



# MASTER THESIS

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***“Score for Gender Equality”***  
***The Contribution of Sports to realising Women's Rights***  
***in Kosovo***

verfasst von / submitted by

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*'Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.'*

- Nelson Mandela



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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADL	Anti-Discrimination Law
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AGE	Agency for Gender Equality
CDC	Centers for Disease and Control Prevention
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
COE	Council of Europe
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues
EU	European Union
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KAS	Kosovo Agency for Statistics
KPGE	Kosovo Program for Gender Equality
KWN	Kosovo Women's Network
LGBTI	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex
LGE	Law on Gender Equality
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co- operation in Europe
PE	Physical Education
PEN	Peer's Network
PRP	Property Rights Program

RAE	Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nation Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Multiple
MICS	Indicator Cluster Surveys
UNKT	United Nations Kosovo Team
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNSC	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCRF	World Cancer Research Fund International
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organisation

## **I. Introduction**

The overall topic of my Master thesis is women's rights and sport. Since my childhood, I have been engaged in sports, especially team sports like football. Moreover, from September to December 2016, I worked with PLAY International Kosovo, an NGO using sport for peace-building, reconciliation and empowerment of vulnerable groups like women, ethnic communities and persons with disabilities. Back in Austria, I worked with the UN Women National Committee Austria, which aims at women's empowerment. These and a lot of other experiences have encouraged me to write about women and sports. Hence, my thesis combines both, my personal and academic interest.

Through my work with PLAY International and further research, I gained insight into the problematic situation of women in Kosovo. Women face discrimination in various fields, and social norms limit their freedom and development. Thus, throughout the thesis, I studied possible solutions for improving the disadvantaged situations of women in Kosovo. Indeed, there is not a single solution that can solve the whole problem. Nevertheless, I identified sport as one of the tools to tackle discrimination against women in various ways. The research questions for the thesis has been defined as follows: "How can sport contribute to the realisation of women's rights in Kosovo?" and "How can sport help women to overcome their disadvantaged position?"

The sub-questions, hypothesis and method to answer these questions will be elaborated on in more detail within Chapter V. To answer the question, I have identified six key areas, where a link between sport and women's rights can be made. These six areas are economy, education, health, gender stereotypes and social exclusion, violence against women and marriage. There are most likely more fields, which show a link to sports but to mention all of these fields would extend the scope of my thesis.

Due to the limited time resources and the scope of the master thesis, not all aspects can be covered. Kosovo is a special case, a post-conflict country that is still shaped by ethnic tensions and discrimination of vulnerable groups. It is not possible to elaborate

on the particular situation of ethnic minority women, who face double discrimination or ethnic minority women with disabilities, who face multiple discrimination. This topic alone could fill another scientific paper. The access to the most disadvantaged group is difficult and it would take a longer period of fieldwork, translators etc.

Moreover, the benefits of sports do not only apply to women and girls. In my opinion, sport is important for all people, regardless of their gender but women and girls have been chosen for this thesis because they find themselves in a more disadvantaged and vulnerable position than men. Additionally, it is not only relevant for Kosovo, but due to my internship, I have chosen Kosovo. Kosovo is a nation in transit that strives for integration into the European Union (EU). For fulfilling European standards, it needs to tackle the on-going discrimination against and stigmatisation of women and girls.

In 1999, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSC) 1244, international military and security presences were authorised, and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has been established.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, the status of Kosovo as an independent state is controversial and disputed. Nevertheless, to simplify matters, in the course of this thesis, Kosovo will be mentioned as an independent country.

To clarify, sport is not a cure-all remedy and does not solve the whole problem of discrimination against women. It is not the one and only tool to realise women's rights, but it can be an important one. My thesis aims to demonstrate the link between sports and women's rights and show how sport can influence the realisation of women's rights. In this paper, sport is seen as a leisure time and recreational activity rather than a professional and competitive activity.

To answer the research questions, various aspects need to be considered; to understand the overall situation of women in Kosovo some prior knowledge is necessary. For this reason, Chapter II will briefly touch upon the legal framework of women's rights in Kosovo. Chapter III pictures the dimensions of discrimination against women in

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations (UN), *Security Council Resolution 1244*, New York, 1999, p.2f  
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/172/89/PDF/N9917289.pdf?OpenElement>  
(accessed 19 May)

Kosovo and their disadvantaged position. Chapter IV discusses the general benefits of sports for women and girls. Chapter V will illustrate the method, access to the field and chosen experts for the interviews. Afterwards, Chapter VI presents the results of my empirical research in Kosovo. It serves as the main source to answer my research questions. After that, Chapter VII summarises the results and gives some prospects. The six areas mentioned above, serve as the structure for all the content-based chapters.



## II. Legal Framework: Women's Rights

*'The extension of women's rights is the basic principle of all social progress.'*

- Charles Fourier

Before elaborating on the legal framework of women's rights in Kosovo, it is essential to define women's rights. Women's rights are strongly linked to equality between men and women, which is one of the most fundamental principles of human rights.<sup>2</sup> The Universal Nations Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) arose as a direct response to the atrocities of World War II.<sup>3</sup> The intention was to enshrine the idea that all human beings are equal and inherently entitled to fundamental rights and freedoms. Non-discrimination is one of the guiding principles of the UDHR.<sup>4</sup> Article 2 states that

*'everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.'*<sup>5</sup>

That implies the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination against women. To further address discrimination against women, women's rights as a separate and more specific field of human rights have been established. Women's rights are rights and entitlements that can be claimed by women and girls worldwide.

*'The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community.'*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *Human Rights Principles*, [website], 2005  
<http://www.unfpa.org/resources/human-rights-principles>  
(accessed 17 July 2017)

<sup>3</sup> UN, *UDHR: History of the document*, [website], n.d.  
<http://www.un.org/en/sections/universal-declaration/history-document/>  
(accessed 17 July 2017)

<sup>4</sup> UNFPA, 2005

<sup>5</sup> A. Bisset, *Blackstone's International Human Rights Documents 10<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Oxford University Press, 2016, p.10

<sup>6</sup> OHCHR, *Fact Sheet 22: Discrimination against Women: The Convention and the Committee*, 1993, p.1  
<http://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/factsheet22en.pdf>  
(accessed 13 May 2017)

Due to the fact that the UDHR is legally not binding, the UN drafted two other human rights treaties, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).<sup>7</sup> The CCPR and the CESCR, together with the UDHR, constitute the so-called International Bill of Human Rights.<sup>8</sup> Not only the UDHR but also the CCPR and CESCR with Article 2, prohibit discrimination based on sex, and with Article 3, guarantee the equality between men and women.<sup>9</sup> This demonstrates that women's rights and gender equality are indispensable and integral parts of the concept of human rights.

Women's rights can also be described as '*the effort to secure equal rights for women and to remove gender discrimination from laws, institutions and behavioral patterns.*'<sup>10</sup>

In the following, there will be an overview about the legal framework that firstly deals with women's rights and secondly is applicable in Kosovo.

I have analysed different legal documents that guarantee women's rights and enjoy applicability in Kosovo. These includes the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the Law on Gender Equality (LGE) and The Anti-Discrimination Law (ADL). All of those documents are incorporated into the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo.<sup>11</sup> But it seemed most reasonable to focus on the most comprehensive ones; therefore I have chosen to narrow down my discussion to the following legal sources. The most advanced legal framework regarding women's rights, applicable in Kosovo, comprises CEDAW, LGE and ADL. I have left out the other documents like ECHR or CRC because they are less focused on women's rights than

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<sup>7</sup> UN, *Human Rights Law*, [website], n.d.  
<http://www.un.org/en/sections/universal-declaration/human-rights-law/>  
(accessed 17 July 2017)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>9</sup> Bisset, p.34,50

<sup>10</sup> The Legal Dictionary, *women's rights*, [website], 2008  
<http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Women%27s+Rights>  
(accessed 25 May 2017)

<sup>11</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, *Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo*, 2015, p.6  
[http://www.gjk-ks.org/repository/docs/Constitution-of-the-Republic-of-Kosovo-with-amend-I-XXIV%20\(4\).pdf](http://www.gjk-ks.org/repository/docs/Constitution-of-the-Republic-of-Kosovo-with-amend-I-XXIV%20(4).pdf)  
(accessed 13 April 2017)

the chosen documents. To answer my research question, I decided to focus on six fields, which can be put in relation to women's rights and sport. These fields are:

- Economy
- Education
- Health
- Gender stereotypes and social exclusion
- Violence against women
- Marriage

To give a better overview of these areas and their relation to women's rights, I have analysed CEDAW, LGE and the ADL and will refer to some articles that show a correlation. Furthermore, a short description of CEDAW, LGE and ADL will follow.

## **II.a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

According to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kosovo, the Republic of Kosovo is recognised by 113 out of 193 UN member states.<sup>12</sup> Other sources speak about 114-115 recognitions. However, the status of Kosovo as an independent state is still very controversial and a highly political issue. Since Kosovo is not recognised by all UN member states, it cannot become a UN member. As a consequence, the Republic of Kosovo cannot become a member to UN treaties. To address this problem, the Constitution of Kosovo contains Article 22, which deals with the direct applicability of international agreements and instruments.<sup>13</sup> One of the treaties, which under Article 22, enjoys direct applicability, is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.<sup>14</sup>

Article 22 is designed to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed under international human rights law. The enshrinement of these rights and freedoms in the Constitution permits them direct applicability in Kosovo. In cases of conflict, they enjoy priority over provisions of laws and other acts of national public institutions.<sup>15</sup>

A fundamental component of human rights is the non-discrimination principle.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, human rights apply in the same way to men and women, without any distinction based on sex. As mentioned above, this has been enshrined in several UN human rights documents, e.g. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, widespread discrimination of women has continued, and existing mechanisms did not prove effective in addressing these problems. Hence, the Commission on the Status of Women

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<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Republic Kosovo, *International recognitions of the Republic of Kosovo*, [website], 2015

<http://www.mfa-ks.net/?page=2,224>

(accessed 13 April 2017)

<sup>13</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2015, p.6

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>17</sup> A. Kartusch, 'Women's Rights are Human Rights – The Role of CEDAW', in M.Nowak et al., *All Human Rights for All: Vienna Manual on Human Rights*, Graz, NWV, 2012, p.439

pushed forward the initiative to codify women's rights principles and standards.<sup>18</sup> As a consequence, in 1979 the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW.<sup>19</sup> With its 30 articles, the Convention is the most comprehensive legal framework regarding women's rights and has been ratified by 187 out of 193 UN member states.<sup>20</sup> The Convention is often described as an international bill of rights for women and marked a milestone for respecting and ensuring women's rights.<sup>21</sup> In the Convention, discrimination against women is defined as

*'... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.'*<sup>22</sup>

CEDAW includes an ample range of articles dealing with policy measures, state obligations to tackle discrimination in various fields, ensuring equal opportunities regarding education, employment and health but it does not include the issue of violence against women. This problem was solved with the Committee's Recommendation 19 on violence against women. In 1999, an Optional Protocol to CEDAW was adopted. It includes the examination of individual complaints and an inquiry procedure.<sup>23</sup>

Article 22 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo states that CEDAW precedes the national legislation and allows to make use of the mechanism set down in the Convention and its protocols.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p.440

<sup>21</sup> UN Women, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, [website], n.d.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>  
(accessed 23 April 2017)

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>23</sup> Bisset, p.69

<sup>24</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2015, p.6

## **II.b Anti- Discrimination Law (ADL)**

In 2005, the Assembly of Kosovo, supported by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), adopted the Anti-Discrimination Law.<sup>25</sup> The aim of the law is the prevention and fight against discrimination.<sup>26</sup> Within the Anti-Discrimination Law, non-discrimination is based on the following principles:

- a) The principle of equal treatment shall mean that there shall be no direct or indirect discrimination against any person or persons, based on sex, gender, age, marital status, language, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation or conviction, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, race, social origin, property, birth or any other status;*
- b) The principle of fair representation of all persons and all the members of communities to employment in the frame of public bodies of all levels.*
- c) Good understanding principle and interethnic tolerance of the citizens of Kosovo.*<sup>27</sup>

## **II.c Law on Gender Equality (LGE)**

In 2004, the Assembly of Kosovo, supported by UNMIK, adopted the Law on Gender Equality in Kosovo.<sup>28</sup> It aims to

*‘preserve, treat and establish gender equality as a fundamental value for the democratic development of the Kosovo society, providing equal opportunities for both female and male participation in the political, economical, social, cultural and other fields of social life.’*<sup>29</sup>

The LGE promotes equal conditions and opportunities and the elimination of any barriers for women. It contains general and special measures to tackle discrimination and foster gender equality. It allocates responsibilities between institutions and defines a variety of legal measures for achieving gender equality. On the basis of the LGE two institutions have been established, the Office for Gender Equality and the Gender

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<sup>25</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, *The Anti-Discrimination Law*, 2004, p.1  
[http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2004\\_3\\_en.pdf](http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2004_3_en.pdf)  
(accessed 13 April 2017)

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>28</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, *The Law on Gender Equality in Kosovo*, 2004, p. 1  
[http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2004\\_2\\_en.pdf](http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2004_2_en.pdf)  
(accessed 23 April 2017)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.,

Equality Attorney. The Government of Kosovo has established the Office for Gender Equality as a separate governmental institution to implement and monitor the provisions of the present law, to propose the compilation, alteration and amendment of laws and regulations and to draft gender equality policies.<sup>30</sup> The LGE includes articles dealing with political parties and representation, economy, employment, education, media and civil rights.

After a short introduction of these three laws, the six fields mentioned above will be looked into.

## **II.1 Economy**

### **II.1.a CEDAW**

CEDAW comprises some articles bringing up issues related to economy, employment and the labour market. For example, Article 11 and 13 include such components.

Article 11 emphasises the importance of equality in the area of employment. The right to work as an inalienable right must be ensured regardless of gender.<sup>31</sup> Women must have the same opportunities as men in entering the labour market and being employed or self-employed. Article 13, calls upon states to take measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the sector of economic life.<sup>32</sup> Economic life also includes the right to bank loans or other forms of financial credit.<sup>33</sup>

#### Article 11

*'1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:*

- (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;*
- (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;*

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p.5

<sup>31</sup> OHCHR, 1993, p.10

<sup>32</sup> Bisset, p.65

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*,

*(c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;*

*(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work; ...*<sup>34</sup>

### Article 13

*‘States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:*

*(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit; ...*<sup>35</sup>

### **II.1.b ADL**

ADL includes articles dealing with economic issues like employment. It stresses the importance of equal treatment regarding employment, self-employment, selection criteria and recruitment conditions and further mentions equal access to vocational training as well as working conditions in general. Such ideas are, for example, enshrined in Article 4:

### Article 4

*‘This Law shall apply to all natural and legal persons as regards both the public and private sectors, including public bodies, in relation to any action or inaction which violates the right or rights of any natural or legal person or persons, to:*

*(a) conditions for access to employment, self-employment and to occupation, including selection criteria and recruitment conditions, whatever the branch of activity and at all levels of the professional hierarchy, including promotion;*

*(b) access to all types and to all levels of vocational guidance, vocational training,*

*advanced vocational training and retraining, including practical work experience;*

*(c) employment and working conditions, including dismissals and pay; ...*<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>35</sup> ibid.,

<sup>36</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004b, p.2f



### **II.1.c LGE**

The LGE deals specifically with gender equality and discrimination against women. For example, Article 5 and Article 6 of the LGE refer to the importance of gender equality in the field of economy.

#### Article 5

*'1. In order to prevent and eliminate gender discrimination and achieve gender equality, Republic of Kosovo Institutions which include bodies at all levels of legislative, executive, judicial and other public institutions shall be responsible to implement legislative and other measures including:*

*1.4. ensuring that the selection, recruitment and appointment processes, including for leading positions, are in line with the requirement for equal representation of women and men;*<sup>37</sup>

#### Article 6

*'1. Public institutions shall take temporary special measures in order to accelerate the realization of actual equality between women and men in areas where inequities exist.*

*2. Special measures could include:*

*2.3. economic empowerment and steps to improve the position of women or men in the field of labour improvement of equality in education, health, culture and allocation and/or reallocation of resources;*<sup>38</sup>

## **II.2 Education**

### **II.2. a CEDAW**

Article 10 is the main article of the Convention that raises the claim of equality in the education sector. Article 10 calls upon states to take measures that women and men have equal rights in the field of education. That includes access to various programs and the same opportunities in enjoying all levels of education.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004c, p.5

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p.6

<sup>39</sup> Bisset, p.64

## Article 10

*'States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:*

*(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;*

*(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;*

*(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;'<sup>40</sup>*

## **II.2.b ADL**

Article 4 of the ADL points out the right to education for everyone.

### Article 4

*'This Law shall apply to all natural and legal persons as regards both the public and private sectors, including public bodies, in relation to any action or inaction which violates the right or rights of any natural or legal person or persons, to:*

*(g) education;'<sup>41</sup>*

## **II.2.c LGE**

Article 6 is a more general article of the LGE that not only advocates for gender equality regarding employment and economic sector but also in the field of education.

### Article 4

*'1. Public institutions shall take temporary special measures in order to accelerate the realization of actual equality between women and men in areas where inequities exist.*

*2. Special measures could include:*

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>41</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004b, p.3

*2.3. economic empowerment and steps to improve the position of women or men in the field of labour improvement of equality in education, health, culture and allocation and/or reallocation of resources;*<sup>42</sup>

## **II.3 Health**

### **II.3.a CEDAW**

CEDAW stresses the importance of health for the advancement of women. Discrimination against women in the field of health is mentioned in Article 10 and 12.<sup>43</sup> Article 10 does not directly mention access to the health sector, but it does mention access to information about health and family planning. Article 12 advocates for gender equality regarding access to health care, especially because women have gender-related needs like family planning, reproductive or maternal health.

#### Article 10

*'States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: (h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.'*<sup>44</sup>

#### Article 12

*'1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.*

*2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.'*<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004c, p.6

<sup>43</sup> Bisset, p.64

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p.65

### **II.3.b ADL**

The ADL does not address health to a large extent, but in Article 4 it mentions equal access to health care.

#### Article 4

*'This Law shall apply to all natural and legal persons as regards both the public and private sectors, including public bodies, in relation to any action or inaction which violates the right or rights of any natural or legal person or persons, to:  
(e) social protection, including the Social Assistance Schemes, social security and healthcare.'*<sup>46</sup>

### **II.3.c LGE**

Article 6 of the LGE is a very comprehensive article that also points out the importance of special measures in the health sector for achieving gender equality.

#### Article 6

*'1. Public institutions shall take temporary special measures in order to accelerate the realization of actual equality between women and men in areas where inequities exist.  
2. Special measures could include:  
2.3. economic empowerment and steps to improve the position of women or men in the  
field of labour improvement of equality in education, health, culture and allocation and/or  
reallocation of resources;'*<sup>47</sup>

## **II.4 Gender Stereotypes and Social Exclusion**

### **II.4.a CEDAW**

Gender stereotypes, in particular, are covered in Article 5 of CEDAW. It mentions states responsibilities with regard to changing social and cultural norms, which lead to discrimination against women.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004b, p.3

<sup>47</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004c, p.6

<sup>48</sup> Bisset, p.63

## Article 5

*'States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:*

*(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;*

*(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.'*<sup>49</sup>

### **II.4.b ADL**

ADL does not mention specifically gender stereotypes or social exclusion of women.

### **II.4.c LGE**

LGE, as well, does not include specific articles addressing gender stereotypes but Article 6 mentions the participation of women in public life, which implies social inclusion.

## Article 6

*'1. Public institutions shall take temporary special measures in order to accelerate the realization of actual equality between women and men in areas where inequities exist.*

*2. Special measures could include:*

*2.2. support programs to increase participation of less represented sex in decision making and public life;'*<sup>50</sup>

## **II.5 Violence against women**

### **II.5.a CEDAW**

CEDAW does not directly refer to violence against women, but the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women can draft recommendations on pressing

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>50</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004c, p.6

issues where they propose that the state should take action.<sup>51</sup> Recommendation No. 12 and No.19 are dedicated to tackling violence against women.<sup>52</sup> Although legally not binding, the recommendations show the Committee's commitment to addressing the issue of violence against women.<sup>53</sup>

### **II.5.b ADL**

ADL, as well, does not mention the term violence against women or similar ones but Article 4 includes the right to personal security. Personal security often refers to liberty and unlawful imprisonment, but it can also be linked to the right to life. Therefore, personal security can be understood as being protected from physical violence or domestic abuse.<sup>54</sup>

#### Article 4

*'This Law shall apply to all natural and legal persons as regards both the public and private sectors, including public bodies, in relation to any action or inaction which violates the right or rights of any natural or legal person or persons, to:*  
*(k) personal security;'*<sup>55</sup>

### **II.5.c LGE**

LGE designates gender-based violence as a form of gender discrimination that impairs the guarantee of other rights and freedoms, and Article 4 prohibits any form of discrimination.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> OHCHR, *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women: General Recommendations*, [website], n.d.  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Recommendations.aspx>  
(accessed 22 May 2017)

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>53</sup> J., Shapiro, *CEDAW as a tool to promote substantive gender equality*, n.d., p.6  
<http://www.cedaw.org.tw/en/upload/media/Capacity%20Building/1-1The%20Mechanism%20of%20CEDAW%20Committee.pdf>  
(accessed 22 May 2017)

<sup>54</sup> USLegal, *Personal Security Law and Legal Definition*, [website], n.d.  
<https://definitions.uslegal.com/p/personal-security/>  
(accessed 22 May 2017)

<sup>55</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004b, p.3

<sup>56</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004c, p.5

#### Article 4

*'2. Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's and men's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality and is prohibited.'*<sup>57</sup>

### **II.6 Marriage**

#### **II.6.a CEDAW**

Article 16 of CEDAW is designed to regulate the matter of marriage. It calls upon states to ensure equality within marriage and that marriage is based on the free will of both spouses. With its second paragraph child marriage is null and void.

#### Article 16

*'1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:*

*(a) The same right to enter into marriage;*

*(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;*

*2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.'*<sup>58</sup>

#### **II.6. b ADL**

The ADL does not comprise any provision dedicated to the matter of marriage.

#### **II.6.c LGE**

The LGE, as well, does not mention marriage in its articles.

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<sup>57</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004c, p.5

<sup>58</sup> Bisset, p.66f

The figure below better illustrates all articles enshrined in these three documents, which mention the six areas of economy, education, health, gender stereotypes and social exclusion, violence against women and marriage. CEDAW is the most comprehensive document concerning the six different areas. Only the field of violence against women, as mentioned above, is not directly addressed by CEDAW but general recommendation Number 12 and 19 fill this gap. CEDAW includes more specific articles while ADL and LGE comprise broader articles, which embrace various aspects within one article. For example, Article 4 ADL and Article 6 LGE include aspects relevant for most of the six fields. Economy, followed by education, is the strongest point within all three documents. What is striking is that marriage is not mentioned by a single article in ADL neither LGE. Overall, it is evident that all three documents are coherent and that CEDAW serves as basis for the establishment of ADL. But that appears logical since CEDAW is a Convention, drafted and adopted by UN bodies and ADL as well as LGE has been created by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo in cooperation with UNMIK.



	<b>CEDAW</b>	<b>ADL</b>	<b>LGE</b>
<b>Economy</b>	Art. 11 Art. 11 (b) Art. 11(d) Art. 13 (b) Art. 15 (2) Art. 15 (3) Art. 16 (1.h)	Art. 2 (b) Art. 4 (a) Art. 4 (b) Art. 4 (c) Art. 4(h)	Art. 5(1.4) Art. 6 (2.3)
<b>Education</b>	Art. 10 (a) Art. 10 (b) Art. 10 (e) Art. 10 (g) Art. 13 (c)	Art. 4 (h)	Art. 6 (2.3)
<b>Health</b>	Art. 10 (h) Art. 12 (1) Art. 12 (2) Art. 16 (1)	-	Art. 6 (2.3)
<b>Gender Stereotypes &amp; Social Exclusion</b>	Art. 5 (a) Art. 7 Art. 10 (b) Art. 13 (c)	Art. 4(m)	Art. 6 (2.2) Art. 6 (7)
<b>Violence against Women</b>	-	Art. 4(k)	Art. 4 (2)
<b>Marriage</b>	Art. 16 (1) Art. 16 (1a)	-	-

Figure 1. Table of the six areas within CEDAW, ADL and LGE.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> created by the author

In addition, Kosovo has a Program for Gender Equality (KPGE). To meet the requirements of Article 4.4 LGE, the Government of Kosovo is responsible for drafting and implementing the KPGE every five years.<sup>60</sup> The KPGE is defining the goals and objectives, policies and key actors in implementing gender equality in Kosovo.<sup>61</sup> There is a Program against Domestic Violence and Action Plan 2011-2014. In July 2010, the Kosovo Assembly approved the Law on the Protection against Domestic Violence.<sup>62</sup> The aim of the law is to prevent domestic violence through appropriate legal measures and to provide legal consequences for perpetrators of domestic violence.<sup>63</sup> It offers a comprehensive definition of domestic violence and the protection against different forms of domestic violence. A National Action Plan (2011-2014) was drafted to support the fight against domestic violence in Kosovo. The overall goal of the Action Plan was to establish efficient and comprehensive mechanisms for the prevention of domestic violence.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, Kosovo has a National Action Plan to implement Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security”.<sup>65</sup> But to illustrate all legal documents addressing discrimination against women in Kosovo would go beyond the scope of the thesis. For this reason, I focused on the three documents, CEDAW, ADL and LGE.

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<sup>60</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004c, p.3

<sup>61</sup> Agency for Gender Equality (AGE), *Kosovo Program for Gender Equality*, 2008 p.93ff  
<http://www.womensnetwork.org/documents/20130529105303566.pdf>  
(accessed 24 April 2017)

<sup>62</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, *Law on the Protection against Domestic Violence*, 2010, p.1  
<http://gbvaor.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Law-on-protection-against-domestic-violence-Kosovo.pdf>  
(accessed 24 April 2017)

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>64</sup> AGE, *Kosovo Program against Domestic violence and Action Plan 2011-2014*, Pristina, 2011,p.50  
(English version)  
<http://gbvaor.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Kosovo-Programme-against-Domestic-violence-and-action-plan-2011-2014.pdf>  
(accessed 24 April 2017)

<sup>65</sup> AGE, *Working plan to implement Resolution 1325: Women, Peace and Security 2013-2015*, Pristina, 2014, p.23 (English version)  
[http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/kosovo\\_nap\\_2014.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/kosovo_nap_2014.pdf)  
(accessed 24 April 2017)

## II.7 Limitations and Challenges

With regard to women's rights, Kosovo has a fairly comprehensive legal framework. This chapter provided a closer look at the main three legal documents applicable in Kosovo have been taken. Various women's rights are enshrined in these documents. De jure, women are equal to men and enjoy their rights in the same way as men do.<sup>66</sup> De facto, they are not recognized as equal member of society and discrimination against women continues.<sup>67</sup> Due to the lack in implementing laws and legal provisions in Kosovo, to combat discrimination against women remains challenging.<sup>68</sup> A survey about the implementation of the LGE and KPGE was conducted and one respondent replied that "*the law is just a piece of paper; it's not being implemented*".<sup>69</sup> There are various reasons for the lack of implementation. To find out some of these reasons, I combed through different reports, which helped to narrow them down to some main factors.

Firstly, insufficient political will hinders the implementation of gender equality laws. It is not seen as a priority, there is inadequate support by the government. Greater attention is paid to the process of drafting laws than implementing them.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> U. Färnsveden and A.Q. Mustafa and N. Farnsworth, *Country Gender Profile: An analysis of gender differences at all levels in Kosovo*, Kosovo, ORGUT, 2014, p.7  
[http://www.swedenabroad.com/ImageVaultFiles/id\\_20757/cf\\_347/Orgut\\_Kosovo\\_Gender\\_Profile\\_FINAL\\_2014-05-08.PDF](http://www.swedenabroad.com/ImageVaultFiles/id_20757/cf_347/Orgut_Kosovo_Gender_Profile_FINAL_2014-05-08.PDF)  
(accessed 25 April 2017)

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>68</sup> U. Färnsveden and N. Farnsworth, *Gender Study in Kosovo: Review of the Implementation of the Law and Program on Gender Equality in Kosovo*, ORGUT, 2012, p.5  
[http://www.swedenabroad.com/ImageVaultFiles/id\\_8560/cf\\_347/Sida\\_Gender\\_Study\\_in\\_Kosovo\\_2012-12-20\\_ORGUT\\_Final.PDF](http://www.swedenabroad.com/ImageVaultFiles/id_8560/cf_347/Sida_Gender_Study_in_Kosovo_2012-12-20_ORGUT_Final.PDF)  
(accessed 17 May 2017)

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.11

(accessed 17 May 2017)

<sup>70</sup> N. Jerliu, *The challenge of implementing Kosovo's laws*, OSCE, 2005, p.4  
<http://www.osce.org/kosovo/14299?download=true>  
(accessed 17 May 2017)

Secondly, lack of financial resources and unclear responsibilities were stated as other reasons.<sup>71</sup> Under Chapter 2 of the LGE, the Agency for Gender Equality was established.<sup>72</sup> The aim of the AGE is to promote, support, coordinate and implement the LGE, but it is reported to be under-financed.<sup>73</sup> The AGE is heavily dependent on the government about its budget.<sup>74</sup> That further leads to a lack in quantity and quality recruitments for the AGE and related institutions. There is not enough skilled staff available, so at first, they must undergo training to later carry out the required tasks.<sup>75</sup>

Thirdly, weak rule of law, corruption and impaired access to justice play a role in hampering the implementation of laws. According to the Freedom House Nation in Transit Report, in the category Corruption, Kosovo reaches 5.75 out of 7 points (1 represents the highest level and 7 the lowest level of democratic progress).<sup>76</sup> Corruption remains widespread, it constitutes the second-greatest concern, after unemployment, for Kosovo citizens.<sup>77</sup> In the same report, Kosovo reaches 5.50 out of 7 for the area of Judicial Framework and Independence.<sup>78</sup> The report indicates that the judicial administration is slow and inefficient, the officials continue to lack accountability, and political interference in the judiciary remains a significant problem.<sup>79</sup> That further impacts access to justice, which is another factor influencing the implementation of laws enhancing gender equality. Legal support is not affordable for the majority, free legal aid is not available to all and strongly depends on international support.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>72</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004c, p.1

<sup>73</sup> Färnsveden and Farnsworth, p.12

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>76</sup> K. Gashi, *Nations in Transit Ratings and Averaged Scores: Kosovo*, 2017, p.1

[https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT2017\\_Kosovo.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT2017_Kosovo.pdf)

(accessed 18 May 2017)

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.10

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p.1

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p.9

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.12

Furthermore, most of the legal staff, court personnel and judges are not trained in gender-mainstreaming and have difficulties in reacting appropriately to gender-related cases like domestic violence or property and inheritance.<sup>81</sup>

Lastly, the presence of strong gender norms and stereotypes create a barrier to the successful implementation of the LGE and similar documents.<sup>82</sup> If the law does not reflect the society's values, its implementation will be difficult. But the law exactly wants to address these gender norms. Hence, it must be adapted to the given environment. This, for example, can be made through action plans, which are usually drafted on a regular basis and better reflect the socio-economic development. If victims of domestic violence suffer stigmatisation, they will not report their case and that further hinders an effective implementation of provisions tackling cases of domestic violence. Thus, there is a reciprocal influence between existing gender stereotypes and the law addressing these gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes and social exclusion will be addressed in more detail within the next chapters.

In 2012 a survey was conducted, where the staff of the Legal Department of the Ministry and the Legal offices within the municipalities were asked about the obstacles in implementing laws.<sup>83</sup> The following figure illustrates answers given by the respondents.

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<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>82</sup> Färnsveden, 2012, p.15

<sup>83</sup> S. Demaj, *Strengthening the Role and Capacities of Kosovo Institutions for Effective Implementation of Legislation*, Master Thesis, American University in Kosovo in partnership with Rochester Institute of Technology, 2012, p.54  
<http://scholarworks.rit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7956&context=theses>  
(accessed 18 May 2017)

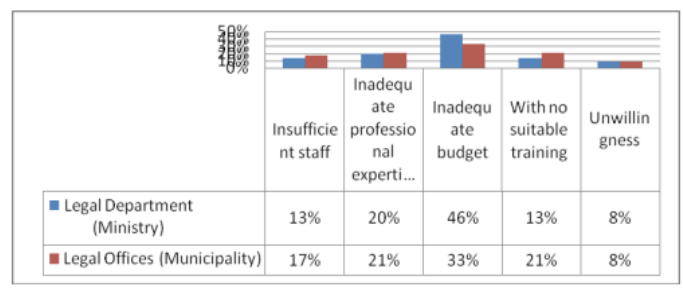


Figure 2. Key obstacles and problems in implementing laws in Kosovo.<sup>84</sup>

Other respondents would probably indicate political unwillingness in a higher number, but this figure shows that even the personnel within the Legal Department and Legal Offices are aware of the problems in implementing laws. Moreover, this figure is about the implementation of laws in general, the implementation of laws focusing on gender equality probably faces even more problems and specific obstacles.

## II.8 Résumé

To sum it up, with regard to women's rights, Kosovo has a fairly comprehensive legal framework, adapted to international human rights standards. The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo is compliance with international standards. With Article 22 international agreements and instruments like CCPR, CRC, CEDAW or CRC enjoy direct applicability in Kosovo. Due to the focus on women's rights only CEDAW, ADL and LGE have been looked at in greater detail. Despite this comprehensive framework, there are different factors hampering the implementation of the legal documents promoting gender equality. Insufficient political will, lack of financial resources, weak rule of law and corruption as well as a lack of qualified and staff and gender norms have been identified as the major obstacles to the implementation of laws.

The next chapter will illustrate the on-going discrimination against women and the disadvantaged position of women in different fields.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.,

### **III. Discrimination against women in Kosovo**

*'No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of the contribution of half of its citizens'*

- Michelle Obama

As stated above, according to CEDAW, discrimination against women means:

*'any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.'*<sup>85</sup>

This part will deal with the disadvantaged position of women in Kosovo. Again, discrimination against women will be allocated to the six different fields that have already been used in the previous chapter. Despite the division into six areas, it is important to understand that all of them are interconnected. For example, the economic situation of people influences their access to health and education. Education, in turn, has an impact on future job opportunities and career. The financial situation can be linked to marriage. Sometimes girls are seen as a financial burden for their families and marriages at a young age are desirable. Marriage can foster social exclusion since from then on women are responsible for family care and their household. Early marriage can prevent girls from finishing their education and later from participating in the labour market. To further elaborate on the correlation between the different areas would go beyond the scope of thesis. Nevertheless, as illustrated below, it is important to mention that there are links between these areas. The figure below should illustrate the interdependence of the different fields.

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<sup>85</sup> Bisset, p.62

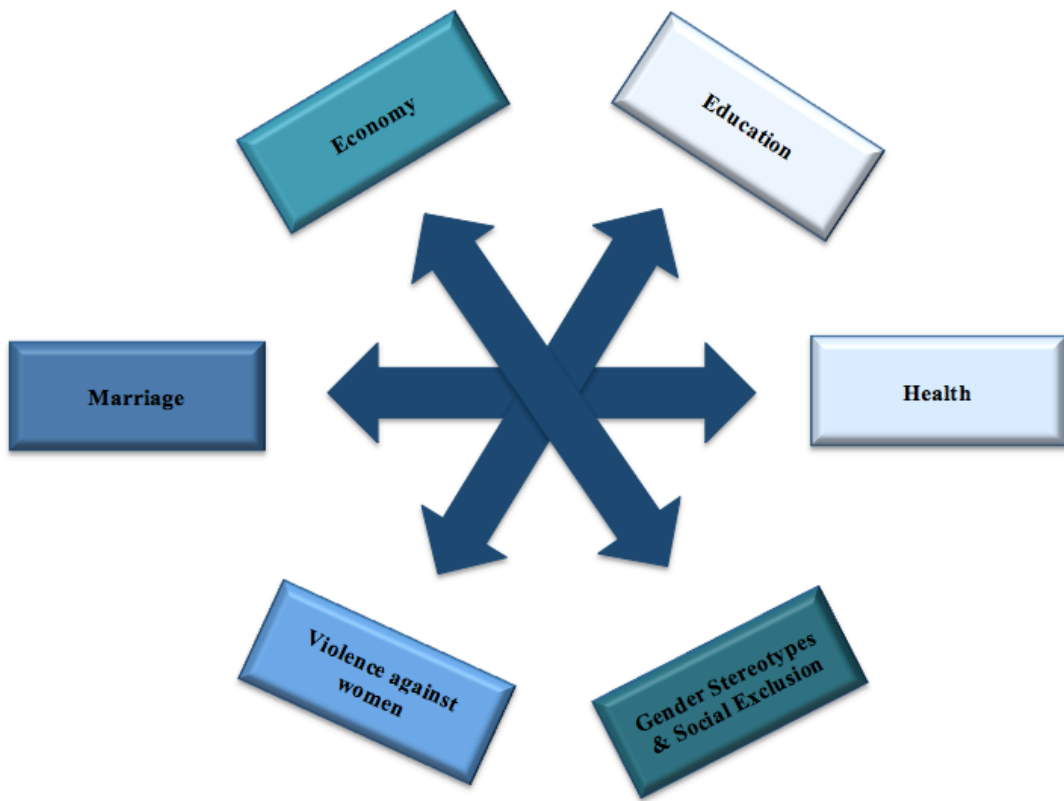


Figure 3. Correlation between the six fields.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> created by the author



### III.1 Economy

Kosovo with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 6.40 is one of the European countries with the weakest economy.<sup>87</sup> Except Montenegro, all neighbour states have a higher GDP than Kosovo.<sup>88</sup> Although Kosovo has an annual growth rate of 3%, the unemployment rate remains high and amounts to 33%.<sup>89</sup>

Especially, the youth unemployment rate with 58% is alarmingly high.<sup>90</sup> As a consequence, the living conditions in Kosovo are challenging, and the poverty rate adds up to 29.7%.<sup>91</sup> The weak economy and lack of job opportunities affect women, in particular. Job vacancies are mainly filled with male workforce. This contributes to a consistent gender gap in the economic sector.<sup>92</sup> It is not surprising that the rate of women participating in the formal economy is low. According to the Country Gender Profile, the women's employment rate is approximately 18%, the lowest in Europe.<sup>93</sup> Another source speaks about structural discrimination of women in the labour sector and indicates that only 12% of women are active on the labour market.<sup>94</sup> Women are not only disadvantaged in getting employed but also in self-employment. Only 8.2% of women lead businesses, while 91,8% are owned by men.<sup>95</sup> Rarely, women are given the chance to establish their own business. However, some of them manage to do so but most of these companies remain small. 99% of women lead businesses are micro-enterprises with 1-9 employees.<sup>96</sup> This has various reasons, two of them are mentioned below.

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<sup>87</sup>Tradingeconomics.com, *Kosovo GDP 2000-2017*, [Website] 2017  
<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/kosovo/gdp>  
(accessed 24 April 2017)

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*,

see also:

Embassy of Sweden, *Multidimensional poverty analysis Kosovo 2017*, 2017, p. 5

<sup>90</sup> United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Kosovo, *About Kosovo*, [website], n.d.  
<http://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/countryinfo.html>  
(accessed 24 April 2017)

see also:

Embassy of Sweden, p. 5

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>92</sup> Embassy of Sweden, p. 5

<sup>93</sup> U. Färnsveden and A.Q. Mustafa and N. Farnsworth, 2014, p.17

<sup>94</sup> Embassy of Sweden, p. 5

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*,

Firstly, women in Kosovo are highly disadvantaged regarding the right to property and inheritance. The right to property and inheritance are addressed by various legal provisions, existing in Kosovo. The Constitution of Kosovo, the Law on Gender Equality or the Family Law grants women and men the equal right to property. In reality, women's property ownership is estimated at 8%.<sup>97</sup> The discrimination of women with regard to property rights is also verified by the results of the National Baseline Survey for property rights in Kosovo. Within this survey, 78% indicated that there are no female property owners within their household.<sup>98</sup>

In 2011, the NGO NORMA conducted research about the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality with its Chapter IV on inheritance. Therefore, NORMA investigated inheritance cases that were decided in front of the court in five different regions. According to the final report, in only 487 (9.75%) out of 4,994 cases women and men received an equal bequest.<sup>99</sup> Rules about the succession date back to the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini. This Kanun is an important part of the Albanian customary law and involves cultural traditions and deeply entrenched social customs. The Kanun mostly excludes women from inheritance. For example, §88 only recognises sons as heirs but not daughters or wives.<sup>100</sup> Although Kosovo passed various legal provisions addressing the unequal inheritance of women and men, the out-dated rules set down in the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini still influence the social behaviour of the Kosovo population. Different institutions in Kosovo are aware of this problem. For example, the OSCE Mission launched several campaigns for raising awareness and improving the situation of female heirs.

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<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>98</sup> United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Kosovo, *Property Rights Program (PRP): National Baseline Survey for property rights in Kosovo*, 2015, p.iii  
<http://www.womensnetwork.org/documents/20160614114824999.pdf>  
(accessed 21 July 2015)

<sup>99</sup> NORMA, *Research and Monitoring the Implementation of the Law on Gender Equality*, Kosovo, 2011, p. 25  
[http://www.norma-ks.org/repository/docs/norma\\_eng\\_\(2\)\\_1.pdf](http://www.norma-ks.org/repository/docs/norma_eng_(2)_1.pdf)  
(accessed 5 May 2017)

<sup>100</sup> S.Boman and N.Krasniqi, *The Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini among Kosova Albanians in Sweden*, Master Thesis, Malmö University, Sweden, 2010, p. 42

The Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Jean-Claude Schlumberger, said:

*'One of the reasons behind gender inequality is directly linked with the unequal enjoyment of property rights. Without inheriting properties women often find themselves in economically dependent positions.'*<sup>101</sup>

He got to the heart of the problem with regard to property rights. Due to the very small percentage of property owned by women, their resources are limited.

Therefore, economically, women find themselves in a weaker starting position than men, and this automatically increases their dependence on male family members. Moreover, the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), supported by PPSE Swisscontact and ARTPOLIS, initiated a theatre.<sup>102</sup> The play, called "Hisja" (part or proportion in English), has been designed to show the reality faced by women and girls in Kosovo with regard to the realisation of their rights to property.<sup>103</sup> KWN also organised Roundtables, Workshops and other awareness-raising campaigns on this pressing issue.<sup>104</sup>

Secondly, women are disadvantaged when it comes to access to financial resources. The Country Gender Profile Report indicates that women cannot access credits and loans as men do because of collateral credit histories and connections. According to the report, men hold about 92% of collateral properties in Kosovo, and only 3% of commercial bank loans go to women.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *OSCE Mission in Kosovo helps improve women's access to property*, [website], 2015  
<http://www.osce.org/kosovo/148936>  
(accessed 5 May 2017)

<sup>102</sup> Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), *KWN successfully finances „Hisja“ series of shows*, [website], 2016  
<https://womensnetwork.org/?FaqeID=1&n=471>  
(accessed 21 July 2017)

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>104</sup> KWN, *Workshop session on Women's Rights on Immovable Property Rights and Interitance*, [webiste], 2016  
<http://www.womensnetwork.org/?FaqeID=1&n=441>  
(accessed 22 July 2017)

See also: KWN Homepage and Newsletter

<sup>105</sup> Färnsveden, Mustafa and Farnsworth, p.17

Another study about female entrepreneurship in Kosovo underpins this argument while stating that for many women access to financial resources is a barrier to establishing their own business.<sup>106</sup>

The discrimination of women in the economic sector makes them more vulnerable to living under the poverty line. A study, conducted by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS) showed that in 2011 around 30% of the Kosovo population lived in poverty and 10% in extreme poverty.<sup>107</sup> The rate of women living in poverty is slightly higher than that of men.<sup>108</sup>

Despite the slight decline in poverty and the economic growth, inequalities within the population remain. This disproportionately affects women since they tend to earn lower wages, have less access to education, fewer chances to develop their skills and limited mobility compared to men.<sup>109</sup>

To continue here, education is the next crucial point that firstly influences the disadvantaged situation of women and secondly is linked to the economic participation of women in Kosovo.

### **III.2 Education**

Education and the development of skills play an essential role in the future career of women in Kosovo. The quality of education in Kosovo is quite low, compared to the EU countries. In 2015, Kosovo for the first time took part in the PISA Test. The sobering results showed the shortcomings of the national education system. In all three main categories Kosovo, is far behind the OECD average and there is also a significant

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<sup>106</sup> V. Ramadani et al., 'A look at female entrepreneurship in Kosovo: an exploratory study', *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, Vol. 9 Issue: 3, 2015, p. 285

<sup>107</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), *Consumption Poverty in the Republic of Kosovo in 2011*, Pristina, KAS, 2013, p.3

<http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/2737/consumption-poverty-in-the-republic-of-kosovo-in-2011.pdf> (accessed 6 May 2017)

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, p.7

<sup>109</sup> Färnsveden, Mustafa and Farnsworth, p.18

gap between Kosovo and its neighbour states.<sup>110</sup> The figure below demonstrates the big difference between the results of Kosovo and the OECD members.

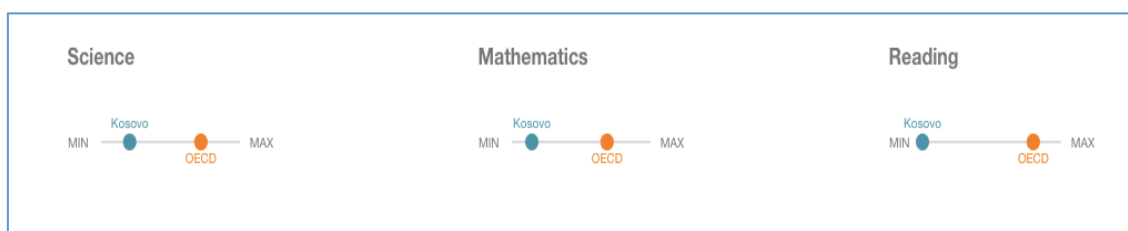


Figure 4. OECD PISA Test 2015: Kosovo.<sup>111</sup>

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (UNICEF MICS) indicates that 98% of children in primary school age attend school, while in secondary school the rate drops to 96%.<sup>112</sup> The Gender parity index for the primary school is at 1.00, which means that the school attendance of girls and boys is equal at the primary school level but decreases to 0.97 with the secondary level.<sup>113</sup> A report of NORMA also demonstrates that the higher the level of education, the lower the number of girls enrolled.<sup>114</sup> The biggest gender disparity occurs on the upper secondary level.<sup>115</sup> Major improvements regarding literacy are visible. In particular, the illiteracy rate of young people is constantly decreasing.

<sup>110</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *PISA TEST 2015: Kosovo*, 2015 <http://www.compareyourcountry.org/pisa/country/KOS> (accessed 4 June 2017)

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>112</sup> United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), *MICS 2013-2014 Final Report: Monitoring the situation of children and women / Kosovo (UNSCR 1244)*, UNICEF Kosovo, 2014, p.28 (xxviii) [https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS5/Central%20and%20Eastern%20Europe%20and%20the%20Commonwealth%20of%20Independent%20States/Kosovo%20under%20UNSCR%20res.%201244/2013-2014/Final/Kosovo%20%28UNSCR%201244%29%202013-14%20MICS\\_English.pdf](https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS5/Central%20and%20Eastern%20Europe%20and%20the%20Commonwealth%20of%20Independent%20States/Kosovo%20under%20UNSCR%20res.%201244/2013-2014/Final/Kosovo%20%28UNSCR%201244%29%202013-14%20MICS_English.pdf) (accessed 7 May 2017)

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p.7

<sup>114</sup> NORMA, p. 15

<sup>115</sup> ECA Gender Assessments Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit, *Kosovo: Gender Gaps in Education, Health and Economic Opportunities*, the World Bank, 2012, p.1f <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/371251468030245833/pdf/759300WP0ENGLI0Box0379792B00PUBLIC0.pdf> (accessed 7 May 2017)

The illiteracy rate for the age group 15-24 stands at 0.6 for males and 0.5 for females.<sup>116</sup> The higher the age group, the higher the illiteracy rate, which affects women, in particular. In the age group 65+, 13.0% of men are illiterate while the rate of women stands at 44.6%.<sup>117</sup> In total, 2.2% of men and 7.2% of women in Kosovo are illiterate, which again shows a gender disparity.<sup>118</sup> A gap is also recognisable between males and females with a tertiary degree. Within the age group of 25-64, 12% of the male populations own a tertiary degree, while only 6% of the female population do.<sup>119</sup>

To sum it up, the enrolment of girls in different education levels has increased over the years and the gender gap is decreasing. However, women do not have equal access to education and training opportunities, especially on a higher level.

They experience limited opportunities to expand their skills. Priority in education and the labour market is still given to men, which contributes to maintaining the disadvantaged position of women in Kosovo.

### **III.3 Health**

The health sector in Kosovo is often criticised for its shortcomings. Major problems of the system include poor medical infrastructure, lack of qualified medical specialists, inadequate equipment and medical supplies.<sup>120</sup> Health insurances are only offered by private companies, which are not affordable for a large part of the population.<sup>121</sup> The insufficient health system affects women differently than men. Some gender-related health issues are a low life expectancy at birth, high maternal mortality and low prevalence of contraception use.

The general living conditions in Kosovo have improved over the last decade, which has also influenced the life expectancy of the population.

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, p.4

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, p.5

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, p.6

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*,

Nevertheless, it remains lower than in the East Central Europe and Balkan countries. In 2015, the life expectancy at birth for women amounted to 73.6 years and 69.2 for men.<sup>122</sup> In total, Kosovo has a life expectancy at birth rate of 71.346, the lowest in the region.<sup>123</sup>

Gender-specific health issues are in particular related to fertility and maternal health. According to UNICEF Data, the infant mortality rate stands at 15 out of 1,000.<sup>124</sup> In comparison, Serbia has an infant mortality rate of 5.9, Macedonia 4.3, Albania 12.5 and Montenegro 4.3.<sup>125</sup> The maternal mortality rate of Kosovo is also comparatively high. A report of the ECA Gender Assessments Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit deplores the lack of current data about maternal mortality. However, it is estimated that in 2009, approximately 43 mothers died per 100.000 births, which again is one of the highest rates in Europe.<sup>126</sup> Due to the specific needs, the health-impairing effects of the living conditions differently affect women's health. Furthermore, women and girls in Kosovo, especially in rural areas, lack information on reproductive health, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases. Out-dated and conservative social norms hinder appropriate education and information on contraception and sexual diseases. In particular, the knowledge and use of contraception is an alarming issue. The UNICEF MICS figure below indicates the usage of contraception in more detail.

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<sup>122</sup> The World Bank, *life expectancy at birth*, [website] 2015  
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?end=2015&locations=XK&start=2015&view=map>  
(accessed 6 May 2017)

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>124</sup> UNICEF, *MICS 2013-2014 Key Findings: Monitoring the situation of children and women / Kosovo (UNSCR 1244)*, UNICEF Kosovo, 2015, p. 2  
[https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS5/Central%20and%20Eastern%20Europe%20and%20the%20Commonwealth%20of%20Independent%20States/Kosovo%20under%20UNSC%20res.%201244/2013-2014/Key%20findings/Kosovo%20%28UNSCR%201244%29%202013-14%20MICS%20KFR\\_English.pdf](https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS5/Central%20and%20Eastern%20Europe%20and%20the%20Commonwealth%20of%20Independent%20States/Kosovo%20under%20UNSC%20res.%201244/2013-2014/Key%20findings/Kosovo%20%28UNSCR%201244%29%202013-14%20MICS%20KFR_English.pdf)  
(accessed 8 May 2017)

<sup>125</sup> The World Bank, *Infant Mortality rate*, [website], 2015  
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.IMRT.IN?view=map>  
(accessed 6 May 2017)

<sup>126</sup> ECA Gender Assessments Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit, p.7

**Figure 5: Use of contraception, Kosovo\*, 2013-2014**

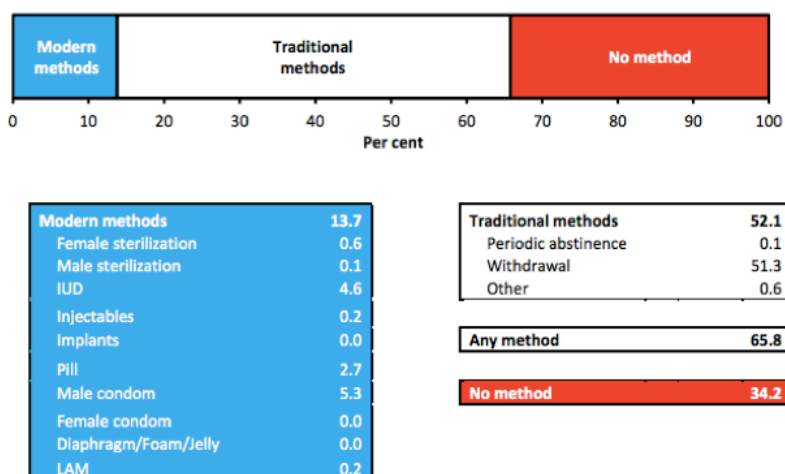


Figure 5. UNICEF MICS Kosovo 2013-2014: Use of contraception.<sup>127</sup>

At first, the percentage of 34.2 people, who are not using contraception, does not seem to be exceptionally high, compared to other countries. For example, a survey in Austria indicated that 28% of the respondents do not use contraception.<sup>128</sup> The significant difference is not between the non-usage of contraception but rather in the usage of different contraception methods. In Austria, only 5%<sup>129</sup> use so called less efficient or traditional methods while in Kosovo 52.1%<sup>130</sup> use this kind of methods. Due to different reasons, like a lack of information, stigmatisation, lack of financial resources and limited access to contraceptives, women and girls in Kosovo tend to use insufficient contraception methods. A child spouse asked for a UNFPA survey in Kosovo said:

*‘At that age I had no information about family planning, about unplanned pregnancy. All I thought was: “I am going out with my boyfriend. I love him...” I didn’t know anything about contraceptives or condoms. Otherwise I wouldn’t have gotten pregnant, and I wouldn’t have gotten married. Nobody taught me that stuff.’*<sup>131</sup>

<sup>127</sup> UNICEF, 2015, p. 8

<sup>128</sup> Gynmed Ambulatorium, *Österreichischer Verhütungsreport 2015*, Gynmed Ambulatorium, 2015, p.13 <http://verhuetungsreport.at/sites/verhuetungsreport.at/files/2015/gynmed.pdf> (accessed 8 May 2017)

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, p.16f

<sup>130</sup> UNICEF, 2015, p. 8

<sup>131</sup> UNFPA, *Child Marriage in Kosovo*, 2012, p.4

<http://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa%20kosovo%20overview.pdf> (accessed 8 May 2017)



The lack of knowledge about contraception not only contributes to an increasing number of unwanted pregnancies but also facilitates sexually transmitted diseases. The percentage of young people aged between 15 and 24 who correctly identified methods of prevention of sexual transmission of HIV stands by 16.8% for girls and 17.4% for boys.<sup>132</sup> This, in turn, poses a risk to the full development of women and girls since it can cause serious health issues.

To sum it up, the lack of information and the limited access to contraception can contribute to a disadvantaged position of women and girls. Due to pregnancy and maternal health, women are disproportionately affected by the insufficient health system.

It is important to stay healthy since it influences not only their own lives but also the lives of their children. Maternal health is naturally related to maternity. By reason of gender roles, family and parenting are mainly attributed to women and this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

#### **III.4 Gender Stereotypes and Social Exclusion**

Kosovo is still shaped by a patriarchal and conservative society with a clear distribution of roles between women and men. Women are not accepted as equal members of society. Their primary duties and responsibilities comprise childcare and household chores.<sup>133</sup> This is reflected in the low number of women integrated in the labour market. Before discussing gender stereotypes and norms, which can lead to discrimination against women, it is necessary to give a brief explanation of gender and gender roles.

*'Gender is a key dimension of personal life, social relations and culture. It is an arena in which we face hard practical issues about justice, identity and even survival. Gender is also a topic on which there is a great deal of prejudice, myth and outright falsehood.'*<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> UNICEF, 2015, p.13

<sup>133</sup> Färnsveden et al. 2014, p.17

<sup>134</sup> R. Connell and R. Pearse, *Gender in World Perspective*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2015, p.viii

Gender is often confused with sex. Sex is seen as biological while gender is seen as a social construct.<sup>135</sup> Sex refers to the biological characteristics of women and men, whereas gender means roles and responsibilities attributed to women or men by society.<sup>136</sup>

Being a man or woman is not a pre-determined state<sup>137</sup>, as Simone de Beauvoir said: 'One is not born, but rather, becomes a woman'.<sup>138</sup> Gender is a very dynamic concept that varies from place to place and changes over time.<sup>139</sup> The concept of gender entails gender roles; these roles are performed according to social norms.<sup>140</sup> This can trigger gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes can be defined as follows:

*'A gender stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by, or the roles that are or should be performed by women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives and life plans.'*<sup>141</sup>

Gender is also related to equality and justice. Gender equality is when women and men, boys and girls worldwide enjoy the same opportunities and rights. The principle of equal rights of women and men is already enshrined in UDHR.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> E. Mader et al. *Einführung in das Propädeutikum Kultur-und Sozialanthropologie*, [website], 2016 <http://www.univie.ac.at/sowi-online/esowi/cp/einfpropaedksa/einfpropaedksa-173.html> (accessed 24 July 2017)

<sup>136</sup> V. Groverman and J.D. Gurung, *Gender and Organisational Change: Training Manual*, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, Kathmandu, 2001, p.10 <http://lib.icimod.org/record/22011/files/Gender%20and%20Organisational%20Change%20Training%20Manual-English.pdf> (accessed 10 May 2017)

<sup>137</sup> Connell and Pearse, p.viii

<sup>138</sup> S. De Beauvoir, *the Second Sex*, [E-book], New York, Vintage Books, 2011 (1949), p.14 [http://uberty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/1949\\_simone-de-beauvoir-the-second-sex.pdf](http://uberty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/1949_simone-de-beauvoir-the-second-sex.pdf) (accessed 24 July 2017)

<sup>139</sup> Connell and Pearse, p.viii

<sup>140</sup> L. Lindsey, *Gender Roles: A sociological perspective*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, New York, Routledge, 2016, p.2f

<sup>141</sup> OHCHR, *Gender stereotypes/stereotyping*, [website], n.d.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/GenderStereotypes.aspx> (accessed 24 July 2017)

<sup>142</sup> OHCHR, 1998, p.1

Gender justice can be defined as:

*‘Gender justice is a human right; every woman and girl is entitled to live in dignity and in freedom, without any fear. Gender Justice is indispensable for development, poverty reduction, and is crucial to achieving human progress. Realizing it includes sharing of power and responsibility between women and men at home, in the workplace, and in the wider national and international communities.’<sup>143</sup>*

The definitions and explanations given above are also important to later understand the relation between sports and gender stereotypes.

Kosovo is still a country with a society significantly shaped by gender norms. The phenomenon of “sworn virgins”, which still exists in North Albania and Kosovo, shows the flexible distribution of gender roles. If a male family member is missing then under certain circumstances women have the chance to replace this person. These women have to swear to maintain their virginity and in turn, they are able to change their gender. Predrag Šarčević defined them as a relatively independent gender category of „social man“.<sup>144</sup> Antonia Young discusses this phenomenon in a book with the title “Women who become men”. Women give up sexual relationships, marriage and children for living a free and more self-determined life with the same rights as men.<sup>145</sup> Although this custom is steadily verging towards extinction, it shows the deeply entrenched gender roles but also their flexibility within the Albanian society in remote areas. It is not comparable with the present situation. Nevertheless, the current society is still influenced by patriarchal customs and cultural traditions.

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<sup>143</sup> OXFAM, *Gender Justice*, [website], n.d.  
<https://policy-practice.oxfamamerica.org/work/gender-justice/>  
(accessed 24 July 2017)

<sup>144</sup> P. Šarčević, *Sex and Gender Identity of “Sworn Virgins” in the Balkans*, 2005, p.3  
<http://www.udi.rs/articles/genderPS.pdf>  
(accessed 4 June 2017)

<sup>145</sup> A. Young, *Women who become Men: Albanian Sworn Virgins*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2011  
<http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/women-who-become-men-9781845209889/>  
(accessed 4 June 2017)

see also:

*Women who become Men: Albanian Sworn Virgins*, [online video], in the Now, 2016  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1WSPWw9X34>  
(accessed 4 June 2017)

This further impacts the perception of women and men in the society and allocates them different responsibilities and norms about their behaviours.

There is a correlation between gender norms and social exclusion. The given social norms connected to gender often determine the sphere in which women can “move”. Their participation in social and cultural life is often restricted because they are pushed back in the private sphere and that contributes to the social exclusion of women.

*‘Social exclusion refers to ways in which individuals may become cut off from full involvement in the wider society. It focuses attention on a broad range of factors that prevent individuals or groups from having opportunities open to the majority of the population. In order to live full and active life individuals must not only be able to feed, clothe and house themselves but should also have access to essential goods and services such as education, health, transportation, insurance, social security, banking and even access to the police or judiciary. Social exclusion is not accidental but systematic –it is the result of structural features of society.’<sup>146</sup>*

As illustrated above, in various fields, women in Kosovo do not enjoy the same opportunities as men. Therefore, women are prevented from participating as equal and full members in society. Women are mainly restricted to the private sphere, while men are overrepresented in the public sphere. Regarding the division of labour, this means that the majority of men are active in the production sector while women are responsible for the reproduction sector. The reproduction sector comprises unpaid work as child and family care or household chores. This reflects the low number of females (18%) active in the labour market.<sup>147</sup> Another proof for widespread gender norms is visible in the political sector. The political sector is a public area, where women are significantly underrepresented. At present, 1 out of 17 ministers is female, 1 out of 34

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<sup>146</sup> Sociologyguide.com, *Social Exclusion*, [website], 2017  
[http://www.sociologyguide.com/social\\_inequality\\_exclusion/social\\_exclusion.php](http://www.sociologyguide.com/social_inequality_exclusion/social_exclusion.php)  
(accessed 16 May 2017)

<sup>147</sup> Färnsveden, Mustafa and Farnsworth, p.17

deputy ministers is female and only 14 out of 301 Municipal Directors are female.<sup>148</sup>

Women are underrepresented in all offices stated in the figure below.

What needs to be considered, in June 2017, elections have been held. The next cabinet might show a higher gender balance.

Political Participation Indicators (in 2014 unless otherwise noted)	Females	Males
Presidents (ever)	1	5
Prime Ministers (ever)	0	6
Deputy Prime Ministers	1	4
Ministers	1	17
Deputy Ministers	1	34
Foreign Missions <sup>1</sup>	6	16
National Assembly Members	40	80
Chairs of Assembly Committees	1	8
Mayors	1	32
Municipal Directors of Directorates <sup>2</sup>	14 4.4%	301 94.6%
Municipal Assembly Members <sup>3</sup>	34%	66%
Civil Service <sup>4</sup>	38%	60%

Figure 6. Country Gender Profile: Kosovo: Political Situation.<sup>149</sup>

Women's unequal participation in politics is partly influenced by social norms.<sup>150</sup> According to interviews conducted for the Country Gender Profile, 49.1% of women believe that taking care of the family is more important than a career in politics and 58.2% hold the opinion that men are more suitable for the tough working conditions of politicians.<sup>151</sup>

The example, mentioned above, can be seen as a valuable proof for how social norms can limit women's self-confidence and can create a distorted perception of their skills and abilities, not only in the political but also in other fields. To sum it up, existing gender stereotypes and norms dictate a particular behaviour to women and girls and hinder them in their full development.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, p.13

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*, p.14

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*,

Furthermore, gender stereotypes lead to social exclusion while limiting women's participation in social and community life and allocate them to the private sphere. Another field linked to gender stereotypes are behavioural patterns like violence against women.

This setting supports the assumption that gender based violence has cultural aspects and is tolerated. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

### **III.5 Violence against women**

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects women in every corner of the globe, regardless of age, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or nationality.<sup>152</sup> It occurs in many different settings, public or private, in the family, at work, school or university. Nonetheless, the family remains the place where the most cases of GBV occur.<sup>153</sup> According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 30% of women worldwide, who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced any form of physical or/and sexual violence by their intimate partner.<sup>154</sup> Before illustrating the situation of domestic violence in Kosovo, it is necessary to give a brief definition of the terms “violence against women”, “domestic violence” and “gender –based violence”. Following Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention the three terms can be defined as follows:

#### Violence against women

*‘Violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.’<sup>155</sup>*

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<sup>152</sup> World Health Organisation (WHO), *Fact Sheet: Violence against Women: Intimate partner and sexual violence against women*, WHO Media centre, 2016

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>

(accessed 16 May 2017)

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>155</sup> Council of Europe (CoE), *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, Istanbul, 2011, p.8

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

(accessed 16 May 2017)

## Domestic violence

*'Domestic violence shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.'*<sup>156</sup>

## Gender-based violence against women

*'Gender-based violence against women shall mean the violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects woman disproportionately.'*<sup>157</sup>

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a structural and embedded phenomenon; it is a result of deeply entrenched and unequal power relationships between women and men.<sup>158</sup>

GBV is not only a result but also reproduces and increases gender inequality.<sup>159</sup>

Domestic violence is a serious problem and poses a threat to a high number of women in Kosovo.<sup>160</sup> A famous example within the last years is the case of Diana Kastrati, who was killed by her former husband in 2011. Three weeks before being shot by him, she requested an emergency order at the Municipal Court of Pristina. The Court failed to react to the order and kept silent, Diana Kastrati had to pay with her life.<sup>161</sup> Similar cases happen occasionally. In 2015, Zejnepe Bytyqi was stabbed to death in her home and her husband is accused of being her slayer. That was not the first violent incident towards her. According to her family, since 2002, Zejnepe Bytyqi had reported abuse by her husband to the police 16 times.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>158</sup> [health-genderviolence.org](http://www.health-genderviolence.org), *Strengthening Health System Responses to Gender-based Violence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: 1.1. Definition and forms of gender-based violence*, [website], 2014 <http://www.health-genderviolence.org/news/191> (accessed 16 May 2017)

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>160</sup> Färnsveden, Mustafa and Farnsworth, p.20

<sup>161</sup> Europe Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), *The Diana Kastrati Case: Violence against women and Kosovar Justice*, ECMI Kosovo, 2013, p.2 <http://www.ecmikosovo.org/uploads/1111engl-Diana%20Kastrati%20case.pdf> (accessed 11 May 2017)

<sup>162</sup> [Opendemocracy.net](http://www.opendemocracy.net), *For domestic abuse survivors, Kosovo's justice system can be fatal*, [website], 2016 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/hana-marku/for-domestic-abuse-survivors-kosovo-s-justice->

To get a better overview of the situation, the KWN published a comprehensive report about domestic violence in Kosovo. The research included, besides a review of the legal framework, a survey and interviews. The statements of some respondents demonstrate very well the common perceptions and attitudes towards domestic violence in Kosovo. Attitudes of some people, including police officers, are alarming.

The police should provide immediate protection for women in danger of becoming victims of domestic violence or women who reported cases of domestic violence.

However, one comment of a police officer given to the KWN researcher was:

*'I am not saying not to ask for help when a woman is a victim of repeated domestic violence, because it is difficult to rehabilitate a [person who suffered] repeated violence. But I am also not saying to go immediately and ask for help from the police, or to the victim advocate's office. Of course the doors will always be open but we are ALBANIANS.'*<sup>163</sup>

This statement shows how deeply the behaviour of violence against women is rooted in society and that culture and social norms can be used as an excuse for cases of domestic violence. In this manner, domestic violence is seen as a part of the Albanian culture, and since it belongs to the culture, it is not expected to be changed. Hence, domestic violence is not taken seriously enough; even worse, there exists a conception that to report a case of domestic violence is shameful because it should have been settled within the own family. The UNICEF MICS survey supports the assumptions that domestic violence is a common phenomenon, which widely accepted or at least tolerated. The following figure illustrates attitudes of women and men towards domestic violence.

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system-can-be-fatal  
(accessed 11 May 2017)

<sup>163</sup> N. Farnsworth et al., *No more excuses: An Analysis of Attitudes, Incidence, and Institutional Responses to Domestic Violence in Kosovo*, KWN, Pristina, 2015 p.64f  
<http://www.womensnetwork.org/documents/20151124105025622.pdf>  
(accessed 11 May 2017)



Attitudes towards domestic violence				
MICS Indicator	Indicator Name	Description	Value	
8.12	Attitudes towards domestic violence	Percentage of people age 15-49 years who state that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife in at least one of the following circumstances: (1) she goes out without telling him, (2) she neglects the children, (3) she argues with him, (4) she refuses sex with him, (5) she burns the food	(a) Women	32.9
			(b) Men	14.9
SS	Attitudes towards domestic violence (including additional circumstances)	Percentage of people age 15-49 years who state that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife in at least one of the following circumstances: (1) she goes out without telling him, (2) she neglects the children, (3) she argues with him, (4) she refuses sex with him, (5) she burns the food, (6) neglects the household and hygiene work, (7) she neglects his parents, (8) she makes him jealous by her behaviour to other men, (9) she makes decisions for the family without consulting him	(a) Women	42.4
			(b) Men	21.9

Figure 7. UNICEF MICS Kosovo 2013-2014: Attitudes towards domestic violence.<sup>164</sup>

Regarding the attitudes illustrated above, it is not surprising that domestic violence is widespread in Kosovo.

As a short remark, not only women but also men are affected by gender-based violence and domestic violence. In particular, violence against LGBTI people in Kosovo remains widespread.<sup>165</sup> But firstly, as highlighted earlier, due to the unequal distribution of power, women and girls are disproportionately affected by GBV and domestic violence.<sup>166</sup> Secondly, this paper is focusing on women's rights and discrimination against women. Therefore, it does not illustrate the situation of male victims of domestic violence.

According to the KWN Report on domestic violence, 68% of women in Kosovo have suffered domestic violence in their lifetimes.<sup>167</sup> In 2014, the year before the publication of the KWN Report, 41% of women became a victim of any form of domestic

<sup>164</sup> UNICEF, 2015, p.14

<sup>165</sup> Färnsveden, 2014, p.7, 12, 22,

<sup>166</sup> health-genderviolence.org, 2014

<sup>167</sup> N.Farnsworth et al., p.38

violence.<sup>168</sup> Thus, Diana Kastrati and Zejnepe Bytyqi are by far not the only victims of domestic violence. But they serve as an example of what can happen if the responsible authorities fail to take appropriate measures to react to on-going incidents of domestic violence. Women and girls involved in child or early marriage are more likely to experience domestic violence. In the course of the UNFPA Survey on child marriage, many child spouses reported repeated suffering of domestic violence.<sup>169</sup> One of the spouses said: *'He beat me up twice. I remember the first time was because I didn't charge his phone.'*<sup>170</sup>

This directs to the next chapter about marriage, which, in some cases, is linked to domestic violence.

### **III.6 Marriage**

Although the number of child and early marriages has decreased, it is not totally abolished yet. Especially girls from ethnic communities like Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (RAE) are involved in early marriages.<sup>171</sup> Child and early marriage is a union where at least one member is under 18.<sup>172</sup> In 2010, 14 courts reported 116 requests for early marriage cases, which went down to 107 cases in 2011.<sup>173</sup> Dr Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA, said:

*'Child marriage is an appalling violation of human rights and robs girls of their education, health, and long-term prospects. A girl who is married as a child is one whose potential will not be fulfilled. Since many parents and communities also want the very best for their daughters, we must work together and end child marriage.'*<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*, p.38

<sup>169</sup> UNFPA, p.7

<sup>170</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>171</sup> Färnsveden, Mustafa and Farnsworth, p.19

<sup>172</sup> UNFPA, p.1

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.*, p.5

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.*,

UNICEF data indicates that 0.8% of girls and 0.1% of boys in Kosovo were first married or in union under 15, for marriage under 18 the numbers decrease up to 10% for girls and 1.0% for boys.<sup>175</sup> Consequently, the number of child and early marriage is not exceptionally high but there is a general tendency to marry at a young age. While most of the Western European countries show a trend of marriages with age upward 28, in Kosovo it is preferential to marry at younger age. The following reasons for marriage at a young age were observed: love, family pressure, security, socio-economic conditions, unplanned pregnancy, peer pressure or traditions.<sup>176</sup> In general, marriage appears as an important issue in Kosovo and receives much attention. But for women, it often entails a restriction of mobility and pushes them back into the private sphere with household chores, family planning and family care. During the UNFPA survey, a women rights activist gave an example of the possible consequences of early marriage:

*‘My cousin was in high school when she was married [age 17], and she became pregnant immediately. Her husband didn’t even allow her to go to the prom because he ‘loves her’, and she had to do what he said. That’s normal in Mitrovica. Girls’ purpose in life is to get married. It’s not their fault; it’s everyone’s fault. It’s the box and they are inside that box.’<sup>177</sup>*

Marriage, in general, is a positive construct but in some cases, it involves child spouses, which is illegal. Furthermore, marriage does entail various consequences for women. Those negative consequences include limited mobility and restricted social contacts. Therefore, it is important to ensure that women and men within marriage are not only equal de jure but also de facto.

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<sup>175</sup> UNICEF, 2015, p.14

<sup>176</sup> UNFPA, p.6

<sup>177</sup> *ibid.*, p.5

### **III.7 Résumé**

Women and girls in Kosovo face discrimination in various areas of life. This chapter has dealt with inequalities within six different fields. Women are disadvantaged when it comes to employment opportunities. Only 18% of women participate in the labour market, and especially high-level positions are reserved for men.

Women lead only 8.2% of businesses and face significant barriers in accessing financial resources like bank loans. In addition, female heirs are rare, and all these factors restrict women's economic independence and further influence other areas of their lives.

Within education, there is no gender disparity at the primary level but the higher the education level, the higher the gender disparity. In addition, more women than men in Kosovo are illiterate. In total, the poor results in the PISA Test 2015 demonstrated the deficits of the Kosovo education system.

The health system in Kosovo is criticised for its poor medical infrastructure, lack of qualified medical specialists, inadequate equipment and medical supplies but these affect women differently than men. Major health concerns for women and girls in Kosovo are linked to maternal and reproductive health as well as contraception. Kosovo has the highest rates of infant and maternal mortality in the region. Women and girls lack information and financial resources regarding contraceptives.

Gender stereotypes are another factor that contributes to discrimination against women and can further lead to social exclusion of women and girls. Gender norms often restrict women's space and link them with the private sphere, where they bear the responsibilities of family care and household chores. Withdrawal from the public sphere enhances social exclusion of women and limits their participation in social and community life.

Violence against women and especially domestic violence are common phenomena in Kosovo. Perceptions and attitudes towards violence against women are disturbing but reflect the deeply rooted power relations between women and men.<sup>178</sup> Governmental institutions refuse to address this issue efficiently and victims often experience stigmatisation within their own family and community.

The last area deals with marriage. Early marriage is constantly decreasing but still existing within the Kosovo population. Especially, girls from the RAE communities are at risk to become child spouses. Early marriage and also marriage at young age can limit the development of young women and prevent them from finishing their education.

There are still more areas in which women and girls are discriminated against but it is not feasible to discuss all of them within the framework of this thesis and the six areas, mentioned above, can be related and influenced by sports and physical activity.<sup>179</sup> The relation between these fields and sports, based on literature, will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

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<sup>178</sup> UN, *Indicators to measure violence against women*, 2007, p.5  
[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/IndicatorsVAW/IndicatorsVAW\\_EGM\\_report.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/IndicatorsVAW/IndicatorsVAW_EGM_report.pdf)  
(accessed 17 July 2017)

<sup>179</sup> See: Färnsveden, 2014

## IV. Women and Sports

*'Sport has a huge potential to empower women and girls. In many countries, it has been recognized that sport can be a force to amplify women's voices and tear down gender barriers and discrimination. Women in sport defy the misperception that they are weak or incapable. Every time they clear a hurdle or kick a ball, demonstrating not only physical strength, but also leadership and strategic thinking, they take a step towards gender equality.'*

- Lakshmi Puri

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, although there exists a fairly advanced legal framework on tackling discrimination against women and enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment, women in Kosovo find themselves in a disadvantaged position. There are various tools, which may contribute to women's empowerment and support women in overcoming their disadvantaged position. The main mechanism to fight discrimination against women is the implementation of legal provisions dealing with this issue. However, in some contexts, the implementation of laws remains challenging. Additionally, legal provisions are not the only option in fostering gender equality and the realization of women's rights. Sport and physical activity can be an alternative way of tackling discrimination against women. This chapter will discuss the benefits of sports and physical activity for women and girls and how sport can contribute to women's empowerment and the realisation of women's rights. Before that, it is important to give an explanation of my understanding of sport and physical activity as well as a definition of women's empowerment.

In this paper, the terms sport and physical activity will be used interchangeably. For a better understanding, there will follow a definition and explanation of sport and physical activity, as it will be used in this paper. According to the WHO, *'physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure.'*<sup>180</sup> In the framework of this thesis, sport and physical activity will be used as a comprehensive term with various aspects.

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<sup>180</sup>WHO, *Health Topics:Physical Activity*, [webiste], n.d.  
[http://www.who.int/topics/physical\\_activity/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/physical_activity/en/)

It means any physical activity and exercise but it does not include sport on a professional and competitive level. It relates to sport as leisure time and recreational activity, where people are active and have fun. The benefits of sport indicated below are stimulated and fostered by a specific environment.

Firstly, the benefits described below mainly take place during participation in team sports or physical activity, which is done in groups as a result of the social interaction with others. But some of these benefits also occur during individual sports.

Secondly, it is more likely that women and girls benefit from sport when it happens in an organised and well-thought-out framework. There are numerous sports programmes, especially in developing countries, which use this sports approach to tackle discrimination against women and foster women's empowerment. For example, Women Win is an international women's fund that supports sport and physical activity programs, which aim to reach social change and enhance gender equality. Women Win suggests that such programs must be grounded in a women's rights based approach and besides engage women and girls in physical activities, the programs must provide women and girls with information, life skills, resources and services aimed at advancing their life positions.<sup>181</sup> So the priority is not to develop athletes but rather to empower women and girls so that they can live self-determined lives.

Again, it is crucial to point out that in the course of this paper, sport is seen as a leisure time activity and a platform to socialise instead of an arena for high-level competitions. For a better understanding, it is relevant to give a brief explanation of women's empowerment.

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(accessed 22 May 2017)

<sup>181</sup> Women Win, *Empowering Girls and Women through Sport and Physical Activity*, 2009, p.11

<https://womenwin.org/files/pdfs/EmpoweringReport.pdf>

(accessed 19 May 2017)

According to Jennifer Hargreaves:

*‘Empowerment is a process by which people gain power over their lives, that is, empowerment enables women to do things for themselves in their own interests rather than at the command of others for their benefit. Thus, empowerment also involves the ability to resist pressure to conform to gender-stereotyped notions concerning presentation and behaviour.’<sup>182</sup>*

Becoming empowered further means that women become more active in taking decisions, this includes taking decisions about their own lives and what they want to do with their lives.<sup>183</sup> Taking part in sports and physical activities can give women power in the form of ‘power to’ and not necessarily ‘power over’, which is often the first connotation of power.<sup>184</sup>

The international community also recognises the correlation between sports and the realisation of women’s rights. CEDAW advocates for same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education and the right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.<sup>185</sup>

The following section will discuss the contribution of sports to empower women and girls, which can further lead to the realisation of their rights. Therefore, an analysis of different reports dealing with the benefits of sports and physical activities for women and girls and the contribution of sports to empower girls and will be offered and assigned to the six areas, which are found throughout the whole paper. The main information for developing this chapter was gathered from the World Health Organization (WHO), Right to Play, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Women Win and the Women’s Sport Foundation.

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<sup>182</sup> A. Bradshaw, ‘Empowerment and Sport Feminism: A Critical Analysis’, *International Sports Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2002, p.7

<http://library.la84.org/SportsLibrary/ISS/ISS2401/ISS2401c.pdf>  
(accessed 18 May 2017)

<sup>183</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>184</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>185</sup> Bisset, p.65



## IV.1 Economy

Women worldwide find themselves in a disadvantaged position when it comes to economy and the labour market. Women's participation in the labour market is significantly lower than men's engagement. They are mainly responsible for family care and household chores. They are often pushed back to the private sphere and are more active in the informal labour market and unpaid sector. Whether in the formal or informal labour market, women make a huge contribution to the worldwide economies. Nevertheless, gender disparities continue. ILO research indicates that in 2017 worldwide men's participation in the labour market stands by 76,1% while women only reach 49.5%.<sup>186</sup> Recently, a UN Women campaign raised awareness about the existing gender pay gap. It stated that globally women are robbed 23 cents for every dollar men earn for work of equal value.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, women are underrepresented in senior and leadership positions.<sup>188</sup> The question here is what sport can contribute to the economic empowerment of women.

Firstly, participation in sport and physical activities can provide women and girls with different skills that can help them in their everyday life, including the working world. Team sport teaches values like fairness, team play, respect, self-assertion and motivation.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup>International Labour Organisation (ILO), *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2016*, 2016, p.20  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_443480.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_443480.pdf)  
(accessed 19 May 2017)

<sup>187</sup> UN Women, *the 23% robbery*, [website] 2017  
<https://www.23percentrobbery.com/#facts>  
(accessed 25 May 2017)

<sup>188</sup> ILO, *Women at Work: Trends 2016*, p.41  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_457317.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_457317.pdf)  
(accessed 25 May 2017)

<sup>189</sup> EY Women Athletes Business Network, *Perspectives on sport and teams*, [website] 2013  
<http://www.ey.com/br/pt/about-us/our-sponsorships-and-programs/women-athletes-global-leadership-network---perspectives-on-sport-and-teams>  
(accessed 19 May 2017)

Furthermore, engagement in sport contributes to the development of leadership skills. Women and girls can learn how to lead a team and transfer this knowledge to other areas of life.<sup>190</sup>

A study conducted by the Women Athletes Business Network indicated that 90% of female respondents agreed that teams are the best way to solve complex business problems, 72% mentioned that a background in sport is helpful for the team performance at a workplace and 76% stated that adopting behaviours and techniques from sport in the work environment can improve their performance.<sup>191</sup> The overall outcome was that almost all women with a position of senior manager or executive practised sport at some level.<sup>192</sup> Angela Ruggiero, Olympian IOC member and vice chair of the IOC Athletes' Commission said:

*'Sport develops skills in management, negotiation and decision-making that empower women and girls to become leaders in the workplace, in the home and in all areas of community life.'*<sup>193</sup>

Secondly, the engagement in sport can offer women opportunities to expand their social network. Settling down in the labour market is often about networking. Being part of a sports team, association or simply part of a group doing physical exercise together can facilitate the exchange of information regarding employment opportunities.

Lastly, the sports sector itself can offer job opportunities for women. Female coaches and referees become more popular. It is crucial to have female staff for sports programs, which aim to empower women and girls. For some women and girls, it is easier to join teams and activities led by staff from the same sex. For example, they feel better understood by female coaches if they approach them because of menstrual pain.<sup>194</sup> Female representation is also desirable in other positions like managers or administrative staff.

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>193</sup> Olympic.org, *Inspiring change and advocating gender equality through sport*, [website], 2014 <https://www.olympic.org/news/inspiring-change-and-advocating-gender-equality-through-sport> (accessed 19 May 2017)

<sup>194</sup> Women Win, p.17

To conclude, sport can serve as a field where skills can be developed and transferred to other areas of life, but sport is also a field that offers employment opportunities for women.

Education lays the foundation for future employment opportunities and a successful career. Hence the next chapter will discuss the relationship between sports and education.

## **IV.2 Education**

Women are disadvantaged when it comes to the access to educational offers. Despite some progress in closing the gender disparity, the gender disparity in the primary and secondary education level has been nearly closed, but that does not apply to the tertiary education level. It is estimated that 31 million girls of primary school age and 32 millions of secondary school age did not attend school in 2013.<sup>195</sup> Girls make up a large part of out-of-school children and youth out of education.<sup>196</sup> Additionally, there is a continuing gender disparity with regard to the literacy rate. Nearly two thirds of the estimated 781 million people older than 14 years who are illiterate are women.<sup>197</sup> Hence, women and girls are more likely to be discriminated when it comes to access to various forms of education. Consequently, women often experience greater challenges and barriers to entering the labour market and reaching high-level positions. Thus, discrimination against girls in the education sector influences the later performance in

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<sup>195</sup>UNICEF, *Education*, [website], 2015  
[https://www.unicef.org/education/bege\\_70640.html](https://www.unicef.org/education/bege_70640.html)  
(accessed 19 May 2017)

<sup>196</sup> World Economic Forum (WEF), *The Global Gender Gap Report: 2016*, 2016, p.37  
[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF\\_Global\\_Gender\\_Gap\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_2016.pdf)  
(accessed 19 May 2017)

<sup>197</sup> United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), *The World's Women 2015: Education – Chapter 3*, [website] United Nations, 2015  
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/chapter3/chapter3.html>  
(accessed 19 May 2017)

the economic sector. But education is essential to reach gender equality and the entire society benefits from better-educated women.

The question here is how sport can contribute to the education of women and girls. Sports programs can serve as informal education programs. It is important for children to interact with their peers and sport can offer an environment where children learn with and from each other. While playing, children have to follow specific rules.

Furthermore, sport can be used as a platform to spread messages and where women and girls can gain additional knowledge and skills.

Apart from this, data suggests that sports and physical activity have positive effects on the academic performance. Physical activity does not only lead to a healthier body but also a healthier mind. Bodily activity enhances concentration, memory and cognitive skills.<sup>198</sup> Moreover, physical exercises can stimulate women's and girls' reading, writing and counting abilities. There are games where children have to count their passes or objects they collected, or they have to fulfil other duties to reach the overall goals. However, here must be a balance between time dedicated to sports and time dedicated to school tasks because if students use too much time for physical activities, it can have a negative impact on their academic achievements.

To sum it up, physical activity can be used as a platform for informal education, where girls can learn and improve skills like reading or counting, and there is evidence that being physically active has for different reasons a positive influence on academic achievements. Sport can influence the economic situation of women, develop their skills and improve their school and academic achievements but also influence their health and

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<sup>198</sup> M.Y. Khan et al., 'Association between Participation in Sports and Academic Achievement of College Students', *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. 8, 2012, p.423f  
<http://www.hrmars.com/admin/pics/1137.pdf>  
(accessed 21 May 2017)

well-being. Hence, the next chapter will discuss various health benefits for women and girls, who are physically active.

### IV.3 Health

Sport and physical activity are one of the main factors contributing to a healthier life. It reduces the risk of different diseases and improves the level of physical and mental health. Sport supports the prevention of chronic diseases in later life. A physically active lifestyle lowers the risk for heart diseases, cancer, obesity, osteoporosis or even Alzheimer's disease.

For example, heart diseases are the leading cause of death for women in the United States; research showed that women who are physically active are less likely to suffer from heart diseases.<sup>199</sup> Another serious health issue is cancer; breast cancer is the most common cancer in women worldwide. In 2012, with nearly 1,7 million new cases diagnosed, breast cancer constituted the second common form of cancer.<sup>200</sup> The WHO indicated physical activity as one crucial factor in preventing breast cancer.<sup>201</sup> Data suggest that one to three hours of physical exercise can reduce the risk of breast cancer by 30% and sport exercised for four hours or more per week can reduce the risk by more than 50%.<sup>202</sup> Obesity and overweight are problems that often affect women's health. WHO reports a general trend towards increased childhood obesity in a large number of countries. One group particularly affected by this are girls from urbanized

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<sup>199</sup> Women's Sport Foundation, *Her Life Depends on It III: Sport, Physical Activity, and the Health and Well-Being of American Girls and Women*, 2015, p.19, 22

<https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/article-and-report/health-research/her-life-depends-on-it-iii/>

(accessed 18 May 2017)

<sup>200</sup> World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF), *breast cancer statistics*, [website], 2015

<http://www.wcrf.org/int/cancer-facts-figures/data-specific-cancers/breast-cancer-statistics>

(accessed 18 May 2017)

<sup>201</sup> WHO, *Breast cancer: prevention and control*, [website], n.d., p.4

<http://www.who.int/cancer/detection/breastcancer/en/index3.html>

(accessed 18 May 2017)

<sup>202</sup> L. Bernstein et al., 'Physical Exercise and Reduced Risk of Breast Cancer in Young Women', *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, vol 86, 1994, p.4

[https://www.vitamindwiki.com/tiki-download\\_wiki\\_attachment.php?attId=3716](https://www.vitamindwiki.com/tiki-download_wiki_attachment.php?attId=3716)

(accessed 18 May 2017)

areas.<sup>203</sup> Most forms of obesity and overweight can be cured by an increase of physical activity and balanced nutrition. Another disease that disproportionately affects women is osteoporosis.

According to the WHO, women make up 80% of all cases of osteoporosis.<sup>204</sup> Physical exercise contributes to strengthening bones and preventing osteoporosis in later years.<sup>205</sup>

Moreover, sport can be used as a platform to provide information about sexuality, reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases. In particular, this is important for adolescent girls who lack sufficient information on risks in connection with sexual activity, early pregnancy and HIV.<sup>206</sup> Sport can be an appropriate space where women and girls can discuss sexual and reproductive health issues with their peers.

*‘When people in our community come to watch the girls play, after the game, or in mid time, when resting, we talk about HIV/AIDS. They open their eyes and ears to new messages because they are laughing and enjoying. Because they are relaxed. ... Rather than us calling them and saying “come and talk about HIV/AIDS or reconciliation”, we say, “Come and watch the game”. This way we have a chance to capture their minds.’<sup>207</sup>*

Thus, sports venues can offer an environment where women can meet and exchange their experience in different fields. They can advise other women on how to deal with sensitive topics and difficult situations.

In terms of sexual behaviour and early pregnancy, data suggests that encouragement in sports increases body awareness. A study showed that there is a correlation between

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<sup>203</sup> R.Bailey, I. Wellard and H.Dismore, *Girls’ participation in physical activities and sports: benefits, patterns, influences and ways forward*, WHO, 2004, p.1  
<https://www.icsspe.org/sites/default/files/Girls.pdf>  
(accessed 18 May 2017)

<sup>204</sup> Right to Play, *Chapter 4: Sport and Gender: Empowering girls and women*, 2013, p.138  
<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/7641853/sport-and-gender-right-to-play>  
(accessed 18 May 2017)

<sup>205</sup> N.M. Schmitt, J.Schmitt and M. Dören, ‘The role of physical activity in the prevention of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women: An update’, *Maturitas* Vol. 63, No.1, 2009  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0378512209000917>  
(accessed 18 May 2017)

<sup>206</sup> Right to Play, p.140

<sup>207</sup> Women Win, p.11

girls' participation in sports and the delay of sexual activity, hence a reduced level of early pregnancy.<sup>208</sup> In addition, physical activity can have positive effects on the health of pregnant women and their infants.

The health status of infants is strongly linked to the health of their mothers, and regular physical exercise can prevent health complications of their newborns, including the risk of infant mortality.<sup>209</sup>

To sum it up, sport can have a positive impact on different areas of women's and girls physical health, but it does not only contribute to physical health but can also lead to improvements in the state of mental health and well-being.

The consequences of sport and physical activity are often reduced to physical benefits and fitness; other positive effects are usually overlooked. Different reports suggest that women and girls are more likely to suffer anxiety, depression, eating disorders or simply a lack of self-confidence and self-satisfaction. Depression is the most common psychological health issue of women and studies indicated that physical activity is as effective as a treatment with anti-depressants and psychotherapy.<sup>210</sup> The well-being of women and girls includes self-esteem, confidence and a healthy sense of personal worth and value. Different sources have specified the existent "Confidence Gap" between women and men.<sup>211</sup> Through participating in sports, women can achieve some significant goals, which improves their self-esteem and motivation. They feel more aware of their body and earn acknowledgement for their sporting successes.

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<sup>208</sup> E. Sumru, A. Tracy, *Sports as Protective of Girls' High-Risk Sexual Behaviour 2000-2005*, Wellesly Centers for Women, 2000

<https://www.wcwonline.org/Archived-Projects/sports-as-protective-of-girls-high-risk-sexual-behavior> (accessed 18 May 2017)

<sup>209</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Infant Mortality*, [website], 2016  
<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/infantmortality.htm> (accessed 19 May 2017)

<sup>210</sup> R. Bailey et al., p.2

<sup>211</sup> H. Sarsons and G. Xu, *Confidence Man? Gender and Confidence: Evidence among Top Economists*, 2015, p.18f

[https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/sarsons/files/confidence\\_final.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/sarsons/files/confidence_final.pdf) (accessed 19 May 2017)

See also: W. Bleidorn et al., 'Age and Gender Differences in Self-Esteem—A Cross-Cultural Window', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 111, No. 3, 2016, p.396

<http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/psp-pspp0000078.pdf> (accessed 19 May 2017)

Furthermore, the support given by teammates and peers can stimulate the increase of self-worth.<sup>212</sup> Self-esteem and confidence are also relevant components in the following chapters about the relationship between sport and gender stereotypes, social exclusion, violence against women and marriage.

#### **IV.4 Gender Stereotypes and Social Exclusion**

Gender stereotypes do exist in every society and are persistent and deeply rooted. They can lead to social exclusion of women while defining the space where women can participate and where not.

For achieving gender equality, it is crucial to break gender stereotypes. There are various ways to question and redefine gender norms; one of them can be sport.

Sport can offer a platform for discussions of gender stereotypes. Gender-mixed activities can help to break down prejudices towards the other sex. If women and girls participate in physical activities, that alone challenges gender stereotypes as sport have traditionally been a male domain. It has often been said that women are too weak to practice exhausting sports and that it is inappropriate for women to sweat or to be involved in contact sports like football or boxing.<sup>213</sup> While doing sports, women can demonstrate their abilities and get rid of their prescribed roles. Myriam Lamare, a female boxing athlete said: *'The punches that I land shake my adversaries as well as the foundations of our society.'*<sup>214</sup>

Prescribed gender norms can further hamper women's and girls' participation in cultural and public life of the society. In a large number of societies, women have fewer opportunities to social interaction outside their home and family structures.

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<sup>212</sup> Right to Play, p.143f

<sup>213</sup> United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, *Women 2000 and beyond: Women, gender equality and sport*, 2008, p.16

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/Women%20and%20Sport.pdf>  
(accessed 21 May 2017)

<sup>214</sup> ILO, *ILO celebrates International Women's Day Champion female athletes urge women to step up fight for social justice*, [website], 2006

[http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_068478/lang--en/index.htm%20](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_068478/lang--en/index.htm%20)  
(accessed 21 May 2017)



Sport can offer women a place where they can interact with other women and exchange their experience. They can establish social relations and acquire social capital to broaden their networks. Additionally, participation in physical activities can be a good reason for leaving the house and take actively part in the community life.

In conclusion, sport can contribute to the social empowerment of women by challenging gender stereotypes and prescribed roles of women and further supports women in expanding their social network and take part in public and community life.

#### **IV.5 Violence against Women**

Women are disproportionately affected by violence, especially domestic violence. Hence, women are often seen as vulnerable or in danger of becoming victims of violence. Sport can support women and girls in gaining self-confidence, which makes them less vulnerable to become victims of violence. Thus, sport can empower women while they are practising; they become stronger physically and psychologically.

Furthermore, sport can offer safe spaces for women, who experienced domestic violence. They have the chance to meet women who were in similar situations and can give advice on how to overcome these difficult situations. For example, in 2012 SheFighter<sup>215</sup>, a self-defence studio in the Middle East was established. It is designed to empower women and to offer a space where women at risk of becoming victims of violence can get support. Furthermore, physical activity increases self-esteem and improves the relationship between women and their bodies, so it can be useful for victims of gender-based violence, who often struggle with the attitude towards their

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<sup>215</sup> She Fighter, About, [website], n.d.

<http://www.shefighter.com/>

(accessed 21 May 2017)

See also:

L. Khalifeh, *Because I am a fighter*, [online video], TEDx Prague Women, 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIDwTmYR1Cs>

(accessed 21 May 2017)

bodies and low self-esteem.<sup>216</sup> It does not replace any other treatment, but it can support the recovery.

Consequently, sport can prevent incidents of gender-based violence by improving the strength and self-confidence of women and girls and it can also help victims to overcome their traumas.

#### **IV.6 Marriage**

As for marriage and especially early marriage, sport has a similar influence as mentioned within the previous chapters on gender stereotypes and violence against women. Sport can provide a safe place for girls who are in danger of getting married without their full consent. They can have an exchange with other girls and discuss possible solutions. Furthermore, the others can encourage the girl to step up and express her will about marriage. In addition, early marriages are often not based on the free will of the parties involved and so being engaged in such networks, increases the chance to find a shelter if girls manage to escape from arranged marriages.<sup>217</sup>

As illustrated throughout this chapter, sport can contribute to women's empowerment in various fields and different ways. Physical activity can provide women and girls with different skills, and it can further contribute to their work performance, influence their physical and mental health, and it can impact their academic performance in a positive way. Moreover, sport can be a vehicle to break gender stereotypes and foster social inclusion of women and girls. Besides, it can help women and girls to cope with gender-based violence and early marriage. Nevertheless, sport and physical activity is not a

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<sup>216</sup> [health-genderviolence.org](http://www.health-genderviolence.org), *Strengthening Health System Responses to Gender-based Violence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: 1.7. Consequences of gender-based violence*, [website], 2014  
<http://www.health-genderviolence.org/guidance-for-health-care-professionals-in-strengthening-health-system-responses-to-gender-based-vi-4>  
(accessed 21 May 2017)

<sup>217</sup> Women Win, 2009, p.15

cure-all remedy. Sport does not work for everyone and everything. Some of the limitations and challenges of sports will be discussed in the following section.

#### **IV. 7 Limitations and Challenges**

Sport and physical activity can be a tool to foster women's empowerment and enhance gender equality but sport as a tool to empower women and girls also faces various barriers and problems. Sports programmes cannot be applied in the same way all over the world. They must be adapted to the given environment.

Methods that work in developing countries perhaps will not be effective in developed countries. Sports programs in conflict or post-conflict countries must be implemented in a different way than in other countries. I assume that projects in Austria should be designed in a different way than projects in Kosovo.

Some components would remain the same but cultural and social framework in the different countries needs to be considered. If the program is not adapted to the given environment, it can cause more harm than it helps to achieve its goals.

Sport is not an option for everyone because not all women and girls like sport, so it would go in the wrong direction to force them to practice sports. Women who are pushed to be active in such programs will not feel comfortable there and will not benefit from it. Although it is essential not to force people, it is important to encourage them to take part in such programs. Sometimes, women and girls hesitate because it is something new and not common in their community, others do not see the benefits at first glance. Hence it is crucial to motivate people but not to push them.

Sports programs are not a sure-fire success; it is not about telling people to play with a ball and getting friends. Successful programs must follow some core values and standards. Some of these programs, which use sport as a tool to empower women and girls, deal with very sensitive topics in an even more sensitive and polarising environment. Therefore, it is very important to develop a well-thought out strategy.

For some of these activities, it is better to have boys and girls separated, for others it is helpful to mix them. In some cases, it is necessary to have female sports facilitators. Additionally, the staff must be knowledgeable and well trained. Above all, these programs must take place in a safe environment where all participants can communicate and move freely.

In some cases, it is very difficult to get access to remote areas or more vulnerable groups, e.g. women or girls in rural areas. Organised recreational and leisure time activities are mainly implemented in urban and densely populated areas.

Hence, they often fail to reach the most disadvantaged groups. So the goal of offering access to the people who would benefit the most remains challenging.

Lastly, programs must be planned carefully to prevent further discrimination against women and girls. If the sports facilitators are not trained well, they can contribute to decreasing self-confidence of the participants and create a place where people do not feel comfortable and do not convey the message that physical activities can be fun. There are negative sides of sports and it would be wrong to turn a blind eye to this fact. But this paper tries to identify the benefits of sport and physical activities in empowering women and support them to overcome their disadvantaged position, which further contributes to the realization of their rights, but it does not focus on the negative aspects of sports because that would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Discrimination against women in sports could fill another paper with a similar size as this.

#### **IV. 8 Résumé**

In this chapter, the relationship between sports and the six areas have been discussed in general. Through literature review various benefits of sports for addressing discrimination against women in these fields have been identified. Sport can help women to develop skills, which can be useful for their career and to reach leadership positions. Sport helps women to expand their social network and offers them job opportunities. Physical activity includes a learning component and can be used as an informal education platform. In general, physical activity has a positive impact on the school performance of children. One of the most apparent benefits is the impact on physical and mental health. Sport reduces significantly the risk of diseases like obesity, cancer, and osteoporosis. While reducing stress and increasing self-confidence, it also contributes to the mental well being of women and girls. In addition, it offers a platform to discuss health related topics like contraception or sexually transmitted diseases. Sport itself can break gender stereotypes. Some kinds of sports, depending on the area, are still seen as inappropriate for women. If women participate in this kind of sports, it breaks stereotypes because before it was seen as a male sport and women demonstrate that they are able to do the same sports like men. That can help to change the opinion about women. Furthermore, sport can be an opportunity for women and girls to socialise and get in contact with peers outside of their family. Moreover, since sport increases physical and mental strength as well as their self-confidence it can help women to defend themselves in cases of violence.

Additionally, it can help victims of violence to overcome their traumas. Besides, sport can provide a safe space for victims of early marriage or it helps girls to gain self-confidence and express their opinion regarding their marriage.

But as mentioned above, sport also has limitations and challenges. Not everyone likes sport. Thus, it does not make sense to push people but rather encourage them to get active. Furthermore, the sporting environment plays a crucial role. If the coaches and teachers are not well trained, sports lessons and programs can cause harm instead of empowering women and girls.

## **V. Methodological Approach**

This chapter will describe the process of the empirical research I have followed. It provides information on methodology and the method I have chosen for my research. It gives a short description of the experts and key informants, the preparation for the fieldwork and access to the field, the collection and processing of data as well as a brief reflection on the research process.

At first, I start with the research questions, sub-questions and the hypotheses that have been set out based on literature review. The questions for the interview guide have been created following the hypotheses.

### **Research questions**

- How can sport contribute to the realization of women's rights in Kosovo?
- How can sport help women to overcome their disadvantaged position?

### **Sub-questions**

- 1.) Which are the main fields in which women in Kosovo face discrimination?
- 2.) What are the major disadvantages for women in Kosovo?
- 3.) How can sport enhance women's rights?
- 4.) What are the benefits of sports for women and girls?

## Hypotheses

- 1.) Women face discrimination in various fields.
- 2.) Women are mainly disadvantaged when it comes to:  
Labour, the economic situation, property rights; Education and further training;  
access to health care; participation in social- and public community life;  
violence against women; marriage
- 3.) Sport can empower women and tackle discrimination against women.
- 4.)
  - a. Sport can help women to learn useful skills, which can be transferred to other areas; it can help them at work and for their career.
  - b. Sport can serve as an informal education platform and sport can help children to develop and improve their school performance.
  - c. Sport influences the physical and mental well-being of women and girls.
  - d. Sport can help to break gender stereotypes and to change social norms and the mentality of people.
  - e. Sport can be a good platform for socialising and establishing social networks.
  - f. Sport is useful to address and discuss sensitive topics and taboos.
  - g. Sport can help women to become self-confident and to defend themselves in cases of gender-based violence
  - h. Sport can help girls to extend the time until they get married and it can lower social pressure.

## V.1 Methodology

Through researching literature on women and sports, I could ascertain that there is no publication that combines the topic sport and women's rights with a focus on Kosovo.

Therefore, I have decided to combine literature review with empirical qualitative research. The first part of the thesis is based on literature review about women and sports publications. These literature also served as a basis for my research questions, which I used for the empirical data collection in Kosovo.

Qualitative research tends to be concerned with words rather than numbers and has three other main features.<sup>218</sup> Alan Bryman indicated the following three features of qualitative research:

- ‘1.) an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research, whereby the former is generated out of the latter;*
- 2.) an epistemological position described as interpretivist, meaning that, in contrast to the adoption of a natural science model in quantitative research, the stress is on the understanding of social world through examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants; and*
- 3.) an ontological position described as constructionist, which implies that social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena “out there” and separate from those involved in its construction.<sup>219</sup>*

The second feature is from importance for my research. Through my research, I try to understand the underlying motivations and reasons for specific social processes. Qualitative research is based on six main steps.

The following figure illustrates the different steps of qualitative research, which guided my research approach.

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<sup>218</sup> A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, New York, Oxford University Press, 2016, p.375

<sup>219</sup> Bryman, p.375



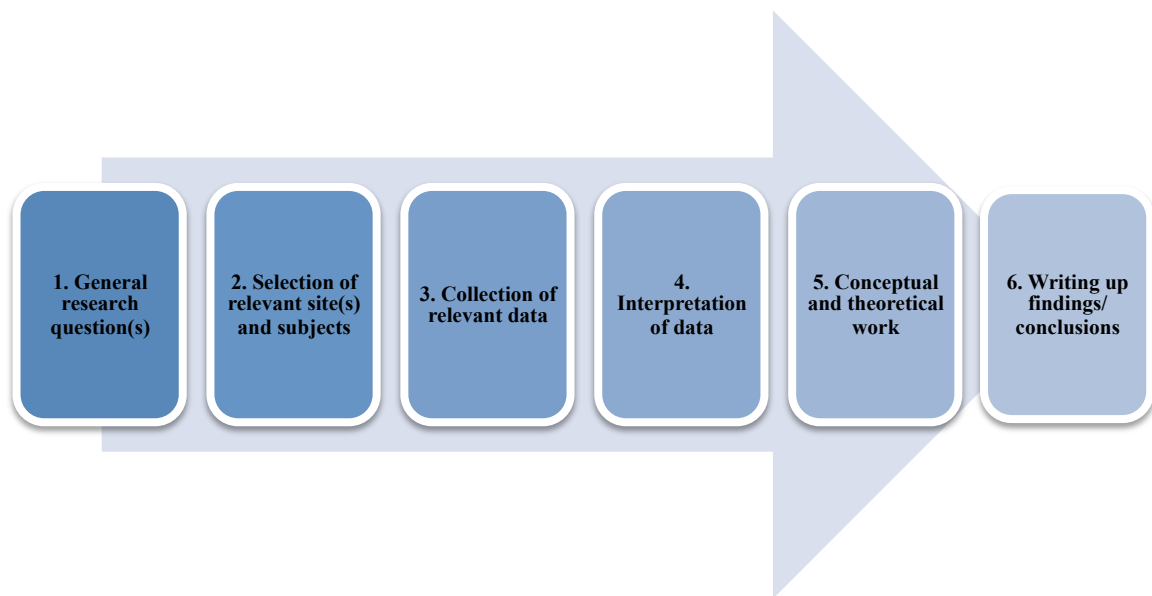


Figure 8. The main steps of qualitative research.<sup>220</sup>

As the first step, I started to search for my topic and to outline my research questions, which I have already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. As the second step, I have defined Kosovo as territorial framework for my research. Then, I did literature review about topics such as women’s rights, gender equality, women’s empowerment and sports. Based on this literature, I created hypotheses, which serve as the basis for the empirical research of conducting qualitative interviews. After collecting data through the interviews, I analysed the data and collated them with the data from the literature review. That included the verification or falsification of the hypotheses. And as the last step, I draw a conclusion from my theoretical and empirical research.

## V.2 Research methods

The main research methods associated with qualitative research are ethnography/participant observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, discourse analysis, conversation analysis and the collection and qualitative analysis of texts and documents.<sup>221</sup> I have chosen qualitative interviewing as the method for collecting my empirical data. Qualitative interviewing and the reasons why I have chosen this method

<sup>220</sup> created by the author, following Bryman, p.379

<sup>221</sup> Bryman, p.377f

will be explained in more detail within Chapter V.1.2, but before it is essential to explain the different forms of deriving a conclusion by reasoning. There are three different ways of reasoning, deduction, induction and abduction.

*‘Deduction is generally defined as "the deriving of a conclusion by reasoning." Its specific meaning in logic is "inference in which the conclusion about particulars follows necessarily from general or universal premises." Simply put, deduction—or the process of deducing—is the formation of a conclusion based on generally accepted statements or facts. Deductive reasoning always follows necessarily from general or universal premises.’<sup>222</sup>*

*‘Induction refers specifically to "inference of a generalized conclusion from particular instances." In other words, it means forming a generalization based on what is known or observed. Induction is at play here since your reasoning is based on an observation of a small group, as opposed to universal premises.’*

*‘Abduction, is defined as "a syllogism in which the major premise is evident but the minor premise and therefore the conclusion only probable." Basically, it involves forming a conclusion from the information that is known.’*

The following illustration exemplifies the difference between deduction, induction and abduction.

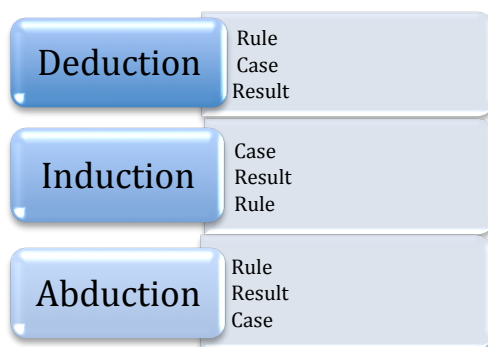


Figure 9. Deduction, induction and abduction following Peirce’s Logic.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>222</sup> Merriam-Webster, Deduction vs. Induction vs. Abduction, [website], n.d. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/deduction-vs-induction-vs-abduction> (accessed 27 July 2017)

<sup>223</sup> created by the author, following Pierce’s Logic

I have decided to use the deductive reasoning, which will be explained in more detail within the following subchapter.

### V.2.1 Deduction

*'Deductive theory represents the commonest view of the nature of the relationship between theory and social research, whereby the researcher draws on what is known about in a particular domain and on relevant theoretical ideas in order to deduced a hypothesis (or hypotheses) that must then be subjected to empirical scrutiny. Embedded within the hypothesis and then translate it into operational terms. This means that the researcher needs to specify how data can be collected in relation to the concepts that make up the hypothesis.'*<sup>224</sup>

In other words, the first step of a deduction is the theory, based on the theory hypothesis/hypotheses can be created. Followed by data collection, which reveals the findings. Then, the findings whether confirm or reject the hypothesis/hypotheses. As the last step, the theory can be revised. Following Bryman, the image below illustrates a deductive research process.



Figure 10. The process of deduction.<sup>225</sup>

With regard to my thesis, I created hypotheses, based on the literature review about women's rights and sports. These hypotheses served as a basis for my empirical research, where I collected data through semi-structured interviews. Through the findings I have tried to confirm or reject my hypotheses.

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<http://www.iep.utm.edu/peir-log/>  
(accessed 27 July 2017)

<sup>224</sup> Bryman, p.21

<sup>225</sup> created by the author following Bryman, p.21

Afterwards, I combined the theory with the empirical data and drew a conclusion. I have chosen qualitative interviews as the method to collect empirical data.

### **V.2.2 Qualitative interviews**

The interview is probably the most common method of qualitative research.<sup>226</sup> There are different types of qualitative interviews. In general, qualitative interviewing tends to be less structured than quantitative interviewing; the two main types of qualitative interviewing are unstructured and semi-structured interviews.<sup>227</sup> Quantitative interviews are designed to maximize the reliability and validity of measurement of key concepts while in the qualitative interview, there is an emphasis on interviewee's own perspectives.<sup>228</sup> Alan Bryman defined, in contrast to quantitative interviewing, following characteristics for qualitative interviewing:

- There is a greater interest in the interviewee's point of view
- "rambling" or going of at tangens is often encouraged, it gives insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important
- interviewers can depart from the interview guide, new questions can be asked and the order and wording of questions can be changed
- qualitative interviews tend to be flexible, responding to the direction in which interviewees take the interview
- rich and detailed answers are preferred<sup>229</sup>

General and specific forms of qualitative interviews can be differentiated. The major forms of qualitative interviews are the unstructured and semi-structured interview.<sup>230</sup> Due to the time frame and various topics that should be covered through my interviews, I have decided to use semi-structured interviews.

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<sup>226</sup> Bryman, p.466

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p.466f

<sup>230</sup> R. Edwards and J. Holland, *What is qualitative interviewing*, Bloomsbury London, 2013, p.29

Semi-structured means that the researcher creates a list of questions or fairly specific topics that need to be covered.<sup>231</sup> Like in my case, that often refers to an interview guide with a set of questions and topics but the questions may not be asked exactly in the way outlined on the schedule.<sup>232</sup> I designed questions for the six different fields but I usually started with the general question about the benefits of sports for women and girls and then I waited which topics were raised by my interviewees and asked my questions depending on their replies.

Furthermore, there are specific forms of qualitative interviews.<sup>233</sup> These includes the narrative interview, the ethnographic interview, biographic interview, episodic interview, problem focused interview, expert interview and focus group interview.<sup>234</sup> The two main options of qualitative interviews eligibly for my research were expert interviews or focus group interviews. I have decided to conduct interviews with experts and key informants as I assumed that people need to be knowledgeable about the topic for answering my questions. I have considered conducting focus group interviews with the beneficiaries of PLAY International activities. Due to different reasons, I have decided to do expert interviews rather than focus group discussions. Firstly, the PLAY International beneficiaries who are children and teenagers were inaccessible or unavailable as my field period fell into the period of fasting month. By reason of Ramadan, the number of sports activities was very limited and for visiting them, I would have needed to postpone and extend the period of my fieldwork. That was not possible because of the tight schedule prescribed by the Master programme. Secondly, specific ethical and legal standards need to be considered when doing research with children and minors. It was not feasible to travel to all the different localities for getting permission from their parents to interview their children. Thirdly, there were some practical reasons like language barriers.

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<sup>231</sup> Bryman, p.468

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>233</sup> Edwards and Holland, p.30

<sup>234</sup> A. Heisteringer, *Qualitative Interviews – ein Leitfaden zu Vorbereitung und Durchführung inklusive einiger theoretischer Anmerkungen*, Universität Innsbruck, 2006, p.4-7  
[https://www.uibk.ac.at/iezw/mitarbeiterinnen/senior-lecturer/bernd\\_lederer/downloads/durchfuehrung\\_von\\_qualitativen\\_interviews\\_uniwien.pdf](https://www.uibk.ac.at/iezw/mitarbeiterinnen/senior-lecturer/bernd_lederer/downloads/durchfuehrung_von_qualitativen_interviews_uniwien.pdf)  
(accessed 28 July 2017)

For doing research with the sporting children it would have been necessary to have at least two translators from English to Albanian and Serbian. Therefore, I realised that within the framework of my master thesis it was not feasible to conduct focus group discussions with children. In order to identify experienced links between sports and women's rights, expert interviews and interviews with key informants appeared as the right method to collect data for my research.

### **V.2.2.1 Interviews with experts and key informants**

To conduct expert interviews, so-called experts must be identified. The distinction between an expert and a layperson is controversial and depends on the topic. Although I have decided to use expert interviews, I prefer to use the term key informant for my interviewees. Within the social sciences, the term expert is disputed, and since there are no experts in the field of women's rights and sports in Kosovo, it would not fit as a description for my interview partners. Hence, I conducted key informant interviews with persons from either a sports or women's rights background.

*'Key informant interviews involve interviewing a select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subjects.'*<sup>235</sup>

Another definition of key informants is the following:

*..., ... the use of key informants ('those who know') who are not necessarily representative of a population in any sense, but are chosen simply for their knowledge or distinctive viewpoint.'*<sup>236</sup>

Two characteristics of key informant interviews are necessary to mention. Firstly, key informant interviews only include a small number of informants.<sup>237</sup> The researcher selects persons who possess information or ideas on the specific topic.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> K. Kumar, *Conducting key informant interviews in developing countries*, USAID, 1989, p.1  
[http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNAAX226.PDF](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNAAX226.PDF)  
(accessed 28 July 2017)

<sup>236</sup> P. Woodhouse, 'People as informants', In T. Alan, J. Chataway and M. Wuyts (eds.), *Finding out fast: Investigative skills for policy and development*, Sage, London, 1998, p.132

<sup>237</sup> Ibid

<sup>238</sup> Kumar, p.1

Secondly, key informant interviews are qualitative interviews, which follow an interview guide with relevant topics and issues that need to be covered.<sup>239</sup>

Key informant interviews are useful and appropriate in following situations:

- 1. When general, descriptive information is sufficient for decision-making.*
- 2. When understanding of the underlying motivations and attitudes of a target population is required.*
- 3. When quantitative data collected through other methods need to be interpreted.*
- 4. When the primary purpose of the study is to generate suggestions and recommendations.*
- 5. When preliminary studies are needed for the design of a comprehensive quantitative study.<sup>240</sup>*

The key informant interview has advantages and limitations. Advantages are the information comes directly from knowledgeable people and it provides data, insight and confidential information that cannot be obtained with other methods.<sup>241</sup> This kind of interview provides flexibility to explore new ideas and to adapt the interview guide according to the course of the interview.<sup>242</sup>

The limitations or disadvantages of key informant interviews are, for example, the limited basis for quantification, they are not appropriate when quantitative data is required.<sup>243</sup> Moreover, the findings can be biased if they key informants are not carefully selected.<sup>244</sup> Additionally, it can be difficult to prove that the chosen informants are knowledgeable and appropriate as representatives for a certain group or their peers.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., p.1f

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p.3

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.,

My approach was to hear different voices and get insight into the topic from different perspectives. Therefore, my list of key informants comprises staff from governmental institutions, international and national organisations and civil society.

For me, it was also important to have female and male respondents because gender equality is a topic, where it is necessary to involve women and men.

To be in compliance with ethical research standards<sup>246</sup>, beforehand the respondents were informed about the research, topic and interview process per Email. The declarations of consent of all respondents have been given in written form. With regard to confidentiality, all respondents have been asked and agreed to be mentioned by name. However, in the end, I decided to anonymise my respondents and only mentioned them as representatives of an organisation. Two of them are authors of a master thesis relevant to my topic but I avoid mentioning their work since it would reveal their name. The following key informants were my interview partners:

- **Interviewee #1, Head of PLAY International Kosovo**

PLAY International is an NGO, operating in Kosovo since 2002. They are using sport as a tool for peace-building and reconciliation. Besides, one focus area is sport and gender. They implement physical activities in different localities all over Kosovo in order to promote inclusive sports and mix gender and ethnic communities.<sup>247</sup>

- **Interviewee #2, Head of UN Women Kosovo**

UN Women has been operating in Kosovo since 1999. It is strengthening governmental and civil society capacities and has contributed to the present legal framework about gender equality, domestic violence and women's empowerment. It is working with national stakeholders to increase women's participation in decision making and to promote gender mainstreaming in policies.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> University of Washington, *Key informant interview handbook*, n.d., p.7  
<http://courses.washington.edu/nutr531/HEBD/KIInterviews/KeyInformantInterviewHandbook.pdf>  
(accessed 28 July 2017)

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>248</sup> United Nations Kosovo Team (UNKT), *UN Women* [website], n.d.  
<http://unkt.org/en/un-agencies/un-women/>



- **Interviewee #3, Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist at the Prime Minister’s Office**

Interviewee #3 has long-standing experience in the field of gender equality and women’s issues. She is currently working within the Millenium Challenge Office Kosovo, before that, she was employed as Gender Advisor with EULEX and for the Humanitarian Law Centre of the Red Cross.<sup>249</sup>

- **Interviewee #4, Manager of the Sport Department within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport**

Interviewee #4 currently is the Manager of the Sports Department, which is one department within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. Furthermore, he obtained a degree in physical education. Together with PLAY International, he worked on a National Action Plan including “Sport for All” and a section on women and sports.<sup>250</sup>

- **Interviewee #5, Representative of the Agency of Gender Equality**

The Agency for Gender Equality was established on the basis of the Law on Gender Equality. It operates within the Prime Minister’s Office and is the highest mechanism for Gender Equality in Kosovo. The Agency is responsible for the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality and for developing policies and strategies to achieve gender equality.<sup>251</sup>

- **Interviewee #6, Physical Education Teacher, Different projects like Open Fun Football Schools, Football Coach and Referee**

Interviewee #6 is currently employed as a physical education teacher in a high school focused on sports. Besides, she is a female football coach and referee. She is engaged in various sports projects, for example, Open Fun Football Schools<sup>252</sup>. Furthermore,

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(accessed 2 July 2017)

<sup>249</sup> I3, 8.06.2017, Min. 0:44, 2:04

<sup>250</sup> Source: Author

<sup>251</sup> I5, 12.06.2017, Min. 0:18

<sup>252</sup> Cross Cultural Project Association, *Open Fun Football Schools: Kosovo*, [website], n.d.

<http://ccpa.eu/countries/kosovo/>

(accessed 3 July 2017)

during the Kosovo War, when she was a refugee in Macedonia, she trained young girls to defend themselves against incidents of gender-based violence within the refugee camp. In addition, she wrote her Master Thesis on sport and peace-building in post-conflict societies.<sup>253</sup>

- **Interviewee #7, Care International, Project Manager of Young Men Initiative**

Since 1997, Care has been working with people in Kosovo who were affected by the Balkan conflict. At first, it focused on internally displaced people (IDP's), refugees, humanitarian aid and peace building, with a special focus on the integration of ethnic minorities. Nowadays, CARE Kosovo has a very comprehensive approach with a palette of various projects. One of them is the Young Men Initiative, which was designed to tackle gender stereotypes, social norms and violence.<sup>254</sup>

- **Interviewee #8, Head of Kosovo Women's Network**

Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) started as an informal group of women's groups and organisations all over Kosovo. Nowadays, KWN is an officially registered network that comprises 106 women organisations and advocates for women's rights in Kosovo. KWN focuses on women in politics and decision-making, women's health, domestic violence, trafficking, and women's economic empowerment.<sup>255</sup>

- **Interviewee #9, Women's Rights and Gender Equality Expert, Project Assistant for Act on Gender Equality**

Interviewee #9 obtained a Master's degree in Human Rights and he wrote his thesis on the cultural and religious barriers for Human Rights in Kosovo. Currently, he is working with Peer's Network, an NGO focusing on social change and inclusion. His

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<sup>253</sup> I6, Min. 0:56, 21:57

<sup>254</sup> CARE International Kosovo, *About Care & Project: Current- Young Men Initiative*, [website], 2009 <http://careks.org/projects-edu-current.html> (accessed 5 July 2017)

<sup>255</sup> Kosovo Women Network (KWN), *About Us*, [website], 2017 <http://www.womensnetwork.org/?FaqlID=3> (accessed 5 July 2017)

project is called “Act on Gender Equality”, it aims to foster the inclusion of women in decision making.<sup>256</sup>

- **Interviewee #10 (& 11), Austrian Development Agency: Head of ADA & Project Manager**

For interview #10, I spoke with the Head of ADA and its Project Manager at the same time. One of the priorities of ADA in Kosovo is to empower women. Therefore, various women projects and women NGO’S are supported by ADA. 86 organisations under KWN are supported by ADA to help women to claim their rights and to be economically independent.<sup>257</sup>

### **V.3 Preparation and access to the field**

Accessing the field was not a major obstacle. I already had a good insight into the situation since I worked for PLAY International from September to December 2016. Meanwhile, I could already establish some contacts and meet some potential interview partners. Through further research, I complemented the list with other respondents.

In addition, my supervisor is an expert in gender related topics and worked for EULEX Kosovo, which also helped me to get in contact with relevant people.

Thanks to my contacts, gained through my internship, organising the stay in Kosovo was not that difficult. My own experience in the field, especially as a female football player, was helpful during the conversations. Furthermore, I brought small gifts from Vienna in return for their time.

To be prepared for the interviews, I did background research and created a sheet with relevant information about every key informant with additional questions that I could pose if the other questions were not enough to get sufficient answers.

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<sup>256</sup> I9, 13.06.2017, Min. 0,07, 0,47, 1:25

See also: Peer’s Network (PEN), *Act on Gender Equality*, [website] , 2016  
[http://www.ngo-pen.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/toolkit\\_eng\\_fin.pdf](http://www.ngo-pen.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/toolkit_eng_fin.pdf)  
(accessed 5 July 2017)

<sup>257</sup> Austrian Development Agency (ADA) Kosovo, *Frauen stärken im Kosovo*, [website], n.d.  
<http://www.entwicklung.at/ada/aktuelles/detail/artikel/frauen-staerken-im-kosovo/>  
(accessed 5 July 2017)

#### **V.4 Data collection and data analysis**

The data collection through interviews marked the core of my research. In the end, I managed to have ten interviews with eleven interviewees, which varied from 39:00 to 54:00 minutes. The interviews have been conducted either in the office of the interviewees or in cafés in Pristina. In the case of a technical defect with the recording, I used simultaneously the sheet with the individual information and the interview guide and noted the information given. I started with the transcription of my interviews during my field trip and finished them back in Vienna. For the content analysis following Mayring<sup>258</sup>, I already had my main six categories, which are used throughout the whole paper. I created additional categories for other results, limitations and challenges and women's rights and their link with sports.

I have chosen different colours for all these categories and highlighted the statements at the transcription sheets with different colours. Afterwards, I created an excel sheet with the different categories to see which respondent gave which statement regarding which category. Based on this excel sheet I started to write Chapter VI about the contribution of sports in realizing women's rights in Kosovo.

##### **V.4.1 Secondary data**

*'If the data set in question was collected by the researcher (or a team of which the researcher is a part) for the specific purpose or analysis under consideration, it is primary data. If it was collected by someone else for some other purpose, it is secondary data.'*<sup>259</sup>

I used resources of PLAY International as secondary data for my research. For the chapter on the contribution of sports in realising women's rights in Kosovo, I used the Final Project Evaluation of Sport4Youth from 2015 and the analysis of Sport4Youth end-of-year questionnaire from 2016. I compared the results of the project evaluation and the questionnaire with the results of my own research. The main objectives of the Sport4Youth Project were to build bridges between the communities, youth

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<sup>258</sup> P. Mayring, *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse : Grundlagen und Techniken*, Beltz, Weinheim, 2010

<sup>259</sup> S. Boslaugh, *An introduction to secondary data analysis*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.1  
[http://assets.cambridge.org/97805218/70016/excerpt/9780521870016\\_excerpt.pdf](http://assets.cambridge.org/97805218/70016/excerpt/9780521870016_excerpt.pdf)  
(accessed 28 July 2017)

empowerment and to provide children with values and skills.<sup>260</sup> Within the end-of they year questionnaire the volunteers, involved in the sports activities, have been asked a wide range of questions about the benefits of sports, the establishment of a relationship between and the other gender or communities as well as their skills, developed through these activities.<sup>261</sup> Due to the fact that the Sport4Youth project is more focused on reconciliation, communities and youth empowerment rather than gender and women's empowerment., it was not possible to compare all six fields with the results from the secondary data. PLAY International Kosovo had a second project called "Sport4All" with one focus area on sport and gender. Unfortunately, the project evaluation was not finished before doing my research. But as visible in the following chapter, I have used some results with regard to social contacts, gender and skills, to underpin my results.

## **V.5 Reflection and Remarks**

The overall empirical research process and field trip went quite smoothly. I had expected more obstacles but due to my preparation and my previous experience in Kosovo, I managed to stick to my plan. Nevertheless, June turned out to be a difficult period to visit Kosovo and conduct research. Ramadan and the parliamentary elections emerged as kind of obstacles for doing my research. Due to the pre-election stress, the mayor of Gjakova had to cancel our interview and by reason of Ramadan, PLAY International had a very limited numbers of activities. Therefore, I could not visit the activities and I was not able to hand out my questionnaire to children and teenagers, which I had prepared beforehand and translated in English, Albanian and Serbian.

As mentioned above, the interviews have been conducted in the offices of the interviewees or in cafés. There were minor interferences by colleagues, waiters or background noises. In total, during the field trip and the process of collecting data, no major problems occurred.

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<sup>260</sup> PLAY International, *Final Project Evaluation Sport4Youth 2015*, Pristina, PLAY International, 2016, p.6f

<sup>261</sup> PLAY International Kosovo, *Sport4Youth end-of -year questionnaire analysis 2016*, Pristina, 2016 (unpublished)

## **VI. The contribution of sports in realizing women's rights in Kosovo**

*'Sport is a unique and powerful tool for promoting dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of every member of the human family. It is a driving force for positive social change. It empowers, inspires and unites.'*

- Ban Ki-Moon

The previous chapters, about women's rights in Kosovo, the discrimination against women in Kosovo and their disadvantaged position and the general benefits of sports for women, were based on theoretical research. This chapter will illustrate the results of my empirical research. Again, it will be divided into six main categories. In addition, it includes a specific chapter for women's rights and the link between women's rights and sports as well as other results and a chapter about limitations and challenges.

At the end of every chapter, a brief interpretation of the link to women's rights is given.

### **VI.1 Economy**

As illustrated at the beginning, the right to work is enshrined in various human rights documents. For example, Article 11 of CEDAW identifies

*'The right to work as an inalienable right of all human being'' and 'The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment'.<sup>262</sup>*

Nevertheless, as indicated in Chapter III, several reports demonstrate a big gender disparity within the labour market and the economic situation. Regarding the disadvantaged position of women in economy and employment, my collected data correspond with the information given by these reports. Women in Kosovo are marginalized, and the biggest gaps are visible in the field of economy and employment.<sup>263</sup> The economic situation of women is the basis for other forms of discrimination because it brings women in a vulnerable position.<sup>264</sup> Economic discrimination is predominant and it entails other disadvantages, which are mainly linked to the financial dependence of women.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Bisset, p 64.

<sup>263</sup> I2, 8.06.2017, Min. 2:21

<sup>264</sup> I6, Min. 0:15, 0:56

<sup>265</sup> I8, 13:06:2017, Min. 6:14, 7:26, 7:43, 8:28, 10:02

Although the participation of women in the labour market is slightly increasing, there is a lack of women in leadership and decision making positions.<sup>266</sup> The bad economic situation of women and a high unemployment rate were mentioned by all my interviewees as a huge problem.<sup>267</sup> This disproportionately affects women because men are prioritized when it comes to employment.<sup>268</sup> This also verifies the assumption that all six areas are linked to each other, especially economy and unemployment affect other fields and are a major reason the vulnerable position of women.

Sport obviously cannot eradicate unemployment, but it can contribute to the successful participation of women in the labour market. Sport offers a platform to develop and advance skills that are transferable to other areas of life, e.g. employment and work. All interviewees mentioned multiple times the increase of self-confidence of women who practice sports.

Firstly, the additional self-confidence gained through sports can help women at work for expressing their opinion, to believe in themselves and to become braver and motivated to strive for higher positions.<sup>269</sup> It not only changes how you see yourself but also how others see you.<sup>270</sup> Women are encouraged to apply for leadership and decision-making positions because they are confident about their skills and capability. Secondly, sport teaches discipline and motivation including self-motivation because women have to learn to stand up when they failed, it is about not giving up and about going beyond the personal limits to reach the goals.<sup>271</sup> So it increases perseverance, and all of these things are important to advance your career.

*'I think that females, engaged in sports, they are more prepared for life than others because they used to know that society, what is losing, what is winning and that you are in top and down and how to deal with difficult situations.'*<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> I10, 14.06.2017, Min. 4:08

<sup>267</sup> I3, Min. 30:39, 32:01

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>269</sup> I2, Min. 19:40, 19:50, 19:52, 21:47

<sup>270</sup> I1, 6.06.2017, Min.18:00

<sup>271</sup> I10, Min. 19:44, 20:02

<sup>272</sup> I6, Min. 5:07

The result of the Sport4Youth<sup>273</sup> questionnaire supports this argument. In 2015, 65% of the volunteers of Sport4Youth explained that sport helps children to learn discipline.<sup>274</sup>

Thirdly, all respondents identified teamwork as a very important skill developed within sports. Teamwork includes social skills and the ability to communicate and negotiate with others.<sup>275</sup> Sport makes people more social because it teaches them respect and rules and how to behave within a group and this is useful for the professional life of women. All interviewees stated a positive influence of sport for the professional life of women and girls. They agreed that skills and values acquired through sports are transferable to other areas of life that includes working life. So, there can be a positive contribution of sports to realise women's rights. That includes the right to work and employment. Sport can help women to overcome barriers in participating in the labour market and can encourage women to reach leadership and decision-making positions by developing their skills and personality. Hence, it empowers women because it reduces their financial dependence. In this way, it influences a foundation of human rights in contributing to a self-determined life. Somehow it also impacts the realisation of the right to expression because it makes women more self-confident to express their opinions and this is important for assertiveness at work. In addition, it influences the right to work because it increased the chances of women to be employed. One of the respondents described it as follows:

*'I don't know when you practice sports you... again, self-confidence for me is the most important when I go and I do a boxing match. First when I come back to office, I feel like am super women. I am happy with my colleagues ... it makes me more self-confident in saying what I think., you overcome your own limits,. I think it really makes you speak. You feel not like nobody. You are someone.'*<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Sport4Youth is the main project of PLAY International Kosovo. It aimed to create a multi-ethnic network where volunteers are trained to implement inclusive sport activities in their localities.

<sup>274</sup> PLAY International, 2016, p.24

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>276</sup> II, Min. 38:50, 39:42



## VI.2 Education

The first part of the thesis illustrated the equal right to education, which is for example enshrined in CEDAW Article 10, ADL Article 4 or LGE Article 6. The right to education is a fundamental human right and a basis for equal opportunities in various areas. Therefore, Article 10 of CEDAW calls upon states

*‘to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women.’<sup>277</sup>*

Chapter III discusses the poor quality of education in general. The gender disparity in the education sector is constantly decreasing. Nevertheless, the higher the level of education, the higher the gender gap. Women have less access to facilities that expand their knowledge and skills through vocational training and further education opportunities. Particularly, in rural areas, the priority within education and training is still given to men.

Data collected through my research is reflecting this. The answers of my respondents highlight the lack of quality in the education sector and the out-dated curricula, which are shaped by traditional gender norms.<sup>278</sup> The results of the conversations about education and sports are that sport can contribute to a better quality of education because it is a tool for informal education, it can be used as a platform to provide information.<sup>279</sup> In general, it can be said that sport includes a number of wide-reaching educative aspects. Sport teaches values of respect, teamwork, communication and social behaviour.<sup>280</sup> Sport is important, in particular, for children as it influences their overall physical and mental development.<sup>281</sup> Children, who do sports learn things for their life, for example how to deal with situations.<sup>282</sup> In addition, games can stimulate their skills for finding solutions.<sup>283</sup> *‘I think sport can teach you a lot of things. It’s definitely a good platform.’*

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<sup>277</sup> Bisset, p 64

<sup>278</sup> I7, 13.06.2017, Min. 29:43, 31:18, 31:19

<sup>279</sup> I9, Min 33:12, 33:49

<sup>280</sup> I2, Min.10:30

<sup>281</sup> I6, Min.5:33, 11,:12

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>284</sup> This opinion is confirmed by the Final Project Evaluation of Sport4Youth where 75% of the interviewed volunteers indicated that such sports projects are useful for children because they expand their knowledge and skills.<sup>285</sup>

Furthermore, physical activity helps to concentrate and find balance.<sup>286</sup> Thus, physical activity can improve the school performance of children<sup>287</sup> but it is important to have the right balance between time dedicated to sports and time dedicated to studying for different school subjects.<sup>288</sup>

The right to education is legally guaranteed without any discrimination. Unfortunately, women and girls in Kosovo are still to some extent disadvantaged when it comes to education and especially training. Sport can help to address that problem because it as an alternative way of education and offers a platform for informal education. It can provide women and girls with knowledge and skills that can be of importance for their further development. Therefore, it indirectly contributes to the right to education of women and girls.

### **VI.3 Health**

The right to health includes various factors, reaching from access to health services to an appropriate environment where human beings can develop without being exposed to health impairing conditions.<sup>289</sup> Special care and assistance should be granted to mothers and children.<sup>290</sup> Article 10 and Article 12 of CEDAW state equal access to health care and stresses the importance of access to information about health and well-being.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> I9, Min. 33:12

<sup>285</sup> PLAY International Kosovo, 2016 (a), p.24

<sup>286</sup> I1, Min. 43:52, 44:10

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>288</sup> I6, Min. 8:09, 9:01

<sup>289</sup> OHCHR, *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, 1998, p.7

[http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf)  
(accessed 1 July 2017)

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>291</sup> Bisset, p. 64f

As mentioned in Chapter III, the health system in Kosovo is insufficient and does not offer adequate health services. Due to maternal and reproductive health women are differently affected by these shortcomings.

Literature, used for Chapter IV indicates different health aspects that can be influenced by physical activity. It affects both physical and mental health. There is no doubt that sport can contribute to the health of women. Similar results were revealed by my collected data.

Interviewees mentioned the inadequate health services and the disproportionate effect for women because of reproductive health and maternal health.<sup>292</sup> Women are not only disadvantaged because of their special needs but also because of their financial situation. Women have less financial resources, and this prevents them from accessing proper health services. This again shows that the economic situation is linked to other areas. One respondent mentioned that the government is investing in health insurance, but this is a way of tackling the consequences instead of fighting the root causes of health issues.<sup>293</sup> He also said

*‘Sport would tackle the roots. Health insurance is important if you have a lot of sick people but it is even more important to prevent... it affects everything when you have a healthy society.’<sup>294</sup>*

This implies that regular physical activity would improve the health state of the whole society. The physical health benefits of sports have not been mentioned in great detail because the respondents said that it is obvious that sport has a great impact on physical health and this is well known. But for example it was said that sport lowers the risk of several diseases, including obesity, osteoporosis and depression, it is very wide reaching.<sup>295</sup> In general, women in Kosovo are less active than men.<sup>296</sup> Therefore, it is important to encourage them to get active to improve their overall health status.

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<sup>292</sup> I3, Min. 37:12

See also: I6, I7, I9

<sup>293</sup> I9, Min. 35:06, 36:57, 37:28

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., Min. 37:28

<sup>295</sup> I3, Min. 39:17, 40:00, 41:01

See also: I10, Min. 23:51, 25:01

<sup>296</sup> I7, Min. 19:51

Furthermore, women's health is crucial for the health of their infants and influences the whole society.<sup>297</sup> One respondent said that *'women are keeper of healthy families.'*<sup>298</sup> Besides the benefits of sports for physical health, all respondents mentioned the benefits of sports for mental health.<sup>299</sup> Regular physical activity has wide ranging effects on women's health. Sport increases women's self-esteem, especially self-confidence .<sup>300</sup> One interview partner said:

*'After Karate I felt like the most powerful girl in Kosovo. I was so full of assurance and self-confidence that I am not afraid of anyone.'*<sup>301</sup>

Another respondent gave a similar answer and mentioned that after boxing she feels like a super woman.<sup>302</sup> Additionally, sport is a good method for stress-relief, it helps to relax, to forget problems and be happy and balanced.<sup>303</sup> As stated in Chapter IV, women are three times more likely to suffer from depression at the same time it has been found out that physical activity is as helpful as anti-depressants. That can be helpful for women in Kosovo, who still have to cope with the cruel incidents, which happened during and after the Kosovo War. One interviewee expressed it as follows:

*'It will be good for your body but even more important for your mental health. .for feeling that you have energy to do something, you feel good, healthy and fit. I feel healthy then and relaxed . In that sense it's even better for your mind. It definitely increases your self-confidence, I am also sure it will build some strength , you know you can feel more strong physically and mental.'*<sup>304</sup>

Furthermore, sport can be used as a platform to gather people and provide information about health related issues. There is a particular need to raise awareness about sensitive topics like contraception, family planning or sexually transmitted diseases. Sex education is skipped at school because it is still seen as a taboo topic and this lack of

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<sup>297</sup> I6, Min. 3:16, 14:45

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., Min. 3:16,

<sup>299</sup> I7, Min. 21:47

See also: I1, 39:42; I2,19:09; I3,40:00; I4,6:30; I5, 27:01; I6, 17:00; I8,40:25; I9,36:00; I10, 25:01

<sup>300</sup> I3, Min. 41:01

See also: I1, 39:42; I2, 5:43; I7, 22:56; I8,31:22; I9, 36:00;

<sup>301</sup> I8, Min. 31:04

<sup>302</sup> I1, Min. 38:50

<sup>303</sup> I6, Min. 17:00

See also: I1,18:00; I2,19:34; I3,41:01; I5, 27:01; I7,21:47; I8,30:56; I9

<sup>304</sup> I7, Min. 21:47, 22:56

knowledge fosters cases of early or unwanted pregnancy and sex related diseases.<sup>305</sup> The better informed and the less taboo, the less the risk to experience these problems.<sup>306</sup> Sport can offer a supportive environment to discuss these sensitive topics and provide information on taboo topics because it is easier to gather people with the pretence of doing sports together.<sup>307</sup> One interviewee named the example of a collision, called K10. This organisation is dealing with reproductive rights and organised a bicycle tour to raise money and to start debates and awareness-raising about sexual reproductive rights.<sup>308</sup>

To sum it up, sport can influence physical health positively by preventing diseases while staying fit and vital. It has a significant impact on mental health because it increases women's self-esteem, self-confidence and it is crucial for stress relief and being balanced and relaxed. In addition, it can be used as a platform to gather people and provide information and start debating about sensitive topics. That can contribute to the realisation of the right to health by keeping people healthy. The use of sport for awareness raising and to start debating on taboo topics, in a wider sense can be seen as a contributing factor to realise the right to information in the sense of being informed and having the access to important information, which affects their own lives.

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<sup>305</sup> I7, Min. 36:55, 37:58

See also: I9, 4:40, 27:08

<sup>306</sup> I7, 37:58

<sup>307</sup> I8, 37:21

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.,

#### **VI.4 Gender Stereotypes and Social Exclusion**

Gender stereotypes and social norms are existent all over the world. They often limit women's development and undermine their rights. CEDAW with its Article 5 mentions the importance of breaking gender stereotypes.

*'States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:*

*(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;'<sup>309</sup>*

Due to gender stereotypes and social norms, women are often reduced to the private sphere. Thus, they are disadvantaged when it comes to social inclusion and establishing social contacts.

Kosovo's society is still shaped by gender stereotypes and traditional social norms. This is not only the result of the literature review but also of my empirical research. Traditional social norms and gender stereotypes were mentioned comparatively often as the main barriers for women. One respondent declared gender roles and the patriarchal society in Kosovo as the main problem for women. Also the majority of the other respondents mentioned social norms as a big obstacle for women.<sup>310</sup> Within society, women are seen as part of a family rather than individuals and their main purpose are to find a husband and give birth.<sup>311</sup> Social exclusion is stated as another disadvantage for women.<sup>312</sup> Due to social norms, women are mainly responsible for childcare and housework, additionally, the majority of women are unemployed.<sup>313</sup> Women and girls lack opportunities to leave their house and socialise without their family structure; they lack space to participate in the public community sphere.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Bisset, p.63

<sup>310</sup> I3, Min. 6:27, 7:50 , 8:14

See also: I2, 2:47; I5, 3:50; I7, 3:50; I8, 8:28,10:02; I9, 8:37; I10, 8:38;

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>312</sup> I2, Min. 2:47

<sup>313</sup> I3, Min. 6:27, 7:50

See also: I5, 7:29; I10, 2:47,, 9:58;

<sup>314</sup> I9, Min. 40:33

See also: I8, 23:28; I9, 40:33; I10, 2:47, 14:42;

Therefore, social norms and gender stereotypes entail disadvantages for women. Moreover, it hampers their participation as equal members in public and social life.

Sport can help to overcome these disadvantages on different levels.

Firstly, sport itself can tackle gender stereotypes. Sport, especially in areas like Kosovo, is still male dominated. In particular, intensive contact sports like football, boxing, judo, karate, etc. are seen as inappropriate for women.<sup>315</sup> One of the interviewees mentioned that she does boxing and people tell her that boxing is nothing for girls; it is too violent and not feminine.<sup>316</sup> That also reflects the low number of women in her boxing club.<sup>317</sup> But if women manage to get engaged in sports, in particular, in such male dominated sports, this will make a change. The best example is Majlinda Kelmendi, a judoka, who won in 2016 the first Olympic Medal for Kosovo. Regardless of being a woman, she became kind of a national hero in Kosovo; everyone is proud of her because she represents Kosovo outside of Kosovo.<sup>318</sup> One respondent told me that Majlinda brightened the face of Kosovo<sup>319</sup>. Another interviewee described it as follows:

*‘Majlinda Kelmendi in Judo. for me I am just happy that she gave us a slap in the face as a wake up call. I think in a way she did, I think her achievements is respected by all men and women. So I think sometimes it is good to have these people, who can have an impact on society. She is making Kosovo proud, everyone likes that. She is a good person in sports, it is possible for her to affect, influence others. I heard girls are entering the sport because they have Majlinda as a role model. Majlinda Kelmendi, she changed the mind-set of whole Kosovo. Imagine if we have a group...sport has a big impact in breaking gender stereotypes.’<sup>320</sup>*

Thus, women who start male dominated sports, break stereotypes because they prove people wrong in their assumptions that women are not made for these kinds of sport. They demonstrate their abilities and skills and succeed in reaching their athletic goals.

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<sup>315</sup> I1, Min. 11:16, 11:42, 12:07

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>318</sup> I3, Min. 8:56, 10:05

See also: I1, 13:17; I6, 28:30,29:17,30:16; I7, 10:04,11:34; I8, 15:58,16:33,17:14; I9, 20:42, 21:19, 22:10,22:43; I10, 22:27,23:22

<sup>319</sup> I10, Min.22:27

<sup>320</sup> I7, Min. 10:04, 11:34, 13:30, 56:00

Other examples are Uta Ibrahim and Arinet Mula, who climbed the Mount Everest.<sup>321</sup> They send out a signal for all women and men in Kosovo that women are strong and capable of achieving exceptional accomplishments.

*‘Uta, Arineta, Maijlinda, everyone is proud of them and I think they have contributed to improving the status of women in general. It increases the level of respect for women's abilities. They can be a role model for girls and boys, men and women.’<sup>322</sup>*

Secondly, besides breaking gender stereotypes, successful women can serve as roles models. Young boys and girls look up to different kind of people, including athletes. Recently, Kosovo has got more of these female role models like Majlinda. My interview partners mentioned that young girls and also boys strive to become like Majlinda and young girls start to be engaged in sports because of her.<sup>323</sup> So she managed to encourage young girls to be involved in sports and also that the sport of judo is becoming more common for girls and women. Also, an interviewee told me about her experience when she started to do Karate, people were criticising her and her family, it was considered as a shame for the whole family that she, as a girl, is engaged in Karate but she did not care and continued.<sup>324</sup>

*‘I practiced karate and it is nothing for girls, but if you go there as a girl and do it, it changes something. It directly and indirectly tackles gender stereotypes.’<sup>325</sup>*

Another interviewee mentioned that sport is so effective in breaking gender stereotypes because you break stereotypes with something that you love.<sup>326</sup> Within my respondents, there was no doubt that sport can be a very helpful tool to change the patriarchal society in Kosovo. The representative of CARE International told me the following story about organising a football tournament for girls.

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<sup>321</sup> I8, Min. 15:58

See also: I9, 22:43; I10, 23:22;

<sup>322</sup> I10, Min. 23:22

<sup>323</sup> I6, Min. 30:16

<sup>324</sup> I8, Min.29:14

<sup>325</sup> I8, Min. 45:47

<sup>326</sup> I7, Min. 50:52



### **Football tournament for girls<sup>327</sup>:**

The representative of Care International told me about the organisation of a football tournament for girls. Within the framework of the Young Men Initiative, where they try to tackle gender stereotypes, they asked adolescents what is needed, what they would like to have and their answer was a football tournament for girls because nobody offers that. So they organised a football tournament for girls, they did not know if there would be enough interest but instead of having 5 teams, they ended up with 12 teams and for most of the girls it was the first time to play football because usually it is seen as a thing for boys and men. This tournament changed a lot, girls got the opportunity to be active and have fun while the boys became their cheerleaders. It changed the way boys see the girls and even the girls who were interviewed afterwards said that their friends see them differently now and now they play football together. Already this small project changed their opinion. In his opinion, forbidding girls to do any kind of sports is killing their creativity and in some way also their freedom of expression.

In 2015, the Final Evaluation of Sport4Youth also indicated that sport is helpful to bring girls and boys together and to change their perceptions towards each other. 86% of the volunteers agreed that thanks to the project boys and girls were encouraged to play together in the future.<sup>328</sup> Moreover, 72% changed of the children, engaged in the activities, changed their opinion about the abilities of the opposite sex.<sup>329</sup> Also, the Sport4Youth end-of-year questionnaire for the volunteers indicated a very positive perception of boys and girls' participation in sports. 40 volunteers stated that boys and girls can participate together and in the same way in sport activities while only three people said it is better if they are separated and four volunteers indicated that it depends on the sport activity.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> I7, Min. 14:46, 17:02

<sup>328</sup> PLAY International Kosovo, 2016a, p.25

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>330</sup> PLAY International Kosovo, 2016b

Furthermore, sport cannot only break stereotypes and change social norms but it can also foster social inclusion of women and girls. Due to social norms and gender roles, women are more present in the private sphere. They do not leave their common environment frequently.<sup>331</sup> Sport can offer them a platform to leave their usual environment, come in contact with others and socialise.<sup>332</sup> Sport offers opportunities to establish and broaden your social network. Sport influences the future of women and girls because through meeting new people it expands their opportunities and increases their mobility.<sup>333</sup> The Head of PLAY International Kosovo mentioned that most of the girls, who take part in their activities, had not left their villages before.<sup>334</sup> That is one of the reasons why they organise joint events with children from different localities.<sup>335</sup> How sport can change the opportunities and mobility of women was also outlined by the Head of the Kosovo Women's Network. She told me a story about a volleyball project from her previous NGO.

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<sup>331</sup> I2, Min. 3:26

<sup>332</sup> I2, Min. 3.26,4:19,5:22

See also: I1, 21:16; I3, 25:50, 27:06; I4, 6:30; I5, 21:57,21.46; I7, 14:15, 14:46; I8, 37:15,37:27; I9, 19:22, 19:36; I10, 14:42, 17:07

<sup>333</sup> I6, 21:57, 21.46

See also: I1, 26:20, 27:59, 28:30

<sup>334</sup> I1, Min. 26:20, 27:59, 28:30

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.,

### **Volleyball Teams in the region of Has<sup>336</sup>**

The Head of Kosovo Women's Network with her previous organisation started a project in the Has region. This region, close to the Albanian boarder, was considered as very conservative and less developed. There were no proper roads, no schools, nothing. Then the NGO helped to open schools, to establish a library and to create volleyball teams for women and girls in every village. They organised a tournament with all teams annually. The establishment of these volleyball teams brought so much development in these places, it changed a lot. Sport, culture and education were the key to development. She told me that it changed everything, later everyone, even men, fathers, mothers, everyone was coming to watch the volleyball games. Today the girls from Has are attending university; sport affected their lives in various ways.

Thirdly, establishing contacts increases the social network of women and girls and that can help to build trust and make new friends. As stated previously, the Kosovo society is still rather conservative and there are a lot of social taboos and sensitive topics, which people should not talk about. Girls often do not have people outside their family to whom they can talk about their problems.<sup>337</sup> Being engaged in a sport club, team or other physical activity can help these girls to talk about their problems with peers, it stimulates the exchange of experiences among young girls and they can give advises to each other.<sup>338</sup> Furthermore, sport offers them some space, a sense of more freedom and possibilities to make their own decision. One of the representatives of ADA described it as follows:

*'Daughters are often kept more at home within the family. They have less freedom and opportunities but through sports I felt more free, I had the opportunity to exercise. Sport can be an opportunity for them to get out from the private sphere, recognising their own talents.'*<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> I8, Min. 13:33, 14:54

<sup>337</sup> I1, Min. 28:52

<sup>338</sup> I2, Min. 6:16, 7:10, 9:03, 10:30

See also: I3, 25:50, 27:06; I4, 7:55; I6, 33:34, 34:30, 34:49; I8, 37:15,37:27,38:18;

<sup>339</sup> I10, Min. 14:42, 17:07

To sum it up, sport can have a great impact when we speak about gender stereotypes, social norms and inclusion. Sport itself can break gender stereotypes when women and girls enter male dominated sports and demonstrate their abilities. Sport can offer a platform for women and girls to establish new contacts, broaden their network, and increase their mobility and opportunities. In addition, it offers women and girls a space to be more independent and free and to exchange experiences and give advice to each other. Thus, sport tackles gender stereotypes and social norms, which are barriers to the enjoyment of women's rights. It counteracts discrimination against women and helps them to overcome their disadvantaged position while contributing to the realisation of the freedom of expression and the freedom to make their own decisions. Furthermore, it gives them the opportunity to realise their right to participate in recreational activities and sports.<sup>340</sup>

## **VI.5 Violence against women**

Violence against women is one of the major human rights violations faced by women worldwide. It is estimated that globally one out of three women have experienced physical or/and sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>341</sup> Domestic violence is the most common form of violence experienced by women.<sup>342</sup> Legally seen, violence against women and domestic violence is addressed directly and indirectly by different legal documents. To be free from violence has been recognised as a women's fundamental human right.<sup>343</sup> As stated in Chapter II, violence against women is also enshrined in legal documents, applicable in Kosovo. For example, CEDAW and LGE, additionally the Kosovo Assembly adopted a Law on

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<sup>340</sup> Bisset, p.65

<sup>341</sup> WHO, *Violence against women: Intimate partner and sexual violence against women*, [website], 2016 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/> (accessed 3 July 2017)

<sup>342</sup> UN, *Unite to end violence against women*, 2008, p.1 <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/pdf/VAW.pdf> (accessed 3 July 2017)

<sup>343</sup> WHO, *Understanding and addressing violence against women: Overview*, 2012, p.1 [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77433/1/WHO\\_RHR\\_12.35\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77433/1/WHO_RHR_12.35_eng.pdf?ua=1) (accessed 3 July 2017)

Protection against Domestic Violence<sup>344</sup>. Nevertheless, violence against women, in particular, domestic violence, is a major problem for women in Kosovo. As illustrated in Chapter III, domestic violence is a behaviour deeply entrenched in Kosovo's patriarchal society. 68% of women have become victims of domestic violence at least once in their life time, the dark figure is probably even higher because talking about domestic violence is a taboo and appears to shame the whole family.<sup>345</sup> My interviewees also mentioned domestic violence as a major issue for women in Kosovo.<sup>346</sup> The problem of domestic violence is strongly linked to the economic situation of women and their dependence on their husbands; it increases their risk of becoming victims of domestic violence.<sup>347</sup> That again proves the hypothesis that all these areas, where women are discriminated against are linked to each other.

Literature presented in Chapter IV revealed that sport could help to prevent cases of violence against women because it makes women stronger physically and mentally. Furthermore, it creates safe spaces for victims of violence and can help them to overcome their trauma. My respondents also mentioned these beneficial aspects of sports related to domestic violence.

Firstly, my respondents said that sport empowers women, it increases their self-confidence, and that makes them less vulnerable to become victims of violence.<sup>348</sup> Consequently, sport can provide women and girls with self-defence skills; they become stronger physically and mentally.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2010

<sup>345</sup> N. Farnsworth et al, p.38

<sup>346</sup> I2, Min. 31:25, 31:27, 31:34

See also: I3, 19:11, 19:23; I5, 12:23; I6, 19:47; I7, 24:17, 26:17; I8, 31:22, 31:24, 31:43; I9, 10:11, 10:54; I10, 6:49;

<sup>347</sup> I10, Min. 6:49, 8:24, 12:35

See also: I8, 7:26, 7:43;

<sup>348</sup> I2, Min. 32:05, 32:09

See also: I4, 3:21, 3:34, 4:49; I6, 19:47; I7, 24:17; I8, 31:22; I9, 40:53;

<sup>349</sup> I2, Min. 32:09

See also: I1, 50:09; I3, 24:14; I4, 4:49; I6, 19:47, 24:17, 24:31, I8, 31:22, 31:24, 31:43; I9, 40:53;

Thirdly, sport can have a therapeutic effect for women and girls, who became victims of violence. It can be of high relevance for the healing and re-socialisation process of women.<sup>350</sup> The Head of ADA Kosovo described it as follows:

*‘Sport has a healing component in many different ways for women with traumata. It brings you back in the middle of life. You break out of your habits, surroundings, isolations, you start to be active. It mobilises themselves, they come in touch with others and this supports the re-socialisation process.’<sup>351</sup>*

To sum it up, sport can be linked to domestic violence in at least three different ways. It increases women’s self-confidence and helps them to defend themselves. It makes them stronger physically and mentally. Furthermore, it has a therapeutic effect and can foster the re-socialisation process of victims of violence. Hence sport can contribute to the realisation of the right to bodily integrity and manifests the right to be free from violence. In some cases, it can also ensure the right to life while preventing that women or girls die from cases of gender-based violence, as has happened with Diana Kastrati or Zejnepe Bytyqi, whose fate have been mentioned above in Chapter III.5.

## **VI.6 Marriage**

Marriage is not only regulated in national laws but also by international laws and the human rights framework. For example CEDAW, Article 16 calls upon states to tackle discrimination against women in all matters of marriage and to ensure equality of men and women, including the right to enter into marriage and to choose their spouse freely.<sup>352</sup> Early marriage, which legally means that children under 18 are going to marry, is forbidden within the national framework in Kosovo<sup>353</sup> and it is internationally null and void.<sup>354</sup> The result from my literature review, that early marriage is not really common in Kosovo, except some cases within ethnic minorities, has been confirmed by the

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<sup>350</sup> I1, Min.19:26, 30:36

See also: I4, 3:29; I5, 15:54;

<sup>351</sup> I10, Min. 40:53

<sup>352</sup> Bisset, p.66f

<sup>353</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, 2004a, p.4

[http://www.kuvendiskosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2004\\_32\\_en.pdf](http://www.kuvendiskosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2004_32_en.pdf)  
(accessed 4 July 2017)

<sup>354</sup> Bisset, p.66f

answers from my interview partners.<sup>355</sup> Nevertheless, marriage at a young age and marriage itself with all its responsibilities and social expectations has been identified as a major problem and barrier for women.<sup>356</sup> There are various reasons why in Kosovo it is preferable to marry at a young age.

Firstly, girls are often seen as a financial burden for their family because they contribute less to the family income than boys. Therefore, families consider it somehow as insurance to marry their daughters because then they will move to the house of their husband and his family.<sup>357</sup> This financial aspect is also responsible for the fact that families often marry their daughters to men living in the diaspora because they hope that they will send money back to them in Kosovo.<sup>358</sup> Related to this financial aspect, is the lack of opportunities for women. Women and girls, especially in rural areas, do not see any perspectives for their life except getting married and having children.<sup>359</sup>

Moreover, girls do not only marry because of a lack of opportunities, but also marriage can limit their opportunities. It is very common that women discontinue their education, leisure time activities or regular social contacts without their family network.<sup>360</sup> Marriage is different for women and men; they are not equal within marriage. Women give up a large part of their freedom and are limited in making decisions about their own life.<sup>361</sup> That is reflected by the following story, told by one of the interviewees.

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<sup>355</sup> I1, Min. 4:20

See also: I5, 27:58; 28:52; I7, 34:14; I9, 12:49, I10, 28:37;

<sup>356</sup> I9, Min. 12:47

See also: I1, 4:20, 4:48, 6:29; I2, 27:00, 27:34; I6, 31:38, 31:59; I7, 34:14, 34:49, 35:29, 35:38; I8, 12:07; I10, 35:15;

<sup>357</sup> I8, Min. 34:39, 36:09

See also:

<sup>358</sup> I10, Min. 35:15

<sup>359</sup> I2, Min. 27:00, 27:34, 27:43, 28:17, 28:40

See also: I1, 4:20; I8, 12:07, 34:39;

<sup>360</sup> I9, Min. 12:47

See also: I1, 4:20, 4:48, 33:43; I6, 31:38, 31:59; I7, 2:22, 3:50; I10, 28:37;

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.,

### **Young women and marriage as a barrier to their own development**<sup>362</sup>

One respondent told me that the case of his niece is representative of a lot of girls and young women in Kosovo, especially outside of Pristina. He told me that approach was very common in his region. His niece turned 18 and she is immediately going to be married. He wanted to interfere and said it was too early but his aunt said she was 18 and that was not too early. Then he asked about her studies, which she wanted to start after high school, and in general about her own life. His aunt replied that she did not need to study; it was better to have this security. All the time, people mention that marriage means security but in reality it increases the dependence of women and girls. He said that girls should have their own life, their own education, job and opportunities and that 18 is too young to get married and will stop you from reaching your own goals. Pristina is relatively progressive in these kinds of things but the rest is quite old-fashioned and they see it as the main priority for girls when they finished school to find a potential husband.

This approach is also related to social norms and expectations. Women face a lot of pressure to get married, so they start trying to find a potential husband and get married early because they fear they might be left over.<sup>363</sup> At least the pressure to get married has decreased a bit, and the age of female spouses has increased within the last few years.<sup>364</sup> The project manager of the Young Men Initiative summarised the problem as follows:

*‘But how society sees marriage is a problem because people, once you get married, everything should stop, that's the wrong way. That is true especially for women, not so much for men. Basically their career is put to an end now, for them it's a new journey, you know, that's how they see it or how they are pushed .. into these roles. It's fine when they get married as long as they don't see marriage as being blocked. ... cut off from everything else because if you are married happily then it's also good for your health and everything but it also*

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<sup>362</sup> I9, Min. 12:47

<sup>363</sup> I10, 30:28, 31:3, 31:10, 32:20, 32:36

See also: I2, 17:51, 18:23,

<sup>364</sup> I10, Min. 30:28



*should bring you happiness, joy and should you to become who you are as a person, as an individual, in your career and education.*<sup>365</sup>

Through literature review, the following links between marriage and sport could be identified. Sport can be a safe space for women and girls, build social contacts and encourage each other to make use of their right to choose the right time to become married and choose their spouse. Similar but also divergent arguments have been given during the interview conversations. The linking factors between sports and marriage will be discussed in the following part.

It was said that sport can help to delay marriage and, related to that, help to prevent early pregnancy.<sup>366</sup> It helps women to set their own goals and to reach them, which influences their own development and freedom. As mentioned various times, sport increases women's self-esteem and self-confidence, so it can help women to become more equal within marriage, to make their own decisions and stand up for their rights.<sup>367</sup> Furthermore, this self-confidence can help women to deal with social pressure and to stop rushing to get married.<sup>368</sup> Being engaged in a team can also contribute to lower the social pressure of getting married early because you are together with peers, who are similar to you and they will influence each other in their decisions about marriage and family planning.<sup>369</sup>

Thus, sport can help women to realise their own goals, it supports their personal development and their freedom, which includes their freedom of expression, and especially their freedom to make their own decisions, both about and within marriage, and to have a self-determined life. Moreover, it influences their right to marry on free will and to choose their future husband by themselves.

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<sup>365</sup> I7, 34:49 / 35:29 35:38

<sup>366</sup> I1, Min. 50:11

See also: I2, 17:51, 18:23; I6, 31:59, 32:31; I8, 34:39, 36:09;

<sup>367</sup> I6, 31:38, 31:59, 32:31, 33:00

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.,

See also: I2, 17:51, 18:23; I1, 50:11

## VI.7 Women's rights

Women's rights are fundamental human rights, which entitle every woman and girls to rights like the right to live free from violence, slavery, discrimination, to be educated, to own property, to vote, to be healthy and to earn fair and equal wages<sup>370</sup> Women's rights have been established as a specific category of human rights for women because women still are more vulnerable to become victims of human rights violations<sup>371</sup>. Women's rights legislation should grant them special rights and protection. The well-known quote '*Women's Rights are Human Rights*' was also used by my respondents when I asked them about women's rights.<sup>372</sup> Through the gathered data, it was possible to identify three main obstacles relating to women's rights in Kosovo.

Firstly, there is generally a lack of knowledge about human and women's rights, which is also related to the lack of education about civil, political and human rights at school.<sup>373</sup>

Secondly, social norms and the patriarchal society in Kosovo disregard women's rights, they constitute a barrier to the enjoyment of women's rights.<sup>374</sup> One respondent highlighted that family and social norms prevent women from claiming their rights.<sup>375</sup>

*'They know they have a right on inheritance but they don't take their right. They know that they have to report domestic violence but they don't report it all the time.'*<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Global Fund for Women, *Women's Human Rights*, [website], n.d.  
<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/womens-human-rights/#.WVuCfNPYjjA>  
(accessed 4 July 2017)

<sup>371</sup> Amnesty International UK, *Seven reasons we still need to fight for women's human rights*, [website], 2016  
<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/yes-minister-it-human-rights-issue/seven-reasons-we-still-need-fight-womens-human-rights>  
(accessed 4 July 2017)

<sup>372</sup> I10, Min. 36:46

<sup>373</sup> I2, Min. 28:40, 30:29

See also: I1, 33:45; I3, 42:00; I7, 46:49;

<sup>374</sup> I5, Min. 30:00, 30:04, 31:39

See also: I1, 45:17; I3, 30:29; I3, 42:00; I7, 42:18; I7, 46:49, 46:54, 47:57; I10, 6:49

<sup>375</sup> I5, Min. 30:04

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.,

Another interviewee stated that society limits women's right to have right because women's rights violations are tolerated and become a social norm.<sup>377</sup>

My interview partners named the following rights as the main women's rights:

Right to health, right to equal opportunities and equal treatment, non- discrimination, right to participate in public, social and community life, the right to inheritance and property, right to be free from violence, right to employment, right to choose your own profession, right to education; the right to be free and make your own decisions, the right to a self-determined life, the right to choose your spouse, right to freedom of movement, right to mobility, freedom of expression, right to personal security, right to bodily integrity, freedom of speech,<sup>378</sup> All of the respondents could see a link between some of these rights and sports and they agreed that sport can contribute to the realization of these rights.<sup>379</sup> Through the conversations with my ten interview partners various ways how sport can influence women's rights could be determined.

There is no doubt that while doing sports you enjoy your right to participate in recreational activities and sports. In addition, as explained in more detail in the previous chapters, sport influences various fields and, for example, contributes to the right to health or the right to mobility.<sup>380</sup>

Furthermore, sport can compensate the lack of information about women's rights. It can offer a platform to raise awareness about women's rights.<sup>381</sup>

Sport can foster the implementation of women's rights. It tackles barriers to the enjoyment of women's rights. For example, sport is helpful in breaking gender stereotypes and change social norms and the mentality of people.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> I7, Min. 46:49, 46:54

<sup>378</sup> I7, Min. 42:18, 42:35, 43:11, 43:22, 45:37

See also: I1, 46:42, 47:27, 47:52; I2, 32:37, 32:59, 33:16, 33:22; I3, 44:51, 45:16, 45:31; I6, 44:05, 47:03, 47:47, 48:53; I8, 40:38, 41:31, 42:34; I9, 9 male, 47:24, 48:25, 48:31, 49:32, 49:33, 49:57; I10 ,36:46, 37:00, 37:07, 37:11

<sup>379</sup> I8, Min. 38:55, 40:38, 41:31, 42:34

See also: I1, 46:42, 47:27, 47:52; I2, 33:16, 33:22; I4, 8:30, 8:51; I5 30:00, 30:04, 31:39, 36:12; I6, 48:53; I7, 49:43, 49:55, 50:52, I8, 38:55; I9 , 50:26, 51:13, 51:14, 51:36, 52:40; I10, 42:39, 43:39;

<sup>380</sup> I5, Min. 31:39

<sup>381</sup> I7, Min. 49:43, 49:55

See also: I10, 42:39

Beyond that, sport increases the self-esteem and self-confidence of women, they feel empowered, and it makes them stronger mentally and physically. Thus, it helps women to overcome their disadvantaged and passive role; it turns them into active citizens, who can stand up and claim their rights.<sup>383</sup> Interviewee 7 said that sport makes you a fighter and that:

*'... prepares you to fight for your rights, even that you are going to be judged by others. It makes you stronger. You keep going because you believe in it and that has a lot to do with self-confidence.'*<sup>384</sup>

To sum it up, I could not describe it better than one respondent with the following statement:

*'I think sport can influence women's rights in general because you start to develop your rights when you work on yourself. And today when we spoke about sport and self-confidence, everything when you talk about them. Yes, I think in this way you can reach your human rights. Sport can be about education, people, socialising, diversity and understanding each person in their way. Sport can help you to be different. ... to learn to have your own life and to do what you want, this is a human right and sport can help to achieve this. If you do sports, you are more completed in yourself.'*<sup>385</sup>

## **VI.8 Other results**

This chapter will summarise statements given by the interviewees, which do not fit in any other category. Most of them are not highly relevant to answer my research question. Nevertheless, these remarks are interesting to understand the overall situation. The most often stated remark was that Pristina is not representative of the rest of Kosovo, because it is very progressive compared to the rest of Kosovo. Most of all, the difference between Pristina and smaller villages is significant.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> I9, Min 50:26, 51:13, 51:14, 51:36, 52:40, I10, 6:49

See also: I3, 42:00; I5, 36:12;

<sup>383</sup> I7, 49:43, 49:55; 50:52

See also: I8, 38:55; I10, 1:20; 43:39

<sup>384</sup> I7, Min. 50:52

<sup>385</sup> I6, 44:05, 47:03, 47:47, 48:53

<sup>386</sup> I1, Min. 2:30, 5:38, 52:28

See also: I3, 10:05; I9, 12:47; I10, 4:08,32:54

As mentioned in Chapter III, all these fields are related to each other. If sport influences one of them, it may also have a direct impact on other areas.<sup>387</sup>

Another aspect, which was mentioned repeatedly, is the criticism of the government. Some of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the government directly, others in a more indirect way. Related to the topic, it was mentioned that the government, but also the whole society, is investing too little in young people and recreational activities for everyone but for youth, in particular. Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe, and they do not have enough employment but also not enough leisure time opportunities.<sup>388</sup> If young people were engaged in education, vocational training, sports, etc., they would be less at risk of making the wrong choices, for example, towards extremism, which is more and more becoming a problematic issue in Kosovo.<sup>389</sup>

To sum it up, respondents mentioned the disparity between rural and urban areas, especially the capital Pristina. Furthermore, it was indicated that there is a link between all the different areas of women's rights and that the government does not invest enough in recreational activities and the younger generation.

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<sup>387</sup> I2, 37:54

See also: I4, 7:22; I9, 17:56;

<sup>388</sup> I6, Min.13:47, 35:11

See also: I2, 12:44, 14:12; I4, 7:22; 10:58, 11:15, 12:44; I6, 13:47, 35:11; I5, 36:56, 39:57

<sup>389</sup> I2, Min. 17:01

## VI.9 Limitations and Challenges

There are various limitations and challenges in using sport as a tool to realise women's rights. One of the major obstacles is the lack of facilities and space for sports and recreational activities<sup>390</sup> In particular, sport and recreational opportunities for women and girls are rare.<sup>391</sup>

Another aspect is seen in the low quality of physical education (PE) and the lack of qualified and well-trained teachers and coaches.<sup>392</sup> It is important to have knowledgeable PE teachers. Not having them can cause more harm.

Additionally, it is important to offer a wider variety of different sports, so that everyone can find something that he or she likes.<sup>393</sup> One problem is that physical education as a subject is influenced by gender stereotypes. Girls are usually sent to play some stereotypical games like volleyball and boys can play football or some other games, which they traditionally like to play.<sup>394</sup>

In general, social norms are a barrier to the participation of women in sports and recreational activities because men and boys are prioritized and have better access to sports and recreational facilities.<sup>395</sup> In addition, there is a lack of encouragement of young girls. It already starts at school, where girls sometimes do not even have real physical education lessons; they stay in the classroom while boys are playing.<sup>396</sup>

Besides, other priorities were named as a limitation for sports. Kosovo is a new country

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<sup>390</sup> I3, Min. 16:14, 18:36, 45:54, 46:09

See also: I1, 53:08; I2, 35:32, 35:43, 35:47, 37:03, 37:54; I4, 5:30, 5:52, 12:35, 17:49; I7, 18:19, 33:12, 54:19, 54:44, 55:37; I8, 26:53, 27:01, 27:39; I9, 31:39; I10, 44:26;

<sup>391</sup> I1, Min. 51:29, 52:28, 53:08

See also: I2, 12:36, 12:44; I7, 18:19, 54:19, I10, 44:26

<sup>392</sup> I2, Min. 11:17

See also: I1, 29:37; I7, 18:19; I9, 30:47;

<sup>393</sup> I7, Min. 19:51

See also: I9, 33:49; I2, 35:32, 35:43, 35:47, 37:03, 37:54

<sup>394</sup> I7, Min. 19:51

See also: I9, 30:31, 30:47

<sup>395</sup> I1, Min. 51:29, 52:28, 52:51; I2, 11:17; I2, 12:36, 12:44; I6, 9:43, 16:22; I7, 54:19, 54:44, 55:37;

<sup>396</sup> I7, Min. 19:5

See also: I2, 12:44, 14:12, 34:46; I4, 7:22; I6, 13:47

with a lot of problems and developable areas. The government is investing in infrastructure and politics rather than sports and youth.<sup>397</sup> Lastly, there is a general lack of awareness about the benefit of sports and physical activity.<sup>398</sup>

Following Penchansky and Thomas' theory about the different dimensions of access<sup>399</sup>, following results can be identified:

*Availability:* There is a general lack of sports facilities and opportunities for recreational and physical activities. In particular, the opportunities for women to practice sports are very limited.

*Accessibility:* The access to existing sports facilities varies from region to region. There is a significant difference between urban and rural areas. The access to sports facilities is more progressive in Pristina and some other cities but in rural and remote areas the access to sports facilities is very limited. This disproportionately affects women because sports facilities and sports clubs are still male dominated.

*Affordability:* Most of the sports opportunities are related to expenses. There is a lack of free recreational and physical activity opportunities. This again, disproportionately affects women because their economic situation is worse than men. So, the number of women who can afford to pay fees for sporting facilities is very limited. From this point of view, women are disadvantaged in all three categories.

To sum it up, the use of sport to obtain several benefits, as mentioned above, faces various barriers. Kosovo, as a post-conflict country with on-going ethnic tensions and a patriarchal society, does not offer an easy environment for the implementation of such

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<sup>397</sup> I5, Min. 36:31, 38:56

See also: I9, 31:52;

<sup>398</sup> I6, Min. 40:26,40:37, 41:57,

See also: I8, 42:42,42:46;

<sup>399</sup> M. Gulliford, 'Modernizing concepts of access and equity', *Health Economics, Policy and Law*, Vol.4 (2), 2009, p.223-230

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/health-economics-policy-and-law/article/modernizing-concepts-of-access-and-equity/71F9C3F108956F74E5217DD59433FD95>

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See also: G. Samuels, *Availability- Accessibility – Affordability*, WHO, 2005

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(accessed 5 July 2017)

sports programs but it will gain even more benefits if a constant increase of people in sports can be achieved.

#### **VI.10 Reflection and Remarks**

In conclusion, I will give a short reflection and some remarks on the results and the interviews. I was surprised that nearly all interviews went very well without breaks, most of the interviewees would have liked to discuss further the topic, but I also knew that they had a tight time frame and I did not want to stretch the time dedicated to our conversation.

In addition, I was surprised by the quality of the answers since nearly all respondents said at the beginning that they were no experts whether in sports or women's rights but all of them provided answers and examples where both aspects were linked. Some of them also mentioned that the conversation stimulated them to think about the topic and now the link between sport and women's rights is more visible for them, and they also recognised the overall importance of sports. Some of the respondents praised my approach as very interesting and innovative and that they would like to read the final version of my thesis. The highlight was when the head of UN Women Kosovo said that our conversation was impressing her so much that she wanted to consider sport in their future strategy and she will mention this topic at the Regional Conference in Istanbul the following week.

Often, the respondents raised the topics by themselves; I did not need to ask my questions or give any examples. That was primarily the case with Maijlinda Kelmendi, she was mentioned by the majority of the interviewees.

I was glad that the attitudes towards my topic and the questions were received well by the respondents and all of them were eager to answer my questions and underpin them with their personal experience and stories. That is also reflected in the dimension of my material, which includes nearly 100 (12pts) pages of transcription and 160 excel sheet pages of content analysis.



Furthermore, I recognised that the answers of my respondents were consistent and complementary. Only in one case there were some discrepancies. Interviewee 4 and Interviewee 6 said that domestic violence is not a big problem (anymore), but then throughout the further conversation they mentioned that maybe it is a problem, but they lacked information on this topic.

All they knew is that there were articles in the press about domestic violence regularly, whereas all the other interviewees said that domestic violence is one of the major problems for women in Kosovo.

Below, the influence of sport on the different fields has been discussed in greater detail. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the correlation between the different fields. The interrelation between the six fields has already been illustrated in Chapter III. Before the empirical research, it was assumed that the six categories are of equal importance. Based on the thoughts of the key informants, the illustration has been modified. My interpretation, based on the empirical data, is that economy is the most important factor, influencing women in Kosovo. The economic situation of women is responsible for other forms of discrimination faced by women and girls. The financial dependence of women constitutes a big disadvantage and increases their vulnerability. Moreover, the economic situation of women influences their access to education and health services. In turn, the level and quality of education has an impact on their participation in the labour market. But also the state of health has an impact on the employability. Economy and gender stereotypes or social norms also influence each other. For instance, social norms affect women's right to property and inheritance, which further influence their economic situation.<sup>400</sup> In turn, women on the basis of being female are discriminated in the economic sector.<sup>401</sup> That shows the economy and gender stereotypes influence each other. To some extent, economy is also related to marriage. As indicated by my respondents, women are often seen as part of family rather than an individual and therefore, the financial aspect plays a role with regard to marriage. If

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<sup>400</sup> I5, Min.3:50

See also: I10, 6:49;

<sup>401</sup> I5, Min. 9:03

See also: I4, 10:16 (1); I7, 5:24, 6:49;

women get married, the family of the husband is responsible for their living. Moreover, there is a correlation between economy and violence against women. My respondents with the argument that there are power inequalities between women and men demonstrated this connection. Women are financially dependent on men, and in the case of domestic violence, they have limited opportunities to leave their husband.<sup>402</sup>

The second most important point, mentioned by my interviewees, was gender stereotypes and social norms. Gender stereotypes influence the everyday life of women and girls in Kosovo. They are linked to gender roles and the concept of marriage.<sup>403</sup> In addition, there is a relationship between gender stereotypes and violence against women. For example, one respondent mentioned that violence against women is a problem in Kosovo related to social norms and the perception of women in general.<sup>404</sup> Domestic violence, as demonstrated above, is common in Kosovo and mainly occurs between spouses, partners or intimate family members. Therefore, it is related to marriage or relationships. In turn, violence against women influences relationships and marriage. In general, violence against women is strongly connected to gender norms since violence against women is an expression of power inequalities between men and women.<sup>405</sup> To sum it up, the different categories have a differential strong impact on the situation of women and girls in Kosovo. The correlation between the six different fields will be better visible with the following illustration.

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<sup>402</sup> I3, Min.19:11, 19:23

See also: I7, 26:17;

<sup>403</sup> I7, Min. 2:22, 3:50, 34:14, 34:49, 35:29, 35:38

<sup>404</sup> I2, Min. 2:47

<sup>405</sup> I9, Min. 4:40, 7:04, 11:47

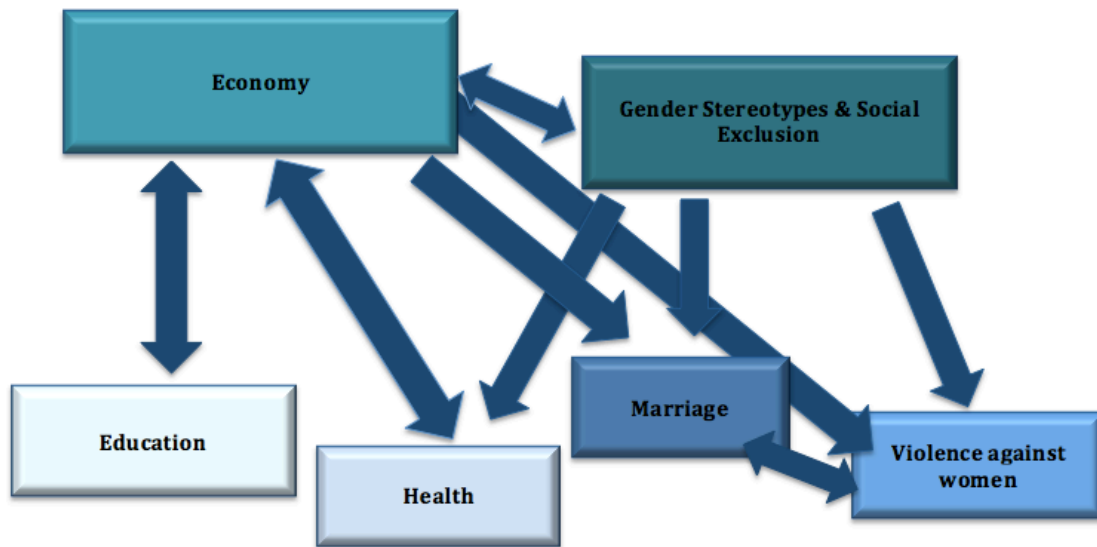


Figure 11. Correlation between the six fields based on interview data<sup>406</sup>

That is also relevant for demonstrating the indirect influence of sports for these fields. As mentioned above, sport has an impact on all six fields, but through the correlation of the different fields it also influences the other fields in an indirect way. When sports are tackling the economic situation of women, then it also influences their access to education, health services and their financial independence with regard to cases of domestic violence.

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<sup>406</sup> created by the author

## **VII. Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper was to create a link between the benefits of sport and women's rights and to demonstrate that sport is a powerful tool for enhancing women's rights. To accomplish this goal, it was necessary to give the reader an overview of the legal framework of women's rights in Kosovo and the situation of discrimination against women in Kosovo.

After the introduction, Chapter II illustrated the legal framework of women's rights, applicable in Kosovo. That should demonstrate that Kosovo has a fairly comprehensive legal basis for fighting discrimination against women. Nevertheless, laws have their strengths and weaknesses. Especially in countries with a high level of corruption and weak rule of law, the implementation and enforcement of laws remain challenging and often unsatisfying. De jure women in Kosovo are equal to men, de facto discrimination against women in Kosovo is still a reality and widespread in various fields. The disadvantaged position of women, with regard to the most important six areas, economy, education, health, gender stereotypes and social exclusion, violence against women and marriages, was discussed in more detail in Chapter III. Chapter IV, based on a literature review about sport and women's empowerment, demonstrated the impact of sports on women and girls. This chapter focused on these six fields but there are further benefits, which are from an additional significance in the context of this paper. Before presenting the results, Chapter V introduced the methodological approach to collect and process the data. Finally, Chapter VI presented the results of my research, through the collected data, the actual research questions could have been answered. Since the research questions are more abstract and comprehensive, it was necessary to formulate sub-questions that lead the more concrete hypotheses for every area.

The first three content related chapters served as the basis for the created hypothesis used for the empirical research in Kosovo. The research questions, defined in the Introduction were "How can sport contribute to the realization of women's rights in Kosovo?" and "How can sport help women and girls in Kosovo to overcome their disadvantaged position?".

Summarising the results the following can be said:

With regard to the field of economy, sport offers a platform, where women can develop and advance skills that are transferable to other areas like employment and work. Through sports women and girls gain self-confidence, which can help them to express their opinion at their work place. It changes how they see themselves and also how other people see them. In addition, sport can help women to develop leadership skills and increases their perseverance. It is evident that team sports can help women to work in a team in their jobs. Thus, it influences women's rights to work and employment.

When it comes to education, sport is suitable as informal education platform and can provide information on important issues. In general, sport includes a number of wide-reaching educative aspects. It teaches values of respect, teamwork, communication and social behaviour. It can provide women and girls with knowledge and skills, which can be of importance for their further development. Therefore, it indirectly contributes to the right to education of women and girls.

Speaking about health, sport has great impact on physical as well as mental health. Sport would tackle the roots of various health issues and chronic diseases. Women's health is essential for the health of their infants and thus influences the health of the whole society. In relation to mental health, sport increases women's self-esteem, it helps to relax and forget about their problems. Hence, sport is very effective as a method to relieve stress and further can have the same effect as anti-depressants. Therefore, sport can contribute to the realisation of the right to health by keeping people healthy.

Concerning gender stereotypes and social exclusion, sport is an effective tool in tackling gender stereotypes. Sport, especially in areas like Kosovo, is still male dominated. Women who are engaged in sports, especially contact intensive sports, break stereotypes because they prove people wrong in their assumptions that women are not made for these kinds of sports. As Majlinda Kelmendi, demonstrated women can be very successful in male dominated sports. Majlinda also served as role model and people like her can influence Kosovo's society.

Furthermore, sport can foster social inclusion of women and girls by offering opportunities to socialise. Sport gives them the chance to leave their usual environment and broaden their social networking. To sum it up, sport tackles gender stereotypes and social norms, which are barriers to the enjoyment of women's rights. Thus, it counteracts discrimination against women and contributes to the realisation of freedom of expression and the freedom to make their own decisions. Furthermore, it gives them the opportunity to realise their rights to participate in sports and recreational activities.

Talking about violence against women, as mentioned various times, sport increases women's self-confidence and that makes them less vulnerable to become victims of gender-based violence. Consequently, it provides women and girls with self-defence skill, and they become stronger physically and mentally. Moreover, sport has a healing component and fosters the re-socialisation process. That can be relevant for victims of gender-based violence. Thus, sport contributes to the realization of the right to bodily integrity and manifests the right to be free from violence.

Regarding marriage, sport can help to delay marriage and to prevent early pregnancy. Additionally, physical activity can help women to become more equal within marriage because it increases their self-confidence. Furthermore, sport provides a platform for women and girls to discuss problems and give advice to each other. Thus, sport can help women to realise their own goals, it supports their personal development and their freedom. That includes their freedom of expression and especially their freedom to make their own decisions, both about and within marriage and also to have a self-determined life.

The results in a more abstract way can be summed up as follows:

Firstly, sport contributes to the realization of different women's rights. For example, the collected data indicated that physical activity influences the right to health or it gives women a space to realize their right to freedom of expression.

Furthermore, sport itself is a women's right. If women and girls practice sports, they make use of their right to participate in recreational activities and sports.

Secondly, sport tackles barriers to the enjoyment of women's rights. It was indicated by the interviewees that social norms and gender stereotypes are major obstacles for women in Kosovo. Sport was named as an effective tool to break gender stereotypes and change social norms and the mentality of the population. Therefore, it paves the way to a better enjoyment of women's rights.

Thirdly, sport can help to prevent human rights violations but it also serves as recovery for women and girls whose human rights have been violated. In particular, this was seen with violence against women and domestic violence, in particular. There was a clear statement that sport increases the self-confidence of women and girls. It encourages them to defend themselves against violent acts. It turns them into fighters, fighters for their rights. Thus, it helps women to remain free from violence and to regain their bodily integrity. In addition, sport has a healing component and fosters the re-socialisation process of victims of violence.

Lastly, sport empowers women and girls. As mentioned by interviewees, sport increases the self-esteem of women and girls. Hence, it encourages women to become active, and stand up and claim their rights. It makes them more powerful and active citizens.

Due to these arguments compiled throughout the thesis, the research question could be answered in the sense that sport plays a key role in strengthening and supporting women's rights. As the following quote says, there are various ways to realise women's rights. Legal documents may serve as a legal basis, but that does not mean that law enforcement is the only way to achieve these rights. To ensure that women can make use of their rights, various components have been taken into account.

*'Winning rights for women is about more than giving opportunities to any individual woman or girl; it is also about changing how countries and communities work. It involves changing laws and policies, winning hearts and minds, and investing in strong women's organizations and movements.'*<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> Global Fund for Women, *Women's Human Rights*, [website], n.d.  
<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/womens-human-rights/#.WWCKidPyjJB>  
(accessed 8 July 2017)

Nevertheless, there are some limitations. There is a lack of literature about sport and women's rights. Mostly, I had to combine different documents to get answers. Due to the lack of literature, it did not seem feasible to break down the thesis to one or two fields instead of six. Furthermore, I could not identify persons who are combining expertise in and women's rights in Kosovo. The chosen interviewees were either experts in sports or women's rights. Still, the interviews provided useful and interesting material for answering my research questions.

To answer the research question in more detail would go beyond the scope and time frame of a master thesis. Kosovo, as a country with a conflict-ridden history, has a special environment with a lot of specific aspects, which could not be considered. The specific situation of ethnic minority women or even ethnic minority women with disabilities could not be discussed separately; it could provide enough material for a doctoral thesis. In the frame of the master thesis, it was not possible to get access to the most vulnerable groups like ethnic minority women in remote areas.

Further research would be important to have a scientific foundation for developing special programs in which sport is used to address women's rights and discrimination against women. In particular, in post-conflict countries shaped by ethnic tensions like Kosovo, such programs would be of great benefit. The power of sport is often underestimated. We would need more awareness about the value of sports and physical activity. Sport is not a cure-for-all but a cost-effective tool with unused potential.

As Nelson Mandela said: '*Sport has the power to change the world.*'<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> N. Mandela, *Speech by Nelson Mandela at the Inaugural Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award*, [website], Monaco, 2000  
[http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub\\_view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NMS1148](http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub_view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NMS1148)  
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### **Figures**

Figure 1: Table of the six areas within CEDAW, ADL and LGE created by the author

Figure 2: Key obstacles and problems in implementing laws in Kosovo  
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Figure 3: Correlation between the six fields created by the author

Figure 4: OECD PISA Test 2015: Kosovo  
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Figure 8: The main steps of qualitative research created by the author, following Bryman, A., *Social Research Methods*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, New York, Oxford University Press, 2016, p.379

Figure 9: Deduction, induction and abduction following Peirce's Logic created by the author, following Peirce's Logic  
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### **Abstract: *English***

Women and girls, worldwide find themselves in a disadvantaged position. Gender inequality, with all its facets is still predominant in our society; and it must be a major concern of the international community to put women's empowerment and gender equality on the top of their agenda. We only can reach a resilient, sustainable and peaceful world if we create a society in which women and men can participate on an equal basis. Gender equality and non-discrimination are one of the main principles of the human rights approach. Human rights as such are often criticized for being too abstract. This thesis demonstrates that human rights are present in our everyday lives. It can be related to simple things like sports. Human rights influence every part of our life. In turn, different aspects from our everyday life can influence human rights. Therefore, this thesis opens a new field about the relationship between human rights, especially women's rights, and sport. It aims to give a comprehensive account of the contribution of sports to the realization of women's rights. The thesis focuses on the disadvantaged situation of women in Kosovo in the six fields of economy, education, health, gender Stereotypes and social exclusion, violence against women and marriage. To answer the research question and illustrate the link between sports and women's rights, literature review and expert interviews have been undertaken. This thesis illustrates different aspects, where sport can influence the realization of women's rights. Women's rights and human rights in general, are manifold and there are various ways to implement them. International agreements and laws serve as legal basis for ensuring human rights. Though, the realization can be influenced by various factors. Sport can be one of the tools to promote the realization of women's rights. And sports can be of particular importance for post-conflict countries, which have a significant need for further development in women's rights and other fields.



### **Abstract: *Deutsch***

Frauen und Mädchen werden weltweit benachteiligt und diskriminiert. Geschlechterungleichheit, mit all ihren Facetten, ist nach wie vor weit verbreitet in unserer Gesellschaft. Die Emanzipation von Frauen und Gleichberechtigung muss als eines der Hauptanliegen auf den Agenden der internationalen Gemeinschaft stehen.

Stabile, nachhaltige und vor allem friedliche Gesellschaften können nur erreicht werden, wenn Frauen und Männern Partizipation auf gleicher Augenhöhe ermöglicht wird. Gleichbehandlung und Anti-Diskriminierung stellen Grundprinzipien des Menschenrechtsansatzes dar. Diese Masterarbeit veranschaulicht die Präsenz von Menschenrechten im alltäglichen Leben. Menschenrechte stehen in Verbindung mit profanen Dingen wie zum Beispiel Sport und Bewegung. Im Gegenzug können aber auch unterschiedliche Aspekte des Alltags Menschenrechte und deren Realisierung beeinflussen. Diese Arbeit behandelt ein innovatives und kaum erforschtes Terrain. Im Zuge der Analyse wird der Beitrag von Sport für die Realisierung von Frauenrechten herausgearbeitet. Dabei wird auf die benachteiligte Position von Frauen im Kosovo bezüglich Ökonomie und Arbeitsmarkt, Bildung, Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden, Geschlechterrollen, Stereotypen und soziale Exklusion sowie Gewalt gegen Frauen und das Konstrukt der Ehe eingegangen. Um die Forschungsfrage über den Zusammenhang zwischen Frauenrechte und Sport zu beantworten, wurde themenrelevante Literatur analysiert und Interviews mit ExpertInnen im Kosovo durchgeführt. Diese Masterarbeit illustriert unterschiedliche Aspekte von Sport und Bewegung, welche die Realisierung von Frauenrechten beeinflussen und unterstützen können. Frauenrechte und Menschenrechte generell, sind mannigfaltig und können auf unterschiedliche Weise umgesetzt und implementiert werden. Die naheliegendste Variante um Frauenrechte umzusetzen sind internationale Abkommen und Gesetze, die als rechtliche Basis zur Umsetzung von Menschenrechten dienen. Allerdings, beeinflussen verschiedene Faktoren die Realisierung von Frauenrechten. Sport kann dabei einen alternativen Weg darstellen, um die Durchsetzung jener Rechte zu unterstützen. Vor allem für Post-Konflikt-Länder, da diese erheblichen Bedarf und Potential zur Weiterentwicklung im Bereich Menschen- und Frauenrechte, sowie anderen Feldern aufweisen, kann dies von großer Bedeutung sein.



## **Annex 1: Interview guide**

**Do you see any effects for women and girls , who are engaged in sports? /  
Which effects do you see for women and girls practicing sport?**

### **Health:**

Health has many aspects → physical & mental

*Physical:*

**Which physical aspects of physical activity do you see?**

e.g. fitness, prevention of (chronic) diseases /osteoporosis, obesity, strength, cancer prevention,

*Mental:*

**Which mental aspects do you see?**

Do you think women and girls feel better if they are physical active?

How would you describe better?

e.g. feel relieved, satisfied and forgot my problems

Incentives: stress relief, self-esteem/ self - confidence, self - satisfaction, dopamine/ happiness -  
adrenalin / euphoria , prevention against depression,

### **Education:**

**Do you think physical activity has effects on children an their school performance?**

Can you imagine some reasons for that?

cognitive skills – concentration, problem resolution, memory, will, orientation, imagination

Informal education, counting, stimulating games

**Do you think sport can be used as an informal education platform?**

### **Economy:**

**Do you think that women and girls can gain and advance some skills while practicing sports and  
transfer these skills to other areas of life?**

Which skills? Do you have an example?

Do you think it can help/helped them for their professional life/ career?

In which way?

Data suggest that women who practice sports learn skills that are transferable to other areas of life e.g.  
leadership skills, teamwork, motivation, perseverance

### **Social Exclusion:**

**Would you say that sport is a good place for socialising and helpful to establish new contacts?**

Do you know an example?

Not for nothing there is a phrase called Sport connects people – can you imagine how physical activity connects people

**Can sport enable an exchange of experiences for example about sensitive topics?**

In your opinion, what are sensitive topics affecting women and girls here in Kosovo?

Contraception, abuse, drug abuse, harassment, violence against women, rape, virginity, HIV/sexual diseases, reproductive health, marriage,

What do you think - how can these topics be addressed by sport?

**Gender Stereotypes:**

**People say that Sport is not appropriate for women and girls? What is your opinion on that?**

Recently, Arineta Mula climbed the Mount Everest and last Summer Majlinda Kelmendi won the first Olympic Medal for Kosovo. Do you think that changed the opinion of people about female athletes and women in general?

For example during my stay: Majlinda was everywhere, media/ advertisement, named as national hero – rare for women

Do you think that has an impact on the perception people had about women here in Kosovo?

Do you think there is a difference what old/young women/men think about them?

Incentives: role model, motivation, strong women

**Women's rights:**

**When you hear women's rights , what are you thinking about?**

Incentives: right to health, right to education, right to work/employment, right to participate in cultural & community life , right to be free from violence

**Do you see a link between women's rights and sport?**

And can you imagine that physical activity can in any way influence these rights?

**Limitations & Challenges**

Last but not least, What do you think are limitations and problems of sports in promoting women's rights?