of this study.

<sup>9</sup> Whilst Autesserre has pointed to the fact that there is too little “reflection on how” to revise the practices and habits of practitioners (Autesserre, 2014, p. 16), reflexive practices in development are increasingly encouraged and new literature is emerging (see, for example, Eyben, 2014; Autesserre, 2014; Smirl, 2015). However, there is still no grand theory on what reflection, or reflective practice is (Ixer, 2012, and also 1999), making the call to focus on reflexive practices in development a rather broad one, in need of further defining.

<sup>10</sup> Although the idea for this study originates in a previous experience and general observations made, that experience does not feature as part of this thesis, be it in the data collection or analysis. It merely represents where the seed of my thinking originates.

diversity to be taken as its point of departure. It is therefore my intention in this study to demonstrate that we may gain a deeper understanding of the everyday of development practice by explicitly thinking about time, and utilising a temporal perspective.

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION AND RATIONALE

In the pages that follow I propose that closure, the central concept of this thesis, helps us gain a richer understanding of everyday development practice,<sup>11</sup> particularly the temporal practices of temporary short-term international development missions in Kosovo and their staff, and helps us identify new ways of approaching and conceptualising the everyday realities of development work so that they can be considered for analysis. Writing about Kosovo, Mary Venner has noted that, in addition to providing “specialist and professional services”, technical advisors delivering development assistance are also required to “instruct others in performing the same work *with a view to making their services unnecessary in the future*” (Venner, 2014, pp. 36–37, own emphasis). That development practice ultimately rests on this idea that one should, at some future point in time, no longer be needed,<sup>12</sup> is an interesting and humbling thought. As an observed feature of Kosovo’s development work it is the need to eventually withdraw that is fundamental to this study, both as a starting point and conceptually to introduce a new lens through which to observe the everyday realities of development work and life in Kosovo.

As I later develop, closure here is used both as a process that engages various temporal modulations and their combinations, as well as an analytical approach to looking at the everyday realities of development practice from the inside. Making one’s services unnecessary in the future, informs a particular temporal process that is located in the

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<sup>11</sup> Although I recognise the diversity of what can be labelled the field of development, aid, peace-building or humanitarianism (Autesserre, 2014; Hindman & Fechter, 2011; Roth, 2015), my use of the terms ‘development’ and ‘development practice’ uniformly encapsulates the work of short-term temporary international organisations and the professionals within them working towards the transformation of a host territory.

<sup>12</sup> Silke Roth specifically points out that this is a personal hope for many individuals working in development (Roth, 2015, p. 3).

relationship between the present and future: I will leave when the time comes, and that time is measured by my having achieved my present day mission objectives, and the job is done. This logic can be extended to the international organisation; we as an organisation must ensure we meet our current objectives in order to accomplish our goals and pull out. Equally, it can also help a host country monitor the impact of an organisation, and assess the continuing relevance of that organisation according to changed circumstances. In every case, success is implied;<sup>13</sup> be it the perceived or actual success of an individual development worker, a development organisation, or of the entire system of international development, the basis for leaving *is* the accomplishment, or reaching, of an intended future goal.<sup>14</sup> An organisation's life is therefore, directly or indirectly, planned and organised in the present by the goal of its eventual withdrawal which is set in an (un)defined future: defined by it needing eventually to end, yet undefined by that end not always being guaranteed by a fixed date, or fixed in time. In this sense, if the organising principle of a development organisation becomes about its very end – symbolised by what I term its closure – then how one orients themselves in relation to closure and how one is framed by it becomes important to examine.

In a scholarly field where everyday temporal practices are largely ignored at the operational level and where what constitutes a good – or successful – exit strategy has

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<sup>13</sup> According to organisational studies and management scholars, organisations are 'successful' to the extent that they accomplish organisational objectives (see, for instance, Helmig, Ingerfurth, & Pinz, 2013, p. 122; Price, 1972). However, success is a loaded term in development; where the success of a project or programme may be about empowering local communities, that very success may disadvantage an organisation - or vice versa. It is not the aim of this research to enter debates about what successful development is or means as this is already subject to a wealth of scholarly attention (see, for example, Escobar, 2012; Sen, 2001; Stiglitz, 2002). Instead I broadly accept success to be symbolised by the claim that an organisation *can* leave as it has worked itself out of a job by accomplishing its objectives (Price, 1972).

<sup>14</sup> The case of a whole organisation closing down and retreating in the context of development is quite unusual. However, it does, and has, occurred. The League of Nations offers the first such case (Myers, 1948), and one only needs to look to East Timor for a recent example of the UN closing its offices and withdrawing. More specific to this thesis, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) closed its office in Kosovo in 2012 (Greening, 2012), and the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR), always intended as temporary institution, ended its Kosovo mandate in 2008. However, whether or not the closure of these organisations represent the full termination of their projects is questionable. Venner, for instance, alludes to this when she suggests a transfer of responsibilities from EAR to the European Commission Liaison Office (ECLo) (Venner, 2014, p. 95). The continuation of organisations despite their closure is a theme that I later take up in Chapter Eight.

been debated but rarely described, this study fills a gap in development studies by offering a description of closure and its everyday temporal realities from the inside. It does so by illustrating the everyday practices of time that exist when an international development organisation has a limited and finite mandate, and works toward withdrawing from a host country. This research therefore seeks to identify the temporal dynamics of closure and their influence on how decisions, activities and social interactions are constituted by answering the following question:

*What impact does the concept of closure have within a collective endeavour such as development practice, and how does looking at closure help us understand the everyday realities of that work?*

Such a question includes considering 1) *how closure is framed, managed, practiced, narrated and imagined in development*, 2) *how this shapes development's operational practices and relationships*, and 3) *what the impact of closure is on the broader collective goal of development*.

Where what follows is a description of what happens in two organisations aiming for closure in Kosovo, the intention is to open up new ways of exploring everyday development work so as to shed light on everyday practices of, and relationships to, time that have yet been overlooked inside organisations concerned with the development of a particular location, where the organisation itself is seen as an outsider and is intended to have a short-term temporary presence. As a potential new angle for studying the unfolding everyday realities of development workers, it is hoped that a more detailed picture of the everyday temporal tensions of development workers in Kosovo will be offered, in addition to capturing the curiosity of the reader for exploring how closure impacts the reality of other development organisations across different regions.

### **1.2.1 Research Strategy**

This thesis makes the case for looking at closure as both a conceptual approach and an analytical lens from which to understand the everyday reality of development work in Kosovo's short-term temporary development missions. Conceptually, closure is understood as a temporal process; the planned termination of an organisation, a fluid

process based somewhere in the future, yet very much concerned with structuring the regular functioning of an organisation that has a temporary short-term mandate. It is neither grounded in the present nor bound to an imagined future, but shifts dynamically between the two as an uneven process with multiple trajectories.

Inspired by Barbara Adam's *futureescapes* framework (Adam, 2006, 2008), my analysis for closure is framed by the temporal links within and between two temporal standpoints: the present and the future. For Adam, "we need to conceive of the future as both guide to actions in the present *and* as activated by us in the present" (Adam, 2009, p. 22). To do so, Adam suggests, necessitates taking into consideration the present future (what may, or is to, happen in the future) and the future present (how that impacts the here and now), as well as the relationship between these two temporal modulations (Adam, 2006). This framework allows a whole array of diverse temporalities to be understood between the present future and the future present. Importantly, it also considers the future as a social construction for which we have responsibility. The study of closure thus requires an inquiry into closure's positioning in the future, both as a temporal horizon and parameter structuring the everyday. According to Adam, simultaneous engagement with the present and future in this sense allows us to better understand how people engage with and respond to their everyday contexts, taking action and making decisions, and how this influences the construction of that very reality (Adam, 2006).

In addition to utilising closure conceptually, closure is used throughout this study as an analytical approach to understanding the everyday realities of development work. It is understood as a framework incorporating the continuities, exceptions and disruptions of interlinked temporally sequential actions and events within an international development organisation aiming to withdraw from a host country. Viewing development work through this lens we see that closure is meant to represent a clear deadline and be a defining goal of development practice but instead, as this study will show, it becomes ambiguous and riddled with contradictions and temporal tensions. Ergo, closure acts both as a lens through which to observe the realities of development work and a tool with which to unpack how temporal structures are constituted and maintained.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between September 2012 and June 2014, I analyse closure and its influence in two EU organisations with limited short-term mandates deployed to Kosovo; the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the International Civilian Office (ICO). As I explain in section 1.4 of this chapter, while both organisations are European institutions and contribute to a particular type of democracy being built, it is particularly because of their short-term mandates that they have been selected, setting them apart from more typical development organisations such as NGOs (for instance, Oxfam or Save the Children), International Organisations (such as UNDP, or the WHO), National Governments and think tanks, all of which tend to work to long-term, indefinite or unspecified durations. The promise of finitude enables inquiry into the liminal temporalities of everyday development practice when such organisations engage in transforming a host country from ‘developing’ to ‘developed’.

While closure uncovers various temporal aspects of development work in these two organisations, it primarily helps to unpack some of the contradictions in the operational practices of development by pointing to internal and external temporal practices of (dis)connect and ambiguity. Internally, as I go on to show, this (dis)connect is triggered by changes in the task of development itself, as well as to changes in both staff and organisational values and discourses that become increasingly linked to the internal politics of the organisation and focused on the impetus of survival. Particularly as an organisation’s withdrawal approaches or becomes more visible in the public eye, for example during its public announcement or its subsequent imagining discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight respectively, the internal tasks of an organisation change to address the more immediate logistic and operational processes of withdrawing and leaving. In turn, staff respond to new organisational meaning and organisational values by increasingly focusing on the here and now to act within an increasingly pro-active and finite short-term timeframe.

This study also finds that observing the everyday reality of development work through the lens of closure points to an external environment of (dis)connect through similar temporal processes of short-term values and relationships. For example, an organisation winding down will be faced with response-driven concerns, such as

diminishing influence, and the need to justify an increasingly visible temporary existence while upholding the fiction of being invested in the longer-term development and success of the host country. Particular attention to maintaining its external image as a functioning and permanent organisation until its actual withdrawal gradually takes a more central place in an organisation's external policy, a theme I explore in Chapter Six. Closure in this sense highlights an internal obsession with the political, organisational (and eventually staff) survival, and the external 'image' of an organisation whilst illustrating how the task of development becomes constrained by its own temporal ambiguity.

Presented as both an empirical process and a conceptual tool, this thesis concludes that an examination of closure foregrounds temporal ambiguity in everyday development practice and opens up the everyday time of development practice as a fluid framework within which actions, decisions and social relations construct an established but messy reality. Closure is found to be both consistently present *and* absent in the activities, decisions and social interactions of short-term development organisations in Kosovo, thereby confusing the goal of closure by introducing permanence, possibility and flexibility. Marked by its set-up of temporal paradoxes and ambiguity, closure loses its meaning and becomes all-encompassing as a goal in and of itself to be constantly (re)negotiated and (re)adjusted. From this framework the everyday emerges to reveal an internal familiarity with temporal ambiguity that is normalised.

The claim of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, closure offers a new way of approaching and conceptualising the everyday of development practice that witness various temporal tensions and ambiguities embedded in the way we 'do' development. Secondly, as a framework it opens up the possibility of addressing temporal agency in that everyday by pointing to how these temporal tensions and contradictions are navigated and overcome.

While recognising that closure is not the only lens or tool with which to study the everyday of development work, understanding the impact of closure at an operational level is a first step in opening up the everyday temporalities of development practice for social inquiry. It is hoped that such an approach will prompt interest for looking at closure in other regions or organisations, and will encourage the industry to reflect

further on its actions by pointing to the potential agency that its individuals and organisations have in constituting and perpetuating particular temporal structures in development practice.

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH**

This study draws attention to the messy reality of everyday temporal practices in short-term temporary development missions aiming to withdraw from their host country. To do so means exploring sociological research about time and advances made in ethnographies of aid to help render visible the unfolding operational practices of time and temporality in development for analysis. In addition to offering a new empirical study on the temporal practices in Kosovo's short-term missions, there are three main areas of scholarly attention to which this thesis contributes: development studies and the sociology of development work, organisational closure, and the sociology of the future.

#### **1.3.1 A temporal lens to development studies and ethnographies of aid**

Within the field of development studies, this thesis particularly speaks to the emerging sociology and anthropology of aid work which has contributed to an increased ethnographic focus on the everyday experiences and practices of those working in development.<sup>15</sup> Development scholars have often critiqued how we 'do' development through viewing development as its own category of analysis (Easterly, 2007; Escobar, 2012; Sen, 2001) to treating development as a category of policy and practice (Mosse, 2005). A recent shift of attention on the everyday practices of development work and life (Fechter & Hindman, 2011; Mosse, 2011a; Roth, 2015) seeks in part to question development's various modes of everyday action and practices. For instance, Autesserre's important work on the habits, practices and narratives of international peacebuilders explores why certain ways of working in development persist, even if they are ineffective (Autesserre, 2014). While Autesserre points to the everyday tools

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<sup>15</sup> Although Gould has coined this area of study 'aidnography' (Gould, 2004) the term does not appear to have become fully recognised by those conducting ethnographies of aid, and continues to appear as ethnography within the disciplines of anthropology or sociology.

and strategies of development practice, Smirl claims one answer lies in the material and spatial aspects of aid work itself (Smirl, 2015). While I hope to complement these analyses by offering an empirical illustration of everyday development work in Kosovo's short-term temporary development organisations, I am less concerned with understanding the symptoms and outcomes of that everyday than with describing the everyday temporal experience of development's operational practices.

My approach is to examine the industry's explicit relationship to time as a unit of analysis in its own right.<sup>16</sup> To do so means two things. Firstly, it means veering away from spatialised linear approaches to time in development studies where time is typically treated as sequential, and flows from past to present, and extends into the future (see, for example, Langer & Brown, 2016), or is set up in contrast to the past (see, for instance, Kothari, 2005). Much of the literature on development and development practice also tends to accept that there is a beginning and an end to development projects, programmes, organisations, and staff contracts. Instead, I offer an understanding of time that starts with a consideration of the end, and treats closure, the ideal future end goal of development organisations, as an influential date and temporal horizon impacting present day development work. By starting with the end – that ideal moment when an organisation's development goals have been met and it can close – I am able to question how a positive and intended future goal, that of organisational closure, impacts the here and now to become part of the normal quotidian. As far as I am aware, no other discussion in development literature takes so clear a position on the future's influence on the present to describe the temporal practices of everyday development practice.

Secondly, in line with the burgeoning field of ethnographic study on the everyday work and lives of development workers (Gould & Marcussen, 2004; Kaufmann, 1997; Mosse & Lewis, 2005; Rubinstein, 2005; Mosse, 2011a; Fechter & Hindman, 2011; Roth, 2015), it means moving away from addressing the outcomes and symptoms of

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<sup>16</sup> While I recognise that space and time are "intricately linked" (Massey, 1994, pp. 260–261; see also Harvey, 1990; May & Thrift, 2003), space, not time, has itself been at the forefront of scholarly attention in the field of development and treated in isolation of time (Duffield, 2010; Smirl, 2015). Although I take no issue with this, rarely is time explicitly the focus of academic attention in development resulting in recent calls to look at time as a subject in its own right (see Smirl, 2015, p. 201 in particular; as well as Langer & Brown, 2016; Mueller-Hirth & Rios Oyola, 2018).

time in development to unravelling everyday relationships to time.<sup>17</sup> To do so means thinking about time as a fundamental feature of experience. This necessitates considering how time and temporality is navigated within the development community itself, both in organisations and amongst its professionals. While scholarly attention has already been given to how people operate within particular organisational time-frames, such as short-term consultancies (Stirrat, 2000) or during personal time horizons such as in the life-histories or pathways of development professionals (Lewis, 2008, 2011; Roth, 2015), rarely has it revealed the temporal practices that exist within the industry. When it is, it tends to be viewed at the macro level (Held, 2001), rather than at the operational level.

Although it is recognized by scholars that time holds considerable information about *how* people belong and interact within the development community, how time is experienced, managed and negotiated within an organisation *in relation to* working oneself out of a job needs attention because it is seldom analysed in the literature as an equally structuring and constitutive feature of the everyday. Located within the sociology and anthropology of development work, the approach to this study therefore adds insight into the dynamic constitutive processes of particular temporal practices.

### **1.3.2 Organisational Closure as an Aimed-for Goal**

A second way in which I contribute to academic inquiry is by viewing the closing down or withdrawal of an international mission as a positive, and as attainment of an organisation's ultimate goal. Focusing on a future end and tracing its impact on the present day is not new, as organisational death and closure studies illustrate (Sievers, 1994). While the strength of this work has highlighted the importance of everyday temporal processes and their underlining realities for an organisation's closure, bringing work-related meaning to the fore, it has rarely been applied to the specificity of development organisations which have always intended to be temporary institutions. If attention to organisational closure has been given within development studies, concern has been limited to the timing and sequencing of organisational exit

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<sup>17</sup> I do not claim that the way closure is framed, narrated, or performed, for example, does not influence the outcomes of development. It probably does. But my intention here is other: it is to unravel the temporal practices of develop work as its own explicit unit of analysis.

strategies, primarily focusing on their processes (Zaum, 2012) or on the “political” rather than everyday “sociological time” (Mac Ginty, 2016) of those exit strategies (see also Caplan, 2012a). This study introduces a new lens in organisational closure literature by treating closure as an inevitable, positive and aimed for goal, thus, borrowing from Mac Ginty, it offers a description of closure’s everyday sociological time.

### **1.3.3 The future as guiding the present**

While this study is sociological in nature and situates itself within the field of the ethnography of the development worker, it is also about time, and more specifically, future time. As such it engages with recent debates around the future orientation of social activity found in the sociology of the future (Bell, 1997; Bell & Mau, 1973). This field of academic inquiry has opened up the future to analysis by treating the future as a participating agent and a social construct for which we have responsibility (Adam & Groves, 2007; Bell, 1998). This work tends to underline the importance of the future in understanding the linkages and networks within, and between, various social activities, practices and identities in the present. However, recent debates around anticipation and futurity often label the future as uncertain and framed by risk (Beck, 1992). It also seeks proactive thinking of futurity and its construction in the present across various disciplines from economy (Esposito, 2011), macroeconomics and evangelicalism (Guyer, 2007), geography (Anderson, 2010a, 2010b), and development (Esteva, Babones, & Babcicky, 2013; Green, Kothari, Mercer, & Mitlin, 2012; Inayatullah, 2014; Kothari, 2014; Thomas, 2014), all tending to frame the future from the standpoint of the present in terms of possibility.

As a major difference to this body of work, in this thesis the future is represented by positive and goal oriented organisational closure; even if organisational closure in itself draws up its own uncertainties. As such it is not to an uncertain long-term future I look to, but to a “near future” (Guyer, 2007) that is, symbolically at least, positive and certain. My analysis is framed by the temporal links within and between two temporal standpoints inspired by Barbara Adam’s *futurescapes* framework (Adam, 2006, 2008) which allows a whole array of diverse temporalities to be understood between the present future (the future seen from the standpoint of the present) and the

future present (the present seen from the standpoint of the future). The study of closure in this thesis thus requires an inquiry into closure's positioning in the future, both as a future reference point or timeframe toward which an organisation is aiming, and as a participating agent within the unfolding present. Simultaneous engagement with the present and future in this sense, allows us to better understand how people take action and make decisions. Finally, as a burgeoning field, empirical studies such as this one remain relatively low in numbers in the literature on the sociology of the future.

Drawing attention to closure through these three scholarly areas helps to bring into question claims that development is a static and linear process fixed by two points, with a (clear) beginning and end, and cannot be changed. It also questions the tendency to consider relationships between those who 'develop' and those who are being 'developed' as dualistic, oppositional and temporally asymmetric by enabling us to recognise the more subtle and complex processes by which activities, relations and decisions are (re)created and (re)built within development practice.

Put together, it is these perspectives that constitute my main contribution to sociological research. In so doing, I hope that the incorporation of empirical studies on developments' everyday temporal practices such as this one will eventually contribute to improved theory on closure, and a better understanding of the temporal processes and temporal agency in the development industry's quotidian that might encourage further reflection within the field of development and development practice.

#### **1.4 SHORT-TERM TEMPORARY MISSIONS AS CASE STUDIES**

The concept of closure, be it representative of the end of mission or the ending of a mandate, is the temporal reference point and timeframe used in this study. To this end, I have selected two short-term and temporary missions as case studies for this research: the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the International Civilian Office (ICO). Mindful of Ragin's criticism of social scientists who conduct case study research for arguing that "their cases are typical or exemplary or extreme or theoretically decisive in some other way" (Ragin, 1992, p. 2), I do not claim that

EULEX or the ICO are unique or typical examples of temporary organisations working themselves to withdraw from a host country. Indeed, as Caplan notes, “No state-building operation is intended to endure indefinitely” (Caplan, 2012b, p. 4).<sup>18</sup> However, as I later elaborate, what renders EULEX and the ICO interesting cases for the study of closure is that both promise to be finite by placing a strong emphasis on the short-term and temporary nature of their operation: EULEX through its two-year mandate duration, and the ICO through its status as a temporary supervisory mission. Their importance as case studies also relates to their contribution to the overall efforts of the European Union (EU) to promote sustainable peace in Kosovo by utilising elements of peace-building and development assistance. As the EU increasingly attempts to establish itself as a key security actor in world politics, examining the everyday processes and impact of closure in two of its missions provides an entry point for observing the EU’s wider efforts towards this goal.

#### **1.4.1 EULEX as a Case Study**

Mandated to assist Kosovo’s rule of law agencies to adhere to internationally recognised standards and European best practices, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) has been selected as the main case study for several reasons. Firstly, EULEX represents a European institution<sup>19</sup> that contributes to a European future of security through peace-building (Spernbauer, 2010, p. 4 in particular), development and democracy assistance (Fagan, 2015; Venner, 2014; see also Carothers, 2009). In this capacity, it is unique; funded by the EU, it is the EU’s largest civilian crisis management mission to date and the first civilian operation with executive powers, authorised to run independent police investigations and conduct trials, (Biscop & Whitman, 2012, p. 152; Spernbauer, 2010). Such a presence has introduced new rule of law structures and symbolic order to Kosovo focused on European security. Related to this, EULEX is an interesting case for highlighting

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<sup>18</sup> In this edited book, Caplan uses the term state-building organisations to broadly encompass colonial administrations, peace support operations, international administrations and military occupations.

<sup>19</sup> Its role as an institution is important to note as this compares directly to other temporary development organisations such as the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or the World Health Organisation (WHO) which are UN agencies deployed to various locations and with their own programmatic budgets. As opposed to having its projects or programmes funded like other development organisations, EULEX as a European Union institution, is solely funded by EU member states.

ideological clashes between models of development and concerns about how we ‘do’ development as underlying criticisms of EULEX echo criticism found in post-socialist literature and development studies. Lastly, what makes EULEX an interesting case to study the impact of closure is that it is a temporary organisation, and particularly one that operates on a short-term mandate of two years. While operating on a short-term mandate is not specific to EULEX, for example the United Nations (UN) peace-keeping missions can run on mandate lengths of six months, unlike organisations such as the UN or its individual agencies, its very existence is temporary. Said differently, once it terminates, there is no other EULEX – be it in Kosovo or globally.

That EULEX’s two-year mandate is potentially renewable (and has been renewed on several occasions<sup>20</sup>) offers the potential for multiple fixed calendar dates to represent its closure. The renewal of finitude here is a paradox worthy of consideration later on in itself, but the key here is that EULEX establishes finitude through a fixed calendar date for its withdrawal – at the time of writing, this date is set for 14 June 2018.<sup>21</sup> Presenting a fixed date for its projected closure therefore provides the first conceptual temporal horizon for closure that this research considers, where the present is oriented towards a specific date. Related to this issue is that due to the changes in mandate that have altered EULEX’s operational capacity and focus over the years, the EULEX that is described in this thesis is that of the 2012 – 2014 mandate when the fieldwork for this study was conducted.

### **EULEX in Kosovo**

EULEX has been active in Kosovo since 2008 and is the EU’s biggest mission launched under, and financed by, its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). EULEX aims to help bring Kosovo closer to EU standards being mandated to:

assist the Kosovo institutions, judicial authorities and law enforcement agencies in their progress towards sustainability and accountability and in further developing and strengthening an independent multi-ethnic

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<sup>20</sup> To date, EULEX’s mandates have been renewed four times (14 June 2010 to 14 June 2012, 14 June 2012 to 14 June 2014, 14 June 2014 to 14 June 2016, and most recently, 14 June 2016 to 14 June 2018).

<sup>21</sup> Closure at the time of the data collection was imminent but now, at the time of writing, it has once again shifted to a future date (see also Chapter Two).

justice system and multi-ethnic police and customs service, ensuring that these institutions are free from political interference and adhering to internationally recognised standards and European best practices (European Union, 2008, Article 2).<sup>22</sup>

As well as Administrators, Assistants, Drivers, and Political, Legal and Press Officers providing support to the mission,<sup>23</sup> EULEX is primarily made up of Judges, Prosecutors, Police Officers and Customs Officials. Their roles and tasks are typically divided into either executive or non-executive responsibilities that reflect the two main divisions of the mission: the Executive Department and the Strengthening Department. The Executive Division is tasked with actively investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating sensitive cases relating, for example, to organised crime and corruption, war crimes, and terrorism. The non-executive branch, the Strengthening Division, supports Kosovo rule of law institutions. Its staff are expected to monitor, mentor and/or advise their local counterparts in the police, judiciary and customs either individually or on a collective basis.

For the most part, activities of staff are clearly defined by which aspect of the mission their role falls into. For example, EULEX police roles are divided between the executive and non-executive functions of the mission; either being tasked with monitoring, mentoring or advising their Kosovo counterparts on issues such as the investigation of crimes or the controlling of borders, or being directly involved in the execution of particular police-related tasks such as running a witness protection programme. As such, an EULEX police officer will not offer support to a local counterpart *and* be involved in investigating a case at the same time. On the other hand, some areas of work remain less clear cut as some judges and prosecutors, for instance, can advance the strengthening and executive functions concurrently providing both the sole investigative function of a case and offering recommendations or support to their Kosovo counterparts, while others will primarily be involved in the execution of a case. Following an increase in its executive mandate in 2012 and a restructuring that left staff numbers reduced by about one third, EULEX's operation

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<sup>22</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the EULEX mandate see Spornbauer, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> This list is by no means complete as there are myriad EULEX roles that do not feature here.

is mostly run from Pristina and the North of Kosovo despite some mobile team capacities across all of Kosovo.

The complex legal basis legitimising and founding EULEX, and ongoing criticisms of EULEX render it an interesting case study for understanding development practice and the negotiation of development models. EULEX is legitimised by, and works within, the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (Resolution 1244) which authorised international civil and military presence in the area and established Kosovo as a UN protectorate (UN Security Council, 1999). Resolution 1244 upon which EULEX is legitimised, therefore recognises the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia. On the other hand, EULEX is also legally founded on several status-neutral documents such as the EU Joint Action of February 2008.<sup>24</sup> Although the implications and legal complications of its set-up are not a focus of this research and nor are they directly discussed, they remain extremely important to bear in mind as they require EULEX to regularly “juggle with contradictory objectives” (Merlingen, 2012, p. 153).

The background and set-up of EULEX also means that it faces operational difficulties. For example, one major issue noted during my fieldwork was the application of the criminal code in judicial proceedings as EULEX judges are able to choose which criminal code to apply in court proceedings be it from the former Yugoslavia, the United Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), or an independent Kosovo. Internally, a similar issue also impacts seconded employees who, in Kusari’s words, “are exposed to over three legal systems, thus creating legal uncertainty should they seek to claim any right (viz., judicial system of their country, of the country in which the seat of the international organisation is located, and of the country where they operate)” (Kusari, 2015, p. 45). Operating within clear frameworks can therefore be difficult.

External to EU politics and policies, the Serbs, Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians differ in their expectations of what EULEX should achieve due to their divided opinion on Kosovo’s status. To this day Serbia refuses to recognise Kosovo sovereignty and continues to regard Kosovo as a province of Serbia. EULEX is therefore seen by Serbs

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<sup>24</sup> See for example European Union, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012.

as the protector of the ethnic Serbian communities living in the Serbian province of Kosovo (Merlingen, 2012, p. 153) and understood as operating under a status-neutral mandate provided for by UN Resolution 1244. As a result, it has been particularly important to reassure the Kosovo Serb community that EULEX actions have been agreed to by Serbian authorities in Belgrade (Ferati, 2012, p. 18). On the other hand, for the Kosovo Albanians, the existence of EULEX is justified on the whole as it is understood to be supporting Kosovo institutions to fight corruption and crime and to be concerned with supporting the *independent* Kosovo authorities. As such, EULEX sits uncomfortably between the views of Serbia and Kosovo Serbs and those of Kosovo Albanians, adapting like a “chameleon” (Kursani, 2013, p. 6) to its fragile political and legal environment.

Here we also find an EULEX attempting to modernise a post-socialist<sup>25</sup> state but getting entangled in the complexities of the local context. Sitting on the fence between recognising Kosovo’s independence or denying it means that EULEX is not particularly welcomed either by Kosovo Serbs or by Kosovo Albanians. EULEX still holds little legitimacy with Kosovo Serbs living north of the river Ibar, and is perceived as not doing enough (Radin, 2014; International Crisis Group, 2013; Savković, 2009). For the Albanians of Kosovo, the high expectations (Kursani, 2013, p. 6) that have been placed on EULEX to fight corruption, crime and help build a functioning sovereign state have not yet been met (Merlingen, 2012, p. 153), and Kosovo Albanian disappointment with EULEX has increased. For example, EULEX has been perceived by a leading Kosovo think tank as falling prey to the political agenda in Brussels and to lacking democratic accountability (Kursani, 2013, pp. 12–20), while charges of EULEX corruption have been rife (Capussela, 2015a, pp. 112–148, 2015b; Jacqué, 2015; Harris, 2015; Borger, 2014; Aliu, 2012).<sup>26</sup> One particularly

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<sup>25</sup> While I accept that Kosovo is more than likely to be an example of what Sampson has called post-postsocialism (PPS) “a period where the shock of the new has worn off and where the larger structures of the new global order have become embedded in people’s consciousness [so that people] now act as if they have some kind of understanding of the frameworks in which they live” (Sampson, 2002, p. 298), the category ‘postsocialism’ (Humphrey, 2002) still makes sense to this thesis to broadly denote and acknowledge the region’s balancing of temporal reference points between its past (as reference point) and its future trajectory.

<sup>26</sup> Here we are reminded of Sampson’s cautionary notes about anti-corruption work being a mere “spectacle” (Sampson, 2005).

vociferous critic is Arbin Kurti, leader of the group for Self-Determination *Vetëvendosje!* which advocates for an independent Kosovo. In his criticism Kurti directly attacks EULEX as the new colonial power, demanding that Kosovo be freed from the “service of foreign merchants and neoliberal privatization” (Kurti, 2011a, see also 2011b, 2009). He has also organised the vandalising of EULEX vehicles, and protests against EULEX asking them to “go home” (Marzouk, 2009; see also Çollaku, 2009; EUBusiness, 2009; A’Mula, 2009).

EULEX has thus faced harsh criticism from all sides, including unwelcoming graffiti opposite EULEX Headquarters with the slogan “EULEX made in Serbia” (A’Mula, 2009) and billboards, such as the one in the image below, accusing EULEX of “doing nothing” (see for example Kosova Press, 2013).



Figure 1 – Billboard in Pristina, author's photo, 2013

The idea of “doing nothing” has also been voiced by international actors (Spiegel, 2012).<sup>27</sup> In particular, criticism over the limited success of EULEX’s anti-corruption efforts have been echoed both in scholarly literature (Kusari, 2015) and in key international reports such as the European Court of Auditors which noted:

EU assistance to Kosovo in the field of the rule of law has not been sufficiently effective. Some of the objectives of individual interventions have been achieved, albeit frequently with delays and doubts about the

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<sup>27</sup> These ideas were also very much a topic of debate and discussion during informal conversations I had during my time living and working in Kosovo 2008 and 2009, as well as when I returned for my field research in 2013 and 2014.

sustainability of the results. However, overall progress in improving the rule of law is slow, particularly with regard to the fight against organised crime and corruption, above all in the north of Kosovo (European Court of Auditors, 2012, p. 5).

While it is not the place to discuss the reasons of the discontent or its specifications, that such strong criticism exists, is important to note particularly as it begs the question of whether ineffectiveness is a way to extend a finite mandate as one cannot withdraw until things are ‘achieved’ in some indefinite future.

In some ways, we see here the existence of the complexities of the post-socialist state within EULEX, underlining divisions among its local and international staff between the old and new, the modern and the traditional. We also see a clash of ideologies looking forward to different visions of the future, with no real ideology leading. It is these criticisms of EULEX and its tensions which render EULEX an interesting case study for understanding development practice and the negotiation of development models within a temporal context.

#### **1.4.2 The International Civilian Office as a Case Study**

At the time of starting this thesis in September 2012, EULEX had just received a two year extension of its mandate<sup>28</sup> which was set to expire on the 14 June 2014. In many ways this made it an ideal organisation for which to study the processes of closure; I could study the present day impact of that future June date, and could return in June 2014 to examine the mandate, or mission’s, closure. However, as happens so often in fieldwork, the anticipated closure of EULEX did not materialise in June 2014 as EULEX’s mandate was again extended for an additional two years.<sup>29</sup> Wanting to pursue the issue of closure, a second case was selected as backup in the event that EULEX’s own withdrawal would not occur within the timeframe of this study: the International Civilian Office (ICO).

As I discuss in more detail in Chapter Seven, the ICO had been established in 2008 and tasked to advise and support the government and institutions of Kosovo during a

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<sup>28</sup> The previous mandate ran from 2010 to 2012 and prior to that, from 2008 to 2010.

<sup>29</sup> EULEX extended its 2012-2014 mandate in April of 2014 until June 2016. At the time of writing in summer 2016, it has again renewed its mandate to June 2018 (Tota, 2016).

period of supervised independence. Being staffed by about 250 people, it was a much smaller organisation than EULEX, and, unlike EULEX which took a status-neutral approach to Kosovo, the ICO was mandated to assist Kosovo in becoming a fully functioning sovereign state. It was structured around six key units including a community affairs unit and a decentralisation unit, all of which aimed at supervising status implementation and transferring international responsibilities to local institutions.<sup>30</sup> As with EULEX, the ICO contributed to the EUs sustainable peace efforts in the region, and like EULEX, its founding basis was contentious as it was established outside the framework of the United Nations with Kosovo Serbs in particular not recognising it.

The ICO was selected because it too aimed for a short-term and temporary existence with a two year mandate that was subject to renewal. Having placed a strong emphasis on the temporary nature of its mandate (Feith, 2012, p. v), the ICO's total length of operation was four years making it an ideal example of a short-term temporary mission that 'successfully' worked toward its own withdrawal from Kosovo.

While this thesis is concerned with two international organisations in a particular location, it is not a study about these organisations or their location, but rather the everyday temporal practices of closure within these organisations. I am therefore not assessing or comparing the performance or activities of these two institutions, nor am I assuming or claiming that the ICO and EULEX are the same beyond being short-term missions intended to be temporary, and part of wider EU efforts for advancing sustainable peace. In this vein I use both organisations to fully explore the concept of closure. While closure is not unique to either EULEX or the ICO, it is hoped that that the observations and analysis of closure illustrated here will provide interesting insights into the everyday temporal practices of Kosovo's short-term and temporary international missions, and encourage a wider use of closure as an analytical lens.

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<sup>30</sup> As with EULEX, the ICO had field offices that also closed prior to this study being undertaken. In some ways, like with the EULEX field offices, the staff working in these offices could have been invited to take part in this study. I recognise this as a weakness of this study.

## 1.5 THESIS STRUCTURE

Presented here in **Chapter One** is the context for this thesis. It begins with a description of my journey in starting this research, followed by the strategy, key question and originality of this study which questions what we learn about development work in short-term missions when seen through the lens of closure. I end with an explanation of the two case studies used to examine closure. **Chapter Two** then describes the research methodology and considers the ethnographic element of the study detailing the time spent as an intern in EULEX: accessing, getting around and inside EULEX.

**Chapter Three** serves as an introduction to the literature that has framed my analysis and inspired me throughout. Here I trace the changing discourses on development that have increasingly led to a focus on the individual development worker and the everyday experiences of development professionals. I then address the general and trudging literature on time which I have found to be useful in helping frame my point of departure which is closure. I end by introducing the concept of closure as a conceptual tool framing this study.

**Chapters Four, Five, and Six** broadly unpack how closure informally features in an organisation's life cycle when that organisation is a short-term temporary mission aiming to withdraw from a host country. I address how the future goal of closure is framed during the recruitment and selection of staff (**Chapter Four**), how it is performed in the regular activities of an organisation (**Chapter Five**), and how it is managed during a downsize (**Chapter Six**). While the three chapters highlight how people move in and out of disparate temporalities in their here and now as they treat closure as there but not there (an absent present), they also illustrate that what is meant to be a clear and defining goal for everyday work becomes overshadowed by temporal ambiguity characterised by (re)adjustment and (re)negotiation.

**Chapters Seven and Eight** analyse the temporal activities and language of formal closure in a short-term temporary development mission. I first introduce a new case study, the International Civilian Office (ICO), due to the unavailability of EULEX materials. I then describe how an organisation narrates and marks closure when it formally and publicly closes its doors to withdraw from a host country (**Chapter**

**Seven**) and how closure is imagined after an organisation officially and publicly marks its withdrawal (**Chapter Eight**). In particular these two chapters suggest that when closure is presented and perceived as being real, rather than deemed absent as in the previous three chapters, continuing hidden tensions and misaligned temporal flows render it absent. Said differently, closure is experienced as a present absent.

All chapters lead up to a concluding chapter, **Chapter Nine**, which first presents the complexities and contradictions of the intricate temporal processes identified in each chapter. Here I argue that combined, all chapters point to a closure that is omnipresent rather than an outcome or output, doubling up as an elaborate process of continual presencing and distancing, and pointing to the blurred temporal reality of everyday development work. I then discuss how using closure as an analytical lens helps us to better understand the everyday development practice by revealing an established reality of temporal ambiguity within which an accepted reality is (re)created and (re)negotiated. I end with a concluding analysis on the implication of closure in how we ‘do’ development, suggesting that dynamic temporal ambiguities become a framework for everyday development practice from which actions, decisions and relations are constantly (re)negotiated, whereby agentic potential is introduced.

Vignettes introduce each empirical chapter with the exception of Chapter Six. These vignettes aim to introduce the general discussion of the chapter. I often shift between tenses in my writing which might make odd or difficult reading. However, inspired by Fabian who has suggested that writing must reflect the dimensions of temporal rhetoric (Fabian, 2014), I use various tenses to create both a historical framework and context for closure, while allowing fluidity from the present tense for that future and unfolding closure to be accessed.

## 2 CAPTURING CLOSURE: METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

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This study does not aim to predict social form, organisational outcomes or symptoms; it is not what *will become* that is of concern, but rather the unravelling practices and experiences of evolving and changing temporalities throughout the existence of a short-term temporary development organisation aiming to withdraw from its host country that forms the focus of this inquiry. Given my use of the term closure as a conceptual tool and analytical lens for which to observe the everyday reality of development work, I now consider what it means to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in an organisation which is working towards its own withdrawal from a host country. How to capture that closure through participant observation and interviews is the aim here. I leave how to conceptually frame closure to the next chapter.

Defining closure is neither simple nor straightforward as it is not a concrete thing, but a fluid, mobile process constantly in the making – and therefore invisible as it does not yet exist. This makes researching a concept that is ambiguous and not clearly defined extremely difficult; how does one research closure when it is set in the future and has not yet happened? Where, or when, does one start if it has no clear beginning or ending? What can or cannot be studied? What questions are to be asked about an ambiguous temporal concept in the making?

In order to render invisible closure visible for studying, I have categorised the life-span of a short-term mission that is working itself towards withdrawing from a host country into five areas for study: staffing and recruitment, regular activities, downsizing, official marking of closure and its imagining. Each stage relates to different organisational activities and shifting priorities from which everyday temporal experiences can be observed. Broadly speaking, recruitment happens when an organisation needs to fill vacant or newly created positions in order to meet its goal or changed priorities. Downsizing typically occurs when positions need to be erased as a mission changes its direction. The difference between the two lies in the fact that recruitment is about beginnings and starts whereas downsizing focuses on ends and

exits. As such, the former helps us understand how time is framed from the outset, and the second represents a microcosm of closure that enables inquiry into how it is enacted and managed. The regular activities relate to the moments where an organisation is focused on fulfilling its mandate and meeting objectives. As a bridge between the framing and management of closure, the regular activities offer insight into how closure is performed in an organisation's everyday 'normal' operation. The public announcement of closure occurs when an organisation formally officialises its withdrawal and is designed to publicly narrate closure and the 'success' that withdrawal symbolises. The final stage occurs when an organisation is liquidated. During this phase, the institution conducts the administrative activities required to terminate and dissolve itself and withdraw. It represents the end of an organisation's existence and enables inquiry into how closure is imagined.

The use of such basic categorisation facilitates understanding how working toward closure is practically executed, unpacking the practices of time by which decisions, activities and social and organisational relations are (re)created and (re)built within an organisation, *over* time and *in* time. The loose categorisation thus enables complex and overlapping temporal practices to be broken down into manageable aspects of time for analysis. Although I fix these categories both in the sense of my data collection and in my chapters, I do not propose that they are clearly defined temporal moments with obvious or distinct beginnings and ends. As such these organisational stages are not independent from one another, disconnected from their past or their future. Nor do I aim to control the facts that exist within each area for study by limiting their timeframes to a "timeless" present (Fabian, 1983, 2014). Instead, my intention has been to observe the impact of closure emerging from these stages within the wider temporal context within which they are a part (an organisation aiming to withdraw),<sup>31</sup> and to open up time to inquiry by superimposing and combining the various temporal practices of closure made visible by the differing organisational priorities and

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<sup>31</sup> Here I have taken into account that, as Adam writes, the future is not an endeavour of "control or certainty" (c/r Adam, 2011, p. 11, 2005), and, as Marien highlights, there is a need to view the future as changing rather than static (Marien, 2002). A vast amount of literature acknowledges this approach by understanding the creation of event-based scenarios as chains of actions or events (Amer, Daim, & Jetter, 2013; Bishop, Hines, & Collins, 2007; Booth, Rowlinson, Clark, Delahaye, & Procter, 2009. See also Hernes, 2007).

activities. It is combined, therefore, that these categories contribute to the conceptual and analytical understanding of closure and become of interest to this study.

This approach has necessitated capturing the changing organisational perceptions linked to time and to closure's felt proximity. For example, I have asked how time is structured from the outset and what the future end point of the organisation, closure, means or represent at the start of an organisation compared to its place and meaning at the end of an organisation? What are the key considerations at the start of an organisation's life or during a downsize that become lost at the end of that organisation's life, and why? What are the new considerations at the closing down stage? What changes throughout, or stays constant? When and how does closure become final? And with what consequences?<sup>32</sup>

## **2.1 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Although this research has its roots in a previous experience living and working in Kosovo, that experience is not documented here, nor is it part of the investigation or data collection. This study is based on ethnographic material collected during several trips between September 2012 and June 2014, the bulk of which was taken in February 2013 to June 2013 coinciding with a four-month internship in European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). The data has been collected through a mix of semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations, as well as an examination of official documents by international and Kosovar organisations. I first provide an overview of the materials collected, and the difficulties faced, before providing a brief fieldwork account and discussing the problematic positionality that my double-hated role as researcher and EULEX intern posed.

### **2.1.1 Ethnographic Observation**

I spent a total of six months in Kosovo both as participant observer with EULEX for four months, and as observer with the International Civilian Office (ICO) for three days, with three additional weeks spent observing the ICO's formal and public

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<sup>32</sup> For a full list of questions asked during each stage of the fieldwork see Appendix I.

announcement of its closure. In light of the fact that this study looks at temporal processes, my data collection process has sought to avoid fixing the other in time (Fabian, 2014) by extending my own temporal boundaries for data collection to allow for a multi-temporal ethnography (Dalsgaard & Nielsen, 2013). As such, I returned regularly to Kosovo to observe changes or continuity in the temporal practices and experiences of working oneself out of a job within both organisations. Each trip varied in length and focused on different aspects of closure as I now detail.

### **Observing the International Civilian Office (ICO)**

I made two trips to observe how time manifests itself the moment an organisation formally and publicly exits its political and public role, and how a mission prepares for that exit. I also wanted to understand the effect this has on staff, the organisation and the local population. The first trip lasted three weeks in September 2012. It enabled me to observe the ICO's last official days including attending an international conference titled "Chapter closed in the Balkans" which reviewed the next steps for Kosovo, post international (ICO) supervision. I also took interest in the unofficial end: how the ICO's closure, and its imminent departure, was seen by the local population, and by staff within the ICO according to interviews and informal conversations I had or overheard. The data collected at this stage is discussed in Chapter Seven.

Having obtained permission from a senior staff member to shadow the ICO's newly established Liquidation Team, I returned in November 2012 as an observer to the ICO's liquidation mission. During this time I was given access to a wealth of information and insights into the liquidation of an organisation which form the content of Chapter Eight. The aim of this trip was to gain understanding of how the organisation had changed in its structure and functions since its public and official exit. Questions focused on encouraging reflections about the September end of the ICO and what the ICO had left, as well as on any changes in working practices during this final stage of existence. Perhaps the fact that the ICO was no longer operating publicly or politically played a key part in the openness of my respondents as I was openly welcomed and included in the liquidation team's regular activities; including daily coordination meetings, and meetings with external players such as the landlord of the logistics base. That closure, at this stage, was perceived as being a shared

experience by staff also seemed to contribute to staff wanting to talk openly about their experiences. As I later discuss, this willingness to share information contrasts to the more suspicious approach taken by EULEX.

### **Participant Observer in EULEX**

The first three empirical chapters reflect data collected during a four-month internship with EULEX and a follow-up visit one year later. During the first fieldtrip and in line with Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte's definition of participant observer, I was involved and exposed to "the day-to-day or routine activities" of EULEX staff as an intern<sup>33</sup> sponsored by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) between February 2013 and June 2013 (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 91). This does not mean, however, that I was allowed into particular meetings pertaining to issues concerning this research. The timing of the internship, a year prior to EULEX's mandate end date of June 2014, provided me with a mid-way phase of EULEX's existing mandate and its end, where I was able to observe how staff and organisation work towards a fixed goal that has an uncertain (and sometimes changing) timeframe, and the internal and external impacts of closure on daily relations. It also coincided with the announcement of a downsizing exercise.

In order to conduct this research I sought written permission from both EULEX as well as my sponsors and their operational agency the Stabilisation Unit (SU) prior to leaving the UK. Initial discomfort about my role as researcher during the internship coincided with an initial paranoia over my research topic and an attempt at circumventing my efforts to collect data. Unbeknown to me, prior to my arrival in EULEX there had been unease within EULEX about who I was and why I was looking at closure, particularly a period of downsizing, when no one knew there would be a downsize in the upcoming months. This was purely coincidental but, naturally, my timing rang some alarms. EULEX had also recently undergone strong media criticism following a recent scathing report by the European Court of Auditors that claimed EULEX had had "only modest success" (European Court of Auditors, 2012), as well as its reputation undergoing public scrutiny following charges of internal corruption

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<sup>33</sup> The delicate issue of my own positionality as intern and participant observer is a topic I address in a later section: **2.2.2. A question of positionality, p48.**

(Kursani, 2013; Kusari, 2015). EULEX was thus particularly sensitive to negative attention and criticism, and efforts were being made to portray EULEX more positively. Another person examining EULEX was therefore perceived as a risk for EULEX's already fragile reputation and not particularly welcomed.

Following a meeting with staff from the security and human resources teams, permission was verbally granted for me to remain an intern and conduct fieldwork research. However, I was asked to state in any publication that the fieldwork for this study was *not* part of my internship, in case anyone would mistakenly think that the EU had accepted me studying one of their missions. I make it clear, therefore, that I was *not* allowed into EULEX on the basis that I conduct fieldwork as a researcher, but as an intern only. Said differently, during working hours I was an intern, and in non-work hours I was researcher. At this point, the boundary between insider (intern) and outsider (researcher) was, from EULEX's perspective, clarified in an effort to ensure I would not betray the mission family by breaking what Smirl refers to as the "unwritten code of the field" (Smirl, 2015, p. 25, and 38).

The second fieldwork visit in June 2014 occurred one year after the internship with the intention of tracing the closure of EULEX as foreseen by its two-year mandate. I believed this would somehow act as a full circle in my data collection; I would end where I had started, with the closure of an organisation, but the knowledge I would have about the experiences and practices represented by that date would be richer and vastly more informed. In March 2014 the June 2014 deadline was again extended for another two years (Novinite, 2014). The extension of EULEX's mandate threw up interesting methodological questions and insights as I noted that closure for me had become a concept that was ever present but equally something abstract that could not be relied on or pinned down temporally or methodologically. Up to March 2014 my research path had somehow been dependent on the timeline of EULEX and the set date of its mandate end: 14 June 2014. The possibility of closure being continuously extended now meant that I amend the research objectives of this final fieldwork trip. Rather than focus on the ending of EULEX as an organisation as originally planned, I focused on the ending of its mandate. My visit now sought to provide insights into what is an end, and what isn't, by exploring the grey areas of extensions. In particular

I wanted to understand the perceptions and experiences of the changed/extended deadline so close to the original date for closure.

### **Note taking**

During all field visits I made detailed note. My notes were made in diary form and include the results of informal and out of work conversations and observations with people. In the case of the fieldwork conducted during the EULEX internship, my notes also include observations I made during official breaks such as the lunch hours, often had in the EULEX café. When making my field notes I broadly followed five thematic questions as suggested by Emerson et al.: “1. What are people doing? What are they trying to accomplish? 2. How exactly do they do this? 3. How do people characterise and understand what is going on? 4. What assumptions do they make? 5. Analytic questions: what do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes? Why did I include them?” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 146) Throughout each fieldwork period, my notes were recorded on a regular basis and in various formats and styles; observations of facts made during the day and snippets of conversations were jotted in a notebook at the end of every working day, and a self-reflexive diary was written to record initial thoughts, interpretations and my own positioning in the events I was observing (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2001, pp. 355 – 361), recording what Van Maanen terms first and second order concepts (Van Maanen, 1979).

A final way of engaging with my observations was through a monthly, or end of trip, summary where I would reflect upon and analyse conversations I recalled, interviews held and observations I had made. Perhaps similar to what Ottenberg labels “headnotes”, these monthly summaries were also an attempt to regularly revise and reflect upon what I was learning, as well as trace any changes in ideas (Ottenberg & Sanjek, 1990). My notes were intended to be supplementary to interviews held rather than treated as fixed materials for analysis in their own right (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 118) and used as a memory trigger contextualising temporal processes to help make sense and trace changing settings.<sup>34</sup> In this way I also recognise my place within the research as a participant for my own observations and considerations about human

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<sup>34</sup> Coffey for example acknowledges the importance of memory as part of the process of ethnography (Coffey, 1999).

behaviour (Perry, 1988, p. 143). Inevitably the ethnography that follows is told from my own point of view being filtered through my own recollections.

### **2.1.2 Fieldwork Interviews**

The bulk of my data was collected between September 2012 and June 2014 through interviews with 19 International Civilian Office (ICO) staff and 47 EULEX staff I met during my internship but not as a part of it. Of the total 66 staff formally interviewed, about one third, 20, were local staff. Interviews took the form of semi-structured interviews of staff at various levels and stages of their careers. About half the interviews were taped and later transcribed. Where respondents did not wish to be recorded I took extensive notes during the interview. The interviews were mostly held in public spaces such as cafes during out of work hours, with the exception of the ICO liquidation team who I interviewed in the workplace and two skype calls upon my return to London. Where an interview was taped, I have incorporated key quotes into my narrative.

My interviews all followed a similar structure. They were prearranged so as to give the respondent time to consider the topic and bring their own interpretation of the topic to the interview. I applied an element of semi-structured ethnographic interviewing technique by broadly introducing interviewees to my research question and aim, thus encouraging a “joint exploration of the research, rather than a mining of the interviewee for information.” (Davies, 1999, p. 109). Immediately after interviews, I would note down the general physical gestures and emotional tones of the informants, as well as the physical surroundings of the interview. All interviews ended with a general discussion on where participants were going next, and what they would take back with them.

Respondents were mostly identified by sending colleagues, and ex-colleagues, generic emails to elicit interest in being interviewed, and then snowballing for further contacts. I also dropped into conversations my research topic, fishing for interest, and got some interviews this way. Having worked closely with a Kosovar staff member during my EULEX internship opened the opportunity to speak with more local staff than I think would have otherwise been possible, although for the most part, local staff members of both organisations were generally reluctant to have their interviews taped. This I

understood not only as a feature of mistrust of internationals, but also as a nervousness around taped material representing potentially incriminating evidence.<sup>35</sup> Staff interviewed consented to participate responding on the whole rather positively. I understood this positivity as coming from the fact that no one had asked staff their thoughts about certain issues, like downsizing, that had been extremely difficult for them on a personal and emotional basis. In particular, local staff appeared pleased that someone cared enough to ask them what they thought and felt. I suggest positivity was also symptomatic of a sense of disconnect with the organisation and its pending closure.

There were, however exceptions to that positivity. During my final visit in June 2014, external issues slightly impacted my research despite occurring independently of it. On four occasions when I requested interviews with EULEX staff, I was informed about an email that been sent to some staff requesting them not to answer questions asked by anyone outside the organisation. This email, one staff member told me, specifically included students. This did not represent an ethics issue for me as I was still covered by the permission granted to me in 2013 and, following this information, had again requested and received permission from EULEX through the Press and Public Information Office (PPIO) as is the standard procedure. This meant that one of my interviews was delayed, another was cancelled as the staff member didn't feel comfortable, and two respondents approached my questions with extreme caution, carefully selecting which questions they answered. I believe this climate of permission and caution was indicative of a wider suspicion in speaking to external people and a reflection of EULEX's sensitivities towards external criticisms, or heightened awareness about potential criticism, which were rife at the time (see introduction).

In all my interviews I was aware of the many versions of closure that were being created, usually dependent on the position and proximity to closure a respondent had. As such the more impacted by closure, either personally or at a professional level, the less negotiable the version of closure was. When prompted to talk about closure, people also appeared to live through closure in different ways and expressed that

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<sup>35</sup> Here I am reminded, for example, of the cautionary reaction against the methods used by Kaneff in interviewing locals that she notes "aligned [her] with state officials who were engaged in similar activities" (Kaneff, 2004, p. 20).

experience in several ways. For instance, those personally affected by downsize emphasised unfairness and difficulty, whereas those professionally dealing with closure during its liquidation stage promoted a factual view of closure that was emotionally distanced and made its meaning harder to grasp. This suggested that when perceived as a shared and concrete event, closure was accepted as positive and inevitable with organisation and staff uniting, whereas when it was perceived as an individual experience, closure involved more emotional<sup>36</sup> tension and resistance, and the organisation was target of various levels of blame and anger. These situations, although tough during the data collection stage, produced interesting considerations when it came to analysing the data as it allowed capturing the vast and changing perceptions linked to closure's proximity.

What became interesting was the context in which people became nervous, anxious or interested about what I was doing. In some cases respondents showed resistance to questions relating to processes of downsizing and uncertainty about mandate extension, particularly in interviews with more senior staff in EULEX when these events were either unfolding or about to happen. The more staff knew about closure, the less willing to answer questions they seemed. Topics around how to manage and get rid of resources were especially sensitive topics for senior staff who knew about the processes of downsize or closure. While their caged responses hinted at the secrecy and confidential nature of decision-making on the one hand, and at a heightened awareness of the internal rumour mill on the other hand, they also suggested that the activities of withdrawal was a loaded topic. While senior staff were more hesitant to talk when decisions were not yet final, more junior and local staff were keen to express their worries, uncertainties and the practical difficulties relating to closure that they faced both personally and professionally. This, as I later understood, implied that due attention to the topic had not been given to dispel the tension around pending closure,

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<sup>36</sup> For example, the emotional reaction from some respondents ranged from being close to tears to completely breaking down. Such expression of emotion I found equally valuable, if not more so, as such reactions are not calculated but natural. I sought out the expertise of psychologists working with international staff in Kosovo whose feedback I integrate throughout my text. However insightful their input has been, I feel that there is room for psychological research on the importance of closure as a constant and permanent deadline in the everyday of development work.

encouraging staff to consider and negotiate where their own boundaries to closure lay as if (re)attempting to gain control in uncertain times.

Alternative and outside views of EULEX in relation to Kosovo's development and to political changes was offered by informal conversations held with locals and internationals outside the work place. Entry into non-EULEX audiences was aided by my previous experience in Kosovo and existing contacts.

### **2.1.3 Documentation on Closure**

During the fieldwork period between 2012 and 2014, I also considered information from public sources written in English. These sources include newspaper articles; conference materials; website information from EULEX and the ICO; media communiqués; regular reports from international organisations including the OSCE, World Bank, UN, EU; and independent research produced by think tanks such as the International Crisis Group (ICG) and the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED). Together, these public sources were helpful in shedding light on the local Kosovar perspective of developments and on local opinions on developments in Kosovo, the ICO and EULEX. Some of the individuals interviewed during the fieldwork provided me with private documents. Where relevant, I have included significant recent developments.

## **2.2 METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES**

### **2.2.1 Challenges in Capturing Closure**

I have suggested that there is no starting point for capturing closure and that its timing cannot be fixed. Instead, it is fluid, moving across, between and through various time regimes. Yet whilst closure is virtually impossible to pin down temporally, it must also be defined for methodological purposes. As such, boundaries of time must be imposed on any research that tries to capture closure. This has posed several challenges to my research.

Although the approach to my research acknowledges the constant, porous and ongoing nature that closure encapsulates, it must also, paradoxically, allow for a framing of

that closure as fixed events in time. If reality is socially constructed, it is also positioned in, and filtered by, our constructions of history. Due to my own place in and of time therefore, addressing the issue of time causes an objectivity problem unavoidably affecting the historical framing and placing of this research. I also recognise the financial issues that have limited the number and length of visits I could make to collect data. As well as some things being insurmountable within my personal PhD timeframe (like me not speaking Serbian or Albanian, or financial constraints), my research was incredibly frustrating at times.

In particular it was the construction of closure as something that was oriented towards the past or to the future which made the approach to my topic difficult to grasp when I observed it in the present. While I made sure to get respondents to elaborate on themes or explain events and concepts unfamiliar to me, my own concept of closure sometimes proved difficult. When closure was considered as an abstract future concept rather than an immediate present-day event, it was difficult to capture as there is no single definition or meaning attached to closure. For example, differences in interpretation meant that respondents spoke of closure as either a factual or an emotional process. Especially during uncertain times, such as during a downsize or the extending of a mandate, I felt that some respondents reacted defensively to their understanding of the concept of closure immediately associating a discussion on closure with criticism or judgment of a mission, its process of closure or of their own work and ability to cope. When respondents picked up on and repeated concepts that I have developed, such as ‘closure’, I asked them to clarify and elaborate their own personal interpretations of those concepts.

### **2.2.2 A Question of Positionality**

Both an insider (having spent two years living and working in Pristina and taking part in one of the organisations studied as an intern for four months) and an outsider (a student/researcher living in London) I was aware that my positionality could lead to concerns of objectivity and distance or research methodology dilemmas as made clear by Mosse (Mosse, 2006, see also 2011b, 2005). While previous experience working and living in Kosovo helped me gain access to contacts with ICO staff, my double

hatted role as intern and researcher at EULEX caused some obstacles to the data collection in terms of access to some respondents and the openness of others.

In an effort to ensure that staff were aware of my dual position I made sure to inform all staff about my research project early on in my internship. The opportunity arose when all interns were asked to write a short introductory paragraph about their backgrounds and internship roles for the EULEX monthly staff magazine A-LEX. In this article I included a sentence about being a PhD candidate and stated clearly that EULEX was one of my case studies so that staff were made aware of my dual role. This was also an attempt to solicit respondents outside of the internship circle. From my perspective however, it was impossible not to observe or hear during the internship. This is why, as I elaborate in the next section, the notes I made as an intern represent a key source of material collected. From the perspective of staff and colleagues my position also remained ambiguous as it was not always clear for them to decipher when I was an intern or researcher observing their activities, interactions and language.

As a PhD student I was on occasion feared for the freedom such a status represents. On one occasion a junior local Kosovo Albanian staff member joked that I was watching and observing everything to write it all down later. On another occasion I was asked not to note the discussions of a particular conversation. Although these were rare occurrences, these incidents attest to the difficulty in gaining the full trust of those I was working with in the capacity of intern. Many staff also encountered me with two different roles; one when I would work with them, and the other when I would be interviewing them outside of working hours. The blurring of these roles by respondents became apparent during interviews where, for example, respondents would purposefully not elaborate on certain points assuming that I knew the answer – after all wasn't I an 'insider'? – or they would reference particular dynamics or incidents that although as an intern I was aware of, as a researcher/outsider I needed to feign ignorance of. After several initial interviews during which I realised my knowledge was being assumed, I started interviews reminding respondents that my research was not part of the internship and suggesting that they pretend I knew nothing of EULEX or its work, warning that I would be asking seemingly 'stupid' questions.

My position as an intern also proved a challenge when it came to addressing staff in certain positions. For some respondents I seemed to represent more of a threat to internationals with whom I shared a language, perhaps because I was somehow setting myself apart from the ‘group’ so my role was understood as a critical one. For Kosovo Serbs, closure was perceived as a subject that threatened the individual as the departure of the international community represented an uncertain future for this community. As such I was approached with mistrust or hesitation as it was not clear on whose side I stood. On the other hand, I seemed to be at an advantage with Kosovo Albanians for whom, as an intern with no status or authority, I was perceived as non-threatening and in some cases empathised with. My previous experience in Kosovo also helped, symbolically at least, by suggesting I was not naïve, understood the context I was working in and was therefore ‘dedicated’ to Kosovo by coming back. It seemed that for many Kosovo Albanians I spoke with, my interest in closure and the withdrawing of the international community more broadly was associated with an interest in them and ‘their’ Kosovo.

Due to the sensitive timing of the fieldwork, and possibly my role as intern, staff were not always open or generous with their answers. I was refused a couple of interviews, and one was cancelled. Although I would never mention by name who I had interviewed, on seven occasions I was explicitly asked to not only treat the material of the interviews as confidential, but also the interview itself (three were locals, four were seconded international staff, all of whom were males in varying positions of responsibility). Emphasis was also placed on the need for anonymity to be upheld in the writing up stage.

Specifically relevant to EULEX, as an intern I was somewhat limited. In particular, as a sponsored intern, my movement was restricted to Pristina for security reasons. Breaching this condition of employment could have got me fired.<sup>37</sup> I also accept that as an intern I had access to privileged information, details of EULEX activities and

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<sup>37</sup> It is perhaps worth mentioning that because of this condition I was unable to visit EULEX offices outside Pristina, notably the North Mitrovica office. Although I had access to some field office staff during weekends, I was unable to have access to enough staff working outside Pristina to gain an impression of the specificities of closure and temporality in the non-Pristina based EULEX offices. This would be an area for further research.

particular office dynamics that on some occasions I noted, while on other occasions I self-censored. For instance, there were a number of interesting situations and important dynamics within my office that I am unable to disclose due to the small size of that department and the high chance of confidentiality being breached. Finally, in accepting to be paid by a sponsoring Government I would essentially be complying to the need to request and obtain approval for my research and, later, its publication. To date, this positioning has in no way impacted the final result of my research as my sponsors have allowed me (insofar as they haven't responded to follow-up emails requesting publication approval) to conduct and write up the research without interfering.

No matter how much I tried to bypass these issues, they have to a degree impacted the type of data I could access and the questions I could ask in ways I have just addressed. It is highly likely therefore that there are exceptions to what is presented in the following chapters, and disagreement to particular statements made. While I recognise the constraints represented by a sponsored (paid) internship, it also offered a way into EULEX that helped me to establish contacts and observe internal situations and activities that I would otherwise have missed out on, from daily routines and coffee breaks to a speech addressed to all staff by the Head of Mission regarding the downsize. However, my goal has been to offer selective rather than expansive insights as a first step in utilising closure as a new tool for observing development practice in short-term temporary development organisations.

In the chapters that follow I have anonymised all respondents to maintain their confidentiality and in accordance with the Goldsmiths ethics approval procedures. In order to preserve the anonymity of my informants I have also changed their gender<sup>38</sup> at random. I only quote documents from public sources or interviews that were recorded with permission from the respondents. All other information provided comes from confidential interviews and participant observations although the statements for what matters have been faithfully observed.

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<sup>38</sup> While it is not a focus of this study, a gendered approach to temporal practices and experiences would be an interesting area for future research.

There are two points to note before providing an account of the fieldwork conducted in EULEX. Firstly, considering EULEX's structure has changed since it first became operational, and again since my fieldwork in 2014 when it extended its mandate, the structure of the EULEX I describe in the pages that follow is that which I researched during the fieldwork period 2012 – 2014.

The second point is that my focus on EULEX is primarily limited to its offices in Pristina of which include, but are not limited to, a forensic department, a medical unit, an EULEX Police Headquarters Annex building, and a Special Prosecution Office. This is in part due to the closure of field offices prior to the start of this research which meant that EULEX operated mostly from Pristina with an office in the North of Kosovo and some mobile teams who travelled throughout Kosovo. The offices outside of Pristina were also inaccessible to me due to the movement restrictions placed on me as an intern. Although I did not get to spend time in EULEX's North Mitrovica office, nor did I have access to staff who had previously worked in EULEX field offices, the consideration of field offices is an important omission to note. Related to this, I also do not give comparative attention to the different implications and experiences of closure in the various EULEX offices across Pristina. This is not to say that other EULEX offices peppered in Pristina are excluded from the study nor the viewpoints of their staff ignored. They are not. While I recognise this as a shortcoming of the research and an important issue for future research, where possible I have highlighted the temporal differences experienced by various offices when it has been directly invoked as an issue by respondents.

### **2.3 FIELDWORK ACCOUNT: GETTING INTO EULEX**

I entered EULEX as Gender Matters Intern sponsored by the British Government in February 2013. Although I had applied directly to the mission as an individual,<sup>39</sup> independent of a sponsoring national authority, my application had somehow circulated from London to Kosovo, and back again to London, already hinting at an

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<sup>39</sup> The difference between individual applications directly to EULEX and seconded applications is something I develop later, along with being part of a national contingency.

established informal network of information. Back in London my application and CV had reached the attention of the Stabilisation Unit (SU); the UK Government's operational agency responsible for coordinating the deployment of civilian experts to states deemed fragile or in conflict, and to multilateral missions such as EULEX.<sup>40</sup> As EULEX prefers nationally sponsored candidates, the SU decided to put me forward for the internship as a sponsored applicant rather than a direct one to increase my chances of being accepted by EULEX (DFID Deputy Deployments Manager, 2012). While this unsolicited support and backing is rare, it allowed me to discover the process that UK seconded staff follow prior to their deployment to Kosovo. Now supported by a sponsoring authority, I was sent basic tips for improving my chances during my EULEX interview. These tips arrived after I had been interviewed. They underlined the importance of spending time preparing and researching for the role, time which ironically I had not had, and introduced me to some of the temporal contradictions explored in the following chapters.

### **2.3.1 Inside EULEX**

The internship programme I participated in was the first internship of its kind in an EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)<sup>41</sup> civilian mission (European External Action Service, 2012). As such it was very much an experience of trial and error for EULEX as well as the interns who fed back on their experience at the end of the internship, with the hope that it would trigger positive change for future interns. I was one of nine. We arrived from various corners of the world, different stages in life and with varying levels of financial support. Although some were being financed by parents, others by themselves, or, like me, by a sponsoring institution, we all received a monthly allowance from EULEX. Of all the interns, I was the only one with prior experience in Kosovo.<sup>42</sup> Each of us were summoned at the last minute, as if time

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<sup>40</sup> According to their website, the Stabilisation Unit: “support integrated coordination of government work in fragile and conflict-affected states, acting as a center of expertise” [...] As a part of this work, we train and deploy qualified and experienced civilian experts to support government work in conflict situations, and to multilateral missions on behalf of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. We are responsible for safety and security of all staff deployed through us” (Stabilisation Unit Website, n.d.).

<sup>41</sup> For an overview of the CSDP structure of command see Appendix II.

<sup>42</sup> I have often heard the term “mission virgin” to denote new recruits to development organisations and multi-lateral missions like the United Nations, and EULEX. This sets this group apart from those who have lived and worked in the field before, and suggests a scale of professionalism; from first timers, to

outside EULEX was of no importance. We were all deployed to the Pristina region, and were limited to remaining in Pristina due to EULEX staff safety concerns and imposed movement restrictions.<sup>43</sup> Despite being spread across several departments and offices we mostly conducted legal research in some form or another, and assisting with writing legal memos or legal papers. Most interns, like myself, were based in EULEX's Headquarters: Farmed. There was one exception: the intern placed in the mobile team. As part of the work conducted by this team, travel throughout Kosovo was necessary. As such this particular intern was able to bypass the movement restrictions and explore the 'field', gaining an experience beyond the bubble of Pristina.

I noted that the intern group was quite insular at first. A few socialised and lived together, generously extending the intern hand to other EULEX colleagues when they went out. At work, the Headquarters interns tended to hang out together meeting for lunch every day, quite often sitting at the same table. One international staff member external to the intern group described this as "internophobia"; a fear of mingling, setting themselves apart from other EULEX staff. Interns based outside Farmed were more likely to hang out during working hours with their other colleagues, rather than interns, revealing an interesting difference in organisational culture between the EULEX buildings. Being an intern myself made it easier at least to observe this group's understanding and approach to their own processes of closure, but, as an intern from Headquarters myself, it also set me apart as an outsider from other EULEX colleagues.

The internship occurred during a particularly unique period of transition and change. EULEX was recovering from a downsize which had affected mostly local staff and reduced staff numbers by one third. Most local staff who were working for EULEX had gone through an examination process to re-apply for their positions. This experience, which I detail in Chapter Six, had left many local staff extremely angry and bitter. The downsize also changed the mandate, and the standard operating

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the more experienced. The term "mission virgin" is not often used in academic literature, although has been recognised in blogs from the field (see for example Caroline, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> Interns still got to travel outside Pristina during working hours, however this was rare rather than the norm and in all but one intern's case, permission needed to be granted prior to each journey.

procedures of EULEX which, as I explain in Chapter Five, structured the daily work at EULEX.

A key change during this period was the arrival of a new Head of Mission (HoM), a diplomat, followed a few weeks later by a new Deputy Head of Mission (DHoM), with a military background. There is a history in EULEX of the Head and Deputy not getting along which many staff at EULEX linked to the stark difference in backgrounds, feeling that military and diplomatic personalities could only disagree. As trust was not at its highest during this time, the perceived lack of team spirit between the two new senior appointees did not serve to help fix issues of disconnect within EULEX. Added to this was the feeling that the arrival of these two new staff members which coincided with the unexpected downsizing exercise was somehow linked and thus blame for the downsize was shifted onto them. It is against this background of sudden downsizing and adapting to new management that the majority of my EULEX research notes were taken.

### **2.3.2 Inside the Gender Office**

The position I had applied to at EULEX was Gender matters intern. From the advert, I knew I would be conducting research into sexual violence issues in Kosovo. What specifically these issues were, I did not know. Being sponsored by the UK I had been briefed, prior to leaving for EULEX, on the UK Government's priority and interest area regarding gender in Kosovo. It was suggested that I explore themes of war time rape and sexual violence in my research on women's rights in Kosovo, as well as develop useful contacts on matters relating to gender issues to later feed back to the UK. When I arrived in the Gender Office, it transpired that war time rape was not on EULEX's agenda and that I was to research and report on current day rape in Kosovo.<sup>44</sup> This meant collecting information about the current situation of access to justice for victims of sexual violence in Kosovo, and examining the gap between formally available protection for victims of sexual violence and the 'real life' situation on the ground in Kosovo.

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<sup>44</sup> My sponsored position as EULEX intern added an additional conflict of positions as evidenced by this mismatch in research priorities, although one that is not directly relevant to this study.

The role of intern often limited me to desk research as I analysed gaps between international and national legal requirements on sexual violence, and the procedures and practices pursued by Kosovo institutions. It also necessitated that I interview staff within Kosovo's legal institutions such as the police, prosecutors, judges and staff from NGOs workings with victims of sexual violence. As such I had contact with local Kosovo rule of law experts within the police and judiciary, as well as some EULEX staff based or working closely with their Kosovo counterparts in their local offices. Since most of these offices are based in Pristina, my geographical focus remained in Pristina. Due to my own movement restrictions as an intern, I elicited information about regional procedures and practices regarding cases of sexual violence from EULEX staff working in the field. On three occasions, however, I was able to gain permission to travel.<sup>45</sup> My first visit was to Prizren to interview a prosecutor on the troubles he faced with the process of prosecuting rape cases. The last two visits were to Mitrovica, in the North of Kosovo, to attend a war time rape trial. On both occasions I was escorted by convoy to the court, first passing through the EULEX office in the North, and at the mercy of a strict schedule and particular locations. Although war time rape was not a focus for the internship, I attended because there were no current cases of rape going to trial and this was my only opportunity to observe how rape cases were dealt with and the language used. It also allowed me to fulfil a requirement for my sponsoring Government as I was able to mention Kosovo's efforts in dealing with war time rape in my final report to the UK.

The main purpose of my internship was to identify new areas for the Gender Office to focus on and to recommend future activities for EULEX more broadly that would help mainstream gender-sensitive approaches to sexual violence, both within and across EULEX teams, and in their support of Kosovo rule of law institutions dealing with crimes of rape. At this time, the identification of possible activities was particularly important to the Gender Office as it was a new office, no longer working under the umbrella of the Human Rights Office, but as a strategic office linked to the Deputy Head of Mission. It was therefore in the process of establishing itself within EULEX

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<sup>45</sup> These visits did not bring up any opportunities to discuss closure and provided no data that added to the insight of this study.

as an office in its own right, and needing to clarify its role, purpose and direction within the organisation.

### **2.3.3 Getting Around EULEX**

My particular role as the Gender Matters Intern got me to research issues of sexual violence in Kosovo, with a particular focus on rape, and its treatment by Kosovo institutions and EULEX staff, as a scoping exercise for future EULEX activities. I took this role seriously, feeling overly responsible due to the serious nature of the research and to my being seconded. I was also the only intern with a specific task to conduct, and an outcome, a final report, to produce and share with my sponsoring Government. Whilst this research offered important opportunities to meet with various staff at different levels in EULEX, I also found it limited my access due to emerging issues faced within my office.

A key site, or obstacle, for me to gain access to and enter into was the Gender Office itself where it was planned I would spend the entire four months of the internship. I suspect, sadly, that by entering the Gender Office I lost some credibility or approachability. I soon realised that some EULEX staff held rather negative views of Gender Advisors by stereotyping those working on gender issues as angry, difficult to work with and tending to not listen. Such stereotypes of Gender Officer staff meant that I too was labelled negatively, and thus set apart from other staff by my pure presence in this office. Regrettably, not many EULEX staff knew about this office as it had been newly established under the office of the Deputy Head of Mission, having previously been part of another office, the Human Rights and Gender Office. Those who did know about the newly created Gender Office recounted negative experiences of previous dealings with Gender Advisors. It quickly became apparent that the office I was placed within was a misfit within the organisation, and that no one wanted it, or, I guessed, its staff who were judged to be difficult. While suggesting an institutional culture of sexism, these perceptions of the Gender Office created an interesting dynamic as well as proving to be a difficult starting point.

Nor was I entering an already established office. Apart from one local staff member, everything was new, from the room and furniture, to its organisational position in EULEX and two of its new staff members – the new international Gender Advisor and

the Intern, me. To add to this, I was the first to arrive in this office of three, spending my first week alone in the office. This confused the typical temporal ordering of staff arrival in terms of office hierarchy. For my first week alone in the office spent time creating my own networks and meeting with staff to introduce myself. This meant that I had to ‘*get* around’ as well as ‘*be* around’ (Carmel, 2011, p. 556) without the support of my two colleagues who were absent. The new international Gender Advisor started one week after me, during which time I had to affirm my dual role; that of organisational ethnographer, and staff member expected to be “contributing towards super-ordinate organisational goals” (Camel 2011: 553). The late arrival of this colleague also meant that my position as intern took second priority for the office and EULEX staff, with attention given first to the settling in of a new senior colleague. The local Gender Officer arrived two weeks after me, and one week after the new international colleague, giving an additional temporal dimension to this office as knowledge and expertise arrived in a reversed temporal order. The impact of this was an increased difficulty in terms of establishing contacts for the internship as I was asked to spend time conducting desk research while the international colleague settled in to her new role, and the parameters for my internship were established. This however, was turned into a positive as it gave me a first-hand experience of the non-linear and complex structure and practice of time in one office in an international organisation aiming to withdraw.

The reversed timing of staff within the Gender Office meant that the activities and purpose of a new office were as yet undefined. They remained so for the entire duration of my internship as the office attempted to affirm its new organisational position under the Deputy Head of Mission – a time consuming task. In an attempt to set up a new office, the Gender Advisor and Officer set about attending meetings with the dual purpose introducing the newest Gender Advisor to relevant EULEX offices and defining the current and projected role and activities of their new office. Time was also given to determining the research scope for the study I was to conduct as intern.

## 3 A FRAMEWORK FOR CLOSURE: THE EVERYDAY OF CLOSURE

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*“If we are interested in how time reflects the social structure of a society, we should also be interested in how that social structure is ordered in its own right and in an on-going fashion, especially if that ordering makes use of time.”* (Rawls, 2005, p. 168 own emphasis added)

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter surveys the literature on development, time and closure that has framed my analysis and inspired me. As this study considers Kosovo an example of a developing country, the chapter first addresses the shifting positions in development literature. This serves two key purposes. Firstly, it locates the study within a broad history and critique of development in post-socialist societies, while placing Kosovo within the parameters of European Union (EU) development and democracy assistance. Secondly, by tracing the changing development discourses on development that have increasingly led to a focus on the individual and their experiences of everyday development work, I locate the research within a burgeoning field of study – that of the sociology and anthropology of development work.

In a second section I turn to the general and trudging literature on time as a theoretical tool underlying this study. The aim is to briefly introduce time as an instrument for understanding social interaction, and to discuss its treatment by development scholars. Here I propose that time is generally used to explain outcomes or symptoms of development and development work. It also typically assumes temporal horizons are oriented towards either the past or the future, and actors (development workers, organisations or host countries) are fixed in or of time by claiming experiences are universally experienced.

Beyond the narrative on time found in ethnographies of development work, I suggest, is a more fluid and diverse relationship to time. With this in mind, I end the chapter by introducing the concept of closure that this research uses as a conceptual approach and analytical tool to observing the realities of everyday development work, justified

by studies on organisational closure and literature on the sociology of the future. In a first section I draw attention to my being influenced by the literature on organisational death and closure which has enabled the exploration of versatile action systems and processes within organisations to give meaning to everyday work. I point out that where I differ from these studies is in my approach to closure as an inevitable and aimed-for feature of organisational life rather than a shock or surprise. Building on this I turn to the re-emerging debates around the future orientation of action and processes found in the sociology of the future. These studies, I argue, are key in establishing fluid temporal frameworks from which one can better understand how people take action and make decisions despite their instance on the future as uncertain. In this sense I use the concept of closure as an entry point for the study of time in development practice, offering closure as a temporal lens through which to unpack the tensions and contradictions that exist in everyday development practice.

The aim of this chapter is to establish the importance of considering the relationship to future time and endings for organisations concerned with the development of a particular location, where the organisation itself is seen as an outsider, and is intended to have a temporary short-term presence. It also situates the study within a development-time-closure nexus that exposes a complex relationship to time and offers a new lens through which to view the everyday of development work and life.

### **3.2 SHIFTING DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSES**

Located in South Eastern Europe, Kosovo displays characteristics of a territory worthy of ‘Global North’ development assistance and attention as is evident from the continuing existence of, and dependence on, international aid and donor agencies. Since the 1998-9 conflict,<sup>46</sup> Kosovo has been rapidly urbanising, attracting not only the rural population and returnees, but also myriad international aid and donor agencies arriving for professional reasons and being tasked with contributing to Kosovo’s conflict prevention and democratisation processes. With a population of

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<sup>46</sup> For more about the historical period of the conflict see, for example, Bieber & Daskalovski, 2004; Buckley, 2000; Garton Ash, 2001, pp. 380–399; Glenny, 1996; Judah, 2002; Weller, 1999, 2008c.

about 1,805,000 (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2015, p. 8) Kosovo is one of Europe's poorest countries (World Bank, 2015, p. 6). According to the European Commission, Kosovo's GDP per capita "reached €2 721 in 2012, equal to 11% of the EU-27 average" (European Commission, 2013; see also Tota, 2014; World Bank, 2013). Kosovo remains in a state of development with considerable weakness in both state-building and democracy-building (Cohen, 2010), a weak and concerning rule of law, high unemployment, and lacking long term sustainable sources of economic growth (European Commission, 2014; see also Woehrel, 2013).

It is neither the place nor the aim of this research to trace in detail the historical changes of development in the Former Yugoslavia, nor the historical process leading up to Kosovo's self-declaration of independence.<sup>47</sup> It is however important to provide a brief background to the development context and the situation framing this study, before moving on to trace broader trends in development studies.

### **3.2.1 From Fordism to Modernism to Democracy Assistance**

A large body of work exists to address social transformations, including literature on *why* societies change or *how* they transform. Such literature is particularly prevalent with regards to Eastern Europe and post-socialist transitions which portrays development as an economic, political and social transformation or transition (Coppieters, Deschouwer, & Waller, 2014; Pickles & Unwin, 2004; Burawoy & Verdery, 1999; Matutinović, 1998; Eyal, Szelenyi, & Townsley, 1998; Stark & Bruszt, 1998; Stark, 1992). The notion of development in post-socialist transitions has shifted over the years from development as progress in the Fordist days of the 1950s, to a state-led focus on economic growth and modernisation in the 1970s recognising underdevelopment, and giving way to a neoliberal approach rejecting state-interventionism for laissez-faire market capitalism (Pine & Bridger, 1998; Toye, 1993; Venner, 2014a). Such ideas have impacted how growth has been played out by institutions, and have helped guide government policies in helping countries emerge from poverty (Meier, 1984, p. 4).

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<sup>47</sup> For a useful historical background and analyses of this period, see, for instance, Papadimitriou & Petrov, 2012; Weller, 2008a, 2008b.

With the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, the development discourse of the 1990s became increasingly politicised by Governments and international institutions to justify reform that would, symbolically at least, lead post-socialist states “back to Europe” (Vachudova, 2005; Neumann, 1998). In particular, projects now aimed to enable post-socialist states to ‘catch up’ with ‘the West’ through various transfers of capital and technology (Venner, 2014a, p. 22; see also Hughes & Hare, 1992; Okey, 2003).<sup>48</sup> Growing interest in positioning Eastern Europe and the Former Yugoslavia in relation to Europe (O’Brennan, 2006, 2008), have subsequently drawn out a discourse focused on treating Eastern Europe, and the Balkans,<sup>49</sup> as part of the European Union (Bechev, 2012; Rupnik, 2011), and resulted in various European Union (EU) accession campaigns throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Prompted by the Balkan conflicts however, the language on development and EU accession again changed. This time it became about EU conflict resolution with the aim of promoting “*peace and stability* in the Western Balkans” (European Union [online], 2012). International funds now committed to the Balkans in the guise of military, humanitarian, peacekeeping and reconstruction initiatives. Although the immediate post-conflict activities of development focused on post-conflict reconstruction, they have more recently come to favour European democracy building efforts. Carothers labels these efforts a “developmental approach” (Carothers, 2009). For Carothers, a developmental approach to democracy assistance is about “supporting democracy based on the conviction that basic features of democratic governance – such as transparency, accountability, and responsiveness – contribute to more equitable socioeconomic development overall” (Carothers, 2009, p. 8). The European Union’s approach to post-conflict state building has since focused on bringing the Balkans closer to the EU through democracy building, with the aim of eventual integration (European Parliament, 2000, para. 67).

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<sup>48</sup> Although the dynamics of this relationship is not the focus of attention here, I acknowledge that the flow of transfers can also be two-way (Sampson, 1996).

<sup>49</sup> Peter Siani-Davies draws attention to the fact that some scholars have emphasised the negative connotations of the term ‘Balkans’ (Siani-Davies, 2003, p. 2).

### **Brining Kosovo closer to the EU**

Whilst the Western Balkans has tended to be labelled “Europe’s troubled region” (Bartlett, 2007), Kosovo has been framed within a continuing legacy of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Following the 1998-9 crisis, thousands of international staff working for various NGOs, international organisations and donors descended upon Kosovo, some of whom, like the EU, NATO, and the UN, were conducting their largest ever field operations (Dursun-Ozkanca, 2009). Kosovo was also identified by the EU as representing a particular challenge to European security and a risk to the region’s stability. As a result, European political interests strongly promoted creating “a stable, secure and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo” (European Commission, 2005) in order to avoid a future regional conflict from occurring within Europe’s borders, rendering the EU an indispensable agent in Kosovo’s conflict resolution (Stefanova, 2011, Chapter 6).

Since Kosovo’s declaration of independence, one feature of development attention has been the continued presence of international organisations offering technical expertise and assistance in areas of security sector aid (NATO), financial sector assistance (IMF, WB), and legal sector aid (OSCE, EULEX) (see Howard, 2013, p. 6). As international organisations such as NATO and the UN have reduced their presence in a post-independent Kosovo, international responsibilities over Kosovo have shifted their activities toward European development and democracy assistance (Fagan, 2015; Venner, 2014a) through European organisations such as the European Union’s Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the International Civilian Office (ICO), the case studies in this thesis.

Carothers provides five characteristics of the European developmental approach to democratic aid, of which two are particularly relevant to the work of EULEX and the ICO; technocratic governance work such as capacity building in state institutions, and human rights support (Carothers, 2009, p. 16). By the very presence of EU organisations such as EULEX and the ICO offering developmental democracy assistance, Kosovo is shown to be treated by the EU in the same way as a developing

country such as Afghanistan,<sup>50</sup> and if development is a democracy building process, it is also needed in peace-building where peace is supported through democracy building.

Considering the EU's treatment of Kosovo as 'developing' is also interesting as development, or aid, has not typically been considered as occurring on the European continent by development studies. Umbrella terms that have served to categorise those from abroad as 'internationals', and those from a host country as 'local' or 'national' (Roth, 2012) have encouraged a separation or (dis)connection by 'bracketing' lives (Heaton Shrestha, 2006) between the 'doers' and 'receivers' of development. Such bracketing has ignored the diversity within groups; expatriate foreigners are simply categorised as 'international' regardless of whether they come from different countries, ethnicities, nationalities, races, social backgrounds, developed or developing countries (Leonard, 2012; Sampson, 2003b)<sup>51</sup> and similarly, groups within host countries are labelled 'local', 'national', 'beneficiaries' (Krause, 2014, Chapter 2) or 'recipients', regardless of their different geographical,<sup>52</sup> social or ethnic<sup>53</sup> makeup (Kothari, 2014; Dana M. Landau, 2017; Roth, 2012).

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<sup>50</sup> According to the International Statistical Institute (ISI), "Countries with a GNI of US\$ 11,905 and less are defined as developing". As such the ISI defines both Afghanistan and Kosovo as 'developing' countries (International Statistical Institute, 2015). Additionally, the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL), like EULEX, falls under the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) which "aims to strengthen the EU's external ability to act through the development of civilian and military capabilities in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management" (European Union [online], 2011). For an overview of the CSDP structure of command see Appendix II.

<sup>51</sup> According to Leonard, expatriates tend to be white, skilled or privileged individuals from Europe, America and Australia, although in Kosovo there is a large number of expatriates from developing countries such as the Philippines, Pakistan and Nigeria to name a few. Japanese and Chinese development workers are also present. Overall the expatriate community in Pristina represents a global community (Leonard, 2012). This is not to say that despite their "tremendous" differences, they do not have things in common (Sampson, 2003b).

<sup>52</sup> For instance, Kothari points to the language of 'local' as excluding and abstracting the recipients of development from the global (Kothari, 2014, p. 3), while Roth makes the distinction between national and local staff "to address the fact that 'local' staff and NGOs do not necessarily work in their local village or home town, but in other parts of their country" (Roth, 2012, p. 1472, footnote 6).

<sup>53</sup> In the case of Kosovo, the labelling of groups falls within a wider multi-ethnic narrative which Landau has argued is seldom made explicit and is therefore problematic. In her unpublished MPhil thesis, Landau challenges the normative commitments to the concepts of multi-ethnicity in Kosovo used by Kosovo's international community to shed light on the tensions and inconsistencies arising from disparate notions of multi-ethnicity in Kosovo (Dana M. Landau, 2011; see also, Dana M. Landau,

Any distinction between Europe and its Kosovo ‘other’ is now harder to claim as the dichotomy between the ‘them’ and ‘us’ typical of aid relationships is blurred and contested in a Kosovo no longer temporally defined by a past of conflict but instead linked to a European future.<sup>54</sup> Not only are Kosovo’s development goals clearly linked to European standardisation processes, but Kosovo is also geographically located in Europe. A 2010 nation branding campaign entitled “Kosovo the young Europeans” represents this visually by suggesting that Kosovars *are* Europeans (Saatchi & Saatchi, 2009). This campaign advert aims at transcending difference both within Kosovo and externally by showing a Kosovo that fits in with European standards and identities. In the case of such unclear boundary-making differentials as I suggest is present in Kosovo, interactions and relationships between international and local development staff must be created by other differentials.

Kosovo thus becomes an interesting case study to challenge pervasive practices of othering where those who are doing the ‘developing’ and those being ‘developed’ can no longer be set up in a clear oppositional binary relationship, be it temporally, geographically, culturally or even physically. The importance and impact of this dynamic is implied throughout the following chapters, particularly Chapter Four.

### **3.2.2 Understanding Development as an Everyday Lived Experience**

There is a large history of academic literature debating the strategies and consequences of development at both theoretical and practical level in Eastern Europe. Approaches to development have been judged for their strong link to Western economic history, seen as displacing traditional society with modern capitalism in a linear and sequential way (Rostow, 1956). Gradually, as the focus of development shifted from the economy to institutional and social change, the practices of development have come under scrutiny (Creed & Wedel, 1997; Sampson, 1996, 2002b, 2003a; Wedel, 2001). More recently, parallels have been drawn between EU expansion, or conditionality, and colonialism (Chandler, 2007; Böröcz & Sarkar, 2005; Anastasakis, 2005; Verdery,

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2017; Bieber & Daskalovski, 2004; and Ahtisaari, 2007 who defines the future of Kosovo as a ‘multi-ethnic’ state and society).

<sup>54</sup> Based on Waever, for Siani-Davies it is a past of conflict and fragmentation in the Balkans that represents “Europe’s defining ‘other’ [...] Now, they form a temporal ‘other’; they represent the European past which cannot become the future” (Siani-Davies, 2003, p. 2).

2002; Böröcz et al., 2001; Böröcz, 2001; Stubbs, 2000),<sup>55</sup> with some, like Weaver, linking European security and the governance of Europe to themes of empire (Weaver, 1997). Furthermore, the EU has been judged a “mission civilisatrice” (Paris, 2002) and often criticised for engaging in a one way process of “Europeanisation”, defined by Anastasakis as a “coercive process of domestic and regional change brought about by the EU” that is “didactic and patronising” (Anastasakis, 2005, p. 77 and 82). Although Kosovo’s development continues to be viewed under the debated lens of ‘Europeanisation’ and the EU’s enlargement strategy in the Western Balkans, emerging literature now also questions the substance of aid assistance in Kosovo (Venner, 2014a, 2014b), particularly in the form of democracy assistance, its coordination and implementation (Fagan, 2013a, 2015; Fagan & Sircar, 2012; Greiçevci & Çollaku, 2015; Sampson, 2003b).

Mary Venner has warned that while EU assistance in Kosovo takes on many features of development assistance, “it suffers from the same challenges and practical difficulties” of development assistance in any other developing country context (Venner, 2014a, p. 28). According to Ferguson (Ferguson, 1990), understanding development requires an understanding of the discourses of development in which particular forms of knowledge that shape the world have conditioned how development is carried out (see also Escobar, 1984, 2012; Grillo & Stirrat, 1997). These discourses on the origins or the solutions of development, he argues, have presented development in a homogenous way, and assume that the development world, either geographically or temporally speaking, is the same in, of and across geographic location or time however these are delineated or defined.<sup>56</sup>

### **The sociology and anthropology of everyday of development**

Ferguson has long taken issue with needing to do something about the industry that is development. Whilst he put forward the idea of development as an “anti-politics machine” unleashing unintended consequences of bureaucratic state power and

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<sup>55</sup> Understanding development through history, particularly its in relation to continuity with colonialist history, is also reflected in wider development literature (see, for example, Duffield & Hewitt, 2009; Kothari, 2005; Munck & O’Hearn, 1999).

<sup>56</sup> For example a rich literature on space and place that is beyond the scope of this study, brings attention to and challenges how space/place is defined and what this represents (see for example Cresswell, 1996; Harvey, 2012; Lefebvre, 1991, 2004; Massey, 1994).

ultimately de-politicising poverty, he recognised that there is little to offer in answer to the question “what is to be done?” His reasoning is that it is a meaningless question to ask, because “the subject, the actor who is to do the ‘doing’, still remains completely unspecified” (Ferguson, 1990, pp. 279 – 280). In an attempt to discover, or uncover, who is “doing” the developing, literature on development has shifted its attention to this question through a new field of study that offers an ethnography of everyday aid (for example, Crewe & Harrison, 1998).

One approach has been to analyse different aspects of professional power and aid relationships of those living and working within “Aidland”<sup>57</sup> through deep field research. Lewis and Mosse have highlighted the need for anthropologists to examine how people construct representations of stable and unified policies that conceal the actual contingencies, multiplicity, and disorders of everyday aid work (Lewis & Mosse, 2006; see also Mosse, 2005a, 2011a). This has been explored, for example, through empirical studies on local and expatriate relations (Owen, 2010; Shevchenko & Fox, 2008) or donors and their beneficiaries (Eyben, 2006, 2011). More often than not, these relationships have been framed within the context of networks of knowledge transfer (Lewis, 2011), the formation of knowledge practices (Mosse, 2011b), working practices (Eyben, 2006), or in the creation of hierarchies and social dominance (MacLachlan, Carr, & McAuliffe, 2010, p. 12).

These studies have raised critical questions about the role of the foreign development worker as a professional group made of various backgrounds and ideological perspectives with particular views of the world (Emblem, 1996; Kaufmann, 1997; Mosse, 2005b; Rubinstein, 2005; Stirrat, 2008). As they do so, they also offer a rich and differing profile of expatriates as various groups of professionals across various countries; from volunteers (Hindman, 2014; Simpson, 2004), to activists (Yarrow,

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<sup>57</sup> The term “Aidland”, coined by Raymond Apthorpe, denotes the separate world inhabited by aidworkers where power relations are often played out. Harrison references a 2005 paper given by Apthorpe (Apthorpe, 2005) suggesting that: “Aidland [. . .] is the trail (to use a word that usefully is both verb and noun, and about both process and place) of where foreign aid comes from, where it goes, and what then. Stepping into Aidland is like stepping off one planet into another, a virtual another, not that this means that it is any the less real to those who work in or depend on or are affected by it in other ways” (Harrison, 2013, p. 263). There have been other terms coined such as ‘Bubbleland’ (Apthorpe, 2011a), or Sampson’s ‘project society’ which denotes “a set of practices with its associated sets of resources, social groups and ideological constructs” (Sampson, 2002a, p. 314).

2008), experts (Emblem, 1996), doctors (Bortolotti, 2010; Redfield, 2013), donors (Eyben, 2011), diplomats (Boustead, 2002), and short-term development consultants (Green, 1986; Stirrat, 2000; Wedel, 2004).

A case has already been made to recognise the diverse conditions and contexts that make up this profession. Fechter, for instance, promotes the inclusion of peace-, humanitarian-, aid-, and development- workers in a broad definition of ‘aid professionals’, or ‘the people working in aid’ (Hindman & Fechter, 2011; see also Roth, 2015, pp. 2-3-9). In this vein, I speak of ‘development’ and ‘development workers’ throughout this thesis, and include academic work about all professionals working in development or humanitarianism which constitute part of the growing field of study on the ethnography of aidwork. My reason for doing so is that these professionals, regardless of the context or conditions in which they work, all strive for similar outcomes (social, economic, judicial or political transformation of a territory), and ultimately work within organisations that require, amongst other things, the *temporary* posting of external staff (military, or civilian) to partake in efforts of capacity building and knowledge transfer (for similar arguments see Venner, 2014b, p. 21; and Autesserre, 2014, p. 47).

More recently, individual agency has been viewed as an entry point into understanding the effectiveness, efficiency and symptoms of development organisations and their professionals. In response to what she has perceived as the lack of attention on the personal and individual experience, Fechter has called for the examination of the everyday lives of the development worker, arguing that this is integral to development theory and the professionalisation of the development worker (Hindman & Fechter, 2011; Fechter, 2012a). This move has been reflected in a recent spate of literature on the *lived* complexity of development rather than just its narrative. Hoppe, for example, provides insider accounts of the development industry in her anthology (Hoppe, 2014). There have also been various blogs (AidSource, n.d.; AidSpeak, n.d.; ‘News aggregator | Aid Workers Network’, n.d., ‘Stuff Expat Aid Workers Like’, n.d.; Shotgun Shack, n.d.), films (Campbell, 2003; Kondracki, 2011; Meirelles, 2005), novels (J, 2013), anthologies (Bergman, 2009), autobiographies and biographies (Barber, 2014; Eyben, 2014; Martini & Jauhola, 2014; Reilly, 2012; Thomson,

Postlewait, & Cain, 2006) that, together, have contributed to an increasingly “popular” (Lewis, Rodgers, & Woolcock, 2013) trend in recounting or witnessing the lives experienced by individual development workers. Put together, these personal accounts provide a plethora of anthropologic or ethnographic insights and portraits about the everyday in specific organisations, countries, regions and/or in an historical time.

Literature on aid and development has thus shifted away from the work itself, and its impact, to analysing the behaviours and motivation<sup>58</sup> of development workers through their everyday lived experiences, and how this shapes their perspectives and practices of development work and organisations. This places the onus on the impact of individual and group ordering practices in which this thesis situates itself. Yet while I recognise the descriptions and observations evident in the emerging literature on the everyday experiences of the development industry and its professionalisation, one thing that makes me uncomfortable is that this personalisation and professionalisation of the development worker implies that individual relationships and identities are closed and fixed, rather than on-going processes of (re)construction that are fluid across time. Indeed, Hindman suggests this vision of the everyday remains constant (Hindman, 2002) and to a certain extent, my experience in Kosovo hints at this (since its general community behaviours remain the same over time despite people leaving and new people arriving). As a result, images of the development worker are not always put into question. Rather, such images serve to fix the international community’s characteristics and their resulting identity, as if this were the only way in which the development community are able to experience life in international development.

Although this field of academic inquiry is where this study locates itself, I am suspicious of the recent focus on the image-making aspect of development and narrative shaping. I believe that such an approach limits itself to the sphere of justifying or explaining particular present day interactions and behaviours rather than questioning them. Consequentially this allows them to continue unchanged, as if

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<sup>58</sup> Although I do not enter discussion about the altruism of these motivations, often the subject of scholarly attention (see for example De Jong, 2011, pp. 27–31; Roth, 2015, pp. 51–52; and White, 2015), it is worth noting that people in aid have “mixed motivations” (Fechter, 2012a), often needing to reconcile altruistic motives with career objectives and personal relations (Fechter & Hindman, 2011).

victims of a system, rather than active participative agents within their own community. Said differently, these everyday practices and identities of development work appear absolute where they are relative as time will show.

### 3.3 TIME AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL INTERACTION

Time is central to how we see and understand the world in which we live. Depending on our standpoint or perspective,<sup>59</sup> time is also relative; it helps us to orientate ourselves in relation to the past, and to the future, in the present, while representing a key component of our relationship in, and to, the world.<sup>60</sup> Yet despite the plethora of scholarly attention to time, time remains “*the* missing variable in modern sociological analysis” (Hassard, 1990, p. 1 original emphasis kept), and difficulties in capturing time’s meaning and its construction continue to be perceived as problematic. It is, as Adam recognises, a “multi-layered, complex fact of life” (Adam, 1990, p. 169) and its complexity is reflected in the turgid, and itself complex, scholarly treatment of time as this section briefly addresses.

In industrial and post- industrial societies, time, at its most basic level, has been perceived as a unit of measurement that structures life; be it chronological or sequential time as measured by clocks (*chronos*), or the cyclical nature of time such as seasonal or episodic time with a beginning, middle and end (*kairos*). Time has also been viewed as an ordering principle, a process, a symbol, and a tool (Adam, 1990, p. 15) and has been approached by scholars in various ways, with studies on the form of time (Jaques, 1982), its nature and history, its effect on social structure, and its social interpretation (Luhmann, 1976). While sociologists have acknowledged that time cannot be explored by separating individual and collective time, time has essentially

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<sup>59</sup> Language could also be included here considering, for example, the controversy surrounding the Hopi people’s notion of time (Malotki, 1983; Whorf, 1950).

<sup>60</sup> For instance, the range of people’s understanding and experiences of time can be seen in anthropological and sociological accounts on time across the globe (see, for example, Bourdieu, 1964; Evans-Pritchard, 1939; Jeffrey, 2010; Kaneff, 2004; Maines, 1987; Verdery, 1996, Chapter 2).

been used to explore social time and its relational nature between society, organisation and interaction (Adam, 1990; Durkheim, 2001; Mead, 1959).

In her work on *Time and Social Theory*, Barbara Adam suggests that the temporal “maze of conceptual chaos” found in academic literature on time has not gone far enough in explaining what time *is* (Adam, 1990, p. 15, see also 2004). Historically, she argues along with a few others (Jaques, 1982; Orlikowski & Yates, 2002; Yates & Orlikowski, 2002), time has been limited to a dichotomous treatment of opposites. It has been treated, or explained, within an “either/or” framework, as either “social or natural, as a measure or an experience, as cyclical or linear” (Adam, 1990, p. 4). For instance, McTaggart speaks of earlier ‘A’ time, and later ‘B’ time, conceptualising events in time along a fixed continuum of the before and after, the permanent and absolute (McTaggart, 1927). Adam argues that rather than this dualistic approach to time, time should instead be treated as *mutually constituting dualities*. Making sense of human social time and its implications, she argues, requires time to be treated as a participating agent; a social category “fundamentally embedded in the social forms of life which constitute it and which are simultaneously constituted by it” (Adam, 1990, p. 42).

In response to this lacuna in temporality, new trends in creating temporal meanings of time have since responded to this call (Hassard, 1996, p. 586) to consider our relationship to time. For example, while Hoy helps to bring us closer to an understanding of time by distinguishing between time as universal, clock or objective time, and temporality as the time of human existence (Hoy, 2009, p. xiii), Nowotny supports the idea of looking at different modes of social times she terms “pluritemporalism” (Nowotny, 1992, p. 424), and Bash encourages researchers to move away from time’s analysis as “tempocentric” to approach the study of time with a social constructivist approach rather than linear ordering (Bash, 2000). What is suggested here is that how we orient ourselves to and in time, underlines the importance of time as an organising principle of social activity and action.

For Adam, time is understood both as a horizon for orientation, and a parameter within which to structure everyday life (Adam, 1990, p. 103). This necessitates considering the temporal “relation between *Time Past, Present, Future* and all the modulation that

are possible since each one provides us with different *subject positions* and different *action potentials*” (Adam, 2006, p. 9). This point which Adam elaborates throughout her work is that which I take up throughout this study in order to understand development’s everyday modes of operation and social interaction in a way that allows time’s dynamic and diverse temporal practices to be explored, rather than reinforcing a dualistic view of time. If it holds true that “time constitutes an integral aspect of the social construction of reality” (Luhmann, 1976, p. 134), then the reality of the development worker should really be examined under the lens of time, and its constantly changing temporalities. I therefore make time and temporality the explicit focus of this thesis.

### **3.3.1 Time and Development**

As I explain in the rest of this chapter, my interest for this study lies in the planned and aimed for future closure of a short-term temporary mission and its impact on the present, I focus on two temporal modalities inspired by Adam’s *Futurescapes*; the relationship between the present and the future (present future), and the relationship between the future and the present (future present), as well as the relationship between these two temporal modulations. Before turning to this fundamental point which makes up my analytical framework and is part of my argument for looking at closure, let me first give an overview of how time has been treated in the literature on development in post-socialist transitions and in the everyday of development in order to situate this study.

Time plays a key role in theories of social change over time and in time, particularly in how past, present, and future, are understood and imagined in countries undergoing social change. This often results in a dichotomous representation of a world undergoing change; developing societies are frequently framed in a traditional past, whereas developed societies typically represent the modern (Western) future (see in particular Green et al., 2012; Kothari, 2014), and the present is oriented towards one or the other, or bracketed out between the two. When this happens, time is more often than not treated as normative rather than relative, and it is implicitly assumed that time is a standard against which the time of ‘us/them’ is socially constructed for comparison (Adam, 1990, p. 96).

In post-socialist literature the present is shown as a continuation of the past. While Stark and Bruszt have suggested that transition requires discontinuity with the past (Stark & Bruszt, 1998), post-socialist literature has heavily criticised the treatment of time as a linear objective concept during transition, which has typically framed Eastern Europe as a “blank sheet with no (proper) institutions and laws” (Kuus, 2004, p. 475). Proposing that the link between past and present is “not as distinct as initially might have appeared” (Pine, 1998, p. 107; see also Burawoy & Verdery, 1999; Hann, 2002; Kuus, 2004; Pickles & Smith, 2005; Wedel, 2001), post-socialist literature has instead documented the continuation between regimes and systems (Pine and Bridger 1998), focusing on the legacies of communist systems on cultural (Creed, 2011; Knudsen, 2012), legal (Fijalkowski, 2013), environmental (Pavlínek & Pickles, 2004) political and economic institutions and structures (Antohti & Tismaneanu, 2000) in present day Eastern Europe.

The dynamics of transition and social change in the present have not only been discussed in relation to a (dis)continuity with the past, but also in relation to the future. Faced with the challenge to (re)build new legal and institutional systems with which to meet the needs of a new market economy in post-socialist Europe, questions about the future have also dominated the literature. The conditionality of, and the adaptation to EU accession requirements have for instance, directed post-socialist scholars to focus on the impact and consequences of efforts to (re)structure economic institutions, societies and identities in anticipation, or preparation for, an EU future, while also attempting to predict the time beyond that membership (Grabbe, 2014; Schimmelfennig, Engert, & Knobel, 2003; Vachudova, 2014; Verdery, 2003). In this sense, from the standpoint of the present, time shapes the everyday in post-socialist literature, and becomes an important feature linking the present to the past, and the present to the future.

A similar trend can also be found in the literature on social change in Kosovo where the present is oriented towards either the past, or the future. Regardless of one’s interpretation of the 1990s conflict, it is the historically messy process of nation-building that harks back to the conflict which frequently frames attention to present day Kosovo (Buckley, 2000; Berger, 2006; Narten, 2007; Abdela, 2003;

Ingimundarson, 2007). Alternatively, it is Kosovo's future that is framed within the present parameters of a Europe promising a 'better future', despite those parameters being unclear and constantly changing (Krasniqi & Musaj, 2014; Mladenov & Stahl, 2014; Obradović-Wochnik & Wochnik, 2012). The message symbolised by eventual EU membership is that of a future set apart from, and in opposition to a past of conflict and insecurity. However, where the past is contested and future progress on EU membership is not yet secure (Ker-Lindsay & Economides, 2012; Papadimitriou, Petrov, & Greicevci, 2007), both past and future keep slipping away, and so the present cannot be bound by either. It is in this sense that the use of time in this study represents relative time.

### **3.3.2 Time and Temporality in the Everyday of Development**

Consideration for time and temporality is growing in popularity across a large number of sub-sets within development, such as in sustainable development (Held, 2001), rural development and livelihoods (Guyer & Peters, 1987), climate change (Arnall & Kothari, 2015; Grove-White, 1997), and urban development and planning (Fusco, 2006). There have also been numerous studies about time in development that trace the history of development (see for instance Rist, 2006), or aim to identify the continuities and divergences of colonial rule in development and its discourses.<sup>61</sup> Yet few studies have sought to grapple with the issue of time and temporality in their ethnographies of development work and life in as sophisticated a way as they have with spatial issues (for instance Higate & Henry, 2009; Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010; Kothari, 2006; Schech, Mundkur, Skelton, & Kothari, 2015; Smirl, 2015). This has left the subject of time in the everyday of development practice largely underexplored (Smirl, 2015),<sup>62</sup> and perpetuates the assumption that the everyday exists in a timeless present disconnected from history and the future.

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<sup>61</sup> Time has also been acknowledged as an important feature, but not as a unit of exploration in its own right, within the life histories of development workers (see in particular Lewis, 2008; and also Eyben, 2012; Roth, 2015).

<sup>62</sup> Lisa Smirl specifically pointed to the need for further research on the time horizons of the aid industry and its professionals, recognising that attention to time has not yet been given enough attention (Smirl, 2015, p. 210 in particular). Literature on this topic is only recently emerging with a particular focus on post-conflict societies (see, for instance, Mueller-Hirth & Rios Oyola, 2018).

Kothari is one of the few recent exceptions of a development scholar who has directly addressed the issue of individual time and temporality (particularly the future which I speak of later). For Kothari, time and temporality define and delimit boundaries that reinforce inequality and hierarchy (Kothari, 2005, 2005, 2011, 2014). Her argument aims at identifying the continuities and divergences of colonial rule in development and its discourses through the lives and experiences of individuals. As such she addresses time within its historical continuity, from the standpoint of the present, and imagining the future based on knowledge of the past (Arnall & Kothari, 2015; Green et al., 2012; Kothari, 2005).<sup>63</sup>

Many studies offering ethnographies of development work have, however, tended to focus on the synchronic rather than diachronic elements of development work and life, and have been typically undertaken in a largely ahistorical, or atemporal, way. For instance, in line with the recent move to the personal (Fechter, 2012b), there has been a growing trend in development studies to focus on the dynamics of individual change when one goes to the field, or is in the field. We see this in particular in the various (auto)biographies, novels, and films on the everyday of development work and life mentioned above. Often, the gradual learning curve of an individual, or individuals, can be stereotypically traced; the story is often one of innocence and/or naivety to begin with, gradual discoveries and reactions, the shaping of consciousness, followed by deep reflection once someone has left the field (for example, Alexander, 2013; Eyben, 2012, 2014; Hoppe, 2014; Kondracki, 2011; Thomson et al., 2006).

Addressing time within development in this way spatialises time by viewing it as moving from one point to another.<sup>64</sup> Here transition from one liminal state to another is the emphasis (Smirl, 2015, Chapter one). As a result, this exposes structural and spatial limitations of understanding development, as everyday development is treated, and essentially fixed, as a chronological or linear product in time. This restricts the everyday of development to an historical analysis of the everyday (Eyben, 2014), and

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<sup>63</sup> Another exception is Ann Mische's current work the discursive and relational dynamics of future-oriented projections found in the United Nations Conference documents on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) (Mische, 2014; see also, Mische, n.d.). Here Mische offers an empirical sociological study relating to sustainable development and imagining the future through discourse.

<sup>64</sup> For Deleuze, the problem with time is that it is reduced to points in space (Deleuze, 1991).

confines it to a static view of time and temporality that focuses on the outcomes and symptoms of experience(s) rather than their practices in the making.

We are reminded by Hernes that while “...actors may appear more or less stable over the time that we study them” it is not the point “to treat them as fixed entities” (Hernes, 2007, p. xv). Rather, they must be allowed to become something else if we are to find alternatives and move away from accusation and blame. Viewing Aidland as *History nullius* (Apthorpe, 2011b, p. 210) and understanding time as homogeneous and linear has thus limited the potential of understanding time as a structuring feature of interaction in everyday development practice, and as a means for breaking the dualities between the ‘us’ and the ‘them’ that continue to prevail. In the pages that follow I seek, in part, to open up the discussion on the everyday of development work and life away from changes or continuities that occur in a fixed everyday of development work, to include temporal diversity. To do so, I suggest, means introducing the concept of closure; a new lens through which to observe the everyday realities of development work, allowing invisible temporalities to be rendered visible.

### **3.4 INTRODUCING CLOSURE AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL**

This study is not only about the influence of time as an organising principle of social action and activity, but also the complex ways in which development workers grapple with questions of closure in their working practices as they navigate time’s multiple flux and flow. As mentioned above, making sense of time requires going beyond its dichotomous social formulation, to looking at how it is conceptualised and means treating time as a participating agent (Adam, 1990, p. 42).

My entry point for looking at time is closure, a concept I develop in this final section. Unlike many studies which move forward through time to an end point in the future, this study considers how the organisational structure of a future *aimed-for* organisational closure simultaneously reflects and orders the social relations and activities of a short-term temporary development organisation in the here and now. Although I do not treat time as a linear order, as I later explain, I do structure my

argument by framing events within an organisation's life span,<sup>65</sup> from the recruitment and selection of staff, to liquidation.<sup>66</sup> Introducing closure as a way into addressing time in development's everyday working practices and social interactions first requires considering closure's existing role within studies on organisational closure and death before offering a new concept of closure based within a re-emerging field of the sociology of the future.

### **3.4.1 Organisational Death and Closure**

One way in which time has been conceptualised is through the idea of death; the moment one is born, one is also dying. Death therefore becomes a social fact (Sievers, 1994) present in all human existence. But it also structures that existence. In what he termed *Dasein*, Heidegger suggests that humans are future oriented and that their fear of the non-existence (death) encourages interpretation and action in the present (Heidegger, 1962). Life and death, in these instances, are not about two absolute or opposing poles (alive or dead), but about the in-between; the time in existence, the struggle for *being* in the world (Heidegger, 1962). This struggle represents a feature of the human condition (Berger, 1969) that frames the everyday structure of human conduct (Willmott, 2000), and the way in which we relate to others (Reedy & Learmonth, 2011). Put differently, social and cultural organisation can be explained by constant awareness of mortality (Bauman, 1992), or its denial (Becker, 1973).

Despite a reluctance to engage with the idea of death (Bell, Tienari, & Hansson, 2014; Mellor & Shilling, 1993), and organisational demise not being acknowledged "an inevitable feature of organisational life" (Kimberly, Miles, & Associates, 1980, p. 7), death has been viewed an entry point into the analysis of everyday behaviours and structures within organisations. In his seminal work, Sievers clearly links death to organisations. A refusal to accept death in modern times, he suggests, results in

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<sup>65</sup> The volume of scholarly attention to the field of organisational life cycle is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice to say, the organisational life cycle analogy attests to the passage of time within organisations from birth, to maturation, to death (see for example Whetten, 1987, p. 335). The focus in this thesis is on the latter stage of the cycle – that of organisational 'death'. For more on the processes of organisational life cycle see, for example, Freeman, 1990; Kimberly, Miles, & Associates, 1980; Starbuck, 1965.

<sup>66</sup> I am aware that while in practice it is hard not to treat these as separate categories as they do not exist in isolation of one another, closure is one lens through which the connections between each category and the temporalities they expose can be explored.

feelings that our work is meaningless (Sievers, 1994). For Becker, as organisations reproduce the immortality project that allows people to avoid confronting their own deaths, the denial of death can only be dealt with by engaging in heroic action (Becker, 1973). Literature on the relationship between death and organisations has therefore enabled explorations of the structures of meaning in everyday life of organisations (Reedy & Learmonth, 2011), and the cultural phenomenon of organisational death that is key to work-related meaning (Bell & Taylor, 2011).

The treatment of death in organisational studies is metaphorical, as death and organisation are constructed sites of meaning (Arman, 2014). The use of organisational death as a symbol (Burrell, 1998, p. 143), be it literal or metaphorical (Arman, 2014), has proved useful<sup>67</sup> in underlining certain realities within organisations. For instance, death as a metaphor has been used to address demise (J. Barton Cunningham, 1997), closure (Arman, 2014; Sutton, 1987), collapse (Kahn & Liefoghe, 2014) or ending (Walter, 2014) as well as being linked to terms such as redundancy, liquidation, exit, failure, bankruptcy, decline and retrenchment (Mellahi & Wilkinson, 2004), downsizing (Kahn & Liefoghe, 2014; Hansson & Wigblad, 2008), insolvency and administration (Kahn & Liefoghe, 2014), and mergers and acquisitions (Marks & Vansteenkiste, 2008) to represent organisational death. While the metaphor has guided understandings on these temporal processes, it has also helped to express how individuals view such transition (Blau, 2006; Brockner et al., 1994; Van Dierendonck & Jacobs, 2012; E. Bell, 2012; Barton Cunningham, 1997; Sutton, 1987), or manage it (Sutton, 1983; Whetten, 1987). Although I use the term closure, the literature on organisational death in its broadest sense, helps to explore the dynamics of symbolic action systems and processes that is useful for an analysis of closure.

What is striking in the literature on organisational death and closure is that, as an event, it tends to be framed negatively.<sup>68</sup> This, it seems, is because it is predominantly

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<sup>67</sup> I am aware that some scholars find the term organisational death difficult as a metaphor (see in particular Walter, 2014).

<sup>68</sup> This is particular in relation to Western Judo-Christian ideas of death, although the literature on the reincarnation, reanimation or rebirth of organisations is slowly emerging (Kelly & Riach, 2014; Walsh & Bartunek, 2011, 2012). This literature also includes discussions on post-death organizing (Walsh &

situated within capitalist financial terms of boom and bust, seen through the lens of growth and decline (Gerstrøm & Isabella, 2015). For Bell et al., organisational death accounts for “the cessation of organisational function, for example, in situations of corporate closure or shutdowns of production units.” As such they continue, “Issues of organisational mortality, discontinuity and decline are particularly prescient in the wake of the global financial crisis” (Bell et al., 2014, p. 1). Studies addressing organisational closure also focus on financially driven issues such as performance and efficiency (Hansson & Wigblad, 2006), sometimes looking to motivation to maintain the functioning of an organisation. Within the study of the not for profit sector, the demise of organisations has equally been framed from the perspective of financial failure (Bielefeld, 1994; Hager, 2001; Hager, Galaskiewicz, & Larson, 2004) highlighting a vulnerability to resources (Hellinger, 1987; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) such as changes in donor funding (Smillie, 1995), or through a lens of financial survival or capacity (Anheier, 2014; Low & Davenport, 2002). In sum, the closure of organisations has been treated as a present day event or process, with analyses of its past or present day “material, social and psychological effects on societies, organisations, groups and individuals” (Bell et al., 2014).

Closure has not, as far as I am aware, been treated as a positive symbol of a future, towards which an organisation is actively aiming for, and pursuing, in its regular daily activities.<sup>69</sup> When closure is treated as a positive planned objective by an organisation, and as the very purpose of its existence, the academic insight is lacking. I therefore propose introducing a different version of organisational closure that frames closure in a positive way, and finds its inspiration in the re-emerging field of the sociology of the future.

### **3.4.2 The Future (Closure) as an Issue for Social Inquiry**

As previously mentioned, time allows us to position ourselves in the world and represents a criterion within which we can organise and structure our everyday.

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Bartunek, 2012; Walsh & Glynn, 2008), recovery efforts (Walsh & Bartunek, 2009), and continuations of organisations as in the mnemonic community (E. Bell, 2012).

<sup>69</sup> Studies on Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) could be one route into this, however these studies tend to give attention to what represents the best of the human condition, and the desire to improve it which this study does not focus on (see in particular Cameron & Spreitzer, 2011, pp. 1, 4).

However, in sociology, time has not, as far as I am aware, been explored in direct relation to a *planned* and *aimed-for* future organisational closure. When time is considered in this way, the ordering principle of an organisation *becomes* about its very closure – its future end point. In this sense, closure is to this study what death is to Heidegger's *Dasein*; it suggests temporary short-term development organisations and their staff are future orientated (towards eventual closure), while also structuring action and experiences in the present. As such, the influencing role of future closure on the activity and social organisation of development practice raises significant questions about how the present is experienced, and the future is created in the present. The study of closure in this thesis therefore requires an inquiry into closure's positioning in the future, and as part of that future in the making.

Addressing the future does not, however, place my research within the field of futures studies<sup>70</sup> which seeks to understand future consciousness through the practice of foresight, forecasting and scenario planning.<sup>71</sup> Instead, my work falls loosely within the re-emerging sociology of the future<sup>72</sup> which treats the future as a participating agent, considering it a social construction for which we have responsibility (Adam & Groves, 2007; Bell, 1998). The sociology of the future claims that in everything we do, the future is somewhere; in our hopes (Desroche, 1979; Miyazaki, 2006), anticipations (Anderson, 2010a), and/or expectations (Brown & Michael, 2003) of alternative futures. As such the future is omnipresent, and in the words of Adam, is "an inescapable aspect of social and cultural existence" composed of "a world of deeds under way that have not yet materialised as symptoms, not yet congealed into matter" (Adam, 2008, p. 7, 2008, p. 5). Most importantly, the sociology of the future claims

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<sup>70</sup> The study of the future has received various labels such as futures studies (Bell, 1997; Dator, 1996), futurology (Flechtheim, 1966), foresight (see for example the journal that carries this name), or futuring, (for a list of terms see also Sardar, 2010; Masini, 2010). Each carries with it its own view and understanding of how to study the future, however this is not the focus here. For a historical overview of sociological thinking on the future see Adam, 2011; Bell, 1997, 2012.

<sup>71</sup> This approach is more relevant to the sciences, technology and business planning, and is inadequate for analysing social activity and directing social processes (Adam, 2005), as it neglects the finer insights on human activity that social science can offer.

<sup>72</sup> Despite being pushed into obscurity by positivism in America, the sociology of the future has continued since the 1960s through the work of Wendell Bell (see, for example, Bell & Mau, 1973; Bell, 1997, 2012). For a history of the sociology of the future see Adam, 2011, and also 2005, pp. 3–7, 2011.

humans have agency. As such they are also able to effect the future to which they have a responsibility (Adam & Groves, 2007).

That the future has been given increased attention<sup>73</sup> is important to this study as new ideas are emerging about how to study the future and its temporality. In this sense, the sociology of the future has provided a framework on how to study and discuss the ‘not-yet’ as a reference for studying the dynamic temporal complexities of the present. Based on the work of Weber, Adam in particular provides an excellent base from which to start considering the future. On this it is worth quoting her directly:

... the future features in our present action not only as the desired end (the reason for our action) but also as an encoded reality of potential impacts. Past, present and future interpenetrate in purpose, goals, actions and outcomes: actual and potential, intended and unintended. From a temporal perspective, therefore, the world of the ‘is’, the realm of the present, is not neatly definable, not temporally bounded [...] All aspects of that temporally constituted process mutually implicate each other. Boundaries between the ‘means’ and ‘ends’ are perforated and the dualisms once more unsettled. (Adam, 2009, p. 19)

As such, for Adam, “we need to conceive of the future as both guide to actions in the present *and* as activated by us in the present” (Adam, 2009, p. 22). To do so, Adam suggests, necessitates taking into consideration the present future and the future present in which the temporal modalities of present and future are able to “mutually implicate each other”. The focus on what may, or is to, happen in the future (present

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<sup>73</sup> The study of the future has recently been re-opened as an issue for consideration in the social sciences by Barbra Adam (see, for example, Adam’s ESRC Professorial Fellowship work ‘In pursuit of the future’ Adam, n.d.). One has only to look to the recently established Institute for Social Futures at Lancaster University (‘ISF — Institute for Social Futures’, n.d.), and to a certain extent to work on the sociology of expectations to see this emerging trend in the social sciences on the sociology of the future (Brown, 2003; Brown & Michael, 2001, 2003; Brown, Rip, & Van Lente, 2003). I am grateful to Barbara Adam for highlighting these out to me, and for a personal conversation that helped me to focus this section.

future) and how that impacts the here and now (future present) is therefore what is most interesting to this study as I now explain.<sup>74</sup>

### **A framework of closure: futurescapes**

The main analytical tool that I consider finds its origin in Barbara Adam's work. Building on her own concept of *timescapes* (Adam, 1998) that she defines as "a cluster of temporal features" to encompass both action and process (Adam, 2004, p. 143), Adam offers *futurescapes* with which to consider the structural elements of the future (Adam, 2008). *Futurescapes* offers a useful framework since it allows a whole array of diverse temporalities to be explored and understood. The key elements of *futurescapes* include: time frames, temporality, timing, tempo, duration, sequence, and temporal modalities (Adam, 2008). Within these, time is both bounded (for example in time frames) and unbounded through the combination of temporal modalities of past, present and future, making any approach to the future varied and fluid depending on one's standpoint or perspective.

This brings me back to what I mean by closure.

It is *planned* and *aimed-for* closure that is my temporal reference point and timeframe for this study, based somewhere in the future, yet very much representing a constitutive feature of everyday development work and life by structuring its temporally embedded rhythms moving towards that closure.<sup>75</sup> Thus, closure in this study is both temporally situated and temporally embedded. Like with *futurescapes*, our orientation to closure, and the relational dimension of that closure, must therefore take account of where we are temporally in relation to closure and when (past, present or future), as well as the various relationships that emerge from these positioning. In

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<sup>74</sup> In a footnote, Adam notes that this distinction between present future and future present was introduced by Luhmann "who suggested that the present future is rooted in a utopian approach which allows for prediction, while the future present is technologically constituted and as such facilitates the transformation of future presents into present presents" (Adam, 2009, p. 23 footnote 1).

<sup>75</sup> There have been similar approaches to the idea of working oneself out of a job in studies of psychoanalysis although these involve individuals, and in literature on military engagement which also seeks to be temporary. These studies however, do not address the temporal modality and the oscillation between present future and future present.

this study I take up two of these temporal modulations: the present future, and the future present.

Firstly, my interest in this research lies in how the goal of future closure guides and structures relationships and activities in temporary short-term development missions in Kosovo (the present future). Here, the future is located firmly in the present when it is presented as a fixed timeframe and date. In EULEX's case, that fixed timeframe has been expressed through two-year mission mandates (14 June 2010 to 14 June 2012, 14 June 2012 to 14 June 2014, or most recently 14 June 2014 to 14 June 2016), and their projected calendar dates for closure (for example the date this study focuses on, 14 June 2014). Presenting closure as a future (fixed) calendar date, provides the first conceptual horizon for closure that this research considers. As such, the present is oriented towards a specific date (14 June 2014) which, for Guyer, "forces inquiry into how events are aggregated (or woven) into social synchronies and cultural representations" (Guyer, 2007, p. 417).

Secondly, this study is interested in how the operational goal of inbuilt self-obsolescence shapes the way that staff within short-term temporary development missions (re)produce the context in which they live and work. Viewing closure as a future present in this way, enables us to understand closure as part of an unfolding experiential horizon as it develops, to help trace the lived future (Guyer, 2007) as well as the future in the making (Adam & Groves, 2007). Although her focus is primarily on the everyday in the context of changing circumstances, which is not the focus here, Mische's dimensions of projectivity in which to study the form and context of future projections are useful here for addressing the consequences of positing a future on the everyday.<sup>76</sup> Temporal horizons, such as that which Mische describes, emphasise the constructive and structural feature of human action (see also, Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Islas-Lopez, 2013; Mische, 2009; Nuttin, 1985; Zimbardo & Boyd, 2015), thereby informing how people take action and make decisions. In this sense, closure

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<sup>76</sup> For Mische, the projected future includes considering: temporal expandability and reach, breadth and detail of alternatives, the fixing or flexibility of trajectories, sense of volition, and the relationships (sociality), connections and narrative (genre) (Mische, 2009). Such temporal horizons are an important aspect of Mische's *futures in action* work which argues that the meaning of action is made in a present which views the future in terms of multiple possibilities and projected courses of action (Mische, 2001, 2009, 2014).

is able to mobilise the future in the present because organisations and staff must work towards the achievement of their mission objectives in the unfolding present, contributing all the while to futures possible, probable and preferred (Bell, 1998).

While the temporal modalities of closure bind time between the present future and the future present, equally, as I illustrate in this thesis, closure involves constant and dynamic oscillation between the two modulations. The study of closure in this thesis therefore simultaneously takes into account the various temporal relationships in which closure is practiced, managed and experienced by various people and groups and embraces time's temporal complexity. The performative element of closure, which I hope to bring to the fore in the next chapters, raises awareness of the socially constituted future that the sociology of the future, in part, seeks to address.

### **Future closure as certainty**

One final point I wish to make here is on the type of attention being given to the future. Through the possible, probable and preferable (Bell, 1998) imagining of the future, the future is increasingly being studied with uncertainty as its focus, and framed by risk (Beck, 1992). On the one hand the influences of the uncertain future on the present day are the subject of analysis. For instance, Anderson's push to "understand the presence of the future" (Anderson, 2010a, p. 778, 2010b) is set within the context of an uncertain or anticipated futures. On the other hand, uncertain futures that arise as a result of present day choices and decisions aimed at mitigating the uncertainty of the future are also the focus of attention (see, for example, Esposito, 2011). Here we are also reminded of Kathari's work in the everyday of development work where she looks to the future as an opening for possibilities and alternatives in development aspirations (Green et al., 2012; Kothari, 2014). Attention to the future, and particularly its influence on the present and the resulting imagined future, is often turned towards the unpredictability of the future which is where I differ.

From my observations the future of a short-term temporary mission does indeed draw out its own temporal uncertainties, but it is in my starting point that I offer a new approach to addressing the future. While Anderson's view of the future is one that is "problematized as a disruption, a surprise" and that is "indeterminate or uncertain" (Anderson, 2010a, p. 777; see also Adam, 2008), in this study the future, represented

by closure, is understood as the final aim and positive goal that an organisation is working towards. Future closure is therefore a certainty, as opposed to disruptive or surprising event, because for a short-term mission aiming to close, closure *will* (eventually) happen; when or how it will close, and the consequences of that closure are indeed unpredictable, but that is not the focus for this study. It is in scholarly attention to the unpredictability, and risk, of the future, or possible alternative futures, that this thesis thus diverges from.

### **3.4.3 The Role of Closure in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development**

Emerging literature in the field of International Relations and Peace- or State- Building notes the limited attention to time (McIntosh, 2015), particularly in addressing temporality (McKay, 2016). Literature is therefore responding by offering analyses of how temporality helps to provide insights of the world (Hom, McKay, McIntosh, & Stockdale, 2016), or focusing on the timing and sequencing of post-reconstruction reform (Langer & Brown, 2016; Mueller-Hirth & Rios Oyola, 2018). While this study does not address societal relationships and interactions as Mac Ginty's call for a turn to the local has encouraged (Mac Ginty, 2014), I do take inspiration from Mac Ginty who has promoted a move from "political time" to "sociological time" where an accepted reality of temporal ambiguity and uncertainty is recognised as a means through which to observe the quotidian in post-conflict reconstruction (Mac Ginty, 2016). Rather than focus on political processes and outcomes of interventions, this study looks to the operational practices of time and temporality in international development through the lens of closure.

#### **Exit Strategies**

The literature on closure in the sense used by this study has hardly begun. The closest academic attention to closure has been within the field of International Relations in the guise of exit strategies (Caplan, 2012; Jansen, Wollenberg, Osinga, Frerks, & Kemenade, 2016). The idea of a planned and aimed for withdrawal is directly acknowledged, for instance, by Richard Caplan who writes that "All state-building operations are conceived with the termination of the operation in mind. No state-building operation is intended to endure indefinitely" (Caplan, 2012, p. 4). In this

edited book, Caplan uses the term state-building organisations to broadly encompass colonial administrations, peace support operations, international administrations and military occupations. Where this study is specific to development is that such development organisations have a built in self-obsolence contrary to colonialism and colonial administrations.

By recognising the importance of the ““end game” of post-conflict state-building operations” (Caplan, 2012, p. 3), Caplan’s key engagement with closure has, however, encouraged valuable discussions by scholars focusing on planning for exit, implementing exit and the repercussions of exit (Caplan, 2012). To date, literature has tended to focus on the process of planning exit (Benson & Thrash, 1996; Caplan, 2012; Flavin, 2003), the nature of exit strategies (Hirschmann, 2012; Zaum, 2009), the importance of leaving well (Spear, 2013), as well as analysing and evaluating the timing of exits and their successes or failures primarily through the lens of democratic elections in post conflict states (Brancati & Snyder, 2011; Reilly, 2012). One has just to look at the recent spate of attention evaluating the UN’s process of withdrawal and its consequences in Timor (Braithwaite, 2012; Diehl & Druckman, 2010; Eurich, 2010; Goldstone, 2012; Pushkina & Maier, 2012) to see a systematic and systemic treatment of exit focusing on outcomes or symptoms of exit. Literature on exit strategies has also addressed the changing relationship between international administrations and local institutions, either from a policy perspective, an organisational perspective or from the point of view of a host country (see, for example, Crampton, 2012; Durch, 2012; Martin, 2012; Zaum, 2012).

Yet if it is taken that the future goal of an organisation is its closure, or exit, such a temporal frame clearly orders the work and working practices of development staff in the everyday of short-term temporary organisations. To this end, Adam Fagan has called for increased attention to exit strategies within the field of development practice itself (Fagan, 2013b; Fagan & Sircar, 2012). However, it appears, for now at least, that the focus remains at the macro, political or policy level to observe symptoms or outcomes of exits and not, as this study does, to explore and describe the everyday practicalities and consequences for development staff at an operational level.

These trends in the literature on exit strategies appear to mirror the attention given to closure in organisational studies discussed above, as framing closure as one event in and of itself. Such literature conceives exit strategies as processes in themselves, with which I agree. What I do differently, however, is to treat exit, in the form of closure, as a (positive) defining point of an organisation's aims and objectives, instead of a single process with specifically defined activities to be planned and coordinated, or a fixed event to be evaluated and assessed. Rather than analyse assumptions about how we think of, or deal with, closure, this study claims that closure, if treated as a positive future goal, can stand on its own to offer alternative views and dynamic insights on human processes of interaction within development.

### **3.5 CLOSURE: A STAND ALONE UNIT OF ANALYSIS**

In specifying a (non)defined date, closure (be it represented through the ending of a mandate or the actual closure of an organisation) becomes omnipresent to be examined and observed as it unfolds. Whilst it guides the organisation, it also reflects shifting discourses and meanings. These shifts throw into question the meaning of what the everyday is whilst providing valuable insights into that everyday. As the following chapters will demonstrate, closure creates a particular environment of internal and external (dis)connect that alter development practice in hitherto unacknowledged ways. The task of development changes depending on an organisation's proximity or distance to closure, and is reflected in how time is managed, narrated, and performed by an organisation aiming to close. As temporalities wax and wane and timeframes shift the goal of development is relegated to the background with more immediate response-driven actions taking centre stage.

If death "becomes the point zero" (Giddens 1991) and sequesters personal meaning (Mellor and Shilling 1993), by extension, closure also deconstructs meaning by removing the taken-for granted structures of work-related meaning, and diminishes the role of an organisation in the eyes of its staff and external actors. Closure, in parallel to death of the organisation, is in this case a positive, which, rather than erasing meaning, should instead give meaning to work. In this sense, closure as an

organisational aim becomes ever more important to address. Through exploring the relationship within and between present future and future present, closure, as I have framed it to be, is one instance through which temporal process of human interaction can be observed. In this sense, just like with Dasein, the future encourages particular socially constructed behaviours and action in the present. While time gives meaning to closure, time, in particular everyday time, is also given meaning by closure.

In this chapter I have outlined the emerging trends in the literature on development, time and organisational closure within which this study is located, and have highlighted the role and importance of time as a fundamental aspect of life, especially in the area of everyday development work and life. I have also suggested that that development's regular and daily activities are orientated towards, and framed by, a future metaphorical and literal goal: that of organisational closure and the aim of working oneself out of a job. If the ordering of closure makes use of time, then the role of the future becomes key in helping us understand the present structure and the unravelling of interactions within a temporary short-term development organisation.

As such, this study does not just interest itself with the processes of *how* closure is executed, nor the immediate effect and implications of that closure for the purpose of problem-solving. Rather it is the performative element of closure, as an objective future goal directing the intention of an organisation, which concerns this research, and which introduces a different temporal lens through which to observe the lived realities of the everyday of development workers. In this sense, and as will become clear in the following chapters, closure as a unit of analysis in its own right has the potential not to set people in opposition to one another, but to highlight the mutually constituting dualities in which development workers experience their everyday.

In the world of international development, where foreign individuals and organisations are attempting to help territories divided by conflict, and where the work and lives of those foreign actors hint at superhero status, another story of a lesser novelty is found. This story is about the time of everyday closure. Before entering EULEX to watch its staff fulfilling their regular activities aimed at closure, let me first trace how staff get here, as the story of closure is one that starts the moment one is introduced to the process of recruitment in a short-term temporary mission.

## 4 FRAMING CLOSURE: BUILDING ON SHIFTING SANDS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION: THE FUTURE IS OURS TO SHAPE

*All staff are obliged to check-in to EULEX on their very first day with the mission. They are also required to attend a three-day induction training followed by a driving assessment and, for those with roles requiring the use of arms, legal training on the use of arms. The check-in is a half day spent signing forms and contracts, picking up equipment such as mobile phones and work ID cards, and completing a basic security training.*

*Upon arrival in EULEX, and once past the front entrance guards and security scanner, new staff gather together in a room dedicated to staff training. I am one of the last staff to arrive. I count eight men and four women. We are all wearing jeans or smart casual clothes despite having roles that range from intern to police officer to prosecutor. There is some quiet chatter as each individual asks the person next to them where they are from, what role they have been accepted for and if this is their first time in Kosovo. Outside, current staff hang around trying to spot the new arrivals. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the interest generated by new arrivals suggests that the unknown staff member represents a break from current routine friendships, a potential enemy, new stories to be heard, or new adventures in love or friendship. There is a sense of excitement that packages new arrivals into nationalities, genders and ages; new arrivals are no longer individuals but a country, a gender, a certain age group that will naturally help form particular friendship groups and gain particular knowledge. Either way the unknown brings curiosity both outside the check-in room as well as inside it.*

*Following the check-in, the race to find accommodation starts. This prompts new conversations, and later friendships, as tips are shared and notes are compared about the conditions of flats and the honesty of agents. By the second day some have decided to move in together as house mates. The new friendship groups are reflected in the seating arrangements that emerge throughout the four day week and contribute to the group chatter increasing in volume and confidence. These first encounters in EULEX represent a safe environment in which new arrivals form friendship groups based on*

*job, nationality, age, or gender for the short duration of the training. It gives a protective element to a group of individuals arriving into a large organisation; they now have familiar faces they can smile to or acknowledge in the corridors or in the staff café. They may also share jokes from the induction training. The time of the training also provides a personal opportunity to select who will be useful professionally and whom is liked or disliked.*

*During the two day training we are presented with a general historical, political and cultural background to Kosovo and to EULEX. Here, Kosovo is framed in a present that is sandwiched between a past of conflict and a future of European security. EULEX is offered as a solution to Kosovo's past and an answer to its future. As new staff are introduced to EULEX's existing organisational structure, its goals and mandate objectives, I note that it is in passing that the mandate end date is mentioned. Perhaps because it is so obvious, no one points out that this is just over a year away. At no point during the training is there a discussion about the impact of such a limited timeframe on the activities or priorities of the mission or its staff. Nor does it warn that in a few months a downsizing exercise will start and some in the training room may be dismissed to be sent back home. As the session draws to an end the Head of Mission arrives and gives a speech welcoming us, his new staff, to EULEX and hands out certificates of attendance. We are now officially new EULEX staff. While the impression is given that the future is ours to shape, no one is ready for what that future holds.*

In the above account, EULEX's time horizon appears to be unquestionably presented as linear with a focus on new beginnings and new starts. As new staff arrive in a short-term temporary development organisation, they bring with them promises of what they can contribute to that organisation's efforts, and to the host country's future. While this future initially appears to them as open and far off, to be formed and shaped by their decisions and activities, it is also, albeit implicitly, bounded and framed by the organisation's future-oriented goal of pulling out from the host country.

A short-term and temporary international development organisation's goal is its withdrawal from a host country (and the success that this closure symbolises) delineating its temporal finitude. In the above account this goal is but alluded to in a

short sentence that mentions the end of the mandate as a fixed date. This would indicate that closure is a far off concept not yet to be directly addressed in the here and now of an induction to a short-term temporary mission. If withdrawal then is representative of the organisational goal, not discussing it or the objective to work oneself out of a job from the outset, is quite significant therefore. Without talking about the impact of the mission or mandate end during the training, new arrivals lack full understanding of where EULEX as an organisation is going, or where and how they fit into its wider objectives. The implication is that closure is offered to new EULEX staff members as a framework within which to operate rather than as a goal for which to strive, somehow, lying dormant in the background as an absent present.

However it is not only in the training that the impact and process of aiming for closure is not specifically discussed but throughout the entire recruitment and staffing process where activities revolve around starts rather than ends as this chapter will demonstrate. In this chapter, which addresses EULEX's staffing processes, and the individual contracts EULEX issues its new staff with, I argue that the future end goal is rarely explicitly mentioned by a short-term temporary organisation that aims to eventually withdraw from its host country. Instead, I show that closure lies dormant in the background, replaced by various other, individual and organisational dates of shorter time-horizons. However, as this chapter will also illustrate, these short-term horizons are symptomatic of rigid and fixed, yet equally fluid and flexible time structures that point to a tension between (un)bounded organisational and personal time. While symbolising (un)bounded time horizons, these more immediate and individualised timeframes also create a sense of permanence through organisational time that is cyclical and continuous, in turn rendering closure an absent present.

## **4.2 FIXING CLOSURE'S TRAJECTORY: PLANNING THE MISSION'S NEEDS FOR FUTURE CLOSURE**

In recognition of the distinction between the recruitment process and selection process (Carlson & Connerley, 2003; Connerley, 2013; Wood & Payne, 1998), this chapter understands recruitment as an issue of staffing. Heneman defines staffing as: "a

process or system composed of a series of interrelated activities, such as recruitment, selection, decision-making, and job offers” (Heneman, Judge, & Heneman, 2000, p. 5). Staffing thus regulates the movement of candidates into and out of organisations, and involves sequentially ordered decisions and activities deemed necessary for the achievement of the organisation’s goals and objectives over time (Carlson & Connerley, 2003) as well as in time.<sup>77</sup> When the goal of an organisation is its closure, the sequentially ordered decisions and activities Carlson and Connerley point to, must ultimately be bound by closure rather than being open-ended or continuous. As such, the fixed trajectory of closure frames all staffing activities and decisions in a linear way, as the organisations moves sequentially along a temporal trajectory towards its goals and objectives: its closure.

The closure of a short-term temporary organisation rests on particular staffing decisions and activities that take place in the present, for the purpose of ensuring the adequate human resources needed by that organisation to fulfil its intended future goal. As such, staffing methods typically use the logic of linear time with projections of future needs within which to operate. This is true in EULEX. Once a role is identified as vacant due to staff having left, or is created in response to newly identified or anticipated mission needs, opportunities or problems moving forward, the process of recruitment follows a basic temporal sequencing; a job description is prepared, a contract regime,<sup>78</sup> job title and salary type are agreed, and a call for contribution is sent out to advertise the new or continuing job position(s) for a set time. These openings are sent out to the EU’s Conflict Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD) in Brussels. They then pass on the list of vacancies to the various EU member states who in turn, use their own channels of dispersion to advertise the call. For example, Germany advertises through professional websites, such as recruitment websites for Police Officers, whereas the British tend to target those already selected

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<sup>77</sup> Here I am partially influenced by the staffing cycles framework (SCF) proposed by Carlson and Connerley which depicts staffing as a “single coherent conceptual system” with a “dynamic and multifaceted mixture of actors, contexts and activities that play out *over* time” (Carlson & Connerley, 2003 own italics added). I would also add that such a structure also plays out *in* time. Although their aim is to identify and understand the mechanisms that influence staffing outcomes, which is not my purpose here, I do find their framework useful for viewing staffing as a sequence of decision-making activities.

<sup>78</sup> I discuss the various contracted and seconded contract regimes and their key differences later.

and part of a pre-approved Government roster. EULEX also advertises in local newspapers and on their own website.

The selection process also follows a sequential and linear ordering of decisions and activities. Once applications have been received by the set deadline there are two typical routes EULEX will take to select candidates. The first is for staff who have directly applied through EULEX under the contracted regime. For this group, EULEX embarks on a process of short-listing the applications received, interviewing, reference checking, and offering chosen candidates a job. Local staff, who are entirely contacted, may also have an English exam organised by EULEX. The second route taken by EULEX is less engaged, and concerns those who have applied through their national authority under a seconded employment regime. Here the process is slightly less lengthy for EULEX because the burden of recruitment and selection is passed on to the national authorities. Once these authorities have selected their candidates, they are then presented to EULEX. However, EULEX does not always make the final decision about which secondees to take. Occasionally the national authorities and the EU in Brussels embark on a process of lobbying where candidates are weighed up against one another as representatives of a member state. This I would argue, becomes less about the candidate themselves, than about each member state's own interests and their financial contribution to EULEX.

EULEX's staffing process follows a future-oriented linear sequencing of actions and decisions. After all, the decisions about which staff are needed to fulfil the organisation's future (and changing) objectives are taken in the present. In considering the future, closure indirectly and slowly approaches – being a part of the future goal for the organisation and its staffing decisions. Yet closure is not the immediate focus for the Human Resources Team at this stage. While the direction of EULEX is moving towards a future of closure, the immediate goals of the Human Resources Team focus on activities based around bringing staff *into* the organisation, thereby placing the onus on beginnings rather than endings. Thus at first sight, time is offered as a linear and rigid entity by those in charge of EULEX's staffing processes. Presenting time this way, creates a sense of structure for the Human Resources Team who undertake these regular staffing activities and tasks. Staffing methods that use the logic of linear time

in which to operate, also impose a linear quality of time on the individual applying to EULEX. Treated as a homogenous entity during recruitment, linear time may symbolise the ideal framework within which a short-term temporary organisation can plan and manage its human resources regularly up until the aimed for closure of the mission, but equally, it means that the framework established for staffing EULEX is preoccupied by short-term staffing goals, and immediate staffing deadlines, rather than closure.

#### **4.2.1 Organisational Time Matters**

Proposing a linear and sequential dependence of future-oriented tasks, bounds activities between preceding activities, and activities that follow. Such linear framing of time encourages shorter time horizons to manifest themselves across the staffing activities of the Human Resources Team, while also serving as isolated activities for the individual applying to EULEX. For instance, every new potential EULEX staff member must follow a similar recruitment process with its set deadlines, albeit through two different channels depending on the employment regime applied to. EULEX will often present candidates with a sequence of complex and rigid activities to be followed in turn during the application process: discovery of advertisement, filling out application, interview, and pre-deployment activities. While each application advertised has its own deadline to which individual applicants must work, this encourages each applicant's immediate future to become oriented towards that specific application's deadline and tasks. With a focus on the immediate task at hand, it is not working oneself *out* of a job but working oneself *into* a job that concerns candidates now, and so closure is encouraged to shift further away along the linear time horizon.

The sequential linear ordering of staffing activities partly suggests that time is uniformly applied to each new recruit as the same opportunities are disseminated across various channels and the same deadlines are encountered. Despite the semblance of a uniform process across all national authorities, every member state has their own linear employment regime that set them apart. While I came through the Stabilisation Unit, a UK government department initiative, other seconded candidates would come through different ministries or government departments, such as the ministry of justice, or national police forces. How long these national authorities

choose to second staff, also differentiates each employment process, with some typically seconding for one or two years.

Linear methods of staffing encourage time to gain a sequential quality for individuals entering a short-term mission for the first time. The inflexible nature of this was highlighted to me during the interview planning process when EULEX presented my own interview as a non-negotiable and fixed date. Any change would necessitate additional tasks for the Human Resources staff at EULEX, and although EULEX did not specify what would happen should I have been unable to meet the appointed interview time or day, the implication was that I would not have been interviewed at all. The result for the applicant is that the responsibility lies with the individual to ensure they are able to make that time available regardless of any inconvenience this may cause them, or others. Inflexible and rigid timeframes that are imposed on the applicant may represent guidance in a step-by-step process, but by the inflexibility of their very nature, they also denote that here, it is very much the organisation's time that matters. EULEX thus imposes a structural linear framing of organisational time but equally, encourages the individual to frame their own personal time in accordance with the organisation.

#### **4.2.2 Recruitment Criteria as Determinants of Temporal Experience**

While determining the relationship between employee and employer (see, for example, Cascio & Aguinis, 2014), the job description design equally imposes a linear, chronological patterning of time for an individual applying to EULEX. A call for contribution will often expect candidates to meet the essential education and work experience required for the role.<sup>79</sup> While this means that candidates are required to have followed a particular career and educational path prior to applying to EULEX, it implies that experience is measured in time rather than in role. For instance, the minimum work experience required for some international EULEX roles is three years which may discourage those fresh out of university, or at a later stage in life or their career, from applying. It also suggests that three years is deemed enough time to gain

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<sup>79</sup> These essential minimum requirements are often associated with university qualifications or their equivalent in military or police training, and a minimum number of years working in areas deemed relevant to the post being applied to.

particular skills and knowledge deemed relevant for the organisational success of that position. On the one hand this can seem like an opportunity for some international staff, particularly those in junior roles with administrative or reporting powers. For example, one new international EULEX staff member contracted with a reporting role told me:

When I applied, I didn't have the 20 years of experience in something specific. I'm a junior without a specific specialisation. I'm not a lawyer or police officer or anything like that, so this was the perfect way and the perfect place to get my foot into a mission.

While the minimum requirement allowed this staff member to enter EULEX even without a specific specialisation, temporally imposed work requirements can also have negative consequences for some individuals, particularly, although not exclusively, young professional women.<sup>80</sup> For instance, the problematic link between minimum work requirement criteria and personal timeframes was pointed out during an interview with an international seconded female staff member in a senior role who had been in the mission for nearly three years. At the time of applying for her position at EUELEX, she was in her early 30s and had worked for several years within different branches of the European Union in Brussels, and in NGOs. She recounted that she had applied for her current position because she finally met the relevant work requirements following years of internships and voluntary work with various international organisations. She recognised that this put her in a difficult position with regards to her age and personal ambitions:

Now I feel like it's tough on a personal level. I am thinking about the biological clock ticking. If I want a family I will need to meet someone and settle down. But here I still am three years on, and this is not the right place to find someone serious. Silly isn't it - this was an ideal job that I spent time getting the right experiences for, but now I have different priorities and concerns because of my age. I'm wondering if I should stay

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<sup>80</sup> I do not specifically address the gendered time of closure in this thesis as this would produce an entirely different thesis. It is however, a vitally important issue that needs future attention by scholars.

and, if so, how long for? That's the big question for me now, particularly if I want a family life.

Concern for the biological clock is not unique in this line of work where relationships are often characterised by a "hook-up culture" (Roth, 2015, p. 102; see also Thomson et al., 2006). While some may have the relevant years of experience behind them when it comes to applying for a role at EULEX, they are also of a particular age that makes them more vulnerable in their personal lives to considerations of time, age, and the future. It is in this sense that recruitment criteria can impact individuals, causing staff to consider the temporal consequences and personal compromises that such a job entails.

### **4.3 STAFFING OVER TIME: THE CYCLICAL AND CONTINUOUS NATURE OF THE STAFFING PROCESS**

By their very intention, staffing activities aim to ensure that the organisation has the adequate resources necessary with which to achieve the organisation's goal of closure. However, my observations showed that the strict linear structuring of those future-oriented staffing activities in EULEX also form part of a wider cyclical patterning of activities which instead serve to establish permanence, and erase closure.

Carlson and Connerley have acknowledged that "an organisation's attempt to fill a position represents the aggregation of many concurrent staffing cycles" (Carlson & Connerley, 2003). For EULEX, this is translated into frequent waves of staffing vacancies that move EULEX beyond a linear sequential framing of time, to a temporal separation across various cyclical staffing patterns. There are often between two and three calls for contributions issued per year. Rarely are there four calls for contributions in one year. If this happens, these are recognised as having an extraordinary status (see, for example, European External Action Service, 2014). Externally, these regular vacancies serve as a frequent reminder that an organisation does not simply endure until it closes, but changes and adapts over time and in time, regularly renewing itself through the creation of new positions and the intake of new staff.

Typically, more staff are hired at the start of a new mandate when old roles have been cut and new positions created, whereas the closer to the mandate end, the fewer the opportunities that arise (see Chapter Six for instance). Having said that, there appears to be no clear correlation between the approach to closure and how many staff are recruited in EULEX. Regardless of how long the mission has until its closure, recruitment continues. For example, despite, or in spite of, the mission being one year away from its June 2014 mandate end date, a call for contribution was issued in 2013 (European External Action Service, 2013b) with over 200 new vacancies being opened. Even as that mandate got closer to its end, an “extraordinary” call was issued for a mere five posts four months prior to the ending of the June 2014 mandate (European External Action Service, 2014). Equally, this does not mean that no jobs are created when a mandate is approaching its end. In fact, once news confirming that the June 2014 mandate was being extended, a new series of calls for contributions was issued in May 2014, one month prior to the ending of that ‘current’ mandate. This would imply that rather than a focus on the end of a mandate, the focus is on looking ahead to the start of the next mandate and its new staffing requirements.

Regardless of how close to the end of a mandate the organisation is and independent of the number of staff being recruited, the periodic occurrences of vacancies throughout the year require the Human Resources Team to repeat their staffing activities. As the lungs of the organisation, this not only represents an arduous task for this team, but one that allows the organisation as a whole to remain permanent through renewal, rather than orient itself towards closure. Here, the seemingly tight linear framework of time discussed above gives way to a more repetitive and cyclical framework of internal activities and short-term time horizons focused on starts rather than ends, and closure appears to be eliminated by permanence, at least temporarily.

### **Playing with timeframes**

It is not only the cyclical repetition of vacancies and staffing activities that appear to erase the presence of closure, but also the seeming flexibility of some timeframes that act to blur starts and ends. For instance, as a seconded intern I was first required to

attend a Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT)<sup>81</sup> course before I could be deployed to Kosovo. During the HEAT course one thing that did strike me as being unusual was the presence of a senior EULEX staff member. Perhaps because HEAT courses depend on finance and needs, it can happen that UK seconded staff are requested back from their posting to attend the course at any time during their period of employment. What appeared particularly odd about the presence of this seconded EULEX staff member was that, while he was already working for EULEX as Head of Department, he was also four months away from the end of his contract – his own personal closure.<sup>82</sup> In spite of this, he was nevertheless attending the HEAT course as it was a compulsory staff requirement (albeit an outstanding one for him), for all UK secondees. The impression of a seemingly linear recruitment process (applying and acceptance of new role at EULEX, pre-deployment training, and arrival into EULEX) was, on this rare occasion, skewed by a reversal of that order (applying and acceptance of new role, arrival and work in EULEX for several months/years, followed by pre-deployment training). Preparing for the environment he was deployed to, occurred some time after his actual deployment. While this exception points to a temporal confusion in what at first appears to be a very structured and strict process of timing, it also indicates a blurring of time, where the close proximity between starts and ends erases boundaries between the linearity of rules and timing of staff deployment. That temporal inconsistencies such as this exist attest to the existence of blurred sequencing and timeframes in EULEX.

#### **4.3.1 Continuities Overlooked: “I’m the New Kid, Except I’m not ‘New’!”**

All the while, the organisation’s future goal of closure is the rationale behind a temporary missions’ recruitment activities and decisions, typically structured around

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<sup>81</sup> There are various names for such courses designed to prepare staff for difficult working and living environments: Living and Working in Hostile Environments Training (LWHE); Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR); Comprehensive Approach in Multi-Dimensional Peace Operations (CAMPO); or online Hostile Environment Safety Training (e-HEST). HEAT courses, such as the one I attended, are organised by the Stabilisation Unit for Crown Agents going to ‘Hostile Environments’ for work purposes, although having worked and lived in Kosovo prior to the EULEX internship I wondered what ‘hostile’ means in the case of Kosovo, and who decides when it stops being ‘hostile’. These training courses offer, as one organisation puts it, ““one-stop” services and expertise on peace operations” (Center for International Peace Operations, n.d.).

<sup>82</sup> This contract was indeed terminated four months after the HEAT training.

considerations of linear or cyclical time. Framing staffing activities and decisions in these linear or cyclical terms however, ignores the continuities found in staffing processes. Internally, while staff are employed to meet the changing needs of a new mission in recognition of the change in organisational direction, externally there is a semblance of continuity that is established through the appearance of unchanged activities and regular staffing numbers. The internal repetition of staffing activities coupled with the organisation seemingly adapting immediately to a new mandate or changed environment signifies, externally at least, that the organisation continues to function and operate.

The continuation of a short-term temporary development organisations, like EULEX, can also be seen through how such organisations are reproduced through their staff. Although learning about the call for contributions through the EULEX website is not unusual for international staff, it is not the typical story heard. It was very common with the internationals I spoke to, for a friend or previous colleague to have emailed over the call or mentioned it to them verbally. This implies that personal connectors play a key role in obtaining information about job openings at EULEX. Often, the “friend” or “contact” would be another international, either already working for EULEX or aware of upcoming openings through their own personal contacts who at some point would have worked for EULEX or in Kosovo. Sometimes, these contacts would be part of a roster from their sponsoring authority receiving information first-hand about international jobs supported by their government and then sharing it.

Learning about job postings in such a closed way underlines the importance of past connections and temporal connectors even before one enters EULEX. On some occasions, I was told that these personal contacts also lobbied in support of a candidate to fill a particular position. This in itself tells us a lot about the reproduction of organisations through continued networks and friendships that are maintained across and beyond both temporal and spatial borders. Here, personal relationships act as a temporal connector between past and future and as a spatial connector between insiders and outsiders.

Personal continuities also play a central role for local staff in their job search. The same can be said for local staff on their journey to find a job with an international

organisation based in Kosovo. Many of the local staff I spoke with usually heard about vacancies in the same ways as their international counterparts through personal contacts, although these could be either local or international sources. Local EULEX staff were on the whole more forthright with how active they had been in their search and how determined they had been to be employed by EULEX because of the financial opportunity and security such a job offered. Whether for international or local applicants, finding job positions with EULEX is already a process of selection in itself; as a job hunter one would need to know where to look, and who to ask in this somewhat closed circuit of advertising, indicating the importance of prior or circulated knowledge and social networks.

The recycling of knowledge and people (Fechter & Walsh, 2010; Kothari, 2005; Stirrat, 2000) is equally overlooked by a linear ordering of the staffing process. Very often, staff at EULEX have already been in Kosovo, or have already worked for EULEX. I spoke to many such staff, but one seconded international clearly expressed this after being asked when he had started his role as prosecutor at EULEX. At the time of our interview, he had been in his role for three months and was tasked with leading the investigation of criminal cases by liaising with local and EULEX police and prosecutors. Being perceived as a new staff member by his current team and holding a new contract gave him the impression of new beginnings he told me. Yet he had previously worked for EULEX in a similar capacity, telling me “I’m the new kid, except I’m not new at all! I was here before.” He recognised that his previous experience with EULEX had enabled him to start his role immediately as he knew “where to look” for case information and “who to ask”, as well as being familiar with the Kosovo context. While this example is not unique, it clearly symbolises the continuity of personnel, and the continuity of ideas that Stirrat mentions regarding short-term consultants in development (Stirrat, 2000, p. 40). Thus for EULEX, the recruitment process is an ongoing activity, but despite being presented as a process that functions within linear, rigid timeframes, it is complex, cyclical and repetitive in nature linked by continuities that render future closure invisible, relegating the finality that is represented by closure, to the background.

#### 4.4 CONTRACTUAL TIME-FRAMES: THE (IN)FLEXIBILITY OF TIME

The seed of flexibility is planted by the language used in job advertisements. For instance, the non-committal and undefined approach to time, and to EULEX's eventual closure, is highlighted in a 2014 “extraordinary” call for contributions, a few months prior to the ending of a mandate on the 14 June. In this call, a message to all applicants reads as follows:

**Tour of Duty/Contract Period** – *Subject to the adoption of a Council Decision extending the Missions' mandate and approving the appropriate Budgetary Impact Statement, the duration of the deployment should be of 12 months.* Regardless of the above, the continuation of any tour of duty/contract extending beyond 14 June 2014 (the end of the current mandate) is *entirely dependent on the requirements after the end of the existing mandate.* A number of the advertised *vacancies may have to be withdrawn* upon adoption of the new OPLAN.<sup>83</sup>

Although reference to the end of the mandate is made by EULEX in a call for contributions such as the above example shows, a condition of flexibility in end dates and contract length is implied. On the one hand, the two conditions established determining the duration of a deployment (“the adoption of a Council Decision extending the Missions' mandate and approving the appropriate Budgetary Impact Statement”), impose constraints. On the other hand, the use of modal verbs such as “should” and “may” defy that certainty. Here, contractual flexibility is introduced by EULEX during its recruitment stage as the future is opened up as a possibility and potentiality. This highlights a particular engagement with time, and Kosovo. Firstly, it suggests a preventative measure is taken for unseen circumstances in the future; there is a get out clause should EULEX's expected route change and new internal, or external, circumstances arise. Secondly, it displaces the actions of EULEX beyond time; while a contract is intended to establish a timeframe for organisation and staff, sidestepping the very bounded constraints of time offered by a contract dismisses the temporal structure represented by that contract. Finally, without explicit reference to Kosovo, organisational time is seemingly placed above and beyond Kosovo time, and

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<sup>83</sup> Own emphasis added (European External Action Service, 2014).

the future that is being symbolically promised by the very existence of EULEX is one that does not explicitly take Kosovo into account.

For an applicant, obtaining a contract with EULEX or a national authority however, is the final stop in a lengthy recruitment process, and there is no clearer way to demonstrate the paradox of time's complex (in)flexible framing than by examining the various employment contracts one can receive. While contracts serve to connect the present to a fixed period of future-time and offer generic opportunities and rules to all staff, all contracts, regardless of their category, have a fixed term employment which must be completed unless the terms are changed, or an employer or employee gives notice of early termination. In a short-term mission aiming to eventually close, individual deadlines are flagged up by contract end dates enabling contracts to structure individual future-oriented time. Along with vacancies that arise throughout the year, these individual contracts are reminders that nothing lasts forever, particularly in a short-term temporary mission, and symbolise an individual's short-term involvement both with EULEX and Kosovo.

There are four possible staff contracts that one can apply for in EULEX; seconded international, contracted international, contracted local, third party national, and since late 2012, international internships have been added to this list. As I will now show, each contract regime differentiates staff according to the time frame established by their contractual duration, revealing various individual lengths of temporary framing and positioning within EULEX, and towards Kosovo.

### **International Seconded Contracts**

International seconded contracts are reserved for international staff who are paid for by their home EU member state, rather than from EULEX's own budget, and their selection lies entirely with that sponsoring authority (European External Action Service, 2013a). This selection process follows a relatively linear path: the national authority decides which EULEX vacancies it hopes to fund, receives applications, interviews applicants, selects its candidate, and presents them to EULEX, sometimes lobbying on their behalf. How hard a role is lobbied for depends on how strategically significant that role is to the sponsoring government, and its foreign policy aims. If that candidate is accepted by EULEX, as I was, the sponsoring authority bears "all

personnel-related costs for seconded personnel, including salaries, medical coverage, travel expenses to and from the Mission area (including home leave) and allowances” (European External Action Service, 2013a). This financial support shows a degree of support and benefit given by a sponsoring state to an individual in their journey to the mission, and gives the illusion of being looked after by a sponsoring government.

Seconded contracts benefit both EULEX and the sponsoring authority. For EULEX, such set up saves money. Salaries can average €100.000 per year to €26.000 per month for a Head of Mission position, a difficult spending cost for a short-term mission to justify from its own limited budget. It also benefits EULEX by shifting responsibility for the recruitment to an external body. This saves EULEX time and resources as it does not have to process the applications itself, spend time interviewing, making decisions or follow up calls. However, the impact of staff being seconded sometimes creates a rigid conditioning for a mission confined to the choices and decisions of the various national authorities.

For the sponsoring authority, the high cost of a seconded contract incurred by a national budget reveals the strategic importance of that role and its benefit to foreign policy. In order to justify the financial commitment to that role, these staff will typically be strategically placed in managerial, or information-gathering positions. The perceived benefit of a seconded position thus goes beyond the individual and their time spent in EULEX, with seconded positions fitting into a wider long-term national government strategy. I was made aware of the hunger for knowledge that my own sponsoring authority had when I returned from my internship. The knowledge and contacts I had gained were the key area of interest during my de-brief session. This is natural when one thinks of the investment being placed in every seconded candidate, and the wealth of information that can be gained collectively by the member state from each individual experience.

A seconded international contract not only offers the individual a high salary and strategic support from a sponsoring national government, but also symbolises

particular professional benefits and security. For instance, British<sup>84</sup> secondees receive various benefits from the UK government. Among these, benefits include trainings such as the HEAT course I attended, the UK purchasing flights to and from a mission, covering costs for the transportation of belongings, as well as providing vaccinations and insurance forms in the event of serious illness, or death, not offered by EULEX for its contracted staff. Once in a while, government officials visit their national seconded staff to ensure they are doing well, and are up to date on UK government objectives and priorities. Secondees are essentially taken under the wing of their sponsoring authority throughout the course of their recruitment, and beyond, providing an impression of security that extends beyond the borders of the sponsoring authority and beyond the temporal boundaries of a contract.

What distinguishes seconded staff from all other contract types at EULEX is that, for the most part, EULEX secondees are already employed. This set up establishes an interesting temporal dynamic for the secondee. Secondees are typically professionals taking time *away from* jobs back home to share their expertise and knowledge with local counterparts for a *set period of time*. A secondment usually ranges from one to two years. Often, the perception is that it is the secondment period framing one's time in EULEX because time with EULEX is seemingly sandwiched by the year of leave granted by the secondment. In other words, it is not always EULEX itself framing the temporal horizon of seconded staff, but the 'job back home' which remains a background consideration throughout the everyday of many seconded staff at EULEX. Irrespective of the role, for many secondees, being contractually expected to return to employment back home fixes their contractual time at EULEX within a wider temporal context external to Kosovo, EULEX and the individual staff.

Having a secured job at home, from which one is taking time away, also creates the appearance of financial and job security, as well as continuation of employment, across territories, and linking present and future time. As a result, the future is felt to be secure as a secondee can always return to a job. Because secondees have the backing of their sponsoring government, getting rid of a seconded staff member is

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<sup>84</sup> Here I specify British seconded contracts as this is the system I know best having myself been seconded by the UK government. It would be interesting to compare the seconded contracts between EU countries and account for their differences here, however this was not my focus at this stage.

very difficult for EULEX, adding to the impression of individual job security.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, while most secondees feel safe with the prospect of a job back home, an interesting dynamic is created between the EULEX's employment timeframe and that of the secondment. While it is an interrupted time for the 'job back home', the temporary framing of time is conditioned by the EULEX contract that is issued. However, a longer-term timeframe, as represented by the job being returned to, ultimately remains dormant in the background and seen as a reassuring feature. Which timeframe dominates is likely to depend on how close or far away one is to leaving or returning to the job being interrupted as will become clear in this chapter and Chapter Six.

Although common, this profile of the seconded staff member is not uniform. One difference is found with third party nationals. This group of staff at EULEX is also seconded but originates from non-EU member states. These are staff seconded to EULEX by Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the US. Another exception is that a seconded staff member may, back home, be unemployed or retired. Typically, this group is part of an expert pool or database seconding professionals out to a posting. This means that for the retired or unemployed secondees, once their seconded contract ends, they return to being part of that roster of experts. The result of this is that they need to apply for new jobs rather than returning to a specific job like their other seconded colleagues.

Both retired and unemployed seconded staff commonly share the burden of insecurity upon one's return to a country of origin that the employed seconded staff member does not generally experience. This implies that for this group of seconded EULEX staff, one's time at EULEX is not perceived as being framed by another job, but rather, time takes on a less bounded aspect, often resulting in worry for the future due to its open ended nature. The temporal impact of this will be a theme returned to in the next two chapters. The exception can be found with the retired person who receives a pension while also working for EULEX. The temporal differentiation that exists within the set-

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<sup>85</sup> It was unclear however, whether or not a seconded staff member would be offered social welfare back home if a mission ended while a contract was still open.

up of the seconded contract is thus blurred by an overarching and broad categorisation of “international seconded”.

For EULEX, the impact of staff being seconded means that EULEX has a permanent vacancy list as staff are obliged by home governments or their employees to eventually return home. The permanent vacancy list that results from this set up not only highlights a high turnover of staff, but also reinforces the temporal complexity faced by secondments that are short-term and can only be short-term, constrained by the requirement to return. In this sense, secondments contribute to a temporary framing of time for one group of EULEX professionals. However, the temporary framing of time is even more obvious with the recruitment process experienced by staff entering EULEX with contracted positions, be they internationals or locals.

### **International Contracted Contracts**

The contract that is issued to international contracted staff is an employment contract between EULEX and its employee that establishes “the conditions of employment, rights and obligations, remuneration, allowances, travel and removal expenses and the applicable high risk insurance policy” (European External Action Service, 2013a). International staff recruited on a contractual basis differ to seconded staff in that they are paid for directly by the European Union budget allocated to EULEX. As defined in their contract, contracted staff are not provided with the same level of support at recruitment stage that the secondees receive. They are instead typically given higher salaries. This puts a strain on the budget which leads the mission to employ preferential treatment towards seconded staff, as my case illustrated, during the recruiting process shifting the budgetary burden on national authorities rather than on the EU.

The contracted staff employment regime has a flexible timeframe that is applied to this group, despite, on paper, appearing to be fixed. The fixed aspect of these contracts stems from the fact that all contracted staff contracts align with the Head of Mission’s (HoM) own contract end date, thereby appearing to offer a uniform and fixed timeframe across the organisation for all international contracted staff. However, due to the continuous waves of recruitment that occur throughout the year, different contractual start dates also mean different contractual lengths. Staff hired on a contractual basis are issued with differing lengths of employment depending on the

timing of their arrival in relation to the HoM's own contract end date. A common end date regulating the mission's time in a linear manner, thus collectively impacts each individual in a unique way.

Some applicants have been found to reject offers based on the length of contract offered regardless of other job attributes. For example, as I talked about contract types to an EULEX staff member in the correctional services tasked with observing and reporting on conditions of detention centres and the treatment of inmates across Kosovo, I was told about a particular incident when a contracted staff member had refused the job offered by EULEX. Apparently, this prospective staff member had deemed the contract too short and consequentially, refused it, never even turning up to EULEX. When I asked why, I was told that the contract had been issued four days prior to the termination of the Head of Mission's own contract, and therefore, in line with EULEX policy, a four-day contract was offered. Although the possibility to extend one's contract is always present in a mission like EULEX that keeps extending, the job was turned down because it was deemed too risky. In this case, the risk had been weighed against leaving family behind for what was perceived to be too short and limited a time, despite the high likelihood of this particular contract being extended. (The reason this particular contract was highly likely to be extended, I was told, was that the position that had been applied for had been created to meet the needs of the changing mission in 2012. As such, the newly created job was in line with the mission objectives moving forward and was unlikely to be made redundant by the new mission mandate).

On the other hand, the potentially short length of a contract represents a pull factor for others. For one young hopeful Legal Officer working with prosecutors to research and compile case evidence, a short contract with EULEX was deemed an opening for future employability. As we sit together in café Credo, the café in the EULEX Headquarters, during one of the regular coffee breaks punctuating EULEX's mornings, I am told that a six month contract was all she needed to accept the role of Legal Officer at EULEX as she had never worked in an international mission before:

Six months gives enough time to gain experience in a mission, and see if I like it as a career. It also looks good on my CV, but less than six

months would look odd. A future employer, without knowing how short-term missions work, would ask ‘why was this person only employed for six months’? What did she do wrong to not stay longer?

This account highlights the benefit to one's CV, both in terms of the ongoing real-time experience and knowledge gained, and the future visual representation of the time spent in a mission which future employers would consider on a CV. We see here that the duration of a contract can play into the long-term value, gain and overall worth placed on a contract and was a point often echoed by other international contracted staff. At this early stage in one's employment with EULEX the personal focus would seem to be on the gains one can obtain from a contract. The above account, for instance, suggests that effort is measured against time. Where a contract was deemed too short (usually under six months, but not always) it was not considered worth the effort of moving to a new territory.

New experiences and challenges are often thought to be offered by the prospects of a new job in EULEX, an opportunity provided for by the perceived transience of time ‘away from home’ (Willis & Yeoh, 2007, p. 214). While such thinking follows an individual's linear approach to time, seeing time in EULEX as an interruption of one's life course ‘back home’, or as an escape from the mundane, it also highlights a consideration of future benefits and opportunities. For others however, financial reasons and the need to provide for family can be determining factors. For one contracted EULEX police woman whose role included observing the activities of local police when investigating crimes, the length of the EULEX contract was never an issue as the status and pay made up for what others saw as a risk and disadvantage. The length of the contract duration offered to successful applicants therefore acts as an additional selection criteria for EULEX; those willing to take the short-term risk tend to accept jobs with EULEX. It also suggests that a particular mind-set is encouraged as temporal risk is weighed up against personal gain.

As with the seconded staff member, the background of an individual applying for a contract with EULEX is not uniform and exceptions exist. Some contracted staff do not rely on EULEX as their primary source of income. For example, of the three retired contracted EULEX staff I spoke, all had chosen to work for EULEX to supplement

their pensions. This means that upon return to their country of origin, financial support will be provided through state pensions for this small group of EULEX staff. In addition, this group of retired but contracted internationals are generally much older than most contracted international staff, and at the end of their careers. Staff employed directly by EULEX tend to be on average young professionals in the early to mid-stage of their careers, viewing their entrance into EULEX as a career opportunity; a chance for a present job to propel them into a particular (imagined) future.

### **Local Contracted Contracts**

EULEX also recruits local staff on a contractual basis. The key difference for this group is that they are paid substantially less than any of the internationals although their salary of up to €1500 is an important sum compared to the average Kosovo salaries of €250 a month. With such a salary whole families are supported. Often, the extended family also benefit. This salary in Kosovo has the potential to stretch further than day to day living. As with the contracted employment regime offered to internationals, local staff contracts also depend on the Head of Mission's contract, and end on the same day. I had assumed, wrongly, that as with international contracted staff, the duration of a contract was an important consideration for a local when deciding whether or not to accept a job at EULEX. A personal assistant spoke for all locals I talked to when she said she "preferred to have a job than not to have one." Most locals thus tend to be more willing to take the risk of a short-term employment due to the high financial gain, and little sacrifice represented by not having to relocate.<sup>86</sup>

The value of a short-term contract for a local staff member does not always take a future-oriented approach into account. For many local staff I spoke with, a contract frequently offers present day subsistence living rather than the promises of a future and career progression seen with international contracted staff. I elaborate on this point in the next chapter, but unlike the seconded staff member who is typically placed within a managerial or leadership position, or the international contracted staff member whose international career benefits from a contract with EULEX, the local

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<sup>86</sup> Some local staff do need to travel across Kosovo to Pristina on a daily basis, however, they often return home at the end of the day to their families unlike international staff.

staff has neither the responsibility of the seconded staff, nor the career progression prospects of the international contracted staff. Instead, their positions in EULEX as drivers, IT specialists, personal assistants, or logistics personnel are restricted to administrative roles exempt from key decision-making responsibilities. As assistants to international staff these positions are often felt to hold limited responsibility, commonly perceived as a dead-end, without career prospect; what is offered today, is offered tomorrow, and will be offered in half a year's, or a year's time. However, some irregularity exists for local roles as some are tasked with important responsibilities such as legal advisors who interpret or draft legal documents relating to EULEX, or translators whose accuracy in language is vital. While these roles go beyond the usual secretarial or administrative assistant roles given to locals, they tend to plateau as there are no higher or more senior roles a local can move up to. As such for any local staff with personal career ambition there is limited career progression trajectory within EULEX implying that only limited long-term opportunities are offered to local staff members.

### **International Internships**

I have mentioned two of the three overarching categories for international and local staff in EULEX: seconded and contracted staff. Internships have been a recent addition to the staffing list of EULEX, with the first internships programme having started in February 2013, a year prior to the mandate end date. It took between 2008 and 2012 to create the internship programme due to various disagreements over the length of an internship, questions over pay, leave, and access to EU restricted documents. That the internship programme was created four years after the start of EULEX, but launched with just over one year before the ending of a mandate, did not seem to surprise anyone.

The contractual relationship between EULEX and its interns is set for a fixed length of four months. Interns are paid 500 Euros from the EU budget, unless seconded in which case it is up to the sponsoring authority whether or not they pay personnel-related costs such as travel, or a salary. Interns are not considered staff and, as non-staff, are restricted in terms of leave. As with local staff, interns are not allowed to access confidential or restricted documents such as the organisational plan stipulating

the roles and objectives of particular departments, a point I detail further in the next chapter. Interns cannot apply for a position with EULEX until six months have passed between the internship and the next EULEX application. This bracketing of time does not represent a closure that is linked to the end of a mandate, mission or HoM contract. Rather, it sets an interesting short-term framing of the internship programme that implies a fixed end (four months) rather than a continuation or investment in an intern as a young professional. Such bracketing out of time suggests that there is no possibility of continuity in personnel.

Contractual deadlines thus regulate time for both individual and the mission; they place individuals at the intersection of flexible and inflexible structural timeframes from the outset, and regulate the continuous flow of staff in an organisation aiming to close. Temporal complexity in a short-term mission is exposed through the dual dynamics and contradictions exposed by an organisation setting up its contractual timeframe as rigid and fixed while also attempting to establish the possibility of flexibility and changing conditions in the future. While contracts categorise an individual from the start, they also position the individual within an external temporal continuum that punctuates both individual time and the wider organisational time. This set up is one way through which both continuation and flexibility are introduced by a short-term development organisation. As we shall see in later chapters, this heightens awareness to differences between organisational time and individual time as well as representing a differential between staff themselves. While seconded contracts follow a different time-scale to contracted staff contracts each individual at EULEX has their own temporal frames within which to function, and as a result, their own individual temporal considerations that often do not explicitly or directly consider Kosovo.

Taken together, at the organisational level, the use of contractual deadlines acts as a reminder that all employment is temporary and therefore finite. After all, contracts, like the mission, can but be short-term. Underlying the differing timeframes of staff contracts is the concern for a present-orientation of time, rather than a future-oriented approach to time. This complex framing of contractual duration points to a paradox; on the one hand it places the onus on the immediate short-term (and individual), rather than the organisation's longer-term future aim of closure. On the other hand,

organisational permanence is created through organisational repetition established within a temporary set-up. While closure is discretely present and encouraged through the types of contract one applies to and is accepted for, those contract types paradoxically encourage the existence of parallel individual end dates that, collectively, occur in short succession to each other and ultimately confuse the boundaries of time between individual ends and collective continuity, and between temporary organisational time and the long-term permanent time of Kosovo.

#### **4.5 INTERNAL RHYTHMS: WHEN ONE PERSON ARRIVES, ANOTHER LEAVES**

The staffing process also represents flexibility and unbounded time through the continuity and cyclical temporalities of staff continually leaving and being replaced by new staff members. As previously mentioned, contractual time in EULEX has an end date presenting staff with temporal reminders of their own employment duration and termination. This also means that, while one's contract starts, another contract may come to its end at the same, or a similar, time, or with delay. Here, times exist beyond the individual's contractual time. There is no rule or structured process to the gap, or the moment of overlap, between an arrival and a departure. Rather, parallel currents of time exist and pulsate throughout the organisation; where the arrival of one person is symbolic of a start, departure is symbolic of an end within a cycle. These two symbolic moments repeat themselves throughout the overall life of an organisation creating a sense of connection between temporalities. Bearing in mind departure, this final section briefly looks at the existence of these two parallel moments from the point of view of the arrival of a new staff member as it underlines a logic (or lack thereof) found within the internal rhythms of the short-term mission.

The start of one's experience with EULEX symbolises a novelty experience, the start of a new job, and of promises for what one will achieve and bring to a new position. It also represents knowledge acquisition similar to approaches of the time horizons experienced by youth (Carstensen, 2006); gathering information, spending time preparing and researching for a job or role. The individual activities of arrival thus

involve an open and infinite perception of the future and not a closed finite future perceived as being too far away in time.

In *Matters of Life and Death*, Adam writes “if I am promised employment (as long as I also keep to my end of the bargain) then potential endings are regulated and I can plan my life and my future with confidence” (Adam, 2008, p. 4). This view was generally supported by my respondents who, by the existence of their very own contract, felt a sense of security with their immediate future, for as long as the duration of their contract. While a contract duration emerges as an important consideration in accepting a job with EULEX (or not, as we saw above), once arrived in EULEX, the duration of the contract no longer features as an immediate concern, although it remains a background consideration as will become clear in the next chapter. At the moment of recruitment, staff generally felt that their contract end date was a faraway point in time not to be considered relevant to them at this early stage (with the rare exception of those who were given contracts of less than one month). This mirrors the far off time of organisational closure alluded above, to suggest that individual future possibilities are also perceived as opening up, and individual time horizons are understood as expansive (Mische, 2009) during the recruitment stage of an individual to EULEX.

Arriving therefore separates individual staff operating under the linear structure of recruitment while reinforcing a temporary sense of permanence itself through unchanged structures. This I suggest creates a disconnect between staff at EULEX, while also reinforcing a temporary sense of permanence for the organisation as a whole through unchanged structures.

The simultaneous arrival and departure of staff also suggests that there is no collective gap despite the individual beginning and ends of employment contracts, rendering contractual time very personal to be experienced individually. The semblance of permanence at the collective level ensures that from the outside at least, EULEX appears to be continuing to function. Individual ends are subsumed into the continuation of the collective, and closure is reduced to a background consideration despite framing organisational time.

Whilst contracts establish staff commitment for a particular period, and the check-in process sets up the new arrival with new equipment ready for accomplishing the promises of a job signed up to, in EULEX the job descriptions and the terms of reference for international seconded and contracted posts are vague and open for interpretation by the post holder. This may be an unintentional consequence of limited time where new arrivals are not guaranteed time to meet with their predecessors who either had leave to take, or possibly, due to internal processes or decision-making issues, were not replaced immediately and so left months ago. It could also be the aim of EULEX to allow fluidity between post holders in terms of allowing changing priorities to be given time to breathe, or for EULEX to gain back control over a post or team.

A symbolic way in which past and present are joined during one's arrival in EULEX is in the handover period. The advice and information being transmitted is often minimal and person-dependent. If no personal contact is made with a predecessor, an email or word document can be left for the replacement to interpret. This document is usually up to the individual leaving to create as typically, there is no set protocol on what this handover should be like, how long or detailed it should be or what it should include. For example, it can be an email listing what, up to now, the focus has been, what work needs to be continued and why. It can also be in the form of a word document. Sometimes such documents are left with a line manager. Or, as EULEX has many Judges, Prosecutors and Legal Officers, a file with cases will be left for the newcomer to read, study and pick up from where a case was left off.

Usually though, respondents seemed to suggest that there is no handover. This implies that the past actions of a team or role is left as a blank slate for the newcomer to enthusiastically propose new ways of achieving particular objectives. One team leader who has been seconded to the mission for three years and tasked with supervising and supporting an EULEX policing team responsible for conducting criminal investigations described this historical disconnect. She told me that despite continuity being important to the work of criminal investigations, many of her international colleagues had started afresh upon arrival into her team:

I work in an office where what happened before is important, like knowing who has been [interrogated by the police] and why they were not followed up. But [new arrivals] start from square one. No historical thread is kept alive... I've never been asked questions about what I know and nor have the locals in the team, so for new arrivals there generally isn't much emphasis on institutional memory.

While both internationals and locals are portrayed as potential bearers of institutional memory, this account appears to lay the blame on new arrivals not seeking out information from those who have spent more time in EULEX. This implies that there is a hierarchy of time which equates to a particular type of knowledge deemed vital to the work of EULEX, but one that is generally held back without processes like a handover in place. This begs the question of whether the information gained by spending time in EULEX is purposefully held back from newcomers to maintain power or provide the freedom for new arrivals to provide their own inputs and change direction of a team or programme area. In any case, the lack of a formal handover process appears to sever the present with the past, which new arrivals are often perceived to symbolise.

For the new staff member, the lack of handover provides, to a certain extent, an element of freedom to do what one will with that information. It also allows one to define their own work and make their own contacts, figuring out who will be most useful for their work for the duration of their contract period. After all, each individual has their objectives and tasks set out by their job description (however detailed) and a line manager to account to. For the person receiving a handover, the option exists to ignore or take into account the information being shared. One seconded international responsible for conducting legal research into criminal cases and compiling case evidence directly mentioned this issue:

I got a heads up about who was who in my team and if they were pulling their weight or not. It's always useful to have an insider's point of view on the team. And also if they are leaving they have nothing to hide. Funnily though I had my own sources of information telling me that my

predecessor was a difficult character so I took everything he said with a pinch of salt.

While in this case independent sources of information are sought out, suggesting that trust may be carefully measured, the above raises the question about continuity through knowledge sharing in handover processes, highlighting the personal choice to consider or leave handover notes.

The advice or information that is passed on, or recycled between staff leaving and those arriving, might influence the new arrival in one way or another. Many of those I spoke to who had met their predecessor and received a verbal handover, engaged in a process of selection. Generally the focus of the verbal information fell into three main areas. The first was information about the team, particularly how the locals worked. Regardless of ability, distinguishing between local team members and international team members perpetuates a divisive criteria for staff as a collective body aiming for the same outcome. The second was on the immediate past actions and/or successes of the office. Here, handover represents incremental change as what has been achieved to date is listed. More cynically as one senior international suggested, it may also form part of the outgoing staff member's attempt to leave behind a legacy of personal achievements. This is a point I return to in Chapter Seven. Finally, a verbal handover would tend to encourage the newcomer to take up and follow up current activities, suggesting the intention of continuity, but also hinting at new opportunities and possible options available that leave the future open. Yet ultimately, it remains in the hands of the newcomer to decide what to take on board, or what to dismiss, along with set targets which are established. During such occasions outcome-driven and outcome-focused objectives are key in looking for what still needs to be done, and how, within their own, oft limited, contractual timeframe.

For the organisation, the intentional replacement, or reproduction, of information during the handover process at first sight appears to aim for continuity of team processes, and objectives. As a process, it is internally focused on the strategic or operational planning of the organisation and attempts to ease the newcomer into a new working environment, providing the background context of the team's roles and objectives. Externally, it allows staff to recap what benefits or achievements have been

made in Kosovo from the individual staff member's point of view. However, for EULEX there is no blueprint or template for handover, nor is there a follow up strategy in job positions to ensure continuity of a role's objectives when one staff member leaves and another arrives. As in a relay being run by runners on the same team with the same goal, such a set-up opens up the possibility of ensuring that all staff work toward closure. As I have shown, sometimes the staff members taking up the symbolic relay baton during a handover use the various other possible routes that are open to them. In this sense, the path towards organisational closure takes different, individually determined directions and may in the long-run delay the benefits an organisation can offer its host country.

#### **4.6 THE ABSENCE OF CLOSURE AT THE HEART OF A SHORT-TERM TEMPORARY MISSION**

This chapter has traced some of EULEX's staffing and recruitment processes and the contracts EULEX issues its staff. The intention of the Chapter has been to observe how the goal of closure is framed for new entrants from the outset. It has shown, on the one hand, how recruitment occurs in "the bounded sphere" (Adam, 2006, p. 8), of an organisation's future-oriented goal of closure, and how the needs and activities of staffing follow a linear and fixed sequencing that seek to populate the organisation with the necessary professionals identified to accomplish the goal of closure. On the other hand, this chapter has also described the frequency with which new positions arise in response to changing external circumstances or mission needs and the regularity of staff turnover, all of which establish a cyclical and repetitive rhythm in staffing activities. These I have suggested introduce elements of temporal flexibility for organisation and staff, as well as creating the impression of permanence and continuity.

Combined, these observations point to the emergence of a temporal tension; while closure frames and orients staffing methods and processes, continuity and permanence annul closure, pushing it further away. The assumption that closure has not yet been deemed important enough to be directly addressed suggests that closure may be taken

for granted: after all, don't we all have to leave one day? But it also suggests that closure is somehow common to all, regardless of age, gender, nationality, religion or role within EULEX: we all share the burden, or success, of closure. This commonality seems paradoxical in an organisation that sets people apart from the outset through the individual closures it establishes through its contracts. As a result, new values emerge to resist and bypass the resulting temporal tensions between the longer-term goal of closure, and the shorter internal timeframes that intend to enable that future closure to occur. This risks undermining the longer-term development goals an organisation initially sets out to achieve as it suggests, as does the entire staffing process, that closure is not of immediate concern for EULEX and requires little or no consideration at this stage as closure is assumed to be a far off future goal.

There are two key points to note here. The first is that for the organisation, closure is not of immediate internal concern. Indeed, as an organisation adapts to and learns from newly identified needs and values (Haas, 1990) and staffing requirements and decisions change over time, closure is pushed further away by the focus on renewal rather than ends. This brings into question who controls the time of a temporary organisation operating within a host country within the context of development. While in this case Kosovo may appear empowered by the time that EULEX gives it, Kosovo is equally disempowered by EULEX's recruitment methods that introduce permanence and flexibility rather than focus on the certainty of closure. Similarly, while staff are empowered by their employment with EULEX, they are disempowered by the potential for contractual flexibility that leave the duration of their employment in the hands of the organisation. The certainty of external and internal time is thus taken away by EULEX.

The second point implied by the absence of closure alluded to in this chapter is that within the recruitment process of a short-term temporary mission aiming to close is the assumption that the future is amendable to the intervention of selected individual staff fulfilling their roles (Adam, 2006, p. 8). In the context of Kosovo's development, this would seem to suggest that it is the future of Kosovo that is dependent on EULEX both in the staff it selects and the roles it creates in response to changes in the motives, needs and interests of the mission. We are reminded here that EULEX, under the

mandate of the European Union and its member states, is in pursuit of a particular future for Kosovo; one that aims to bring Kosovo closer to the European Union through establishing peace and stability, and away from its past of conflict (see Chapter Three).

The temporal contradictions and uncertainty underlying the staffing processes contribute to an instability of relations and the transient nature of EULEX's regular activities which the next chapter now illustrates.

## 5 PERFORMING CLOSURE: CLOSURE IN ACTIVITY

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*“Beliefs and expectations of the future in part determine what happens in the present by contributing to how people think, feel, and behave.”*  
(Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008, p. 137)

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION: “GETTING FROM ONE DATE TO THE NEXT”

*You can smell spring nearing, and sense its arrival with the newly elongated evenings. I am sitting with a seconded EULEX staff member. He is in his late 50s. This is his first international mission. His role at EULEX is to offer specialised support and advice to the mission rather than to Kosovo counterparts. Reflecting on how he engages with and experiences his time in Kosovo, we talk about how he manages the uncertainty of time created by his temporary working environment:*

*For my family, it’s all about structuring time in a way that we always have a focus on a time when I’m coming home. That means I never leave home to come back to Kosovo without first having a date for our next visit. That’s vital! I did it once. The first time I went back home after I arrived out here, and I left to come back to Kosovo, the leaving was really difficult. The kids were getting upset and they kept asking me ‘when are you coming back’? And I didn’t have a return date set up, so I didn’t have an answer. I didn’t have that structure organised. At that point in time, from their perspective, I was gone. I was really living away from home, and not coming back. I would never again fall into that trap again because then there was uncertainty.*

*I ask him to tell me more about what that uncertainty represents for him and his family. Taking a deep breath in, he resumes:*

*There’s a finality about it if you don’t have your key dates in place all the time. You’d be far better to stay out here, rather than go home and not have a plan for when you’re going back again, because it’s almost like opening a wound. You need that ticket. You always need a ticket in your pocket for going home. Whereas if I was leaving and able to tell my kids*

*that on the 14th of next month they are coming over here, or I will be back home, then it's like I'm only away for four weeks and that, well, it's extraordinary how significant that is with kids. They have to have that certainty.*

*And for me, well, it's not that I'm counting down days and all, like 'oh geeze I've only got four more days or ten', but it really helps me to remain happy because I don't have the sense at all that I live in Kosovo. I'm only working in Kosovo. And that's a huge difference for me. It means that my life here is pretty much focused on getting from one date to the next. Everything in my life here is focused on work and getting things done, then driving out to Pristina airport and landing back home. Everything is focused on that. And within that, I can actually give a lot more time to work because I don't have any distractions, and I know I'm satisfied that my return home is in place and I can get out in three weeks' time. Thanks to the process we have, I feel like I'm not away, I'm just popping over and back again. Just like these birds come and go every day.*

The above account suggests that structuring one's time in EULEX is key for making the everyday manageable, particularly for those with children back home. Here, controlling one's time suggests that EULEX does not have all the control of time as it extends beyond EULEX's borders, and Kosovo's geographic borders. Where in the above case, children are seen as the main beneficiaries of managing one's own time, it is clear that family involvement becomes an important feature of how one manages time, underlining the extent to which work and life in development affects more than just one person, and extends beyond spatial borders.

The anticipation of a future date is of particular importance in the above narrative, helping to manage the present day unravelling of time towards that future flight. In some ways, this allows a logic to be imagined between the here and the then, and serves to connect present and future (Mische, 2009), allowing all involved to get "from one date to the next". Engaging with time in such a way suggests that time, particularly future dates, frame the regular day in some form or another. Indeed, having a return flight ticket in one's pocket symbolises an important attempt to temporally structure

the temporary uncertainty of development work that many international staff I spoke with in Kosovo strove to somehow recreate. It is how this engagement between the now and projected dates is performed on a daily basis, that is the focus of this chapter.

Closure as a future goal is neither static nor fixed, and thus in the everyday of development work, anticipated end dates and personal closures are also projected and performed in the here and now. If, as this thesis maintains, closure is a goal towards which an organisation is aiming for, closure should foreground the most important values an organisation and its staff live by, and the working processes and structures that are in place. Yet there are various ways in which an organisation and its staff can respond to the unravelling time of closure, all of which establish varying degrees of understandings of closure, as well as resistance or acceptance of closure. The myriad temporal processes that weave together towards the end-goal of that closure, and that are structured by it, thus become important to examine.

Whilst the previous chapter looked at that the ways in which an organisation frames time during the recruitment and arrival of its staff, and the next chapter examines how an organisation manages time during the leaving and downsizing of staff, this chapter investigates the role of ‘normal everyday’ operation. This ‘normal’ broadly encompasses the regular activities and priorities that occur between the start of an organisation and its closure. As I will show, many tensions and problems that appear in what is designated as closure, already appear as inherent and problematic in the ‘normal’ operation of the organisation. These tensions come from the fact that short-term temporary organisations operate on multiple and contradictory times encouraging both temporariness and permanence; organisational time, contractual time and individually experienced time. Such temporal structures also promote degrees of ‘us-ness’ and ‘them-ness’, with some performances of time bringing people together, others drawing them apart.

Taken together, these temporal concerns, I argue, ultimately inform and change the realities of development work but have little to do with the explicit goals of development. The underlying claim of this chapter is that regular performances of time are a form of resistance to working oneself out of a job because the everyday is about

maintaining functioning processes of operation, not about successfully closing them down and ending them.

## **5.2 ORGANISATIONAL TIME**

### **5.2.1 Maintaining a Functioning Mode of Operation: The OPLAN and MIP**

Closure as a date that is set in the future provides the temporal parameters of an organisation. Working oneself out of a job carries with it a responsibility to achieve specific organisational objectives, and to deliver expected results within particular, and often limited, timeframes (see, for example, Autesserre, 2014; Caplan, 2012; Stirrat, 2000). At the operational level, this means (among other things) establishing clear structures and instructions to guide teams in planning and executing particular activities and tasks.<sup>87</sup> The successful performance of all staff achieving the organisational objectives, enables the delivery of a mission's longer term goal: its withdrawal from a host country.

There are two EULEX documents serving as a blueprint for guiding staff activities and delineating goals at a pragmatic level; the Operational Plan (OPLAN), and the Mission Implementation Plan (MIP). Both documents lay out key operational and structural information about EULEX, and translate EULEX objectives into performance-based activities and tasks for staff to implement. The first document key to EULEX's internal functioning is the Operational Plan (OPLAN). Prior to the confirmation of every new mandate, the OPLAN is revised and drafted to reflect how the upcoming mandate will be implemented. The OPLAN details the structure of EULEX,<sup>88</sup> the specifics of the operation and contains detailed and specific guidance

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<sup>87</sup> Presumably the short-term nature of such an operation also has an impact on what is chosen to be an indicator of 'success' and impacts on the kind of work undertaken by that organisation. Such issues would be issues for further study.

<sup>88</sup> Article 6.3 of the Council Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP states that: "Subject to detailed arrangements in the OPLAN, EULEX KOSOVO shall be structured as follows: (a) the Head of Mission and staff as defined in the OPLAN; (b) a police component, co-located where appropriate with the Kosovo Police Service, including at the border crossing points; (c) a justice component, co-located where appropriate with the relevant Ministries, the Kosovo judiciary, the Kosovo Property Agency, the Kosovo

on legal issues (Naert, 2011, pp. 9 & 16). According to Article 4.4 of the Council Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP of 4 February 2008, it is also meant to “take into account the risk assessment” for the upcoming mission, and includes “a security plan” (European Union, 2008). Following approval from EU national governments and the Political and Security Committee (PSC),<sup>89</sup> the OPLAN is then approved by the European Council which has the power to amend it, and stipulates the date on which the new mission will start.

The second internal document that serves to guide EULEX staff activities, is the Mission Implementation Plan (MIP). The MIP structures EULEX’s operational objectives and translates objectively verifiable indicators into performance-based benchmarking projects. There are 38 MIP action points that seek to help EULEX meet its four key EU objectives (police and customs, justice, restoring rule of law in the North and support for the Pristina/Belgrade Dialogue process).<sup>90</sup> These action points, according to the European Court of Auditors, contain “a rationale/background, an overall objective, a list of activities and of measurable results, a timeframe and indication of available resources, as well as links to external assistance” from which to establish a benchmarking and review process (European Court of Auditors, 2012, p. 56). Each EULEX unit, division and office is driven by specific MIP action points and as such, all staff are seen to contribute to the MIP regardless of their role.

What the OPLAN and MIP have in common is that they are both renewed and approved prior to each two-year mandate, and their content is expected to cover the entirety of a mission’s duration. Viewed from a temporal perspective, several assumptions can be drawn. The first is that, by being open to the possibility of renewal when each two-year mandate nears its end, these documents become fixed for a two-year timeframe. The second assumption is that both documents are written within a

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Correctional Service; and (d) a customs component, co-located where appropriate with the Kosovo Customs Service. 4. Specialised police may be hosted in camps designed to cater for their operational needs” (European Union, 2008).

<sup>89</sup> Under the authority of the European Council, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) exercises political control and strategic direction of the mission. It also supervises the implementation of all the measures taken and assesses their effect, recommending adjustments as and when necessary. While the OPLAN is drawn up by the existing Head of Mission, its final considerations are made by the PSC.

<sup>90</sup> For a more detailed explanation of these areas see: (EULEX, 2013).

particular present and therefore reflect the priorities of the time in which they were written. Related to this, both documents are drawn up with a view to anticipating future activities and tasks deemed necessary for EULEX to fulfil its intended goal of closure. This projects a fixed trajectory for the activities of closure for the duration of that two-year mandate. A final assumption then is that by fixing activities in such documents the mission may become unable to respond and adapt to the changing environment it, itself, is creating. Said differently, the change that accompanies development, or any unexpected events, can only be operationally and structurally reflected by EULEX's internal documentation every two-years at the time of a mandate's renewal, rather than as, or when, changes occur and priorities evolve. Put together, EULEX's temporal horizon, as set out by the OPLAN and MIP, is framed by a temporal tension; between a fixed two-year timeframe of future-oriented planning, potential renewal and anticipated activities, and the unfolding reality of present day changes that could potentially interrupt or alter any of these expected activities.

### **Short-term responses take over longer term goals**

This tension came to the fore in early 2013 when EU-led talks to normalise relations between Kosovo and Serbia accelerated.<sup>91</sup> As a result of these talks, and as part of an Integrated Border Management (IBM)<sup>92</sup> agreement, six interim crossing points at the border between Kosovo and Serbia were opened. These were to be supported by EULEX presence. Rapid political progress thus altered the external environment in which EULEX was operating in, requiring EULEX to internally respond rapidly to its new duties, and change its course of activities. At the time, and perhaps because of this unanticipated progress not being factored into the MIPs and OPLAN documents, EULEX did not have the human resources it needed to meet this sudden change in

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<sup>91</sup> On the EU-facilitated talks that began in March 2011 between Serbia and Kosovo see (Hamilton & Šapić, 2013; Malazogu & Bieber, 2012); for an evaluation of the EU's border management strategy see (Collantes-Celador & Juncos, 2012).

<sup>92</sup> According to Hamilton and Šapić, "IBM traditionally references "Integrated Border Management" in the EU context, the meaning of the acronym in the context of the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue has been disputed. Kosovo argues that IBM stands for "Integrated Border Management" which upholds the existence of national borders, while Serbia argues that IBM stands for an "Integrated Boundary Management" which would denote a territory without national sovereignty. Only the status neutral acronym "IBM" was used in the EU facilitated agreement." (Hamilton & Šapić, 2013, p. 3 footnote 1).

political focus. As a result, staff were required to be flexible as roles were re-prioritised to meet the new political demands.

It was this issue that a seconded staff member raised when we met one cold evening. She had been a Police Officer for six years back home and had applied to EULEX to broaden her experience. Upon arrival into EULEX two months prior to our interview, she had expected to deliver rule of law services in Kosovo but was unexpectedly transferred to physically patrol a border crossing in the North. Although she could understand that she was there as part of the IBM process, she felt that she was being prevented from fulfilling her EULEX own anticipated duties to stand at a border gate visually representing an international presence. She told me:

Two weeks after I arrived in the mission I was sent to the borders in the North to sit around doing nothing all day. A monkey could have done the job! I just sat there and watched. Those were the longest weeks of my life.

This account points to two important tensions of speeds. The first is of personal time going slowly compared to the fast paced organisational time. This slow pace of lived time is set in immediate contrast to the fast political changes occurring in Kosovo at the time requiring immediate results in the guise of Police Officers at border crossings. Secondly, while the need to transfer Police Officers to control Northern border crossings reflects a wider, and accelerated, change in EULEX's focus it is also witness to the tension between EULEX's fast-changing external environment and its own slow-changing internal environment. Like many others in a similar position, this seconded Police Officer was sent to the border in part because the OPLAN could not easily be changed due to its time consuming procedures. Consequently, no new positions could be created, or filled, fast enough to respond to the new needs facing EULEX. Instead, it was the human resources that had to be flexible both with time and space. While the OPLAN could remain as it was, the structure could still be tinkered with through additional demands placed on staff, such as that which the above account testifies to. Herein lies a temporal tension of speeds where function changes more quickly than form, and staff are expected to adapt and show flexibility in their approach to work tasks and activities. Implicit here is the need for EULEX and its staff

to be response-driven, allowing short-term responses to take over longer-term plans and goals.

### 5.2.2 Spatio-Temporal Secrecy Regimes

Whilst the MIP and OPLAN establish a framework for EULEX's regular functioning mode of operation, and serve the purpose of providing a strategy on how EULEX is to achieve its goals within its two year mandate, they also hint at spatio-temporal regimes of secrecy where delayed work is seemingly encouraged. In hindering access to information, it is implied that secretive documents influence EULEX activity and impact the effectiveness and contribution of everyday staff activities. The specific details contained in these documents are labelled "EU RESTRICTED". The result of this classification is that some staff, in particular local staff, are not allowed to access either document.

In way of explanation for the confidential nature of such documents, a 2012 European Council document explains that, if the "privileged information on the mission's operations and functioning" found in the OPLAN was made public, it would "risk intensifying certain conflicts and make it more difficult to operate in the current climate" (Council of the European Union, 2012 own emphasis added). The same document goes further in emphasising the security risks associated with the public disclosure of certain EULEX documents, including some OPLAN appendices:

[b]y reason of their nature and *sensitive content*, these documents are classified EU RESTRICTED as their disclosure would be *disadvantageous to the interests of the European Union*. Given their operational nature, the Council considers that disclosure of this information would be *detrimental for the effectiveness* of the on-going mission in a difficult environment. Releasing this content would not only put at *risk the mission's activities*, but also *affect relations* with relevant third parties (Council of the European Union, 2012 own emphasis added).

This definition of "RESTRICTED" relies on the concept of "disadvantageous" and the notion of "detrimental", where any disclosures could embarrass the EU or call into question EULEX's operational activities, and its accountability (Bunyan, 2014). The

suggestion is that while public measures have to be put in place to restrict information about EULEX's operational nature, so too do internal measures of caution against the possibility of "disadvantageous", or "detrimental", disclosures of information from within the mission. Here, possible future risk determines present day confidentiality criterion.

The effect of restricting staff access to internal documents like the MIP or OPLAN, constructs a regime of selective secrecy that is broadly based on bureaucratic hierarchies of knowledge. At one level, those in the European Council, who make decisions about the content of these documents and their accessibility, are set apart from EULEX staff in the field who receive and implement those decisions. In this way, closure becomes about the decision-makers in the Council of the European Union, as it is they who hold key longer-term information about the future direction and objectives of the EULEX mission. The assumption is that it is possible to achieve a future EU state (Kosovo) by only telling a few select people how this will be achieved. This begs the question of whether it is a conscious thought-out policy of exclusion and secrecy, or something that just happens by accident, as a result of over-zealous bureaucracy.

### **The 'them' and 'us' of secrecy regimes**

Secretive documents also impact how fully staff are integrated into EULEX based on who has access to confidential information at any given time. By only allowing certain EULEX staff to access the MIPs or OPLAN, those in the field are also divided between those who have access to key operational documents (typically international staff), and those who do not (typically local staff). Together, these hierarchies of knowledge, establish a 'them' and 'us'; between the 'insiders' (namely EULEX staff, the EU and European Union governments), and the 'outsiders' (anyone outside the 'insider' group including the general public and Kosovo). They also suggest that local EULEX staff, who commonly do not have access to key operational documents, are a potential 'insider' threat not to be trusted, and therefore also represent 'outsiders' to EULEX as the below table reflects.

Table 1 – A Paradox of ‘Insiders’ and ‘Outsiders’

<b>EULEX international staff – short-term involvement with EULEX and Kosovo</b>	<b>EULEX local staff – long <i>and</i> short-term involvement with EULEX and Kosovo</b>
INSIDERS to EULEX	INSIDERS to EULEX as staff
	OUTSIDERS to EULEX as part of the local population
OUTSIDERS to Kosovo	INSIDERS to Kosovo

This brings up two fundamental points of particular interest to this thesis. The first is that the internal secrecy imposed by confidential action points and a secretive operational structure, is not favourable to transparent<sup>93</sup> working processes, or to notions of capacity-building and knowledge transfer so central to development practice. After all, as a staff member, how do you plan your regular work tasks or implement activities without fully grasping your organisation’s strategy or its structure? This Kafkaesque set-up of secrecy and limited transparency suggests that these hierarchies of knowledge are one means of forming internal spatio-temporal structures of inclusion and exclusion; ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’.<sup>94</sup> These in turn encourage knowledge networks to form amongst those holders of confidential information.

The second and related point is that while secrecy, created by operational documents maintaining a status of confidentiality, typically forges a division between the internationals as holders of knowledge, and the locals as non-knowledge holders, it also suggests that the short-term involvement of international staff can replace the longer-term involvement of locals. It is these two issues that the next section elaborates.

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<sup>93</sup> Although the European Union, through the Lisbon treaty, established transparency rules in which EU institutions work as openly as possible (European Union, 2007), there is some caution regarding the notion of transparency and what it really signifies. For instance, for Stan, transparency measures “contribute to a new opacity and secretiveness in the domains they seek to transform” and is therefore closely linked to corruption, both “two sides of the same coin (Stan, 2007, p. 259).

<sup>94</sup> Sampson, for example, attests to local complaints oft made against internationals (in his case donors) who “keep secrets” (Sampson, 2002b).

### **5.2.3 A Spatio-Temporal Paradox of ‘Insiders’ and ‘Outsiders’**

The hierarchies of knowledge that are established from internal regimes of secrecy, not only limit the openness on decision-making procedures and the accountability of operational practices, but they also make working towards the goal of closure much harder to achieve in the regular operation of that organisation. Being an ‘insider’ means that you have the power to decide what you will be doing at work as one is informed about performance indicators and team, or organisational, objectives. The regular working day then becomes about deciding which activities should be completed, in order to meet the objectives that will ultimately contribute to an organisation successfully meeting its goal of closure. With such knowledge, timeframes and deadlines can be set, activities can be prioritised, and tasks can be accomplished. Among those who have access to key information about the operational structure and performance activities include the Head of Mission, the Heads and Deputy Heads of Departments, Mobile Monitors, Customs Monitors, Intelligence Analysts, Regional and Mobile Advisors, Team Leaders, Prosecutors, Legal Officers, Judges, and Political Advisors, all of whom are international staff.

Whilst I heard some international staff in senior roles complain that they did not know *how* they were expected to meet certain departmental or organisational aims, they were nevertheless aware of *what* they were expected to achieve during their time with EULEX, and how they, and their team, fit into the broader operational strategy of EULEX. This is a far cry from local staff who, quite often being ‘outsiders’ to operational information, are not aware of the bigger picture, beyond the broad mission mandate objectives. Instead, their everyday role is limited to a short-term supportive role that is dependent on the line manager communicating specific action points to be achieved. Typically, local staff are the Drivers, Administration/Language Assistants, Interpreter/Translators, Legal Advisors, and IT and logistic support staff. In such roles they tend to have to respond and react to the immediate needs of other staff on a regular basis. This process often prevents local staff from knowing the work that goes on beyond their own offices, as they are encouraged to work in teams rather than for the organisation as a whole. Having a limited temporal vision about what their work is

about and where they fit into the organisation at any given time, not only breaks up an organisational community and maintains a division between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, but equally, control of this temporal long-term vision influences how staff spend their everyday working hours.

Despite no local staff openly admitting to the regular constraints of not being able to access the MIPs or OPLAN, I often observed this dynamic at play in the regular activities of some local staff who, as a result, were left unable to plan ahead, or really engage with their colleagues in other departments being unaware of what other departments or roles existed. For many I spoke with, this meant working with the same EULEX staff or offices, and limiting their work activities to being responsive and reactive. The impact of this would translate into frustration, stress or, simply, loss of motivation.

### **A question of trust**

The goal of working oneself out of a job towards what this thesis terms closure, typically becomes possible only for those with access to information outlining the mission’s structure and how it will achieve its objectives during its regular period of ‘normal’ operation. The practice of inclusion and exclusion in this case means that international staff usually become the knowledge holders, or ‘insiders’, who bear full responsibility to drive forward the organisational goals in their everyday, while local staff, excluded from such sources of information, mostly become the ‘outsiders’ to that knowledge, and disempowered from fully participating in the long-term goals of the organisation, and thus of Kosovo’s development. In this case, the practice of a “need to know” applies to ‘outsiders’ (the international staff and decision-makers in the European Council), while excluding the locals from that need, or its possibilities. The insinuation is that the internationals can be trusted as responsible holders of confidential knowledge, while local staff, cannot be trusted. Such practices reproduce the colonial paternalism attached to many development projects (see, for instance, Baaz, 2005; Escobar, 2012; McEwan, 2009; Rist, 2006), and fit in with implications of “infantilized dependency” (Burman, 2007), rendering the local staff passive receivers of external, European aid.

The fear of information being leaked was brought to my attention by a seconded Head of Department who had been in his role for two years. He described a typical situation within his unit, highlighting this distrust between colleagues which usually manifested itself between internationals and locals:

My team was mostly made up of internationals, with one local assistant. We often have morning meetings and, sometimes the local assistant would be late, or not turn up at all. One morning I decided to ask my team where he was. They told me they hadn't invited him. When I asked why, their answer was 'Oh we don't tell him to come unless it's absolutely necessary.' 'Let's invite him then!' I said. Their answer: 'are we sure we can trust him?' What I want to know is, how do we know we can't trust him?!"

In this instance, the separation between local and international staff that is common in EULEX stems from distrust.<sup>95</sup> It is highly likely that a regime of secrecy set up through confidential documentation encourages this approach where certain staff are encouraged to keep information confidential from others, even if it might not be the only explanation for it.

Keeping information confidential and restricting access to certain documents is not just limited to local staff, but it is also a policy imposed on interns. In my own case, writing a study on access to justice for victims of sexual violence was made harder by the restrictions. Not having full access to the Organisational Plan (OPLAN) or the relevant Mission Implementation Plan (MIP) action points meant that I was limited in making any useful observation on the core roles of EULEX. In my report I note that:

Due to the restrictions placed on interns, the report is not founded on any knowledge of the OPLAN or MIPs which have restricted the ability to

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<sup>95</sup> While it is not the aim here to discuss the dynamics of trust and distrust between locals and internationals in the Balkans, several scholars have testified to the imbalances of such relationships resulting from these dynamics that often undermine peacebuilding efforts (see, for example, Sampson, 2002a, p. 311)

base any findings and recommendations within a specific EULEX strategy.

The result of this was to limit the usefulness of my research for EULEX, as the findings and recommendations were based on my *interpretation* of what EULEX activities were, rather than fact. Had the restrictions not been in place, I might better have used my time to study a handful of documents with all the information available at hand, rather than spending days investigating the mission structure, emailing colleagues for their recommendations of who best to contact, and waiting for answers from those still in the mission. I might better have been able to target my recommendations in line with the future direction of the mission to ensure that the action points I was suggesting were relevant, and could be built on. I have often wondered how many other international staff have experienced such restrictions, and how that impacts the productivity and value of an organisation compared to the cost of that position.

On the other hand, international staff do not usually have knowledge of the local language and therefore depend on locals for updated intelligence about particular events in Kosovo, or, for example, for accurate translations. Here a dependency of a less acknowledged type emerges – that of the international expert’s dependency on the locals. As such the relationship between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ is a complex one that makes the ‘normal’ operation of a short-term mission not always what it seems. It also attests to a blurred spatio-temporal boundary that is constantly being (re)created.

#### **5.2.4 Contradicting Time-Horizons: ‘Short-term’ and ‘Long-term’ Horizons**

When considering closure, these working practices create an interesting dynamic not only between those included or excluded from operational information, but also between their temporal trajectories to suggest that the short-term involvement of international staff can replace the longer-term involvement of locals. While the ‘insiders’ of knowledge are also ‘outsides’ to the Kosovo context, they are present in Kosovo as a transitory, temporary presence. By contrast, those placed ‘outside’ of the secrecy created by the MIP and OPLAN, most often the locals, are Kosovo’s ‘insiders’ and permanent residents who are supposed to be the long-term beneficiaries of

EULEX's work. One way of demonstrating the temporal complexity that this set-up creates is through the use of 'experts'.

Experts can be professional experts or thematic experts, usually sent in from abroad to work for EULEX to share their particular expertise within a capacity-building role. This fits in with the rhetoric of development where outsiders are tasked with capacity building a local population. They are expected to leave once this expertise has been transferred. As such, their presence is intended to be temporary despite having an anticipated long-term impact. Because of the short-term nature of the job, capacity building local colleagues is deemed difficult to achieve in the typically limited time available to experts.

Several EULEX staff involved with capacity building their local counterparts told me that time was a valuable resource for them in helping them gain the trust of locals. Sometimes this was a resource that they simply did not have, or ran out of. As a result, capacity building tasks would not always be prioritised, but instead replaced by activities that could quickly show results, such as a one off training. This resonates with Autesserre's point about the short-term mind-set deterring interveners from committing to long-term action, and instead, promoting quick results (Autesserre, 2014, p. 243). For Autesserre, such limited time horizons impede particular working relationships which require time to build trust (Autesserre, 2014, p. 245).

The impact of short-term activities is not always deemed to have a long-term impact however. For instance, one seconded Head of Unit who was nearing the end of his contract offered his take on the temporal limitations of the short-term expert's role by pointing to the longer-term expertise of locals. He told me that when it comes to capacity building local counterparts, he felt acutely aware that many of the locals he was working with were more expert than him, explaining:

[My local counterparts have] been in their job since before EULEX even existed and they received so much training from the UN and experts from many other international organisations.

This, he pointed out, created an issue relating to the temporal trajectory of local counterparts. He continued:

...some of these police are now approaching retirement. When they leave, all that expertise will also leave with them as we've not thought about passing that knowledge on from local to local.

The point here is that while international experts come and go regularly in EULEX, the careers of local counterparts have a different temporality as they tend to remain in their jobs for several years. This account would suggest that various international experts share their expertise with the same locals time and time again. While this serves the short-term needs of those particular local staff who are accumulating expertise, there are no provisions in place to transfer their knowledge to the next generation of local police staff. Sharing targeted expertise may give the impression of meeting targets and working towards the goal of closure, but equally it contributes to short-term capacity building structures.

### **Dependency established**

The existence of confidential documents holding key information about the direction of an organisation, limits both the knowledge of locals, and the potential for international experts to transfer (confidential) information in the limited time they have due to confidentiality restrictions. The extent to which a staff member without information about the long-term objectives can contextualise expert information is questionable. In addition to the ineffective distribution of responsibilities (see also Martin, 2012), it highlights the reliance that such staff have on knowledge holders. Being dependent prevents those staff, primarily locals, from planning ahead, developing their own skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking or decision-making due to lacking the 'bigger picture'. Nor are they given the space or encouragement to participate actively in the mission's end gaining processes. As a result, locals are less likely to invest in, challenge or question the mission, trapping them into established patterns of working behaviours and linear ways of working.

For instance, being reactive and responsive to the emerging needs of the mission is an issue many locals bought up. For one Personal Assistant this rendered her work dull and curbed any ambition. She had been in the mission for nearly four years and was mostly responsible for organising meetings as well as translating key documents relating to political and legal issues her line manager deemed important to know:

I just do. My boss treats me like I'm just here for him. So I do what he asks. Sometimes I know that something has already been done before and didn't work. But he doesn't ask what I know. He has his specific tasks that he has to do, and then he tells me mine. I just do what he says and then I go home at the end of the day.

This account highlights an approach to work that many other locals echo. By not being able to determine her own tasks herself, and being dependent on instructions from her line manager, this Personal Assistant hints at not going beyond what is asked of her or using initiative due to the working relationship that is established. She is aware, as were many others that the result is a loss of motivation and a disconnect from the work she, or EULEX, does. Such a set-up results in many frustrated working relationships between internationals and locals in EULEX.

However, not everyone upholds the pact of secrecy. Some internationals decide to show their local counterparts the MIP action points and/or OPLAN. I was told by an international Adviser that this information was shared because there wasn't anything worth hiding in it. But this is an exception rather than a rule, and one that blurs the division between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' and establishes the co-existence of formal and informal practices of secrecy. The result of such a closed and guarded system of knowledge is that while internationals leave with the expertise and knowledge about the structure and direction of a mission, locals remain with institutional memory but have little knowledge to ensure the successful end gaining of the organisation in which they continue to work. As such, the regular operation for the international is bound to a future-oriented work outlook, whereas for local staff, it is knowledge of the past that they master.

Although the OPLAN and MIP documents generally serve the purpose of providing a (future projected) strategy on how EULEX will achieve its goals within its two-year mandate, both documents are, typically, kept confidential from local staff due to anticipated future risks of disclosure. Such confidentiality divides staff between 'insiders' of knowledge, and 'outsiders' of knowledge, as well as along temporal lines described above. As a result, closure becomes dependent on access to information, without which, some staff, primarily local staff, are excluded from fully participating

in the organisation's longer-term goals and Kosovo's development, despite principally being staff who will remain in Kosovo well after the mission has left, while others, mostly internationals, carry full responsibility in achieving those goals.

### **5.3 CONTRACTUAL TIME: EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN END OF MISSION DATE**

While the OPLAN and MIP are considered confidential documents and establish a regime of secrecy, the end date of one's contract is very much visible on every staff member's identity card, generally carried around each individual's neck during working hours. The regular visibility of a staff member's end of mission date, underlines a shared commonality between staff: everyone shares an end date. Regardless of whether they resist this end date, or work towards it (after all, we all have to leave one day), there is a clear deadline within which to work oneself out of a job. Contractual time in this sense represents a symbolic daily reminder of an individual's own closure as determined by the organisation. The different ways in which staff respond to the end date of their contract, I suggest, points to an anxiety about pending closure that distracts from the main goal of collective closure.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the type of contract one receives dictates to a large extent the type of professional EULEX attracts, and how the job is approached. Whether they are seconded staff, international contractors or local contractors, each person experiences a unique approach toward their own contractual end date and the insecurity that is felt during the lead up to that date. For example, when staff describe the main difference between contractors and secondees, they often point to the fact that secondees return home to a job waiting for them, or to their retired life, once they reach the end of their contract, unlike contractors who do not have a job waiting for them back home. In particular, for many international contractors who usually hold junior or mid-level positions, their contract represents their only work. I was told that this means that they are mostly reputed to put in "extra hours" at work, and to "work extra hard" in creating strong networks, or a good working reputation. With strong connections and a good reputation, future job prospects are more likely.

An additional point differentiating contractors and secondees is that contracted staff are more likely to job hunt on a regular basis, even from their first day at EULEX. For example, one senior international contractor working as part of a small team putting together criminal cases for trial, admitted to have been looking for jobs every week since the day he arrived in Pristina:

It's what I've needed to do – look for another job constantly. There is a sense of insecurity and ambivalence towards what you are doing as you need to be looking for another job all the time. You get used to it, but it is really difficult. That insecurity makes it difficult to have a private life and get involved in relationships. These relationships are not capable of surviving after the departure from an environment. That's one of the biggest sacrifices that you have to make.

This idea of constantly looking for work was also reiterated by staff members at the International Civilian Office (ICO), the second case study in this thesis. This points to a general insecurity experienced by contractors on an everyday level, with a strong awareness about time and the significance of an end date. This end date for contractors worried about future financial, or personal, security is expressed through a need to always be looking and planning ahead to secure the next job. The exception is with a minority<sup>96</sup> of local contracted staff members who hold one or several jobs external to EULEX in addition to their employment with EULEX. This can be for financial reasons, or to maintain opportunities and connections with the local job market in anticipation for when EULEX will close. By holding several jobs externally, some local staff demonstrated the importance of being able to prepare for an uncertain future.

An international Legal Officer working on internal legal matters pertaining to EULEX told me she was aware that a large part of her early career was now being spent in Kosovo. Consequentially, she felt concern about being pigeonholed into this one geographical area as a “Balkan expert”. Worrying about such a label implies that some

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<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately statistical information about how many local staff held jobs outside EULEX was not gathered nor is it available. However, based on my own interviews and personal conversations, I gathered that although this was not the case for all local staff, an important minority held other jobs.

international staff fear being limited to only finding work in this region in the future. The result means that some staff are encouraged to leave EULEX within a certain personally set timeframe in order to gain experience in other regions. This opens up future career prospects and possibilities that go beyond time spent in EULEX.

The visible contract end date on one's ID card acts as a frequent reminder about working towards a deadline, and a future point; for locals it is as much about their own contract, as about an end result for Kosovo, and the departure of EULEX. This has many implications which are discussed in later chapters, but relevant to this section is that the contract end date symbolises either an everyday safety net and financial opportunity for local staff members and their families, or a worry to be anticipated and planned for.

As with international contractors, one's own contractual end date conjures feelings of worry for local staff regarding future job security. In the context of Kosovo where employment levels are dire, future employability is of real concern. However, this concern manifests itself less regularly as a daily issue, perhaps because, as Sampson notes, local staff have "little aspiration to obtain employment in the state or private sector" due to low pay, low status, or a non-existent market (Sampson, 2003b, p. 150). Concerns over future employability will instead emerge as a fateful moment punctuating the regular rhythms of mandate end dates (Guyer, 2007, p. 416). With the exception of a downsizing exercise (an issue I address Chapter Six), local staff tend, on the whole, to have their jobs extended whenever a mandate is renewed. For local EULEX staff therefore, the regular contract end date displayed so clearly on their EULEX identity cards is seen as being a temporary date with the possibility of being extended. Flexibility of dates is thus introduced as is the potential for flexibility, a point I elaborate on in the next chapter.

Paradoxically, underlying this confidence over the renewal of one's contract, is also the awareness that one's contractual end date may, some day in the distant future, *really* represent the end of one's work at EULEX. This is a point I return to in later chapters. The difference here between local and international contracted staff seems to lie with the time horizon that informs this confidence or insecurity. With the exception of the few who hold one or several jobs in anticipation of closure, for most

local contractors, the perception is that the end of their time in EULEX will not occur immediately. Local contracted staff would often snigger at my questions about the end of their contract, questioning why their contract could end when Kosovo was still undergoing major issues such as political corruption. Such reactions suggest that local staff position their own careers in line with the development of Kosovo. In parallel to their own contract end date is therefore, what this end represents more broadly for Kosovo.

In contrast to the contracted staff member who is conscious of their unstable job status, holding a seconded position in EULEX triggers worry of a different nature. For secondees, such a set-up is generally experienced as reinforcing the temporary and transient nature of daily work and life in Kosovo. Secondees on the whole, oscillate between feeling that they are living in a paused time between the now and their return home, and feeling that they are experiencing an intense period of their life with many new opportunities to exploit. Head and Deputy Heads of Mission and Departments are typically seconded staff, as are senior professionals from the Police or Justice Sector who hold positions such as Advisors. As they are seconded by their Government they are often considered to be “safe” in terms of having regular work available to them back home. This explains the permanent vacancy list due to the high turnover of staff, mostly seconded, needing to return to their jobs interrupted by the secondment.

Most secondees also feared being de-skilled and learning bad practice, or being “contaminated by poor practice in Kosovo”. On the other hand, having a job to return to for secondees, means that for some, the EULEX contract is an opportunity to try and learn something different that would benefit or strengthen their professional skills back home. This suggests that this group is generally placed within a professional context of continuity between the work ‘back home’ and the work in Kosovo.

### **5.3.1 Temporal Trajectories of Everyday Work**

From the organisation’s perspective, staff are constantly present in EULEX regardless of the high staff turnover. This gives an impression of permanence and continuity for the organisation which I discussed in the previous chapter. However, the length of time each staff member spends in a short-term organisation is generally dependent on the contract duration one is issued with as symbolised by their individual contract end

date. When we observe the individual's length of time spent in EULEX, various fixed and flexible temporal trajectories emerge. I have mentioned before that some contracts are shorter than others. This could be due to the difference in contract regimes (seconded staff typically have longer term contracts than contracted staff), or as a result of different arrival dates particularly affecting contracted staff whose contracts align themselves with the Head of Mission. This emerges both factually and as a felt reality for many staff at EULEX.

For the individual, each time a new wave of staff arrive, the further along the EULEX time continuum a staff member moves. We see this more obviously with international staff as they enter and leave EULEX more frequently. For instance, new international arrivals would often clarify that they were new to EULEX. In the stage of discovery and knowledge acquisition (Carstensen, 2006) I hinted at in Chapter Four, new staff set themselves apart from staff who are no longer 'new'. A young Legal Officer who recently arrived in EULEX to offer support to a legal team preparing cases to be brought to trial, identified two key moments when he felt he could no longer call himself new to EULEX. The first was at the organisational level, when new staff arrived. In his case new staff arrived two weeks after his own arrival. Having finished the induction training and started in his role, he felt as if he was no longer being viewed or treated by EULEX as a new staff member. He was now part of the organisation. The second moment where he felt conscious of no longer being new, was at a more personal level, when he reached three months in his role. Three months, he told me, was the amount of time needed to get settled into a new job and EULEX. At this stage he felt he had transitioned from exploring and discovering Kosovo and the EULEX organisation and structure, to having his own knowledge and more experience than when he'd first arrived, and in comparison to those arriving after him. This was echoed by other staff who also felt that after three months one was no longer 'new' as three months was the template amount of time required to understand a new job, as well as the structure of the organisation.

In general, local contracted staff tend to stay longer in EULEX as their contracts get renewed and extended more frequently, providing them with the opportunity to gain the institutional memory that internationals lack due to the high turnover of

international staff. Although some staff have to reapply for their positions, as the next chapter shows, on the whole there is not as high a turnaround of local staff as there is with international staff. The high turnaround for seconded staff, I suggested before, is due to the need for seconded staff to return to their jobs back home. The high turnaround of contracted international staff may be triggered by the preferential treatment accorded to seconded staff over contracted international staff. As local staff generally remain in Kosovo and do not tend to be replaced, or in competition, with seconded staff who are temporally bound by their jobs back home, local staff remain the longest in EULEX, gaining knowledge and experience of past activities and projects. These differences in time spent in EULEX often encourages various responses to closure, all of which have temporal trajectories of their own.

### **5.3.2 A Time for Networking**

Social networks are important in the everyday and have their own temporality. Depending on one's contract type, access to a network can be helped by tapping into established networks. This is particularly the case with secondees due to the roster they are usually a part of, and following the pre-deployment training that itself establishes new contacts. A network can also have been established by having already worked in EULEX or in Kosovo. On the other hand, those completely new to Kosovo and to EULEX may have more difficulty in entering a set network, and may be encouraged to form their own networks, often naturally formed during the initial training week, or with team mates.

Networking for the future is vital in Aidland and the urgency of networking is equally impacted by how long one has left until the contract end date. The most common way of creating and maintaining social connections and networks is by drinking and partying. In some instances, drinking and socialising was seen as more important than doing a good job for many contractors and seconded internationals alike, particularly those who were keen to stay in missions. In the case of one international Legal Officer in a junior position, the failure obtain "the network to back him up in a job interview" was given by his team leader as an explanation for why this junior staff member had not had their contract renewed. Another staff member indirectly supported this claim by telling me of her own experience as a junior contracted Legal Officer. She told me

that she was extremely focused on her career but had felt pressured to go out and socialise, recognising that this was the only way she could get strong references that would help her later on.

By the very nature of their short-term presence however, there are limited long-term opportunities to socialise. In agreement with Cohen I observed that the internationals generally restricted their leisure-time to other internationals as a result of temporal choice and constraint combined, as well as stemming from a need to increase or secure future career prospects (Cohen, 1977). The result of limited time in seeking out opportunities to establish networks of friendships and connections, heightened the need to socialise. Networks thus have their own temporality in this sense. They also follow people into their next mission or job. Paradoxically, despite the importance placed on networking and socialising, I was told that “the same buffoons turn up again and again” as recruitment occurs outside of these networks. So while individual names are known, their reputation does not always follow through in time. Making the right choices in who is invested in from the outset thus plays a crucial part in networks, and highlights the importance of continuity beyond closure.

### **5.3.3 The “Priority List” of Temporal Relationships**

Various temporal relationships also emerge as a result of the various temporal trajectories found within EULEX. For instance, the temporary nature of all contracts will impact which image a person will portray to others during their presence in the field. For instance, in considering how people portray themselves, some development workers will only allow one layer of who they are to show, not wanting to commit or get too close to others. This is mostly due to the transitory nature of the job which places closure and leaving into the background of social relations.

Whether for internationals or locals, getting to know someone and investing in them is an important decision to make. Many of the narratives I heard pointed to the idea that spending time investing in others through meaningful relationships and friendships gradually became less appealing over the time spent in EULEX. Often, what would emerge from conversations with internationals and locals alike was the sense of loss or the feeling of being left behind from which many found it hard to recover from. Where this narrative differed was in the nationality of the respondent;

for locals it would often focus on the departure of internationals, for internationals the narrative instead pointed to the reluctance of making efforts with new (international) arrivals (see also O'Donoghue, 2014 for a similar argument).

For one particular type of local female staff, age and time spent working for international organisations such as EULEX contribute to a temporal definition of who one is. This is the case for women that symbolise a lost generation; those in their late 20s, early 30s working in international organisations since a young age, who are not married, and who have often fought back the advances of international males while being rumoured locally to have dated those international men. Having never worked for a local organisation, these women are children of the international mission, and reflect what Schwandner-Sievers has noted to be a temporal domestication of the local staff member within the system of international intervention in the Balkans who is “stripped of any threatening local culture” and has limited long-term opportunities as a result (Schwandner-Sievers, 2003, p. 202).

The information visible on an identity card is sometimes used to feed one's knowledge, particularly when choosing to enter a relationship or not. The decision to make friends often considers the time period that the other is contracted for. One doesn't enter a friendship or relationship because they know, from the “valid till” date on the ID card, when the person is expected to leave. If it is soon, then the effort is not always considered worth the pain and emptiness alluded to above when that person leaves. This is illustrated by a typical question asked of new arrivals by internationals and locals alike: “how long are you here for?”, or variations of that same question: “when is your contract till?” or “have you just arrived?”. If the questioner is international staff, the answer given is usually evaluated against their own departure date, if the person asking the question is a local staff member, the consideration tends to be based on how busy their schedule is. The answer is usually evaluated against the questioner's own expected departure date.

During processes of courtship and sexual relationships, this question appears ever more important. One internationally contracted Special Assistant in her 30s particularly sensitive to her environment and the people around her, noted a trend she had observed of men asking this question of new female arrivals:

First they will ask you your age, where you are from, and then they will ask how long your contract is for. This helps to inform them about how long they have to court you. It dictates their priority list; if you are staying a while, there is time. If you are leaving soon, or sooner than another woman they are courting, then you jump to the top of that priority list. They target you till you go. Once you've left, the second person on the list is targeted, and so it goes on.

My observations confirmed the question of contract length being amongst the top five questions staff would first ask new arrivals. While this enables a sorting of priorities for either sexual or friendship reasons, it also allowed staff to gauge the level of knowledge new arrivals have, and to assess their vulnerability in terms of friendship groups. Where arrival is met with a sizing up of contract duration, the end date on one's contract informs much of the continuing relationships individual staff are to have.

It also impacts relationships back home as the here and now is, for many, dictated by the end date of one's contract as the Special Assistant, who had been working in EULEX for three years, continued:

After a while most internationals seek human contact with someone who is here. Most of the men will arrive all sad as they are still thinking about their wives or girlfriends and probably missing them. Then they go out, meet other internationals, see how they behave and start to play the field a bit - everyone here does it, so why can't they? Maybe they'll succeed in having one, or a few, casual relationships. Then, just before the end of their mission, they go crazy. It's as if it's the last opportunity they will have to have fun.

While this is by no means only applicable to males in relationships back home, this example shows how one's own contractual end date structures relations both back home and in Kosovo and the intensity with which these are lived. Whether or not part of a courtship process, entering a friendship and/or relationship often involves a process that carefully considers the date of departure of the other, as well as one's own departure date, highlighting the temporary nature of time and relations.

### **Transitory working relationships**

The contract end date is equally an important source of information for many staff - particularly, I found, for locals. In some cases, knowing the departure date of another staff member represents something to look forward to, particularly if staff members don't get on. This was the case in one office I came across where the international and local staff member were in conflict with each other. The local who was tasked with providing legal and programmatic assistance held on to the date of departure of her senior international line manager, openly counting down the days. However, this date was also shrouded in angst:

I've worked with funny people, people who have taught me a lot. But this is just terrible! I just hope I don't wish him back!

In this case the time between the 'now' and the end of her international colleague's contract was considered a bracketed time to survive and endure, but always with an element of anticipation and awareness about what, or who, was to follow.

For others, knowing when a staff member would leave was expressed by a rush in activity. For example, below is a story about a local EULEX Press and Information Officer in his 20s who is highly motivated by his junior role at EULEX. I sat with him one lunchtime discussing his growing unease and angst about the pending and inevitable departure of his line manager, an international who he had been working with for over two years. He liked his boss, he told me, because together they had developed the scope of his work. Whereas he had initially been given a support and administrative role, his boss had provided him with the rare but informal opportunity to research and develop his own stories going beyond his original job description. In an organisation that does not promote career progression, he recognised that he had been amongst the lucky ones. At some stage they had even spoken about changing his job title to reflect this change in responsibilities in order to help him with future work prospects. However, despite being on the ID card, the departure date of his boss had been unexpected as both had relied on the contract being extended. (The expectation of contract extension is a common perception in EULEX that I detail further in the next chapter on the downsizing of a short-term temporary mission). In this case, he

worried that they had not had the time to put onto paper what his new job consisted of. He explained:

We haven't had time before to change my contract or the title of my new job. If he leaves now before we officially change my role, then the next person who comes in might not believe me that I do all these things and I'll have to go back to doing what I was doing before. I'm worried because now I don't see him. He's concerned about leaving now, or trying to keep his job. But I need this official change of job description and job title because it will help me later on.

As a result of this his daily concerns became about trying to pin down his boss to officialise his changed work responsibilities and tasks. In the end he was unable to change his title. Although his was only the second case I came across of a similar nature, it suggests that contractual end dates go beyond impacting the individual concerned but also impacts wider teams, friendships or career opportunities beyond the fixed contractual date. In the regular activities of EULEX staff, the experience of closure is thus felt to be flexible and transitory as characterised by the existence of various temporal trajectories, yet having long-term impacts that are fixed and rather inflexible, requiring time to (re)establish.

#### **5.4 EXPERIENCED TIME: DIFFERENT TIME HORIZONS**

Even when you are working yourself out of a job, life must go on.<sup>97</sup> Although not everyone experiences time in the same way, most work at EULEX reveals an element of shared temporal characteristics shared across all staff. In all the experiences of time that I describe below, the future departure of EULEX is very much a structuring feature of the present, even if not always openly recognised. Due to the temporary nature of EULEX and its two-year mandate, approaches to time and closure become a delicate balancing act between various temporalities. It is the purpose of this final

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<sup>97</sup> For a public source on what EULEX staff do in their everyday personal time see a short film by EULEX that shows the everyday experiences of two EULEX police advisors on their days off (EULEX Kosovo, 2013).

section to illustrate how life does go on through the regular negotiation of these temporalities, and how the performance of these temporalities are experienced by development staff in Kosovo. There are infinite ways that time can be felt and experienced both at home and at work. Not all of these are illustrated here as I have chosen to describe those most regularly mentioned to me in the context of closure. I am aware that these feelings of time are also apparent in the non-developmental world as part of the regular day at work and in personal life, however, my focus is specifically on how time is felt by those in Kosovo's development scene which is what I describe.

#### **5.4.1 Cyclical Time of the Working Week: “TGIF”**

The socio-temporal rhythms of time are largely configured around the cycle of the working week, beginning on Monday morning and terminating on a Friday, and repeating itself the following week. For example, staff often talk about Fridays as if it were the completion of a full week and the start of a new beginning: the weekend. Most staff seem to look forward to Fridays. When I would ask how people felt on a Friday the response was often a slight variation on “TGIF!” – Thank God it's Friday. While some looked to the week that had just been, expressing relief that a difficult working week was now ending, others would look to the weekend and look forward to the personal activities they had planned, be it a weekend of partying, cleaning the house, or visiting family. Travelling or visiting a new place was an activity only international staff would look forward to.

One of the ways in which closure is regularly performed within EULEX itself, is in the rhythms of arrivals and departures. Arrival and check-out punctuate the typical week at EULEX often starting with new staff arriving on Mondays and ending with current staff leaving by Friday. Although this movement of staff is not a strict weekly occurrence, it occurs throughout the year, creating such regularity in the movement between exits and arrivals that neither become apparent any more. The weekly structure thus represents an undercurrent of movement in EULEX that is visible when put on paper. Like waves, the new staff arrive with the start of the week and current staff leave with its end. However, while staff are aware that this is a regular occurrence and that “EULEX staff leave and arrive all the time” as a local Administrator in the Human Resources team explained, it falls into their subconscious; it is an activity that

is hidden away in the basement, it is out of sight, out of mind. Being so present, closure is deeply taken for granted and becomes invisible being inextricably part of the working week.

#### **5.4.2 Wasting Time: “That’s about 150 days a year you’re getting”**

Like many staff who have experience of working in missions, one international seconded staff member whose tasks include providing internal advice on legal and staffing matters, feels frustration about the volume of time wasting that there is in EULEX. This is particularly felt as a result of the constant in and out flow of staff. For new staff, she told me, it takes about three months to understand a new job and the structure of the work and the organisation:

If you actually did the numbers on this, and took out the weekends, and took out the national holidays and then weekends on top of that, throw in how much on average people would be sick, say two weeks in the mission, and the three months it takes to get into your role in the first place... and then the worry faced around downsizing time which can take out six months (three months lead up and three months to recover), well, really, you’re talking about a tiny amount of time that people are actually working, that’s about 150 days a year you’re getting. That’s the real effect of rotation. When they talk about operational effectiveness of a mission. I don’t know why anybody didn’t just sit down with the member states and say we need somebody here for three years.

In counting the days staff on a two year contract spent at work, it becomes clear how detrimental the impact of rotating staff is. Here it is suggested that the resource of time is spent on getting settled into a job and adapting to any internal changes. In this case, “operational effectiveness” is translated into a temporal measurement.

It is not only in how many days spent at work that was a measure of effectiveness for staff. A contracted staff member working within the Executive Division of EULEX as a Legal Officer collecting case information from local rule of law counterparts, was frustrated at how this high turnover interrupted the process of achieving objectives:

People underestimate how long it takes to get to grips with an entire case history. Then to start working on it, which involves setting up meetings that rely on people being available to you, time for translations, time for just waiting for people. So much time wasted! Then once things are finally set in motion or getting somewhere, you need to leave, or to transfer the case to someone else who will go through exactly the same process again, and again, and again. They don't always do the overtime that is needed to get on top of the entire case in such a short time span. It's just such a frustrating way of working.

This example highlights the lack of continuity not just in staff but also in tasks despite both being interrelated.

#### **5.4.3 Slow Time: “What has changed since you were last here?”**

Various temporal trajectories impact not only relationships but also one's view of the work of development. I often heard it said that time goes slowly at EULEX, although the weeks go by quickly. The perception that time is slow is echoed by internationals and locals alike, suggesting that time is also commonly experienced. Mostly it is experienced as a frustration as work feels futile because progress is not immediately obvious. Slowness here becomes linked to the impression that not much is being achieved. Often when I would return to Kosovo I would be asked what had changed since the last time I was in Kosovo. Each time I was aware of the hope in this question - as if what I was really being asked was “tell me that there have been changes and that my work isn't for nothing.” Autesserre clearly addresses this issue with the short-term mind-set idea; claiming that when changes do take place, these can be “small and incremental in comparison to the overwhelming nature of the problem at hand”, resulting in discouragement and disheartenment (Autesserre, 2014, p. 245).

Here, daily time appears to be identified with narratives of progress throughout the everyday, symbolically linking the pace of development to time going fast and results being achieved. However, time is also offset by unforeseen slow time. The significance of this contradictory unravelling of time thus links two states of existence for Kosovo – its developing and developed state. The ‘normal’ everyday internal

operation of EULEX is therefore organic; responding to or anticipating changes in time flows or temporalities, but also framed by a specific end goal: closure.

#### **5.4.4 Controlling Time: “I control my environment because my environment controls me”**

Reflecting on his environment an international contracted staff member working on monitoring and reporting political issues and assessing their impact on EULEX activities, suggests that, amongst other factors, one must control one’s own time:

This type of work and life is similar to being a conscript in prison; with strict schedules, lots of work and living away from society in one way or another. I have to control my environment because my environment controls me. I have to control both my space, and my time. That means deciding who I spend time going out with, or who I listen to. I can’t listen to everyone because I find it tough hearing the problems of others. Their problems can become mine; I worry for my friends, or if it’s serious I can become involved even if involuntarily. And problems can wear you down, so you have to be careful who you offer that listening ear to and how often or when. I also have had to distance myself from family as it is too painful. I don’t mean being away from them, that’s of course sad for the length of time it lasts for. I mean more the things that I see and hear in my time here. I don’t want to worry them as well as then I’d have to spend time reassuring them I’m alright. And then, when you go back, you spend time trying to forget the pain, or you spend time settling back in again to normal life.

The remarks above refer to the challenges offered by the structural confines of development work and life in which actively choosing how to spend one’s time by limiting interactions and relations is but one of the ways in which this is expressed. The idea of controlling time hinted at above manifests itself in various ways and to differing degrees by different people. The control of time, and its ownership, is thus associated with various experiences and understandings of closure such as needing to control one’s thoughts of personal survival. It is in various ways and to differing

degrees that one will engage with time an attempt to control it, as part of a reaction to the environment one perceives themselves to be in.

#### **5.4.5 Spending Time: “I like to experience *here*”**

There is a lot of judgement about how people spend their time during the week, impacting the quality of relationships one has with colleagues. For example, many will judge their colleagues who leave work at the end of the working day (5:30) rather than putting in the same extra hours that those who judge are putting in. For instance, one staff member who was contracted to provide verbatim court recordings and translate legal documents commented on those who prioritise their time with partying and travelling rather than working seeing this as a reflection of staff “not caring about the job”. Such views hint at an inability for people to manage both work and partying, suggesting that a balance between the two is difficult to achieve. This seems to establish a distance or misunderstanding between people that is based on assumptions about what others do in their spare time.

While some prioritise partying, others prioritise making the most of time by exploring Kosovo and its culture. For instance, for a Police Officer in the Strengthening Department, the choice to discover and make the most of time spent in Kosovo is seen as crucial:

You know, when I’m here I like to experience *here*. I mean I have been to every... I have been to a wedding, a funeral, the girl’s party, I have been to where the boy gets circumcised, I have been to a birthday. I have been to every kind of event here. The Ramadan. I’ve made Avar, tortilla, fli. I’ve experienced everything there is *here* because that is why I am here.

Time in this way has to be made the most of, as if the end, or the limited temporality of this new experience, structures present day time.

#### **5.4.6 Continued Time: “It’s England re-created”**

Not everyone makes the most of time but rather they chose to encourage continuity in time. A senior civil servant external to EULEX who had been in Kosovo for over four years told me that internationals, particularly the British with whom he shared a

culture, “slot” into the life of Kosovo’s international community and carry on where others left off. This, he noted, can be best illustrated by Paddy’s culture as he explained:

There’s a great vibe. It’s a very friendly bar. They have a quiz on Thursdays, you can go to watch the rugby. They are very generous and lovely. But beyond that it’s a spiritually really *really* bad place. Just terrible – it’s England re-created. It’s your modern equivalent of building your own tennis court and having your afternoon tea of darjeeling in India - now you drink Guinness and watch footie. That’s the anthropology of the foreigner in Kosovo. It just offers a continuum of memories and comforts of home.

Expat worlds are by their very existence time out of time and this safe haven of time, also allows for social time which is key to establishing personal networks and connections that help ensure a continuity in career, thereby linking closure to the future and to continuation beyond that closure.

Due to the temporary nature of EULEX, time is approached in various ways during the regular and ‘normal everyday’ operation of EULEX and its staff. With various responses to the future time of closure, and to one’s own contractual end date, various temporalities are negotiated, experienced, judged and managed. While these performances highlight the various individual approaches and responses to time and to the future uncertainty represented symbolically by closure, they also reveal how fundamental closure is to the collective everyday of development work and life, whether or not openly acknowledged.

## **5.5 TEMPORAL AMBIGUITY MAINTAINED**

Ironically, while EULEX is concerned with goals, outcomes on a programmatic level, the precise goal of its own obsolescence is a deeply painful and terrifying one for the organisation and individual. This chapter has illustrated some of the ways in which closure is performed in the ‘normal everyday’ operation of EULEX. These do not claim to represent and reflect every type of time that is experienced by all EULEX staff, but broadly demonstrates some of the myriad and overlapping tempos, and the

many temporal orientations that can be found in EULEX. It finds that while there are anchors created by EULEX through its organisational and contractual set up, staff often find themselves spread across time zones, countries, and jobs. Within an organisation so tightly ruled by bureaucracy and structure a deep rooted dependency emerges whereby staff operate in a non-regulated chaotic manner, often looking out for their own individual interests, or navigating the contradictions in an attempt to regain some form of temporal control and certainty.

There is also a logic of conflict and contradiction between the private and the organisational life. In the everyday private life, an individual finds a way to cope, navigate and manage time and closure's shadow in an attempt to regain control. As a group, anxiety dominates as the future cannot be predicted or controlled and reminders of the temporary overrule attempts at stability and continuity. In the everyday of the organisation, closure is hidden away in the basement, as we saw in the previous chapter, or in secret documents. In such a secretive internal environment reminiscent of socialist times, EULEX's intention of empowering its beneficiaries through capacity-building is compromised as short-term internal goals replace closure's longer-term goals of working toward withdrawing from Kosovo. Kosovo is locked in short-termism as time beyond is ruled by the European Union and its member states through the secretive spatio-temporal hierarchies of knowledge of EULEX where the boundaries of knowledge become sites of negotiation dependent on trust and pacts of secrecy. Thus in an attempt to maintain a fiction of everyday continuity, EULEX controls the strings of time at the expense of Kosovo upon which it aims to impose a modern European future whilst burying Kosovo's past of conflict. Taken together, this risks undermining the longer-term development goals an organisation like EULEX initially sets out to achieve as short-termism and temporary values reign.

The dynamic interplay between the standpoint of the present on the future goal of closure, and the future goal of closure itself structures and controls the unfolding present in the regular activities of an organisation. Although not all staff have a uniform experience of time, the everyday necessitates a constant negotiation of deadlines, with closure always present within that negotiation. Closure in this everyday thus has a guiding role, be it directly or indirectly as, ultimately, it both

frames and conditions the 'normal' everyday operation of an organisation. And yet not knowing what that closure will bring, or when it will happen, maintains a degree of ambiguity and creates levels of angst and uncertainty that filter down through the pores of stable structures. Assuming that closure has not been deemed important or given due consideration during the everyday suggests that closure may be taken for granted and is a shared burden, be it one of success or of failure.

And yet...

Whether attempting to deal with closure or avoid it, closure is always there in the background. This becomes particularly apparent at the moment when the everyday is disrupted and no longer stable or routine, such as in a downsizing exercise which is the subject of the next chapter.

## 6 MANAGING CLOSURE: CLOSURE IN ACTION

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*“Who therefore denieth, that things to come are not as yet? and yet, there is in the mind an expectation of things to come.” (Saint Augustine, 2015)*

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION: DOWNSIZING AS A MICROCOSM OF CLOSURE

I have so far argued that although closure is informally present in the way that time is planned and performed, by maintaining a functioning state of operation either at recruitment stage (Chapter Four) or during regular work and life activities (Chapter Five), closure is somehow resisted by an organisation with a short-term mandate. In this chapter I turn my attention away from the early stages and regular activities in an organisation’s life, to look at its processes of winding down. Before addressing the formalities of closure, to which Chapters Six and Seven are entirely dedicated, I focus on a microcosm of closure - downsizing; a small but early exercise in closure, and a landmark process within the larger process of closure, where, I believe, closure’s time is most visible and intensely experienced.

In this chapter I provide an understanding of how an organisation manages closure during a downsizing exercise to consider the impact this has on the collective development endeavour. To do so means first looking at the various process of downsize and unpacking downsizings’ shifting discourses and meanings where secrecy of information serves to divide staff and encourages an inward-looking short-term culture. The challenge of change is then observed through illustrating some of the activities of downsizing which are set apart from the regular organisational activities and are often experienced as a disruption. I end the chapter by focusing on the marking of time in a downsizing exercise to explore the various temporalities that exist. I make two key points; the first echoes the previous two chapters by claiming that the organisational time structures during a downsize create a division between the insiders and outsiders of knowledge. The second key argument I make is that, as closure’s proximity is perceived as being more ‘real’ in a downsize, time increasingly becomes a matter for prioritisation and (re-)negotiation to be carefully managed and accounted for at both a personal and organisational level. As a result, the organisation

becomes inward-looking, and the nature of development work is temporarily interrupted.

Downsize is typically linked to restructure and improving effectiveness in response to declining or changed financial, organisational and/or environmental circumstances (Cameron, 1994; Cameron, Freeman, & Mishra, 1993; Sitlington & Marshall, 2011). Literature on downsizing, or corporate or organisational change usually focuses on corporations or businesses and their need to remain competitive and performative by reacting to market influences. This is clearly not the case in a short-term temporary mission such as the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) which is not part of the competitive market place but is instead dependent on political will and political priorities across Kosovo, the European Union and its member states. In this sense, this chapter understands downsize to be an intentional step in the right direction for a mission with a limited time horizon.

In a short-term temporary development mission a downsize is not only expected, but it is also part of the organisation's strategy to reduce in size, focus on activities of transferral to local counterparts, and leave. Although much of what is expressed about EULEX downsizes reflects trends in the literature on organisational downsizing, it isn't unexpected and it is not about financial sustainability or performance, even if these remain background considerations for EULEX. Downsize in this sense is a part of a strategy of closure. Downsizing belongs to the wider goal of closure for two reasons. Firstly, it is about reflecting achievements so is in theory a positive benchmark. This was supported by the mission's own message in June 2012 which emphasized that "[t]he reconfiguration and downsize of the [2010-2012] mission is a clear sign of the progress of the Kosovo authorities and the success of the Mission" (EULEX Website, 2012). By downsizing, EULEX thus tells its funders and stakeholders that certain objectives have been met at a certain point in time, and as a result of that achievement or "progress" (EUbusiness, 2012), the mission can reduce in numbers. Secondly, a reduction in staffing numbers suggests that longer-term preparation for the eventual withdrawal of a mission is underway.<sup>98</sup> As such,

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<sup>98</sup> For example, when justifying and supporting the 2012 downsize, EU civilian commander Hansjoerg Haber told the press that: "EULEX [...] needs to prepare for its own disengagement from Kosovo" (Nielsen & Rettman, 2012).

downsizing becomes not only part of EULEX's programme, integral both to measuring its achievement and key to its goal of closure, but it also acts as a reminder of the organisation's temporary nature, and of Kosovo's readiness to take over. This understanding of downsizing as both expected and integral to the life cycle of EULEX is important to bear in mind throughout this chapter.

## **6.2 SHIFTING DISCOURSES AND MEANINGS: THE TRICK IS GETTING THE TIMING RIGHT**

No downsize is managed in the same way even within a single organisation. Every downsize faces new priorities, differs in its context and triggers, and will often have different staff members involved at various stages of the process. For EULEX, a downsize is intricately linked both to the mandate's limited timeframe (and hence budgetary) horizon of two years, and to the contract of the Head of Mission (HoM). In particular, there have been several important employee<sup>99</sup> downsizes and restructures in the nine years in which EULEX has been operational, all sharing common features. The material used in this chapter comes from three different downsizing exercises which occurred within the life of the 2012-2014 EULEX mission only, and clearly reflect a temporal trend in processes leading to personnel reductions.

The first significant downsize that took place within the time period of this research occurred in the summer of 2012 along with the extension of the 2010-2012 mission to reflect the shift in priorities for the new mission. At this point, the mission was extended for another two years (see, for example, EULEX Website, 2012). The extension of this mandate was reflected in a change in EULEX's structure and a subsequent downsize to reflect the changed staffing needs. Having previously focused on the Monitoring, Mentoring and Advising (MMA) of local Kosovar counterparts, the mission was significantly restructured into two major sections: an 'Executive'

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<sup>99</sup> Taking into account that "downsizing can involve reductions in various combinations of physical and human resources or capital" (Datta, Guthrie, Basuil, & Pandey, 2010, p. 282), unless otherwise specified, the downsizing I discuss from this point on refers specifically to *employee* downsizing.

division tasked with investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating cases, and a ‘Strengthening’ division which would continue to focus on MMA. Although this first downsize ended just before I started my research, its impact reverberated throughout my fieldwork.

Another downsize occurred in early 2013 marking the mid-way point of the 2012-2014 mission, when a new budget cycle entered into play, and a new HoM arrived. At this time I was also starting as an intern at EULEX and was able to trace the reactions and impact of the 2013 downsize which was experienced as a surprise despite downsizing being a fundamental component of a short-term mission. As mentioned in Chapter Two, my internship at EULEX coincided with this downsize although the research for this chapter occurred outside it.

The third downsize I focus on is the one that started at the end of my research in summer 2014 to accompany the extension of the 2014 mandate till June 2016. In June 2014 the mission was again extended<sup>100</sup> and the annual budget to cover its operating costs was cut from €111 million to €90 million.<sup>101</sup> This resulted in a further reduction of staff numbers although the basic structure of EULEX did not significantly change, despite having an additional task of implementing agreements to normalise relations between Kosovo and Serbia (EULEX Website, n.d.).

Whilst I recognise that all three downsizes had different triggers (the end of one mandate, the extension of another mandate, and the end of a budget cycle) the key temporal elements of downsize feature in all three downsizes. As such, I have not found it necessary to state which specific downsize I address during this chapter. I do however, refer to the appropriate downsize when something specifically refers to only one downsize.

Regardless of which experience of downsizing I spoke to EULEX staff during my fieldwork, it became apparent that there are commonalities in how organisational time

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<sup>100</sup> The extension of the mandate was established following an exchange of letters between Kosovo’s President Atifete Jahjaga and Catherine Ashton the EU High Representative (the letters are available from Republic of Kosovo, 2014). For news coverage of this see Peci, 2014.

<sup>101</sup> The figures are based on calculations found on the UK Parliament - European Scrutiny pages (UK Parliament - European Scrutiny Committee, 2014).

is managed during a downsize. In the words of one senior staff member linked to some of the downsizing decisions taken, the “trick” of a downsize “is getting the timing right.” There are various stages of downsize in which the timing is key. As this section will show, timing is key to the formal process of decision-making and in the communication of decisions. Time’s delicate nature, I then argue, is illustrated by the shifting meanings and understandings of time that ripple across the organisation.

### **6.2.1 Formal Processes of Restructuring Personnel**

It is generally agreed that a downsize is part of a wider review process that re-assesses where a mission currently is, where it is going, what its achievements are to date and which professional staff are required to ensure that EULEX successfully meets its goals. There are therefore several decision-making processes that take place during a downsize, all of which take on their own temporal rhythms. One of those decisions is about the need for staff composition and staff structure to reflect the new needs of a mission. It was explained to me by a senior international staff member who had been working for over three years at EULEX with decision-making responsibilities, that when the mission mandate changes its function to focus on new goals, the “form of the mission must respond simultaneously” by “re-prioritising” its staffing “to reflect and support those new goals”. This points to a temporal mismatch between an organisation that changes its objectives immediately in response to external circumstances, and the lengthy internal processes that are necessary to adapt to those changes. It is this time-consuming process of re-prioritising human resources which, I would suggest, is one of the contributing factors in drawing an organisation away from its objectives, despite staffing being necessary to meet those objectives.

The various decision-making stages necessary for “function” to change are indeed lengthy. The first step is an internal procedure to decide which positions will be effected. This starts within EULEX itself where a handful of international senior staff, usually Heads or acting Heads of departments, review the structure of their departments and the progress that they have made. According to various international staff in senior or managerial roles, some of the things that are taken into consideration for example, are where “duplication of roles exist”, where “efficiency gains can be

made”, and where “there is frack in the system” or “part of the business which is past its sell-by-date that you don’t need to do.”

As I understand the process, following the strategic considerations made by senior EULEX staff, recommendations for positions that could be cut are then passed upwards through the chain of command, to the Chief of Staff and/or the Head of Mission who either approves the suggestions or makes another suggestion. These preliminary suggestions are then sent to the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM), an advisory body within the EU in Brussels. In Brussels CIVCOM discuss the proposed EULEX reconfiguration, potentially making some changes, and then pass it on to the Political and Security Committee (PSC) for final approval. The PSC are a permanent body, also based in Brussels and made up of member state representatives. These representatives then make any further changes and suggestions. This part of the decision-making process is an exercise in diplomacy and negotiation as member states battle out their own interests for EULEX through their government representatives based in Brussels. At this stage decisions can be taken based on member state budgets, political interests or, it was suggested, pressure from EULEX staff lobbying for their own positions. Once the PSC have approved the reconfiguration and officially documented it, the proposal is then returned to EULEX. It is at this point that staff members who will be affected by the changes get officially notified by letter that their position has been cut despite having already heard rumours<sup>102</sup> to that effect.

According to one seconded Head of Unit who was nearing the end of their contract, taking on new, or different, activities “which requires more staff with a certain skill set”, results in letting other staff go, a process involving the “re-prioritising of posts based on the new mission needs”. For this Head of Unit, there is a logic to that:

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<sup>102</sup> I do not explore the role of rumours and gossip here due to spatial and time limitations, but note that the rumour has often been portrayed negatively in organisational contexts (Gluckman, 1963; Michelson & Mouly, 2002) as something to be managed (DiFonzo & Bordia, 2007). For more on the processes of rumour and gossip more generally see, for example, Bergmann, 1993; and Figes, 2007.

If you have a finite budget, you have to live within your means. If you have finite resources, those resources have to be the resources you now need to deliver the job.

This implies that time is key to meeting focused objectives in a downsize, as the finitude of resources or budget remain real determinants of job delivery. The process of finding those resources, however, takes time; while the mission can have a view and make recommendations, changes can occur several times, and over time, either at Brussels or in a member state. While on the one hand the above points to a logical need to downsize staffing numbers and re-prioritise positions, many EULEX staff, both internationals and locals alike, took this process very personally as if it were a violation of a psychological contract (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1989; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993).

### **6.2.2 Informal Processes of Restructuring Personnel: The “Ghost List” of 2013**

A parallel time also exists for those who are excluded from the bureaucratic process briefly described above between Heads of Departments, Brussels and member states. This was most clearly demonstrated during the 2013 downsize. As part of the structural review process, a list of potential positions to be cut is drafted. Alongside this list of positions are the names of the staff members currently holding those positions. Without anyone knowing how, this list of the 2013 downsize is somehow leaked and rumours start about whose position is being cut in an attempt to make sense of the uncertainty.<sup>103</sup> Like with any rumour, it is not certain when this one started or what its trigger was (Rosnow & Fine, 1976, Chapter Three); is it when EULEX decision-making staff spoke in confidence to other colleagues or to their seconding government? Or is it when the CIVCOM or the PSC got hold of the proposal and the member states threw up a storm about certain key strategic positions of theirs being erased from EULEX? Regardless of when, how or where this “ghost list” as one senior

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<sup>103</sup> What is interesting about these rumours is the speed in which they spread and operate, taking up their own temporality (for a short discussion on how the rumour is bounded by temporality limits, see for example, Rosnow & Fine, 1976).

international called it, is leaked, it started a parallel informal process of staff involvement with the restructuring process.

International staff believing that their positions were being cut in the 2013 downsize started to lobby their EULEX colleagues as well as their member state representatives in Brussels giving the 2013 downsize a particular trajectory. As this informal process started shortly after the initial list of positions had been drafted, time seemed to be more intensely felt as less time was given to negotiations at this stage. Time was spent with internationals fearing the loss of their jobs, urgently traveling to Brussels to meet with their member state representatives, and lobby for support.

I mentioned in Chapter Four, that secondees are seconded from a member state to EULEX for usually a period of one or two years therefore giving them a unique status in EULEX. This placement is strategic for the member state. Either the secondee is placed in a role that is a position of power, or has strong negotiation potential where they can exert influence on behalf of their seconding state, or they are placed in an information gathering role. This means that when it comes to a downsize, the member state becomes involved directly as it is one of their members, and a thus key player in a states' foreign policy, being impacted. The level of involvement of a member state depends on how strategically important the position is to that country.

A member state can become involved once they hear about or have an understanding of the proposed changes. This can be in reaction to disagreements about a strategic position being cut. It can also be the result of a secondee lobbying for their own role to be kept, or lobbying on behalf of another colleague. It was suggested to me by both international and local EULEX staff that if the individual is liked or has a solid network of supporters in powerful positions, they hold an advantageous position in these negotiations. If they cannot keep their current role in a restructure, it is highly likely that as a result of their strong support network, they will be transferred to a different role. Should the position be strategic enough for a member state, then that member state is likely to want to keep it open. The fact that member states finance EULEX, is then a card that can be played by member states to ensure that their candidate remains in EULEX. Rare are the times when a state will not push and

negotiate hard over a strategic EULEX position or for an individual with the right network and reputation.

The support that international contracted staff have compared to a seconded member of staff is vastly different, and differentiates these two groups from one another. Contracted staff I spoke with often felt unsupported by both Brussels and EULEX; by Brussels because they are not a priority for member states seeing as they are not paid by member states, by EULEX because as staff, EULEX has no obligation to them. One international contracted criminal investigator had the impression of being alone in the fight to “save” her job, saying it made her feel “isolated and disadvantaged compared to the seconded staff members”. She told me that as a contracted staff member she:

[...] had the support from secondees at the very start of the downsizing process, but once the member states had secured the positions of their own secondees, no one was interested in me anymore. Member states no longer got involved in my fight because they had already secured their own national interests through successfully positioning their seconded own staff. After that, the contracted staff didn't matter to them.

While this shows how supportive the national authorities are of their seconded staff, contracted staff are left to their own devices in defending their at risk positions. Thus spending time lobbying for roles in EULEX is seemingly linked to political strategies that go beyond EULEX and its individual staff. It was clear that this experience was not an isolated one amongst contracted staff, either local or international, as many of this group drew my attention to the lack of involvement from member states to either protect, help or support them during a downsize. I do not know what the discussions in Brussels focused on, or whether the issue was more the personal impact of a job being cut or the organisational impact, but what is important here is that time was essentially taken away from regular daily activities to lobby for one's position, and everyday worries and angst turned towards the insecurity symbolised by changed staffing numbers and positions.

### **6.2.3 Communicating a Downsize**

Getting the timing right also becomes an important strategy in communicating about downsize; at which point does one communicate to staff about what is happening, and in how much detail? Although downsize is a marker of progress and is an expected part of a short-term temporary mission's life, timing the communication of its very occurrence and its outcomes, posed important questions for senior staff involved in the process in an attempt to reduce resistance or anxiety.<sup>104</sup> Many recognised that they faced a dilemma between the need for organisational change, and the potential impact this would have on people's jobs and livelihoods. This impact was recognised for being temporarily disruptive on both the livelihoods of staff as well as in their ability to implement the mission mandate.

The idea of downsize being disruptive "albeit temporarily", as a senior international Head of Unit put it, is an important one. It indirectly accepts that downsize is an exceptional phase of the regular functioning of the organisation. This also highlights a key temporal tension in communicating about a downsize; between the holders of knowledge at the top, and those who seek out information. On the one hand, those with knowledge of the timing of the downsize, usually senior staff as mentioned above, might seek to keep this information quiet for fear of worrying staff unnecessarily and causing unnecessary disruptions. This would suggest that they are also aware of the time it takes to come to a final decision about which positions are to be affected, and how restrained the mission is by the time-consuming decision-making processes of the European Union. On the other hand, those who will be impacted require time to plan and prepare for the disruption to their livelihoods. The decision process suggests that at the core of deciding about when to communicate a downsize, the mission and the staff become two separate issues for consideration. This marks a start in scales of worry that staff experience which I look at in the third section of this chapter.

What is communicated and when, is also a strategic tool by management in managing expectations and maintaining staff performance levels. Unlike in previous downsizes where staff were highly critical of the lack of communication, and perhaps as a result

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<sup>104</sup> The importance for timely and effective communication has been noted in literature on change management and downsizing (see, for example, Richardson & Denton, 1996).

of this, the 2013 downsize is an example of a step towards early communication. The incoming Head of Mission gave a monthly address to his staff when rumours of downsize had already started. He informed staff that positions would be cut due to changing budget and priorities of the mission. He explained the process involved in choosing positions, the various stages of the negotiations, and explained that EULEX was limited by quotas, mostly due to budget cuts. Essentially, he explained, the reduction of roles was in the hands of the EU, and that this would be a lengthy process. This particular address however, gave the promise of more updates *in* time, which, it was felt by a majority of staff I spoke to, never came *on* time, causing disappointment over the lack of progress made. Staff during these moments seemed impatient and hungry for new information.

With whom one communicates downsize is also a matter of careful consideration. The decision-making process is the first issue that involves careful consideration about who is involved. I would expect the HoM to be amongst the first staff to identify the need for downsize, along with the staff involved in the strategic review of EULEX's restructuring. Following on from the review suggestions, I would imagine that a process would be put in place to decide how the mission structure would be remodelled to support the new functions of the mission. It was strongly suggested by a handful of high ranking staff that this re-structuring of roles was, more often than not, a closed process involving little or no consultation with other senior staff due to the confidential nature of the restructuring process. I was told on a couple of occasions that the 2013 downsize had "organised a clandestine committee of maybe seven or eight people" who were solely responsible for deciding which positions in EULEX were to be cut and downsized. Who this small select group was kept highly confidential, as was the meeting itself.

Indeed, not all Heads of Departments or Team Leaders were informed of approaching downsizes, despite the possible repercussions this would have on their team or unit. The Counselling and Support Team (CAST) was one team who expressed a lack of support. This team offered psychological support and counselling to staff requiring their services. One staff member in particular had found out about the downsize along with their workload increasing as more appointments were made to discuss fears about

potential cuts. This coupled with the issues her clients were coming in with – a fear of being made redundant due to the rumoured downsize. I was told that as a team, they had not been informed of the pending cuts as the unit itself was rumoured to be “abolished completely”, despite a psychology unit naturally being most needed as a supportive structure during periods of organisational change. Such lack of information could risk preventing teams like CAST from anticipating and preparing their workload adequately to ensure the necessary support to their own teams, as well as to the wider EULEX staff.

One of the reasons for having a closed consultative process during a downsize may be for efficiency purposes. A short-term mission requires quick decisions to be had. Logistically therefore, taking time for a consultation or open process may not be a resource the mission can count on. It may also be for allowing a mission to carry on functioning as I have already mentioned.

However, the confidential nature of the downsizing process forges a division between the holders of knowledge, and the non-knowledge holders along hierarchical and spatial lines. Those at the top of the EULEX hierarchy know the most about timelines and decisions being taken. Often these are bureaucrats from Brussels living in their own homes or rented homes not too far away from their families. Their goal is to oversee the successful running of a mission but not to inhabit the process; being geographically at a distance and not EULEX staff, they are not directly affected other than in the decision-making process. Compared to EULEX staff however, these European Union staff in Brussels know more by their proximity to the decision-making processes than do those inside EULEX or in Kosovo. Those in EULEX or Kosovo are those who, instead, depend on the decisions of the European Union, and await the final official document to be returned to them, despite being the ones more directly impacted by its consequences.

On the other hand it also exposes mistrust, particularly if one gets to know who was in the clandestine committee. This was the case for one international who had, through informal knowledge-sharing practices that are rife in EULEX, heard about the clandestine committee. Once this person had discovered who was in the clandestine committee, it led them to wonder how “these people, who know nothing about the

character of my job, about the character about any other jobs” or “how teams function effectively” because “they haven’t taken time to involve us or talk to us”, can make an informed decision about which posts to delete. Implied here was the sense that time had not been taken to understand the value or importance of roles, attributing knowledge to time.

The experience of the different staff also varies depending on the level of power held. The higher up in the hierarchy one is, the more information one tends to have about closure and the timeline for the downsize. The lower down the knowledge hierarchy one is, the less one is likely to know, usually resulting in stronger reactions against the process. As discussed in previous chapters, considering the structure of EULEX and confidentiality issues regarding the MIP and OPLAN, international tend to hold more senior roles, while locals tend to hold more support based roles. The implication is that while internationals will usually know more, locals will know less. It also has an impact on the future running of the mission. Indeed, for one Head of Unit, not taking time to consult widely meant making “assumptions about how something operates”. Managing within such a structure, this international staff member suggested, increased the risk of “disaster waiting to happen” if the decisions were based on incorrect knowledge. By presenting managers with a *fait accompli* and an operational structure engrained in an already approved OPLAN, any disagreement or request for change “would look very silly” and would result in a “loss of face”.

While the management of communication and its timing is key, at organisational level and individual level, time seems to run at opposite speeds. A mid-level contracted international staff member involved in reporting on political trends, told me that although the mission “make[s] sure the procedure is open, it can’t tell people what they really want to hear which is: am I getting cut?” This question highlights important tensions around time and the nearing termination of a contract; while the mission believes it is communicating what it can, the approaching end of one’s contract becomes an increasing focus for many staff, often impacting the activities of the mission as individual staff increasingly become focused in their own self interests.

The distance between knowing and not knowing key information about how much time is left for the mission or a staff member’s own contract, exposes a plurality of

tensions and scales of worry that relate to time. Communicating downsize or reaching agreements about which positions are to be cut therefore underlines how important it is to get timing right. While continuing to implement the mission mandate and its activities is important for the mission, the politics of a downsize lead a mission to become increasingly concerned about its own internal management, particularly relating to the timing of information; either by managing how much, and what, staff know, or managing how much time staff are given to complete their work, or to plan for changes in their own personal lives. The impact of this tension between mission and individual becomes most obvious when we turn to look at staff activities during downsize.

### **6.3 STAFF ACTIVITIES DURING A DOWNSIZE**

The regular activities of EULEX during its ‘normal everyday’ operation have been described in the previous chapter. However, in this chapter I argue that downsize is also a part of the planned and expected activities of a short-term mission that is aiming towards eventually withdrawing. As such, the activities of downsize also represent an integral feature of the functioning state of operation of a short-term temporary organisation. This implies that the activities that occur throughout the period of downsize continue to help the organisation work itself towards closure. However, this is not always clear cut, as downsizing is often experienced as a disruption, resulting in the renegotiating of routine, work, and friendships where staff are often set against one another depending on their contract type or how much information about the downsize they hold. As I show in this section, despite there being a plan to leave and downsize, the work shifts from externally focused activities, to internal activities that draw the organisation away from the collective endeavour of supporting Kosovo’s rule of law institutions.

#### **6.3.1 Filling Newly Created Positions**

A downsize exercise is typically about deleting jobs and cutting positions that are no longer effective or useful to meet the shifting demands and circumstances of an organisation. Paradoxically in a short-term mission, while a downsize will usually

erase certain jobs, it will also focus on the creation of new positions and the recruitment of new staff to those roles. The creation of positions implies that the mission is concerned with activities that are typical of the start of a mission. As will become clear, this suggests that a downsize, while being a part of an overall goal of a mission, it is also about the renewal of human resources and of a mandate life-cycle that, ultimately, opposes the direction of a mission aiming to wind down by engaging in activities of renewal and continuity.

I spoke about downsize with an international contracted Police Officer in her 40s who had been in the mission for several years in an observation role. Having experienced several downsizes she told me that once the mission decides its new structure and which roles it needs and where, “the selection of people into those roles” becomes the next focus of downsizing activities. The filling of positions thus becomes the focus for both mission and staff, dominating organisational activities for the period of the downsize. While the secondee will often be redeployed into a new role following the backing by a sponsoring national authority and successful negotiations between member states and EULEX, both local and international contracted staff members will usually need to re-apply through a formal application process and pass an interview if selected. This process differs for international, and locals. Occasionally international contractors, need to compete with seconded candidates. Having to compete with a secondee was noted as being particularly difficult as the secondee would already be placed in a favourable position being supported, and thus funded, by a seconding government. This international Police Officer recounted her own experience of reapplying for her position as a contracted international staff member a few days before her interview to keep her current position. She told me:

I just heard that a new secondee is also going to be interviewed for this position so I'm now worried that I won't get the role. I know this job like the back of my hand as I've been in that role for several years now. I wouldn't need any time to adapt or get to know anyone. I can go straight back into it. But who they give the job to will come down to if the seconded person gives a very good interview. It won't be about skill or the ability to do the job.

The threat represented by a seconded candidate in this instance is not only an issue of being equally or more qualified for a position than a contracted staff member, but is also seen as a matter of time. Having spent time in the job this Police Officer implies that she is not only qualified for the position, but she would also save time for EULEX as she would need less time getting settled into the role than would someone new to EULEX or the job. Here, importance lies in the experience of time, and the value of time for this individual. This narrative would also suggest that time spent in a mission does not necessarily equate to experience or job qualification for those tasked with staffing EULEX, and points to a temporal hierarchy as the external influence of longer or shorter-term priorities shapes staffing decisions.

Local staff have a similar situation to the international contracted staff as neither have the support of a member state and their strategic interest. Of the locals I spoke with, many felt that they had even less support than the international contracted staff as their positions were administrative or supportive rather than that of 'experts'. As such many local staff members had the impression of being disposable resources. Like with contracted international staff, locals whose positions were cut, would find themselves applying for the same role again through an internal competition. The competitor in this instance would most likely be colleagues from the same team, with whom they had worked alongside, and who would have a similar, if not identical, profile to them. Part of the application process for locals is an English exam. Many of the local staff felt that this was not a fair process nor a fair test. They claimed that, in some cases, they spoke better English than some internationals, and as a result, did not understand why they were the only ones being tested for their language skills. In addition to this, they also believed that this was not a reflection of how able or efficient they were at work, as the test did not take into consideration their previous performance usually recorded in Performance Evaluation Reviews (PER).

### **Performance evaluation forms: a short-term vision of temporal horizons**

Performance Evaluation Reviews are a regular evaluation of EULEX staff performance over a period of time which often coincides with downsize and/or the end of a staff contract, or extension of mandates. It is both a record of how well a staff member has performed, and an opportunity for staff to apply for a renewal of their

contract. The form is filled out by both staff member and their line manager. At the beginning of the PER cycle, their working objectives are laid out. At the end of the PER period, a rating is given by the line manager so that the staff member's performance can be measured against intended objectives and results obtained. This also includes rating and commenting on various skill sets such as "computer skills", "working under pressure", "knowledge of the job" and "quantity of work" (Performance Evaluation Form, 2013, EULEX).

Not taking into account the contribution and efficiency, or effectiveness, of a staff member's ongoing performance during a downsizing process, was felt to be unfair. This perceived unfairness was openly expressed by a local Language Assistant and Interpreter. In his late 30s he had been employed for EULEX for three years translating and interpreting sensitive case materials for trial:

They just don't look at the PERs so all the hard work you've done before, just doesn't matter. It's just your English that counts. Not the knowledge or quality of your work, or what you've done for the mission. Anyone who was lazy at work could stay because they have better English than someone who knows the job.

For this local staff member, the PER fails to give value to the resource of time, and to his own individual time working in EULEX. Not considering an individual's PER during a re-selection process questions which skill sets are prioritised by EULEX, and for which reason. Indeed, while the PERs are perceived by most local staff as a truer reflection of their ability than an English test, the activities of the selection process would suggest otherwise, and hints to a mistrust of organisational procedures that are seemingly based along local and international lines.

Performance evaluation forms themselves take time into consideration. Here, longer-term performance is linked to short-term targets which are seemingly divorced from a vision of the future that "goes beyond six months". Being targets-based underlines a lack of longer-term strategising about staff performance and the importance of maintaining staff motivation beyond the downsize. Indeed, as Appelbaum et al. note "if employees perceive that performance is not a criterion for job survival, or even for reward, they will have no incentive to perform." (Appelbaum, Delage, Labib, & Gault,

1997, p. 280). It also points to another layer of short-term thinking. It was suggested by internationals and locals alike, that the process of filling out PER forms itself favoured the short-term over the long-term. For example, several staff held the opinion that any manager filling out a PER represented an opportunity to establish the next phase of working relations and help avoid future conflicts. According to a senior seconded staff member working to help support and strengthen the Kosovo Police through observational tasks, it is not always in the managers' interest to manage and deal with underperforming staff as "the manager is thinking 'I'll be gone in a year, why should I pick a fight?'"', implying that their own contract length is an important consideration. The priority is thus on maintaining good working relations, and highlights the importance of personal future orientation, based on collegial preferences rather than past experience and evidence of ability over time.

A similar pattern was described about the staff member whose performance was being evaluated. On the one hand, the PER represents what the manager thinks of that particular staff member, setting up their future working relations. It also acts as a temporary motivational boost. On the other hand it may also become a valuable record of work when a staff member leaves EULEX as proof of achievements. As a result, PERs have become symbolic of a token review processes where performance has little to do with whether or not one keeps their job or is re-deployed, particularly seconded staff who are protected by a sponsoring government.

While local staff become concerned with preparing for upcoming English exams and interviews, the idea of EULEX being present in Kosovo to strengthen the rule of law institutions and Kosovo as a whole, begs the question about why locals even need to reapply for their jobs during downsize when staff should instead be handed to Kosovo's institutions to ensure continuity or as an example of capacity building its own staff to help Kosovo when EULEX eventually withdraws. Considering the nature of EULEX's presence in Kosovo as seeking to create the conditions for stable and lasting peace in the Balkans and representing a mission there to monitor, mentor and advise local counterparts for that purpose (see Chapter Three) this would appear paradoxical as the focus remains internal rather than external, and short-term rather than long-term.

### **6.3.2 Taking Leave Days**

During downsize, taking leave days was sometimes prioritized over working. This was not always down to staff choice, but often as a matter of structural obligation. Regardless of whether or not their contracts would be renewed, all staff coming to the end of their contracts were told to collect their remaining leave days, or lose them altogether, so that no leave was left outstanding in the eventuality that a contract was terminated. Often this requirement would happen with no more than a month left on a contract. This had several impacts both at the personal and organisational level. On the personal level, it meant that staff had less time to plan their holidays. For one local EULEX Translator in his mid-30s, this meant that he had no friends to go on holiday with as there was not enough time for his friends to request leave from their own work place. It also meant that while he was unable to put aside money in time, he would also lose the holiday he had already planned and paid a deposit for as it fell outside the current contract dates. He needed the break he told me, so would take time off anyway, but it would be spent at home.

Although many staff felt confident that their contracts would be renewed, being unable to carry forward their accrued leave days into the next contract resulted in most staff feeling obliged to suddenly take days off they felt were owed to them. At the organisational level, having fewer staff at work meant the organisation slowed down in productivity. In many cases, staff would just leave without taking time to adequately prepare cover, or consider the timing of their leave due to a sense of urgency or time running out. On the other hand, EULEX became dependent on those who remained. In some cases, the decision-makers would be absent so decision-making processes were slowed or activities postponed. During these weeks, staff expressed an increased frustration about getting their own regular working activities completed. A mid-level local Legal Advisor, told me she spent most of her time trying to discover who was still around to work with and obtain key information from. For those who were away, she would also try to ascertain if this was temporary or permanent leave so as to ensure as much continuity between the temporary downsizing period and the next phase of the mission, yet ironically, pointing to rupture and lack of commitment.

### **6.3.3 Handover: From One Staff Member to Another**

While the European Union and member state governments may feel increasingly concerned about Kosovo, a tension between leaving and staying emerges during the activities of a downsize, where the two directions suddenly confront one another when handing over activities and responsibilities from EULEX to Kosovo local authorities. One of the primary reasons that EULEX is present in Kosovo is to strengthen and support Kosovo Rule of Law institutions. In a practical sense this suggests that legal cases have to be handed over to the Kosovo authorities, or that EULEX has trained or capacity-built personnel in Kosovo Rule of Law institutions so that they are self-sufficient and fully able to take over from EULEX for example. The handover process of legal cases and knowledge from EULEX to Kosovo is thus an important part of EULEX's supportive process to Kosovo. From what was observed and what EULEX staff mentioned, it quickly became clear that during downsize the handover process was important as a tick box exercise for those not distracted by their own emotional responses to the downsize, and that not enough time had been given to its planning and execution.

Once positions have been finalised, and the future operational structure and mandate confirmed, the handover of activities becomes a new focus for the organisation as a whole.

There are two groups of EULEX staff in particular who need to consider carefully the handover process during downsize process. The first group is those staff whose contracts are suddenly terminating as the position is being cut. This group, following several months of uncertainty, are usually given one month of notice once the decision to cut their position has been finalised and communicated. Time, I was told by those whose contracts were ending, has to fit into this final single month. Considerations during this last month may include figuring out where to go to or work next, the practicalities of moving, taking remaining leave days. Emotional reactions are also strong. While some staff are able to hold in their emotions, others are susceptible to outbursts of frustration, fear, angst and, as I witnessed on one occasion, pure desperation. While this group may, on some occasions, find the emotional strength and time, or willingness, to put a plan in place to handover to their team members,

more often than not, staff in this group were the least productive according to their remaining colleagues who would often testify to needing to take on more work or cover for their departing colleague. They were distracted, burnt out or in one severe case, one female staff member was reported to have given birth prematurely, rumoured to be the result of the stress she had endured during the downsizing period. Handover activities for this group may not, therefore, always be high on the agenda.

The other group who must consider their handover are those who had their positions cut but were successful in, or in the process of, being redeployed or reapplying for another position within EULEX. For this group a successful handover is ever more important to prove their ability to perform under stressful circumstances. Wanting to remain in EULEX, it is vitally important for this group to keep working and cooperate in providing succinct handover notes, showing that they are worthy of remaining employed by EULEX.

Considerably few handover activities include locals being given more responsibilities. I was told that a local staff member had been given the title of Head. However, due to the secrecy of information I discuss in the previous chapter, it is questionable how much power this position holds without access to the Mission Implementation Plan (MIP) or to the Operational Plan (OPLAN).

On most occasions the handover is internal, aimed at giving other staff or team members a summary of activities and outcomes to date, and a suggestion of future activities. For example, one office responsible for handing over cases to local counterparts, was the Mobile Prosecution Team (MPT) which was soon to be dissolved. The Prosecutors, Legal Officers and Advisors, the Legal Assistants and Administrative staff in this team had been given some guidance in the form of a 3 page memo (EULEX, 2014). It was dated 7 May 2014 and aimed to ensure a “smooth transition of cases” from the MPT to local prosecutors by 15 October 2014 at an “appropriate time for the transfer”. “Appropriate time” was defined as being “determined in consultation with [the] team leader” suggesting that time in this case becomes an issue of personal discretion and individual interpretation. An attachment sent with the memo listed the cases that were deemed “not suitable for transfer” which included cases assigned as exclusive, sensitive or on-going, and those “that are suitable

for transfer”. The memo asked staff to prepare their assigned cases in accordance with a list of instructions. These instructions were generic in nature, and included ensuring all documents were translated, notes or instructions were prepared regarding the investigation, and that the procedural history and the current state of affairs had been explained. Staff were also tasked by the memo with being “available to advise and support their counterparts” once cases were transferred.

However, not everyone has to handover activities, maintaining undercurrents of continuation rather than departure. For example, many of the teams working in the head office focus primarily on the functioning of the organisation rather than on preparing for eventual handover to Kosovo counterparts. This includes for example the Human Resources Team, the IT and Logistics Teams, and the Drivers. I spoke to a senior seconded staff member who highlighted the uniqueness of her particular office which looked at providing internal legal advice to the mission. This office I was told had no mission target to “wrap up” because a legal backup service would always be required internally as long as the mission existed. In the words of this staff member, it was not “the Kosovo thing” but rather “just the internal thing” that was the focus for this office.

As a mission there to ‘help’<sup>105</sup> a host country, the planned downsize of the mission should also be mirrored by the expansion of Kosovo’s Rule of Law institutions. However, criticism remains of Kosovo Rule of Law institutions. For example, in a European Commission Report dated 2013, hindrance in private sector development was attributed to a “deficient rule of law” (European Commission, 2013, p. 24), and a “weak rule of law” along with “a large informal economy and an underdeveloped policy framework”, was seen to “hamper the economy” (European Commission, 2013, p. 26). EULEX staff members I spoke to were also critical of the achievements of

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<sup>105</sup> Hindman (2011) points to the idea that aid workers are amongst those in the “helping profession”, a profession she claims often sacrifices “a level of compensation for the satisfaction of doing work that contributes to a better world” (Hindman, 2011, p. 170). Autesserre also looks at the “here to help” narrative of the interveners’ community and focuses on the unequal relationship that such a narrative creates between interveners, the ‘helpers’, and locals, who are perceived as “beneficiaries” and “recipients” of that help (Autesserre, 2014, pp. 195–196; see also Mauss, 2005 on the quality and motivation behind that help. Although it is not the place here to explore what this means in practice the practices of “doing good” has been addressed particularly in relation to NGOs (Fechter, 2012; Fisher, 1997; Krause, 2014; Sampson, 2016).

EULEX in handing over to the local authorities fearing that the withdrawal of EULEX would be premature, especially as talk of corrupt politicians and EULEX staff remained rife. In the autumn of 2014 for example, British prosecutor Maria Bamieh openly accused EULEX of corruption claiming they had ignored the investigation of cases implicating senior Kosovo politicians (Borger, 2014).<sup>106</sup> In addition to issues of transparency and corruption (Kusari, 2015), this raises the question about whether or not EULEX is delaying its process of closing by choosing some cases over others, leading back to the question of secrecy of information; What information is to be disclosed to the EU or to Kosovo? Why would some processes or cases be delayed?

When examining the activities of downsize it becomes clear that individuals become more inward-looking as staff can no longer depend or rely on the possibility of their contract being renewed. The internal competition that stems from the downsize leads to negativity, where personal livelihoods overtake the wider group goal, pushing Kosovo further away from any consideration. It is the perception of support (or lack of) that one receives as well as the various levels of internal competition that sets staff against one another. Gradually, as staff come to compete against one another for their positions, they no longer act as one. The mission, and its ambitious goal for Kosovo, is forgotten about and replaced by self-interest. This trend particularly comes to the fore when time is the focus of attention as the next section illustrates.

#### **6.4 MARKING TIME IN A DOWNSIZE**

Time in a downsize is an important marker of progress and development and the experience of a downsize has much in common with closure; its occurrence signifies change and departures – international staff leave, local staff must integrate back into the changed local workforce, new skills must be gained and relationships reconfigured. I have previously mentioned that downsize is a planned and intentional occurrence in a short-term temporary mission. This implies that staff are aware that they must expect downsize to eventually occur. However, the reaction to the finite

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<sup>106</sup> More recently, British Judge Malcom Simmons also made a similar claim (see, for example, Lemonier, 2017).

time that a downsize symbolises, is suggestive of surprise, triggering anxiety, uncertainty, and various levels of worry. It is these temporal rhythms of downsizing that this final section illustrates.

#### **6.4.1 Issues of Extensions**

Continuity of time is an important aspect of a downsize that is often relied upon by mission and staff alike. This is most clearly illustrated by the use and reliance of extensions. Extensions in EULEX exist in conjunction with downsize as the mission changes function or form as a result of the extension. Extensions, however, juxtapose mission and contractual finite time as they create the opportunity, and the hope, for more time to be given to staff and mission. While on the one hand every mandate and staff contract has an end date which frames an organisations' operation, goals, structure and budget, there is an end in sight that both mission and staff can prepare and work towards. On the other hand, extensions of this contract end date blur the clarity of a seemingly clear time frame, or 'end' point, by offering an alternative time. With the potential for more time, extensions represent a possibility for continuity that pushes the boundaries of time further away into the future, and disrupts the regular temporal rhythms of time. During a downsize when the end is seemingly closer but also pushed further into the future, extensions thus create an unsettled environment of contradictions and conflictual flows of time.

Extensions of a mission are not automatic and have various methods of being approved. For example prior to 2014, European Council legal acts would establish and extend the mandate of EULEX (European Parliament, 2009). In 2012, the European Council extended the budget, and allowed the Political and Security Committee (PSC) to extend the mandate of the Head of Mission by amending Joint Action 2002/124/CFSP which had established EULEX (Council of the European Union, 2011). In the case of the 2014 mission extension, it was following an exchange of letters between the Kosovo President and EU High Representative (Republic of Kosovo, 2014) that EULEX was formally invited for the first time to extend its stay in Kosovo for another two years. There is no definite amount of times a mission can or cannot extend. Despite the set timeframes within which a mission like EULEX needs to operate, it remains an organic organisation flexible for responding to changed

environmental and budgetary circumstances through its extension. Viewed in this way, extensions become a contingency plan for a mission.

Extensions are equally a contingency plan for the internal running of a mission and very much relied upon as a 'normal part of mission life'. For instance, an international contracted Officer advising and reporting to EULEX on political matters explained that extensions are cost effective as without them the mission would "lose the continuity and the corporate institutional memory," which she saw as being "really bad for business." It would also be "difficult for maintaining airtight relationships" which was recognised for taking time to build. Extensions she continued also bypass a lengthy and expensive recruitment and training up system as EULEX "simply doesn't have the capacity to recruit all the time and do that number of interviews, induction trainings and get people up and running. The budget is there to pay the salaries, not to keep recruiting."

Extensions also become a useful tool when decisions are made about cutting personnel positions, such as during a downsize exercise. In a downsize when decision-making processes are lengthy or delayed, extensions become a safe option. Where uncertainty reigns, the organisation does not need to make any promises as it can expect that unless staff hear otherwise, their contracts end on the date stated in their contracts. As such, EULEX is able to use the contract end date as justification for terminating someone's position. To support this view, staff in decision-making offices or who hold higher responsibilities, tend to think that the dependency and expectation of contracts being extended is ridiculous. One international whose role included reporting on particular staffing issues was surprised about the reactions of staff to extensions during downsizes:

They all know that their contracts will end on a certain date so I don't know why they complain when it does happen.

But "complain" they do through strong emotional expressions of anger, angst and frustration. The downsizes of 2012 and 2014 clearly demonstrate this tension, as many staff recalled emotions of anxiety, fear, depression and uncertainty brought about by confusion over whether or not their contract was being extended or not. It is the not knowing which, I observed, hangs over staff like a black cloud. During a downsize

period where some, but not all, positions are being cut, the possibility of one's own contract termination was felt to be the cruellest as it was an isolated closure rather than shared, but one that was still uncertain. Uncertainty takes control away from staff and acts as a reminder of the organisation's power. At this point staff see themselves as being unfairly treated (or "tortured" as one EULEX international psychologist staff member, called it) as if the organisation is a human able to render them a 'victim', or resenting the organisation as one would another person.<sup>107</sup>

Reactions from staff highlight a fundamental temporal contradiction at the heart of the extension paradox; while there is an element of certainty offered by a contract end date (as one knows when the contract will end), the reality itself is uncertain as this contract end date is flexible and can be changed by the organisation. Such fluidity of temporal milestones brings into question what exactly can be relied upon and questions what objectives really do need to be met within that timeframe. This not only impacts working objectives and activities, but it also questions the very working day. Pushed to its extreme, not being clear about set timeframes was highlighted by the dilemma in June 2014 about whether or not to even turn up to work the day after the mission end date when most staff contracts expired. On this occasion, staff contracts had not yet been signed off by the mission Heads and so no staff had had their contracts or ID cards officially renewed and extended. As a result some, like a junior Legal Officer contracted to assist with internal legal issues, questioned what was going to happen:

What's happening on the 15 June? Will I come in to work? Because my ID expires the 14 June but I haven't got my new contract signed. Will I even get let in through the gate?

The uncertainty expressed above around being able to get into work or not questions how effective a mission can be during a downsize, as most staff start thinking about

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<sup>107</sup> In organisational death studies, for instance, seeing the organisation as human is not an uncommon trend. In some cases, those "entrusted with the planning, execution, and evaluation of a downsizing activity" are even perceived as "executioners" (Gandolfi & Hansson, 2011, p. 511). I would also suggest that through in the treatment of "survivors" and "victims" this idea of the organisation as a human making decisions that change the felt status of staff perpetuates itself even the literature on organisational death (for example, literature on 'Victims' see Brockner et al., 1994; Pugh, Skarlicki, & Passell, 2003; and on 'survivors' see Datta et al., 2010; Mellahi & Wilkinson, 2004).

how much time they have left in a mission, and counting down the time left to their departure, or to the confirmation of their extension.

#### **6.4.2 Rhythms of Time**

For the majority of staff, downsizing sets itself apart from the regular activities of a mission as it is often experienced as a phase or event in time that is set apart, or distracts, from the main everyday functioning of an organisation. Particularly due to its differing activities and unique processes as explored above, downsize seems to exist as an exception, although paradoxically, it should be a core consideration of all staff activities in a mission that is aiming eventually to close its doors. Perceived as an exception by staff, however, downsizing represents many scales of time and highlights a diversity in relations, interactions and activities of staff within an organisation, all of which appear to place the onus on organisational (and eventually staff) survival, rather than the collective mission goals.

During an employee and material downsize, specific dates by which particular milestones need to be reached, and activities are to be completed, become ever more pertinent. This often results in a fight for physical resources where each team or unit acts in their own interest against the interests of others. The downsizing of materials thus highlights the importance of the individual over the mission and manifests itself across various levels. One level is at the team level, where each team or unit fights to keep its own resources. For example, the daily reality of a physical downsize is evoked through the reduction of materials, buildings and equipment. This was the case for one international manager who spent most of the working hours of the downsizing period looking into the corresponding downsizing of cars. This involved time spent on writing, sending, receiving and responding to emails with the aim of establishing which units or teams needed cars and which staff members could share or do entirely without.

While here the frustration expressed was that people were not playing the rules of the game, another international, took issue with cars being taken away from his unit as it hindered the work of his team. This staff member was seconded to the Kosovo Special Prosecution Office (SPRK), an office headed by a EULEX prosecutor and composed both of Kosovo and EULEX prosecutors. As an office, they very much depended on

cars to visit their local rule of law counterparts, such as prosecutors and police, as well as needing to attend court. He claimed that while staff at Farmed, the HQ building, used cars to “drive their kids to school”, his unit had to “travel frequently as part of the work”. This suggests not only a spatial misunderstanding of roles and use of time between teams or offices, but also points to increasing internal tension where the mission is no longer one, but several teams or units fighting to keep their resources.

### **Individual rhythms**

One seconded Team Leader with an observation and reporting role within the Strengthening Department, recognised that generally “[EULEX staff] are not focused on end of mission date, as the organisation is ending its involvement in Kosovo”. Instead he continued, “everybody is focused on their own end of mission”. According to him, one simply has to look at an ID card, or a contract to see one’s own end of mission date:

Because everybody has an end of mission; it’s either that your contract is expiring on a specific date, or your secondment is ending – regardless, you’ll have a date. These are the dates that individuals are focusing on, not the end of mission. The end of the mission doesn’t really exist for us.

As such, the threat of a position being downsized is often interpreted as a personal threat. Some staff members react to news of downsize by working particularly hard to somehow show that they are good, useful or necessary to the organisation. Many staff continue to use time productively, although personal gain is often associated with working hard during a downsize exercise. Several contracted and seconded staff, for example, recognised that it was mostly contracted staff who were susceptible to “working their socks off” during downsize. Contracted staff without the backup of a sponsoring government are believed to feel uncertainty about having their contracts renewed thereby needing to somehow prove themselves during these uncertain times. Likewise, local staff were similarly reported to be proving themselves necessary to the organisation during this time. The financial repercussions of losing one’s job implies that during a downsize many staff hold on to their positions or become more productive.

Accusations of staff acting in their own interest was a common theme that emerged during my fieldwork and highlights a tension of how time is used, particularly during downsizing where the reporting back of progress is ever more important. These accusations and rumours similarly serve to create mistrust and doubt between staff. On the one hand there is the idea that in is in the interest of those some who are “punching the time in and not being really productive” to delay productivity and extend the mission’s life. These staff members, I was told, are often the ones reporting back to the EU the problems with Kosovo and the delays in effectiveness of Kosovo rule of law institutions. This, it was said, helps them justify their jobs and positions although it was more often said of international secondees rather than contracted international staff. Working in one’s own interest is thus particularly associated with international staff who want to leave. They were also rumoured to mention how well Kosovo, or a certain programme, was doing to justify their contract being terminated or, as several internationals implied, to “look good” by taking the credit for success. No staff member however, ever admitted to actively working in such a way. Local staff were also accused by internationals of slowing down the EULEX process by dragging their feet or selecting what they reported back to. It was obvious that uncertainty however, was the main concern for all staff, all of whom reacted to uncertainty differently.

Staff are equally rumoured to be unproductive during downsizing. Lack of productivity is described in temporal terms where often, staff would give me a six month frame within which they believed staff to be most unproductive when it comes to a downsize. It seems to be agreed, as a local Legal Advisor put it, that “people don’t work three months before the actual downsizing, and then they don’t work three months afterwards because they are just trying to recover”. The quantifying of immobile or frozen time is suggestive of a regular occurrence which is seemingly accepted while also rippling across and through the temporal boundaries a single mandate. Besides the flow of time being temporarily disrupted, although accepted, in downsize, time is perceived as continuous.

The urgency of time in downsize however, means that any decision-making needs to be made with the idea of how much time it will take to implement or deliver. During

downsize, specific dates by which particular milestones need to be reached, and activities are to be completed, become ever more pertinent. As a result, there is little scope for teams and individual staff to proceed at their own pace as deadlines and timeframes are externally set. While some staff are busy working to deadlines however, the potential for surprise is also present as staff are not preparing for the possibility of their position being cut. What is taken for granted in the regular life of an organisation is suddenly threatened with being taken away which leads to people hanging on to what they have and in many cases, to what is being taken away.

For many local staff who, over time, tend to stay in a mission longer than their international colleagues, downsizes are experienced as regular, cyclical markers of time in EULEX. For example, one EULEX Driver told me that he lived “for the moments in between each downsize”. As such, rather than a vision of the mission objectives being the time framing some staff, it is downsize that can demarcate one’s experience in EULEX. Many also considered themselves as survivors of previous downsizes, which is not an uncommon perception for those who remain in an organisation after a downsize (see, for instance, Appelbaum et al., 1997; Brockner et al., 1994; Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). For one international staff member with decision-making and line management responsibilities, the idea of saving staff was also deemed an important consideration when she told me about the attempt to “save” two local administrative staff so that they would not need to compete for the same job.

### **Maintaining external clout**

The temporary nature of an organisation also means that its bargaining powers are reduced, particularly during downsize where the potential for closure is ever more present. Several locals I spoke with informally about the 2014 downsize, most of whom were linked to either political parties or local non-governmental organisations, were of the opinion that EULEX now had less power to negotiate as it was reducing to leave. One Head of a local NGO pointed out that they felt EULEX no longer had a stick or carrot with which to encourage its local counterparts in Kosovo rule of law institutions to take up their suggestions or to punish if this didn’t happen. “Why would we listen to them now that they are leaving? Who will punish us if we don’t?” I was asked. This implies that time is played with both inside and outside an organisation.

Indeed some Kosovo rule of law counterparts and civil society were very aware of EULEX's deadlines and often hinted that they were merely humouring EULEX. This is most obviously the case with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) which currently holds a marginal role in Kosovo. Since EULEX replaced UNMIK's rule of law operation, UNMIK has been reconfigured and significantly downsized. In 2013 I visited a one person office in UNMIK. Although this office still held an important role in Kosovo at the time, very few Kosovo institution, governmental or civil society organisations, were in touch with the office to inform them of key events or publications. On the small dusty shelves of this office were publications being referred to as key texts. These documents were dated 2007 highlighting how outdated and out of touch this office was.

Downsize acts as a reminder that the organisational goals are different from the individuals in the sense that the organisation has a programme that it has to shrink, whereas the individuals want to keep their jobs and keep working. Both local and international staff for instance, were concerned about being able to provide for their families and sought to continue their employment in EULEX throughout all downsizing exercises. Any change of pace unsettles and underlines how little is certain. In this section I have highlighted the various flows of time that can exist during downsize; productive time, wasted time, immobile time and selfish time. Each flow works against or at different tempos to the other without harmony creating confusion and lack of cohesion or a united vision. Yet while downsizing encourages different activities and rhythms of time, it also creates a particular environment of internal and external (dis)connect that confuses the goal of working oneself out of a job.

## **6.5 READJUSTING AND RENEGOTIATING CLOSURE**

My observations in this chapter have shown that internally, there has been a continual tension between individual and organisational goals and futures, and as I will show in the next chapters, this is in contrast to staff at the ICO who, once closure is formally and publicly confirmed, generally seem to focus more on the organisational task at hand. I have so far argued that during a downsize a short-term temporary organisation

is essentially in conflict with itself. Obsessed with the goal of closure at a pragmatic level, the own goal of closure is terrifying for the organisational and individual. On the one hand the single event of one downsize symbolises the achievement of a mission reaching particular objectives and nearing its final goal of closure. Internally it reminds staff of the uncertain and precarious environment within which they and the mission operate. Herein lies a paradox between individual goals and mission goals as individuals increasingly seek security and stable employment, whilst the mission executes its plan for eventual closure. Despite the mission's official focus on closure the inner machinations of the mission are preoccupied with personal stability, both of which result in uncertainty. In this maelstrom, the European Union and its member states secure in their control of time leave Kosovo and individual EULEX staff members at the mercy of their decision-making.

As a partial attempt at closure, the downsizing process has been shown to be concerned with realigning the future. For the EULEX mission this necessitates readjusting to changed circumstances and the resulting changes in mission objectives and staffing requirements, as well as renegotiating commitments of the mission towards Kosovo and trading risks. While uncertainty dominates, the European Union in Brussels essentially controls the long-term future of Kosovo by making short-term strategies – strategies that we saw in the previous chapter to be secretive. The simultaneous existence of finite and infinite time experienced in downsize betrays a particular temporal tension and pattern of development that encourages a focus on organisational and individual survival, and distracts from the collective endeavour that is development.

## 7 MARKING CLOSURE: A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

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*“The International Civilian Office [...] was an extraordinary international creation: a unique mission for a unique context in a young Europe; and a mission that closed itself, in good time.” (Feith, 2012)*

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION: THE END SUPERVISED INDEPENDENCE

*Today is muggy. The clouds are out, and the air is heavy and warm. Walking across the centre of Pristina the traffic is also heavy. Cars are at a standstill, some beep their horns, others swiftly u-turn into alternative routes. As I walk past Parliament I notice for the first time that the rails separating parliament space from public space, are now visible. Normally, a large banner displaying some of the missing people of the Kosovo conflict cover the peeling white paint of these rails; fading photos of sons, daughter, wives, husbands, mothers and fathers. All photos, bar one lonely young man, have gone. At a friend’s house the TV is on. On the screen are images of a press conference and the serious faces of Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi and International Civilian Representative Pieter Feith.<sup>108</sup> We are told that the International Steering Group has just met in Pristina’s Parliament. There is a close-up of Pieter Feith. He is saying something in Albanian. Then he repeats himself in English to a silent and expectant room: “The supervision of Kosovo’s independence has been terminated”.<sup>109</sup> The silence continues for a brief second, and is then quickly broken by claps and the clicking of cameras.*

*I turn to my friend, a local NGO worker and ask her what she thinks. Her answer focuses on the conference to which she’d been giving half her attention while continuing to work: “It’s Pieter Feith’s show, and for our local politicians is just a self-praising event for the coming elections.” It soon becomes clear during conversations with other locals, that her reaction and perception of today’s declaration is not isolated. Other locals I later speak to, are equally nonplussed about*

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<sup>108</sup> For public images of this press conference see Schneider, 2012.

<sup>109</sup> For the full speech see Republic of Kosovo Assembly, 2012.

*today's event, or hint at irony while expressing gratitude for this "declaration" from an international outsider.*

*Going back to the press conference, I note that it is the International Civilian Representative, also the Head of the ICO, who has declared supervision over. As the ICO was established for the sole purpose of supervising and supporting Kosovo into full independence, this is a press conference that is not only about Kosovo becoming fully responsible for itself, but it is also about the ICO's termination. Along with the end of supervised independence comes the end of the ICO, often seen as being synonymous:*

*After four years of supervising Kosovo's independence, the International Civilian Office (ICO), an organisation established by western powers concerned with the supervision of the independence of Kosovo, ended its mission. Last Friday, the Kosovar parliament adopted a set of 22 constitutional amendments that ended the era of internationally supervised independence. The ICO, established after Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008, terminated the process of supervision after midnight September 9, stating that it had fulfilled all the relevant conditions. This decision is seen as a new step towards Kosovo's full sovereignty. From now on, Kosovo will have the power to take unilateral decisions on its own (European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, 2012).<sup>110</sup>*

*Tasked with supervision, the ICO is no longer needed, and it is via a mediatised press conference that its end is publicly announced;<sup>111</sup> a short-term mission has therefore reached its objective - it has supervised the transition to Kosovo's independence successfully and, as such, it can now leave. The moment an organisation decides to close its doors to the public and close down, withdrawing itself from a host country, is a key moment in the history of both organisation and host country.*

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<sup>110</sup> See also Aliu, 2012b.

<sup>111</sup> Although as early as 2 July 2012, supervision had also been reported as coming to an end by Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger (see, for example, Radio Free Europe - Radio Liberty, 2012; The Republic of Kosovo - The Office of the Prime Minister, 2012).

Kaneff has drawn attention to the public celebration of historical events in public spaces that are dominated by officials (Kaneff, 2004). Here, I am reminded of her work as having described some of closure's regular manifestations during various stages of an organisations' life in the previous chapters, I now addresses the official and public announcement of closure and the simultaneous internal processes marking this moment. This chapter starts by introducing a new case study - the International Civilian Office (ICO) – which publicly closed its doors following the announcement of the end of supervised independence mentioned above. In this chapter I continue to maintain that closure is a positive marker of an organisation's achievements in time, suggesting that the moment closure is publicly announced positively marks historical and future time for both organisation and host country.<sup>112</sup> The following section looks at how the public face of the ICO's closure was officially marked during an international conference the day after which supervised independence had been declared over, and how this period was experienced by ICO staff themselves.

However, it is equally difficult to identify when closure starts and when it ends; unlike in organisational death literature, the closure of the ICO does not involve the definitive 'ending' of an organisational entity (Arman, 2014; Bell & Taylor, 2011; Sutton, 1987). For some, the marker of time extends beyond the organisation; while closure represents a positive symbol of progress and a goal reached, for others it represents the start of something new. I therefore end the chapter by rewinding back to a few months prior to the closure of the ICO's political mandate in order to illustrate the lead up to the ICO's official closing date as seen through the eyes of ICO staff. This final section highlights the various rhythms of time experienced by staff, some of which parallel rhythms experienced by staff in the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), others that shed a new light on these same rhythms.

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<sup>112</sup> I mention in my introductory chapter that my aim is not to debate or to critique what successful development is as a substantial body of literature already exists on this. Rather my point is that achievement is symbolised by the withdrawal of the organisation.

## 7.2 INTRODUCING THE INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN OFFICE

Before looking at the public face of closure and its portrayal as a key marker of time, I introduce a new case study - the International Civilian Office (ICO). The ICO has been introduced as a new case study due to accessibility and availability of data; while information about EULEX's closure is not yet available, the ICO publicly closed after four and a half years on the 10 September 2012. Like EULEX, the ICO was also the result of a proposal set out in the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (henceforth Ahtisaari Plan)<sup>113</sup> following fourteen months of status settlement negotiations. While the Ahtisaari Plan set out a range of provisions for a stable, multi-ethnic state,<sup>114</sup> it also envisaged an EU-led international supervisory structure, of which both the ICO and EULEX were part of.

The ICO was mandated to support its Head of Mission, the International Civilian Representative (ICR) (United Nations, 2007).<sup>115</sup> Although a supervisory role, the Ahtisaari Plan gave the ICR the power to veto decisions by Kosovo's executive, legislative and judiciary (United Nations, 2007).<sup>116</sup> The ICR was to be assisted by the field presence of an International Civilian Office. Both were tasked with supervising the transition and early years of Kosovo's independence by supporting the Kosovo government to implement the provisions laid out in the Ahtisaari Plan. Due to not all EU states recognising Kosovo, the ICO was itself supervised by an International Steering Committee (ISC) formed only of countries that recognised Kosovo's

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<sup>113</sup> Following lengthy negotiations between the UN, Kosovo and Serbia, a Comprehensive Proposal for the Status Settlement was submitted by the UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari in March 2007. This proposal became known as the "Ahtisaari Plan" and proposed that Kosovo become independent following a period of international supervision. For the full text see (Republic of Kosovo, 2007).

<sup>114</sup> Once Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence, the principles of the Ahtisaari Plan were incorporated into Kosovo's Constitution, laws and legal acts, forming the basic principles for a multi-ethnic and stable state. The Ahtisaari Plan thus became constitutionally enshrined, prevailing above Kosovo's Constitution in the event of any inconsistency (see in particular, Chapter XIII, Article 143, Republic of Kosovo, 2008, p. 55).

<sup>115</sup> Annex IX Article 4.3 of the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement, states that "The ICR shall be supported by staff (the International Civilian Office (ICO), as he/she deems necessary, to assist in carrying out the functions set forth in this Settlement" (Republic of Kosovo, 2007, p. 52).

<sup>116</sup> See in particular Article 11.3 of the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement which states that "The ICR shall have overall responsibility for the supervision, and shall be the final authority in Kosovo regarding interpretation of this Settlement" (Republic of Kosovo, 2007, p. 7).

independence, such as the US, Switzerland, France and UK. The ICO's recognition of Kosovo's independence allowed it to work with the Kosovo government, generally receiving more credibility among the local Albanian<sup>117</sup> population than the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX).<sup>118</sup>

Shortly after Kosovo's independence was declared on the 12 February 2012, the ICO opened its doors on the 28 February 2008. Its aim was to ensure the full implementation of Kosovo's status settlement and to support Kosovo's European integration. Tasked to advise and support the government and institutions of Kosovo during a period of supervised independence, the activities of ICO staff focused on providing advice and support to the Government of Kosovo and community leaders on how to implement the Ahtisaari Plan, and coordinating international engagement in support of the implementation process.

With just over 250 staff it was a much smaller organisation than EULEX. The ICO was made up of seconded internationals from supporting EU member states, and contracted national and international staff. It was structured around six units including a decentralisation unit, a community affairs unit, and a cultural heritage unit. Staff would typically meet to discuss and coordinate progress or review processes with key local actors. Many roles were less observational therefore, and more advisory. Its head office was based in Pristina. It also had a regional office in Mitrovica South.<sup>119</sup>

The end of supervised independence that the ICO, through the ICR, was mandated to support was never clearly defined by a fixed or final date, allowing for the potential extension of mandates as with EULEX. However, like EULEX, the ICO existed with a mandate of limited duration. Article 12.7 of the Ahtisaari Plan for example, clearly

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<sup>117</sup> As a result of the ICO's recognition of Kosovo's independence, the Kosovo Serbs were more publicly distrustful of the ICO (see, for instance, Visoka & Beha, 2013, p. 10) and as a joint report by the Forum for Civic Initiatives and Saferworld notes: "Many Kosovo Serbs [did] not recognise the independence of Kosovo and [did] not accept or co-operate with the political, social and administrative structures and institutions established by the Kosovo Government" (Forum for Civic Initiatives and Saferworld, 2010, p. 4).

<sup>118</sup> See Introduction for an explanation of EULEX's difficult relationship to Kosovo independence, and also (Martin, 2012, p. 17).

<sup>119</sup> The ICO had intended to hold office in the northern part of Mitrovica, but due to inaccessibility to the premises following a bomb explosion and increased tensions in March 2008, the ICO regional office remained in the Southern part of Mitrovica.

states that the mandate of the ICR would be reviewed “no later than two years” (United Nations, 2007) following its entry into force. This guaranteed at least two years of field presence for the ICO. With a limited mandate, the ICO was also working towards its own eventual self-obsolescence. This is particularly clear when looking at the ICO’s own Lessons Learned Report, (ICO, 2012a) a report reviewing its period of operation between February 2008 and the end of supervised independence on 10 September 2012 which marked the ICO’s termination. The language of this report strongly suggests that the ICO was consciously working towards its own withdrawal, with staff expecting “to be separated from service once the tasks associated with their positions were completed” (ICO, 2012a, p. 77). The report goes on to suggest that the ICO “remained modest in its scope and refrained from adding on additional responsibilities as Kosovo’s new state evolved”, (ICO, 2012a, p. 79) implying that the mission was not to grow and adapt to changing circumstances like EULEX now does. Instead it was to focus on very specific and achievable targets so that once reached, it could withdraw. Although it is not the place to assess and analyse the ICO’s successes or failures, its short-term ethos is important to bear in mind throughout this chapter as the emphasis is on a temporary organisation that remained “disciplined and focused” on its initial and finite tasks with a clear aim of withdrawal (ICO, 2012a, pp. 79–80).

### **7.3 THE PUBLIC FACE OF CLOSURE: “A CHAPTER CLOSED”**

I am made aware by the newspapers that today is different. Today is important marker of historical time; the ending of supervised independence and the framing of Kosovo within a European future. A summary of Kosovo’s dailies underlines this:

According to all dailies, Kosovo is no longer internationally supervised. As of Monday afternoon, foreigners no longer act with supreme decision-making authority for Kosovo and there are no documents with judicial weight in the Assembly. The International Steering Group has declared the end of supervised independence of Kosovo and the end of the International Civilian Representatives’ mandate. However, only Prime

Minister Hashim Thaçi said that the Ahtisaari Plan has been entirely fulfilled (Shqiptarja.com, 2012; see also UNMIK, 2012a).

Today marks time in two important ways. Firstly, today is portrayed by the media as an “historic achievement” in strengthening independence and “building of institutions of a modern, multi-ethnic, inclusive and democratic state” (Obama, 2012; see also, UNMIK, 2012a) and the end of an era (Aliu, 2012), marking an end to time passed. Secondly, in headlines that suggest that Kosovo is entering “a new chapter”, time is marked as representing a break from the past and the start of a new chapter. This “new chapter” includes a Kosovo with full independence which is placed within the longer timeframe of European integration. However there is a slight word of caution as not all accept that the Ahtisaari Plan has been entirely fulfilled. According to the US Deputy Assistant of State Phillip Reeker, “the closing of independence’s supervision is not the end of international community’s interest for Kosovo” (UNMIK, 2012a). Indeed, international presence is set to continue through organisations like EULEX, or Kosovo Force (KFOR), the NATO-led international peacekeeping force in Kosovo. This moment in, and of, time, is not only an historic moment breaking from a past of conflict, nor is it only a marker of a future that is oriented towards European integration (see, for instance, EurActiv.com, 2012). For many of the locals I spoke with, supervision ultimately remains due to the continued presence of the international community (for a public source see Epoka e Re, 2012).

To mark publicly this transition from old to new, or past to future, a full day international conference is underway for invited staff from local and international organisations, and Kosovo officials (for public images of this conference see Schneider, 2012).



*Figure 2- International Conference on the End of Supervised Independence (Office of the President of Kosovo, 2012)*

It is held in the centre of Pristina at the Swiss Diamond hotel. The conference is called: “Chapter closed in Balkans, International conference on the end of supervised independence of Kosovo and the future vision for the Balkans, 10 to 11 of September 2012 Pristina.” It is divided into three sessions focused primarily on Kosovo’s next steps; “Transition in a time of globalisation”, “Approaching a half decade of independence: the scorecard”, and ending with “What’s next for societies and economies in the Balkans?.” The messages of the conference and the language used repeat the temporal themes expressed by the newspapers: marking time as a break from a past of supervised independence on the one hand, and a European future on the other. Today the present is sandwiched between the two temporal orientations.

When I finally make my way past the various cameramen and bulky security guards I am handed a small little pack. Inside this pack is a visual reflection of how time is being portrayed today. Inside is a heavy book presenting 300 selected artworks that were exhibited at the Kosova art gallery following the conflict (Mulliqi 2000). Whilst this book recognises Kosovo’s difficult post-conflict years, it reminds us that today is not only about publicly recognising that past of conflict, but also about leaving it behind by closing a chapter in Kosovo’s history. Also in my pack is a smaller booklet containing the agenda for the conference and a few essays tracing Kosovo’s time in a linear way from Kosovo’s post-conflict history to its recent developments, and ending with a word of caution about the tough future in an essay by Tim Judah entitled “View

from outside” (Judah, 2012). Taking the same name as the conference, the title of this booklet sums up the vision of time horizons expressed throughout the conference as closing a chapter on the past and looking towards the future (Dickinson & Selimi, 2012).

The scene is also set for the continued international presence which remains strong in today’s Kosovo. In Kosovo, EULEX, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OCSE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation-led international peacekeeping force, Kosovo Force (KFOR) all remain well beyond the ICO’s closure. This supports Zaum’s argument that the structure set by a single organisation, in this case the ICO, continues beyond the closure of that organisation because of the continued existence of other international organisations (Zaum, 2009, 2012). In light of this, the existing Head of EULEX, Xavier Bout de Marnhac, in his speech, declares that EULEX has now reconfigured its mission to reflect “the new realities” and establish a “growing partnership between Europe and Kosovo institutions.” In this logic, hope is directly placed in EULEX to “continue” what the ICO had started. Gradually suggestions of an uncertain future, have given way to an idea of what Kosovo’s future should look like according to the international community. Kosovo is now about the new partnerships with other international organisations like EULEX, rather than about what Kosovo can and should do for itself. The terms of international engagement have now changed.

Now that the International Civilian Representative, Pieter Feith, has verbally handed over full independence to Kosovo, and a new stage has been created for the international community in Kosovo, I am reminded that the ICO is an officially closed organisation since yesterday. When the conference ends, with it ends not just international supervision, but also the public and official existence of the ICO. As such, reaching the end of supervised independence has justified the withdrawal of one international organisation tasked with the sole aim of ensuring that this moment would be reached. What stands out is the conference’s linear understanding of progress through time. While in theory the ICO has officially and publicly ended its political mandate, less obvious is what this means for the ICO staff who have now worked

themselves out of a job but who continue to turn up to work today and conduct daily operational activities.

### **7.3.1 A Day for Farewells**

International supervised independence is over. The ICO is closed. The press conference is finished. Newspapers are less vociferous in their debate over what supervised independence will or will not bring to Kosovo, as they turn their attention to new issues, or to the aftermath of supervised independence such as the “three more missions [...] with status-neutral positions”, UNMIK, KFOR and EULEX, that remain in Kosovo (UNMIK, 2012b). However, in the background, international and local ICO staff continue to wear their work badges allowing them to walk through the gated ICO building that continues to be manned by locally contracted security staff. While during previous days I observed that public portrayal juxtaposes past and future without mentioning the present, the present is very much bounded within the ICO’s walls today. For the remaining ICO staff today is still a ‘normal’ working day. Indeed, they are contracted until the 30 September 2012, a full 20 days after the official declaration of the ICO’s end. Today is as important as any other day, and its continuing internal operation, sheds new light on the discrepancies between the public and official closure of an organisation and its inner machinations.

While the working day may continue, it is a nearly empty building that staff continue to operate in, with activities that differ vastly from previous tasks. As the staff at the ICO wind down, slightly uncertain about what these final days represent, the focus is on wrapping up what is left, with activities of closure shifting away from reporting, assisting and supporting Kosovo institutions, or facilitating dialogue with and between local counterparts, to purely administrative tasks, saying goodbyes, cleaning up desk spaces and finalising reports. Yet today I am unable to get a sense of what the next few days will bring purely because staff themselves are not sure.

Despite closure having been officially marked over two specific calendar dates (the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012), some staff remain, turning up to work in the days that follow. Some may turn up late for work, or spend more time over their morning coffee break. It is rumoured that a few staff are simply not turning up to work, but are instead posting pictures of themselves at the beach on their social media pages despite still

being contracted to work until the end of the month. Others are seen packing up boxes in their offices. Early departures include the most senior staff as the Head of the ICO, Pieter Feith leaves a couple of days after the conference and the Deputy Head leaves a few days later. In an unprecedented event of top level staff gone within the first week of the ICO's public announcement of its closure, there is no one left to take executive decisions, other than Head of units or the highest member of staff for each department. Depending on how many leave days individuals have left to take, many staff will also take their leave days and depart early. While official processes had been in place to grant leave, now those processes are being bypassed as there is no one left to check, or no one sees it as necessary anymore. The days that remain are therefore days of goodbyes and finalising administrative tasks. Today marks closure as several goodbyes over a period of time, rather than in one single event.

## **7.4 THE CHANGING FACE OF CLOSURE**

During the final months of the ICO's life, prior to the end of supervised independence that claimed the end to the ICO's operational existence, I was made aware of a growing sense of various qualities to closure emerging among the ICO staff I interviewed. These perceptions differed from previous elements of closure I have described earlier. This final section thus unpacks some of the new relationships that emerge towards closure following notification of an organisation's termination date, to show that along with the closing down of an organisation, comes a collective sense of time and collective responsibility which in turn underlines an organic and layered process of closure.

### **7.4.1 Collegial Time(s)**

During downsize, leaving is individualised by the organisation (see Chapter Six). In the example of EULEX, the regular influx of new staff makes leaving part of a wider flow of movement where some leave and some arrive. In this sense, leaving marks one's departure and another's arrival in EULEX, but also prompts staff leaving to think about their own departures and the timing of it. One EULEX intern remarked during a downsize that there would be fewer people attending their own leaving drinks

as the interns gradually reduced in numbers. There was definitely a sense with EULEX staff more generally that the longer one stayed, the fewer close friends would still be present at their leaving event. The other view was that, like in a race, they would be first to leave so that they would not have to face having to say goodbye to everyone first. There is therefore a perceived reduction in staff when an organisation is downsizing as waves of staff suddenly leave, but as I have already shown, many departing staff are quickly replaced.

For the ICO facing closure however, the flow is one way. This prompts a different type of approach to leaving and leaving parties, regardless of whether or not staff will remain in Kosovo. With ICO staff leaving and no longer arriving, there is a real and visual diminishing number of people. This makes considering when to plan a leaving party ever more important. I was told that staff were now concerned about avoiding clashes with other leaving parties so that guests were not having to choose between parties or trying to attend all parties in one evening. Staff also wanted to make sure it wasn't "too soon" as they were likely to bump into the very same people again and have to say bye once, or twice, again. Neither did staff want to have a party "too late" in case none of the international staff were left in Kosovo to attend.

The leaving of an entire organisation, however, no longer makes leaving only an isolated or individual issue, but provokes a feeling of togetherness through ceremonial leaving events. Unlike with a downsize where organisation and remaining staff have an interest in keeping leaving individualised, for the ICO, as everyone must leave, leaving becomes a collective matter to be marked through ceremonies. "It's been very ceremonial for the last three days" one seconded international Head of Unit<sup>120</sup> who had previously influenced the policy direction of an entire office among other reporting, managing and coordination activities, told me on the way to a final ICO Heads of Unit meeting. This meeting, the day after the conference ending supervised independence, was to be "the last one" which, it was felt by this Head of Unit, would be "very much like closure" with staff receiving "certificates, and that sort of thing." Official leaving parties have also been organised encouraging a sense of collegial

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<sup>120</sup> Due to issues of anonymity the area of specialisation of the Units referred to in this Chapter and the next are not specified as staff were few and far between during this period and thus easily identifiable.

togetherness in closure. An official leaving party was being held after the last Heads of Units meeting. Kosovo government officials and top level ICO staff were invited to attend this official party. Nor did the ceremonies stop there, as that same evening an ICO staff party was to be held for ICO staff. Interestingly in this case, previous ICO colleagues were also invited to return to celebrate, in recognition of the entire lifespan of an organisation, while bringing together past and present colleagues. Closure thus includes ceremonial leaving parties or artefacts as a markers of an end, and celebrations of a past, not only for the individual leaving but equally for the organisation.

For local and international staff alike, such ceremonies are seen as a “farewell” to all. In the final days of September 2012 there is a sense for the ICO staff of being in it together making it easier to leave, or, in the words of another senior international staff member who had managed a department:

It’s very much like a farewell. Except we’re all going at the same time. Usually one person leaves at a time, but now it’s all of us. That’s what is different. It’s also nicer.

Unlike the closure I have previously described where one person leaves at a time, here I am reminded that “it’s all of us. It’s like the end of school.” This sense of togetherness highlights one aspect of time being collectively celebrated, but time also becomes about that collective.

#### **7.4.2 Collective Time(s)**

While dates of closure may be visible on one’s work identity card, one’s contract or a mandate may have a fixed end date as we have seen with EULEX, it is not always the case that staff know the timeline of an organisation’s closure; when closure will start or end. Internally, there were many differing perceptions of when closure had started. For some staff, it was the closure of the regional offices which marked the start of closure in 2011.<sup>121</sup> For the administrative staff, spring 2012 was the period in which their focus turned to planning for closure; in early 2012 they sold assets in order to fill a budget, in April 2012 they issued new contracts to staff ending on 30<sup>th</sup> September

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<sup>121</sup> For a public source on the ICO’s rumoured intention to close in 2011 or 2012, see B92, 2011.

with a request that all staff take their accrued leave by July, in May they issued a disposal plan which involved the process of second-guessing which staff would be needed beyond 30 September to liquidate the ICO and their subsequent activities. For other support staff, their closure had started with job-hunting and looking ahead to the future, several months beforehand.

Externally, closure had started in meetings and events that took place prior to the ICO's political mandate ending. For example, closure had been hinted in January 2012 when the International Steering Group, overseeing the International Civilian Representative Pieter Feith and his International Civilian Office, hinted that:

The supervision of Kosovo's independence could conclude by the end of this year if by then the Ahtisaari Plan is implemented in most of Kosovo and there is progress in the north (UNMIK, 2012).

It was in July 2012 that the International Steering Group finally decided to end the international supervision of Kosovo. These various dates wove together to give a rich tapestry of moments when closure, formally at least, was deemed to start.

Although staff had heard rumours that the ICO was to close by the end of the year, the actual closing date itself had not been confirmed rendering the timeline for closure unclear to staff. I was told by some internationals who stayed till the end, that for them closure had not been communicated clearly enough. Such confusion surrounding the date of closure was represented in the varying approaches and understandings of closure: while some staff associated the ending of the ICO with the rumoured termination of their contracts, others went by the vague declaration made by Pieter Feith that the end of the ICO would coincide with the end of supervised independence at the "end of [the] year" (UNMIK, 2012), and a few jumped ship early having found new jobs or needing to take accrued leave. Together, this left staff confused as to when the organisation would really end and when the last working day was, and no clarification was made as to when they would have to stop physically coming into the office. However, despite not having a final date, once an end was confirmed, the ICO became more united in its collective task of closure.

### **7.4.3 The Increasing Reality of Closure**

The relationship to closure changes the closer one gets to closure. Whereas during the recruitment stage (Chapter Four) time was felt to be limitless and anything was deemed possible, during an organisation's final days comes the realisation that time is finite. Unlike in a downsize where finite time to some extent causes individual angst, panic and worry about what happens next, during the final day of an organisation's life, staff seem united. While for some individuals there is still worry and uncertainty about the future, it is less isolating as it is shared. This, I observed, made staff less resistant or angry towards closure. Instead, they somehow embraced closure and "became much more focused" on getting the work done, as I was told by a mid-level international staff member who had previously been involved in analysing and monitoring current policies in Kosovo in order to offer support and advice to staff in Kosovo's institutions on specific issues pertaining to one area of the Ahtisaari Plan. Clarity about the tasks ahead were also expressed as another ICO staff member, a local administrator, added that "there was no confusion about what we had to do."

With an end date in mind comes an acceptance and awareness from remaining staff about what can and cannot be achieved in the remaining time left experienced as togetherness rather than a process against which to fight. Here I noted that it is only when closure is deemed certain that it is fully embraced; when staff accept that it is happening, and that the tasks of the mission are oriented towards its execution. This broadens out an understanding of time beyond the individual team member to the organisation as a whole. Part of daily work now included a stronger focus, where staff were working to what they perceived to be a tighter deadline. To aid this, a completion strategy circulated in the final months with activities and tasks that needed to be finalised before the ICO's closure. I was told that although this was a 'tick-box' strategy, having a closing strategy such as this one supported staff in knowing and focusing on their activities. Here withdrawing, and withdrawing as best as possible, was the aim and the purpose behind all activities.

Among other things, activities now focused on preparing amendments to legislation to be adopted by the constitution and the assembly of Kosovo before supervised independence could be declared fully over. In comparison to EULEX, handover tasks

concentrated solely on aiding counterparts to finalise work-plans that would see them becoming functional and remaining self-sufficient post-ICO. Meanwhile, discussions were being held with potential partners who would take over and follow-up. Administrative tasks such as organising the checkout day, scheduled on 25 September, and shrinking the ICO which included shrinking cars, staff, budgets, programmes and projects equally occupied the remaining ICO staff. While such activities are also present in downsize, the difference is that no unit or individual was fighting against the reduction in resources – human or material.

Exceptionally, it was staff members themselves who bought up the “temporal limitations of the mandate length” during interviews. The *realisation* that the mandate was always going to be limited is important when we compare this attitude to that held by EULEX staff. EULEX staff did show awareness that their mandate and contracts were short-term, however more often than not, respondents from EULEX did not engage with its timeframe. The mandate was not deemed finite due to the continued reliance, and expectation of, extensions which were seen as “part of mission life” (see Chapter Six). As such, the idea that a mandate really was limited, and that they were essentially working themselves out of a job, was not a matter of immediate concern to EULEX staff. Rather the perception of ongoing time was taken for granted and not challenged or questioned.

On the other hand, the ICO staff I interviewed were now clearly linking the notion of a short-term mission with an acceptance that they had always been working themselves to this point in time. Suddenly, with public closure, comes the reality of finite time. Unlike during a downsize where some staff are determined to justify their jobs by what is still left to be done, officially facing closure appears to be about accepting “at some point, what just cannot be achieved within our mandate”. Here an ICO staff member in an advisory role offering among other things support on institutional and legal reform, elaborated that the sheer number of “undefined benchmarks” staff had to work to previously were unrealistic in the time left. Instead, the focus for staff in his team now lay with selected few tangible targets, chosen by the team or individuals that concerned handing over structures or mechanisms to local counterparts:

We only had time to push for some mechanisms to be implemented or written into legislation or Government working groups to encourage locals to have the mechanisms and take them up themselves.

As a result, focusing on transferring to local structures and on what is achievable in the remaining time was an important consideration for ICO staff I spoke with during the final weeks of the ICO's functioning.

Perceptions of mission and contract extensions also change the closer to closure one is, broadening out to consider the collective good of Kosovo. While I have shown extensions to be an accepted part of EULEX work, international staff in their final days of the ICO are openly critical of the continued reliance on extensions. Many internationals and locals alike echo views that they no longer deem extensions "useful" for the organisation or for Kosovo being perceived as a "waste of money and resources". Prior to her work at EULEX, a local Public Officer involved with the external communications of the organisation, who had been tasked with answering media queries and providing statements about ICO activities, likened organisations that extend well beyond their limited mandates to a "black hole" for resources. This view vastly differs to that expressed by EULEX staff during a downsize where extensions were a matter of individual or mission interest, rather than the collective good of Kosovo as ICO staff seem to suggest here. This change in perception also seems to accept that the job has been done and all that there is to achieve has been achieved. As such, the organisation can now leave. There is no longer a concern or need to extend the mission or individual jobs.

When an organisation has reached its final goal, it can be assumed that it has reached its vision of the future. The sense of achievement, and to a certain extent the pride that I observed amongst ICO staff in these final days, extended beyond the individual to embrace Kosovo's achievements and how Kosovo had seemingly benefited from the existence of one international organisation.

#### **7.4.4 Talking Political Exits**

Talking about the political exit of an international short-term temporary development organisation impacts a host country in various ways as it naturally has an impact on

the wider environment and not just an organisation itself. What is to note here is that the closure of the ICO was celebrated as being of benefit to Kosovo and its population, but no discussion with the Kosovo population was directly held. This feeds the assumption that the political exit of an organisation is on the terms of the international community as it is they who decide at what moment they leave, and when a host country is ready, or that it is a time for introspection by an international organisation. Indeed for some, such an approach was poorly perceived. Discussions with some civil society representatives exposed the more cynical view of the ICO's closure during my fieldwork, suggesting that the decision to close the ICO down arose from the desire of the Head of Mission/International Civilian Representative to have a success story on his CV. In a similar vein, this evokes Kaneff who points to the contradictions between state approved versions of the past that are publicly celebrated, and unofficial or alternative versions of it by individuals (Kaneff, 2004). Most importantly this was occasionally given as a cynical reason for why the ICO closed so quickly; he wanted to be the 'only' International Civilian Representative in Kosovo, timing the ICO's end with his retirement, again, supporting Kanneff's point that within an officially approved version of the past is one's own personal biography and legacy (Kaneff, 2004, p. 12).

While this idea is echoed by some internationals at the ICO, on the whole the ICO staff recognise a mixed reaction coming from the local population highlighting a multifaceted aspect of formal closure. It is felt that locals are happy to see the ICO leave due to the symbolism behind it (full independence), but on the other hand they don't see everyone being happy as the ICO has generally been well perceived. From a work perspective, according to some ICO staff, the ICO have pushed through work that Kosovo institutions are not yet fully equipped to complete themselves. In this sense, leaving would mean that the Kosovo government no longer have a "crutch" to fall back on as one international ICO advisor put it, suggesting that the ICO had been "the arm of the Government". This led to speculation about the timing of the ICOs closure being too soon. Many ICO internationals expressed concern that their hard work to date would fall apart shortly after the ICO's withdrawal. This brings into question the issue of premature exit and reminds me of Paris who has pointed to the "disturbing signals" of UNMIK's previous rapid democratisation to extract itself from

Kosovo to suggest that such action is one way in which “the appearance of a peacebuilding “success”” is created (Paris, 2004, pp. 217–218). Indeed, ICO staff generally echoed the concern about premature exits and the consequences of such speedy action.

In a climate of uncertainty where staff tend to look elsewhere for job and financial security, the issue of retaining staff until the end is a major concern for an organisation that is about to close or is in the process of closing. Financial incentives are one of the solutions that can be offered to staff to encourage them to stay. In meetings with a few carefully selected international staff, the ICO did indeed consider providing incentive bonuses for its staff. With the remaining budget limiting what could be offered and to whom, consideration was given to offering a retention package only to local staff both in recognition of the substantial loss of income they would face once the ICO would leave, and in recognition of the disparity between local and international salaries. It was suggested to me by an international Head of Unit that had this option been accepted, local staff would have gained about three times as much in their bonuses. However, discussions around providing both internationals and locals retention packages proved more popular with the international staff discussing the retention package options. As a result, local staff were offered an additional two months of their salary and internationals were offered two months’ worth of *per diems*<sup>122</sup> for staying until the last day of their contracts.

While this begs the question of whether such decisions stem from organisational understanding of the precarious situation staff face during closure, or more cynical attempts to look after the self-interests of those making the decisions, it also highlights the changed motivation for staff. The final days of a closing short-term organisation, as this case shows, places personal finances ahead of the mission’s goals, and thus, of Kosovo’s development project.

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<sup>122</sup> It was suggested that the *per diems* were more profitable for the seconded staff than contracted staff as seconded staff earned less than contracted staff. It was also suggested that this option had been chosen as seconded staff had led the discussions, rather than contracted staff. Here again we see a disparity between contract types similar to those discussed in Chapter Four, with an undercurrent of distrust leading to runours between the two contract types.

## 7.5 THE SENSE OF AN ENDING

In this chapter I have demonstrated that the process of closure's official announcement is a complicated and rich tapestry of many single events and processes combined. What has been illustrated is the grey area of public closure's start and end and the difficulty of identifying what exactly closure is defined and marked by: a declaration, an official ceremony, or the days that follow where staff reach the ends of their contracts. Closure is, therefore, not clear cut. Multiple public ceremonies of closure may indicate a fixed end but in reality there is no one fixed point, meaning that the perceived finality of closure, through its announcement, is shrouded in ambiguity. The marker of time illustrated in this chapter extends beyond the organisation; while for some closure represents a positive symbol of progress and a goal reached, for others it represents a literal end and the start of something new.

Gradually, as closure becomes about the collective, it also becomes an easier process; not thinking about yourself, but feeling reassured because everyone is in it together. I have implied that the public announcement of an organisation's closure delineates the border between Kosovo's past of conflict and the beginning of a European future. This for a short-term temporary organisation like the ICO is a measure of their success bringing to the fore the notion that the success is not of Kosovo's doing but that of an external international (European) body. Being a short-term temporary international organisation that has reached its goal of closure implies that the limited temporal commitments of such an organisation impact the permanent and infinite future of a host country. This in turn suggests that the time of the external outsider's input is perceived as being more valuable than that of the local insider actors.

Finally we see here that the organisation's everyday time is structured towards the immediate activities of closure. Such a public demarcation of operational time therefore appropriates Kosovo's time as well as an individual's time. Along with the public display of an organisation's closure we are given the *sense of an ending* (Kermode, 2000), yet operational permanence and continuity of the short-term temporary organisation persist, as the next chapter brings to light.

## 8 IMAGINING CLOSURE: LIQUIDATING A SHORT-TERM MISSION

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*“The ICO has now been disbanded without leaving a footprint. It remains only as an enduring legacy in the emerging institutions of Kosovo and in the memory of those involved.” (Feith, 2012, p. vii)*

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION: BEYOND THE BLUE BUILDING

*In November 2012 I am back in Kosovo. In an empty blue VW golf transporter van, I am taken down a main road with recently developed apartment blocks. We drive past the old International Civilian Office (ICO) headquarters - the ‘Blue Building’ as it was called in the heyday of the ICO’s main political mission. I ask what has happened to it since the ICO was officially disbanded and closed some weeks ago. My driver tells me that it may be going to EULEX, but that it is currently empty now that all ICO staff have left and the ICO is no more. We continue to drive towards the outskirts of Pristina. A few kilometres out, as the van carefully navigates the potholes and bumps peppering the dirt road, we turn into the entrance of a three-storey house and park in the front yard. I walk up to the front door. A simple white sign tells me that this is the Logistics Base.*

*This secluded building 3 km outside of Pristina, symbolises the status of the ICO as it is now: an organisation under the guise of a different name, hidden out of the way, discreet and mostly unknown to the general public. I am told that this house has been the property of the ICO since it first opened in 2008, and was intended to accommodate ICO staff in the event of an emergency. As well as its concealed location and rooms that are used as offices, it has showers, a kitchen and blankets that render obvious its secondary intent. This ICO, now discreetly operational, no longer feels the need to justify the presence of an emergency hideout. It is deemed certain that this stage of the mission is under no threat.*

*Despite maintaining a house-like quality, its current purpose is very different, as inside, the ‘Liquidation Team’, as they call themselves, busies away with a new set of administrative activities and tasks set to erase all existence of the ICO, except its place*

*in history. It is a small, casually dressed, team that I find here. There are about six international staff who hold senior positions such as Head of the Liquidation Team, and about 30 national staff supporting them. They are all characters that walked through the corridors of the Blue Building, and so are not new to the ICO, or unaware of the political mission that preceded this significantly diminished version of the ICO.*

*This new administrative mission entered into force immediately after the ending of the ICO's main political mandate in October 2012, although the work of the Liquidation Team started earlier. It is a particularly short-term temporary mission as it has an official lifespan of only three months. While contracts are set to end on 31 December 2012, staff are entitled to take seven days of leave towards the end of their contracts. Should no extenuating circumstances require them to work during their leave days, 19 December 2012 is therefore the last working day they are aiming for. In this building I feel that staff are proud as they are no longer the scapegoats for slow administrative processes but the leaders of a mission. Now is their moment to shine. As I close the door behind me, shutting out the journey here, and the people we passed, I feel myself entering a focused and insular office; specific in its objectives, and clear about the time it has left to achieve those objectives. A countdown to the end has begun.*

In the previous chapter, I explored the political exit of an organisation claiming that political exit is one of the activities of closure, and a public demonstration of an organisation's closure. Following on from this stage of closure, this chapter now addresses another way in which closure is implemented; a phase the International Civilian Office chose to label 'Liquidation', which includes its material and financial liquidation. I first introduce this last phase of the ICO to highlight the ICO's changed nature since its political closure. The chapter then draws attention to the inward-looking everyday activities of liquidation that are purely relative to the organisation rather than to the wider goal of Kosovo's development. I end by discussing the hidden rhythms of time during liquidation that are suggestive of continuity rather than finality.

## 8.2 FROM BLUE BUILDING TO LOGISTICS BASE<sup>123</sup>

In this thesis liquidation, the administrative closure of an organisation, exemplifies the enactment of having reached an ideal state; that of having worked oneself out of a job, as well as the process of executing that very goal. There is a substantial lack of documentation regarding the liquidation of an international organisation. For example, it is difficult to find a definition, or a full description, of liquidation and its processes in academic textbooks relating to international development. The definition of dissolution, which, for Wessel within the field of international law, relates to “a cessation of the existence of an organisation and in that sense is the counterpart of the creation or establishment of an organisation” (Wessel, 2011, p. 344) may be the closest definition one can find.<sup>124</sup> Following on from Wessel, I offer my own definition for liquidation: Liquidation involves the ceasing of all material and immaterial aspects of a functioning organisation. In this sense, to liquidate an international organisation involves ceasing to engage in any activities except those necessary for collecting and liquidating all assets, and settling liabilities.

Except for general references to the end of the ICO, and to its “phasing out” by the end of 2012 (Lunacek, 2012), I have been unable to find legal and publicly available documents outlining the exact mandate for the ICO’s Liquidation Team. General and unspecific language has also been used by Kosovo legislation. For example, Article 161 amending the constitution of the Republic of Kosovo regarding the ending of international supervision of independence of Kosovo, allows individuals “whose appointments have not been terminated prior to the declaration of the end of supervised independence [to] continue to carry out their functions in the institution for the specified term of appointment” (Republic of Kosovo Ministry of Justice, 2012). Liquidation, it would seem, remains a predominantly political matter despite its implementation going beyond the political mandate. Although this thesis does not aim to examine the legal basis founding and legitimising the ICO Liquidation Team, it is

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<sup>123</sup> The status of the Liquidation Team as a field office or a Headquarters is questionable as it appears to be part of a grey zone between the two: a field office in that it was a branch of the ICO, and a Headquarters for the administrative mandate of the ICO.

<sup>124</sup> Wessel also points to the substantial lack of attention to dissolution in the field of international law.

worth noting the small number of legal documents that cover this phase of an international organisation's life-cycle.

Other than a "Lessons Learnt" report authored by the ICO in September 2012 (ICO, 2012b), which mentions the Liquidation Team only in passing, there is no internal or external review of the success or failure of the ICO Liquidation Team. That this report was issued prior to the commencement of the liquidation process is evidence of the lack of accountability held by the Liquidation Team, and suggestive of its unique place in the lifespan of an organisation.

While the winding down of the ICO is only broadly covered by law, the details indicating the objectives and length of the liquidation mandate is left vague. Presumably, any final decisions about how to liquidate and its time scale are made by the Head of the ICO prior to its political closure, in agreement with the relevant counterparts in Kosovo's government and ICO donors such as Finland and the US (see, for example, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2012). The details of the activities are, however, first drafted by senior administrative staff before being presented to the Head of the ICO and officially signed off.

The staff members who were involved in the liquidation phase were busy with its preparation even before their contract with the ICO had ended and the contracts with the Liquidation Team had started. Establishing a plan for liquidation and ensuring proper staffing capacity was an internal process that underwent its preparation stages concurrently with the ending of the political mandate. As early as spring 2012, while discussions about terminating the political mandate were being held, key senior administrative staff were starting to determine what liquidation would involve. There were two obvious administrative considerations to this planning. Firstly, the immediate liquidation of the current political mandate was necessary, without getting rid of anything that would be necessary beyond September 2012. This involved, for example, terminating staff contracts, agreeing retention packages, and ending the lease of the Blue Building. I have briefly touched upon these activities in the previous chapter.

The second consideration was preparing for the full liquidation of the ICO, with its activities planned over three months between October and December 2012. The three

months that were scheduled were closely aligned to the remaining ICO budget. Financially, the ICO would not be able to extend beyond 2012. Concerns at this stage were geared towards anticipating “what needs to go on in order to make it [liquidation] happen” a human resources staff member explained, clarifying that this entailed “second-guessing who and what is needed” for the remaining time, and without exceeding the budget. An internal document, called the Disposal Plan, was drafted and acted as a guideline foreseeing all activities of the Liquidation Team. From here anything in the current political mission that was not needed could be got rid of. I was told that because there had been no precedent, the ICO was required to design its own unique plan for liquidating its existence. Decisions were therefore made about the activities and staff that best fit the predicted tasks and job descriptions. With the Disposal Plan finalised in the summer, under 40 staff were offered an extension of their jobs beyond the ICO’s political exit, to fulfil the new liquidation mandate which commenced on 1 October 2012.

### **8.3 AN ART MORE THAN A SCIENCE**

There is no precedent to the Liquidation Team at the ICO so the structure and the challenges that staff face are unique. This new version of the International Civilian Office is substantially different to the mission that preceded it. Whereas previously there was a heavy hierarchical and bureaucratic structure, now there is no hierarchy in this small team. I notice, however, that while the Heads of Departments, all internationals, now work closely with their local counterparts and together with each other, some hierarchy remains, as ultimately all staff are accountable to the Head of the Liquidation Team and the Head of Administration and General Management. Symbolising the lack of hierarchy is the absence of a public figurehead as represented by the previous political Head of Mission. It is also a very casual organisation, so when I meet the most senior staff they are in jeans and shirts. Everyone else is equally smart casual. Highlighting the changing organisation, new titles are assigned, so to the outside, the liquidation staff are no longer considered ICO staff, but are instead given the broad title of “international experts” as this is deemed more appropriate for an organisation that has publicly exited the international stage. Internally, they have been

taken off the staff list and put on service contracts. To what extent the public know about the continued existence of the ICO is, however, questionable. Despite the international staff having regular diplomatic protections, they have no formal role or presence in Kosovo.

Although staff are generally clear about what they need to accomplish in order to fully liquidate, and the limited time they have left, several challenges remain due to the lack of any guidelines on how to liquidate an international organisation. It seems that in practice, many staff working to liquidate an organisation like the ICO have never liquidated an organisation before, or in the rare cases that they have, I am told that there is no official guideline, or lessons learned on how to liquidate. It appears that the liquidation of an international development organisation is not only rare but also not given due attention by scholars or practitioners alike. As a result, I am told regularly by all staff I interview about the need to “have contingency plans”, or to “anticipate” what will, or, can happen.

For some this provides excitement to the work as new tasks are deemed engaging and challenging. One international contracted expert working in the Security Unit tells me that “the work has become more engaging as we need to problem solve and find solutions in a very short time.” For another staff member, a local Logistics Officer, the work is “an art not a science. We have no guidelines so we have to create our own.” The idea of creating one’s own job is not isolated as several staff felt they needed to create their own work cherry-picking from the best practices and common standards of other organisations. However, for others, the lack of guidelines means that the work feels more unpredictable and busy, with some resentment expressed particularly from local staff about the lack of guidance. But while helping to keep a focus, time is also felt as a pressure for all.

### **8.3.1 Maintaining Morale**

As I have previously argued, closure has a target completion time set by a date in the future. During liquidation, the intention to achieve a goal by a particular time is felt as even more pronounced due to the perceived shortness in the length of time one has left to achieve that goal and liquidate; the distance between setting up and liquidating is seen as a shorter time period than the relatively longer time of two years given to

complete a political mandate. Furthermore the three-months of liquidation no longer provides the possibility for extensions of time.

This issue of time as a final target set date is recognised by the ICO Liquidation Team in discussions about staff morale. Having a high morale for the remaining staff is linked to an awareness about time as a fixed point in the ever nearing future providing a motivational framework. Activities during this stage of liquidation are generally perceived as being concrete and practical as the focus is clear and specific. Having measurable outcomes in a measurable length of time suggests to staff that progress is tangible. This compares to the regular working activities of a political mandate where activities are viewed as timeless or never enough (Chapter Five). A lot of satisfaction also stems from the figurative success of finalising contracts.

Not everyone feels positive about the relationship between the length of time and the remaining work left. At times, this relationship is deemed stressful particularly when staff are not replaced and the Liquidation Team itself reduces in numbers, leaving those who remain to take over the remaining responsibilities.<sup>125</sup> Particularly for the locals with more junior roles, this is perceived as a stressful burden, although it is recognised that the experience is equally useful. For those staff who have not yet found jobs to go onto, staff leaving and moving onto new jobs can act as a painful or stressful reminder of their own future after liquidation, with a nearing reality of unemployment looming ever closer. In this case, staff tend to become divided between focusing on the job and the remaining work at hand, or looking for work and feeling unmotivated.

When people leave there is also a dynamics issue between staff as relations change. The physical leaving of staff acts as a symbolic reminder of a diminishing organisation and its nearing end, leaving some staff feeling sad about the loss of their colleagues. As a result new relations need to be created and managed, but this time in a shorter time period. The Liquidation Team management recognise the importance of staff morale and ensuring that it is kept high. This is notable during one of the staff daily meetings I attend where the issue of teamwork is addressed. During this meeting

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<sup>125</sup> Even if the period of liquidation is not the same as a downsize, this trend is not uncommon amongst those who remain in an organisation as reflected in the literature on organisational downsize (see, for instance, Appelbaum et al., 1997; Brockner, 1992; Brockner et al., 1994)

emphasis is placed on the importance of teamwork as the seconded acting Head of the Liquidation Team tries to enthuse staff by reminding them that they are a team and if staff don't turn up to work, or "pull their weight", it puts an extra burden on others due to the small size of the team. The idea of the speech is to recognise that the staff here have a responsibility to uphold the ICO's image and bring the ICO to its goal line. It is clear that motivation is of key concern in an organisation that is so small and so focused in its tasks. The realisation that the mission can no longer be extended also results in a focus on working together as a team on specific tasks. I see this during daily staff meetings where the progress of the previous day is discussed, and plans for the day ahead are laid out. This allows flexibility for the team to address any emerging issues together.

Despite there being no blueprint on how to liquidate an international organisation, or on the suggested period of time it should take, the ICO's lessons learnt report, notes the aim for its Liquidation Team as being to "finish off remaining accounting, legal and administrative tasks of the end of the mission" (ICO, 2012a, p. 132). Paradoxically, in order to achieve the disposal of all that was the ICO, the staff must remain relatively disengaged. Compared to the other experiences of closure's time that I have described in previous chapters, this is the only time I sense complete disengagement from staff regarding the activities that they are tasked with as they adapt to a new finite reality and support a low profile.

#### **8.4 THE CHANGING ACTIVITIES OF LIQUIDATION**

The Liquidation Team is a considerably different organisation, albeit still under the umbrella of the ICO. Its mandate is no longer focused on achieving political goals relative to Kosovo. Instead, it has now become technical and administrative focusing purely on what can, and must, go. Unlike in previous stages when activities centred on ending projects or programs by ensuring they were for the most part transferred to Kosovo counterparts, now the attention is on disposing the material and immaterial things that enabled the ICO to function: from staff and cars, to buildings and office furniture, to bank accounts and fiscal numbers.

### **Accounting Tasks**

The ICO finances are a major concern for the ICO Liquidation Team. In some ways, the financial liquidation means that the sequencing of events changes. For example, due to the need to close the accounts in time for the final audit, staff are told that they will be paid ahead in full confidence that people keep working after they have been paid. This is an unusual situation and the need to motivate staff to carry on working after this point becomes of utmost importance. Following the processing of staff pay, the national staff report to the national tax administration, and send in their tax certificates. International staff who are departing from Kosovo close their own bank accounts. As for the finance team, their focus is on closing the ICO bank account once the final pay has been processed. Presumably, the timing is also closely linked with selling off all assets although it was difficult to get a firm answer as to what happened first or last. Assets are sold off to fill any gap in the existing budget while preparing for the final audit before closing down the ICOs fiscal number. This also includes making provisions for any unaccounted expenses.

Donor contracts must also be closed. Unlike in a centralised organisation, where I am told that a head office deals with closing the donor contracts, here the ICO Liquidation Team is alone in needing to close the multiple contracts that it signed within its lifetime.

### **Legal Tasks**

The Legal Team were primarily preoccupied with the complicated task of ensuring the diplomatic immunity of the ICR Appointees, a new role that I describe in more detail below. As part of the process of transferring the responsibility of the ICR Appointees over to the International Management Group (IMG), there were also new memorandums of understanding to be drafted and signed.

### **Administrative Tasks**

Administrative tasks take up the majority of the work-load. In fact when I ask what the main focus of the mission now is, my answer from internationals and locals alike usually comes along the lines of explaining the difference between the ‘then’ and ‘now’, where previously the mission was political whereas now, it is seen as an administrative mission.

An administrative mission has a number of external and internal tasks it must accomplish before it is able to close. Liaising externally with the aim of passing on any ICO assets is one key activity with ongoing stock management and inventory controls, which include organising the sale or donation of all assets to other external organisations. In the lower ground is a large space filled with boxes being labelled by national staff who are responsible for ensuring that all the correct assets, like the office furniture and computers, are boxed up and sent off to the correct national organisations. Cars are eventually donated to other national organisations like Kosovo Government institutions (Ministry for the Kosovo Security Forces, 2012), NGOs or international organisations like EULEX, all of who may also have inherited from the UN before. Selling off some of the ICO assets is equally necessary in order to fill any gap in the budget.

The activities of the team are also internal to the organisation and less geared towards the broader development of Kosovo which the ICO political mission previously aimed at. One key activity is the organisation of archives. I am taken around the archival repository, a separate building dedicated to the paper documents of the ICO. These are all labelled with what the material is, and where it came from, and ordered in some particular logic developed by the Head of the Archives department, a local staff member. He tells me proudly that this space, its organisation and the contents within it is down to his hard work over the years as he was given no guidance on what to store or how. This building is secured with locks and alarms. Inside, the space is cold with little room left for any new documents. All documents are encased in carefully sealed boxes and shelving, secure from any theft or damage, and safe from environmental or human hazards. Whereas work previously consisted of one local staff member developing a comprehensive archives policy and budget for the ICO's paper and electronic documents, now the archival team has grown from one local staff member to two and focuses more on actively gathering records from each of the remaining Liquidation Team staff members. Working their way around the departments, the archival team work to a tight deadline that frames their everyday, although I am told that documents can also be added to later on, even once the Liquidation Team have left.

During my visit the emerging challenge for the Head of the Archiving Team is to decipher who grants access to the archives in the future; EULEX or the EUSR. A few years on, in the virtual world of 2018, there is no record of the ICO as a google search of the ICO brings up a link to a real estate company (ICO KOS, 2014), and the post-ICO website link mentioned in the ICO's own report entitled "State Building and Exit" is not available (ICO, 2012). The archives, I am told, are governed by Kosovo law which has an agreement with the Kosovo archives directorate in Pristina (UNMIK & PISG, 2003) although to date I have not had a reply to emails requesting access to these archives. Responses from other Kosovo organisations and individuals questioned about the archives of international development missions have hinted that there is no agreed system of archiving and with whom authority lies.

The building itself, rented from a Kosovar landlord, is set to be returned to the landlord once the team have completed all their tasks of dissolving the ICO. Although it is not yet known who will be the last to leave, it is clear that the last person to leave will be the one returning the keys to the Logistics Base. The final activity of the team is thus returning the key to the main door. Accordingly, a meeting is held with the landlord while I am visiting the Liquidation Team. Those present around the table include an ICO Translator, three Heads of Unit, the landlord and his son. Here, it is made clear that the property will be handed over last. Negotiations then ensue in anticipation of any problems that may arise once the ICO has liquidated, with discussion around the anticipated cost of any damage or additional work to the building that the landlord would need to cover, or any outstanding bills, once the team has left. For instance, the Liquidation Team's phone bills are to be paid in advance and calculated according to the average monthly costs to date. It is made clear by the ICO at this point that this is an average calculation, implying that there could possibly be an outstanding amount for the landlord to cover. In recognition of the landlord facing a substantial loss of income as a result of the departure of the Liquidation Team, there are hints that the building could continue to be rented by other international organisations as water tanks and fixtures are being left behind for that purpose, enabling any organisation to move in immediately. The idea that the ICO is donating assets to the landlord is an interesting one as it suggests continuity. Any costs in removing these will, however, be his own.

#### **8.4.1 From Operational Security to Material Security**

The security department has also changed in its role between the political mission and the administrative mission, becoming more internally focused while significantly reducing in the size and scope of its tasks. Reflecting the reduction in staff, the security being offered to the ICO Liquidation Team is on a much smaller scale. It has also changed from offering operational and office security to material security primarily focused on ensuring that assets are not stolen from the ICO premises. For the Security Team this also represents a reduction in specialised outward functions as the team are no longer tasked with external security issues such as checking staff residences, dealing with movement restrictions or with radio communications, the latter having been transferred to EULEX. Instead the concerns are internal, checking not just what comes into the building but mostly what goes out of it. This entails conducting a detailed inventory of things going out and internally investigating when things go missing. In a reduced and diminishing mission, everyone is a suspect when assets do go missing. Security also has a significant administrative role during the Liquidation process where security assets are to be sold or donated such as weapons and ammunition, requiring legal paperwork, for instance, end-user certificates, to be signed.

Regardless of how hard the Liquidation Team tries to eradicate all traces of the ICO and its own existence, materials such as cars, computers, office furniture or buildings cannot simply be dissolved but rather get re-used by other organisations, enabling, as Wessel puts it, the soul of an organisation to somehow transmigrate into another organisation (Wessel, 2011). The continuation of an organisation in one form or another is the next subject I look at.

### **8.5 CONTINUITY MAINTAINED**

In liquidation, the material power structure of the ICO disappears in terms of its material and accounting infrastructure. Both personal and institutional memory are also removed from Kosovo in the staff who leave, and in archives that are no longer easily available to the public. What continues, or what should continue, is some form

of cultural change, newly established government structures, laws that are adhered to, bureaucratic regimes that are put in place. One way in which continuity can be guaranteed is by the organic recycling of staff from one organisation that liquidates, to a new or already existing organisation.

Many of the ICO staff, for example, switch organisation by reapplying to other international organisations like EULEX. Indeed, during my fieldwork in EULEX I met a large number of staff who had worked for the ICO, now closed, or for organisations like the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) which, although still exist to this day, are significantly reduced in staff numbers. This somehow encourages organisational culture to cross fertilise. While for some it is perceived as a good thing by encouraging trust between colleagues and enabling memory to be a part of an organisation, or between organisations, for others the recycling of staff keeps an organisation stagnant. A local EULEX Administrator who previously worked for the ICO as a Legal Officer, expressed dismay about the working culture at EULEX in its early days:

I thought EULEX would be different. It had the opportunity to show it was different with a new mission and being fresh in the field. But the same people came in from the UN, OSCE or the ICO and they had the same way of working. Nothing changed as no one changed.

Having hoped that the organisation would be different, the continued presence of certain staff members was seen to perpetuate a negative working culture inherited from the liquidated organisation (in this case the ICO) was seen to have been taken up by the new organisation (EULEX).

Staff do not only switch organisations, but, as in the case of the ICO, the activities of the Liquidation Team itself also focus on ensuring some form of continuity as staff are purposefully and directly transferred to Kosovo Government institution during the liquidation stage. For example, one issue of pressing concern for the Liquidation Team is the continued appointment of ICO staff to selected Kosovo Government Ministries such as the Kosovo Property Agency, and the Kosovo Judicial Council. Deemed key institutions in which to continue providing technical support and capacity building,

existing ICO staff were nominated by the international civilian representative, also Head of the ICO, to remain in, or be transferred to, these institutions when the ICO was no more in order to ensure some continuity between the ICO structure and a longer-term support mechanism to Kosovo Government institutions until the summer of 2014. One international expert seconded to the Liquidation Team suggested that it would have been “bad” for the Kosovo Ministries to have a sudden removal of ICO staff as it would have left too big a gap too suddenly, and would have left the Kosovo institutions “severely understaffed”.

While these appointees symbolise continuity in their working practices, there is also some discontinuity as highlighted by the contractual nature of their new posts. They are now “International Civilian Representative Appointees” (ICR Appointees) rather than just ICO staff. They are to be administered by a different organisation called the International Management Group (IMG), a “technical assistance facility providing continued support to appointees of the International Civilian Representative whose appointments in various key Kosovo institutions extend past the end of the period of supervised independence” (IMG, 2013, p. 8). The Liquidation Team thus preoccupy themselves with transferring the administrative oversight to the IMG, and finalising various donor agreements regarding who will be paying for which Appointee, as, regardless of their individual state affiliation, Appointees are to eventually be paid by donors like the European Commission, Norway, Switzerland and the Government of Kosovo (IMG, 2013, p. 8). For the Appointees this will eventually mean that while their responsibilities remain the same, the body administering their salaries in accordance with the requirements of the various donor agreements is different. Fundamentally, new contracts may be given to the Appointees to highlight a change of organisation and role, but defining and transferring their contracts to new management suggests some form of succession of responsibilities from one international body to another.<sup>126</sup>

The transferral of ICR Appointees from one organisation to another is not always seamless. In addition to establishing an oversight body through holding various

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<sup>126</sup> The International Management Group has been recognised as an “international Organisation” by some states and other international organisations such as EuropeAid – (see also European Commission, 2014b; European Parliament, 2014, p. 3)

meetings with donors and the IMG, the Liquidation Team also move ahead with ensuring that Appointees have diplomatic immunities and new identity cards that no longer advertise their affiliation to the ICO. The legal position of the ICR Appointees and their immunities is not a smooth process I am told, but a complex legal terrain. Indeed if the legal succession of one international organisation into another is given growing attention in the field of international law (see, for instance, Ambrus & Wessel, 2015; Klabbers, 2015; Klabbers & Wallendahl, 2011) the issue of staff being transferred from one organisation to another international organisation with their diplomatic immunities also transferred could be interesting to explore further.

### **Recycling cases: shoe box transfers**

It is not only the movement of people that creates (dis)continuity between the temporal sequencing within or between organisations. The recycling of some areas of work also implies the assumption that one organisation can easily transfer aspects of its responsibilities to another organisation by passing on work through various letters, papers, reports, records of meetings or even legal cases themselves. For example, a local Legal Officer who has worked for many international organisations, including EULEX, and is critical of them, told me that incomplete legal cases the United Nations had been working on were simply left in shoe boxes for the next organisation – the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo – to pick up. Although this example, or rumour, may bring into question the effectiveness of a system that transfers legal cases by leaving them in shoe boxes for anyone to collect, it clearly symbolises the expectation that an organisation has about its work being picked up and continued by another organisation.

In a similar vein, it is highly likely that some of the work conducted by EULEX will also have to be passed on to some other international body. The most obvious case is the witness protection scheme as an international EULEX Security Advisor explains:

That's going to be very problematic for us because people who are in the witness protection programme are, in many respects, in there to be protected against Kosovo institutions and people within those institutions. So we protect them. We can't hand them over to the very people that we're protecting them against.

Such an issue however is not easily resolved nor is it unexpected, as, he continues:

It's not something that you just identify at the end. No amount of planning could change the fact that once we start protecting witnesses they are our responsibility. Ultimately, the EU bears some responsibility of protecting. As to liquidation, you will cut off, you will shut down, but you will still have people operating even if there won't be a mission. I mean people who work in witness protection they know what they're at, and they know that there will never be an exit strategy for them because it's an on-going obligation. Once you get witnesses in, that's it. It's your responsibility. And the only way that you could get out of that is by doing the normal risk assessment and say it is safe to pull the plug now and just let them get on with their lives.

This early identification of issues that will be difficult to liquidate for EULEX highlights how difficult the liquidation of an organisation is, as solutions do ultimately need to be found, and considered early on. It also suggests how likely things are to continue in one way or another, and the assumption that a solution will, in time, be found.

## **8.6 BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE, OLD AND NEW**

While in the administrative closure of an organisation everyday activities are focused on the task at hand and there is no rupture of time, temporal experiences continue to change meaning. Despite closure being publicly proclaimed as shown in the previous chapter, we see here enacted a performance of closure whereby on the surface the short-term temporary organisation is no longer in existence, but now exists under a different guise. The activities of this condensed ICO no longer focus on building up Kosovo's future but on the internal activities of disintegration and fragmentation.

Although this new organisation operates under a different name, in reality it is very much a continuation of itself with the same staff, the same materials and the same operating systems, despite all being reduced in numbers. The safety net of continuity also extends beyond the internal walls of the ICO's Logistics Base as some of the ICO

staff, now international experts, are negotiated contracts as Appointees with various Kosovo Government ministries, cars and other resources are donated back to Kosovo, and the essence of the ICO's work continues through changed structures, and new laws and regimes.

In the context of Kosovo, while one international organisation is understood to have closed, this is confined to a material liquidation as the wider international juggernaut continues through other existing international organisations like the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and through new short-term temporary missions like EULEX. The system that is international development in Kosovo thus remains consistent with the seamless transferral of one organisation's name to another. Underlying this point is the continuing dependence of Kosovo on the international system and the ongoing (re)negotiation between a past of conflict and a European future, and between old and new systems of governance. One is led to question what point closure really manifests itself materially and operationally, and what it really means, and for whom.

## 9 THE ABSENT PRESENT AND PRESENT ABSENCE OF CLOSURE

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*“Struggles over time are what construct it.”*  
(Verdery, 1996)

*“[People] weave in and out of different phases in their life, they engage in activities that are surprising and under the radar of most academic observers, and they hold inconsistent, even incoherent, views. They are wonderfully awkward and defy our neat academic categories.”*  
(MacGinty in Aaronson et al., 2016)

### 9.1 “WELCOME TO FLAGISTAN”: A KOSOVO BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE

*On the ground floor of EULEX’s Headquarters, and in its centre facing the entrance, are Europe’s flags. They line up a flight of stairs to the first floor. As a whole, the flags represent the countries of the European Union. Whether the aim is to act as a reminder that this is an EU building, or that the EU is present in Kosovo, or to inspire Kosovo to be a part of the EU’s future is not obvious. What is particularly striking in the placing of these flags is that behind them, hanging on the walls, are mounted photographs of barbed wire, collapsed buildings, and military men in uniform. These photos are perhaps there as a prompt to EULEX and its staff to remember why EULEX is in Kosovo, and what its main task is. However, regardless of their artistic value or the hidden meanings behind their presence, my reading of them is rather pessimistic. In the juxtaposition between flags and photos, I see an important visual disconnect between EULEX and Kosovo. While the flags are fluid objects, moving in the slightest movement of wind, hopeful representatives of what the future may hold with EU membership, the photos are stationary – stuck with their image of a past conflict that haunts a territory and keeps it confined to that past. The flags sit proudly along the stairway but the view of Kosovo is always the same. In this stairway, Kosovo is limited to either a conflictual past, or an EU future. The present day is bounded by these two contrasting images. It is this temporally symbolic stairway ‘up’ to the EU future or ‘down’ to Kosovo’s past that has framed the story of Kosovo’s development practice*

*and has been a key background consideration throughout this thesis, and a theme I return to in this final and concluding chapter.*

The aim of this research has been to explore the influence of time on everyday development practice in short-term temporary international development missions. As a start for inquiring into time, this thesis has proposed looking at the impact of closure, understood as the planned termination of a short-term temporary development organisation working towards its withdrawal from a host country. This study has utilised the concept of closure as both a conceptual tool with which to offer a deeper understanding of development's everyday practices, and as a new analytical lens through which to observe this everyday. Representing the aimed-for withdrawal from a host country, closure has been conceptualised as a fluid and dynamic temporal process that simultaneously engages closure's positioning in the future as a temporal horizon and as a temporal parameter influencing the here and now. This thesis has also maintained that as a new analytical lens, closure helps us to better understand the temporal realities of everyday of development work by offering a framework from which decisions, actions and relationships emerge and are (re)negotiated and (re)adjusted. Closure therefore exposes some of development's everyday temporal practices as they unravel, and underlines the existence of a temporal ambiguity that is constituted by and constitutes that everyday (messy) reality.

Each chapter has served to highlight the diverse and sometimes contradictory ways in which closure is framed (Chapter Four), managed (Chapter Five), experienced (Chapter Six), narrated (Chapter Seven) and imagined (Chapter Eight), occupying myriad spaces for individuals, organisation and host country in the unfolding present. This final concluding chapter first revisits the key findings from each chapter describing closure in two of Kosovo's short-term development missions; the European Union Rule of Law mission in Kosovo (EULEX), and the International Civilian Office (ICO). It then discusses what we learn about development work when seen through the lens of closure and how closure helps us understand that everyday reality. The chapter ends by claiming that the concept of closure put forward by this thesis has the potential to capture time in its making and thus matters for its agentic potential,

ultimately enabling the everyday operational reality of development practice to be considered for analysis.

## **9.2 UNRAVELLING CLOSURE**

### **9.2.1 Framing Closure**

In the first of five empirical chapters, Chapter Four looked at staffing processes in EULEX with the aim of exploring how closure is framed from the outset of one's arrival into the organisation. Staffing in this chapter was understood as a means of ensuring the suitable human resources needed to help an organisation meet its intended goal of withdrawing from a host country. The chapter finds that during EULEX staffing processes the horizon of closure is very much present for goal-setting. This means that recruitment processes take place in the present and are made with a view to ensuring that suitable professionals are employed so that the mission can fulfil its projected goal in the best possible way. Here, consideration of the future in the present establishes linear and sequential organisational time. For example, during this period of recruitment and staffing, EULEX anticipates and projects future staffing needs, advertises and selects its candidates within rigid timeframes, and positions its staff contracts within a fixed continuum. For the individual, time also takes on a linear and sequential quality. The inflexibility of EULEX recruitment processes impose organisational time on the individual through fixed deadlines, be it in application deadlines or in the recruitment criterion that set out specific temporal requirements for applicants. Recruitment processes are thus presented in this chapter as fixed and rigid suggesting that organisational time is bound to a specific timeline and timeframe which moves in a linear direction towards the organisation goal of withdrawal.

By contrast to the fixed linear and sequential operations of EULEX's staffing processes framed by a consideration of closure's goal, the chapter also demonstrated an undercurrent of continuity, cyclical time and permanence that appears to blur consideration of closure or defer it. One of the ways that organisational cyclical time was identified was through the periodic occurrences of vacancies emerging throughout the year. What is first perceived as a single recruiting activity becomes recurring and

cyclical for the organisation. These recruitment activities were found to occur regardless of how close to the end of a mandate the mission was, emphasising organisational permanence rather than closure. Recall the extraordinary call for contributions for a mere five posts four months prior to the ending of the June 2014 mandate (European External Action Service, 2014). At an operational level the regularity by which positions become vacant and new arrivals enter EULEX gives the impression of organisational continuity and permanence while allowing the organisation as a whole to remain permanent through renewal, rather than orient itself towards closure.

Different rhythms of time also emerge in the chapter to reveal that institutional time is set against individual time from the outset. At an individual level, time takes on its own framing that becomes separate from institutional time. For instance, through the establishment of various contracts types (seconded and contracted) we learn that it is the calendar end date on each individual's contract with EULEX rather than the organisation's mandate end date that frames each individual staff member's period of time in EULEX. We also see that temporal connectors establish cyclical time and permanence as staff themselves can be recycled back into the organisation to fill new positions. Yet time also exists beyond that individual's time through the continuity and cyclical temporalities of staff repeatedly leaving and being replaced by new staff members. Here, individual ends are incorporated into the continuation of the collective, while closure is reduced to a background consideration.

Staffing activities and decisions that take place in the present for the purpose of projecting needs and ensuring adequate human resources also risk focusing on beginnings rather than ends as the chapter underlined. Novelty and new beginnings thus trump consideration of the end. For instance, the individual staff member arriving to EULEX is concerned with settling in, gaining knowledge, and spending time gathering information. Yet while short-term contracts serve as reminders that nothing lasts forever and temporarily frames and positions staff, individuals are able to consider time beyond and prior to EULEX thereby allowing individual time to permeate structural time. Temporal connectors also exist through recruitment criteria or job searches. This, cemented by the close proximity of individual contract starts and

ends, blur temporal boundaries to give the impression of organisational perpetuity, and contributes to pushing closure further away in time. Ergo, through renewal and continuity of staff and staffing processes, the chapter revealed that permanence sets in to confuse, if not negate, the goal of closure.

The importance of these dynamics from the start of one's involvement with a short-term temporary mission like EULEX is significant because the immediate absence and blurring of closure from the outset implies that the stage of recruitment appears at odds with the goal of withdrawing as it is about setting up and ensuring continuity within the temporary short-term context. While the chapter illustrated that everything is set up with closure in mind, a more complex web of activities, decisions and structures emerges to confuse the goal of closure by hinting at the possibility of permanence and flexibility. This hints at a future goal of closure that is unbounded and open to change. It also provides the individual staff member with different temporal orientations. This, the chapter maintains, encourages a taken-for granted reality of temporal possibility from the beginning of one's involvement with EULEX that renders closure absent in the here and now.

### **9.2.2 Performing Closure**

Chapter Five explored the 'normal' operational activities of EULEX in order to shed light on how closure is performed in the everyday. Ambitious in nature, the chapter understood the 'normal' functioning of EULEX to be the moments when its operation was not focused on bringing staff in (Chapter Four), changing mission direction (Chapter Six) or focused directly on the official and public withdrawal of a mission (Chapters Seven and Eight). Many of the tensions that appear in what is designated as closure were suggested to already be inherent and problematic in the normal daily operation of EULEX. These tensions, the chapter proposed, establish different understandings of what closure is, resulting in varying degrees of resistance to or acceptance of closure.

The chapter claims that closure is present in setting the parameters of EULEX's timeframe and justifying its existence. For instance, a fixed trajectory for closure that is embodied in various operational documents translating objectives into specific activities frames the daily activities of EULEX staff. In this sense, projected objectives

and activities guide the daily tasks of staff and organisation. Yet while these documents were considered to determine activities, they were also shown to be fixed by a short-term time-frame of two years, and deemed confidential in nature. The former implied the activities to be inflexible in meeting any unexpected changes or interruptions, while the latter was illustrative of a spatio-temporal regime of secrecy that divided staff and represented an obstacle, if not a delaying tactic (De Certeau, 2011), for some staff in fulfilling the collective goal.

Also argued by the chapter was the idea that that everyone engages qualitatively with closure, be it the closure of the organisation or their own individual tenure's 'closure'. Individual end dates of staff contracts are examples of the co-existence of various timeframes. By showing that individual closures can also frame time, the chapter highlighted the shared and differing temporalities experienced by staff and the temporal rhythms within those. For instance, feelings of wasting time, attempts at controlling time and experiences of time passing slowly compared to the task at hand were common to many EULEX staff. Here too was the acknowledgment of transitory relationships that necessitated regular negotiation. Recall here the prioritising of courtship considerations or deliberations about making friends or not based on individuated contract end dates.

On the other hand, how staff experienced time also varied between contract types while individual contract duration positioned and oriented staff at various points along closure's horizon, each with their own contractual start and end dates and the associated employment concerns about the future. How staff engage between their now and their individual projected closures becomes personal, and goes beyond organisational time, but equally, it establishes myriad and often overlapping or contradictory tempos and temporal trajectories to be negotiated. For instance we are reminded of the local EULEX Press and Information Officer whose experience of trying to officially confirm his increased responsibilities before the departure of his boss attests to the convergence of two opposing time orientations where one is focused on ends and leaving, and the other on continuation of time in EULEX. Closure is therefore evidenced in this chapter as always being present in the negotiation of relationships, decisions and activities.

As temporal concerns eventually inform and change the realities of EULEX's normal daily operation, key to this chapter is the testifying of rich and differing temporalities; their speeds, tempo, pace, rhythm and quality. These underline how vast the temporal horizons, orientations and positioning of EULEX staff can be. Consequently, as closure takes on unpredictable and uncertain meanings for different staff at various points in time, it becomes resisted. Hence, what appeared to be the presence of closure expands into the horizon and becomes absent. In bringing to the fore a colourful tapestry of temporal rhythms and qualities that can be experienced by development workers in their everyday, the chapter makes the bold claim that the regular operation and functioning of an organisation has little to do with working towards withdrawing; short-term and temporary values dominate, and the everyday becomes focused on maintaining a functioning process of operation rather than closing it.

### **9.2.3 Managing Closure**

Chapter Six focused on describing how EULEX manages time when it downsizes its staff and material resources. Here, downsizing was presented as a microcosm of closure; an expected and early process of winding down, symbolic of a mission accomplishing its regular activities and approaching its final goal of withdrawing. However, far from focusing on winding down and ends, the chapter showed that the goal of closure was pushed further in time by the introduction of flexibility, continuity and a focus on new beginnings. This, it was concluded, rendered closure absent despite its presence in the management of a downsize.

The chapter first showed an EULEX readjusting to changed external circumstances by modifying its mission objectives and staffing requirements. Internally the act of realigning the future in this way expands closure's temporal horizon. This suggests that time is infinite as the goal of withdrawal is moved further along in time. It also interferes with the idea of leaving because it is about setting up a new direction for the mission with new staff. Externally, while EULEX (re)negotiates its commitments towards Kosovo and trades risks, it equally enters new commitments. This opens up the future to potentiality and flexibility rather than a clear goal of withdrawal the chapter argued.

The chapter also pointed to an internal tension between individual and organisational goals where an internalised focus on survival emerges. These tensions, it was found, are encouraged by various levels of (in)security stemming from hierarchies of temporal knowledge. As information about the timing of a downsize is withheld or delayed to sustain performance levels, some staff spend their time attempting to gain knowledge about the downsize, and thus their own career survival. While the organisation was shown to execute its plan for closure by the very act of downsizing, individual staff were found to focus on their own personal closures. Pre-occupied with personal stability and emotional well-being, staff started to (dis)engage. Anxiety was found to drive behaviour. The experience of time was intensified through sudden deadlines, with perceptions that time was constrained and shrinking. Efforts were shown to be focused on contract renewals, contract extensions, regulating emotions or on thinking about time beyond EULEX instead of the goal of closure.

Thus the inner machinations of the EULEX mission during a period of downsizing indicated concern with continuation and beginnings rather than finitude and ends despite the goal of closure driving many management decisions. This betrays a particular temporal tension between the absence and presence of closure, and a pattern of development practice that appears to encourage a focus on the pursuit of organisational or individual survival and distracts from the collective endeavour.

#### **9.2.4 Marking Closure**

As the once distant future of closure rapidly advances towards the present in the public and official announcement of withdrawal, the closure of an international development organisation becomes situated between a past of memories and promises, and future imaginings. This is the issue that Chapter Seven turns to utilizing a new case study, that of the International Civilian Office (ICO), due to the absence of materials from EULEX.<sup>127</sup> With the aim of addressing how a short-term development organisation publicly and officially marks its closure, and how closure's time is experienced by staff, the chapter illustrated the portrayal of closure as a positive achievement and as the simultaneous marker of historical and future time. Underlining the chapter is the

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<sup>127</sup> To date (Spring 2018) EULEX has not yet withdrawn from Kosovo.

proposal that although closure is the topic of the day and therefore very much present, its definition becomes complicated and its start and end date blurred.

Symbolising the moment staff and organisation have worked themselves to, the chapter showed closure to be a present and immediate consideration for staff rather than the far off promised future goal it was shown to be in previous chapters. Evidence of collegial time and collective celebration gives a sense of togetherness in closure that was previously missing. As the reality of closure aligns itself with the temporal proximity of its announcement, staff are shown to place a stronger focus on completing final activities. They do this by establishing tangible and achievable targets in the remaining time through closing strategies or administrative tasks involving the elimination of materials. On the other hand, the chapter also revealed that closure occurred behind closed doors rendering it private, and reminiscent of the spatio-temporal hierarchies of secrecy evident in EULEX.

Pointing to the wider implications of closure on Kosovo, the ICO's host country, the chapter also demonstrated that the closure of a short-term temporary organisation impacts the future of its host country. We are reminded by this chapter that the short-term of an organisation impacts the long-term of a host country. As the time of closure is deemed a measure of success, the success becomes not of Kosovo's doing but that of an external international (European) organisation. Here, the marker of time extends beyond the borders of the organisation and its closure in the shape of a new promised future. Hence continuity and permanence are again hinted at as the achievements of a closing organisation are presented as the foundation for the host country's new future. The consequence of this is that while closure is very much present, it becomes absent again.

### **9.2.5 Imagining Closure**

The final empirical chapter illustrated how an organisation executes its withdrawal from a host country. The aim of the chapter was to inquire into how closure is imagined after it has formally and publicly narrated its closure. The chapter borrowed the term "liquidation" given to the ICOs Liquidation Team, the name of the three-month administrative team mandated with ceasing all aspects of the ICO. It found a shrunken temporal horizon for closure existed whereby the immediate task at hand focused

purely on the administrative activities of winding down and getting rid of all resources – human and material. Here closure was at its most obvious the consideration of present operational decisions and activities. Although staff and organisation have been assumed to be aiming for this point in time, the time of liquidation hinted at a mission turned in on itself to achieve its withdrawal. Related to this, the chapter made the claim that the moment a development mission gives full attention to its closure, the furthest away from the task of development it is.

The chapter also revealed that although the disintegration and fragmentation of an organisation was the task at hand, hidden rhythms of continuation and permanence emerged. For instance, staff working on the previous political mandate return in the administrative mission, some staff are employed by various departments within Kosovo's government, and materials are donated back to Kosovo. Crucially, the chapter proposed that the work of the ICO endures through the constant presence of the international community, or through the changed structures of Kosovo's laws and policies. Here continuity and discontinuity co-exist; as the presence of closure becomes eliminated by enduring structures and materials, it once again becomes absent.

### **9.2.6 Capturing Closure**

Separately, the various chapters have indicated that there are different phases of closure, each with their own orders and rhythms but none with clearly defined starts or ends. The aspects of time evidenced within each chapter are all at work to contribute to the construction of closure's meaning, with its many tensions and contradictions emerging at their interface. While qualitative differences of closure relate to where one is situated and oriented along closure's time horizon at any one time, various understandings of what closure is emerge in each chapter and witness degrees of its resistance or acceptance.

Each chapter holds an immanent relationship to the other. Combined, they argue that as operational and individual permanence, flexibility and continuity set in, the goal of closure becomes lost. This underlines the idea that closure is not an outcome of a goal nor an event that can be likened to an exit strategy (Caplan, 2012; Zaum, 2009). Instead, closure takes on a sense of permanence that renders it omnipresent,

characterised by multiple combinations and scales of its absence and presence in the here and now, and embedded within the everyday operational practices of development. In this sense closure becomes a framework that constitutes and is constituted by the everyday reality of development work, and highlights how messy that everyday reality as it speaks to the blurred lines between finitude and permanence, starts and ends, long-term and short-term as I now discuss.

### **9.3 CLOSURE IN KOSOVO'S SHORT-TERM TEMPORARY MISSIONS: A MESSY EVERYDAY TEMPORAL REALITY**

The concept of closure developed in this thesis claims to help expose how the everyday development work in two of Kosovo's short-term temporary international organisations is marked by perpetual temporal ambiguity and paradoxes of varying scales, tempos and qualities. While each chapter independently attests to the shifting temporal organisational priorities and their resulting staff activities, decisions and relationships, combined, the chapters reveal how closure expands and contracts, and expands again as the life of the organisation progresses and its staff move along it. Subsequently, closure is shown to be ubiquitous and a part of an everyday development work that is characterised by a fluid and dynamic relationship between closure's presence and absence in the here and now. Part of the fabric of everyday development practice therefore, closure's reality becomes a messy contradiction of differing temporalities. This messy reality requires constant (re)negotiation and (re)adapting which in turn constitutes a typical everyday reality.

In this thesis I have put forward the idea that closure is a blueprint for guiding action in some of Kosovo's short-term temporary development missions. The future-orientated goal of closure binds present time, particularly for the short-term temporary mission which uses a linear and sequential approach to time during its staffing processes (Chapter Four), its regular operational activities (Chapter Five), and in its decision-making process such as in a downsize exercise (Chapter Six). Underlying the linear approach to the goal of closure is also a closure that keeps moving further away along time's horizon as the organisation finds ways of bypassing its own fixed and

rigid future-oriented temporalities through flexible and cyclical time; hinting at the conditionality of closure in contract and mission lengths (Chapter Four), or regularly extending contracts (Chapter Six) and mandates (Chapter Five). Here, closure is shown to inform the present although from the standpoint of the future.

Equally, I have shown that when the intended future goal of closure is finally reached so that organisation and staff can leave a host country, closure continues to be difficult to identify and ascertain. Despite official attention publicly demarcating the time of closure (Chapter Seven), closure remains a background ordering temporal structure for the short-term temporary organisation as the organisation continues to operate beyond the official marking of its closure (Chapter Eight).

Just like society is not always seen to engage with death (Mellor & Shilling, 1993), the everyday of short-term temporary organisations like EULEX and the ICO and their professionals do not necessarily engage explicitly with closure, and as death represents a struggle for *being* (Heidegger, 1962), closure in this study represents a parallel struggle of temporality in the lived present. This implies that efforts and behaviours in the here and now are geared towards a regular and constant process of (re)negotiation of contradictory timeframes between both the presence *and* absence of closure in the everyday practices of short-term temporary missions. Implicit in this understanding of closure is time's myriad aspects and differing temporalities. The understanding of development's everyday reality that we learn from closure is an everyday marred by temporal ambiguity.

According to the findings of this study, one way in which temporal ambiguity is played out is through the blurring of timeframes. On the one hand organisational cyclical time and the ongoing circulation and connection of staff, knowledge and materials, establish a sense of permanence and renewal which contradicts the very goal of closure (Chapters Four, Five and Six). On the other hand, when closure is attained, ironically, the lack of clarity found in its blurred start and end date renders present closure absent (Chapters Seven and Eight) to the extent that exits are noted to be rarely final (Caplan, 2012). EULEX interestingly stands between closure and existence; as an organisation that is in itself the arm of another organisation (the European Union), EULEX closes while the European Union continues to exist. Such tension highlights closure's messy

contradiction and in a sense, points to its non-existence. This is not to say however, that denying closure in development is inevitable; after all, closure as I have illustrated is present in short-term temporary organisations where regular reminders of closure constantly exist.

In addition to learning that the everyday is a messy reality of temporal ambiguity and contradiction, we also learn that this ambiguity becomes part of the normal quotidian, normalised by practices of negotiation and adaptation. As staff are constrained by various temporal structures in decisions, actions, and relationships they find ways to navigate the various temporal obstacles. Temporal ambiguity therefore becomes a feature of everyday development work. For instance, as we see in Chapter Five, relationships often foreground temporal considerations, be it in personal relationships, professional relationships or networking for future work. During a downsize when future employment is deemed uncertain, staff find ways to lobby for the continuation of their roles. For the organisation, downsizing represents an opportunity for EULEX to (re)negotiate its risks and commitments with its host country Kosovo. Here reminders of temporal flexibility overrule attempts at establishing and upholding fixed temporal structures that clearly aim towards closure. In this sense, closure does not influence outcomes but becomes a framework from which a particular reality is created through negotiation and temporal flexibility.

Together, these chapters have also demonstrated that maintaining the organisation's complex relationship with closure is also an underlying organisational secrecy introduces uncertainty and mistrust between staff and organisation as well as amongst staff themselves, and establishes a hierarchy of knowledge and practices of inclusion and exclusion all based on temporal information. Remember in Chapter Five where key operational documents were kept confidential from many staff, typically local staff. Here it was found that the effect of breaking up an organisational community between the knowledge and non-knowledge holders had temporal repercussions as non-knowledge holders became response-driven in their daily tasks, and knowledge holders were able to control and prioritise their work activities. As decisions about futures are made in organisational confidentiality, such as the clandestine meeting set up to decide which positions to cut in a downsize in Chapter Six, holders of knowledge

appropriate individual time and informal practices of flexible time seep through the pores of the organisation's bound time as individual staff members attempt to regain control of time both on a personal and professional level. Due to such secretive regimes, structures of trust cannot be forged within short-term temporary organisations like EULEX creating counterproductive behaviours and sustaining internal and external structures of inclusion and exclusion. Here we see the EU through its short-term temporary missions encouraging various levels of (in)security forged by temporal tensions, while also trying to maintain a fiction of permanency through that secrecy.

Despite a secretive context that forges an external image of continuation, but internally divides staff, closure follows everyone along and has the potential to bring people together. For anthropologists, different people understand time in a plurality of ways, and various people experience time differently (see, for example, Evans-Pritchard, 1939; Gell, 1992; Van Gennep, 1960). Within the post-socialist literature, the control and interpretation of time, at least in its official and alternative versions, is shown to also be a reflection of power – of, for and against the state (see in particular Kaneff, 2004; and Verdery, 1996 for instance). While acknowledging the different understandings and experiences of time, my approach has been to illustrate how people move in and out of various temporalities and time scales. To do so signifies a shift away from differentiation to highlighting the potential for time's unifying qualities. For example, I have shown that no staff member in either the ICO or EULEX takes up a linear approach to time as they all need to, in one way or another, (re)negotiate conflicting and competing expectations; for example between personal and professional or organisational expectations or time, or between long-term and short-term goals. In the staffing activities of EULEX for instance, the organisational orientations to time are the same across all contractual types where entry into an organisation places the onus on starts rather than ends (Chapter Four). In the regular activities of staff discussed in Chapter Five we find staff members coping in various ways that serve, in a sense, to collectively deny closure and maintain the functioning of an organisation rather than its closure. During various downsize exercises common expressions of distrust and self-interest reverberate throughout the organisation at various levels temporally distracting all staff and mission from closure (Chapter Six).

Increasingly, internal differentials are blurred and closure is deemed a reality during the public closure of a short-term mission like the ICO, as remaining staff collectively celebrate their achievements and mourn the end of their organisation together (Chapter Seven). It is in the administrative closure of a mission, when staff and mission are no longer focused on the task of development but on executing closure that staff work together as a collective group towards liquidation and the organisation's termination (Chapter Eight).

Closure tell us that everyday development practice in EULEX and the ICO is dynamic and fluid, made discernible by the existence of multiple temporal trajectories and their contradicting or complimentary temporal qualities. All of these being dependent on where along closure's horizon one is situated. As organisation and individuals find ways to structure emerging temporal uncertainties or navigate temporal obstacles, parallel times emerge. In Chapter Five, for instance, we see the establishment of anticipated return dates that evade organisational time as staff attempt to gain control of personal time. Whereas individuals are framed by their contractual timeframes, differences emerge when we observe that some secondees perceive their time in EULEX as being bracketed time away from a job back home, while others perceive their time in EULEX frames by their contractual agreement with EULEX. Albeit temporarily, organisational and individual time mutually permeate each other's temporal boundaries.

As closure becomes arbitrary, organisational deadlines unpredictable, staff response-driven and context left open to interpretation, the collective goal of withdrawal becomes lost and is contradicted by the introduction of permanence and continuity as organisation and staff become inward-looking. Viewing everyday development practice through the lens of closure we therefore discover an everyday tainted by temporal ambiguity and contradictions where implicit is the need for (re)negotiation and (re)adaptation by both organisation and individuals. In this way, reminders of the temporary overrule attempts at establishing stability in everyday development practices.

#### **9.4 THE ROLE OF THE TEMPORARY IN THE PERMANENT**

While this study has explored how the present is structured by the future and influenced by it in the context of short-term temporary missions, highlighting how staff work at the interface of two temporal systems, it also raises significant questions about how the temporary time of short-term missions shapes the permanent in Kosovo's development practice. Understanding development as both oriented towards a future goal and structured by it implies a move away from academic attention to historical analyses and critiques of development and post-socialist transition that look to the past (Baaz, 2005; Böröcz, 2001; Duffield & Hewitt, 2009; Fechter & Walsh, 2010; Hann, 2002; Humphrey, 2002; Kothari, 2005b; Pine & Bridger, 1998), to raise new questions about the influence and impact of the future in development, the future being a yet under-explored topic within development studies (for exceptions see Green et al., 2012; Kothari, 2005a; Mische, 2014). Yet the ever-changing nature of closure underlines a key temporal problematic that is reflected in scholarly attention to the development aid and assistance delivered to post-socialist Europe.

On the one hand, the promise of closure connects the external European Union with Kosovo as closure is about the legitimisation of short-term temporary missions like EULEX and the ICO. Here, an engagement with closure draws people into a web of democratisation and promises of transition from one state, system or model to another. Across the Balkans, the European Union (EU) aims to foster democracy and sustainable peace and security, the conditions for which have been set out in the Copenhagen European Council (European Union, 1993). The aim of the EU in Kosovo has been to create the conditions for sustainable peace and democratic governance, a goal that has been typically identified in the state-building and development literature (Paris, 2004).<sup>128</sup> Closure is thus one means by which democratic transition can be seen to be occurring through the appropriation of the future.

On the other hand, patterns of gaining and reversing control are also exposed in closure where the conditions of closure repeat themselves in ongoing struggles. Here, both

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<sup>128</sup> It is worth noting here that Ante intentionally merges the fields of development and state-building having drawn attention to the "noticeable lack of cross-fertilisation between development theories and state-building literature" (Ante, 2010, p. 13).

development and state-building are defined by temporal limits when a short-term temporary mission seeks durability. While the features of development such as institutions, staff and structures in this thesis are described as being temporary, their aim is for permanence and sustainability. As such, a focus on closure underlines an inherent tension found in development between the temporary and the permanent, and illuminates how they both shape and are shaped by one another.

This points to two issues that have merely been hinted at in this thesis and would justify further research. The first is that the temporary shapes the permanent by introducing operational flexibility at the heart of development practice and developmental goals. In this sense, the basis of a short-term temporary organisation is counterproductive to development's longer term sustainability goals as not only does a temporary organisation encourage a short-term mindset, which Autesserre has suggested is detrimental to development practice (Autesserre, 2014), but it also triggers deep uncertainty due to loss of temporal control.

The second point is that the temporary short-term development mission is really about operational continuity and permanence because the organisation must be seen to continue prior to closure, while post closure, the legacy of the organisation must somehow continue. This infers that development, when looked at through the lens of time, is about the continual extension of organisations (including their contracts and resources) and the ideologies that drive them. While the social life of projects (Sampson, 1996, 2003), or socialism's five-year plans all evidenced their own planned time frames, in reality this is a continual adaptation of something that is supposed to have a clear end. Ultimately, just like I have illustrated in this thesis, transitions are proposed but never quite emerge as realities, always being extended in one way or another, rather like the EULEX and ICO missions I have described. The promise for better futures is thus ever-prolonged.

#### **9.4.1 Closure's Paradoxes at the Heart of Development**

The crux of closure is riddled with paradoxes. Underlying this research is a fundamental paradox that the short-term of development practice is relatively long-term, and that the long-term of development practice is short-term. There are several ways in which the short-term of Kosovo's development impacts the long-term. The

very nature of a short-term temporary organisation like EULEX or the ICO suggests that the goals achieved by such missions seek to impact the long-term of Kosovo; establishing peace and stability in the Balkans as well as sustainable “modern” democracy and good governance. Internally, the short-term nature of the operation also has an impact on what is chosen to be indicators of success, and impacts on the kind of work undertaken. The EU, through its short-term temporary organisations, imposes and overlays new models of governance on pre-existing ones, thereby seeking durability and permanence.

Within the mission itself, short-term experts are sent in to capacity-build local counterparts with a vision to uphold the ongoing long-term sustainability. In short-term contracts given to locals and internationals alike, the long-term is sustained as the goal posts of closure are moved further and further away along the time horizon. Outsiders, the EU, EULEX and internationals are brought into Kosovo temporarily but their operational decisions, the regimes of secrecy and the temporal ambiguities and contradictions that I have alluded to throughout this study all have a long-term effect on its future.

In all of this, the locals in Kosovo essentially are allowed a very minimal role to play despite the conversation involving their future. For example local EULEX staff are given low status supportive roles, which disempower them from the decision-making process. They then have to rely on instruction and guidance from their international colleagues who have the privilege of holding secretive information (Chapter Five). In parallel to this exists Kosovo’s role in the determination of its own future. Kosovo is equally disempowered by the conditionality of EU accession with international bodies such as EULEX and the ICO. Through the temporal structures of temporary short-term development organisations, state capacity is eroded as it is left in limbo; neither knowing when the outsider will leave, nor being able to have any control over its present day existence.

Paradoxically, it is when staff appear to come together in efforts to meet the final goals of an organisation that the mission is no longer focused on the goal of development, but is instead internal-looking, with tasks that seek to achieve termination and fragmentation rather than focus on building and sustainability.

The task of development is essentially constrained by its own temporal (dis)connect and ambiguity. As changing relations to closure encourage changes in everyday development values and discourses, these new orientations change the tasks of development feeding an internal obsession with an organisational need for survival, while also delaying the goal of closure and so becoming increasingly linked to an organisation's internal politics and safeguarding its external image and continuing legacy. Ultimately, this questions the goal of a short-term temporary development mission as one that is focused on doing the job and leaving within a set period of time, and/or establishing durable peace and stability through transformed state institutions. While short-term development missions in the present deal with a host country in a way that justifies the future, they will also abandon the host country going on to other things while ultimately holding no accountability for their actions, as they no longer exist as organisations.

The paradox between the long-term or short-term impacts of intervention and exits on the durability and sustainability of development projects, organisations and the system has not gone unnoticed in academia (see, for example, Chand & Coffman, 2008; Darby & Mac Ginty, 2003; Koddenbrock, 2016, p. 58; Langer & Brown, 2016; Ponzio, 2012). It is of particular importance on literature on the set up of democratic elections for instance (Brancati & Snyder, 2011; Reilly, 2011). MacGinty, however, notes that within academic attention to the construction of time in post-conflict reconstruction, most studies “concentrate on political time” while the ways in which people “impose time categories” on political processes are understudied (Mac Ginty, 2016, p. 3). This study is therefore encouraged by academic attention to “sociological time” in peacebuilding literature (Mac Ginty, 2016) and speaks to emerging systematic considerations of time and temporality in transitional and post-conflict societies (Mueller-Hirth & Rios Oyola, 2018) with its unique focus on how future time (the time of closure) is experienced and constituted within everyday collective working practices.

## **9.5 IMPLICATIONS OF CLOSURE AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL**

The main claim being made by this thesis is that closure represents a potential new lens for looking at the everyday realities of development work. Conceptually, closure introduces a dynamic view of time that helps us understand how everyday development practices are normalised and become collective. As a new analytical framework it offers up the potential to delve further into the temporal characteristics, structures and practices of everyday development work. Closure, this thesis has proposed, helps identify not just the various temporal aspects or variables of development work that are, for instance, already present in studies on life histories of development workers (Lewis, 2008) or pathways into development (Roth, 2015), but allows for a plurality of dynamic temporalities to be explored despite the fixed anchors set up by short-term temporary development organisations.

While closure helps to challenge clear temporal boundaries, it also allows a dynamic framework to emerge within which the everyday is (re)created. In this sense, closure foregrounds temporal ambiguity in the making of everyday development practices and opens up new ways of looking at development work. Ergo, closure offers an opportunity to explore multiple perspectives of change so pertinent to the topic of development. As closure is substituted by continuity and permanence, it shows that the goal of withdrawal in a short-term temporary mission becomes lost. Implied here is that while closure informs and changes the everyday realities of development, it has little to do with the explicit goal of development as it emerges as a fluid and open framework from which decisions, activities and relations materialise.

In this sense I have argued that closure, as a new lens through which to explore time in development, is important to examine because it exposes some of the rich and differing temporalities that exist in the development practices of a particular location (Kosovo) and brings to the fore a vibrant tapestry of temporal rhythms and qualities that can be experienced by development workers in their everyday. A focus on closure therefore underlines a dynamic relationship in how we ‘do’ development, as it creates an entry point for understanding how certain relationships and approaches to development work encourage or hinder particular practices and behaviours. If the impact of closure at individual and organisational level can be better understood and

planned throughout an organisation's existence, perhaps we can find a way of tackling some of the unintended consequences of development practices.

### **9.5.1 Closure's Agentic Potential**

Conceptually, closure introduces a dynamic view of time that allows us to unpack temporal tensions and contradictions in everyday development practice, and helps us understand how practices are then normalised and become collective. As a new analytical framework it offers up the potential to delve further into the temporal characteristics, structures and practices of everyday development work so as to eventually question the agency of the development community, and perhaps challenge prevailing oppositional boundaries as I now discuss.

Sociological studies on time and future strongly support the idea of time's agentic potential (Adam, 2008) and its importance in mutually shaping and being shaped by discourse (Mische, 2014). An increasing number of empirical studies attest to the importance of treating time in this way to emphasise key relationships to time that are new. Of particular interest here is the literature on hope and expectations (Brown, 2003; Brown & Michael, 2003). In much of what is written in this field we find echoes in development work and life whereby alternating cycles of hype and disappointment pulsate throughout the lifespan of a short-term temporary organisation.

Just as time becomes inclusive (Barnett, 2011) so too does closure. Through the lens of closure I have therefore demonstrated that time has the potential to unify people as every individual experiences time in some form or another (Gell, 1992, p. 315; see also Bloch, 1977). Despite an arbitrary and transitory temporal context, closure has the potential to follow each individual staff member and to bring people together as each individual experiences closure in some form or another. Highlighting temporal commonalities within development practice is important in a field that is often accused of encouraging a 'them' versus 'us' dichotomy (Crewe & Harrison, 1998, pp. 29–30). Scholarly attention, for example, also points to the disconnect between internationals and the local context (Verma, 2011; Nowicka, 2009; Eyben, 2011) and the establishment of hierarchies and unequal relationships (Crewe & Fernando, 2006; Lewis & Mosse, 2006; MacLachlan, Carr, & McAuliffe, 2010). Maintaining such boundaries encourages hierarchical thinking and approaches, and establishes an

authoritarian atmosphere which is counterproductive in relation to development and reminiscent of the divisive relations so commonly recognised in post-colonial and post-socialist transition literatures (see in particular Green et al., 2012; Kothari, 2014).

Time is also relational. Kaneff, for instance, notes that when individuals associate with different time horizons, they also orient themselves in terms of other individuals (Kaneff, 2004, p. 13). In this sense, the time of closure offers the potential for dissolving the typical boundary differentials between the 'them' and 'us' along local and international lines, and encourages a new way of looking at group formations within the context of everyday development practice. Whilst underlining a tendency to become obsessed with the impetus for survival, the political, and the image of an organisation rather than the task of development itself, highlighting such temporal commonalities is equally important in reinforcing the potential for research on time's role in rethinking boundaries and group formation within development, to date an under-researched field. As such, closure is shown to allow us to identify new themes that may unite development staff along different differentials.

Following on from this idea that an examination of closure allows the possibility for challenging prevalent dichotomies of 'us'/'them', closure also allows development workers to be seen as subjects rather than objects as it provides a space in which development workers can deal with temporal paradoxes inherent in development work as negotiation is implied. Consequently, this provides an opportunity for daily practices to influence the changing direction of the short-term temporary development organisation and its temporal positioning and horizon because closure entails the (re)negotiation and (re)adaption of temporalities. Thus closure enables us to address temporal agency within the everyday of development work by pointing to how various inherent temporal tensions and contradictions are navigated. Said differently, depending on their temporal orientation and positioning how people experience, engage and respond to their temporal context influences the construction of the everyday – and perhaps even their behaviours (see for instance Islas-Lopez, 2013 who discusses how future-oriented thinking impacts behaviour on Mexican migrants) – by allowing the possibility of different action potentials. For example, closure can help expose the calculating nature of relationships as evidenced in courtship processes

where priority lists based on departure dates are drawn up, in the need for some staff to control who they offer emotional support to, or in those looking beyond their time in EULEX by constantly job searching (Chapter Five). As staff find alternative methods of coping and informal ways of navigating or negotiating temporal uncertainty or obstacles, the attempts at regaining temporal control provide each person with agency. In this sense, closure introduces agentic potential for analysis.

## **9.6 CODA: CLOSURE AS A NEW ANALYTICAL LENS**

This study has shown that closure becomes part of the fabric of everyday development practice, but its reality is a messy contradiction of differing temporalities. Temporal practices identified entail their own rhythms, paces and tempos all of which are defining for closure. Closure is therefore shown to be rich, diverse and continually unravelling. It has no end or start. It is not horizontal, linear, circular, bounded or unbounded. It is all of these together. As such, closure cannot be limited to good/bad, positive/negative or success/failure distinctions. Closure can be both polarities in as much as it can be neither because it aims to break away from dichotomous thinking and framing. Nor does closure suspend time between dual or oppositional temporalities (past versus future, starts versus ends, absence versus presence) to explore the symptom or outcomes of time, but considers the fluid relationship of various temporalities *in their making*. Thus the temporal contradictions and ambiguity identified by closure mark the temporal reality of everyday development work as a framework that creates and impacts a (messy) everyday reality. Implied is an internal familiarity with temporal ambiguity that is not unusual but is part of that everyday development work and reality.

As a concept, the closure illustrated here is but a start. This thesis is intentionally broad in scope as the intention has been to introduce the concept of closure as a new conceptual and analytical tool for studying the everyday lives of development workers. As such it has not been the purpose to offer an in-depth analysis of closure, assess its failings or successes, or to frame the types of closures emerging from each chapter into typologies for comparison for instance. These would all be areas for future

research. Instead the intention of this thesis has been to offer a description of closure's impact on the everyday of development work in two of Kosovo's short-term temporary development missions and to propose closure as a new analytical tool with which to observe everyday development work.

Whereas the concept of closure is offered as an opportunity to think in time and to foreground temporality in the making of an everyday reality of development work, it remains a wide-ranging concept. The temporal gaps that emerge as a result of tensions, contradictions and paradoxes of closure however, become key areas for future research. Following on from this, the choice to analyse a singular 'closure' rather than a plurality of 'closures' has not been accidental. In its singular form, closure encompasses, while also aiming to highlight, the wealth of textures that are apparent in this concept. In this way as a new lens it can be applied to other organisations. Equally, it leaves space for analysis of closure to be extended to projects, programs and even to organisations with longer-term mandates but still with an inbuilt self-obsolence at their core. A concept of 'closures' may be the natural progression for closure, moving it beyond description to a more theoretical analysis.

You cannot see experiences of time and its impact if the everyday is understood in a decontextualized way. Such a view would risk limiting people to reactive practices and analyses of outcomes. Closure therefore introduces a dynamic and flexible view of time that can serve as a starting point to exploring how and why certain issues arise in how we 'do' development when working towards finitude. This suggests that as a concept, it could be extended to other missions, or project/programmes with deadlines.

Beyond the conditions of closure's own existence (self-obsolence), there are no limits to what closure can be applied to in unpacking the everyday experiences of time in development practice. For instance, many of the long-term organisations like the United Nations have programmes/projects and funding schedules that are often time limited. In this vein, the two case studies presented in this research are interesting cases for the study of closure as both emphasise the short-term and temporary nature of an existence that is intend as finite. They are proposed as representative of short-term temporary development organisations, and not as unique cases or typical of organisations aiming to become obsolete and withdraw from a host country. As such,

closure as both a lens and conceptual tool for observing everyday temporal practices and their impact does not exclude the possibility of looking at other short- or long-term temporary development organisations, let alone projects/programmes with deadlines, the impact of closure on indicators of success that are used, or the kind of work that is undertaken in Kosovo or in other regions. Nor does closure discount the rich experiences of gendered, national or generational approaches.

All paradoxes highlighted throughout the study require constant (re)negotiation and (re)adjustment. This points to a similar argument made by the late Lisa Smirl about the liminal spaces of aid. Smirl argued that as a community of practice, the development community is regularly constructing itself and its own space. I add that it is also constructing, and is constructed by, its own temporalities which escape clearly fixed temporal boundaries. These are transformative temporal practices in their making. As such, as a new lens, closure underlines the agentic potential that development workers have; no longer objects, they become subjects impacting and being impacted by closure.

In a challenge to anthropologic and ethnographic work on everyday development work and life, I contend that although eventually there is a liminal experience and transition from one point to another, it is messy and constantly *in the making*. This means that closure introduces a new way of analysing development practice on a continual basis rather than when it is deemed over. So while this work aligns itself with work on ‘aidnography’, it is perhaps more aligned to work by Monika Krause and Kai Koddenbrock who focus more on organisational practices than a wish to improve that practice or assess its normative values (Koddenbrock, 2016; Krause, 2014). As such closure will not tell you what to do, nor does it offer a solution. Not the intention of this thesis, how closure influences the outcomes of development work is yet to be seen, but closure, it is argued in this thesis, unsettles the *status quo* of development studies because it opens up the messy reality of everyday temporal practices for analysis, while pointing to the potential agency of individuals. Borrowing from Koddenbrock, we need to scrutinise the operational practices so that the “messiness of development assistance” plays a role in analysis (Koddenbrock, 2016, Chapter Three in particular). If it is taken that such a framework brings about a particular reality in which the

development worker can operate in, the challenge now is to question how we can analyse individual agency within a complex and contradictory collective practice that is constantly in the making and (re)creating itself.

## ANNEX I: EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

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### 1. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- A. Where did you see the advertisement for the EULEX position you now have?
- B. When you first applied, (did you know about the 'end'? ) at which point did you find out that the mandate was coming to an end and how did you come across this information?

**B i)** If you knew the mandate was coming to an end in June 2014, why did you apply?

**B ii)** If you did *not* know the mandate was coming to an end would this information have made any difference to whether or not you applied?

- C. Would you still have applied if you had been told the mission mandate was indefinite? Why?

### 2. ARRIVAL AND HANDOVER

- A. How were you welcomed in your EULEX team? (*what were the dynamic like*)
- B. How was your handover given to you? (*e.g. Met predecessor in person? Email from predecessor? Word document left for you? No handover received etc.?*)
- C. What kind of information did you receive in your handover?

### 3. JUNE 2014: THE END OF A MANDATE:

- A. How did the end of the last mandate (June 2014) affect your team? (*e.g. how as team composition changed? The role of the team? Team dynamics?*)
- B. What is left to be done work-wise for your team from now until the next key date? (*please make it clear which date you are referring to*)

**B i)** How will you and your team approach the work that you have left?

**B ii)** What will be let after that date?

- C. How did your tasks and role change in June 2014?

- D. What comes to mind when you think about the end of a mandate?
- E. How do you say bye to people you worked with?

**4. LIQUIDATION**

- A. How has your job changed?
- B. What was the impact of the ICO leaving on liquidation team members?
- C. What is your current role, and how does it fit in with the timetable and handover procedures for closure now?
- D. What do you think exit/closure means and at what point do you think exit/closure starts?

**5. DOWNSIZING:**

- A. How has team composition changed, and how have tasks changed?
- B. What handover process is in place?
- C. What work is left for you/your team to do?
- D. What support is available to you?
- E. Are you looking for work, and if so when did you start looking for work?
- F. In what way did the downsizing last year/this year impact you?

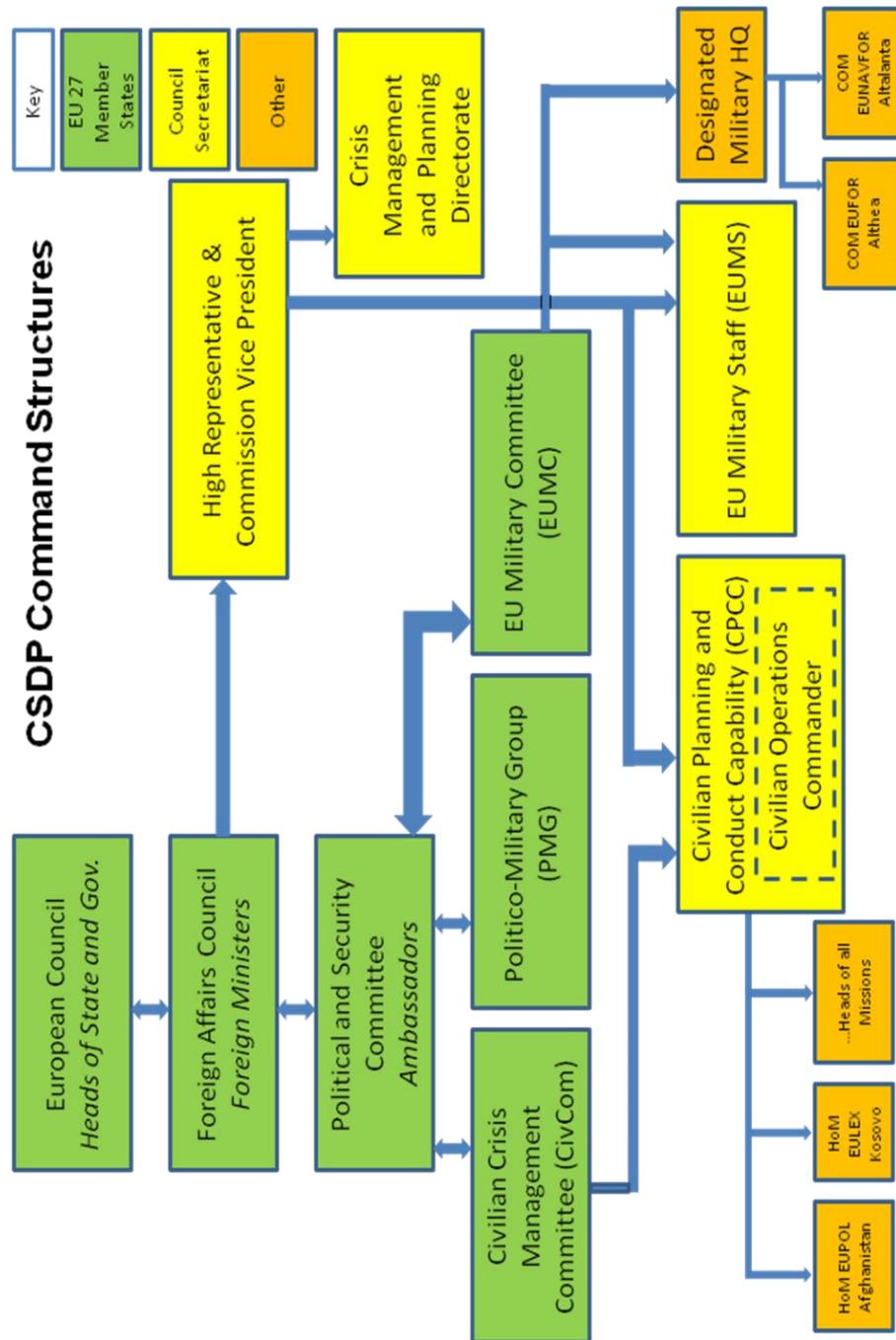
**6. IN GENERAL:**

- A. How would you describe the EULEX/ICO community?
- B. What do you do when you are not at work?
- C. What will you take back from Kosovo with you when you leave?

**CLOSING QUESTIONS:**

- Can I contact you again should I have follow up questions?
- Would you like to add anything that you feel was missed out?

## ANNEX II: COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY (CSDP) COMMAND STRUCTURES



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