

**SEEKING INDEPENDENCE: MAKING NATION, MEMORY, AND  
MANHOOD IN KOSOVA**

**by**

**Nita Luci**

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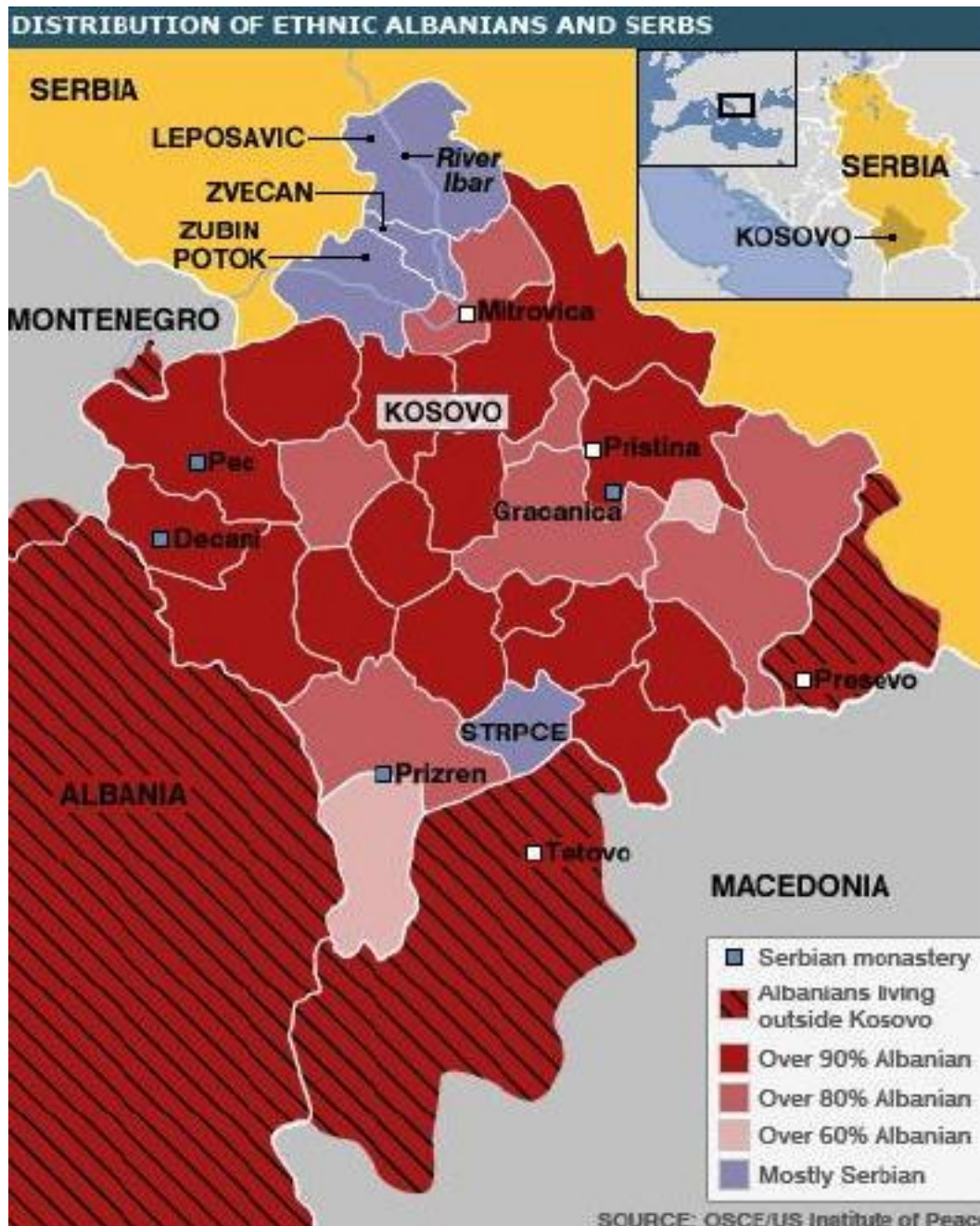
**Doctoral Committee:**

**Associate Professor Kelly M. Askew, Chair  
Professor Emerita Gillian Feeley-Harnik  
Associate Professor Damani James Partridge  
Professor Emerita Carroll Smith-Rosenberg  
Professor Katherine M. Verdery, CUNY Graduate Center**

## Harta e Kosovës



Map of Kosovo with current municipal and administrative regions. Map developed by the Kosova Statistical Agency.



Map of Kosovo showing ethnic composition, post 1999, and neighboring states. Map developed by Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and US Institute of Peace

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## **DEDICATION**

*To my parents, Lumturije Gashi-Luci and Kemajl Luci*

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Acknowledgments, as I understand them, are about showing your gratitude. In Albanian you would say *faleminderit*, meaning that you bow to the honor given to you. There are certainly many people to whom I wish to show such a gesture. There are two families, however, to whom I owe the most. On the one hand are my parents and sisters, and on the other are the remarkable members of my dissertation committee. It is without doubt that the merits of this dissertation belong to Kelly Askew, Katherine Verdery, Gillian Feeley-Harnik, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Damani Partridge, and surely Janet Hart who left the University of Michigan before I could complete the dissertation. In the company of these incredible teachers and scholars one cannot but feel inspired and humbled. Certainly, all the omissions and shortcomings in this dissertation are entirely mine.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how national and gendered ideologies in state and nation-building projects in the new Balkan state of Kosova have been mobilized and contested since the late 1980s. The dissertation contributes to an understanding of broader concerns with political and social movements in Kosova, and their engagement with cultural change. In particular I trace how manhood and womanhood have figured into the cultural formations of these movements, including customary law, kinship, violence, memory and history. The dissertation is based on uninterrupted ethnographic research conducted between 2004-2006 and ethnographic and archival research that continued until 2011. I draw from a number of historical turning points: international military intervention in 1999, the movement for blood-feud reconciliation in the early 1990s, and post-war politics in art and culture. Through focus on intellectuals, soldiers, politicians, activists, and artists, I show how narratives, performances, and built forms are made cultural resources for enacting and constituting gendered body politics. The first part of the dissertation argues that Kosova is a compelling case through which to understand conflict and post-conflict situations, international protectorates, and the politics of cultural difference that emerge out of such contexts. In the second part I move back in time to the emergence of the large-scale civic resistance campaign of the early 1990s. I argue that this movement articulated relatedness between nation and manhood as one based on traditions of endurance. Subsequently, the liberation war mobilized forms of manhood and national solidarity that had to do with *fighting back*. In this part of the dissertation, I outline the contours of masculinity and manhood in a militarized and post-conflict social landscape. In the final part, I highlight public performances, as well as contemporary and public art. I argue that shifts in political systems empower and disempower constructs of political agency based on gender and *aesthetics of power*. The main argument of this dissertation is that national and gendered belongings and histories are made through a persistent reframing of traditions, confrontations with power, the spaces in which these traditions appear, conflicts over the legitimacy of state institutions, and the political practices of diverse socio-cultural groups.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In Kosova's recent past, politics and society have gravitated toward one central project, that of attaining sovereignty and independence. For most readers and analysts, this observation may resonate as accurate; for many of those who were my interlocutors in the field, this statement is a misrepresentation. Upon reading most current history books from Kosova-based authors, although there are exceptions, one could conclude that Albanians and their lands have always been under occupation, and that they have always struggled for independence. This narrative, although not entirely untrue, may present a challenge for even a conventional historiography. However, for an anthropology that recognizes the complexity of social memory, the conflicts and negotiations over historical production, as well as all types of cultural identifications, the challenge is perhaps greater. This recognition has been the challenge of this dissertation.

The struggle for an independent Kosovar state, which I discuss, has remade the everyday lives of people in critical ways and has remained a source of power, conflict, nationalist inclusions or exclusions, and essentialized gender relations. This struggle has informed new, compelling, and creative political and cultural projects. The independence project I encountered, as well as experienced and often embodied, was not located only in the streets of cities, halls of parliament, or in international law. Perhaps more powerfully, this struggle was acted out in the meanings and practices of peoples' relatedness to one another, in their memories, their bodies, and in the varied cultural forms through which their acts were articulated. As Stuart Hall

observed some time ago “The nation-state was never simply a political entity. It was always also a symbolic formation.” (Hall 1999: 38)

This dissertation, then, traces the relations, conflicts, submissions, and struggles that have created a recent history of the nation in Kosova. It is an endeavor to show how this history relied upon the mutual constitution of national and gendered identities. There are a number of political and cultural layers to the research and analysis I attempt here. I seek to understand and contribute to a particular mobilization of national and gendered ideologies, to assess broader concerns with political and social movements, and to ascertain their engagement with cultural change. Framed through the dominant Kosovar conceptual calendar of before and after the war, I trace how particular practices and redefinitions of gendered subjects and identities were made salient for nation-building formations during the 1990s and 2000s. With this in mind, conducted as an ethnography of nation and state building, the aim of the research has been to account for the varying forms through which national belonging is premised upon political articulations of independence and upon the construction of gendered moral orders and power relations.

Wishing to identify the politics and creative practices that animated national belonging as part of everyday life in Kosova, I have attempted to examine that which seemed most visible but was simultaneously cloaked – national culture and gender, and specifically manhood. Therefore, the questions I ask are many. How do people make their gender and national belonging known to others and to themselves? How are different forms and practices of gender related to one another (for example, a manhood based on suffering or one based on resistance)? In what ways have dominant forms of manhood and womanhood appeared and created references and experiences that are commonly and nationally shared, or contested? How have



relations of power, based on different roles assigned to men and women, enabled a terrain for setting national liberation as a story for achieving universal equality?

This introductory chapter begins with a discussion of historical knowledge and renderings that I believe are helpful, and necessary, for understanding this particular case, as well as the conceptual frame I wish to construct. The chapter identifies some of the theoretical and methodological approaches I have found helpful in answering the questions posed above. I then offer a literature review of some of the key concepts that I aim to contextualize and unpack that are found, specifically, in the intersections of nation and nationalism with gender. In particular, I focus on gender and masculinity, and the memorialization of identities and belongings as processes and practices through which national and gendered relations come about. I conclude with a summary description of each chapter.

### **Historical context**

Today the Republic of Kosova is an independent state. It is recognized by over 100 UN member states, although Kosova is still not a member. Its state building is currently overseen by the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), but five EU member states, including Greece, Spain, Romania, Cyprus, and Slovakia, have not recognized its new status. Its declaration of independence in 2008, in just the past half-century was preceded by a transitional UN administration (1999-2008); the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the reduction of Kosova's autonomy as a province within the federation (1991-1999), and simultaneously the declaration of an internationally unrecognized Republic of Kosovo in 1991; provincial autonomous status within SFRY, that came with the redrafting of its constitution in 1974; and district status within Yugoslav Serbia (1946-1963). In the

Ottoman Empire it was established as a separate Kosovo Vilayet in 1864 (a first-order administrative division or province). As a result of Ottoman defeat in the First Balkan War (1912–1913) it was occupied by the Kingdom of Serbia, while during the World War II axis occupation Kosova had become part of Italian-occupied Albania.

With the awareness that this mere enumeration of important dates is less than satisfactory, and a general sweep of the past century perhaps dangerous, the Ottoman period, the First Balkan Wars (World War I) and World War II, etc., will be interpolated at specific moments as I have seen them emerge during the course of my fieldwork, that is, at the times when people refer to those time periods – formations – as either explanatory devices, markers of identity and belonging, or as frames that mark collective memory.<sup>1</sup> Here I will restrict myself to a discussion of Kosova from the moment when it became an autonomous unit (socialist province) of socialist Yugoslavia. I turn to a reading of some historical contexts as the ground upon which this dissertation is built and move to specific research questions.

The motivation (academic, intellectual, political) for the questions I have posed, in this dissertation, comes from the recent calls to redirect analysis to the crises and problems of contemporary globalization to address the question of the continued relevance of postcolonial studies.<sup>2</sup> In the simplest sense, because this is not a study of a traditional site of postcolonial studies (Africa, Asia, or Latin America), or of a European colonialism studied in anthropology, it is understandable that one could be weary of what may appear to be a superficial borrowing.<sup>3</sup> Kosova, as a historically shifting cultural and political geography (Ottoman province, Italian protectorate,

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<sup>1</sup> For the long durée see Jelavich 1983a, 1983b; Malcolm 1998; Blumi 2003, 2011. Some of the more popular and widely debated texts regarding Kosova's history include Judah 2000 and Mertus 1999.

<sup>2</sup> See Loomba 2005.

<sup>3</sup> See Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Stoler 1995; Guha 1997; Gupta 1998; Minh-ha 1989.

Serbian province, independent state), and as a more recent site for theorizing contemporary forms of *empire* (such as military intervention), offers an exciting opportunity to rethink some of the terms of such encounters. Taking advantage of a key anthropological tool, our insistence that the realities we describe are based, above all, on the terms set by the people we study, I will attempt to explain how Albanians saw their movement for national liberation as an anti-colonial struggle, even if such was at times part of nationalist demagoguery.

Considering such an option, Gani Bobi, a prolific writer in cultural studies, social theory, and a professor of sociology at the University of Prishtina, in his *The Context of Self-Culture* (Konteksti i Vetkulturës, 1994), engaged in close dialogue with Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Writing just one year before his death, at a time when the Serbian regime had appeared to have normalized structures of segregation and violence in Kosova, Bobi relied on Fanon's calls for liberation as a demand for nationhood, a liberation that might come only through armed resistance and recognition of one's colonization.<sup>4</sup> Moving between calls for solidarity and complex theoretical elaboration, he argued that what is required are "more reflexive and differentiated relations towards tradition and cultural heritage" (Bobi 1994: 32). He noted that tradition cannot be reduced to a simplistic protection of the past, but is a necessary condition for the creation of new cultural values in Kosova. In this sense, following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, movements for the *independence* of Kosova have been intrinsically connected to re-conceptions of relations between "traditional" and "modern" cultural formations, and the mobilization of "progress" as meaningful lived category.

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<sup>4</sup> Larry Wolf has suggested a kind of subordination similar to colonialism with the relations set up in the former Eastern Bloc countries. See Wolf 1992.

The remaking of tradition, in particular, had provided new political legitimacy to Albanian nationalist discourses in Kosova since the beginning of the 1980s. In the early 1990s (1989–1992), a group of student and intellectual representatives traversed Kosova with the aim of eliminating blood feuds and “reasserting political and moral strength” in Albanian belonging. Nonetheless, the mobilization to reconcile blood feuds in Kosova, and reiterations of the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini, which could be shorthanded as *customary law*, were not only a reaction to then recent developments in Yugoslavia, such as the revocation of Kosova’s autonomous status, the consolidation of a new nationalist regime in Serbia, the emergence of a multi-party system, declarations of independence by Slovenia and Croatia, or the economic crises of the late 1980s in Yugoslavia. Rather, state policies of longer standing, which had curtailed the economic and political development of Kosova (growing unemployment rates, and the racialization of ethnic and gender identities), were constitutive of growing nationalist sentiment. Therefore, reliance on customary law, as was the case during blood-feud reconciliation, could become articulated as an *always already* existing resistance to foreign domination, and would also serve to reinvent tradition for the task of building legitimacy for a nation independence movement.

It is here that a perspective offered by post-colonial intellectual frames, one that resists the flattening of historical complexities, and varied cultural expressions, can offer a much needed refashioning of readings that have considered the fall of Yugoslavia as a return of century old hatreds, or as medieval states. But how did it come about that Albanians in Kosovo came to view themselves as colonized subjects requiring national liberation? Six other new states have emerged from the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia – Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia – but none have built their new state and national identities on

these same grounds, although many of their experiences in socialism were the same. These former units of Yugoslavia had carried republic status and based on Yugoslavia's 1974 constitution all possessed the right to secession. Kosova, as an autonomous province of Serbia, together with Volvodina, had also been elevated to greater equality, but both saw their status withdrawn in 1991. Kosova, unlike Vojvodina, resisted these changes with a separate independence project.

Kosova Albanians argue that the socialist state was always perceived as a foreign governing body, and this would be particularly true for a Serbia led by Milosevic. According to Albanian elite and popular renderings, memories and experiences of the 1990s in Kosovo and the wars in former-Yugoslavia concern Serbian attempts to create colonial control over territories and peoples. Making the Serbian minority in Kosovo the dominant political group and organizing systemic violence against the Albanian population achieved such, as most of my informants claimed. But did not socialist nationalities policy in former Yugoslavia, a socialist federation of nations, shape or produce this response? How were Albanians in Kosova able to mobilize a nationalist movement, and why?

Within Yugoslavia's federal and state-socialist framework, Kosova was an autonomous province of Serbia. Comprised of six "nations" (*komb* in Albanian, *nacia* in Serbian) – Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Bosnians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, represented in six republics of former Yugoslavia – the federation also consisted of a number of "nationalities" (*kombësi* in Albanian, *nacionalnost* in Serbian). Albanians, Hungarians, Turks, Roma, and even Germans, Italians, and others, were Yugoslav minorities and "nationalities."<sup>5</sup> This distinction was based on the Marxist and Leninist

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<sup>5</sup> See Bellinger 2003.

constructs (applied in the Soviet Union) that aimed to settle the “national question” through the creation of a particular hierarchy of rights and obligations. Until 1953, when Yugoslavia changed to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), Kosova was known as the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija (1946-1974)<sup>6</sup>. Vojvodina, to the north of Serbia and bordering with Hungary, was another autonomous unit of the federation. The constitutional amendments of 1974 also included a name-change and Kosova officially became the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo. Before that, specifically during the 1960s, Kosova was characterized by the oppressive politics of Aleksander Rankovic, minister in the Serbian government, whose control in Kosova through the UDBA (Yugoslav secret services) ended in 1966. Flora Brovina, currently a member of Kosova’s Assembly, recalls her father’s imprisonment on the island of Goli Otok, and later remembers “the lines of people being sent to the train station as they were being deported to Turkey.”<sup>7</sup> Rankovic was responsible for the deportation of Hungarians from Vojvodina, as well thousands of Albanians from Kosova to Turkey. Tito purged him in 1966 for committing what Tito called “Stalinist acts.”

The reforms initiated following this period aided to what historian Oliver Schmitt has argued is Kosova’s contemporary appearance, seen in its infrastructure,

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<sup>6</sup> Here it is important to note that geographically and culturally Kosova is usually divided between the basin of Dukagjini, named after the Duke Gjini, an Albanian-speaking medieval nobleman, and the basin of Kosova. The Dukagjini region is also known as “Metohija,” a usage mainly employed by Serbs. Derived from the Greek *metókhia*, which also stands for “monastic estate” and also “religious community,” Metohija is relevant to Serbian historical narratives as the region where a number of important Orthodox monasteries are located, including the Peja Patriarchate. In socialist Yugoslavia, Metohija was dropped from official parlance in 1974, but many Serbian nationalists continued the usage. In 1989, when Kosova’s autonomy was revoked, Metohija was reinstated.

<sup>7</sup> Brovina is also a doctor, poet, and a woman’s rights activist. She is known for her twenty-year political engagement in Kosova, as member of the Democratic League of Kosovo during the 1990s (LDK will be discussed in the first chapter) led by Ibrahim Rugova (Kosova’ former president). The LDK was the first political party to form in Kosova once political party pluralism was allowed in 1990. The party represented the structures that set up the parallel government in Kosovo, and the civil disobedience movement from that decade.

economic, political and cultural institutions (Schmitt 2008). While Kosova continued to have a predominately rural population, in less than three decades, between 1950 and 1980, its urban population had doubled. Investments in industry, urban infrastructure, and, particularly, education, were constitutive of an emerging intellectual and party elite with more administrative control. The University of Prishtina opened in 1970 and, for the first time, higher education in the Albanian language was offered. With reform focusing mainly on education, health and infrastructure, Kosova's bright socialist future seemed guaranteed. Nonetheless, as Schwandner-Sievers has argued, "the massive cultural transformations that took place" in Kosova require a "reassessment that identifies the motives, drivers and actors of modernization and cultural change from within" (Schwandner-Sievers 2011). Among these were a somewhat established socialist and urban class – of administrators, professionals, academics, and other state sector employees – and an emerging educated class of former peasants.

While the decision to elevate Kosovo to an autonomous province in 1974 was a result of complex political and socio-economic circumstances; for Albanians and especially this new class in Kosova it meant more economic development and social uplift, but also national empowerment. For Shehrije Kuqi who was born in 1959 in Millovanc, her village in the Dukagjini region of Kosova, consisting of only 30 houses, "was small, but progressive, traditional but not patriarchal." Her family was large. The household was shared by three generations – her grandfather, her father and his three brothers, her mother and uncle's wife, her four sisters and two brothers, and four female and two male cousins. During the 1970s and 1980s the entire family worked on the land, of which they owned plenty, and mainly cultivated corn and sugarcane, which they sold to the sugar factory in Peja. Her progressive family,

according to Shehrije, was characterized by a love for education. All of her siblings and cousins finished high school and most received a university education. The women in the family became even more achieved than the men. One of her cousins became a music teacher and the other taught math. They had become an example of Albanian emancipation, which had not been possible before.

This period, for Shehrije, and many of her generation, is remembered as a time of progress. Taking part in all kinds of other activities, such as music concerts, sports competitions, excursions, and even shopping trips to Italy, Sherije's generation had embarked on "a new road of progress" and increased personal choice. Connections to the extended family were nonetheless maintained, but new intermediaries between city and village life were strengthened. When Shehrije married in 1983 she lived in a household of twenty-three although the family counted fifty members. However, a generation "thirsty for knowledge," as Nexhmije Killokoqi, also a teacher, defines it, had become committed to a new Kosovar modernity and Albanian emancipation. Moving between the city and village also became commonplace. As was common in other East European socialist states the village continued to be a source of goods, such as foodstuffs, for the new urbanites although Yugoslavia did not suffer from the same shortages as its neighbors. This new class, however, in turn became the carriers of another previously scarce resource in Kosova, education. In the period between 1948 and 1991 illiteracy rates in Kosova, as just one indicator, had gone down from 52.5 per cent to 11.9 per cent, although these rates remained higher for women than men, and significantly higher among the Albanian population than that of others in SFRY (Schmitt 2008).

The nuclear family was strengthened after the late 1960s, and an existing rural and urban divide was being remade. With housing provided through state programs



and directly linked to employment, new urban neighborhoods and communities emerged. In Prishtina, Kosovo's capital, the "army officer's block" was erected and entire neighborhoods such as Ulpiana, Dardania, and Bregu Diellit, which housed doctors in one block, engineers in another, and so forth, were build. The city was still largely segregated with Serbs living in the center in the first modern housing erected in the late 1960s and held most power yielding positions. In municipal offices, media, and other institutions, if a Serbian member of the collective entered the room everyone reverted to speaking Serbian. Serbs were still disproportionately represented, especially in state security institutions, and did wield power in targeting "enemies of the state." On the other hand, an earlier generation or those much fewer in numbers educated in Belgrade, Zagreb, European capitals as well as Tirana (Albania), increasingly held membership in the party and various state associations. It was not uncommon for families whose members were in the Yugoslav Army to celebrate Army Day. But Albanians still continued to experience discrimination and sought to transforms the state and the political sphere through a newfound empowerment in education.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the fragile and complicated constitutional arrangement of Yugoslavia, created in the late 1960s and early 1970s and codified in the Constitution of 1974, more visibly started to crumble. Many have cited Tito's death and loss of the control he signified, and held, as the moment that triggered Yugoslavia's disintegration. On March 1981, Albanian students demonstrated by demanding republican status for Kosova to replace its existing status as an autonomous province. The demonstrations were brutally repressed by police; student leaders were jailed and persecuted as 'counterrevolutionaries' and irredentists. These events triggered several interconnected processes. At the institutional level, tacit

*status quo* established within the loose coalition of party oligarchies had been challenged, although other challenges had been present before that moment.<sup>8</sup> On the ground, Kosova was placed under martial law and many of the ‘freedoms’ created in the short period since 1974 were curtailed. The demonstrations of 1981 also gave additional legitimacy to underground student and other organizations whose platforms included the attainment of republican status for Kosova, and, for some, even unification with Albania. Many of those involved in such illegal associations (community and other citizen associations did not become legal in Yugoslavia until 1990) would create or become part of the movements that articulated the political platform for Kosova’s independence, and more specifically the base of the latter Kosova Liberation Army (KLA).<sup>9</sup>

Because socialism, or more precisely the party-state had “worked assiduously to cleanse *other* organizational forms that might compete with its own initiatives,” as Katherine Verdery argues, national communities and their administrative territories were “the only units having the organizational history and experience to respond” to new realignments (1996: 85). Not surprisingly, when the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK) was founded in December 1989, it took advantage of the already existing administrative infrastructure, such as local community centers (*bashkësi lokale*), to create a web of party branches throughout Kosova. Also, it was the middle-class political elites, who had benefited from Yugoslav modernization policies and the 1970s state sector enlargement, who became its leaders.

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<sup>8</sup>A research brief issued by Radio Free Europe in 1972 shows that power struggles, and conflicts of remembrance of World War II, were manifest in the debates between party officials. See Radio Free Europe 1972.

<sup>9</sup> See Çeku 2003.

On the other hand, political activists, such as the students of the 1981 demonstrations and the blood feud reconciliation movement became the base for the *Illegalja* (Illegal, but having the meaning of banned or prohibited) movement and the latter Kosova Liberation Army, which publicly emerged in 1997. Despite the series of modernization efforts, Kosova had remained the poorest unit of Yugoslavia and this inequality was disproportionately distributed. When tracing the break-up of Yugoslavia, Branka Magas argues that the Kosova economy increasingly became unable to absorb new university graduates into the labor market, creating dissent among the younger generations that culminated in the 1981 student demonstrations (1993). Nonetheless, the slogan “Kosova Republic” was first heard on the streets during demonstrations on November 27, 1968 in Prishtina and several other Kosova towns. Other slogans included: “We want a University,” “Down with colonial policy in Kosova” and “Long live Albania.” They indisputably found inspiration from contemporaneous national independence movements, as well as left readings of imperialism. For the most part, members of these groups came out of illegal underground movements, including the Popular Movement for Kosova (Lidhja Popullore e Kosovës), and from backgrounds in which memories and experiences of resistance since the First Balkan War had marked their political aspirations. The political visions of those who had been placed at the bottom of the former Yugoslavia’s economic and political distribution of rights and mobility had also created constant social and cultural confrontations.

The civic resistance paradigm of the LDK, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Three, mobilized Kosovar society through a parallel state during the 1990s, but ended with the emergence of the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA). Such is the historical assertion perpetuated by Kosova’s post-war political elite, particularly those

political historians and history entrepreneurs who inherited or who made claims of identification with the plight of the KLA. The student organizations and illegal underground movements that were persecuted under socialism had laid the foundations for blood-feud reconciliation in the early 1990s. Later, these groups came to constitute the leading ranks of the KLA. Legitimizing new kinds of social and political confrontations with the state on the part of the KLA was, thus, inspired by the marginality of its members in former Yugoslavia, and by the constant violence strategically exercised by the Serbian Republic over populations in what later became KLA strongholds.

If theories of post-coloniality continue to bear analytical relevance, then it is the insistence on historical understanding and ethnographic grounding of relations of power, and the systematic production of difference, that seems to beg for most attention. In this light, viewing ‘the destruction of Yugoslavia’ as a route to opening authoritarian regimes to democratization and economic liberalization as a post-socialist transition gives only a partial explanation. Writing social histories of these events, movements, and shifts remains a much-needed project, particularly since linear narratives of state and national histories continue to dominate history books and textbooks in the region.<sup>10</sup> I argue that Yugoslavia not only offers an example of the disintegration of a modern-socialist state, but also demonstrates, primarily, nation-building processes which targeted territorial annexation, set-up structures of segregation, and essentialized identities of all kinds. I show the latter in the following section.

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<sup>10</sup> See Hayden 1994; Bowman 1994; Wachtel 1998; forthcoming Gashi 2014.

## **Memory, Events and Space**

The actors and institutions I have so far mentions are all subjects of this dissertation. In identifying the politics and creative practices that animated national belongings, a task I have set for this dissertation, I have turned to both oral histories and official historiographies, to narratives from the center and the margins of political and cultural life, performances, both folkloric and conceptual in contemporary art, and built forms in cities and villages. During two years of intensive fieldwork, between 2004 and 2006, I collected oral histories, conducted interviews and archival research, and volunteered in and also ran civil society and activist projects and initiatives.

I began my research at the Kosova National Archives, Prishtina, in 2004. Having conducted a series of interviews for what became the Chapter Two focusing on the blood-feud reconciliation movement (1989-1992) I was interested to find evidence of how the judicial socialist system had addressed cases of blood feuds. Archives throughout Eastern Europe had begun to open and I believed I could also gain a better understanding of the state apparatus and terms on which it dealt with such cases. Because the archives had been looted during the war, and most original documents taken to Serbia, in the disarray I encountered I could only find scattered documents. I did not attempt research in the Serbian archives, but such would be perhaps more possible today than at the time. What I did find was a particular absence of documentation on blood-feud disputes, and this indicated that cases never went to court, found other means of resolution, or were somehow packaged as any other kind of dispute but a blood feud. A number of jurists also helped me to work out the complex layers of legal claim and settlements.

Having committed to documenting and understanding other forms of documentation, memory, and history making I then turned to the collection of oral histories and in-depth interviews. I mainly focused in the Dukagjini region, and conducted interviews in the towns of Peja and Gjakova, in Junik, and their surrounding villages. I also collected oral histories in the Llap region, in Podujevë (now Besiana). There I spoke to members of families who had ended their blood feuds during reconciliation, those who had made public declarations, documented the movement in video or photography, and those who were activists working to bring people together in mass reconciliation events. I increasingly came to understand that the reconciliation movement had gained its support and strength due to a particular mobilization strategy of the student activists and the intellectual/academic elite they enlisted. A man in his early eighties, having reconciled with a family responsible for killing two members of his household, told me that he “would not have offered an oath of forgiveness if the professors had not come to me directly, if they had only called on the telephone. Because they showed me respect...that this was not only a personal...but a national cause, I could not turn them away.” Activists in the movement understood the more localized hierarchies of power. They made university professors and academics the public face of reconciliation but relied heavily on the requirements of local traditions.

I then turned to the academics, intellectuals, and activists who were the public and not so public faces of this movement and the subsequent civil resistance of the 1990s. The department of Albanian language and literature, the departments of sociology, history, and philosophy at the University of Prishtina, and the folklore and ethnology department at the Albanological Institute (Instituti Albanoogjik) supported my research by offering access to their libraries. In the course of three years I also

interviewed and spoke to most whose were among the ideators and the more energetic activist of the Kosovar parallel state of the 1990s. Drita Statovci, researcher at the ethnology section of the Albanological Institute, who also founded the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Prishtina in 2002, was among them. She has selflessly supported me in my research.

Wishing to understand the links between private and public remembrance and commemoration I then turned to the archive of the former Radio Television of Prishtina (RTP), the public radio and television station, now the Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK). Although these archives had also been ransacked during the war in 1999 I was able to gain access to duplicate recordings given to me by former workers who had managed to smuggle copies, as well as private collections preserved on VHS and audio tapes recorded directly from the daily and evening news. Today most of these are also available on the internet, but at the time they had kept them hidden well. As a former RTP employee told me “the police would not only come looking for weapons. Tapes like that would also get you in jail.”

In addition I conducted research at the National Library working mainly with the archive of the *Rilindja* daily newspaper. This research heavily influenced the writing of the following second chapter. Although for the period of the 1990s I could certainly rely on my own memories and experiences, after all I had lived through them, I relied on LDK activists, as well as the doctors, human rights workers, artists, journalist, and teachers, all of whom contributed to creating and maintaining a parallel Kosovar society resistant to Milosevic’s regime. Most of this research was conducted in Prishtina, but the people themselves are those who at the time lived or worked in towns and villages throughout Kosova. A number of them were also from Serbia,

particularly the human rights workers, academics and artists, who despite the violent divides aimed to create possibilities of dialogue and critique to Milosevic's state.

During these two years I also worked as a volunteer and advisor for a number of non-governmental organizations. In 2004 I was invited by Vjollca Krasniqi to aid her in the role of Executive Director of the Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI); a grant-giving organization for women's NGO that was setup with international financial support, mainly American, immediately after 1999. KWI also became a source of contention among women activists and leaders. They had argued that the fund could be managed by local expertise but ultimately the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) offices in Prishtina and international advisors were given the job. Locally KWI was criticized for having supported projects that reinforced women's traditional roles, for example by offering sewing and hairdressing courses, and not strengthening skills women already had. When the money ran out KWI was also closed, as is the case with most initiatives that lack contact with the grassroots or dismiss the capacity of local actors to carry through important processes.

Later, in 2006, through a grant offered by the Swiss Liaison Office in Prishtina, together with Vjollca we wrote the book *Politics of Remembrance and Belonging: Life Histories of Albanian Women in Kosova*. The research for this book is also part of this dissertation. Yvana Ensler, the Swiss Ambassador who gave her support for the project, together with other foreign and domestic diplomats, insisted that the research offered strong arguments for the inclusion of women at the negotiation table when Kosova's status talks took place in 2007. Through this work I had the opportunity to work closely with many women's organizations, activists, and politicians. I took part in numerous meetings, helped organize workshops and conferences, and became deeply involved in the gender-equality work being lead by



these organization, particularly the Kosova Women's Network, the Center for the Protection of Women and Children, and the Kosovar Center for Gender Studies. Here I also began a close collaboration with the younger generation of feminist researchers and sociologists, including Linda Gusia, Elife Krasniqi, Elmaze Gashi and Dafina Zherka. With Linda we produced a reader in gender studies, a selection of articles we selected and translated in Albanian to serve the needs of students at the Faculty of Philosophy. We continued our collaboration and as Alter Habitus – Institute for Studies in Society and Culture we created an archive of war memorials in Kosova. The research project, which entailed focus groups, interviews, and documentation of memorials in seven municipalities throughout Kosova, aided me in writing the forth chapter here. The Norwegian Embassy in Prishtina and the Kosova Foundation for an Open Society supported the research.

In 2006 I also decided *to return home* and, thus, never really left the field. My research continued until 2011. In 2007 I also joined Missing Identity, a project in contemporary art funded by the German Cultural Foundation. For over a year I had the opportunity to work with and learn from artists, art critics, and curators. Shkelzen Maliqi and Mehmet Behluli, who ran the project, opened many doors for me. Shkelzen's influence is found throughout this dissertation. My fieldwork also gained an additional layer. I became involved in learning to think through the political and social questions I was posing by engaging locations and practices not so common in anthropology. The final chapter is written through this experience and is an attempt to analyze the symbolic articulations of identities as they occur in the intersection between politics and art.

In 2007 I also began to teach in the Department of Anthropology in the University of Prishtina, and, through that position, participated in attempts to shape

new contours of the discipline in Kosovo. I have worked closely with students to bring them into various research projects and I use and cite their work as well. They in turn have opened all kinds of spaces for me, provided me with introductions and admittance in their families and communities. From 2008 and 2010 I was also advisor for the Women's Safety and Security Initiative, a project of the United Nations Development Program. Through the project I worked closely with shelters for domestic violence and trafficking in human beings, and gained access to government ministries and agencies, the Kosovo Security Forces, Kosovo Police, and a whole set of international agencies. Research conducted in these organizations, communities, and institutions is found throughout this dissertation.

These research, academic and activist engagements delayed the writing of my dissertation. While challenging, these multiple positions and research entry points have required me to confront the socio-economic and political particularity of my work. By this I mean that I have continued to attend, and at times helped to organize, meetings and commemorations, concerts, protests, and exhibitions. Those efforts have been guided by particular questions, in an ongoing personal and professional return and research process. I have sketched, photographed, and participated in the changing landscape of memory and remembrance, for projects both violent and positively inspiring. I have also drawn significantly from Kosovar sociological, historical, and ethnographic academic production. This may sound like common sense; however, this has not been common practice in western anthropology or other social sciences. I hope to make the intentions of this decision to seek out particular sources clear throughout this dissertation. I have relied on the written forms of Albanian customary law, expert renderings, as well as oral narratives and histories, testimonies of peoples' participation in political movements, their family genealogies, their memories of war

and violence, and their creative and critical energies that were employed to reshape the world around them. As may be assumed, most of my research was conducted in Albanian, which is my native language. In-depth interviews, oral histories, academic texts, and everyday interactions were predominately carried out in Albanian. Kosova social and political landscape is nonetheless not mono-lingual. Knowledge of Serbian, in which I am fluent, has also been a relevant part of my fieldwork, and English is not only the language of international organizations, but part of everyday life throughout Kosova.

Together with, and often against, emergent historiographies of civil society, political leadership, and activism, I treat memories of a violent past as significant vehicles of social relations and roles. The complexity of such memories in post-war contexts is often not recognized, and is just as often erased. Here my interlocutors have been many: media (including television shows, radio shows, blogs and newspapers), organizers and participants of movements, non-governmental organizations, and students. From the latter I have learned a great deal, and continue to do so.

There are three key events, or moments, on which I focus in order to engage with the multiple fieldwork locations outlined above. The first part of the dissertation addresses one of the most important movements in Kosova of the early 1990s, namely blood-feud reconciliation (*Pajtimi Gjaqeve*). I investigate the mobilization to reconcile blood feuds as part of a larger process of forging an independent nation-state in Kosova as the socialist state began to disintegrate. I argue that *Pajtimi i Gjaqeve* was a form of cultural work that went into forging new forms of relatedness and belonging between people. The reconciliation process required redefining Albanian customary law, read as tradition, and constructing family in ways pertinent

to emerging national ideologies. I will argue that these social and political movements centered on the key notion of *blood* and *manhood*, through which relatedness and the reproduction of families and the nation would be imagined and practiced.

If relatedness through blood was a key means to produce belonging, a key component was to produce a particular gendered hierarchy relevant to legitimating nation-state building projects. Therefore, the second event, *the war for liberation* in 1999, focuses on the bonds and ruptures that occurred in the war zones and the post-war political landscape, between fighters of the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) and the political ruling class it engendered. Unlike the movement for blood-feud reconciliation and the politics of peaceful resistance and disobedience during the early 1990s, the liberation war mobilized forms and values of family, manhood and national solidarity that had to do with *fighting back*. In this instance, notions and practices of Albanian manhood acquired new meanings and repertoires but remained key to conceptions of the nation's political subjectivity.

The third event is not singular; rather, it is the span which people refer to as "after the war," and which I use as an analytical device for researching the construction and conceptions of the past, as they are made pertinent for imagining the future of an independent state. I select some examples from a series of commemorations that have served to construct national and gender identities, produced commensality among people, and also provided new elites with social and symbolic capital. I also draw from political rallies, protests, activist meetings, and artistic performances as events where new groupings emerge and where belonging to the nation is transformed through attempts to either conform or critique, and often both, to the new challenges, transformations and vulnerabilities of state-building.

Events, as Val Daniel argues, are made of a dialectical relation between a “past” and a “now” (1996). Events can be seen as happenings of the past, dislodged, then recovered by memories or by the telling of stories and histories. They are at the same time constructs of our imaginations and the *filtering of facts* that have occurred by their repetition, in documentation in written and other forms, through commemorations in public spaces, or while hidden or placed in the corners, drawers and chests of houses (Bachelard 1964). What we remember happened at this or that place and time. The bodily and sensuous experience of remembering or participating (forcefully or by choice) in family gatherings, wars, marches and more are all aspects that make events *meaningful*. Events are thus never just temporal constructs but are also significantly tied to sites of their occurrence and remembrance. Their meanings are often contested, as are the places where they occur. Cities, streets, houses, and various landscapes can also serve as *aides-memóires*, providing frameworks through which people perceive and engage with the past, present and the future (Halbwachs 1992; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Antze and Lambek 1996; Armstrong 2000; Bohlin 2001; Climo and Cattell 2002). The dialectics between events and sites provides a vehicle for my analysis in an attempt to foreground the culturally and historically specific meanings of built forms and spaces.

At the same time, following Daniel, who argued that the contestation between “then” and “now” is best seen in language and in deeds, I make use of various narrative forms, written and oral, to inquire into the processes whereby various identities are enacted, constructed and re-made (1997: 199). The aim is not to argue for a snapshot of a culture, or to read events as texts (Geertz 1973); rather, the goal is to account for a politics of knowledge production.<sup>11</sup> While this politics is a site where

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<sup>11</sup> See Simmonds-Duke 1987.

dominant and/or hegemonic practices and discourses take place, the “local” character of particular events, or contexts of “micromobilization,” are also sites “where prospective participants initially experience empowerment” (Hart 1996: 141).<sup>12</sup> Important mobilizations and contestations also occur (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003).

In her research on testimonies given at the truth commission in South Africa, Fiona Ross argued that women’s testimonies were very often located within idioms of the domestic sphere using narrative forms that embed experience firmly in the domestic world and the family. She states that “perhaps domesticity is used to mark a world that is relatively ordered and predictable, in which kinship relations have a degree of coherence, and time too, flows predictably—‘as usual’” (Ross 2001: 264). Nonetheless, the work of keeping families together under the South African apartheid regime was predicated upon a *being in the world* that was fraught with violence. The narration of particular experiences required, and became possible only with, changing definitions of participation in political life.

A quite different social and historical context than the one I analyze in this dissertation was my initial moment of discovery:

*“On June 1, 1866, in the Gayaso House hotel in downtown Memphis, Tennessee, a former slave named Frances Thompson spoke before a congressional committee investigating the riot that had occurred in the city one month earlier...[she] recounted her efforts to resist the demand for “some women to sleep” with [white male rioters]. ‘I said that we were not that sort of women, and they must go’” (Rosen 1999: 267).*

Frances Thompson’s claim that she was not “that sort of women,” provides an important entry point in understanding the broader post-Civil War and Reconstruction years in the U.S., as well as the looting, destruction and rape which occurred during

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<sup>12</sup> I use the terms dominant and hegemonic in the way Gramsci (1971) defined them, but through modifications that Williams (1977), Hall (1986), and Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) have made.

the Memphis riots in 1866. As African-Americans entered the public spaces of the city (saloons, markets, etc.), and as white southern men aimed to reclaim the power and privileges that white manhood had signified in slave society, new, gendered constructions of race emerged in the everyday conflicts in Memphis.<sup>13</sup> Black women's presence in the city, as well as that of African American Union soldiers, became a "visible threat" to the previous order and changed the city's landscape materially by redrawing boundaries of gender and citizenship. Public discourse and police action for the most part identified these women as sexually and in other ways "dangerous," and thus aimed to "clean-up" the city through continuing arrests. The sexual violence that occurred during the riots was part of the conflict over public space and the identities and bodies of both men and women.

Thompson's, and other women's testimonies could be seen as "communicative events" (Daniel 1997: 101-102). They were instances of indigenous interpretations where "the reversal of a relationship of force, the usurpation of power, [and] the appropriations of a vocabulary is turned against those who once used it" (Foucault 1984:88). This is not a mere recording of "events" of a historiography as "passive records of history but [as] active embodiments of the genealogy of power" (Daniel 1997: 74). Male rioters with their violence "struggled to stage events that

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<sup>13</sup> We can also argue that the organization and maintenance of spaces, particularly the city, is a function of "the government of society." Foucault argued that, beginning in the 18th century, cities "were no longer islands beyond the common law. Instead...[they] served as the models for the governmental rationality that was to apply to the whole territory" (1994: 341). In another American example, Bernard Cohn and Teri Silvio show that in the post-Civil War period "new popular practices of remembrance" as well as practices created by state and civic institutions (particularly through the erection of monument buildings which were to create a "sacred center of the city") created important connections between narrative, landscape and memory in the maintenance of a historical sense of the nation (2002: 215). The enthusiastic engagement of different women's organizations wishing to preserve the memory of the "gentlemen of the south," also points to the gendered and racialized practices whereby these spaces and memories were created. For other work that also argues for the relevance of cities as sites through which identities, citizenship, violence and other social formations are significantly constituted, see Holston 1999; Low 1996, 1999; Breckenridge et al 2002; Harvey 2000.

‘proved’...freedwomen’s lack of ‘virtue,’” and placed the women in the role of being ‘that sort of woman’ who could not or would not refuse the sexual advances of a white man” (Rosen 1999: 277-278). The women, on the other hand, appropriated that same vocabulary to claim their virtue and prove that they in no way instigated or welcomed the assaults, and indeed defined the assailants’ actions as rape and not illicit sex.<sup>14</sup> They constructed narratives and attested to experiences that were formative of their realities as “honorable women,” such as Rebecca Ann Bloom who maintained that the man who got into bed with her had “violated my person, by having connection with me” (Rosen 1999: 280).

In large numbers, women in Kosova were among the former political prisoners and student protesters in 1981 and 1989, but they are not visible in its history of independence narrative or in the post-war commemoration landscape. Taking a cue from Ochs and Capps, who argued that personal as well as collective narratives and memories “are simultaneously born out of experience and give shape to experience,” I also trace how these women’s political engagement and aesthetics sensibilities, through poetry and letter writing, articulated an inseparability of narrative and self that was grounded in the experiential knowledge of marginalization in private and public spaces, which they then transformed (1996: 20 - 21). Another case in point was the recent debate in the Kosova Assembly on the amendment to the *Law on the Status and the Rights of Heroes, Invalids, Veterans, Members of Kosova Liberation Army, Civilian Victims of War and their Families*. Twelve years after the war the amendment was drafted to include the survivors of sexual violence within the

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<sup>14</sup> When it was later revealed that Thompson was “actually a man in women’s clothes,” her transvestism was used as a means to discredit the whole hearing, for how could (s)he have been raped by a man?



category of civilian victim.<sup>15</sup> When this legal categorization was debated, women's groups protested: "the survivors of sexual violence are not a category." They expressed outrage at the objectification of women through legal discourse, particularly as members of parliament argued that so many years after the fact a gynecological exam would not be able to produce the necessary evidence. In the final chapter, I recall a public performance of four young women artists who set out a folding table in front of the Kosovo Assembly, covered it with a white sheet on which they wrote "Examination," and went on to break dozens of fresh red apples, one after the other, with wooden mallets. The performance, for the first time made public the smashing of women's bodies, symbolized by the apples, which had been kept apart from narratives of the wars' violence and the new kinds violence hidden in the process of forgetting that has forged post-war Kosova.

Throughout this dissertation, I aim to trace similar usurpations of space and political agency. For Spivak, for example, subaltern narratives, such as the example above, could only give a semblance of dislocating normative histories, for their narratives remain defined through particular Western notions of the subject (1988). Bourdieu had, for example, shown that, as a case of "symbolic domination," even those who do not control authoritative forms of practice consider them more persuasive (1977). But, as Susan Gal argues, "such cultural power rarely goes uncontested." The meanings that speakers convey are always situated in particular institutional settings; the control of discourse or representation occurs in social interactions (socio-cultural contexts that also point to the material inequalities of

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/PL\\_per\\_statusin\\_e\\_deshmoreve\\_pjestareve\\_te\\_UCK.pdf](http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/PL_per_statusin_e_deshmoreve_pjestareve_te_UCK.pdf); Accessed 30 April 2013.

actors), and may be “the occasion of coercion, conflict, or complicity” (1991:177; 1989).<sup>16</sup>

Besides pointing to the significance of the relationship between places, events and identity through focus on speech, or lack thereof, the examples above also point to the need to understand the relevance of notions of the body and embodiment as people create and engage in the construction of personal and collective identities and memories.<sup>17</sup> Sexual and physical violence in general are, perhaps, examples where bodies seem to matter the most, in that they quite explicitly stand for inequities people experience.<sup>18</sup> Here I use embodiment to mean a source of experience, which brings together aspects of personal, lived experience with those of the body politic - which has to do with the regulation and control of bodies - where bodies are both sources of representation and also grounds for being in the world.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Judith Irvine and Susan Gal have also argued about the significance of linguistic differentiation embedded in political economy as an index of group (ethnic, etc.) membership and boundaries (2000).

<sup>17</sup> For an earlier and fuller treatment of the “body” in anthropology see the review by Csordas 1999. It would be impossible for me to give an adequate treatment of this topic here. Mauss’s work on body techniques (e.g. swimming, walking, etc.) is one precursor of contemporary interests in the body (1950 [1979]). Through its “career” the “body” has undergone many transformations in anthropology, with work in medical anthropology (Martin 1992a, 1992b); violence, subjectivity and suffering (Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997; Das, et al. 2000); ritual (Turner 1969); Van Gennep (1960); and sexuality and gender (Haraway 1991; Ginzburg and Rapp 1995; Ong 1995). The works of Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1975 [1977]) have been some of the most influential. All have argued for the irreducible bodily dimension in experience and practice. As Connell states “[b]odies, in their own right as bodies do matter. They age, get old, enjoy, engender, give birth,” but the surface on which “cultural meanings are inscribed is not featureless, and it does not stay still” (1995: 51).

<sup>18</sup> Recent debates have criticized the tendency to argue that dynamics of sexual violence can be reversed through a more self-reflexive attitude, as such positions assume that women have a linear and simplified relationship to the social codes that constitute them. To paraphrase Susan Bordo, certain models have downplayed the “materiality of gender” and ignored that social inscriptions, that is, physical situatedness in time and space, do not simply evaporate because we are made aware of them. The critique here seems most directed to Judith Butler’s theory of gender as performativity. Bordo provides a pointed critique: “Many postmodern readings of the body become lost in the fascinating, ingenious (and often, prematurely celebratory) routes that imagination, intellect, and political fervor can take when looking at bodily ‘texts’ without attention to the concrete contexts social, political, cultural, and practical in which they are embedded. And so they need to be reminded of the materiality of the body” (1992: 159-176).

<sup>19</sup> See Gilman 1986; Mascia-Lees 2011.

Sites and events are also relevant for providing expressions of collective memories and identities, but they also rely on what Alessandro Portelli has called “the syntagmatic axis of time,” that is, they form the historical canon represented as one event after another (Portelli 1997:101). Many of the events I discuss became contingent upon “the removal of the episode[s] from the community mode to the political [and were] paralleled by the spatial shift from the local to the national perspective” (1991:21)<sup>20</sup>. A shift in analysis could of course reveal a contested politics of identity where more ambiguous renderings become possible. The making and telling of particular histories, and their events, depends upon a *possibility* that is often determined by contexts that make remembering a particularly difficult and often dangerous task. Personal and/or private spaces are often seen as sites where censored histories become told, and powerful emotional-political links forged between people.<sup>21</sup>

Even so, as Cohen has shown, even the most intimate and private events often don’t always provide an “entry” to what people have gone to great lengths to hide. Camella Teolli’s daughter had combed her mother’s hair for years (Cohen 1994). Teolli’s daughter always made sure to cover the scar on her mother’s head while pulling her hair together. Over many years, Teolli had never told her daughter why the scar was there. Later, Teolli’s daughter learned the scar came from an industrial

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<sup>20</sup> For sources on the “national question” and historiographic debates in Yugoslavia, see Denitch 1994 and Halprin and Kideckl, eds 2000, who provide more anthropologically grounded analysis on “recovered” memories and histories. In an important article Tatjan Pavlovic has argued that “the attempt to absorb the singularity of the event as a continuum is constant in all the narratives of ‘90s Croatia” (2001: 139). Her analysis focuses on the erasures of feminist histories in former Yugoslavia, as well as its successor states, and argues for “an archaeology of lost knowledge” that makes remembering a subversive act, via the Foucauldian critique of the historical tradition “that aims at dissolving the singular event into an ideal continuity—as a teleological movement or a natural process” (Foucault 1984: 88).

<sup>21</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod argues that among Awlad ‘Ali, Bedouins in Egypt, the rendering of experience in poetry (by women while preparing food, attending weddings, funerals, etc.) creates important contexts for expressing ideas about personal relationships, community life, etc., that are not available to women under other circumstances (1985). See also Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990.

accident, from almost seven decades ago, and that it had been “the central event, in the textile mill strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1912” (Cohen 1994: xviii). As Cohen argues, the daughter’s ignorance of the event “was not a consequence of a forgetting, a loss of knowledge, but rather of powerful and continuous acts of control in both public and intimate spaces” (18). Complex layers of experience are always entwined in a wide set of social relations, and while particular events become instances where the social order is reproduced, they may equally be evidence of the dismantling of structures or attempts to create new ones.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, they are significant not only for providing spaces to construct various “imagined communities” of inclusion; they are also significant for whom they exclude.

### **The Relatedness of Nation and Gender: National Resistance and Manhood**

As in all modern conflict and post-conflict situations, where national belonging has come to dominate political sentiments, a multitude of boundaries are constituted by and themselves constitute one of the most powerful forms of cultural reproduction – gender. While anthropologists have long been interested in the roles, aesthetics, and politics of gender identity in the building of kinship groups and other communities, be they based on markers of class, sexuality, language, race, and more, the past two decades have been particularly fruitful for the study of gender identity for those interested in nationalism and the nation (MacCormack and Strathern 1980; Alonso 1994; Chatterjee 1993; Karakasidou 1997; Askew 2002; Sabra 2007).

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<sup>22</sup> Lawrence strike participants and their children had kept many stories hidden until 1979 when “the unveiling of memory began” and “the history of the strike was given an official status within the city” (Cohen 1994: 19). At the same time it is a history that complicates notions of “worker consciousness,” which Luisa Passerini has also compellingly addressed in her analysis of oral histories from Turin, Italy (1987).

Feminist and post-colonial scholars, in particular, have been unyielding in their histories of women, in addressing women's voice and complicated agency, complicit and revolutionary, in the un/making of national cultures, citizenship and politics (Blunt and Rose 1994; McClintock 1996; Yuval-Davis 1997; Werbner 1999; Arextaga 2003; Adely 2012). On the other hand, sustained interest in examining the analytical and social relevance of thinking about men and masculinity in relation to nation and nationalism is much more recent, despite the fact that most of us have come to the agreement that nations are masculinist projects (Thewleit 1987; Cowan 1990; Connell 1995; Mosse 1996; Caufield 1998; Smith-Rosenberg 2010). More importantly, ethnographic inquiry still falls behind in locating this category as one of gendering cultural practice, i.e. to be a man is not the same at all times and places.

The case I study is a case of *national resistance* for an independent state, defined in elite and popular discourse as an attempt at de-colonization. As Albanians in Kosova increasingly came to see Yugoslavia, and the Serbian administrative control over Kosova, as a foreign and colonizing force, they also began the writing, telling, and performance of a particular historical existence outside of socialism's promise of modernity, as, instead, a return to European roots. Movements for independence in Kosova defined their resistance against an unjust, and later immoral neighbor, Serbia. Activists rejected attempts to write an exclusionary socialist Yugoslav history, and sought empowerment through local idioms of cultural particularity. Claims to the latter were built upon shifting identification, on bodily and emotional bonds, and on the experiences of *suffering* and *resistance* as enduring *motifs* of national tradition. The governing political body based its legitimacy on a moral superiority over its enemy, particularly the values assigned to certain gendered cultural practices. The attainment and enactment of womanly and manly character

was made possible, in contexts of extreme *impossibility*, by suffering the domination over the nation and by resistance for the empowerment of the nation. Ultimately, different forms of suffering and resistance would be culturally and morally acceptable for men and woman, as the national project continued to construct the universal (neutral) political subject as male.

Noticing similar configurations elsewhere, many scholars, working from a broad range of disciplines and theoretical frameworks, have drawn our attention to the gendered aspects of nation building (Davis-Yuval and Anthias 1989; Verdery 1995; Bracewell 1996; Cockburn 1998; Shadmi 2000). Scholars from former Yugoslavia have also developed an analysis following the typology explicated by Anthias and Yuval-Davis, focusing on the ways women have tended to participate in ethnic and national processes and state practices (Salecl 1994; Jalusic 1994; Olujic 1998; Marokvasic 1998; Jalusic and Antic 2000; Papic 2002; Slapsak 2002; Zharkov 2007, Krasniqi 2007; E. Krasniqi 2011). While they have primarily addressed the social dangers of nationalism, their approach has not adequately explicated the power relations between the national groups they investigate and the *cultural work* that goes into the constructions of gendered subjects. As Susan Gal has argued, “we cannot assume that ‘woman’ denotes an unproblematic, self-evident, *political* category, or that such a political category is stable across social formations” (Gal 1997: 31). Mohanty has also argued that most analysis is distorted when we assume that women are “already constituted as sexual-political subjects prior to their entry into the arena of social relations” (1991: 59). Deborah Eliston has shown that gender differences do not precede, but are rather produced through social action, and this is certainly also true of men’s subject positions and social, political and economic roles (2004). My research aim to accounts for the ways in which both manhood and womanhood have

figured into the cultural formations - customary law, kinship, violence, collective memory and history - that have informed Kosovar national projects.

A literature review offered by Michael Gutmann some ten years ago concluded that masculinity and studies of *men as men* in anthropology remain few and far between. The review also pointed to a discernable lack of conversation with feminist anthropology. In recent years the situation has changed and there has been increasing attention to the topic, with focus on economic relations and masculinity, male friendships, sexuality, and embodiment. These have established the relevance of “man” in ethnographic inquiry, and there has been burgeoning scholarship in a variety of disciplines (Bederman 1995; Sinha 1999; Caulfield 2000; Wallace 2002, Conway 2011). A relatively recent review by Connell and Messerschmidt, credited with introducing the notion of hegemonic masculinity, concludes that the early dichotomization of experiences of men and women has rightfully given way to a relational approach to gender, and the conceptual and lived difference between patriarchy and gender (2005). Nonetheless, most studies of Eastern Europe, and more specifically the Balkans, have remained attendant to the structural and discursive shifts (welfare policies, media, war, etc.) regarding women and only passing reference is made to men as gendered subjects (Kirin and Povrzanovic 1996). Mainly in the context of former Yugoslavia, masculinity has been addressed as a function of nationalism and militarization, as seen in the construction of martyrdom and warriors. Much of the historical and socio-economic contexts that produced the emergence of violent nationalisms and militarized masculinity have not been adequately addressed, with some exceptions (Bracewell 2000)<sup>23</sup>. Here, men are assumed as already

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<sup>23</sup> See also Ströhle 2010 and Schwandner-Sievers 2013, although gender is not an analytical focus of these works.

constituted subjects, as pre-social. This has certainly been true in the few available analysis on Kosova (Munn 2008).

Within anthropology, when situated within the so-called Mediterranean culture-complex, manhood has been researched and often reified as a means of speaking about honor, village life, and modernization. Analyses that have followed the lines of Herzfeld's study of masculinity in Greece, such as Papataxiarchis ethnography of the village of Mouria in northern Lesbos, have mainly focused on sites and practices inhabited by homo-social relations, such as the coffee house (Herzfeld 1985; Papataxiarchis 1991). Jane Cowan has also been interested in the performative dynamics that assign gender identity, but she shows that such are always relational and embodied through continuous negotiation (1990). Therefore, within a similar setting in Greece, Loizos has inserted new questions destabilizing the assumption that particular cultures have stable expressions of gendered beings (1994).

Along these lines, Bourdieu's analysis of manhood in Kabyle, within what he called the *paradox of doxa*, had even earlier provided a compelling analysis set regarding relations of power and domination (1977: 159-170). Going back into anthropological genealogy, it was perhaps Levi-Strauss who most poignantly showed that group cohesion is created in relations men construct through the 'exchange of women' (Reiter 1975; Levi-Strauss 1969). What was clearly missing there was attention to domination, or what Rubin called the sex/gender system (Rubin 1975)<sup>24</sup>. For example, socio-cultural relations and structures of tradition or "traditional life" are most often seen as *always already there* or authentic phenomena, but it is this particular construct that makes such arrangements expressions of patriarchy.

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<sup>24</sup> Rubin defines the 'sex/gender system' as "the set of arrangements by which a society transfers biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied" (1975: 159).



Benedict Anderson, who saw the nation as a fraternal community, never showed how people may be interpellated as gendered subjects necessary for the production and reproduction - economic, cultural, and biological – of nations (1983).<sup>25</sup> Susan Kahn, in her study on the introduction and use of new reproductive technologies in Israel, has for example shown how a multitude of state, religious, and medical institutions are implicated in processes of social transformation. Kahn asserts that ideas of gender, kinship, and nation are never separate; rather, they intimately inform one another (2000). In Kosova, demographic considerations and state policies, particularly those on reproduction, were brought together in the space of legislation (enabling or curtailing abortion through welfare incentives), constitutional re-drafting (restructuring of the Socialist Party and renaming of groups), through a system of segregation (based on asserted racialized differences between Serbs and Albanians, which many saw as similar to the South African apartheid regime), and by redrawing national borders of all kinds through war.

For example, during the late 1960s and 1970s, Albanian party officials used population growth as a means of legitimating a consideration of Albanians in Yugoslavia as a nationality and not a minority, which was the difference between governing and being governed. At the same time in Serbia, state and church representatives referred in panic to its declining birth rates as the “white plague” and aimed to “treat” it with welfare incentives. What to the Albanian leadership was evidence of equality through numbers, misrecognizing their entrenchment in often-violent patriarchy, for the Serbian leadership fueled by nationalist demography Albanian population growth was a threat to Serbian survival. Simultaneously, the

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<sup>25</sup> See Wingrove 1999.

large Albanian family was seen as evidence and metaphor for “its primitive and repressive practices toward its women.”

The consequences of similar state and political interventions and discourses in Kosova had far reaching effects on relations and enactments of gender. In times of ethnic/national segregation, as was the case during the 1990s, the enactment and perhaps nourishment of relations built around particular gendered identities became the *life world* that affirmed the spread of cultural messages of resistance and imparted information vital to survival. Serbian challenges would not be perceived as dishonoring Albanian national character, and particularly manhood; rather, challenges were a dishonor to Serbian manhood itself. This is just one instance where manhood is not a social construct defined only in opposition to women, as proprietary extensions of ones group and that of the enemy, but also to the men of the other group.

I argue that, as violence was used to undermine family and group cohesion, transform domestic spaces of the home from sites of security and the more ordinary practices of everyday life into those of everyday violence, men and women became emblematic of the larger political system of nation-state formation. Building on earlier work of anthropologists who offered feminist interventions in the sphere of kinship and gender, this dissertation inquires into such mutually constituted processes through an anthropological inquiry in an area of studies where such interventions are lacking, done here with a focus on masculinities and the politics of cultural production in state and nation-building (Yanagisako and Collier 1990; Kandiyoti 1991; Yanagisako and Delaney 1995; Ginsburg and Rapp 1995; Das 1996; Franklin and McKinnon 2001).

Through the women-and-children category, those whom men fight to protect, men and women become embodiments of group belonging, both ethnic and national (Enloe 1989, 2000; McClintock 1993; Knaaneh 2002). Such identifications are not only present during times of war, as has been argued in more recent studies of so-called inter-ethnic sexual violence, but in relations of power during times of peace, which create difference based upon moral and cultural categorization. According to Hart, the gendering of national movements and other social relations "cannot be seen as separate from images of honor, morality and sexuality" (Hart 1996: 102). Stoler, among others, has argued that colonial rule was defined through prescriptions of racialized sexuality, and the control and disciplining of bodies (Stoler 2010). Many have also argued that women's honor has been a necessary "fragment" of anti-colonial national projects (Chatterjee 1993). Kligman's work, on the control of reproduction in Romania during Ceausescu, has shown how the paternalist state took over the "rights" to protect women's sexuality and the womb." Such appropriation became indispensable to socialist nationalism (Kligman 1998: 245). These kinds of arrangements and images are nonetheless still different, depending on whether one speaks of a 19<sup>th</sup> century European bourgeois moment, a colonial or post-colonial violence and nation-building experience, or a socialist or post-socialist Eastern European politics.

Though material and systematic organization and employment of gender posit men and women in binding ways, do people not also actively engage with their sense of belonging, with the technologies of power they embody and perform, and move towards shifting the relations of power? It is perhaps undeniable that structural constraints determine people's options for action. Once a fellow student from Belgrade told me this story: she was always afraid to walk home from school because

she thought that the Albanian construction workers, building New Belgrade, might rape her. While this danger may have been real, due to women's general insecurity in everyday life, what was also present in these encounters was the regime of representation that defined Albanian men as sexual aggressors and Serbian women as their preferred prey (Salecl 1994; Bracewell, 2000).

I propose a new direction, one that argues that there is no single thing that is masculinity. Rather, masculinity also signifies an attempt to locate varieties of gender relations, both spatially and temporally. Instead of focusing only on the dominant and hegemonic, I point to the fault lines between what men do, how they do it, how they express control, recite, embody, and fight, in an attempt to insert historical action to our understandings of manhood (Herzfeld 1985; Gilmore 1990; Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994; Peteet 1994; Hafez 2012; Chattopayay 2011). Therefore, to talk about men is about the necessity of making visible the historical processes and creation of political sanctioning and possibility, whether these proved liberating or disappointing. In Kosova, national manhood became that space where the apparent impossibility of alternative action was turned into a possibility for empowerment. I argue that men acquire, act on, and respect the sensibilities and conflicts that emerge between socially dominant and shifting cultural inscriptions of manhood. Many of these sensibilities emerge out of a dialectic relation between vulnerabilities and strengths, as well as the structural hierarchies of gendered and national identities. Within nation-building projects, a multiplicity of elites will compete over the kind of man one has to be and his place within cultural systems of representation. Ethnographic inquiry can show that the nation is an always ongoing negotiation of history, remembrance, and varied gender relations.

## **Conclusion and Summary**

Here I would reiterate the broader aims of this dissertation and follow with a summary of each chapter. My intentions have been to find and re-surface cultural-political experiences that could remake some current telling of Kosova's history. The analysis I conduct is situated in a series of events, memories and histories of Serbian-Albanian relations, the 1999 war and NATO's intervention in Kosova, and the international post-war peace-building and state-building interventions. I argue that through politics of culture that recreated traditions for social solidarity, Kosovars created/produced opportunities to ultimately practice and define survival. In turn, tradition was not reduced to a simplistic protection of the past, but a necessary condition for the creation of new cultural values in Kosova. I argue that the cultural formations - customary law, kinship, violence, memory and commemoration - that have informed Kosovar national and state-building projects were deeply embedded in the remaking of gender identities, of both manhood and womanhood. By uncovering the publicly shared histories of Kosova's recent past, I show how the intersection of national and gendered belongings shapes the ways in which tradition and memory are produced, and casts claims about power and political subjectivity.

While shifts in political systems empower and disempower constructs of political agency based on gender for men and women, I argue that citizenship becomes constituted through civic participation in the spaces and practices between a political public - of assumed male citizenry - and a private public - of women. In their segregated roles in nationalist reproduction these processes have produced a general ignorance of history and erased the memory and history of women's civic, political, and cultural engagement. More specifically, the capitalization of commemorations and creation of martyrs, produce shared symbolic and material spaces for the

enactment of national and gender identities identities. Related state-sponsored public history erases women's political agency and aids the strengthening of national/ist manhood. The necessity of understanding and claiming agency in the social, political, and cultural realities of Kosova, then constitute a tension in Kosova's social memory and history.

In Chapter Two I trace the emergence of a "public history" generated around the war and military intervention in Kosova. Specifically, I ask: what have been the publicly shared histories of Kosova's recent past, enacted in the resistance to and fears of ethnic cleansing, independence projects, and how have these shaped judgments on intervention? I treat a series of unequal forms of expression and practice - ritualized and public gatherings and protests, newspaper editorials, public intellectual debates, invitations to people's homes - as topos of a public history that served to reconfigure understandings of justice and responsibility, as well as form gendered practices of social and political mobilization. In this regard, this chapter sets the frame of intersecting themes central to this dissertation, regarding public space and gender, and carves the terrain for understanding how nation-building formations in Kosova were represented and remembered. In considering what are usually coined "international" and "outside" impositions, such as the norm of responsibility to protect, through a contextualization of the circumstances surrounding the outsiders who came to the rescue in Kosova, I inquire into how international politics, and claims to universality and justice, take place on a terrain of power relations and arguments about cultural specificities and universalisms. As such, there are many competing stories of origin - of philosophical traditions on justice - and culture above all becomes a means of stating claims to such traditions.

While Chapter Two inquires into competing expectations of humanitarian and military interventions, and the ways in which national and international cultural production defined political and cultural identities in relation to those interventions, Chapter Three traces the emergence of a state-building project in Kosova through a large-scale civic resistance campaign and paradigm. If justice in humanitarian intervention had come to be seen as congruent with Albanian national culture, and as a remedy for past historical injustices, this was possible due to the fact that Albanians in Kosova increasingly come to see Yugoslavia, and the Serbian administrative and military control over Kosova, as a foreign and colonizing force. Simultaneously, they also began the writing, telling, and performing of a particular historical existence, outside of socialism's promise of modernity. Within these contexts, this chapter sets out to inquire into conceptions of national relatedness and belonging that emerged in Kosova during the 1990s, and will examine the ways in which these paradigms enabled the emergence of a new gendered moral order.

Reiterating, to a certain extent, the question posed by Veena Das, this chapter asks, "what are the relations between codes of honor in the sphere of kinship and national codes of honor" in determining the identities of men and women? How did these relations (between kin and nation) influence the collective memory and experience of violence during and after the war? Did the reconciliation process and the mobilization of customary law create a new form of belonging (and relatedness between family and nation)? What were the roles and representations of women and men in articulating and constructing these events? In what ways did blood-feud reconciliation establish new possibilities for a state-building project? How did relations between intellectual and political elites and more marginalized political voices affect the social and political making of national and gendered memory and

identity? How did intellectuals emerge as mediators in feuds and how did their political biographies, and those from the student movement, merge into a seemingly homogeneous public?

Narrative analyses of oral histories and public testimonies were relevant for tracing the appearance of various categories (such as an honorable national manhood), and for claims made about entitlement to narrate different experiences, or to expect silences that were produced and broken in regard to different topics, events, and experiences. My proposition here, as was explicated to me through interviews, is that national participation became a matter of enacting “ties through blood” and “Albanian traditional family relations,” which were seen as true to the oral and written versions of customary law. A thread that runs throughout these stories is the varying ways in which men and women took part in socially sanctioned performances, at times joining, at other times dispelling gendered and national identities.

Chapter Four seeks to outline the contours of masculinity and manhood in a militarized and post-conflict social landscape and to offer critique of strict culturalist explanations. In particular, I analyze the practices and narratives of former KLA fighters, some of whom benefited from their participation in the KLA, while others were relegated to the margins of access to social, economic and political capital. I rely on published memoirs of the war, and conversations with their writers, and on in-depth interviews with members of the Veteran’s Association and former fighters, among whom are now university professors, students, parking attendants, politicians, or construction workers. I also closely follow public and media debate on the demilitarization of the KLA, the creation of the Kosova Protection Force and its transformation to Kosova Security Force, the Law on War Values, and other legal and political processes that deeply affected the lives of these former fighters. Unlike the



movement for blood-feud reconciliation, and politics of peaceful resistance (disobedience) during the early 1990s, “the liberation war” mobilized forms and values of family, manhood and national solidarity that had to do with “fighting back.” In this instance, notions and practices of Albanian manhood acquired new meanings and repertoires but remain key to conceptions of the nation’s political subjectivity. If blood relatedness has been a means to produce national belonging in Kosova, creating particular gendered hierarchies has also been central to legitimating nation-state building projects. Therefore in this chapter, I argue that men’s gendered identities and practices interact with/in political, economic and social institutions and arrangements, and provide a central analytical thread for discussing the processes by which people create relatedness among themselves and construct categories of difference.

In Chapter Five I attempt to conduct ethnography of contemporary art and analyze the politics of aesthetic representations surrounding manifestations of identity and power. I argue that in complex terrain of power-sharing arrangements in post-war Kosova publics have become composed of ethnic communities, and institutional engineering defines cultural heritage as the property of those same neatly delineated communities. But instead of focusing on a common understanding of cultural heritage (mosques, churches, archaeological sites, etc.) this chapter looks to public performance to witness the conflicts and possibilities that contemporary art and public art can inhabit. This is something I frame as an *aesthetics of power*. Via Ranciere, I aim “to consider politics not as the mere exercise of power, but the conflict for the framing of a space as political” (2006). Any such conflict will require a consideration of the systems of representation according to which some political actions receive support and others do not.

The analysis provides a reading of public marketing campaigns, the symbolic architecture of state building, a series of commemorative events, and protests and public art interventions. By also introducing the gendered dimensions of commemoration and martyrdom in Kosova's state-building and ethnic and civic belonging I rephrase a question posed by David Harvey about the relation of bodies to capital: if bodies of the national body politic, in which all are bodies of a nation, exist for its reproduction, how could we measure anything outside of the relations and semiotics of national belonging? (Harvey 2000). Whose bodies serve as a measure? And how do they establish the legitimate and legitimating body politic?

In particular, as public and political morality in Kosova is guarded through new fathers of the nation, I ask how do aesthetic practices speak of consent and politics? In a place where people are asked to forget their past, because it is seen as dangerous, atavistic, a whole politics of aesthetic representations surrounds manifestations of identity and power between domestic participants and international observers/interveners, and continues to shape the imagined national identities of the future. The aim here is to identify particular regimes of representation, the discursive practices, and the visual repertoire of representations, which enabled the *demarcation of boundaries* between national and gender identities, as well as their relation to political and cultural particularities and more global connections. Attention to commemorations, space, and violence shows that new elements are mapped onto older forces and grounded in regional histories; although borders, subjects, and histories are moved to new locations, they do not disappear. In Chapter 6 I offer my conclusions.



## Chapter 2: Interventions in Kosova: Un/Welcomed Guests

“Ethnography decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion. It describes processes of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes.” James Clifford, *Writing Culture*

As an anthropologist conducting research at home and about home, my public role has increasingly entailed television appearances and so-called expert analysis of cultural dimensions of political and economic developments in Kosova. This has been a tenuous role for me, particularly because I am required to offer expert renderings of culture and speak about its continuity as a historical and political resource in state-building enterprises. However, because of this same anthropological orientation, I understand with great responsibility the relevance of participation, not only within the participant-observation matrix of fieldwork, but also within the negotiations of different accountabilities anthropologist increasingly have as academics, public-intellectuals, and practitioners. I was invited to appear on a television show in Prishtina in 2009 and was asked to comment on the apparent indiscriminate hospitality of Albanians. The producers of the show had collected archival images of key historical moments from Albania and Kosova, illustrating the welcome shown to foreign rulers and armies, dignitaries, and presidents in the city-streets of Tirana, Durrës, Prizren, and Prishtina. The images included Prince William of Wied (who was placed on the throne of Albania in 1914), Mussolini’s army entering Albania in 1939, Tito during his visit to Kosova in 1975, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces entering Kosova in 1999, and Bill Clinton during his most recent visit

in 2009. The collage of sepia-toned and HD-quality images depicted a seemingly timeless narrative, about which the host asked: “Can you as an anthropologist explain, culturally, if there is a reason why we always seem to welcome others with open arms?”

The question made me pause. Clearly these images were not made up. Events, however, are constructed through memories and social practices. Culture plays a role in shaping them, but it is not a system of unchanging values and power relations. For example, people in Kosova rejoiced when NATO bombs were dropped in order to stop Serbian ethnic cleansing in 1999, but in time Kosovars grew tired of the lack of political solutions provided by outside interveners. But who were these “others” in question? Were they all guests of the same kind? “With these issues in mind, what might anthropologists have to say?”

I assumed the welcomed response, one I did not give to the host, would have been that Albanians are a hospitable people, their traditions provide for honoring guests, and they share a common belief in peace and in the victory of the just. Indeed, most ethnographic research on and from Kosova would confirm such a conclusion.<sup>26</sup> Another observation, frequently offered in public discussions and collective renderings of history, would be that Albanians have become accustomed to occupation, have allowed others to rule them, and thus offer hospitality to the more powerful. When one of my students asked Blerim Hadri, a high-school professor, from Gjakova, whether the welcome given to NATO troops in Kosova can be seen as a matter of perceived inferiority, love for the West, or an understanding that guests must always be honored, he insisted that these are inseparable. Many Albanians will also state that once one has a guest in one’s home, the obligation to provide protection

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<sup>26</sup> See Krasniqi 2005.

and respect becomes a matter of honor for the host.<sup>27</sup> In 1999, following NATO's intervention, many outsiders were welcomed as guests to Kosova, including the immediate United Nations Mission in Kosova and the later EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission). The mutual obligations, on guests and hosts, have been complex and have been shaped by the circumstances—political, legal, and cultural—upon which they were built. Such complexities are clear in Hadri's response to the students: "But NATO soldiers in Kosova are more than 'guests' as you might say. For us they are no longer that. They are a part of us, because together we managed to overturn that which is bad and open the way for a new history."<sup>28</sup>

My answer to the host's question, which may have appeared evasive to the audience, rested on the argument that these explanations tell of a tension present in Kosova's social memory and history, a tension that is also produced by the necessity of understanding and claiming agency in the social, political, and cultural realities of Kosova. Any present reading of such events is also a discussion conducted through histories of Serbian-Albanian relations, the conflict and NATO's intervention in Kosova, and the international postwar peace-building and state-building interventions. Therefore, a reading of the projected images could be scrutinized by historical methods, but the images also reference present concerns, such as Hadri's, about the direction of this "new history". For me, the images summon attention to the power dynamics that shape cultural realities and memories, political responses, and everyday experiences of the past. They also speak to definitions of self and cultural belonging shaped by constantly shifting social and global political landscapes.

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<sup>27</sup> I would like to thank Shemsi Krasniqi, sociologist at the University of Prishtina, who drew my attention to this during the second consultation by the research team in Prishtina, 25 May 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Lirika Komoni, *Intervenimi i NATO-së në Kosovë*, unpublished paper submitted in partial fulfillment of coursework. University of Prishtina, Department of Sociology, January 2010, 9.

## Locating Justice

The United Nation General Assembly initially adopted the norm of Responsibility to Protect in 2005, marking a significant step away from the freeze created by two major philosophical standpoints on the field of international law and relations. On the one hand were the proponents of “humanitarian intervention,” who saw it as a right to intervene, and on the other hand were those who argued that state sovereignty remain the *sine qua non* of international relations.<sup>29</sup> The military intervention in Kosova and the genocide in Rwanda were critical to the organization of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. A series of summits and UN Security Council debates have resulted in serious consideration of “universal principles” that would underpin consensus for a global commitment against mass atrocities. Although the norm and its principles are not part of international customary law<sup>30</sup> – with some claiming “not yet” and others “it will not be” – the ongoing debates about international interventions of all kinds have made it clear that we stand at a critical point in rethinking the responsibility of international organizations, such as the UN and NATO, of states, and of the very notion of sovereignty when we are made to think about mass atrocities and genocidal politics.

This chapter attempts to offer some observations on the ‘public history’ generated around the intervention in Kosova. Specifically, I ask what has been the publicly shared history of Kosova’s recent past, of the resistance to and fears of ethnic cleansing, and ask how these issues shaped judgments on intervention. I treat a series of unequal forms of expression and practice - ritualized and public gatherings and protests, newspaper editorials, public intellectual debates, invitations to people’s

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<sup>29</sup> See Evans 2008.

<sup>30</sup> See ICRC 2003.

homes – as topos of a public history that served to reconfigure understandings of justice and responsibility. In turn, these reconfigurations form new gendered practices of social and political mobilization. I wish to inquire into how international politics, and claims to universality and justice, take place on a terrain of power relations by considering what are usually termed “international” and “outside” impositions, such as the norm of responsibility to protect, through a contextualization of the circumstances surrounding the outsiders who came to the rescue in Kosova. In such a terrain, there are many competing stories of origin - of philosophical traditions on justice – and culture becomes a means of stating claims to such traditions. A thread that runs throughout these stories concerns the various ways in which men and women took part in socially sanctioned performances, at times joining and at times dispelling gendered and national identities.

In other words, I aim to consider the basic tenets of this norm – intervention and protection (I address post-war interventions and peace-building in a latter chapter) - through the prism of Kosovar Albanian culture as it was shaped historically and as it changed with the events of the 1990s and 2000s. Drawing on the experience recounted at the outset of this chapter, I demonstrate how public renderings and enactments of Albanian cultural traditions played a key role in shaping the political events of the 1990s and in Kosovar Albanian responses to them. In particular, I argue that *dignity* was turned into a political and social responsibility - creating new practices for enacting cultural particularities, such as *besa* (vow) and *mikëpritje* (hospitality denoting the welcoming of guests) and into strategies for action. As Jusuf Hadri’s insistence makes clear, these cultural particulars served to take people in and out of emotional and political commonality. Such enactments, though, do not take place within isolated or easily circumscribed territories or belongings. Indeed, dignity,



solidarity, and tradition could be seen as manifestations of performativity between domestic participants and international observers.<sup>31</sup>

The breadth of research and writing on the undoing of the former Yugoslavia warrants caution. A growing number of texts published on related topics, including most specifically those about NATO's intervention in Kosova, have produced and promulgated sets of glossary terms ranging from the descriptive to the poetic. They suggest such apocalyptic ends as "the death of Yugoslavia," "Balkan battlegrounds," or "Balkan Babel." Most are book titles about which Sabrina Ramet has offered an extensive and compelling analysis. Some 130 different books have been published in English alone about scholarly debates on the varied social and political formations of Yugoslavia's implosion (Ramet 2005). However, while historians, philosophers, political scientists, journalists, and even army generals and casual travelers have provided their analyses, surprisingly, anthropologists have been rather timid.<sup>32</sup>

This chapter takes advantage of relevant research in anthropology in order to (1) respond to the challenge of the question of cultural performance; (2) highlight the potential contribution of anthropology and comparative cultural analysis; (3) explore how norms such as Responsibility to Protect find resonance in local social practices and contexts. Perhaps such analysis also suggests an engagement with other norms and policies in the field of international relations, such as human security. My approach thus employs cultural translation<sup>33</sup>—that is, I consider the R2P norm as a particular cultural and political framework. More specifically, the chapter traces the ways in which R2P finds cultural translation and recognition in the particular cultural

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<sup>31</sup> I would like to thank Linda Gusia, sociologist at University of Prishtina, for pointing this out.

<sup>32</sup> Relevant texts include Reineck 1993; Denich 1994; Goddard, Llobera and Shore 1994; Bringa 1995; Huseby-Darvas 1995; Kirin-Jambresic and Povrzanovic 1996; Marokvasic 1998; Hayden 2000; Povrzanovic 2000; Ballinger 2003; DiLellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006.

<sup>33</sup> I would like to thank David Rodin of the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict, who pointed to the need for comparative philosophical inquiry of legal traditions.

and political practices in Kosova. The argument made here is that requests for protection and intervention that came from *within* Kosova—that is, by Kosovar Albanians—along with demands for global acknowledgment of principles of the responsibility to protect, should be seen as mutually constituted systems of values and morals.<sup>34</sup> In order to analyze the relationships between them, I contextualize the discussion around two key social formations: the 1990s civil-disobedience movement in Kosova, and the armed response of the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA). This chronological contextualization enables us to identify the emergence of cultural values and traditions as they were fashioned, with the power to mobilize social and political action, as relevant to challenges of post-conflict peace-building as well.

### **On Culture and Translation**

It is common to find yourself in the company of people in Kosova who, as they recollect the days before and immediately after the NATO airstrikes, mix stories of anger and pain with jokes. They end up crying and laughing at the same time. During a reunion with friends with whom I had studied at the American University in Bulgaria, we reminisced about our senior year in college during 1999: “He started complaining and was saying how upset he was that he could not go home [to Serbia] because of the bombing. I told him ‘didn’t you hear there are direct flights every day, Aviano [NATO military base in Italy] to Belgrade.’ He understood that getting home for me had been difficult for the past four years, so we both started laughing. My professor didn’t think it was funny. I guess it is part of the Balkan sense of humor.”

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<sup>34</sup> The focus of this work precludes analysis of the social and political cultural context of Serbia and Serbs in Kosova, and the politics of identity practiced among Serbs. Future research would include focus on ways in which Serbs in Kosova and Serbia negotiated and enacted the cultural and political realities of the time, particularly as diverse protests in support of and against Milosevic’s regime have deeply informed analyses of interventions from local and international perspectives. See Cushman 2004; Jansen 2001.

We also laughed with the story of an acquaintance who was stuck in the Blace refugee camp in Macedonia, who was running around in a panic informing people about a disease called “epidemic” that was spreading through the camp.

Michael Herzfeld noted, “For most ethnographers translating local terms as though they had stable meanings is intellectually indigestible, yet we cannot dispense with it any more than we could survive without reifying the categories of ordinary social life” (2003: 109). For the most part, anthropologists have been involved in making the cultural meanings and practices of “others” understandable to “Western” audiences. At the same time, a more accurate explanation would unmask the assumed homogeneity of such an audience, and the assumptions that anthropologists study cultures foreign to them and that their interlocutors are fluent in English, French, German, or other European languages. The unease with the dominant language of anthropological production is not only about translating words from, say, Albanian into English, but also about anthropological conceptual categories whose historical and cultural legacies may be taken for granted (Chilton 2004). From comparative studies of kinship to emotions, anthropologists have engaged the historical relations of the terms of anthropological inquiry, and more specifically colonial power, by showing their mutual constitution.<sup>35</sup> Understandings of structural relations of power and their use in anthropology is necessary, as is attention to the relations between markers of cultural identity—such as nation, race, class, and gender—through the inclusion of shifting sites of resistance and oppression.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, meanings of lived experience are carried in diverse ways and hold potential for transforming the terms of our analysis. Feminist anthropology has

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<sup>35</sup> See Clifford and Marcus 1986; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; McClintock 1995; Cooper and Stoler 1997; Loomba et al. 2005.

been most insistent on grounding research in political realities and historical and material relations of power.<sup>37</sup> The cultural translation attempted here is rooted in personal experiences, as well as the anthropologist's reflexive responsibility to suggest research questions and, perhaps, social action. Lila Abu-Lughod has commented about ethnographic responsibility, linking this to the responsibility to address injustice that moves beyond cultural relativism—that is, a passive understanding of cultural differences. According to her, justifications of the intervention in Afghanistan, based on the moral imperative to save Afghan women, resonate with colonial and missionary rhetoric from the past. Therefore, she asks:

Why knowing about the 'culture' of the region, and particularly its religious beliefs and treatment of women, was more urgent than exploring the history of the development of repressive regimes...[and why] instead of political and historical explanations, experts were being asked to give religio-cultural ones. Instead of questions that might lead to the exploration of global interconnections, we were offered ones that worked to artificially divide the world into separate spheres—recreating an imaginative geography of West versus East (Abu-Lughod 2002: 784).

Similarly, according to Vjollca Krasniqi, the politics of peacekeeping in Kosova is entrenched in a web of signification, a representational system that not only embodies “the ‘death’ of heterogeneity and the ‘victory’ of universalism over particularities, but also the normalization of hierarchical restructurings of gender” (2006: 368). The result is an assumed mimicry of the West, whereby peace-building becomes part of a larger system that places democratic governance in opposition to local cultural practices.

I would suggest following the approach offered by Abu-Lughod and placing focus on the historical developments of repression in Kosova. I also seek to find interlocutors while moving across various disciplinary, geopolitical, and hierarchical

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<sup>37</sup> See di Leonardo 1991; Mascia-Lees 2009.

boundaries, particularly the hierarchies within institutions of knowledge.<sup>38</sup> This is where cultural translation becomes possible, at the intermediary spaces where one takes hold of seemingly self-evident categories of cultural expression and points to the ways in which ‘people confront power,’ as Frederick Cooper suggests (2005). Culture, then, is not a timeless tradition, a mode of behavior, or a tool that aids in explaining why interveners are welcomed. Culture, in Eric Wolf’s terms, is that which can “bring together that what might otherwise may be kept apart...If we want to understand how humans seek stability or organize themselves to manage change, we need a concept that allows us to capture patterned social flow in its multiple interdependent dimensions and to assess how interdependent power steers these flows over time. ‘Culture’ is such a concept” (Wolf 1999: 289).

Anthropologists would certainly argue that we must think through a concept of change – with much disagreement on what the definition of the concept might be – in order to account for the ways in which it has steered politics and culturally deployed “intervention.” NATO’s military campaign in Kosova has without doubt generated some of the most compelling debates on issues of international law and the relevance of international organizations, particularly the United Nations. Genocidal and ethnic-cleansing campaigns of the 1990s inflicted death and suffering on millions, and events appeared as turning points, not only in imagining the “international order,” but also in

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<sup>38</sup> The research conducted for the writing of this chapter has also been devised as an exploratory intellectual exercise into Kosova’s local knowledge production on the topic, a genealogy that is currently absent. The research has also involved the development of an educational tool for students of social and anthropological theory on violence and the state. The research based on analysis of secondary sources includes memoirs and diaries of local opinion makers, researchers, politicians, and military figures. Here some of the more dominant understandings and symbolic frameworks of the intervention are spelled out. The research based on primary sources is based on a total of 100 interviews. I have personally conducted 20 interviews, 15 of which are semi-structured and 5 of which are in-depth. The interviews were conducted with important opinion makers in Kosova, particularly those who have defined the dominant meanings of NATO’s intervention in Kosova, for its pre-independence and post-independence trajectories. The other 80 in-depth interviews were conducted by students at the University of Prishtina as part of a special topics seminar in cultural anthropology.

rethinking the value of human life. Debates among international lawyers and political scientists have focused on the legality, legitimacy, and forms of wars waged within the international society of states in which sovereignty and nonintervention are the traditional governing principles, but have been rethought (Kaldor 1999; Wheeler 2000). The research I conducted on the topic, together with students at the University of Prishtina, confirms that the people in Kosova are not ready to dispense with the possibility that “the intervention in Kosova happened because it was impossible to remain disinterested, to stay away, and not act,” as Linda Krasniqi argued, but concludes that although “Kosova had become a massive prison for Albanians, the aim of the intervention had not been to create freedom in Kosova, rather to force an agreement with Milosevic.”<sup>39</sup>

These observations find analogies in recent analyses of relations between violence, governance, and impunity, influenced by Walter Benjamin’s notion of “state of exception.” According to Aida Hozic, states of exception, or the suspended constitutional order, also can be conceptualized in space as “zones of exception.” According to her, the cultural economy of the location of zones of violence rests upon the “decontextualization from other, global, political and economic trends...Construction of boundaries between zones of safety and zones of violence is, therefore, more than performance of security—it is the way to affirm global order in face of its absence” (Hozic 2002: 185). In this regard, what occurred in Kosova, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Somalia, Bosnia, Chechnya, Angola, Sierra Leone, and Liberia become exceptions to the normal workings of world politics. More poignantly, they appear to tell of “the way in which (cultural) violence is governed

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<sup>39</sup> Linda Krasniqi, *Intervenimi i NATO-së në Kosovë*, unpublished paper submitted in partial fulfillment of coursework. University of Prishtina, Department of Sociology, January 2010, 7.

and contained; the practice that obfuscates the increasing frequency with which sovereign power encounters—and obliterates—bare life with impunity” (Hozic 2002: 185).

The interest has most often been on how an imagined and homogeneous “Western” audience and a global order produce and remake a world of “others.” But as I show below, Kosovars created social movements and engaged in making public history that demonstrated the domestic and international interdependencies. During the early 1990s, it was not uncommon for people to take part in protests and then rush home to watch the Euronews feed of the events. A doctor from Prishtina, who was present in most protests in those years, explained that the relevance of the events came not only from the resistance they marked, but also the message they conveyed. “The world watched. We looked good. The world could see a university professor being beaten. They could say...see how they treat people who have dignity. But they could also see how we were poor and would resist.”<sup>40</sup> Nazlie Bala, also recounts her experience as a human rights activist in the early 1990s for the Council for Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF):

We were always on call...one year a bomb thrown from a police car exploded near a village of Vushtrri. Three children were injured, two died, and one was in critical condition. We knew we were undertaking a dangerous action, facing possible imprisonment, injury, or death...I went to the place where the tragedy occurred so we could witness the fact, take photographs, observe the bodies, and speak with the parents. We knew the next day a delegation led by [UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the former Yugoslavia] Elizabeth Rehn was coming to visit. Her job was to report to the General Assembly of the United Nations. We had to prepare a report in the English language about what had happened by the next morning, before the delegation arrived...This is how we worked to make sure everything was based on truth. Our reports clearly described violations of human rights from 1989 until the beginning of 1999 (Farnsworth 2008: 40).

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<sup>40</sup> Interview conducted 24 January 2004.

I would then agree with Craig Calhoun, who calls for attention to “the underlying social and cultural dynamics that shape both the production of emergencies and the production of response” while reminding us of one of the central concerns of social theory and action (2004: 373). He states, “[T]hinking in terms of emergencies draws on the sense of agency in promoting intervention to minimize suffering. But it denies agency precisely to those who suffer” (392). When asked, many Kosovar Albanians do not argue that the intervention in Kosova is an exceptional case, but one that creates possibility for “humane responsibility.”<sup>41</sup> Kosovar imaginings of and participation in these events have engaged a historiography that brings Kosova into the picture and illustrates the ways in which individuals intervene in events and redefine the spaces of violence. The central question remains how to elicit responses—in this case, to halt mass atrocities—without denying the agency of those who are suffering from crimes.

Lila Abu-Lughod has suggested that we can “use a more egalitarian language of alliances, coalitions, and solidarity, instead of salvation” when responding to social injustice and oppression (2002: 789). Such language would have to be accompanied by practices that account for the power dynamics that cause such injustices and fail to see culture as no more than an obstacle to “the implementation of political solutions.” As Noam Chomsky stated, “it is understandable that the powerful should prefer to declare that we should forget history and look forward. For the weak, it is not a wise choice.” He expressed this view in July 2009 to the UN General Assembly Thematic Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect by stating that R2P is “regularly disturbed by the rattling of a skeleton in the closet: history”(2009). However, a student at the University of Prishtina dissented in a paper for a course on the anthropology of

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<sup>41</sup> Appearing in 63 of 100 interviews in research conducted (see note 16 above).



violence: “NATO’s intervention is an example of a raised awareness at a global level for regional responsibilities and a new moment in international law.”<sup>42</sup> His respondent, Sadik Bicaj, a journalist, affirmed by qualifying the internal request as a sign “that we [could] not allow ourselves to be degraded to the level of an observer.” According to them, Chomsky fails to see that before NATO bombed Serbia, Serbia bombed Kosova. This is not an argument along the lines of “who started the fight first” but, as any anthropologist would say, about grounding the analysis of cultural, intellectual and political concerns.

Challenges abound. For instance, one of the key terms here - mass atrocity - does not have a literal Albanian translation. “Atrocity,” carrying the meaning of “atrocious,” would best be translated as “horrific” in Albanian. During fieldwork and interviews people spoke of massacres, killings, crimes, brutality, and expulsion; and horror was always accompanied with a clear adjectival reference to “Serbian horror.” As one respondent stated: “during the [NATO] bombing I was afraid, but I do not remember it as a suffering, pain, or sacrifice.”<sup>43</sup> According to him, horror is something that leaves one physically untouched, that is observed from afar and conducted from a distance, and resembles conscience-shocking images seen on television. He continues: “I clearly understand why there was intervention in Kosova and not in Rwanda. I think it is racist. People think of the things that happened there as horrible, but we do not feel their pain and suffering. Once you feel the pain yourself, you begin to understand.” Here we see that horror and a response to violence had to be contextualized without becoming a gloss for political expressions emerging out of moments of particularity and socially heterogeneous practice and meanings.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Fatmir Shala, *Intervenimi në Kosovë*, unpublished paper submitted in partial fulfillment of coursework. University of Prishtina, Department of Sociology, January 2010, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Student interview with Rustem Krasniqi, 12 January 2010, Prishtina.

<sup>44</sup> See Venuti 2000.

The moment when something is no longer perceived as just horrible or atrocious—which allows for distancing or containment - produces discomfort with remaining detached (1997).

I now move to a focus on Kosova from 1990 to 2010 in order to see how Kosovar Albanians construed, imagined, and perceived not only their own suffering but also the responses of international “others.” I remain concerned about the way in which terms of international law and relations relate to historical and cultural particularities, and not only those in Kosova, without turning them into exceptions or oddities.

### **Prevention and Reaction**

Civil resistance in Kosova in the 1990s reflected “reinventing traditions”—social, cultural, and political. The decade was a time of solidarity, dignified response, and endurance; it was a space to express social identities as manifestations of particular and universal cultural values. In particular, practices of Albanian customary law were revived. Empowered notions of *besa* (vow) and *ndera* (honor) were placed within a “civilizing mission” by Albanian intellectual and political elites to denote congruity with a universal discourse on human rights. In particular, they served to legitimate discursive practices in the maintenance of moral structures that sustained family and community, while linking national solidarity to the dignity of political action.

Many have argued that the ten-year civil resistance, which sought to mobilize international interests and action, failed because it did not manage to produce that action. Nonetheless, the resistance sustained political, economic, and cultural survival in Kosova. It provided an opportunity for the world to take notice and act, and, perhaps, created an acknowledgement of the moral burden of responsibility by the

powerful. At the time, apart from early symbolic gestures, such as peace awards, it seemed Kosovar Albanians would have to wait their turn until the body count had mounted sufficiently. As Susan Woodward observed, “The unwillingness to intervene at the interests of prevention, acting only when violence occurred, sent a signal that one had to go to war to get attention” (1997: 41). In resonance with this conclusion, Lindita Hajdari and Fitore Çunaku, in their research papers, wrote, “Due to the injustices and the degrading actions against the Albanian population” they “first *had* to organize a peaceful movement and when that seemed to fail they *had* to organize militarily.”<sup>45</sup> Their statements speak of contests for social and political power in Kosova, and the legitimacy assigned to a shifting response that emerged out of impossibility. That one *had* to organize in a particular way tells a history of a publicly enforced and institutionally sanctioned narrative of national identity.



Figure 1. Demonstration in Prishtina 1999. Photograph by Hazir Reka, courtesy of the photographer.

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<sup>45</sup> Fitore Çunaku, *Intervenimi i NATO-së në Kosovë*, unpublished paper submitted in partial fulfillment of coursework. University of Prishtina, Department of Sociology, January 2010, 4; Lindita Hajdari, *Intervenimi I NATO-së*, unpublished paper submitted in partial fulfillment of coursework. University of Prishtina, Department of Sociology, January 2010, 3.

A most iconic representation of the time, which adorned people's homes, coffee shops, and, all kinds of other public and private spaces, was that of a man sitting still in the middle of a main street in Prishtina, as the crowd behind him ran away from the special police forces who were making their way to the protesters and beating stragglers with batons.<sup>46</sup> A caption for a YouTube video featuring the picture echoes a common reading of the event. "When the Serbs used non-human violence against Albanians in Prishtina, 1990. A brave old Albanian man sat down in the middle of the road and said, 'This is my land and no one can take it from me!'" Similar juxtapositions in media, between the "non-human" violence and the "peaceful" claim to one's land, continue to build a terrain for national identification. Although similar images have now been relegated to the memory of those who took part and organized similar protests, a common description *tjetër kohë ka qenë* (it was another time), in its obvious claim, calls forth the resistance of the time with melancholy and is asserted from a position of superiority attributed to non-violence. This position is maintained as a relevant experience of a recent past even though Kosova Albanians later supported an armed resistance. By creating ways in which to photograph, be photographed, protest, write, and even prepare food during times of shortage, the past could be materialized as evidence and as a source of political and cultural congruity.

The public emergence of the Kosova Liberation Army in 1997, therefore, not only confirmed that nonviolent prevention of conflict had come to an end, but also marked the empowerment of a new national construction.<sup>47</sup> As Jusuf Zejnullahu concluded in his interview "Kosovar society feels differently after the war. It feels

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<sup>46</sup> See clip at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWj3ZAcJBwE>

<sup>47</sup> See Pillana 1999.

respected, able to decide for itself. This is because people can now make decisions for themselves.”<sup>48</sup> Although the possibility to “make decisions for themselves” is a matter of great social and political discord in Kosova, now eleven years after the war, Zejnullahu’s sentiment is commonly found in Kosova, and is usually followed by stories of first encounters with KLA.

The KLA first appeared in ambushes on Serbian police, but the more powerful recollections relate with their first public appearance in uniform and their participation at the funeral of Halit Geci, a schoolteacher who was shot by Serbian police on 28 November 1997. Describing a feeling of incredible empowerment, a participant among the thousands of people who attended, recounted the event:<sup>49</sup>

Me: Why did you go to the funeral? You did not know Halit Geci.

Agim: I went because of solidarity with teachers, to say we are against the violence. At that time, you understand, everybody was together, mobilized. It was a big event when you managed to organize a concert, a theater show, or a wedding. Everything was resistance. You would drive your car from one town to the other and people on the street would greet you with two fingers in a V as sign for peace.

Me: What did you think when you saw the KLA soldiers there?

Agim: At that time most people did not believe the KLA existed. Their existence was not clear. Many people were saying the Serbian secret police were orchestrating the attacks...to make us look bad. It was also difficult to know what to think. We had become accustomed to the way of doing this. But, when I entered the graveyard, and I saw them...they were young men, in uniforms. I thought, now we are here.

In Kosova of the 1990s, funerals, weddings, and all kinds of other familial events had become saturated with public relevance. They could not be treated as private, or closed. The greetings on the roadside Agim refers to were more common during the first couple of years of the 1990s. Participants in events viewed their actions as

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<sup>48</sup> Lumni Tërshana, *Intervenimi në Kosovë*, unpublished paper submitted in partial fulfillment of coursework. University of Prishtina, Department of Sociology, January 2010, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Interview conducted 20 June 2004. Source wished to remain anonymous.

resistance that created common political and cultural belonging. Agim’s funeral remembrance is imbued with meanings that both the non-violent and the armed resistance gained following the end of the war, with ensuing contestations over the merits of either strategy. Suspicion regarding the existence of the KLA meant that many people were uneasy about engaging in an armed conflict. Agim’s statement, “Now we are here,” once “I saw them” asserts that the non-violent resistance became increasingly seen as “a muted sacrifice” as Agim later explained.



Figure 2. Bust of Halit Geci in the yard of “Halit Geci” elementary school in Llaushë, Kosova. Photograph by Skifteri (online nickname). The photograph of the bust has been edited and an image of the two-headed eagle placed on top. Contest and debate over national symbols is part of an ongoing process of state and nation building in Kosova. Kosova’s flag – consisting of a blue background on which five yellow stars stand above yellow territorial representation of Kosova, to most Kosovars, represents a concession with the package of post-independence measures for Kosova, in which the flag could not include colors or images associated with only one “ethnic community.” The national contest which selected the new design of the flag (February 2008), omitted entries containing the red and black colors of the Albanian flag and the two-headed eagle. Albania’s flag is a variation of the flag the medieval hero Skenderbeg used to fight the Ottomans in the 15th century. It marks Albania’s declaration of independence in 1928 and is seen as the flag of “all Albanians.” The most common distinction made in Kosova today is that this is the national flag, while Kosovo’s current flag is that of the Kosovar state.

Kosovars found justice and moral responsibility embedded in both the KLA and the NATO intervention for a number of reasons. First, the systematic discrimination exercised over Albanians by the Serbian state had oppressed the majority and stripped them of all rights.<sup>50</sup> Second, Belgrade had brazenly breached international conventions and laws. Not only did Serbia not protect many of its citizens, it also systematically marginalized and brutalized them. Although Albanians did not consider Serbia as sovereign in Kosova, local values of justice resonated with international customary law and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The KLA's fight for liberation and NATO's campaign to stop the ethnic cleansing were mutually reinforcing.

Although formed by different histories, and significantly different in form and intentions, the KLA struggle and NATO's military intervention were seen as a reaffirmation of Kosova's belonging to Europe and of the values of a political and judicial tradition of the West. Cultural and political elites have referenced and constructed relations of such belonging as already existing narratives of cultural reality. A debate between writers Ismail Kadare and Rexhep Qosja developed during 2006, at the moment when Albania was preparing to enter an EU Stabilization and Association Agreement, centered on elaborations of the Occidental and Oriental character of Albanian culture. Subsequently many joined the debate, including prime ministers and ministers. Kadare argued that Albanian culture was in its foundations and history European (Kadare 2006). Qosja on the other hand pointed to the relevance of historical influences from the Ottoman Empire, arguing against Kadare's essentialism, but added that Ottoman "leftovers" are "examples of non-Europe" that do not belong in Albanian culture (Qosja 2006). Historian Enis Sulstarova, has treated

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<sup>50</sup> Here I borrow from Saidiya Hartman's usage on "the state of subjection" (1997).

these seemingly opposing arguments as an expression of ‘an Albanian derivation from European Occidentalism,’ specifically of its intellectuals (2007: 75-80).<sup>51</sup>

### **The 1990s**

In February 1989, the Milosevic regime imposed martial law on Kosova.<sup>52</sup> The “state of emergency” that lasted the next nine years consisted of de facto apartheid based upon ethnic segregation and state-sponsored violence against the Albanian majority. On 23 March 1990, Serbian military tanks and police surrounded the Assembly of Kosova and, without a quorum, Serbian political authorities amended the constitution. These changes resulted in the revocation of Kosova’s status as an autonomous province. The decision also imposed restrictions whose aims, as Howard Clark has observed, were “nothing less but to change the ethnic structure of Kosovo permanently” (Clark 2000: 72).

The 1990s in Kosova, and perhaps the region as a whole, could be characterized as a period of re-inventing traditions (Kennedy 2002). While the West enthusiastically greeted the end of state-socialism in the former Soviet bloc, the resulting transformations toward building democratic states and open-market economies did not always reflect common understandings of the past or visions for the future (Berdahl, Bunzl and Lampland 2000). Nationalist politics and the creation of new states from the former Yugoslavia appeared antithetical to the strengthening of liberal global political and economic relations. While war broke out briefly in

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<sup>51</sup>See also Sulstarova 2006.

<sup>52</sup>For a discussion of some of the key events that led to martial law as well as a discussion of cultural politics behind shifting national identifications in Kosova, see Bieber and Daskalovski 2003; Luci and Markovic 2008.



Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the war in Kosova became one of the longest-lasting nonviolent movements against an authoritarian state.<sup>53</sup>

For Albanians in Kosova, this time of change came to signify an opportunity to govern their own political, economic, and cultural resources. For them, this opportunity could not exist as long as they remained part of a rump Yugoslavia or Serbia.<sup>54</sup> The amorphous so-called international community wanted to recognize the promise to strengthen civil societies throughout the region and such entities provided support, both in monies and other capacities.<sup>55</sup> As Michael Kennedy has argued, however, “civil society was not just a social formation, but, significantly, a cultural formation” (Kennedy 2002: 56). While Belgrade sanctioned the revocation of Kosova’s autonomy in March 1989 and legitimated segregation and martial law, Kosovars aimed to articulate pluralism by developing transformative politics integrated by traditions based on articulations of national cultural identity, modern state-building, and belonging to the West. In this context, Stephen Zunes states, “Starting in 1990, Albanian Kosovars challenged Serbian rule through one of the most impressive large-scale nonviolent campaigns in history, including the creation of a parallel government and educational system. Yet during eight years of struggle, the United States and most of the world ignored them” (2003).

The cultural practices of the 1990s thus sustained an emerging resistance to violence and ethnic segregation, which involved constant renegotiations between modernity and tradition. The reconciliation of blood-feuds among Albanians between

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<sup>53</sup> For a discussion of media construction of identities and the war in Slovenia, see Mihelj, Bajt ad Pankov 2008: 39-60.

<sup>54</sup> By 1993 Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina had declared independence from Yugoslavia, with Montenegro becoming independent from Serbia in 2006. Kosova also declared its independence in 1990 but was not recognized by any government. As of 2008, more than sixty UN member states recognized Kosova as independent but additional acknowledgment was required in order to become a member of the United Nations.

<sup>55</sup> Since 1991 George Soros alone, through the Open Society Institute and national foundations, has provided tens of millions of dollars to civil society programs throughout the region.

1990 and 1992 made for one of the most powerful enactments of political identities remade within novel framings of human rights, set as a modern political practice based on revived but adapted national traditions.<sup>56</sup> In a series of public gatherings over two years, the reconciliation movement came to constitute, according to movement activists and Muhamet Pirraku, a historian at the Albanian Studies Institute in Prishtina, “a legal and civilizing confrontation” with Serbian politics in Kosova (1998: 12). Reconciling blood-feuds was defined, by the students that initiated it, and by the intellectual elite that supported and gave it legitimacy, as expressions of Albanian customary law that already reflected the universal discourse of human rights. Intellectual elite and student initiatives increasingly referred to the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini—an oral tradition from the fifteenth century, codified in 1933 by Franciscan monk Shtjefan Gjeçovi. This better-known version of customary law helped build social cohesion in an uncertain time.<sup>57</sup> Over the two-year period, some 2,000–2,500 feuds were resolved in this way. Notions of forgiveness, *besa*, and dignity became the language of protest.<sup>58</sup> *Besa*, which translates into “oath” or “vow,” was used in reconciliations while replicating the binding ties of morality, family, and, in this instance, the nation. Anton Çetta, the retired folklorist who emerged as one of the leaders of the movement, seemed to be echoing a cohesive assertion: paradoxically, traditional values could shed backwardness and initiate Kosova’s cultural return to Europe.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> This is the topic of the following chapter.

<sup>57</sup> To forgive blood meant that the parties, specifically families, would reconcile and not seek to avenge any wrongdoing committed against them.

<sup>58</sup> Derived etymologically from *be*, *beja*, “the oath,” *besa* is usually translated as the honor of the house, hospitality, the given word, protection guarantee, reconciliation, alliance, etc.

<sup>59</sup> See Demaçi [1958] 1991; Kadare [1978] 1990 for literary treatments and their condemnation of this practice. *Broken April* was also adapted in 2001 into film by Brazilian director Walter Salles with the title *Abril Despedaçado* (Behind the Sun). For the context in Albania see Ismet Elezi 1983.

The public declarations of “forgiving blood” created possibilities to assert pride in cultural belonging that had previously been governed through subjugation and oppression during most years of state-socialism.<sup>60</sup> The purported solution to “nations and nationalities” in socialism amounted to repressing cultural distinctions as aberrations, at least those that threatened the regime. Aims to educate and modernize Kosova came from Kosovar elites, particularly through the University of Prishtina (established in 1969), the first and only university in Kosova until 2002.

Serbian authorities continued to view Albanians as racially inferior within Yugoslavia. This perception of Albanian inferiority in Kosova was marked by categories of cultural differentiation supposedly visible in the physical aspects of citizens. Dominant representations of Albanians were based on the dialectic of an infantilized savage, particularly representations of Albanian men. Serbian political concerns viewed perceived high birthrates in Kosova as a threat. (Salecl 2000; Bracewell 2000). Many civil society activists of the time remarked that it was no surprise that the gynecology clinic and its staff at Prishtina Hospital were the first targets of the special measures imposed by Belgrade. Albanian women were subject to violence, not only during protests of the 1990s but also during the war. Human Rights Watch documented 96 cases of rape in 1999, through testimonies given by victims and witnesses (2001). Most of these cases were gang rape that occurred in homes, while fleeing, or while in detention. Women’s groups, international researchers, observers, and, particularly, the Center for the Protection of Women and Children in Kosova have argued that the number of rapes was in the thousands;

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<sup>60</sup>In the following chapter I show the reaction to the state’s placement of the “observance” of “traditional” kin networks as remnants of the past, as objects and material to be collected by folklorists, and which the state’s modernist projects had to eliminate, although with little success. For a larger regional perspective on relations between ethnology and the socialist state, see Slobin 1996.

however, many of these remain unreported. Victims who came forward never received adequate support (de Brouwer 2005).

In Raymond Williams's terms, the dominant *structures of feeling* were grounded in references to Albanian "otherness" and cultural particularity within Yugoslavia, but these structures relied on the discourse of universal human rights. Eric Wolf's use of the concept of "descriptive integration" is helpful here, particularly in thinking of the relationships between cultural practices, enactments of tradition, and political-legal systems (1999: 18)<sup>61</sup> Placed in contexts of social and cultural life, through selective descriptions of particular and general phenomena, descriptive integration aims to "preserve the 'quality' of phenomena and their relation to each other in time and space" without leading to abstract generalizations. This approach resonates well in the writings of Gabi Bobi, philosopher and professor at the University of Prishtina who was also a regular columnist in the local press. In his 1982 *Sprovimet e Modernitetit (Trials of Modernity)*, specifically in a dialogue with Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism and Franz Fanon's critique of colonialism, Bobi places Serbian-Albanian relations in Kosova within the dialectics of power and culture:

Culture, and thus the universality of the cultural act is created based on principles of uniqueness, which means that the more particular we become the more universal we are, of course if we understand universality as a community of diversity not as their fusion. That is, not as a monocentric culture that suppresses cultural universality (diversity) in the name of an abstract universalism, thus masking its more concrete identity as a dominant culture (15-16).

In early 1990, there was a still a dominant appeal that "Democracy in Kosova means Democracy in Yugoslavia." Blerim Reka and Rramush Tahiri, journalists at the daily

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<sup>61</sup> This term, introduced by Alfred Kroeber, calls attention to historical processes and contextualization, rather than sequence of events. For more discussion see Ingold 2008.

*Rilindja*, made this statement, which resonated with statements made by Veton Surroi and also by the emerging activist of a group called the “Kosova Alternative.”<sup>62</sup> Surroi stated “we cannot discuss [Kosova’s status] through narrow national perspectives...but we have to make attempts at denationalizing the problem, which is a key issue when human rights are at stake” (Reka and Hapçiu 1990). This came one year after the revocation of Kosova’s autonomous status, protests that ended in the death, beating, and jailing of hundreds, the strike of more than 7,000 miners, and the apparent poisoning of children following ethnic segregation in schools (Amnesty International 1994). In a session of the Provincial Assembly on 6 June 1990, Albanian delegates issued a recommendation to draft a new constitution for Kosova. The chair of the assembly refused to enter the proposal into the meeting schedule, arguing that other competent bodies would have to decide. One frustrated delegate bellowed: “We are not children.”<sup>63</sup> By July of the same year, members of the Kosova Assembly gathered on the steps of the building to declare Kosova’s sovereignty and on 7 July proclaimed its constitution. This declaration came after the Serbian Parliament had approved the *Political Action Platform of the Central Committee of Yugoslavia in the Political Circumstances of the Province of Kosova* and the plan of the Republic of Serbia for *Peace, Freedom, Equality, Democracy and Prosperity in the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosova*, which was made official in March 1990 (Clark 2000: 58). Following the proclamation, the police took over Prishtina’s radio and television station RTP. Albanian journalists were expelled, and the

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<sup>62</sup> By the end of 1989 and during the coming year, numerous associations and political parties emerged in Kosova, as in other spaces of former Yugoslavia enabled by new laws permitting new political and other associations. The Kosova Alternative included associations of sociologists and philosophers, women’s groups, and the newly established Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms. New political parties were also established, including Liberal and Social Democrats, the Green Party, Christian Democrats, and the Democratic League of Kosova, which became the dominant force.

<sup>63</sup> A recently produced documentary film *2 korrik 1990*, by Blendi Fevziu (2010) presents recordings from assembly sessions and material from television archives. The public television station’s archive, available only in the past couple of years, contains rich materials for future research.

expulsion of all government employees from all other state institutions followed, dramatically affecting services for health care, media, education, and other cultural, economic, and political institutions. During 1990 alone, an estimated 45 percent of Kosovar Albanians were lost their jobs; soon after almost 90 percent were unemployed. The Milosevic regime centralized control in Belgrade and annexed the previously autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosova.

Already the poorest unit of the former federation, Kosova emigration rose to tens of thousands—and eventually the number in exile reached 350 thousand. Young men sought political asylum in Europe as they faced mandatory conscription into the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA), which, by 1991, already was engaged in wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. As police harassment intensified and made violence routine, ethnic segregation permeated every aspect of social and economic activity. Albanians lost the right to purchase or sell property without special permission. Once expelled from their jobs, they also lost occupancy rights to lodgings formerly attached to their employment. Survival required a parallel economy that relied on remittances from abroad and even more on the so-called Three-Percent Fund, a voluntary taxation system established in 1993 to which Kosovar Albanians contributed. A state that systematically dismantled rights but enjoyed international impunity also encountered fierce local resistance. This mobilization of economic, political, and cultural labor cannot be understood through the lens of “transition,” a process that sought to quickly remedy and rescue socialist economies and societies, nor does it mark a return to normality. Contributing almost a quarter of her monthly salary of \$30, middle school teacher Kimete Dida remembers:

We would divide the salaries among ourselves. There were no more salaries from the state. We created an independent union and would split the money among the teachers. Also, I almost forgot to mention, that our school, ‘Ismail Qemajli,’ was separated. The Serbs separated it. There were 2400 pupils.

There were 300 Serbian pupils and they took 12 classrooms. We had 2100 pupils and we worked in five shifts. Children in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades had to come to school at 5:30 in the afternoon, which was the fourth shift.

This recollection makes clear that the 1990s in Kosova are collectively remembered as a time of solidarity in the face of structural inequities and segregation imposed by Belgrade's nationalist politics. Endurance became the real agent of survival. Cultural values were inserted into historical narratives and animated the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK). Led by Ibrahim Rugova, the LDK became the main vector for civil resistance, a new cultural "phenomenon" in Wolf's terms, which created space and possibilities for normality in abnormal circumstances. Kosovars created a parallel government, including a parliament, an education system, as well as alternative health and other services.

In what Bobi called the "universality of the cultural act," both in its distinctiveness and universalism, dignity came to constitute the forms and contents of protest. As the philosopher and cultural critic Shkëlzen Maliqi noted at the time, "we are not as you choose to present us ... but only 'with dignity' [we] express our political will which is different from yours" (Maliqi 1994: 58).<sup>64</sup> Dignity also constituted the discursive terrain for marking a new political identity. Discussing the shift from shame to dignity, sociologist Anton K. Berishaj observed:

Posing for photography went on with such theatrical ceremony that it was almost as if the beating had not degraded us at all, but had somehow made us proud....The presence of journalists was seen as a gesture of sympathy and curiosity....Kosova Albanians no longer hesitated to go naked, bearing raw marks of violence in front of witnesses, neighbors and family members, ready to show that they had been wronged (2001: 79-81).

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<sup>64</sup> For analysis of 1980s cultural, historical, and political debates see also Maliqi [1990] 2010; Shala 1990; Maliqi 1994; Maliqi 1998.

Calling for an acknowledgment of abuse to motivate “the world to know and take action,” was repeated to me in many interviews and even casual conversations. By the end of the 1990s, every Albanian family had at least one family member expelled from work, detained by police, beaten, or jailed. The UN-imposed embargo on Serbia was breached continually. Diplomatic negotiations were never supported adequately and Security Council resolutions were flouted (Bellamy 2000). The civil resistance of the 1990s postponed violent confrontation, but Serbian occupation legitimized new cultural expressions inspired by universal human rights. With feeble international criticism and a lack of democratic alternatives within Serbia, it became clear that no degree of internal, dignified non-violent resistance could quickly change an authoritarian regime. The case of South African apartheid, which took over 40 years of resistance before collapse, is telling.

### **International Intervention, 1999**

Sociologist Anton Berishaj has noted that Albanians remained cautious of the state and “experienced it as a source of violence and brutality” (Berishaj 2001: 79). Therefore, understanding the emergence of the Kosova Liberation Army requires recognizing that the endurance strategy of the Democratic League of Kosova had become inadequate. A longer history of relations to the state, which Berishaj describes, aided the formation of resistance and underground movements in Kosova. Comprehending the personal and collective experiences of political organization and persecution is a first step in recognizing how an armed response in Kosova became a new means of survival.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> The fall of Aleksander Ranković in 1966, head of the State Security Administration (UDBA), was clearly such a moment. The constitution of 1974 and the student demonstrations of 1981 also signaled that power relations in Kosova were being challenged. See Wachtel 1998.



Gjylnaze Sylja, a Member of Parliament, builds a narrative that connects personal, familial, and national renderings of events spanning four decades. Here she recounts her decision to join the KLA, serving as medical personnel:

Another turning point was the year 1981, when the demonstrations took place... This was perhaps my first confrontation. I simply asked myself where we are as a people. All of this is happening to us and why is it not happening to other peoples of Yugoslavia. Why precisely us? Then I began asking many questions. I began reading a lot of history and posing questions to my professors. At that time my sociology professor was Professor Fehmi Agani. I spoke to the professor a lot during that time... Even from before, because of my family's experience, although they always tried to protect us from the experiences they had had. During that period, especially after World War II, I knew from my parents that our house was burned and that they rebuilt it. Their experience in that system was very bad... and simply I saw that besides being a good student, this was not enough, I had to do something. I was not very certain what I was supposed to do, but I had great will to do something to change the situation.

Legitimizing new kinds of social and political confrontations with the state on the part of the KLA was inspired by cultural and historical understandings of justice, Kosova marginality in former Yugoslavia, and by the constant violence strategically exercised by that state over populations in what later became KLA strongholds (Ströhle 2006). Although socialist Yugoslavia's persecution of enemies of the state was by no means reserved for Albanians, "ethnic considerations" had created a political-economy based on the ethnic division of labor in Kosova. The political visions of those placed differentially within former Yugoslavia's economic and political distribution of rights, and mobility enjoyed by a minority of Albanians in Kosova, had also created constant social and cultural confrontations. Simultaneously, significant segments of the population who were influenced by Marxism-Leninism and were sympathetic to anti-colonial struggles were marginalized; they began to articulate their cause. In Kosova, members of illegal underground movements—including the Popular Movement for Kosova (*Lidhja Popullore e Kosovës* - LPK), which later came to

constitute the ranks of the KLA—came from backgrounds in which memories and experiences of resistance since the first Balkan wars had marked their political aspirations.

### **Stories of Intervention**

Jacob Climo and Maria Cattell state that “memory is tightly connected to emotions, which lead us to create memories of things not actually experienced, reshape existing memories...” (2002: 13). My experience of the war has indeed been shaped by an event told to me by my mother. Once NATO’s campaign began and my sisters and I were safely outside of Kosova,<sup>66</sup> my parents decided to do their part by staying in Prishtina. Their apartment served as a meeting place for those still living in the city. Since the telephone in their apartment was still working, they would house as many as 60 people at a time waiting to speak to relatives who had fled to neighboring Macedonia, or Albania, or farther afield. Having escaped execution, two of their closest friends, together with their four children, also came to live with my parents and others also sought refuge. Once the neighborhood had been “cleansed” of most Albanian residents, only a few families remained. The police and army regularly visited my parents’ apartment. In an act of what she now calls stupidity, my mother even made the soldiers take off their shoes when entering the apartment:

I said this is still a home. I kept remembering being purged from the clinic and the university [she is a pathologist and professor at the Medical Faculty], and all I had seen working with the [Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms]...I cannot remember being happier than the day NATO troops entered.

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<sup>66</sup> I was in my final year in college at the American University in Bulgaria. One of my sisters was in Vienna, attending the Medical School at the University of Vienna, and the youngest, 13 years old at the time, came to stay with me. My father had driven her to Skopje in Macedonia in the morning of 24 March 1999. That evening the NATO bombing started.

The statement that her house “was still a home” meant requiring even unwanted visitors to act according to acknowledged rules of conduct. Although the outside world was so messy, the home had to be kept clean. It was also a means of maintaining a routine of normalcy and protecting an intimate inner space from which to draw strength, where the practice of everyday-life becomes “the social space for resistance to the dehumanizing effects of war” (Bahloul 1996: 82). Most assessments claim that more than 450 villages were destroyed during the armed conflict. This translates to 50,000 destroyed or inhabitable houses, as well as entire cities in ruins. The fact that sexual violence occurred in people’s homes also speaks of the devastation inflicted upon spaces that had served to maintain sociability and expression of normalcy. The critique offered by women’s groups in Kosova and Serbia of women’s exclusion from postwar negotiations has been framed precisely in terms of neglecting these excruciating experiences. Quite often they were the ones placed at the front lines of the war, protesting as did the Women in Black in Serbia, or being the first to open doors when paramilitaries came searching for the men (see Papić 2006).

In July 1999 I visited my maternal grandparents’ home in Peja. Accompanying a team of BBC journalists, working as a fixer with the suggestion of my friends “that you can make enough money to pay for your apartment at graduate school for a full year,” I also saw this as an incredible opportunity to visit the town and revisit my memories of childhood. Although, I did end up making enough money that summer to pay for my apartment rent, I also learned a great deal about the financial underpinnings of war and post-war reporting. I stood in the middle of ruins of what used to be the living room where I spent most of my childhood climbing with my sister on top of the shelves that displayed books, the TV set, vases, and drawers of

things I considered wondrous as a child. This was the house I remember growing up in, the house my grandfather had build.

You could still find signs of the looting that took place in the town. As the paramilitary withdrew, things they could not carry had been discarded. Jewelry, pots and pans, and an occasional photograph were scattered in the yard. My grandmother's summer kitchen was still intact; the apple, cherry and walnut trees seemed larger than I remembered. When I was two I had cut off the top of a pine tree my uncle had just planted in the garden. This tree, which I had been warned as a child would not grow after my pruning, was still there. Two years after the war, the house and the garden were sold to a local and wealthy property developer. The tree was cut down to make way for a new six-story apartment building, similar to much building in post-war Kosova.



Figure 3. Photograph of author, Pejë 1979. Figure 4. Photograph of author's grandmother's house, Pejë 1999. The first is a photograph of me on my second birthday, pretending to read a letter to my father who was away on mandatory army service. My grandmother's house is in the background; the pine tree is to the right. The second photograph was taken during my visit on July 1999. The house had been torched by paramilitaries as they were leaving the town.

As the journalists were preparing to record the scene, the neighbors heard us in the yard and came through a hole in a wall that had previously separated the houses. They invited us to their home and immediately recounted their experience of expulsion and return. Writing about hospitality in the Albanian tradition, ethnographer Mark Krasniqi argues:

[T]he tradition of hospitality is closely tied to the Albanian character. In his psychology, the main element is honor, face, which are tied to other components that make for the honor of men, such as *besa*, hospitality, bravery, truth, justice, tolerance, love for the fatherland, etc., which are principles of life, and the main national characteristics of Albanian people (2005: 25).<sup>67</sup>

One of the better-known commentators on Albanian culture, Edith Durham, adds:

A man is answerable, too, for his guest... The sacredness of the guest is far-reaching. A man who brought me water from his house, that I might drink by the way, said that I now ranked as his guest, and that he should be bound by his honour to avenge me should anything happen to me before I had received hospitality from another (1909: 27).

It would be possible to argue that this venerated cultural tradition also underpinned the welcome shown to most international guests in Kosova. Durham's *noble savage* seems to be not only a foreign perspective on customs observed in Kosova, but also a subject of internal critique on the position in which Kosovar citizens found themselves.<sup>68</sup>

Underlying these observations is the salience of gender in producing cultural and political boundary, as well its role seeking empowerment through local idioms of cultural particularity. Earlier I argued that the past became materialized as evidence and source of political and cultural congruity. For ten years now, since the end of the war in Kosova, the mass expulsion is publicly marked by reproductions of a

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<sup>67</sup> See Gjeçovi, "The house of the Albanian belongs to God and to the mik" [1933] 1992: 132.

<sup>68</sup> See Hamza 2009.

photograph that shows a woman breastfeeding her newborn and leading a convoy of refugees. The public commemoration of this collective experience has strengthened and appropriated elements of socially and culturally defined maternity as evidence of that congruity. As Rudidck has argued, maternity is often characterized by means of *holding on*, as the woman in the photograph holds on to her child (1989). Nancy Scheper-Hughes, asks whether we might not also think of the ways in which maternal thinking during war, in conditions of scarcity, and during political disruption is also guided by “letting go” (1998). Along these lines, I would argue that the attainment and enactment of womanly and manly character was made possible, in contexts of extreme *impossibility*, by suffering the domination over the nation and by resisting to achieve empowerment. Ultimately, different forms of suffering and resistance would be culturally and morally acceptable for men and woman, as the national project continued to construct the universal (neutral) political subject as male.



Figure 5. Kosovo Refugee Convoy 1999. Photograph by Damir Šagolj. Courtesy of the photographer (Reuters).

I turn to a deeper analysis of intersections between nation and gender in the following chapters, but it is important to note that the reproduction of the male subject

position of national character has not been separate from international mechanisms that enable and disable cultural and political agency. The responsibilities of hosts and guests have relied on a gendered division of labor in peace-building, often explaining and justifying “masculine domination” by superficial readings of local cultural, political and economic arrangements (Connell 1995; V. Krasniqi 2007). To discuss such relations, I would often meet with Nazlie, whom I mentioned earlier, who, apart from being a human rights activist for over twenty years, later worked as an advisor for various international organizations, and also offered her testimony at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. The youngest in a family of seven, Nazlie, oddly for Kosova, occupies a position of authority and respect in her family.

During the first days of the bombing, Nazlie would look out from binoculars at a hill opposite her house and observe a nearby army barracks. Once she and her family were expelled from their house they were taken to the train station and loaded into the train towards Kosova’s border with Macedonia. As she and her family made their way to the Prishtina train station, escorted by police, paramilitary and neighbors shouted insults and pelted her family with glass bottles. Having been told that the area around the track was mined, they walked between the tracks. Describing the mass expulsion she witnessed, Nazlie testified:

The Serb forces were at Hani i Elezit [border with Macedonia] where we were told to get off. They were in front of the cement factory. They were not on the Blace side because that was a neutral area. They were in front of the cement factory. I was in the third or the fourth carriage, I think. I'm not sure about that. We got off the train, and the Serb forces were around that cement factory. I mean that there were not only three or four or five of them, but there was a long line of them. The whole train was observed and controlled under the control of the force -- of the forces. And they told the males to go to one side and the females to the other side. And they were searching them. Some people were even threatened with the barrels of their guns. It was a very frightening scene. I could see people's IDs being torn up (ICTY 2006: 2174).

The most common assertion in Kosova over the recent past is that the bombing happened in 1999, but the war started earlier. “It is, of course, one of the most significant lessons of the postcolonial experience that no nation is simply young or old, new or ancient, despite the date of its independence,” Homi K. Bhaba observes. “‘New’ national, international, or global emergences create an unsettling sense of transition, as if history is at a turning point; and it is at such *incubational* moments...that we experience the palimpsestical imprints of past, present, and future in peculiarly contemporary figures of time and meaning” (2004: xvi). Bhaba’s reference is to Franz Fanon’s critique of colonialism, and a particular - perhaps universal - historical and intellectual endeavor. This chapter aims to show that historical turning points are negotiated through diverse social experiences. As people strive to give meaning to such moments, within global emergences of various kinds, they take part in defining their strategies for action. Formed through politics of culture that recreated traditions for social solidarity, Kosovars formed opportunities to ultimately practice and define survival. We must learn to take note of such energies, without remaining helpless to act against injustice.

The means and networks of solidarity created during the 1990s in Kosova, along with the appeal of moving toward and eventually joining Europe, characterized the calls for international military protection. Hospitality shaped the initial response to the presence of NATO soldiers. The emotional politics captured by the oft-used expression of “happiness when the intervention began” constituted the collective expression of belief and reflected the conviction that the intervention would abide by a common understanding of justice. Resonant in most interviews conducted on the topic is the belief that the “intervention was a humanitarian intervention...due to continual violations of human rights in Kosova, individual and collective, by



Milosevic's regime...[T]he extermination and vanishing of an entire people was prevented." In this regard, what the (ICISS) described as the use of 'military intervention for human protection purposes' signaled to many Kosovars a "new era in international law" with a "global responsibility" that would "not permit the repeat of Srebrenica." Again, the terms of such interventions must be resonant with practices that draw meanings from various histories and trajectories, particularly as people come to feel as guests in their in their own homes.

As prevention remains "the single most important dimension of the responsibility to protect," the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS argues) noted that "developed countries [should] be aware of the cultural barriers that may inhibit the interpretation of information" (ICISS 2001: xii). The communication and interpretation of culture certainly must inform the application of R2P, at times creating barriers and sometimes creating opportunities for understanding. Yet the assumption is doubtful that only "developed countries" bear this responsibility, or should decipher culture in order to prevent or halt mass atrocities. For instance, the package of post-independence measures for Kosova, assembled by former Finnish president Martii Ahtisaari, consists of key recommendations for the protection of cultural heritage. Accordingly, Kosova's peace and state building has come to revolve around a central discursive and representational axis of ethnicity and cultural rights, mainly built upon UN and EU resolutions and policies. I turn to this discussion in Chapter 5 in an attempt to trace the definitions of political rights and representation as they have turned cultural heritage into sites of ethnically defined historicity. The result has been the omission of cultural value from practices of everyday life and the varied creative forms through

which history and culture are continuously rethought and remade. In the least, those provide a powerful resource for thinking about the future.

The past ten years in Kosova have been characterized by unusually large responsibilities assumed by outsiders—from NATO, the UN, the EU, international nongovernmental organizations, and other international actors.<sup>69</sup> Most common critiques concerning this situation relate to the unequal power relations built into decision making, the most evident being the right reserved for the special representative of the UN secretary-general to veto any decision of the Provisional Institutions of Self Governance established by UNMIK.<sup>70</sup> This criticism also applies to local political elites benefiting from the international presence. Yet, despite the rhetoric of local ownership of peace-building processes, those outsiders know little about the local cultural underpinnings of workable processes of reconciliation or the measures required to improve prevention of or reaction to mass atrocities.

Practitioners may doubt the relevance of anthropology to the implementation of the responsibility to protect, but this chapter illustrates why a better and even basic understanding of cultural relations provides insights about alternative policies and approaches to prevention, reaction, and peace-building. Globally there appears to be a lack of commitment to this sort of responsibility and sensitivity, of attention to social

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<sup>69</sup> See Reka 2003.

<sup>70</sup> Here I have not discussed in any detail the complex relations of governance and administration that emerged in Kosova after the intervention that led to the independence of the last breakaway republic to emerge from the ashes of the former Yugoslavia. International inputs were essential to achieving Kosova's independence, but they also required diverse interlocutors. A crucial part of this unusual story was NATO's 78-day bombing campaign, which stopped ethnic violence, expelled Serbian troops, and established a UN protectorate for the largely Albanian population. The declaration of independence in February 2008 was followed a year later by actual independence in February 2009. The most recent international input came from the complex July 2010 decision rendered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that Kosova's declaration of independence was legal, although it avoided declaring that the state of Kosova was legal under international law. The ICJ's decision meant that the legitimacy of the state itself would be legitimized by "others," namely by the countries that recognized it. To date, it has been recognized by 96 of 192 UN member states—including the United States and the vast majority of European Union members.

and cultural relations of power. Such a commitment could, however, make unequal economic, political, and security arrangements more visible.

At the end of the 1980s, and beginning of the 1990s, Albanians argued for their right to self-determination as an expression of colonized peoples for freedom. Kosova's statehood has recently been articulated as the will of the people to enter the European "family of nations." Many European governments had claimed the conflict in the former Yugoslavia to be a "European issue," but they had, on countless occasions, failed to mobilize sufficient political will to act. Eventually, the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosova's (UNMIK) diminishing role, following an end to the negotiation process on Kosova's final status, and the Ahtisari package going into effect, led to the establishment of the EU's European Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), which was met with greater enthusiasm.<sup>71</sup>

At first empowered by traditional hospitality, Kosovars welcomed one of the largest-ever international military and peace-building missions. Soon thereafter, however, Kosovars began to assess the post-conflict and peace-building processes as a situation in which Kosova's people felt like guests in their own homes. This was true for both Serbs and Albanians, albeit with very distinct perspectives. In order to better understand the cultural production of political response in Kosova, in the following chapter I turn to a discussion and deeper engagement with the gendered dimensions of the national mobilization. During the periods I have discussed, claims to the latter have been built upon shifting identification, bodily and emotional bonds,

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<sup>71</sup> The aim of EULEX, the largest mission undertaken under the Common Security and Defense Policy, is to "assist and support the Kosova authorities in the rule of law area, specifically in the police, judiciary and customs areas. The mission is not in Kosova to govern or rule. It is a technical mission that will monitor, mentor and advise whilst retaining a number of limited executive powers. EULEX works under the general framework of United Nations Security Resolution 1244 and has a unified chain of command to Brussels." See: <http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/en/info/whatisEulex.php>

and to experiences of *dignity* and *resistance* as enduring *motifs* of national tradition. As the governing political body based its legitimacy on a moral superiority over its enemy, the values assigned to certain gendered cultural practices became particularly salient in showing how various social and political locations were negotiated.

### **Chapter 3: Blood-Feud Reconciliation: Intellectuals Make Memory, Women Make Politics**

When we were released from prison, we found an ideal situation to begin action for reconciliation, which we had long and often discussed in prison. In the beginning we gathered around us a few young people, but we needed older and wise men, those who knew the *oda* well, as well as the rules of the Albanian family, particularly in rural areas... Above all, not only were we young, but we were women, and we had not heard that in the history of the Albanian people women had ever taken such a historic mission. —*Hava Shala, former prisoner and activist*<sup>72</sup>

...[T]he Achilles' heel of the contemporary "second independence movement" lies in its political failure to grasp the specificity of the

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<sup>72</sup> Interview with author, 15 January 2013.

mode of rule that needs to be democratized. Theoretically, this is reflected in an infatuation with the notion of civil society, a preoccupation that conceals the actual form of power through which rural populations are ruled. Without a reform of the local state...democratization will remain not only superficial but also explosive... So long as rural power is organized as a fused authority that denies rights in the name of enforcing custom, civil society will remain an urban phenomenon. From the point of view of customary law, that community is defined in ethnic terms, as the tribe; from that of civil law, the community is a nation, whether defined ethnically or territorially. Both subject and citizen derive their rights, customary or civil, through membership in a patri: a tribe for the subject, a nation for the citizen. —*Mahmood Mamdani, Citizens and Subjects*

By 1990, Albanians in Kosova would publicly start calling each other brothers and sisters. They were no longer comrades. The socialist political elite had not managed to prevent Kosova's constitutional amendment. Kosova, no longer an autonomous province, would become run by Belgrade. The previous year, in November 1988, some three thousand miners had marched to Prishtina with the intent to show support for preserving Yugoslavia and the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosova. Party officials Azem Vllasi and Kaqusha Jashari were their main leaders. But Belgrade soon replaced them with others who were considered "honest Albanians." By the end of February 1989, the miners at Trepça, holding Kosova's mineral and industrial might, went on strike.<sup>73</sup> The strike ended after six days, once the provincial

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<sup>73</sup> Situated in northern Kosova, Trepça produced about 70% of former-Yugoslavia's mineral wealth and employed over 20,000 workers during the 1980s. A common conception in Kosova is that the real reasons behind Serbia's interests in Kosova are its mineral resources, and often define the mines as Kosova's *El Dorado*. Trepça's nearest town is Mitrovica. It was once a relevant economic, educational, and cultural center, owning to and dependent on the mining industry. This did not preclude its inhabitants from often stating "*Mitrovica punon, Beogradi ndërton*" (Mitrovica works, Belgrade gets built); an example of the inequity of distribution of former-Yugoslavia's resources, as well as the growing inability or unwillingness of its wealthier federal units to support the growth of lesser-developed parts. The socio-economic devastation of the municipality following the conflict and deindustrialization are often countered by optimism that Trepça could still be the lifeline of Kosova. Today, it is a city divided between the north inhabited by Serbs and the south by Albanians. Unemployment in Mitrovica South is currently 60%, while the government in Belgrade continues to financially support, through wages and other means, the Serbian population in the North. The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development has stated a common claim. "Northern Kosova has been a stark example of the chaotic reconfiguration, due to the objections of Belgrade, lack of political will in Brussels, and the obstructionist attitudes of the United Nations. As long as the north remains an unsolved 'hot spot' of Kosova, there will be sufficient space for latent radicalism and desperation for

LCY (League of Communists of Yugoslavia) agreed to the miners' requests and announced that Belgrade's placemen had resigned. The resignation was refused in Belgrade, the miners went back on hunger strike, and a wave of arrests and arbitrary detentions ensued. A state of emergency was placed in Kosova. Azem Vllasi was one of those arrested. Charged with "anti-bureaucratic revolution" and nationalist activity, he was later released. Amid the arrests and political power battles, protests emerged throughout Kosova. Influenced by the miners' resilience, by disappointment with the provincial LCY, and by the growing violence imposed by Belgrade, people also began turning in their party membership cards.

Remembering the events of that year, Kaqusha Jashari, who also led the general strike with Vllasi, explains her short experience as President of Yugoslavia's Communist Party:<sup>74</sup>

In 1988 I was for five months, not more, president of the Communist Party. This means that, in that time period from 1988 until 1990, I experienced, and society, but also I personally experienced a collapse... What happened, for example, was that the positions of the Serbian or Yugoslav Committee were to be respected. In Kosova the situation was very difficult. We were being accused and it was very, very difficult. There were accusations that our institutions do not know how to work and are not able to work. There were many imposed and orchestrated clashes... Therefore I reacted in Belgrade and said that all of this was not true, that things in Kosova are the same as anywhere else, but that here many things were being orchestrated.<sup>75</sup> In that time it was very difficult to accuse someone. And so I argued with Milosevic quite

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both the Albanians and the Serbs." This is the area that most brings to question Kosova's sovereignty - the ability, political power and will of its government to define and create a plan of economic development. See (Deda and Peci 2008) ([http://www.kipred.net/web/upload/PB\\_09\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.kipred.net/web/upload/PB_09_ENG.pdf) n.d.); also (IKS Kosova Stability Initiative 2009) (<http://www.iksweb.org/Publikimet.aspx?LID=2&AID=13>).

<sup>74</sup> Interview conducted 1 April 2006. Jashari joined the Social-Democratic Party, which she led from 1991 until 2008, and is currently a member of the Kosova Assembly. SDC was co-founded by Ljuljeta Pula, who also founded the Women's Association, but which was later coopted by the LDK. See Luci and Krasniqi 2006.

<sup>75</sup> Svetlana Slapšak has referred to how incidents in 1990-91 between Serbian and Croatian authorities had also been staged by both Serbian and Croatian nationalists in order to provoke conflict. Milan Martić, former Minister of Police in Republika Krajina (the self-proclaimed Serbian entity in Croatia), attested to, or as Slapšak notes "proudly revealed," this in a number of interviews between 1993 and 1994. (Slapšak 2001: 163, 182).

often. I would listen to his evaluations but I defended mine. Once I had said this, I could not believe that I did. Then I saw the transcript and saw that I did. They had made an evaluation stating that the situation in Kosova was worsening. There were 170 activists from Serbia in Kosova, I remember the number, and they said that more has to be done because the situation was bad. I said that those 170 that have come are not here to fix the situation, rather they have come to intimidate, and their actions are destructive. I said, "If you continue like this we would put up a border whenever we wanted." I know that the meeting was disrupted and there was a lot of noise... and then I realized what I had said. At that time I did not mean to be so harsh, meaning, in an administrative sense, rather, I meant, "Leave us alone because we can control the situation ourselves and you do not have to come." I had many other conflicts, imposed meetings, for example the one in Belgrade with the Kosova Presidency. We went there and had agreed that the meeting would be behind closed doors so that we could speak freely. They did not want this and, once the meeting began, they brought in the cameras. From there it went downhill and I told Milosevic that we had agreed to a closed meeting. He said, "*Neka vidi ovaj narod*," meaning "Let the people see what is happening." I said to him, "You have your people and I have mine and I have my face and I will have to speak in their name so it is you who has created this situation." What happened was that once the secretary, who had to read the closing remarks, a Serb, saw the cameras he could not dare to speak. Certainly what he would have said would have been more realistic, but now he withdrew and I had to speak. My statements were accepted very well by the Kosovar public. So I had many conflicts and they decided to release me from my duties and I did not resign, but our Committee, with Serbia's approval, withdrew me from my duties.

In January of 1990, Slovenian and Croatian delegates abandoned the extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, marking a de facto end to the LCY. By spring of the same year Slovenia and Croatia organized independent elections in which anti-Yugoslav and nationalist parties took the victory. The elections in Serbia, including Kosova, were boycotted by Albanians and thus confirmed Milosevic's ascendancy to power. Once the possibility of electoral solutions disappeared, and the politically tenuous relationship between Serbia and Kosova became more visibly placed in the public arena, it seemed that the new leadership in Kosova could offer nothing short of a republic, if not independence. A new leadership became solidified in the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK). As the

story goes, the LDK formed as a direct response to the people's will for civil and peaceful resistance. Certainly the hundreds of thousands (estimates range from 200,000 to 700,000) who joined the LDK membership within months of its founding speak to the incredible support it received. There are various interpretations of this mass movement. Some argue that the numbers speak to the support for the LDK as a political party; others see this support as a response to years of oppression. A fellow classmate who is now a lawyer, and with whom I met to discuss an altogether different topic, recollected his moment of conversion:

My father took me and my sister to see the exhibition that was put together to protest the violence. I remember this poster with a boy standing behind a window and the glass was shattered in front of his face. In black and white. My father said Rugova is now Kosova's president.

The daily *Rilindja* had also published a list of names and photographs of 74 protesters who were among those killed by police in demonstrations between 1989 and 1990, titled, "Exhibition of Terror" (1990). Shkëlzen Maliqi, a well-know publicist, called the activities taking place at the time a kind of Albanian *Intifada*. A civil resistance movement had emerged from student boycotts, from meetings held by writers, artists, teachers and journalists, and from thousands of different kinds of gatherings, that were to last during the entire 1990s.

Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, elected as the president of the LDK (founded in 1989), became Kosova's first president in elections that set up a whole parallel structure for the self-declared republic. Even though they were not the only political party to form in Kosova, nor was he the first choice for president, the LDK and Rugova became the emblems of Kosovars' political aspirations. Isabel Ströhle, studying the way in which political identities in Kosova have been reflected in the material culture of memorials, has argued, "In an attempt to legitimate the strategy of peaceful resistance, active



identity management has been deployed to gather national support for the former president and his party since its early days until today” (Ströhle 2006: 409). In the first year of civil resistance, the LDK could not fully direct the resistance as such, but gradually did create a structure that made it synonymous with peaceful resistance and the parallel state (Kostovicova 2005).

In the previous chapter I argued that Kosovar understandings of justice were deeply influenced by the experiences of the 1990s, the creation of a parallel state, and a resistance to everyday violence. In particular public renderings and enactments of Albanian cultural traditions played a key role in shaping the political events of the 1990s and Kosovar Albanian responses to them. Here I will not attempt an analysis of the reasons for Yugoslavia’s collapse, nor will I be able to account for all of the intentions of various political actors and the circumstances that refashioned the political ideologies of the period.<sup>76</sup> What I will attempt is an articulation of the politics of culture that emerged once social accord was given to the content found in Jashari’s statement to Milosevic - “Leave us alone because we can control the situation ourselves and you do not have to come” – and demonstrate how this statement proliferated with credence. I wish to account for the ways in which cultural particularity and difference were understood during that period and how these were a product of power realignments and longer-standing inequalities.

Unlike readings that see Kosova-Serbian relations as re-emergences of century-old hatreds, built on ahistorical accounts, Jashari’s recollection of debates with Milosevic, above, unfolds the important creases on the space of relations and perceptions between Serbs and Albanians, in both Serbia and Kosova. Zharko

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<sup>76</sup> See references given in the previous chapter.

Puhovski, philosopher from Croatia, had argued on numerous occasions that the commonality that Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Bosnians, Montenegrins, could articulate among each other did not exist in relations to Albanians. A prominent feature of this space of relations was built upon various cultural and social distances – in addition to the political and economic inequities – and upon the attachment of state sanctioned surveillance to the domain of everyday life.<sup>77</sup> Because Serbs saw Albanians as servants, as Puhovski claims, this combination of distances is what many within underground and illegal groups in Kosova came to refer to as Serbian colonial policy there.

With this context in mind, I would like to argue, and place at the center of debate, the ways in which the mobilization of “tradition” provided a new political legitimacy to the Albanian independence movement in Kosova at the beginning of the 1990s. More specifically, as an informative and methodological background or springboard, I will attempt to weave four overlapping threads whose formulation I borrow from Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman: “(a) the relation between collective and individual memory; (b) creation of alternative public spaces for articulating and recounting experience silenced by officially sanctioned narratives [and their re-inscription in official/dominant narratives]; (c) retrieval of voice in the face of recalcitrance of tragedy; and (d) meaning of healing and return to everyday” (2001: 3).

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<sup>77</sup> See Zivkovic 2001. Zivkovic shows the ways in which articulations of cultural particularity were also relevant for Serbian identity construction. Zivkovic shows how Serbs identified themselves in relation to others in Yugoslavia, and I show how Albanians did the same. While Serbs began a critique of how they have been “Othered” by the “West,” Albanians began a critique of how they have been “Othered” by “Serbs,” and later also by the “West.” A comparative analysis of the ways in which cultural particularities were matters of negotiating political and economic power within former-Yugoslavia, particularly between Serbs and Albanians, has still to appear. For a discussion of state policies see Ramet 2006.

At the center of this chapter is the reconciliation of blood feuds, initiated by a small group of women prisoners, which grew into a large-scale national movement. This movement, I argue provided the most significant site for the transformation and mobilization of Albanian political resistance in Kosova, the creation of collective cultural practice and space for articulating that resistance. I show that Albanian national belonging and unity, as the goal of this movement, relied upon expanding the meanings and practices of forging local kin and other connections of relatedness, through customary codes of honor, to include reconciliation, honorable manhood, mediation and memory, as a basis for a national movement.

### **From Prison to the Move for Collective Action**

The student demonstrations of 1981 in Prishtina, and even the earlier ones in 1968, had already created a possibility of an underground dedicated to an idea of Kosova as a republic of Yugoslavia. These various political groups were known as *Ilegalja* (illegal) movements.<sup>78</sup> Confirmed through a series of interviews with members of various groups, most of the *Ilegalja* groups worked independently of each other and did not have one coherent ideological platform. A number of them were Marxist-Leninist, some sought a republican status for Kosova, and others saw unification with Albania as the best option. These underground groups largely consisted of students who had been sentenced for anti-revolutionary activity for their participation in the 1981 student demonstrations. Most had been imprisoned in the

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<sup>78</sup> Calls for reform and democratization had emerged much earlier in Yugoslavia, particularly by the Slovene and Croatian Communist Leagues. Slovenes had shown sympathy for Albanians in Kosova, with support for a republican status of Kosova most prominent among journalists and intellectuals. In recent years, local literature and analysis of the 1981 demonstrations has proliferated, which also mark an opening of what for a long time was a censored topic. For a discussion of the 1986 demonstration and the 1966 fall of Aleksandar Rankovic, then head of the Yugoslav State Security Administration, later State Security Service (UDBA), and his oppressive policies in Kosova. Magaš 1993, Ramet 2006.

early and mid 1980s and served severe three- to eight-year sentences, including solitary confinement and persistent threat of death, not excluding torture.

In 1984 Havë Shala was only 16 years old. Together with eight other friends they had formed the group *Ideali* (The Ideal), which latter became known as the Peja Group. They were from Peja, Gjakova, and other towns and villages in the larger Dukagjini region. In December 1984 they wrote a letter directed to the local leadership stating their grievances about the lack of political and cultural freedoms of Albanians in Kosova. The letter was distributed in the form of a pamphlet. Two days later, three special service officers dragged all nine out of their high-school classrooms. As Havë Shala remembers, they were in an Astronomy class, a new subject at school, when the policemen, wearing long black capes, opened the classroom door by kicking it in with their feet. The police grabbed her and her friends by the back collars of their jackets and dragged them down the halls and stairs of the school, while their feet barely touched the ground. They were sent to the prison in Peja where they awaited their trial. During the first 24 hours, Shala was also “tortured with electroshock, beaten, and degraded in various ways. They would spit at us, and burn us with cigarettes...In Mitrovica we would take showers once in two weeks, with freezing cold water. They did anything to make you go mad. But you find an immense strength in you...Maybe idealistic.”

All members of the Peja Group were sent to prison following a mock trial, apart from a 15 year-old member who was tried as a minor and released. Amnesty International had also reacted. Over 60 political trials involving 210 persons, most Albanians in Kosova, had been held in 1985. Shala was sent to the infamous Mitrovica prison to carry out a three-year sentence. Speaking in a calm voice, Shala recounted her experiences to me: “The director of the prison, who was Albanian,

would tell me that I had a big mouth. On one occasion he asked me about my views of Albania. This was, of course, a provocation. I said, may Albania live as long as life itself, but that for which I am here is Kosova.” Shala now lives and works in Switzerland. She writes, translates and publishes, and is a frequent guest in media and public discussions on immigration and human rights. Her demeanor is calm; she speaks tenderly, and is full of compassion. Having “always been a supporter of a free voice” she does not seek vengeance, but insists that a “recognition of the pain that was endured must be recognized. Just as in the South African post-apartheid reconciliation. It was possible to reconcile because the pain and injustice had been recognized. This has not happened regarding Kosova.”<sup>79</sup>

Shala and many other members of diverse *Ilegalja* groups came out of prison at the end of 1988. They encountered a transforming political landscape in Kosova.<sup>80</sup> Following the Trepça miners’ hunger strike in February 1989, Kosova became immersed in protest. Students of the University of Prishtina gathered at the “25 Maji” sports hall and in show of solidarity also went on strike.<sup>81</sup> Students, journalists, doctors, former political prisoners, and people of all political ideologies, backgrounds, and affiliations joined to protest Kosova’s diminishing autonomy. During that year thirty-two Albanian soldiers, serving mandatory army duty in the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) were returned in caskets with the claim that they died as a result of blood-feud revenge amongst themselves. Shala, in a letter recounting conversations with her friend Myrteve Dreshaj, describes how she overheard a police officer say Albanians are killing each other anyway. This, she recalled, made her “body shiver,” upset her, and made her think of the idea Akile Dedinca, her prison mate, had about

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<sup>79</sup> Interview with author, 15 January 2013.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Naime Sherifi, former political prisoner. 10 March 2009.

<sup>81</sup> 25 May, which also was the day on which Tito’s birthday was celebrated.

blood-feud reconciliation. The miners at Trepça, among their political requests, had also issued a call to initiate Kosova-wide blood feud reconciliation. They began to contact friends as well as former prisoners from the *Ilegalja* movements and initiated the Action for Blood-Feud Reconciliation.

Other accounts relating the beginnings of the reconciliation actions confirm that Shala, Dedinca and Dreshaj were its initiators (Çetta and Neziri 2011). As they understood them, the rights, duties and emotions of national belonging, and a resistance to a violent system, required them to mobilize. As women, they recognized the immensity of their plans and therefore sought the support of friends, academics, and the Kosova Democratic League. The group found support with the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms, and specifically professors Zekeria Cana and Anton Çetta.

### **Mobilization of Cultural Traditions**

Similar to the challenges being made to states throughout Eastern Europe at the time, the broader transformations I have outlined so far also emerged in Kosova. I described the formal political transformations in the previous chapter, as well as the characteristic social mobilization that created a parallel state in Kosova during the 1990s. I now move to describe and analyze the mobilization of the blood-feud reconciliation movement, and show how it involved the intersection of national culture and tradition, redefinition of spaces for enacting memory, and particularly setting up new connections with relations of kinship that involved articulating new gendered identities. Here I will argue that enactments and renegotiation of tradition made possible and sustained the social and cultural politics of that period and defined Kosovar challenges to the socialist and Serbian state.

Having been approached by the student organizers Çetta would become the public face of the movement. Other university professors and academics also supported and drove the movement forward, in particular, the Albanological Institute (Instituti Albanologjik), which had built networks of trust in Kosova's countryside as ethnographers, doctors, writers, and held the social prestige associated with the intellectual and educated class at the time. Among the academic elite, who participated in the action for reconciliation, were: Azem Shkreli, Pajzit Nushi, Ramiz Kelmendi, Sadri Fetiu, Agim Vinca, East Stavileci, Bajram Kelmendi, Mark Krasniqi, and many others. Religious representatives also joined and among the most noted was Don Lush Gjergji. Luljeta Pula, a professor of physical chemistry, was especially lauded for her ability to mobilize people. She was also detrimental to the creation of the Democratic League of Kosova and was even considered for president before the title went to Ibrahim Rugova. In this chapter I particularly focus on the work of Drita Statovci.

The goal of these academics for many years had been to generate knowledge about a culture that had not been documented and only carried through oral traditions. Characteristic of salvage ethnography, they felt this culture would otherwise disappear if not collected. Although the Albanological Institute had first opened in 1953, intrusive state politics had closed it in 1958. It was reopened in 1967 and for almost two decades produced rich collections of ethnographic data, focusing on folklore, oral traditions, as well as historical and literary research. After 1981, when Kosovo was temporarily placed under martial law, it suffered by lack of funding and constant state surveillance. The work it produced was characterized by functionalist and descriptive ethnographies, and was influenced by Herderian ideas of nation and the folk and the desire to 'know' the national character to represent it better. Its

ethnology and folklore branches were in many ways similar to other ethnology institutes and university departments in former Yugoslavia. Within Yugoslav state socialism, many “traditions” had been remodeled and labeled with concepts such as “cultural heritage” or “traditional folk treasure,” and “the terminology itself suggesting their value as museum pieces rather than living expressions of a particular national (ethnic) groups” (Laušević 1996, 119). The (Laušević 1999) definitions of tradition explicated by the socialist state had also placed the observance of traditional kin networks in the category of “remnants the past,” as objects and material to be collected by folklorists. The *past* also signified the country, and backward rural traditions, which the state’s modernist projects had to eliminate. Such had also been the case with Albanian customary law.

Relying on the Canon of Lekë Dukagjini, a prince from northern Albania, the Canon (from here on *kanun*, as is usually referred to), enforced customary laws for the organization of property and family, with a specific morality for maintaining (Hasluck 1954) patrilineal kinship as well as patriarchal political and economic structures.<sup>82</sup> The *kanun* has been preserved in oral tradition since the fifteenth century. In 1933, Padre Shtjefën Gjeçovi, at the Franciscan Seminary of Shkodra (Lat. *Scutari*, Albania), codified it in written form. Gjeçovi “arranged the proverbs in paragraphs and articles, creating the image of a fixed codification” (Schwandner-Sievers 2001: 102). However, debates persist regarding different versions of the *kanun*, with differences not only between oral and written versions, but also between regional variations and individual readings of the text. I have intentionally not capitalized the

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<sup>82</sup> I have intentionally not capitalized with the aim of referring to a general understanding of the traditions and texts as they are employed in everyday conversations, and not the specialized readings and/or privileging of one form over the other. Most Albanians have not read Gjeçovi’s codification, although a copy can be found in most homes. Experiences of adjudication through *kanun* codes and rules are varied and their understanding is diverse, if not often conflicting.



word with the aim of referring to a general understanding of the traditions and texts as they are employed in everyday conversations, and not the specialized readings and/or privileging of one form of the *kanun* over the other. Most Albanians have not read Gjeçovi's codification, although a copy can be found in most homes. Experiences of adjudication through *kanun* codes and rules are varied and their understanding is diverse, if not often conflicting. As Stephanie S. Sievers argues, "Variations always existed through time, space and person, differing in details of interpretation as to how to behave properly in feuding, and in respect to the guidelines of how to save, restore or prove 'honor,' social status and pride" (2001: 102).<sup>83</sup>

The *kanun* provides regulation and arbitration of instances when economic, political and social prescriptions were breached. Customary revenge killings, or blood feuds, were most frequent in disputes over land, and have been present in Albania proper and Kosova for a number of centuries. Particularly pertinent within the *kanun*, and its common understandings, are concepts of honor and shame, and concepts of male and female virtues that delineate domestic and public spaces according to generation, rank and gender.

Here I do not look at how feuds emerged, but rather how they were reconciled. As numerous scholars and experts of "Albanian customary law" have observed, the overarching significance and meanings of the *kanun* are its mobilizing effect and its power to ensure internal cohesion when there is an outside threat.<sup>84</sup> The basis upon which cohesion is forged, nonetheless, has varied through time and space. Within the scope of this work, I do not trace the ways in which the *kanun* and its practices were treated legally, politically, socially, or academically in socialist Yugoslavia (though

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<sup>83</sup> As noted by Stephanie S. Sievers, the best collection of variations can be found in Hasluck 1954.

<sup>84</sup> See Hasluck 1954; Schwandner-Sievers 2001.

that certainly could be an important endeavor). Most people I spoke to, jurists, university professors, ethnologists, as well as people who were close to feuding families (and many of whom were involved in reconciliation), repeated a number of claims: the socialist state was not seriously interested in eradicating this backward tradition; Serbia was interested in seeing Albanians kill each other; Albanians were not equally integrated in the state and thus could not benefit (economically, educationally, etc.) from it and, therefore, relied on other means to settle disputes.

Reliable statistical data is missing on the extent and types of blood feuds commonly enforced. Archival research I conducted at the Kosova National Archives, which have only recently begun incorporating an electronic system, and which are still in disarray and missing many documents stolen or destroyed during the war, did not produce significant results - or at least not ones that were evident to me. Most court transcripts refer to disputes over stolen property, wood and cattle. One lawyer from Prishtina told me that this substitution of claims was common practice in order to avoid the large fines and long prison sentences the state would give out in cases of blood feuds when the result was not murder. Kosova's current Penal Code imposes a sentence of ten years to life imprisonment for convictions in blood feud cases. The former Yugoslav Penal Code established that murder was punishable by a maximum twenty-year sentence; however, blood revenge was considered premeditated murder and, thus, capital punishment applied.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Kosova, and other federal units, issued their separate penal codes in 1977; until that point, Yugoslavia had a common penal code. The 1977 code remained unchanged in Kosova until 1999 when UNMIK SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary General), Bernard Kuschner issued UNMIK Regulation, nr. 24/1999, that took out the death penalty entirely. In regard to blood revenge, see Chapter IV, Article 30, Paragraph 2, Line 4 (Penal Code of the Autonomous Socialist Province of Kosova). Serbia changed its code in 2006. The same was applied for the murder of a member of a minority group. I am grateful to Vjosa Jonuzi-Shala, Fazli Balaj and Vjosa Osmani, all legal experts, who provided me with this information.

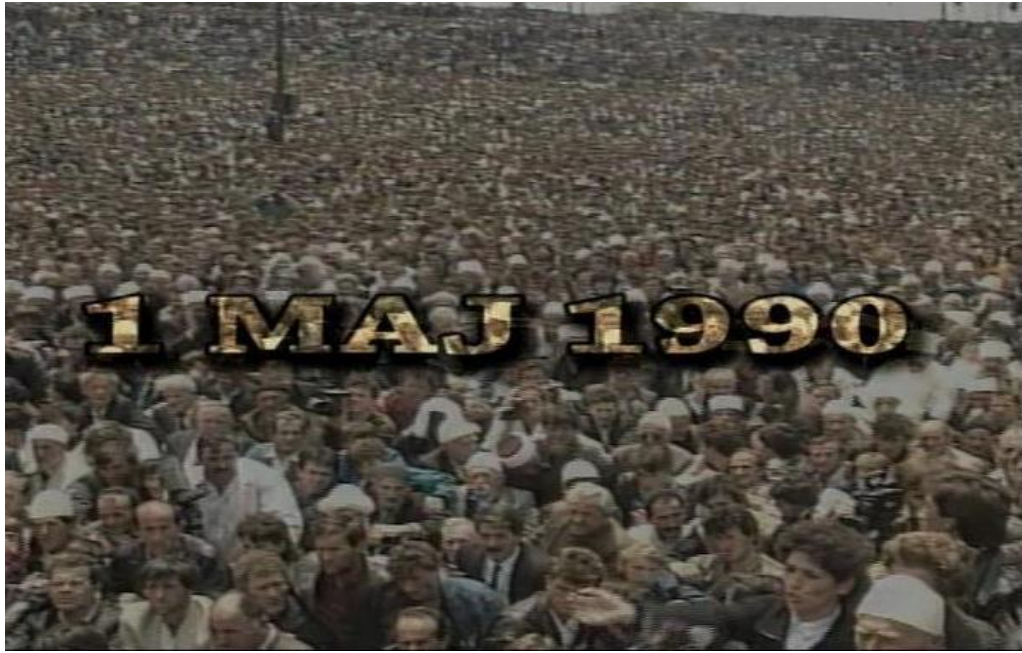


Figure 6. Photograph of blood-feud reconciliation gathering, Verrat e Llukës, 1 May 1990.

Whatever the reasons for the persistence of these practices, and also in spite of them, it had become clear to the majority of the Albanian population that reconciliation had to take place. Over a period of two years, more than 500 thousand people were said to or were documented to have taken part in mass organized meetings of reconciliation. These meetings ranged from hundreds to thousands in a single gathering, with the largest at Verrat e Llukës, near Deçan, on 1 May 1990. According to historian Muhamet Pirraku, between 1990 and 1992, two thousand, nine hundred and fifty-two blood feuds were reconciled (involving feuds for killing, bodily harm, and other disputes) (1998). These reconciliations allowed thousands of people who were members of feuding families to emerge from hiding and to live without fear of reprisal.

For this mass reconciliation to emerge, as noted above, the student organizers had received the support of the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms (KMLDNJ), of academics at the Albanological Institute, and of those at the University of Prishtina. Initially it was called the Youth Action for the Reconciliation

of Blood, Wound and Quarrel Feuds and soon thereafter, by March 1990, The All-National Albanian Movement for Blood-Feud Reconciliation. The Association of Former Prisoners, founded the previous year (1989), also joined, and gradually the Movement had hundreds of activist on the ground.

Both Mark Krasniqi and Drita Statovci<sup>86</sup> explained to me that a great amount of enthusiasm moved them forward, but also a grave understanding of the change they wished to materialize. A case in point was the killing of young man, Xhevdet Breznica, on 1 February 1990, by police during protests in Lypjan. In narratives of the incident, two other protesters, who otherwise came from families caught in a feud since 1986, “dragged the body from the street...as brothers.” This “manly, noble and brave act” moved Avdi Kelmendi, a former prisoner, to immediately contact the two families and ask them to reconcile on “behalf of the blood of the fallen protester, fallen for the freedom of the Albanian people,” the flag, and an independent Kosova (Pirraku 1998: 35). The families immediately understood this call and reconciled, according to reports of the event.

However, when on 2 February 1990 a first attempt at blood-feud reconciliation was pursued between members of the Lekaj family in the village of Lumbardh, in Deçan, it failed. A two-month truce was guaranteed and activist agreed with the family that they would return again. Hava Shala, and the other activists, came to understand that more localized hierarchies of power would have to be garnered. They made university professors and academics the public face of reconciliation but relied heavily on the requirements of local traditions. At the same time they understood, through a number of failed attempts, that inquiries into the circumstances that lead to the feud made reconciliation more difficult. Instead of looking into the

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with author 10 April 2008, Prishtinë.

reasons why families were feuding and offering resolution, they began to articulate powerful message of why the feuding would have to end.



Figure 7. Photograph of blood-feud reconciliation activists in *oda*. Here are some of the initiators of blood-feud reconciliation at one of the first meetings of the Action for Blood-Feud Reconciliation, later renamed The All-National Albanian Movement for Blood-Feud Reconciliation. Also in Pirraku 1998: 31.

Reconciliation occurred first in the *oda*, in the site of hospitality, and only after that in public spaces. Most houses in rural areas will have a room, *odë*, which is relegated to politicking and is a predominately male space. *Kuvend*, or council set up to settle disputes, takes place in the *odë*. Formally they are very rare now. However, any room where men convene - *me kuvendu* - for the settlement of more extended kin relation issues, such as property disputes, divorce, and inheritance, are imagined as such. The organization of gender roles, and generational and rank power is thus also inscribed on the house/home by regulating family hierarchy (seating arrangements, movement within the home, and rules on participation in discussion). In urban settings, a similar demarcation can be noticed but works along a somewhat altered conception of those roles. Hospitality into *odas* was assumed and was always granted.

The picture, above, shows activists, at a meeting in a home whose “door and *oda* was opened to them” to achieve their goals.<sup>87</sup> In fieldwork, people would recount how doors, *odas* and hearts were opened to greet the noble students. Because any guest in the home becomes the head of the household, practices for enacting cultural particularities, such as *besa* (vow) and *mikëpritje* (hospitality denoting the welcoming of guests) would become strategies for action. Before any of the public and mass gatherings could be organized, the students had understood, as Mamdani argues, that they needed to “grasp the specificity of the mode of rule that need[ed] to be democratized,” and that as “long as rural power is organized as a fused authority that denies rights in the name of enforcing custom, civil society will remain an urban phenomenon” (Mamdani 1996: 293). While these spaces were not being used to create or mobilize the harmony Bahloul (1996) describes, they were remade to reframe other hierarchical relations, as well as new democratizing potentials.

Later I will address how different linguistic practices were used to conform to and contradict this setting, but here I am merely pointing out the ways in which ideas of “traditional life” were made salient and universal for the people at large, and why Shala had thought it important to seek “older and wise men, those who knew the *oda* well, as well as the rules of the Albanian family, particularly in rural areas” (Shala et al 2010).

As many have argued, the structuring and role assignments within families have been of particular importance to conceptions of, and practices within the public and private, vis-à-vis the socialist state and nationalist ideologies, even as these are constantly and selectively maintained and discarded.<sup>88</sup> While family and nation do not

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<sup>87</sup> Interview with Drita Statovci, 10 April 2008, Prishtinë.

<sup>88</sup> Here I am referring to the significance of family and kin relations and obligations (so called “connections” or “ties”) in forging a second economy, by mediating between the public spheres of the state and the private domestic sphere. See Mandel and Humphrey 2002; Burawoy and Verdery 1999.

exist in a mere metaphorical relation, they are often used as such. In Kosova, reconciliation could be enacted in the spaces of people's homes and gardens, beyond the larger media and public gaze. At the same time, homes had become increasingly political sites. In Kosova it may be safe to say that they rarely were not.

### **Public Rituals of Forgiveness: National Unity and the Sphere of Kinship**

*Paçi peng fjalën e të parëve  
varur në qafë frëngjitë e kullës  
e duvakun e nuses pa kurorë,  
vajin e foshjës që s'pa dritën,  
ju preftë rrugën barku i shtatzanës,  
kur vriteni vëllezër e plasni zemrën e nanës  
Shefqete Gosalci*

May the given word of your ancestors keep you hostage,  
dangling from your necks the windows of your houses,  
and the veil of brides without crowns,  
the cry of the infant, who has seen no light,  
may the pregnant stomach stop you in your tracks,  
when brothers you kill each other, and burst a mother's heart

Muhamet Pirraku, a professor of history at the University of Prishtina, and member of the Organizing Committee for The All-National Albanian Movement for Blood-Feud Reconciliation, has written extensively about the beginnings of the movement, its progression, and the 'successful completion of this manly and honorable' odyssey. He has carefully documented meetings, names, numbers, and dates, and has presented a coherent story. He even acknowledges that women students initiated the actions. His historiography also finds an anticipated solution to the participation of women. They showed how manly they could be. In 1968, fifteen year-

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At the same time these networks of relations and obligations were significant sites for articulating alternative and oppositional politics to state oppression (of the socialist state, and in Kosova to Serbian nationalist state hegemony, but also against the totalizing effects of Albanian nationalism in Kosova).

old Hyrë Gjoshaj had made an oath that she would not marry until she avenged her father's blood, but, as Pirraku noted: "Our sister Hyra, together with her sisters and all our sisters, are not only forgiving the blood of their fathers, but there are forgiving the blood (feuds) of Kosova" (Pirraku 1998: 108).

The reconciliation also relies on giving one's word or oath, *besa*. *Besa* is a concept comprised of layers of meaning. In the *kanun* rituals of incorporation, marriage, hospitality or reconciliation, former outsiders, like the bride, the guest, or the former enemy in feuding, are transformed into a category of persons called *mik* (friend). The security of these new affiliates, and their incorporation into kin relations, is ideally guaranteed through the concept of *besa*, derived etymologically from *be*, *beja*, 'the oath'. *Besa* is usually translated as the honor of the house, as hospitality, as the given word, protection guarantee, or reconciliation and alliance.<sup>89</sup> As Sievers argues, "past and present rhetoric on having *besa*, being a *besnik*, in contrast to the opposite, *pabese* (non-faithful and 'non-trustworthy'), highlights the ideal values of internal cohesion, peace and solidarity of kin and constructed 'friend' networks, and declare any 'others,' who have not been successfully integrated, as *pabesë*, i.e. as dangerous" (Schwandner-Sievers 2001: 101; Reineck 1991). In addition, as was vocally asserted, "Only the brave forgive, and have always forgiven, and only cowards, sons of cuckoos kill." Reconciling blood feuds and forgiveness among families became an assertion of bravery, which men could practice and enact, but whose character would also be a reflection of the cowardice or courage bestowed to them by their mothers.<sup>90</sup> The poem above, nonetheless, offers a different perspective, and bestows a curse. It sees the customary legitimization of oaths as an erasure of the embodiment of the pain of children and women. It nonetheless calls upon the same tradition, to remember the embodied power of women as reproducers and producers of relations among men. If members of feuding families were to encounter a pregnant women, even if she left unharmed, they "would owe blood" to her affines.

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<sup>89</sup> See Gjeçovi 1933. Chapter eighteen, article 602: "The house of the Albanian belongs to God and to the *mik*." Also cited: "*Cities of refuge: Numbers, 45:10-13; Deuteronomy, 19:2-7; Joushua, 20: 2-6...but most of all they cultivated trustworthiness...Thus they held that a client taken into protection is considered more dear than kin, and must be protected from blood relatives.*"

<sup>90</sup> *Qyqe* of *kukavije* is the Albanian word for the cuckoo bird, and the meaning it carries refers to a weak feminine figure, who is also the carrier of bad news.



Carol Delaney has argued that nationalisms can be understood in terms of explicit political ideologies, but they must be primarily understood in terms of “larger cultural systems (kinship and religion) from which...they derived” (Delaney 1995: 177). Thus, as many have argued (with the initial impetus given by David Schneider’s questioning of the existence of seemingly separate and distinct domains of family, nation, and other communities), we must turn our attention to their mutually constitutive “nature” and the “implications and lived experience[s] of relatedness in local contexts” (Carsten 2000: 1; Strathern 1995). What many scholars have also analyzed, particularly Yanagisako and Delaney, are the ways in which meanings of kinship are embedded in differentials and hierarchies of power, which come to be *naturalized* through their meanings and practices (Yanagisako and Delaney 1995, Carsten 2000). In the context at hand, different forms of relatedness (of kinship, nation, and particularly relations between men and women as gendered beings) are constructed as emanating from one another with the particular aim of asserting a timeless *unity*.

The reconciliation movement cannot be understood if we also do not account for how the particular belongings and experiences that I have discussed so far were attributed to and made alive through a nationalized imagination. A series of significant *moments* and oaths were made salient for the performance and reformulation of Albanian nationhood, tradition, kinship, land, and associated substances, such as blood. These oaths and moments shaped technologies of power in private and public spaces. Our perspective, then, should be historical. It is neither an attempt to argue for particularities nor for universalisms, one of the relevant debates in studies of kinship.



Figure 8. Photograph of Anton Çetta at a public reconciliation gathering, 1990. Agim Gashi, YouTube.

The national stage was open. One-by-one brothers, fathers, mothers, and sisters (a wife could not), would move to the microphone, sounding through a valley of thousands, and free from feud those who had last taken blood from their family. The gravity, seriousness, sorrow and joy could be read on their faces and heard in their voices, as Mark Krasniqi, renowned Kosova ethnologist and member of the committee told me.<sup>91</sup>

“Falë të qoftë gjaku Kosovë...nuk kam force të ju kthej”/”The blood is forgiven to you Kosova...I do not have the strength to send you back,” one seventy-year old man declared.

“Në emër të rinisë, humanitetit gjithë kombëtar, falë ju koftë gjaku i birit tim”/In the name of the youth, national humanism, I forgive the blood of my son,” said another.

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with author, 23 May 2004, Prishtinë.

“Po kthehej nga një lëndinë pajtimi, në një lëndinë të krushqive<sup>92</sup> të lirisë”/”It transformed from a valley of reconciliation, to a valley of bringers of peace,” stated the voiceover for a television special, shown the evening of 2 May 1990.

“Ishalla me kaq”/”God willing it ends here,” declares another man, tired from his pain, as he told me.

“Në emër të jetës, të arrdhmërisë...burra qofshi të nderuar gjithmonë”/”In the name of life, the future...men, may you always be honored.” an organizer affirms.

“E fali gjakun e vëllaut”/”I forgive the blood of my brother,” many sisters declared

“E fali gjakun e babait”/ I forgive the blood of my father,” declares a 10 year-old daughter.

Here I would to note Alessandro Portelli’s definition of *event* as, “A cultural construction based on the context created by memory through selection and connection among a multiplicity of happenings and by the form in which the story is told.” (Portelli 1997: 93). The construction of the feud reconciliation as an always already national event was contingent upon “the removal of the episode[s] from the community mode to the political [and] is paralleled by the spatial shift from the local to the national perspective” (Portelli 1991:21). Animated by an enthusiastic creation of space for the enactment of *public rituals*, reconciliation was constitutive of the meanings and connections between notions of temporality – leaving behind past oaths, curses, and violence, and moving towards a future peace among kin - and

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<sup>92</sup> *Krushqi* – refers to the men who, on behalf of a potential groom’s family, negotiate the terms of a marriage with the potential bride’s family. They are carriers of news and new alliances. In this statement it is supposed to carry the meaning of joy associated with the festivities of weddings.

spatial belonging – where not only homes but also the open spaces of fields and streets become places for claiming politics and cultural presence.



Figure 9. Photograph of performance by Cultural Artistic Association “Jahi Hasani,” at Blood-feud Reconciliation Gathering on 28 July 1990.<sup>93</sup> Photograph shows performance of the association on 28 July 1990, at a mass reconciliation gathering.

During my fieldwork, in interviews and conversations, and in recollections with activists of the movement, people who reconciled blood feuds, and those who *forgave*, in media accounts, as well as in a case where no reconciliation was reached, participation in reconciliation was defined and remembered as a matter of enacting “national ties through blood” and “Albanian traditional family relations.” In these accounts, mobilization was not only a reaction to post-1990s developments in Yugoslavia, such as the revocation of Kosova’s autonomous status, the consolidation of a new nationalist regime in Serbia, and/or the economic crises of the late 1980s in Yugoslavia. Rather, state policies of longer standing constituted growing nationalist sentiment. These policies had curtailed the economic and political development of

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<sup>93</sup> <http://jahihhasani.blogspot.com/2010/12/shka-jahi-hasani-pajtimi-i-gjaqeve-27.html>

Kosova, increased unemployment rates, and had racialized ethnic and gender identities. Reconciliation, not revenge, became recast as an existing tradition and provided a new political legitimacy to Albanian nationalist discourses in Kosova, particularly those that had become more vocal since the beginning of the 1980s. Drawing on village patriarchs and the urban intelligentsia, the movement created new legitimate spaces of mobilization (Clark 2000: 66).

“Tradition” became a “resource for information on an alternative local social order shaped by indigenous perceptions of diverse pre-communist and communist histories,” as Stephanie Sievers argues for Albania, but with differing mobilizational forms and effects in Kosova (Schwandner-Sievers 2001: 97). Inseparable in this were the ways in which conceptions of kinship, at the local and national level, and kin relations and obligations were constitutive of and constituted by attempts of constructing a new polity.<sup>94</sup> Particularly pertinent were re-conceptions and definitions of proper manhood and womanhood. In a commonly understood vernacular, tradition exists as a real time and place, oftentimes explicated as “natural.” It gives evidence of preserved culture. Therefore, among nation-makers and political activists a narrative of the traditional Albanian family and nation needed no reinvention. There was no need to reach into unknown depths in order for it to exist. It would present itself organically.

Songs, recitals, and thousands of oaths of reconciliation claimed that, “blood of sons, fathers, brother, and cousins” was forgiven (no other “legal” means were sought). Shefqete Gosalci, a member of the Albanian Writers Association, particularly remembers and has written about one song that could be heard at reconciliation

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<sup>94</sup> Susan Khan argues how the introduction and use of new reproductive technologies in Israel has also shown that there are a multitude of policies, traditions, and possibilities that make ideas of kinship, the state, and nation constitutive of one another (2000). See also Kanaaneh 2002.

gatherings. While rhapsodic lyrics and intentions, as in this song, below, were “tamed” by the intellectual elites in Prishtina, such lyrics did convey a shared pool of cultural tropes.

### **Reconciling Blood Feuds: Family, Homes and Everyday Life**

“Po ku je, o Anton Çetta, fjala jote qan dhe shkrepa,  
tuj pajtue zemrat shqipate, se ke kombi tuj na dale fare,

o shtrije dorën o shqiptar, o jemi fis e jemi farë,  
o shtrije dorën gja mos thuj, jemi n'gjak me fis të huj.  
o shume omël për me fal, mej rujt nanën e Kombit shqiptare  
Para tytave të serbosllavit, mej shtri dorën vllau–vllaut  
Kan’ kalu plot nize vjet, pat më humb Kosova krejt,  
o falma gjakun, gjakun tim, për liri e për bashkim”

Here you are, o Anton Çetta, your words break apart even mountains  
Reconciling Albanian hearts, because our nation was disappearing [loosing seed]  
O Albanian stretch out your hand of forgiveness, we are kin [tribe] and we are seed  
Stretch out your hand and don’t speak a word, we are in blood with another kin [tribe]  
O how sweet it is to forgive, and save the mother of the Albanian nation  
In front of the barrel of the Slavic Serb, to stretch out the hand one brother to another  
Twenty years have passed, Kosova was disappearing  
O forgive blood, my blood, for freedom and for unity<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Translation by author.

History notes elections, declarations of independence, and the subsequent declaration of martial law as some of the most relevant and revolutionary aspects of the beginning of the nineties. These political events appeared significant due to the magnitude of change they promised. Yet, the intersection of such “major events” with the refashioning of everyday life brought about new liberating formations that were also made possible when the everyday, which is also supposed to be the site of the ordinary, was ruptured by violence (Das 2006; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004).

In her article, “*The Albanian Woman in Forgiving Blood*,”<sup>96</sup> Statovci places the reconciliation of feuds as an “all-national” event but foregrounds “the position and role of the Albanian woman in this movement” (Statovci 1990: 97). Although she analyzes the “Albanian women” as a singular and homogeneous identity, her approach must also be seen as a strategic political intervention into the emergent national politics of the time, which reluctantly included female voice and active agency. For Statovci, the enactment of female agency comes, and perhaps must come, through the performance and appropriation of their roles within the family. As mothers, sisters, and daughters to their male kin, women forgive the “blood of their sons, fathers, brothers” for their own good and the good of the nation (Statovci, 99). Statovci claims Albanian women have always had authority and power through which they can influence not only the future of their families, but also *the people* (Statovci, 103).

Her opening paragraphs nonetheless rely on establishing a terrain for participation by defining a space of memory and action so that “time becomes place,” filled with great possibility and enthusiasm.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> All translations of Statovci’s article are mine.

<sup>97</sup> See Portelli 1997: 32, on “places of memory”.

And a person wishes to experience and somehow note this enthusiasm, but how? We must speak of today which carries the past so that it does not carry the future...by making this painful year, the Year of 1990-a year of greatness. It is a year as great as life (of the people), as (Fields 1989) time that carries both pain and happiness, but also life. (Statovci, 97).

Statovci then constructs a context in which all can participate because it is *the life of the people* that must be celebrated. For this celebration to occur, the meaning of the event, of its time, and place, must also be reconfigured in that it is a possibility to “*heal a heavy wound of the past, of a damaging social institution, of blood feuds. There is joy when you see all gathered together, precisely as it has always been in Albanian tradition, but also in a manner of contemporary life of an uplifted society*” (Statovci 1990: 98, *Italics mine*). In order to argue for the participation of women in reconciliation events and gatherings, but particularly in the male domains of *ode* and *kuvend*, “tradition” has to be re-conceptualized and redefined. Reconciliation is then understood as true to the oral and written versions of customary law; however, it also provides a means of uplift required of “civilization” and “democracy,” both of which are found in nation.<sup>98</sup>

These spaces of power, family and politics continue to be seen and idealized as spaces where noble and honorable traditions of *burrëri* (manhood) are practiced. Spaces and events, in coffee houses, at funerals and wakes, during religious visits and weddings, all provide and require particular gendered morality, family and personal history, and commensality (Sugerman 1997).<sup>99</sup> While all involve socializing with the broader public (people from ones village, town, workplace, etc.), all were primarily

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<sup>98</sup> Here the meaning of “uplift” can have the connotation of development and education as complementary characteristics.

<sup>99</sup> Sugerman offers a deeply insightful ethnography on the complex performative aspects of gendering identity in homes and outside them during weddings. Her study is of Albanians from Prespa, in Macedonia (FYROM), and their communities in the United States.



determined by familial obligations. The home, which many anthropologists have argued provides women with opportunity to usurp unequal relations of power, still remains a site of privilege, where men enjoy the exhibition of their symbolic power and control authoritative forms of practice (Bourdieu 1977; Kandiyoti 1987).

However, it had been their experiences in prison, in contexts of “micromobilization,” that had enabled them to “initially experience empowerment” (Hart 1996: 141). While this politics is a site where dominant and/or hegemonic practices and discourses take place, the “culture forged behind bars,” which Janet Hart has analyzed for women political prisoners in Greece, accounts for the “communal interpretations of experience” that emerged among the women, even under the constant threat of violence and death. Those who were imprisoned for participation in the National Liberation Movement during the 1940s in Greece, and their families, despite their isolation, created complex exchanges with wider civil society. Narratives of the years of imprisonment, and the “situated practices and rituals [that] grew out of [their] experiences” constituted an aesthetic that was about survival, pride and citizenship (1999: 487).

Elife Krasniqi, a sociologist and close friend, has also chosen to publicly discuss the role of women in *Ilegalja* through a very private recollection about the constant tension between home and the street, family and state, freedom and imprisonment, and poetry and evidence:

I must have been four or five or even older in the image that I have in my mind when I think of my childhood at my grandparent’s house, in the old part of the city in Prishtina. This image was of us in the summer afternoons, sitting in the floor cushions in the corridor of the two-story house - my grandmother, my mother, and my aunts. They would have conversations, pieces of which time to time would get unclear and became like coded messages. Their tone of voice would get lower, their mimics would change and they would use words like ‘matanë’ (on the other side), or other words that only later in life I decoded and made sense of; like for example ‘the other side’ was used to mean Albania. These were the times where people would get

in prison if they would be caught to listening to radio programs of Albania or if they would talk about Albania. Those who were chased by UDB (The Internal State Security) would escape by trying to cross into ‘the other side.’ Under circumstances where the entire family was under surveillance by the state, they were trying to protect us with silence or coded conversation. They feared that we as kids could unintentionally reveal conversations from inside the house to outside strangers. Later, much later, I have realized that the reason of those coded conversation and lowered tone of voice, when talking about what the regime considered ‘dangerous’ was as a result of the persecution and interrogations of family members from the regime, due to the engagement in the underground resistant movement of my aunt and two uncles. My aunt Shukrije Gashi (Shuki) and her two cousins got in prison on 1983. (Krasniqi 2011: 99).

Elife’s aunt, Shuki, is now a prominent civil society activist, poet, and lawyer. Her work focuses on conflict mediation, often aiding the process through voluntary participation and third part mediation relying on segments of the *kanun*. Her organization works with Albanians and Serbs, and local governments and village leaders. Her poetic sensibilities and aesthetics are recognized as particularly feminist. Elife has written about the warmth and pain of home, and about the way in which the cobbled stones of streets can free you, but can also rise up and hit the bodies of the unwanted. Similar to Hart’s description of how women behind bars engaged in song, dance, and theatre to create “sites of memory,” Shuki and many of her friends wrote poetry, pamphlets, and sang for an “imaginative recollection and historical consciousness to define past, present and future selves” (1999: 490). The context of their production, as Hart asserts, clearly did matter, but did not remain confined within the “walled city.”

Constructed and elaborated through remembrance, belonging, bodies and events are made meaningful also in the many “ways of dwelling” people create.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Michael de Certeau refers to “ways of dwelling,” as a case of ‘dislocation,’ whereby, “A North African living in Paris...insinuates *into* the system imposed on him by the construction of a low-income housing development...[and] creates for himself a space in which he can find *ways of using* the constraining order of the place” in ways familiar to his native Kabylia (1984: 30).

Gaston Bachelard has argued that the “topography of our most intimate being” is to be found in our houses (1964: 8). Carsten and Hugh-Jones have also defined houses as “loci for dense webs of signification and affect” which serve as “models used to structure, think and experience the world”(1995: 3).<sup>101</sup> Bahloul (1996, 1999) and Mueggler (2001), analyze houses, among other things, as sites where historically contingent relations between families, neighbors, siblings, spouses, and more are maintained and reworked, despite significant events of rupture. Their examples include the Algiers War and the Great Leap Forward, with their ensuing migrations, up-rootedness, and purges. Dar-Refayil, in Setif (Algeria), where Bahloul’s family had lived and where she situates her ethnography, is a “family house” that takes the form of hierarchical gender, family and ethnic relations (in the way cooking, sleeping, and other arrangements are made). But the memories of these practical experiences are also “structurally linked to what produced the harmony between the two religious groups-the practice of everyday life as the social space for resistance to the dehumanizing effects of war” (Bahloul 1996: 82).

There is an abundance of literature that considers the varied social, political and economic arrangements that structure divisions, conceptual and practical, between the public and private. An important point of debate among feminist scholars

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<sup>101</sup> Levi-Strauss’s idea of the house as a specific form of social organization was also linked to the conception of houses as sites where “antagonistic principles” are resolved. Mueggler shows how this is a pertinent function of houses in his study, but that “body, house, and the universe all double, enfold, and invade one another” (2001: 41) “A saying common in the lowlands [Southwest China] held that a man contributed the bones of a child while a woman contributes its flesh. Lolop’o revised this to say that a house’s wooden frame, shaped and erected by men, was its bones, while the mud bricks of its walls, molded and carried by women, were its flesh” and at the same time the house could not be reduced to a contained *habitus*, rather it “repeatedly opened up body routines toward opposite, inverted, or simply different alternatives” (Mueggler 2001: 56, 59). Papataxiarchis (1991) in his ethnography of the village of Mouria, in northern Lesbos, Greece, shows how friendship among men is mainly performed outside the “structure” of the house, which according to him is a site of kin relations and controlled by women. The “normal habitat” of friendship among men is the coffee house, where male friendship, based upon various practices of commensality and choice, provides a site where emotional bonds are formed, and personal character and morality exhibited.

has certainly been the political, legal and social arrangements of the public/private dichotomy in various historical contexts, and in political-economic structures (Rosaldo and Lampere 1974; Pateman 1989; Benhabib 1992a; Benhabib 1992b; Young 1997; Landes 1998; Fraser 1990; Gal and Kligman 2000). Herzfeld's ethnography of manhood in Greece provides one of the most widely cited texts on the topic of manhood and its relation to space, as well as the most detailed discussion of the ways in which coffee houses offer sites and opportunities for the constitution of rules and expressions of manhood (1988). Papataxiarchis's ethnography of the village of Mouria, in northern Lesbos, Greece, also shows how friendship among men is mainly performed outside the "structure" of the house, which according to him is a site of kin relations and is controlled by women (1991). The "normal habitat" of friendship among men is the coffee house, where male friendship is based upon various practices of commensality and choice. The coffee house provides a site where emotional bonds are formed, and where personal character and morality are exhibited. Similar observations about the coffee house can be made for relations forged among men in Kosova, which is mainly true for the cities, for the middle and professional classes, and for those who do not view the consumption of alcohol as an act in conflict with the majority Muslim faith. One of my father's friends once told me, "Never trust a Muslim who does not drink." The whole group of men gathered in attendance toasted to his remark. Teahouses, where alcohol is not consumed, provide for spaces where friendships, kin relations, and other forms of commensality among men also find particular expression.

When compared we find that class and social status, regional belongings, as well as religion, make for varied experiences and expectations for manhood. The interplay between public places and homes, particularly those homes that are "opened

to politics, and everything from the outside,” as some of my informants would remind me, requires a different conceptualization. Nancy Fraser has argued that the public sphere should be thought of in a way proposed by Habermas, although it does require reconceptualization, as “a conceptual resource that can help overcome” problems when its usage “conflates at least three analytically distinct things: the state, the official economy of paid employment, and the arenas of public discourse” (57). According to Fraser’s reading of Habermas, the public sphere “designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk...it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principal be critical of the state” (57).

In many ways, the reconciliation movement was characterized by the refashioning of previous “male domains” in the public sphere of homes, which required specific forms of speech and narrative forms, into more inclusive spaces where women became agents in a new, even though temporary, vision of resistance. This refashioning becomes visible once men and women’s presences in actual spaces (homes, streets, etc.), and in political-economic and social arrangements, are made visible outside of the dominant public’s claim “to be *the* public,” and, as such, challenge claims to what constitutes this public (Fraser 59-61). As Joseph has argued, “state and civil society may be distinct not only from each other [referencing “Western” classical liberal discourse], but also from religion and patriarchal kinship in legal theory. Yet state and civil society may be shot through with religious and patriarchal idioms, moralities and practices; while religion and patriarchal kinship may be shot through with state and political regulations and procedures” (1997:75) In general, as Joseph states, the making of boundaries is always about the making of differences, “for purposes of empowering and disempowering.” (1997: 75). While the

centrality of patrilineal/patriarchal kinship structured the narratives and practices of national and gendered identities, the *eventful* enactment of tradition in reconciliation also enabled a series of moments, representations, and speech previously muttered in corridors of houses, written on leaflets and poems in prisons, or buried in long-gone memories.

Reconciliation events were also concretized by the “affirmation and imagination of community among participants,” whence these performances negotiated ideas of tradition, nation and gender to suit the new circumstances. They also gave evidence to the important “relationship between mass communication, public rituals, and nationalism” (Sofos 1998: 166). By being televised, photographed, and reported, these events “rendered physical presence unnecessary and provided a common shared (among the viewers) imagined locus and time in which the existence of the national community could be affirmed” (Sofos 1998: 168; Anderson 1983).<sup>102</sup> Similarly, Kelly Askew has argued, “Instead of focusing on the so-called ‘effects’ of media technology ‘on people,’” we should rather attempt “to expose the agents, aesthetics [and] politics...behind the technologies” (2002: 2).

Disseminated in the Albanian language media abroad, and broadcast via satellite, these events also helped to create a new Albanian “national geography” which also linked the diaspora in particularly relevant ways.<sup>103</sup> A borrowing from

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<sup>102</sup> Jasmina Lukic (2000) has shown how, in Serbia itself, discourses about national kinship were used to legitimate and define as a defensive struggle the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>103</sup> I have not provided a very detailed explanation on the explicit role of Albanian diaspora for these processes, but rather hinted at their significance. The literature on relations between diaspora and nationalist projects is extensive. For analysis that integrates media between particularisms and universalisms see Georgiou 2005. One of the more widespread and important concepts for these analyses seems to be the notion of “hybridity”, as pertaining to the construction of identities through these processes. Morely and Robin’s “*Spaces of identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*” is an important text for considering some of these issues, although it remains very much embedded (limited) in issues of “Europe.” See also Bahloul 1999, who discusses the ways in which migrants, and diasporic communities, transcribe “their symbolic constructions of the ‘house’ in the migration process” and with underlying continuities and breaks in the kinship system. For the

*Kënga e Mërgimtarit* (Migrant's Song/of Longing), from Naim Frasheri's *Bagëti e Bujqësi* (characterized by pastoral imagery of homeland), was incorporated into communal events. Frashëri, known as the father of the Albanian alphabet, was a *Riljindja* (connoting national awakening, enlightenment, and rebirth) poet and prominent in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century nation-building. His poem, *Abetare*, was remade into a song: *Oj Kosovë<sup>104</sup>o, nëna ime, Ndonse jamë-o, i mërguar, Dashurinë tënde zemra kurrë s'ka me harua-hej* ("Oj Kosove, my mother[land], Even though I am in exile, My heart will never forget your love.") This song<sup>105</sup> became ritualized in farewell parties when people left Kosova for labor or exile in Western Europe, was sung on video tapes by immigrants who sent recordings to their families in Kosova, at weddings, and at numerous other occasions. For Albanians living anywhere, this song became an authentic (re)confirmation of their perseverance during hardship, and carried meanings of an existence imposed by its enemies, appearing as a reclamation of that which had been stolen. As a particularly important genre through which loyalties to family, nation and land were performed, it promised return to the motherland and to the weeping mother left behind.

### **Events of Memory and Kinship: Man's and Woman's Honor**

In the so-called "Yugoslav Breakdown," much of these aesthetics and politics have been informed by discourses that intrinsically link gender to nationalist projects.<sup>106</sup> Media in Kosova and Serbia explicitly connected issues of family,

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Albanian context, see Mai and Schwandner-Sievers 2003; Papailias 2003. For an important article for the Croatian context and role of conservative diaspora in national identity building, see Winland 2002.

<sup>104</sup> Frasheri's original "Albania" is replaced with Kosove. See also Sugarman 1999.

<sup>105</sup> A number of travel agencies, which in Kosova served mainly for arranging the transport of migrant laborers and asylum seekers in Western Europe, had advertisements and/or logos which included these verses.

<sup>106</sup> See Scott, Kaplan and Keates 1997.

sexuality, femininity and masculinity to nation while creating spheres for the performance of national identity. This particular “regime of representation,” the discursive practices and visual repertoire of representation, enabled the further demarcation and concealment of boundaries between national and gender identities.<sup>107</sup> For example, Jasmina Lukic’s analysis of numerous “state orchestrated” events during the first years of the wars in Yugoslavia shows how these events made highly conventional and historically rooted images of men and women persuasive and familiar. Dubravka Žarkov has also shown, specifically in the context of former Yugoslavia’s disintegration, that “states and their national and ethnic groups became personified or symbolically represented as female or male bodies; in which the notions usually associated with norms of sexuality or assumptions of “proper” manhood and womanhood were suddenly associated with matters that concern state territory, daily politics, and— last but not least— ethnicity” (Žarkov 2007: 13).

While feminist analysis has focused on the incompatibility of nationalism and feminism, much still has to be said of the assumed compatibility between nationalism and masculinity (Mouffe 1992; Einhorn and Duchon 1996; Jacoby 1999; Banarjee 2003, 2012). The dominant reading of ex-Yugoslav feminists, that Albanian women’s lives were constructs of their masculine kin and patriarchal order, failed to account for the many ways in which women did engage politics, even if not in the same ways their critics may have wished. What I hope becomes evident here is that there are diverse histories of the public/emancipation and private/patriarchy divide. As Denis

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<sup>107</sup> As Stuart Hall as argued, the meanings which are given and assigned to representation, and the attempts to fix them, are parts of a complex matrix of relations of power, history and politics. There is no true meaning of a visual image, for example, but there are continuous attempts to fix the meaning of certain representations, to prefer certain meanings. See Hall 1997.



Kandiyoti has shown, nationalism “presents itself...as a modern project that melts and transforms traditional attachments in a favor of new identity’ (Kandoyoti 1991).

Thus, I do not suggest the use of “patriarchy” as a generic conceptual or analytical category. Indeed, the use of the term must be made historically and spatially contingent. The “maintenance” and/or “return” of a patriarchal *order of things*, has been a highly contested terrain in Kosova, but also in the region as a whole.<sup>108</sup> Here, patriarchy is defined as the privileging of male discourses and practices within a political/public sphere, and is seen to follow “traditional” dictates through which family and kin relations are exercised. This patriarchal order, with its specific gender hierarchy, is thus naturalized and legitimized by a nationalist polity and ideology.

I distinctly remember a day when I was walking home with one of my cousins. It must have been 1991. She told me that her father bought her a great pair of Reebok sneakers but she could not wear them. She had actually become frightened of wearing them. She told me that her father had bought them in Belgrade, but they were red and black. The Serbian pupils at school called her an irredentist and separatist, and the Albanian classmates told her not to wear them because her parents would be sent to prison. Her Reebok sneakers, manufactured in Asia, sold in Belgrade, signaled irredentism. Very few people in Kosova could even purchase them, but these colors, placed on any surface, could reference only one thing – the colors of the Albanian flag and a desire for Albanian unification.

Fatime Ahmeti, a poet and, previously, a worker at the Rilindja publishing house, was not shy about wearing her red and black colors. Unlike my cousin,

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<sup>108</sup> See Gal and Kligman2000; Scott et. al 1997, Salecl 1994.

Ahmeti had built her national and gendered identity around a visible and public assertion of her belonging:

I was in the 1981 demonstrations, although they thought I was a *balliste* [nationalist and pro-Albanian unification movement and party]...and every time that the directors called for me in 1981 I wore a red and black shirt. The Serbs would go to the director and say, 'Fatime is the biggest nationalist because she dresses in red and black.' And so the director calls me to his office. 'Fatime, the Serbian sisters have come to me and they are complaining about you because you dress in red and black.' And I say, 'Comrade Director, no one has the right to meddle in my choice of clothes, because what I wear is my personal right, who has the right to say Fatime wear a dress, in red or in black. It is the same as if I told you not to wear those pants but other ones. I do not have the right.'

Ahmeti's statement, "Comrade Director, no one has the right to meddle in my choice of clothes... It is the same as if I told you not to wear those pants but other ones. I do not have the right," is not only an example of her exercising agency in an otherwise politically fragile context, where issues of *personal choice* and autonomy are brought to bear. Ahmeti's confirmation that she was in the 1981 demonstrations is directly connected to her wearing red and black colors.

Because the color red is dominantly viewed as a signifier of the blood spilled by martyrs and fighters for Albanian freedoms, blood has also become the main conveyer of social, cultural and political ties. As Hens Marcelin has argued, in his analysis of blood symbolism in Haiti, blood is used "variously as a core symbol within a complex of practices designed to regulate bodies, especially bodies linked to political space" (2012: 253). Carsten has also argued that, despite medical practices that aim to take that which is internal to the body, such as blood, and transform it into a "detached object of scientific study...this divestment is at best unstable." (Carsten 2013: 134). Blood, and the various institutions and practices invested on the continuum that assumed one-blood one-family one-nation, serve to mark bodies as

“same” or “other” based on racial, gendered and class distinctions. Fatime Ahmeti, who chose to embody its meanings through her clothes, was not only disrupting attempts to “de-Albanianize” public space, a source of power for her, but also to become the bodily enactment of patriarchal politics.

Whether seen as an object, a substance, or as embedded in histories, I do not suggest that these are mere expressions of “pre-existing” cultural tropes and scripts. Maintaining honor in politics goes beyond the assumed cultural sphere of the Balkans or Mediterranean; blood serves as a substance in all kinds of relations and political systems across societies, cultures, economic relations, and structures. Deep analysis has been done concerning the way in which blood defines, is used, shared, spilled or preserved, within and among ethnic, racial, class and gender identities and systems (Theweleit 1987; Linke 1997, Grandin 2000; Glick-Schiller 2005). There are many interconnections between the generative processes of the body (steams of blood, processes of birth and death) and the making of exemplary landscapes (hills, gorges, villages, cities and streets) that become “the common matrix of everyday living” (Feeley-Harnik 2001: 78). It is this “matrix” of interconnections of domains of life, of belonging and displacement from and of people and places, of the ways in which experiences and identities come to be embodied and practiced, that can provide the main analytical locus to discuss the processes by which people create relatedness among themselves, construct categories of difference, and interact with/in political, economic and social institutions and arrangements, as well as provide discursive practices of the larger body politic.

This re-conception of tradition, according to Andrew Lass, “depends on meaning-fulfilling acts through which tradition is concretized as part of the everyday...world” (Lass 1988: 456). As Lass states, an additional explanation should

be added to this statement. In contrast to common understandings of tradition as the surviving past, as a relatively inert, historicized segment of social structure, it can be a very important part of how people see their future, as well. Nationalism as a selective process depends on the mobilization of tradition, which is concretized as part of the everyday spatiotemporal world (Lass: 456). Blood-feud reconciliation has provided the best example of the reversal; something that appeared as the most backward element, a remnant of the past, emerged as an element of a future in the present context, as the premonition of what lies ahead. Williams, who has argued for a much stronger definition, states: “Tradition is in practice the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits” (Williams 1995: 115). This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that what is identified as tradition is always already a selective process and one based on forgetting as much as it is about remembering. What was at stake here, and consciously affirmed, was the spreading of cultural messages of resistance, preaching about political realities, and imparting information vital to survival. Even if the conclusion, *the end of the event*, could be seen as a point of reversal, i.e. going back to previous arrangements, its participants wished to argue for a less deterministic idea of *the flow of history*.

Portelli defines events as “cultural construction[s] based on the context created by memory through selection and connection among a multiplicity of happenings and by the form in which the story is told” (Portelli 1997: 93). One aim of oral history could be seen as the “exploring of the *distance* and *bond*” of memories in private, enclosed spaces of houses with those of “history” (viii). This *distance* became apparent to Karen Fields when she ventured to prove her grandmother’s story in the archives of Oxford University, in an act of what she calls a “methodological mistrust” (1998: 151). Her grandmother claimed that her great-great Uncle Thomas, a slave,

had accompanied his master's sons to Oxford and later used the knowledge he had gained there to educate his own children. University archives showed no records of a servant named Thomas, for, as Fields argues, "Only a then unimaginable future historiography could make the names of slave servants resident at Oxford worth remembering" (155). This is one definition of what could be called "micro-history," whereby an attempt is made to connect "small events" and localized worlds of being with those formations that permeate the social body at large. Perhaps immodestly this text aims to do similar work in contributing to a history now not only more possible to imagine, but also necessary to rethink the current gendering of political regimes.

Viewed as a process, the meanings of the reconciliation gatherings, speeches, and oaths given<sup>109</sup> were important for opening and rethinking marginalized stories and histories, and thus disrupting the "syntagmatic axis of time" of "progress" as defined by the socialist state.<sup>110</sup> The Albanian nationalist movement constructed these events as oppositional to the erasures of the socialist state and Serbian historical claims, while inscribing a logic of national development constitutive of specific modernist ideas of state building. Žižek's conclusions on nationalism are pertinent to these enactments. He argues that, "A nation *exists* only as its specific *enjoyment* continues to be materialized in a set of social practices and transmitted through national myths that structure these practices" (Žižek 1996: 202). Nationalism thus presents a privileged domain for the eruption of enjoyment into the social field, whence the

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<sup>109</sup> Here I particularly mean *besa*, giving ones word and promise, which according to "Albanian tradition" is a binding oath that mobilizes action.

<sup>110</sup> I believe Portelli's definitions of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes of time to be particularly relevant here and it is worth quoting him in full. "Events are identified and located in time in terms of a linear syntagmatic axis (chronology), two vertical paradigms (temporal simultaneity, formal similarity) and their combination in historical discourse. The syntagmatic axis breaks the continuum of time into discrete units (a year, a minute, a decade); the most familiar procedure is periodization. The paradigmatic axes of simultaneity designate, among the many occurrences taking place at any given unit of time, the events that go to form the historical canon and combine them in a coherent sequence with related events taking place at other times" (Portelli 1997: 99).

national cause is the way subjects organize their enjoyment through national myths. The ground of incompatibility between different ethnic subject positions is thus not exclusively the different structure of their identification, but, rather, the particular structure of their relationship toward enjoyment (Zizek 203)<sup>111</sup>. In Yugoslavia, “*the theft*” of enjoyment was central to narrating how one nation deprives to the another possessing that which would allow it to live fully. For Statovci, reclaiming an attempted erasure, and, thus, stolen tradition is central to her imaginings of a national community.<sup>112</sup>

Indeed, my grandfather, Ahmet Luci, then a retired army colonel, also explained to me the relevance of re-claiming tradition as an intrinsic part of everyday life and experience. Unlike Drita Statovci, who is a researcher and ethnologist at the Albanian Studies Institute in Prishtina (Instituti Albanologjik), founder of the Ethnology Department at the University of Prishtina, and then member of the reconciliation Action Committee, my grandfather participated in a blood-feud reconciliation, but entered that social space from a different understanding of his rights and responsibilities.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Zizek argues that within a *Western* framework the traditional liberal opposition “between “open” pluralist societies and the “closed” nationalist-corporatist societies founded on the exclusion of the Other [can] be brought to its point of reference: the liberal gaze itself functions according to the same logic, insofar it is founded upon the exclusion of the other to whom one attributes the fundamentalist nationalism” (Zizek 1996: 223).

<sup>112</sup> The definitions of tradition explicated by the socialist state had also placed the “observance” of “traditional” kin networks as belonging to the past, as objects and material to be collected by folklorists. The “past” also signified the country, and backward rural traditions, which the state’s modernist projects had to eliminate. Within Yugoslav state socialism many ‘traditions’ had been remodeled and labeled with concepts such as “cultural heritage” or “traditional folk treasure.” “The terminology itself suggesting their value as museum pieces rather than living expressions of a particular national (ethnic) groups” (Laušević 1999, 119).

<sup>113</sup> I refrain from giving a more extensive biographical sketch on Statovci and explicitly interrogating my own subjective and political implications. Indeed, the need to provide intellectual histories of those who remain “unknown” within the larger and more dominant sphere of knowledge production is of great historical and political significance.

The next excerpt from our conversation is not emblematic of my grandfather's life story or history, but it was a significant episode in his life. In the town of Peja, where my family is from, my grandfather had always been a respected figure to whom many went for advice and support. He had often been involved in resolving disputes and had used his connections as a colonel in the Yugoslav army in the past for a number of purposes for which I still do not have the details. I present his involvement in reconciliation through my transcript of his story:

*Xhevdet had called and told me that Muharem's daughter had eloped with the only son of the X family...Luan's son. These two families had been in a feud for a long time and I don't think they even remembered what it was about. I think it was over land when, in the fifties, the state took over to build the sugar factory and one got more [than] the other. But see this was interesting because the two kids thought, since everybody was forgiving blood, their fathers would settle this in a civilized way. But Luan had sent his younger son to get his sister back and do whatever was needed to preserve the honor of the family. I had to step in because I was close to both families. You know your father's aunt was married to Muharem's brother, but he died in Spain...in the war...but she stayed with the family. And these...the X family and my uncles had the flour mill together...I had tried before to make them forget this whole thing but now I thought there was a better chance since Anton was going all around and saying how we need to come together as a people and show our honor as a people. For me...I needed to help Muharem save face and Luan from losing his only son. Well Xhevdet told me that the two of them were hiding in his house because they heard that Faton was looking for them. He drove them to our house and Kemajl [my father] got Muharem, Luan and Faton on the phone and told them to come to our house because we needed to talk.<sup>114</sup>*

Although both Statovci's and my grandfather's stories may present different and contradictory renderings, both include significant overlap in the remembering of the chronology and form of the events, as well as in the meaning of their stories. What had been lost in all the media accounts, speeches, and press releases that defined and organized mass meetings for reconciliation was the significance of personal and individual stories and memories of lived violence, pain and love. Statovci has, for

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<sup>114</sup> Because I explained my ideas about this project to him, I believe there was also an attempt on his part to address as many facets of the episode as possible and thus the recollection of the state's take-over of land. All names have been changed in order to protect the identity of the other parties involved.

example, included and quoted the oaths given by those in whose reconciliation she participated, but all of them, mothers, brothers, sisters and fathers, exclaimed in unison the same words, “My brother and sister I now give and forgive to the youth and the nation” (Statovci 1990: 103). What emerges from the account given from my grandfather, above, is a story of significance to individual and collective experience rooted in the context of family, kin and community as practiced at the local level.<sup>115</sup> Nonetheless, there is a significant shift from the “we” nation mode to the personal, grounded in the local community, and the enactment of a role as a *mik* (friend), particularly in obligations through marriage and other family alliances. Reconciling these two families carried more weight when defined in terms of preserving the honor and life of members of a local community, but particularly those members with whom specific relations of relatedness exist. The dispute, at the same time, would have to be settled in a *civilized way* not according to the *blood for blood* sanction given by the *kanun*. The enactment of ‘tradition’ can then be seen as “an effective strategy for establishing power in different local contexts” by mobilizing networks of kin and *mik* (friends) while their meaning can be remade according to circumstance (Sievers 2001: 97).

My grandfather’s previous attempts to reconcile the two families were given the added legitimacy with the fact that “*we need[ed] to come together as a people and show our honor as a people.*” These pronouncements also emphasized that reconciliation was about “a return to a common humanity,” or, as the journalist I cited earlier claimed, reconciliation was about all that is “Albanian, human, humanitarian and international.” Here, cultural distinction is also part of a call for recognition and solidarity. We are also given a “history“ of this dispute, which attests to the way histories are remembered by people through the use of personally meaningful cultural

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<sup>115</sup> The tension in differentiating between collective and individual memory and experience must be noted. See Portelli 1997, especially chapter four.



referents, although such histories collapse with the significant chronology of state development (i.e. the state's take-over of land in the 1950s), or other significant international events, such as the Spanish Civil War. The story also "communicates what history means to human beings...[but] this story does not belong to a timeless tradition." Instead, the story makes visible that attempts to make experiences, identities and memories singular and predictable are constantly appropriated and negotiated in locally meaningful contexts (Portelli 1997: 42, 43). At the same time, these negotiations, which required particular ideas of relatedness and their entrenchment within the local community, particularly through oaths of *besa*, were the grounds on which national unity could be performed. Along with the enactments of kinship in *besa* was also enactment of the nation in *besa*, which, through a whole range of genres, outside of the *kanun*, were also meaningful discursive practices for attesting to that unity. This is best attested by the song "*Besa, Bese,*" which had been banned by the Yugoslav socialist state, but performed in private spaces, and was later performed at public reconciliation events: "Besa, Bese, my besa I have given, For Kosova we will give our lives" (*Besa, besë besën ta komë dhane, Për Kosovë, jetën dojm me dhane.*)

Another significant trope which emerged in my grandfather's story, in Statovci's analysis, and I would argue in the whole process of refashioning Lek's customary law, was the requirement that national identities be refigured in such ways that they also demanded an articulation of proper womanhood and manhood. The reconciliation of blood feuds in Kosova was exemplary of this process in which men's traditional role to defend the honor of the family was explicated once again, but also redefined and extended to the whole nation. In my grandfather's account this was explicated by the fact that he needed to "*help Muharem save face*" as his daughter had dishonored him by eloping with a man from a feuding family. With attempts to construct an alternative Kosova polity, from within, and to define political participation, "The social construction of gender...[was an] essential component of the mass incorporation linked to modern political development. Ultimately, the

gendering of citizenship cannot be separated from images of honor, morality, and sexuality.” (Hart 1996: 102).

In accordance with the *kanun*, men were expected to defend their family’s honor by avenging the murder of their family member, and, by extension, protecting their authoritative role. Refusing to “revenge the blood” (“*me hakmarrë gjakun*”) would mean to disgrace one’s family. By failing to protect the interests of the lineage and their property, they would not be able to claim manhood.<sup>116</sup> It is important to note that *burrë* (man) and *grua* (woman) are most commonly used to refer to husband and wife. Hence “mashkull” (male) and “burre” (husband/man) can be used interchangeably, but it is by way of his relationship within the family that a man creates and observes his roles and can enact his masculinity/manhood. In this context, enacting manhood, “*burrërinë*”, requires the observance of familial hierarchy and moral verisimilitude. When women were required to “revenge blood,” such actions were attributed to “*burrë*,” which denotes manly characteristics such as the defense of honor. These representations are frequent in literature, poetry, and public discourse.

Statovci makes note, and makes central to her argument this type of rationalization, with the enactment of “*burrëri*” as a trait and privilege that women can also enjoy.

On April 20 of this year [1990] we met to discuss the forgiving of blood in the Gjokici house, of Terstenik, now living in Vukovc. Here we found mother Hajrije, her daughters, and her son Muhamet. It was extremely difficult for this brave mother because she has to forgive the blood of two beloved sons. And this mother, with a big heart, this strong and knowledgeable<sup>117</sup> mother, when she understood the pointlessness of feuds and relevance of forgiving blood, she went to

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<sup>116</sup> See Gjecov 1933.

<sup>117</sup> The word used by Statovci is *urtë*, also meaning calm, peaceful. The problem of translation is a significant one. I have not used words, and categories, in Albanian in an attempt to claim or construct authenticity. Rather, I wish to assert that the meanings, and untranslatability, of these words rely on the impossibility of divorcing them from wider cultural and symbolic systems.

her son to give him support and strength. She slowly put her hand on him and told him: get up son, get up boy, for this child (next to them was her three-year-old granddaughter), for this youth, and the whole Albanian people, get up and be[come] a man and give your hand-give your people both your brothers” (Statovci 1990: 101).

Without the mother’s support, Statovci argues, this reconciliation would not have been possible, and “is a reflection of the positive role of women in society, for the whole humanity... The Kanun has now been torn down, and it no longer belongs only to the men... It is of our people” (Statovci 1990: 105).

In *The Work of Women in the National Movement for Liberation*, Hava Shala also writes:

The participation of women political prisoners in the blood-feud reconciliation action in Kosova can not be measured in percentage, but with the bravery and acute knowledge of the given word, through which the request to do something for the fatherland was carried, through which the plea for reconciliation for collective survival was carried. And who could better make this call, to plead for love, than a woman... She could speak of motherly emotions, of mothers, who, due to the suicidal pride of men, were being punished to live their whole live in sorrow [suffer], while their men were isolated. She could speak of the fear that would take away their children’s sleep, stopped their growth, put fear in their eyes and souls.

She continues:

The cause of the fear was not only the regime, however powerful it was. We ourselves were the cause, our elders [*kryeneqesia*] conserved through the centuries in the paragraphs of the kanun and its old age. The woman was the one who placed a challenge upon man, to teach a new kind of manhood, a manhood that merged the courage to forgive blood, and the knowledge to prevent those that might occur.

This claim of universality, of equal right to participation, has been a continuing strategy of many women and feminists in Kosova, and Eastern Europe as a whole.<sup>118</sup> Such incorporation and participation, within such a framework, has

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<sup>118</sup> See Gal and Kligman 2000a, and 2000b.

empowering potential that refuses marginalization while asserting a gendered identity. According to the *kanun*, “the wife does not have any rights over the children,” and is known as a sack, made to endure as long as she lives in her husband’s house (Gjeco 1933: article 61, 44). Statovci has, nonetheless, made visible that the codes of the *kanun* as they are experienced and performed are not stable through time. The events as she describes them make it seem as if the significant moment of rupture occurs as she witnesses them. Although she argues for a greater temporal depth to such ruptures, and, thus, other traditions that made it possible, there are also other cultural formations, particularly those of sentiment and emotion, that make such seeming ruptures possible and meaningful.

In her research on rapes committed during the partition of India, Veena Das has argued that “women spoke of their experiences by anchoring their discourses to the genres of mourning and lamentation that already assigned a place to them in the cultural work of mourning” (Das 2000: 205). As she notes, “There is clearly a tension between interpreting a violent event in the form of a text (even a text that is performed) and trying to find ways in which violence is implicated in the formation of the subject, foregrounding the category of experience...but they spoke of violence and pain *within* these genres as well as *outside* them” (Das, 205). Personal narratives then, as Ochs and Capps argue, are simultaneously born out of experience and give shape to experience (Ochs and Capps: 1996). Numerous stories and testimonies of women in Kosova place the violence they experienced, and their role in reconciliation within an “emotive regime” or “structures of feeling” of an acceptance of the inevitability of (*vuajtje*) suffering. During the reconciliation process, the code of honor, central to Albanian customary law, mobilized important ideas of chastity and

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honor, manhood and womanhood, and, especially, family. The same categories were explicated again when reports of sexual violence were made public during and after the war. Whereas in India, as Das argues, arrangements through practical kinship made it possible for women and their children to live with the families of their “perpetrators,” a very different situation emerged in Kosova. Why was it not possible to redefine tradition once more to include women raped during the war and the children these women bore from those rapes? During the reconciliation process, customary law enabled reconciliation among Albanians and required the participation of women in acting out oaths of forgiveness in previously exclusive male domains. I return to these questions in the following chapter.

Here I would like to add the ways in which women do have rights over their children in a multitude of settings, as agents in the “cultural work” of nurturance and forgiveness, and thus made possible and initiated the reconciliation of families. Through the mobilization of various genres and aesthetic forms and complex systems of *sentiment*, mothers (and women in general, as they are all expected to become mothers) stand in for the virtues of the nation. In the literary imagination, as well as in other cultural and political domains, Kosova has categorically figured as the *motherland*. Kosova is portrayed and constructed as the nurturing mother who awaits the return of its sons from exile, war, and so on. Such imaginings are of course not rare. As Carol Delaney argues, Kemal Ataturk’s consolidation of Turkey as a nation-state also relied on various imaginings of the “...*Arravatan* (‘Motherland’) [as] a generalized medium of nurturance...” (Delaney 1995: 179). Rebecca Bryant has taken further Schneider’s claim that the assumed un-malleable character of kinship stems from material and genetic properties attributed to blood. According to Bryant “facts of history and the apparent natural forms of proof which govern them also create a

seeming reality for the ‘natural’ relations of purity and power that regulate the relationship of people and land” (Bryant 2002: 511).

The *kanun*, which have been cited and mis-cited by many, ranging from exceptionally romanticized representations to those that condemn its “barbarity,” have been thus reproduced in various texts, in the imagination, and in the practices of people. As many have argued, the *kanun* also provided a justification to the observance of many “wrongs” for the sake of the family and the nation. Nonetheless, besides the transformations and new possibilities that were explicated and constructed regarding Albanian womanhood, as I have argued, men were also refashioned in particular ways. The reconciliation process, which could be seen as contradictory to the type of manhood and tradition expressed through the *kanun*’s definitions of honor, was also rationalized through a nationalist discourse that required men to be honorable and manly by forgiving for the sake of a greater family: the nation.

In the mass gatherings, hundreds of people met to “participate” in the re-making of a new identity. This identity brought together a newly constructed ethos of forgiveness and the respect for the lives of “the people.” Speeches and media coverage defined these moments as a step forward in the direction of civilized Europe. Kosova was to leave behind its “backward” traditions, and this required men who were willing to forgive. Statovci’s intervention was thus a necessary and significant one. In what could be seen as a *crisis in masculinity*, there is redefinition of manhood that has the semblance of stability.<sup>119</sup> These social and cultural redefinitions, and the pledges which men made, did not require official or legal

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<sup>119</sup> The literature which treats the “crisis of masculinity” in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe and United States is extensive; from contexts of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Western European transformations (in science, economy and politics), to colonial (including the United States) to post-colonial situations and constructions of alterity, and especially within Orientalist discourses (Smith-Rosenberg 1985; Bederman 1995; Mosse 1998; Melman 1998; Kimmel 2005).

legitimacy because they relied on the men's word to keep their *besa*. This concept of *besa* has also always been of crucial importance to the ways in which Albanians have perceived and constructed their martyrs and heroes. It would be unlike an Albanian man not to keep his *besa*, because it signifies his dignity and sacrifice. In what became the predominant discourse, men, by being required to protect the well being of the nation, were "once again" the central agents in this seemingly rational and linear narrative of national progress. Political and social conflicts, then, would have to be resolved on a basis of universal individual rights, by exercising and participating in the new transition to democracy. The whole process presented itself as both faithful to the perceived unique Albanian traditions of the past, thus normalizing this redefinition of manhood, and as creating a picture of future national stability.

My aim has been to find and re-surface cultural-political experiences that could remake some current telling of Kosova's history. This is both an intention and a necessity, and they are relevant for a number of reasons. Some are academic and others political, though certainly I do not see these as separate. As the movement was placed on the platform of national identity, it also made the material/symbolic characteristics of blood the carriers and markers of power, morality/honor, and historical legitimacy. This story has, of course, not gone unchallenged by others as well, but the challenges have been aimed at claiming authorship, and thus moral and political power. For example, many women activists and gender scholars in Kosova continue to be treated as nonexistent. So here I do not tell their story; instead, I tell the story of how they became marginalized and assumed forgotten by mainstream history in Kosova and thus invisible to critical readings of misogyny for all post-Yugoslav nationalisms. Anthropologists have also long treated "the interpretation of honor as an attribute or ideal exclusively of men. Women either are not considered at all or are

viewed as that which men must protect and honor” (Abu-Lughod 1989: 285). This masculine discourse of anthropology, and certainly of other social sciences, has contributed to the omission of women’s participation in political agency.

Historiography has also produced the same. An ending to this story has often been given through the following observation: ‘Once, we had to research through archives and books to meet with such men, courage and heroes, but now they are among us and have erected a monument to courage, manliness, peace and love.’

The context I explored here is the (re)defining of Albanian national belonging by expanding the meanings and practices of forging local, kin, and other connections of relatedness through the *kanun*’s code of honor as a basis for a nationalist social movement. Although I begin with Hobsbawm to refer to the “invention of tradition” as a form that is invented, constructed and emergent, I do not make a clear distinction, as he does, between tradition and custom, with the latter belonging to “traditional society.” Instead, I will show the practices of the *kanun* appear to belong to both. The *kanun*, if considered customary law, is not only a remnant of pre-industrial society; rather, the *kanun* was very much so re-created in response to modernization and industrialization (Bardhoshi 2012). As does Hobsbawm, I also claim that the appearance of a tradition, and not its chance of survival, is important. Traditions are responses to novel situations, and are based upon ritualization and formalization (Hobsbawm 1983: 2-4). From here I wish to take the discussion into another direction, to reiterate a question posed by Das. If the *kanun* is premised upon codes of honor as formalizing principles, “what are the relations between codes of honor in the sphere of kinship and national codes of honor,” and how do these determine the identities of men and women (Das 1995: 212; Delaney 1995). In what ways did the reconciliation process and the mobilization of the *kanun* (as tradition) create a new



form of belonging and relatedness between family and nation? What were the roles and representations of women and men in articulating and constructing these events? (Lukic 2000) .

Relying on Yuval-Davis' elegant definition, referring to Crowley (1999), I cite, in full, the notion of belonging:

Belonging...is a 'thicker' concept than that of citizenship and identity. It is not just about membership, rights and duties, but also about the emotions that such membership evokes. Nor can belonging be reduced to identities and identifications, which are about individual and collective narratives of the self and the other, presentation and labeling, myths of origin and of destiny. Belonging is a deep emotional need of people. Therefore, neither citizenship nor identity can encapsulate the notion of belonging. Belonging is where the sociology of emotions interfaces with the sociology of power, where identification and participation collude...Like other hegemonic constructions, belonging tends to become 'naturalized' and thus invisible in hegemonic formations. It is only when one's safe and stable connection to the collectivity, the homeland, the state, becomes threatened, that it becomes articulated and reflexive. It is then that individual, collective, and institutional narratives of belonging become politicized. (Yuval-Davis 2004: 251-216)

While it is possible, and rightly so, to consider the legitimization of the civil resistance movement in Kosova as a kind of "identify management," as defined by Ströhle, I see the movement to reconcile blood feuds, and perhaps social movements in general, also as examples of a "deep emotional need" that enables groups and individuals to confront power. Rather than just a bureaucratic response, the evocations of the *kanun* as tradition became politicized once national belonging became threatened.<sup>120</sup> I aim to show how various social actors and ideologies came together, conflicted, and emerged, and how representations of the past, multiply-homogenized to claim political power and legitimacy, were a product of a diverse set of ideals,

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<sup>120</sup> Historians mention eight other large reconciliations among Albanians for different time periods since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Current historical rendering characterize these as examples of national unification. However, further research is necessary in order to understand them more fully. The relevance for the 1990 reconciliation was that previous examples could be unearthed.

values and experiences. All these evocations and claims upon legitimacy were ultimately produced through intersecting inequalities between national and gendered belongings.

Narrative analyses of oral histories and public testimonies on blood-feud reconciliation have been relevant for me in tracing the appearance of various categories, such as family and nation, honor and manhood, and mediation and memory. Claims of entitlement to narrate different experiences and silences, both produced and broken, in lieu of historicized events and social expectations, became important in that they challenged the denial of “history, culture, and context to a constructed Other” (Shamir 1996: 253). In Kosova, this challenge has been manifold; one expression consists of Albanian production of history and culture. This production recognizes the existence of Albanian Otherness as constructed in Serbian public and private discourse; at the same time, it cuts through these discourses and erects history and culture as a product of masculine achievements, while it also rejects the perceived tenets of this Otherness that are depicted as resting on an oppressive patriarchy.

My strategy for inquiry has also involved mapping the politics of knowledge production in Kosova, the transformations in the constitution, and the articulations of residual and emerging intellectual, cultural and political elites.<sup>121</sup> Through these, I wish to intervene in a particular social and political context, yet take it out of its marginality. As Williams has argued, “[I]t is in the incorporation of the actively residual – by reinterpretation, dilution, projection, discriminating inclusion and

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<sup>121</sup> Here I rely on Raymond Williams’ (1977) definition of dominant, residual and emergent. A residual relationship is not archaic, it is “formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present” (122). This is particularly relevant when considering that expert ethnological definitions of culture in Kosova have the tendency of seeing layers of culture that are distinguishable in themselves.

exclusion – that the work of the selective tradition is especially evident.” (1977: 123). This incorporation cannot happen, though, without the intersection of national and gendered belongings that shape the ways in which tradition and memory are produced, in order to cast claims about power and political subjectivity. At the same time, through a reading similar to David Cohen’s combing of history, invisible events and experiences are “not a consequence of a forgetting, a loss of knowledge, but rather of powerful and continuous acts of control in both public and intimate spaces” (Cohen 1994: 18).

#### **Chapter 4: From Victim to Freedom Fighter: Fraternity of the Kosova Liberation Army and the “Albanian Woman”**

He speaks, he recites, sometimes he sings, or he mimes. He is his own hero, and they, by turns, are the heroes of the tale and the ones who have the right to hear it and the duty to learn it...It is no longer the language of their exchange, but of their reunion—the sacred language of a foundation and an oath. —*Jean Luc-Nancy*

#### **Observations from a Native Anthropologist**

The eighth day of March, in most of the world, is celebrated as International Women’s Day. In Kosova, as in many countries in the region, the holiday was inherited from a previous socialist basket of ritualized expressions of a political system. More specifically, March 8<sup>th</sup> served to celebrate the achievements of the woman worker.<sup>122</sup> During the past two decades, since the shift from state-socialism, the holiday has come to embody a series of other values attached to women, most

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<sup>122</sup> See Einhorn 1993; Haney 1999.

specifically that of motherhood. With similar and new kinds of visibilities allowed for gender roles in post-socialist and post-war Kosova, I wish to set the stage for the drama that was to unravel on a particular March 8th in 2005.

On that day, I was going to meet some friends at the Kosovar Center for Gender Studies. At that time, the Center seemed to provide a space of possibility, an opening for young women and students, particularly those in the social sciences and humanities. The creators' aims, as a friend and researcher at the center noted, were "to articulate new ideas that reject the dominant and masculine political discourse." We had been planning a public intervention of some sort on the emerging landscape of war-memorials in the city for a while. One idea was to sew a dress and place it on the statue of one of the fallen KLA fighters. This was seen as particularly relevant. Among the hundreds of war monuments commemorating the KLA, only one has been dedicated to a woman fighter, Xhevë Lladrovci (Gillis 1994; Ashplant, Dawson and Roper 2000; Biesecker 2002; Kaplan 2008). The date discussed for this intervention was March 8th, because it would attempt to overturn some of the new practices that had emerged around the holiday. The previous year, a friend and lecturer at the Department of Sociology in the University of Prishtina related, the university had organized a luncheon at the Grand Hotel for university women, including academic and non-academic staff. The friend noted, in disappointment and anger, that the tone of the event resembled a traditional bridal shower (*kenagjegj*), rather than a meeting of a perceived intellectual class. "Could you imagine," she said, "each guest received a bag of cosmetics, including lipstick, a mirror, and eye shadow."

On our way to the Center, I noticed a particular kind of sobriety among people walking down the streets. People in Prishtina do not walk around smiling much, reflecting both worry and increased anonymity in a city that has grown three-fold since

the end of the war. On this day, their faces appeared longer; the city seemed grayer, and the air more chilling. It was as if someone had died, people here would say. I had not seen the morning news that day and later realized that I had missed reports of an event that would powerfully invoke experiences and memories of a recent past, while also shaping assumptions for future belongings. The news concerned Kosova's Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, responding to the charges brought against him by the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. Haradinaj and two other former KLA fighters, Idriz Balaj and Lahi Brahimaj (the latter also his maternal uncle), were being charged with crimes against humanity. Journalists and politicians, especially Haradinaj, addressed fears of social unrest, or protests against the indictment, by urging people to think of this as just another sacrifice on the long road toward Kosova's independence. To me, it seemed I had somehow missed the opportunity to follow the event from the very beginning.

I had made a habit of watching the morning news program on television with the mindframe of an anthropologist doing fieldwork. I did not wish to allow myself the comfort of being home. I was living with my parents, a place I increasingly realized I had never really left. In many ways, doing ethnography from home had turned out to be both more difficult and much easier than I had imagined. It was both difficult *and* easy because I had to position myself as an analyst of events, such as the one I wish to talk about here, while mis/recognizing myself as an anthropologist and member of the public, if not the national community.

The contradictions about my own "situatedness" may become evident throughout the reading of this text. These are contradictions that disagree with the anthropological product that has been the difference between the assumed "normative researcher" or "native-anthropologist" (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Haraway 1988;

Narayan 1993; Gupta & Ferguson 1997; Weston 1997; Breidenbach and Nyíri 2009). Many anthropologists have offered reasons for similar disagreement that relate to essential concepts in the epistemology and genealogy of the field. With similar concerns in mind, Matti Bunzl has suggested a Boasian recuperation in fieldwork, sketching a framework for an anthropology which, as he argues, can “reconstruct the history of [a] present beyond the difference between ethnographic Self and native Other” (Bunzl 2004: 440). If distance is what an Enlightenment tradition valued most, numerous remedies for reaching such distance have been offered. Bunzl’s argument is for a focus on the order of difference in the present, “as the very site of a critical investigation into ongoing processes of historical reproduction” (441). Here his argument meets a Foucauldian awareness of genealogy, but he adds Boasian historicism. This includes knowledge of “secondary explanations” (as the “phenomenon that continuously masks the production and reproduction of cultural difference”) and “alternating sounds” (as the phenomena that remain distant to the outsider and create difficulty in understanding) (Bunzl 2004: 441; Boas 1974[1889]: 72-77). What we need, I would agree with Bunzl, is “cultural difference... dislodged from its position as the enabling principle of ethnography and turned into the very phenomenon in need of historical explanation” (440).

The issues of whether or not I had become prone to such secondary explanations, was holding an understanding of “alternating sounds,” or was producing an anthropological secondary explanation of simultaneous distance and attachment were questions that had no easy answers. My argument, here, is for intentional positionality and animation of visible and assumed distance between recognition and misrecognition. This is, as Elizabeth Povinelli recently argued, “an orientation to the irreducible, and necessary, embeddedness of life.” (Povinelli 2006: 146). To answer the

questions posed in this paragraph, one can only provide partial, selective answers that get tossed around, sketched, and remade while one is continuously evaluated and has one's grounding shattered, mostly by those who inform us in the field. When I explained my research to a respected jurist, the response was, "You have to be careful with this topic. You are young and you can make many mistakes. There are many things you don't know." At first I was ready to dispel his comments as examples of his mistrust in my foreign education, worry about the authenticity of my nativeness, or perhaps, above all, concern for my feminist convictions. I realized, as such commentary became more frequent and the discussions more elaborate, that I was adhering to the culturally-conditioned respect I had been taught to have for what anthropologists would define as hierarchies of age, gender, and social status. All three would have taken me out of the spaces that offer its participants the privilege "to partake," and to take part in what is privileged (Csordas 1994). This was particularly true when I spoke to former KLA fighters and members of the Kosova Protection Corps. The difficult realization was that, somehow, I listened to these men more carefully, not only because they were the subjects of my inquiry, but also because of the authority a diverse set of practices bestowed upon men of a particular age and social rank. In Bourdieu's terms, I found myself in a taken-for-granted set of rules and arrangements, between "objectification and embodiment," between the structuring of our experiences and practices, and the way in which we put those in play (1977: 87-95).

In time, I also realized many had the expectation that I would tell a story about sacrifice and pain. "Tell the truth and set the story straight," is the advice and request I continuously received. The *care* weighed heavily upon me, this responsibility that only such stories could carry. I was expected to be and became concerned about the telling of a recent history to an audience that was imagined, by most Kosovars, to have little

knowledge of the past. Or, if that audience were informed, that knowledge had been tainted by political motivation. The latter concern with political “spin” was particularly true in regard to the desire for “the world” to understand (*le ta kuptoj bota*) the repeated and often agonized statement that, “the survival of Albanians in Kosova depended upon fighting back” (see Balibar 2004). According to my interlocutors, who seemed to have no patience with my concern for the complexity and implications of power in various truth claims, they had other power battles to worry about. This foreign audience had to learn the truth.

I have also often been placed in the category of “Albanian woman,” at times too “authentic,” other times not enough. On a particular occasion, my presentation of the first draft of this chapter caused much controversy. As an advisor for a UNDP (United Nation Development Program) project called Women’s Safety and Security Initiative, I aided the organization of the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) international conference in 2009 titled “Gender and Identity.” AGE is a government agency whose mandate is to monitor and report implementation of the Gender Equality Law.<sup>123</sup> The agency’s goal, among others, for the conference was regional and international visibility for the issue of gender equality in Kosova. Held on the 7th and 8th of March, Shqipe Krasniqi, then director of the agency, wished to recuperate certain meanings of this date. Participants were activists, academics, politicians, journalists, etc.

I shared a panel with a colleague, Vjollca Krasniqi, who presented a re-reading of feminist sex-gender system theories, and Susana Milevska, a lecturer in art history and theory at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, in Skopje. My presentation opened up the topic of the KLA and masculinity. Those in attendance

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<sup>123</sup> <http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/?cid=2,191,103>, accessed 14 June 2013.



included women parliamentarians, some of whom were former KLA fighters. One of them stood up and said, “You do not have the right to talk about the KLA. I can talk about the KLA; I was in the KLA.” I did not anticipate this reaction and responded by stating one of the main reasons I was presenting on this topic was to receive their feedback. At that point a conversation on authority, legitimacy and voice began, and I changed the course of my talk. I turned the floor to the participants and began a discussion on the role of women in the war. The conversations continued during the lunch break and late into the night.

The following year Susana Milevska gave a presentation on the “Feminist Theory & Activism in Global Perspective,” at an another international conference organized by *Feminist Review*. The journal was celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There Milevska discussed “the potentialities of regional feminisms” for transnational theory, and noted the exchange that had occurred at the prior year’s conference in Prishtina (2011: 52). Milevska observed that the audience objected because my presentation was in English. “Because the paper was written in a very hermetic language, [it] was almost incomprehensible to some audience members, especially those coming from the older generation of local feminist activists and the women members of parliament in Kosovo. It created a notable sense of frustration at the conference” (Milevska 2011). Although *perhaps* a technical detail, I presented in Albanian, and most of the comments on the “incomprehensibility” of the language were directed to my colleague, Vjollca, who was the one who presented in English. Milevska did note that a simultaneous translation was provided for Vjollca’s work, and language choice should not have been an issue. However, at the time when this “critique” was launched, five or more people were speaking at the same time. The debate went beyond the technical and technological and a moment of untranslatability ensued. The women parliamentarians, former KLA

fighters, did not wish anyone but them to have the legitimacy of telling the history of the KLA, for this is also where they draw their political power.

I would agree with Milevska on many of her points, and would cite her here at length:

It is absolutely necessary to begin a discussion about regional feminism and solidarity in both academic and activist contexts because, not only will it inform and enrich the transnationally oriented feminist theory with more transversal links and ‘reciprocal influxes’ ...but it could also contribute to a more successful strategy of bridging oppositional positions and towards encouraging women's empowerment at the local level (2011: 56).

However, I have a different concern. “Transnational theorists” cannot assume that women at the “local level” do not understand their language, or that one can write about someone else in some remote corner somewhere, but that person will never have the opportunity to read what a theorist says about her. Nor can theorists assume that theory occurs in a transnational space and practice in a local one. To paraphrase Navaro-Yashin, the mobility and flexibility promoted by processes and theories of transnationalism fail to grasp how they also “engender the opposite: immobility, entrapment, confinement, incarceration.” (2003: 108). These terms themselves are not helpful, and, some time ago, at least in anthropology, we burned the straw man and came to understand how problematic it is to construct “subjects” out of composites. After all admonitions, Milevska had presented a deeply theoretical paper without objections. The opposition to my and Vjollca’s papers occurred because the audience understood what we were saying.

The breadth of knowledge produced about Kosova places it in position of remarkable otherness. The most widely-read and well-known text for western audiences that illustrates this position has been Robert D. Kaplan’s *Balkan Ghosts* (1993). Although Kaplan’s simplistic view of the so-called “ethnic wars” in the

Balkans as a matter of “century-old hatreds” has received sophisticated critique, the otherwise complex historical, political and social intertwinings still beg for social and cultural analysis. Additionally, in Kosova there has been the difficult relation of countering the many academic and political projects that emerged in Serbia regarding Kosova.<sup>124</sup> As recently as 1992, Dušan Bataković, a historian and member of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, writing on 17<sup>th</sup> century mass movement of Serbs to Serbia from the neighboring lands, repeats a well-known depiction of “ethnic Albanian tribes” (given their incredible powers of reproduction) who pose a grave threat to the biological survival of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohia [sic]” (Bataković 1992). It was this Academy, with which most Serbian nationalist academics are associated, that produced, under the guidance of writer Dobrica Ćosić, in 1986, the infamous Project Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences.<sup>125</sup> Though not widely known by the masses, more specialized historical writings and sociological frameworks offered legitimacy to otherwise worrisome policies (during socialism designated as “unity through difference,” and during Milosevic’s rule coined “special measures” to protect Serbs in Yugoslavia). However, specific renderings, such as the one offered by Bataković, did reach the wider public. Bataković’s memorandum made public what had been silenced and censored during Tito’s rule: Albanians were seen as a threat to the cultural, economic and demographic well being of Serbs.

The search for the relations between knowledge and violence, therefore, became my second responsibility in the field. As all within the discipline of

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<sup>124</sup> See Maliqi 2010, for an analysis of sociological, literary and historical texts produced by Serbian academics from the 1960s to the 1990s.

<sup>125</sup> "Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) Memorandum, 1986," *Making the History of 1989*, Item #674.

anthropology agree, there are particular expectations when writing about violence in ethnography. Allen Feldman has argued that, when it comes to modern political violence, “there is a canon of quasi-silence in anthropology...many people [have] decided opinions on *how not to say it*” (1999: 8). Anthropologists are expected to maintain just the right amount and form of distance and closeness, so as not to become voyeuristic or morbid, or even, perhaps, subjective. For the most part, this involves a distance that comes once one leaves the field. To use Feldman’s suggestion, again, an ethnographic reading of violence contains three types of sites from which an ethnographic standpoint is grounded “a pre-ethnographic or culturally residual site, an ethnographic site of dialogical mutation, and a post-ethnographic site of discursive regulation and normativity” (1999: 8). These sites are not necessarily, nor can they be, temporally or spatially discrete, particularly for the “native anthropologist.” According to Feldman, they can be thought of as epistemic conditions.

I realized, throughout my stay in the field, which was my home, the homes of friends, relatives, acquaintances, and even strangers who would trust or distrust me as they learned that I was the daughter, grand-daughter, friend, and so forth of my relations, I aimed to uncover the *habitus* of my rooting. Physical distance or proximity that can be overcome or attained in ethnography still remain determined by embodied experiences and structured difference. Most conversations began or ended with questions. “Where were you during the war? Did you lose anyone? Did yours fight?” And so the day that I missed the morning news also appeared to be a missed opportunity, an opportunity to create a personal memory and an engagement with the object of my study, an opportunity to be part to what Appadurai has called “communities of sentiment” (1996; 2010). It was the public sphere, I thought, that I could best observe and count on.

I had imagined that my ability to capture all the facts, the story from its inception, would add to the rigor of my research. But even an empiricist position of this kind stumbles upon the realization that the story does not begin on any given day. It already exists, similarly, to the myth telling of origins and foundations suggested by Nancy whereby “[w]ith myth, the passing of time takes shape, its ceaseless passing is fixed in an exemplary place of showing and revealing,” although the lack of myth is the contemporary condition for which he argues (1991: 45). There are places that carry some larger moral weight for determining the legitimacy of participants in events, for those places have contoured the emotional bonds between people. I write this from home, but also from a condition of awareness, not only about the process of ethnographic translation, but also about new structures of possibility for, as well as limits to, how enactments of violence are remembered and recorded. Commemorations of sacrifice become the sites of a privileged manhood where knowledge about “authentic” national belonging finds expression.

### **Theorizing Manhood**

With the growing interest in the study of masculinity, there has been a move from previous endeavors intended to assert the relevance of the field, predominantly by showing the gendered identities of men as practices that create hegemonic masculinity, to include issues of power, comparison, and competition over masculine identities in analysis as a critique of the previously established canon (Brod and Kaufman 1994; Kimmel 1987; Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994; Beattie 2002; Adams and Savran 2002; Connell 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Particularly compelling has been research that has focused on the body as a site of social and political control and legitimacy (Gill, Henwood and McLean 2005; Mankayi 2008; King 2010). The

influence of Michel Foucault's work has perhaps dominated, or certainly laid a foundation, as well as that of Pierre Bourdieu (Foucault 1975, 1978; Bourdieu 1977).

In anthropology, Mauss's work on body techniques is one precursor of contemporary interests in the body (1950 [1979]). Through its "career," the body has undergone many transformations in anthropology (Csordas 1999), with work in medical anthropology (Martin 1992a, 1992b; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987; Ginsburg and Rapp 1995); in the anthropology of violence (Das, et al. 1997; Scheper-Hughes 1992); in ritual (Van Gennep 1960; Turner 1969); in sexuality and gender (Ong 1995; di Leonardo 1997; Kulick 1998; Reddy 2005; Gayatri 2005; Wieringa, Blackwood and Bhैया 2007); and in the body's emotive, sensorial, and aesthetic dimensions (Csordas 1999; Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990; Kidron 2011). All have argued for the irreducible bodily dimensions in the establishment of modern structures of power and political economy. Particular kinds of bodies are made within sets of various social, political and economic formations through their institutionalization, categorization, measurement, representation, and trade, (Mascia-Lees 2011). As Connell states "[b]odies, in their own right as bodies do matter; they age, get old, enjoy, engender, give birth," but the surface on which "cultural meanings are inscribed is not featureless, and it does not stay still" (1995: 51).

According to Susan Bordo, certain models have downplayed the "materiality of gender" and have ignored their social inscriptions. Physical situatedness in time and space do not simply evaporate because we are made aware of them. Bordo provides a pointed critique. She claims:

Readings of the body become lost in the fascinating, ingenious (and often, prematurely celebratory) routes that imagination, intellect, and political fervor can take when looking at bodily 'texts' without attention to the concrete contexts, social, political, cultural, and practice in which they are embedded. And so they need to be reminded of the materiality of the body (Bordo 1992: 163).

In anthropology, Scheper-Hughes and Lock, early on, showed that boundaries between individual and political bodies are most significantly made when the social and political order appears to be threatened. However, in their analysis, the symbolic and political are mutually constituted (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). Along similar lines, Sasson Levy, focusing on the soldiering of Israeli men and the relations between masculinity and militarization, argues that, through a set of techniques, social control is exercised to create disciplined bodies and dominating bodies (Sasson-Levy 2008; see Frank 1991). She argues for a focus on emotions viewed as discursive practices through which meanings of political and social events are negotiated.

Through discussion across the fields of anthropology, sociology, gender studies, media studies, history, and, particularly, with the influence of feminist critique, compelling inquiry has emerged on relations between masculinity and soldiering, particularly as they related to state and nation building (Petzet 1994; Marvin and Ingle 1999; Armitage 2003; Kaplan 2006; Gusterson 2007; Açıksöz 2012). Such inquiries had their predecessors. Enloe (1983; 1993; 2000a), Theweleit (1987), and Mosse (1990; 1998), are among those who could most be credited with incursions into these topics. I take a cue from these and propose a new direction, one that would mark not only an attempt to locate the variety of gender relations spatially and temporally. I argue that there is no single thing that is masculinity, or one masculinity that would bring to the center the political constitution of mutually vulnerable and invincible masculinity. As Forth has shown, any “history of masculinity is a history of pluralities” (Forth 2008: 3). Such history becomes possible if, in an attempt to identify the dominant and hegemonic, we also attend to the fault lines of what men do, how they do it, how they express control, perform, embody, or fight (Herzfeld 1985; Lindisfarne 1994; Adams and Savran 2002). Including historical action into our understandings of masculinity

becomes necessary, and, therefore, to talk about men is to talk about the necessity to make visible the historical processes and creations of political sanctioning and possibility, and whether these proved liberating or disappointing (Sinha 1999).

Deborah Eliston has also recognized the need to move into the “unexamined acceptance of men as nationalist activists and the often-presumptive constructions of masculinity on which such acceptance depends” (2004: 608). In the Latin American context, Gutmann has observed how masculinities have continuously developed and adapted to new social and political circumstances (2003). At the same time, aiming to further develop the theoretical and methodological complexities of studying masculinity, Segal has drawn on Judith Butler, who states that all human bodies are fundamentally dependent and vulnerable and our common condition is one of shared helplessness (Segal 2008; Butler 2004).

In an attempt to rethink warfare and militarism, Segal has proposed that we must also encompass the costs of war to men. According to her “in military combat men actually experience fear, trauma and bodily shattering, much like a woman, which is why so much work goes into denying this” (Segal 2008: 33). I argue that men acquire, enact, respect and attack the sensibilities and disagreements that emerge between socially dominant and shifting cultural inscriptions of masculinity. This socially practiced concept of masculinity, I argue, serves as a vehicle to transmit, tell, and determine the language of remembering. Within nation and state building projects, a multiplicity of elites compete over the kind of man one has to be and that man’s place within cultural systems of representation. At the same time, the nation is an always-on-going negotiation of history, remembrance, and varied gender relations.

In Kosova, these competitions and negotiations have brought together, in the field of symbolic and material relations, the blood of the nation and the “sacrifice for



its survival". This is what I call national manhood. It is the sensibility and materiality of practices that emerge out of a dialectic relation between vulnerabilities and strengths. These practices structure hierarchies of gendered and national identities. In order to uncover these hierarchies, my question centers on understanding how shifts in political systems empower and disempower constructs of political agency based on gender for men and women.

### **Masculine Habitus: Oaths of Manhood as Unifying Practices**

I, a soldier of the Kosovo Liberation Army, give my oath to fight for the liberation and unification of Albanian lands. I will always remain faithful, a worthy freedom fighter, vigilant, brave and disciplined, ready at all times, without sparing my own life, to protect the sacred interests of the fatherland. If I break this oath, may I be punished by the most severe laws of war, and if I commit betrayal may my blood be lost [spilled in vain]. I give my oath, I give my oath, I give my oath.<sup>126</sup> Oath of the Kosova Liberation Army

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Republic of Kosovo; that I will obey the orders of the President of Kosovo and the officers appointed above me, in accordance with the law; and that I will carry out my duties with diligence, honour and dignity. I will at all times be a firm protector of human rights and freedom and I will not allow discrimination of any sort including language, ethnicity or religious belief. I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will never misuse my position, rank, or influence for material benefit or personal gain.<sup>127</sup> Oath of the Kosova Security Forces

To return to 8 March 2005 and Haradinaj's response to the indictment of the ICTY, Haradinaj immediately resigned from his post as prime minister and stated his readiness to answer the charges brought against him. In a statement read at a press conference and televised live, he said:

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<sup>126</sup> I choose to call this an oath, not pledge or vow, because the former carries meanings of a sacred and communal bond, as opposed to the individual commitment references in the later terms. In Albanian: Unë, ushtari i Ushtrisë Çlirimtare të Kosovës, betohem se do të luftoj për çlirimin e tokave shqiptare dhe bashkimin e tyre. Do të jem përherë ushtar besnik, luftëtar i djenjë i lirisë, vigjilent, guximtar dhe i disiplinuar, i gatshëm që çdo kohë pa kursyer as jetën time të luftoj për t'i mbrojtur intereset e shenta të atdheut. Nëse shkel këtë betim, le të ndëshkohem me ligj të ashpër të luftës dhe nëse tradhetoj, qoftë i humbur gjaku im. Betohem, betohem, betohem.

<sup>127</sup> <http://mksf-ks.org/repository/docs/Law%20on%20the%20KSF.pdf>. Accessed 10 June 2013. Oath of the Kosova Security Forces, Law No. 03/L-046, Article 17 Oath.

I am of Kosova and willfully sacrifice myself for my country... All of my actions in war were in accordance with the morals of war, international rules, and the code of manhood.”<sup>128</sup>

During the following week, and with lesser intensity during the following months, the headlines and almost all content in print and various electronic media created a unified space to assert solidarity with Haradinaj. This practice would emerge as a momentarily novelty among media outlets, each known for its dependence on or alliance with particular political parties. For the public in Kosova, Haradinaj’s response confirmed a national attribute, the ready response to calls for justice, and was read against the backdrop of Serbia’s inability (read unwillingness) to deliver Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić to stand for charges of crimes against humanity by the ICTY. According to Veton Surroi, leader of the reform party ORA at that time, Haradinaj and Kosova, on this occasion, offered a lesson to the Balkans.<sup>129</sup> In an interview for Voice of America (VOA), also printed in the most widely read daily, *Koha Ditore*, Surroi stated that Haradinaj “passed the exam of maturity, of treating the issue as a matter of rule of law, and his gesture goes towards the protection of his personal dignity and the dignity of Kosova” (Surroi 2005).

On the occasion of Haradinaj’s indictment, there was an overarching agreement that, not only did he respond in a manner that adhered to an internationally sanctioned civilized manner, but that in this act he carried the meanings of Albanian manhood.

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<sup>128</sup> *Koha Ditore*, “Deklarate e Kryeministrit te Kosoves,” 9 March 2005

<sup>129</sup> Surroi has, for the past 20 years, been an active publicist, analyst of current issues, and member of civil society initiatives. In 1995 he founded the daily newspaper *Koha Ditore*, which significantly contributed to introducing free speech in media practice. Internationally he has continuously been seen as a key partner for all political issues in Kosova, taking part in almost all negotiation tables. In 2003 ORA emerged as an alternative to the three main political parties in Kosova. While it secured seats in parliament and municipal elections in 2003, in 2007 it did not manage to gain representation in parliament. Surroi immediately resigned following this defeat but continues to be active in conducting un-official diplomacy internationally for recognition of Kosova’s status as an independent state. He currently runs the Club for International Relations (NGO), which also publishes an Albanian language version of the magazine *Foreign Policy*.

Writing the day following the announcement of the indictment, Agron Bajrami, the editor of *Koha Ditore*, titled his editorial “*Kohë burrash*” (*Time of men*), or, to more accurately carrying the meaning, *Time for Men*. More recently, an acquaintance, also a journalist, told me that Bajrami, at a diplomatic dinner, matter-of-factly asserted that history has always been made by men and that feminists only wish to interpret history to suit their otherwise unattainable political goals. The statement shocked some; Bajrami is seen as a modern and progressive urbanite.

In regard to Haradinaj’s response, Bajrami wrote about many challenging experiences. Luan and Shkëlzen, two of Haradinaj’s four brothers, were killed in the war. His loss was presented as an affirmation of manly character. Such affirmation challenged the Kosova Government and political parties to set aside their individual differences and to begin work towards Kosova’s future. The social and political texts created around the charges, such as Haradinaj’s enactment of virtue, people’s sacrifice and strife for an independent state, and the establishment of justice moved furiously through public and private discussions and shows of solidarity. On the day of Haradinaj’s resignation, students of the University of Prishtina led a protest against the indictment, as festivities for March 8th were canceled.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> In recent years, it has become common for couples and groups of friends to go out to restaurants to listen to live music, mainly folk or what is most commonly referred to as turbo-folk (folk themes performed on synthesizers and “oriental” variations.) Some women joke that this was the only time most men ventured out to buy flowers and many people frown upon the folk aesthetic of the events that have become popular. See Slobin 1996, Lukic 2000, for analyses of kitsch, turbo-folk music, and nationalism in Serbia. In Serbia, Borka Pavićević, dramaturgist, columnist and director of the Center for Cultural Decontamination, has been a constant critic of what she calls “nationalistic kitsch” ([www.czkd.org](http://www.czkd.org)). She remarks, “Violence has become kitsch turned to pornography.” <http://www.tportal.hr/kultura/kulturmiks/138041/Nasilje-je-postalo-kic-koji-se-pretvorio-u-pornografiju.html> (Duhaček 2011). Astrit Salihu provides an analysis for the Kosova context in his *Postmoderna e Interpretuar per Shqiptaret/The Postmodern Interpreted for Albanians* (2007). See Migjen Kelmedni, *Gjurmët LP* (2002), on the debates surrounding rock and the social, political ideologies of the 1980s and early 1990s, which at times was read as unpatriotic and others as capitalist imperialist. In the 1980s Kelmedni was the singer of the rock band *Gjurmët*, and has argued that rock foresaw the fall of Yugoslavia. In past years he has worked as a publicist and the head of the Rrokum TV station. Jane Sugarman’s many works provide the only anthropological treatments of musical and social transformations on Kosova (2007; 2010).

Kosova's dignity would also become a public expression of manly attributes. The solidarity expressed was articulated as a fraternal bond of the nation, a bond created through challenge and sacrifice, whereby the attributes of individuals would generate the existing links of blood and nation. One day before the indictment, a new statue commemorating the Legendary Commander Adem Jashari was revealed in the town of Malishevë. The Mayor of the town stated, "We have gathered to honor the makers of our new history... from now, and onwards, Malisheva will have an eternal resident... not only as a municipality but also as a national geography." At the event, Rifat Jashari, Adem Jashari's brother, confirmed:

We the living have the moral and spiritual obligation to unite around our flag regardless of political leaning, because Kosova belongs to all who live in it... If we do this, we honor ourselves, the nation, the blood of our sons and daughters, and ultimately the KLA and its fight.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the ways in which private spaces of homes, as well as the privileged domains of houses that are structured by means of authoritative practices engaged by men (reproduced in *odas* or spaces similar to them when they formally do not exist), were the settings through which larger concerns of the extended kin were addressed. The search for political and national independence in that context was found, among its first expressions, in breaking the walls that set apart the outside world of politics and the inside world of the political memory of resistance. There is a separate national mythology here, that, before it could be told at The Hague, had been told in the *odas*, homes, cafés, and commemorations, throughout Kosova.

Haradinaj's party, the AAK (Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës/Alliance for the Future of Kosova), immediately set out to construct a stronger public image build around the slogan "A leader who keeps his word," signifying the notion of *besa* and its socio-cultural particularity as a political characteristic of his leadership. Formed in 2001, the AAK emerged as an alliance of numerous smaller parties. It has a large

following in the Dukagjini region, where Haradinaj is from, and where his units fought, but the region also has a strong KLA membership. However, the now larger PDK (Partia Demokratike e Kosoves/Democratic Party of Kosova) is commonly considered the political wing of the KLA. The PDK has capitalized on its KLA roots, mainly in the Drenica region, and has been in power since 2007, replacing the LDK. Once Haradinaj resigned, it became clear to most observers that PDK would grab power. The outright animosity, but also reconciliation, between parties during election-times constantly produces social tensions, as coalitions are formed to secure parliamentary seats and ministries. Underlying economic interests are most often the stronger propellers of intra-party disputes and truces (Krasniqi and Shala 2012).



Figure 10. Photograph of the Haradinaj house and graveyard in Glllogjan. The Haradinaj home in the background and the cemetery where Luan and Shkëlzen Haradinaj are buried, as well as others who died during the Glllogjan siege.<sup>131</sup> Haradinaj’s political team, also comprised of “American advisors,” builds a public image of an educated and peaceful man. While living in Switzerland during the 1990s he worked security for clubs and bars. After the war he received a BA in a Law from the University of Prishtina, and an MA in business from the American University in Kosovo. The stone house or *kulla* - traditional Albanian houses found in Kosova and northern Albania – of the Haradinaj’s is a site of wondrous stories in Kosova. There men meet in the *oda* and make important political decisions. When there is a celebration, the firing of guns is also involved. Similarly to other KLA commanders who entered politics,

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<sup>131</sup> See Langewiesche’s 2008 Vanity Fair article, for an interesting look from within, but also a highly problematic culturalist explanation.

the story here is of rural beginnings, escape from persecution and economic hardship, longing for the homeland, and finally love and sacrifice for the fatherland. The symbolic capital of education some had earlier, and others attained later, is also part of Albanian patriotism (you can not love you country if you are not educated) but is also a matter of rural-urban distinctions.

The PDK, with the official emergence of the KLA, claims Prekaz (Drenica) as its exclusive symbolic capital. The LDK has built its identity around Prishtina, Kosova's capital, and home of deceased President Rugova. The AAK, as a kind of third feudal-estate of Kosova politics, capitalized on the sacrifice of the Haradinaj family and Ramush Haradinaj's response to the indictment. Just as Hardinaj was getting on an airplane to leave for The Hague, billboards, t-shirts, key-chains, and other paraphernalia appeared for distribution and consumption throughout Kosova. Haradinaj's mythic manhood, however, competes with a much more powerful legend, that of Adem Jashari.<sup>132</sup>



Figure 11. Photograph of Legendary Commander Adem Jashari, Prekaz Memorial Complex. The photograph is hanging on scaffold that protect the original burned house.

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<sup>132</sup> The commodification of the war is not something I treat. See Grundligh 2004, for how the war of 1899-1902 in South Africa was commercialized for purposes of tourism. It is not clear to me, for example, who profits financially from similar goods in the case discussed in text. Considering local capacities to generate fake goods, it would be difficult to trace the movement of profit, which is both material and symbolic. The much more explicit and public transformation of regimes of property through privatization of socially and state-owned enterprises is ridden with corruption, and is where post-war political elites have made their fortunes. See Verdery 2003.

The legend of Adem Jashari is the foundation of Kosova's independence; a legend of the dead who embody, inform and transform the emerging political social system. Even after a physical death *He is Alive*, remains on the sign over his portrait at the site of his burned house as the photo above indicates. When socialist monuments were toppled throughout Eastern Europe, so to "excise them from history," a new distinction between the sacred and profane emerged (Verdery 1999: 5). The devastating abundance of graveyards and memorials for civilian and military casualties of war seems to combat the Serbian nationalist assertion that Serbian lands are where Serbian bones are. The dead mark the boundaries of groups and "reorder the meaningful universe" to relate the living and the dead (Verdery 1999: 26).



Figure 12. Photograph of Jashari grave-yard at the Prekaz Memorial Complex. The marble graves are ordered based on the age and gender of the deceased, first the eldest men and women and then the children, representing a kind of horizontal family tree. Each stone has a dark red carving that stands in for blood. There is a general feeling that the bodies have been laid to rest underground, but above-ground they make a permanent connection with the living. The entire memorial site is a composite of symbols of death and violence, on the one hand, and life and rejuvenation on the other.

The martyrdom of the Jashari family begins with the events at Prekaz, a village in the Drenica region. However, stories and images of Adem Jashari and the Jashari family contain remembrances of insurgency that linked previous liberation struggles to events related to Jashari. Drenica has traditionally been a stronghold of

Albanian resistance to any Yugoslav or Serbian state (the *kaqak* movement in the 1920s and the Drenica Uprising in 1945). All are powerfully linked to Drenica as a place of such struggle. Prishtina's National Theatre and Airport are named after Adem Jashari, and the site of the Jashari/Serbian Forces uprising/siege has become one of the main landmarks for Kosova's recent history. The Jashari house and the graves of the family members who died during the siege have been turned into a memorial complex visited by the diaspora, tourists and people living in Kosova (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006, 27–49). Study visits for those interested in collective memorialization have also become more frequent.

One possible way to tell the story, relying on secondary sources and an interview with a villager, is the following. Starting on 5 March 1998, Serbian police and Special Forces were deployed to Prekaz. They sealed off the area surrounding the Jashari compound and began an attack that lasted two days. Although not the first attack on the Jashari compound, the March siege resulted in one dead and several wounded among the police, and over fifty dead from the Jashari extended family. The Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms in Prishtina issued a report with a list of the names of persons killed. Reading like a memorial plaque, the list contained the age and gender of each person, including twelve children. The sole survivor was Besarta Jashari, the daughter of Adem Jashari's brother, Hamëz. Her brief recollections of the event were fervently cited; Bianca Jagger interviewed her for the BBC. Besarta's recalled her uncle singing patriotic songs while he fought, even though the Serbian police had threatened her with a knife and had ordered her to say that her uncle killed everyone who wanted to surrender (CDHRF 1998).<sup>133</sup> Adem

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<sup>133</sup> Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms. Report No. 398. "On the Widespread Repression and Harassment Perpetrated by the Serbian Police and Other Authorities in Kosova: From 8 to 11 March 1998," [www.bndlg.de/~wplarre/week398.htm](http://www.bndlg.de/~wplarre/week398.htm), accessed 12 September 2012.



Jashari has now become memorialized as the Legendary Commander (*Komandanti Legjendar*), hero, leader of the Jashari family, and a “mythical figure who binds past and future generations to the nation” (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006, 513–29). Various media have published historiographical accounts of the Jashari family and helped build the symbolic relevance of the event. War memoirs have proliferated. The event, former members of the KLA stated, boosted the conscription of new fighters, who fought in the Adem Jashari unit. The event continues to inspire various forms of artistic and cultural production in Kosova. The Jashari compound has become a site of commemoration and pilgrimage, as Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers have shown, but it has also served to sacralize the war of the KLA (2006: 27–49). It is also the only memorial complex under the umbrella of the state.

The importance of the siege at Prekaz has also relied on the fact that “Uncle Adem fought back” (*Baca Adem* as he is commonly referred to), thereby shifting the political platform of acceptable action on the part of Albanians. No longer solely remembered as victims, Albanians could be remembered as those who fought back for a just cause. Resonating with the claim of many fighters, a former KLA commander reminded me that: “The Legendary Commander fell in battle protecting his home and his fatherland. His courage inspired all of us...Albanians have always fought injustice.”<sup>134</sup> Oral histories and epic songs in Kosova have continued to carry references and means of transmitting the fraternity and manly sacrifice that Jashari emblemizes, and forge links between the living and the war dead:

I got word  
...  
To sign a song for Adem Jashari  
...  
Raise Adem,

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<sup>134</sup> Interview with author, 15 April 2004, Prishtinë.

Raise the forest birds and nightingale, say

...

Raise Adem

The songs and the brave, say

...

Quickly raise don't stay by the grave

Raise, dear mother says enough

Your forehead made cold by the earth

Raise Adem

Whole Kosova asks for you

...

I got word

...

And to say him that his blood is freedom itself

...

Shkrute Fejza, folk singer



Figure 13. Pre-war photograph of the Jashari family children. Figure 14. Post-war photograph of the Jashari family children. The two photographs above are of two generations of children in the Jashari family. In the first one, in the group are those who died during the siege, apart from Besarta. The second is of a new generation of Jasharis that has been born since the end of the war. The photos stand adjacent to each other at the Information Center of the memorial complex.

At the end of the war the KLA was demilitarized and transformed, first, into the Kosova Protection Corps (KPC) and, following a declaration of independence, into the Kosova Security Forces (KSF). Most KLA fighters went back to a life outside of military institutions, and while the “war belongs to them” post-war Kosova does not. The oaths I cited, above, show a distinctive difference in the meanings attributed to these two military organizations. The KLA fought for the nation; the KSF defends the state. The first emerges from oaths of freedom fighters, the second from defenders of human rights. The first was voluntary, while the second is professional. They both stand

in for the continued conflict in defining Kosovar identity, and for the seemingly stable national manhood from which it is produced.

### **Masculine Habitus: Innocence and Marginality**

In his first sentence of *Charred Lullabies*, Daniel writes: “Many have died” (1996: 3). The first sentences of most who recount their experiences of war and violence, with whom I have spoken begin, “We have suffered very much” (*Shumë kemi vujt*). This statement was often an invitation and a request for my confirmation. Outside the context of the interview, these statements do not belong to a past tense; rather, these serve as a current remembrance and assertion of feeling in the present. Certainly many have suffered and died. When people would ask what I research, my answer generally elicited two types of responses. The most common was “S’ka më burra në Kosovë” or “çka paske punë.” Respectively they mean, “There are no more *men* in Kosova” and “you have your work cut out for you.” Both statements placed me in an awkward position from which I would be requested to offer an ethnographically confirmed truth: that *men* can be found. These men are men that make oaths, men of mythic status and manly honor. On the other hand, these men are “made by their mothers” (*bëhen nga nanat*).

Two years ago I attended the funeral of the mother of one my colleagues. Because her sons had fought in the KLA, she was remembered as the “always dignified and sacrificing mother. Her door, hearth and heart was always open and welcoming to her sons’ friends. She made it possible.”<sup>135</sup> The dependency and debt to mothers generates a powerful emotional bond between fighters. In my conversations with them, during almost any recounting of experiences of war, including expulsion

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<sup>135</sup> From the eulogy read at the funeral.

from homes, deportation, killings, the front-lines, and overall destruction, the strength and support of their mothers was something we would always talk about.

During Haradinaj's indictment at The Hague, Anita, his wife, had told their children he was at a military training. Worried they would not understand, she "spared the children." Haradinaj's mother, also Lahi Brahimaj's sister, was lauded. "Having lost two sons in the war is an example of how strong Albanian mothers have had to be." The day Ramush and Lahi were released by the ICTY (November 2012), Ramush's mother said that the two had exonerated themselves and the liberation army. "I can't speak, I can't speak, thank you to everyone," were her words. Years before, AAK had also written a book in which his mother is credited for Haradinaj's patriotism. Although acquitted at The Hague, as others similarly have been, not guilty does not mean innocent. But for the most part, this is how soldiers and fighters are remembered – as innocent and brave defenders of their hearths. In the public imagination, there is a distinction between the just fighter and the criminal gangs that took advantage and profited from war. I would also claim this distinction relevant.

Today in Kosova, social and cultural relations between kin and nation deeply influence the collective memory and experience of violence during and after the war. The sacrifice of the individual cannot maintain its resonance unless it becomes tied to other forms of relatedness, particularly kin and nation. Although anthropology would have much to say about how the boundaries of such categories are inconsistent, what I encountered were practices that *aimed* to clearly situate and categorize these belongings in terms that are not stable. The terms were based on marking difference between one type of blood and the other, one social body, were viewed as morally dignified, and the other as a blood-hungry enemy.

In comparison to Serbia, which is imagined as a fraternity willing to kill for the nation, Albanians in Kosova have increasingly build an image of themselves as willing to die for the nation. In this sense, Serbia is taken back into the realm of pre-modern politics and savagery, and therefore, within Albanians, there could exist legitimate grounds for an emergence of the liberation army fighter whose sacrifice would carry the blood of the nation. “He” would turn from victim to freedom fighter, by rejecting his position as a dominated subject. Mothers of KLA veterans with whom I spoke often reminded me<sup>136</sup>:

Our sons have sacrificed everything for this land, this people. They have been beaten, tortured, driven away from their homes...This body of mine knows the pain it endured. I gave birth to him and raised him so that people would say he is a good man...The day he told me he was going to join his friends [shoket e tij; male gender] I was very proud, and worried.

It would perhaps be fruitful to investigate how army barracks, tanks, and other sites of army mobilization might have been relevant for structuring some of the same emotions constituted in these “state events.” Klaus Theweleit’s *Male Fantasies* is an important text in this regard. He uncovers “the emotional core of fascism” (that desire more than often constitutes violence), the making of the imagination, and “bodies of steel” (through military drills, etc.) which the Freikorps came to embody (1989). Nonetheless, during conscription for the wars in Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, young men from Kosova left in the thousands and sought asylum in Western Europe. As I showed in the previous chapter, men also made publicly visible the marks of violence inflicted on them. During the first year of the war, before the NATO bombing, hundreds of thousands became internally displaced, and not all men joined the KLA. Many found themselves in positions in which it was difficult to provide for their

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<sup>136</sup> Interview with author, 30 March 2007, Pejë.

families and fulfill their expected roles as heads of families, husbands and fathers. This situation placed men in positions of social, political and economic vulnerability and dependency. As was the case in Rwanda, “inordinate stress (was) placed upon maintaining traditional masculine gender roles stemming from years of economic crisis and resource scarcity” (Jones 2004: 98-99)

In his war diary, Nusret Pllana, under the pseudonym Ushtari Prishtina (Soldier Prishtina), writes about learning to weave rugs in prison, which led to him to open a workshop employing thirty people, after his release (1999). In addition to his self-portrait as a hard-working patriot, he mentions his role as a father and his love for his daughter. This was an intentional message, he told me. Pllana, was the voice of Radio Kosova e Lirë (Radio Free Kosova) and provided information from the front during the war. He has since then received a doctorate and now teaches at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina. His history is not an exception and is similar to those who entered party politics after the war. However, many former KLA fighters find themselves barely making ends meet. While the state guarantees welfare benefits, it is commonly believed that those who never fought have been able to secure welfare, while “the honest, hardworking fighters” have been forgotten and left to fend for themselves. Veli Morina is 45 years old but his face deceives and makes him look much older. Earning three euros a day, he collects cans for recycling on his bike, often working from early in the morning until late in the night. On the other hand, Bashkim, whom I frequently meet, works at a parking-lot near my apartment. Empty lots throughout Prishtina have been given for use to the Association of War Invalids and Veterans, where they work as guards. At night they sleep in a small hut made of aluminum sheets, and in the winter have a small electric heater to keep them warm. I never asked them how much they were paid per month. Such conversations made them uncomfortable,

but they did say “it is barely enough to put food on the table, but we have been forgotten by the politicians. They became very rich and they don’t bother about us [*nuk lodhen fort’ për neve*].”<sup>137</sup>

Many accounts typify apparently irreconcilable forms of masculinity as belonging either to “dominant” or “subordinate” forms. Bravery and assertiveness are depicted as being dominant or publicly acceptable, and while power and economic gain attained through political prowess is looked down upon and considered “unmanly.” National manhood has no room for the economically and socially vulnerable (Bourdieu 1977:11; Peteet 2000). The expression of apparently subordinate forms of masculinity is often depicted as taking place within intimate discourses that are confined to sites divorced from normative forms of so-called public life. This approach reproduces official gendered transcripts and renders invisible understandings of manhood that are framed in terms of dynamic and multivalent sensibilities. As the contours of events are made, of a present “thralldom of the state,” whether through the creation of new rites or invoking tradition, the difficult gaps and that which remains untold are important vehicles for recognizing the vulnerable and the marginalized.

Dani and Beni, two young men and former fighters, talked about holding their friend in their arms and singing. They explained to me that the friendships and ties created as soldiers “cannot be compared to anything else. You fight for something that is sacred.”<sup>138</sup> I asked them what made them decide to join the KLA, but the conversation soon developed into a critique of those who claim manhood but have “only used the association with the KLA to become rich.” A politics of nationalism –

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<sup>137</sup> Interview with author, 15 September 2007.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with author, 15 April 2004.

which was subordinated from another nationalist masculine mythology, that of Serbia – brought forth a sentiment of overcoming – but also new kinds of marginality.

Beni: There was a particular moment that made me decide to join the KLA. I was going home ... the police had stopped people... They wanted to offend you, morally, spiritually...my whole body shivered as I saw what they were doing to these people... In 1999, together with a friend at the time, we constantly were thinking that something has to be done.

Dani: I was 20 years old then...I had heard from older people that there was a continuity, almost inherited, of how Serbs had always mistreated us...but it was my personal experiences that made me make the decisions I made...most KLA members were students, young men, who had aspirations, they were pure as a tear [*të pastër si loti*]. It was things we experienced, the constant interrogations from police... it all got stuck in my head... how before there was anything that was associated with Albania – my father had pictures, etc. – the police would take everything ... so to go to Albania was very emotional.

Me: You were friends before, what were your relationships with the other fighters?

Beni: As a group we were like a family. We took responsibility for one another. There a person had a chance to prove who they are. For example, the road to our home, from Pashtrik was...we walked seven to eleven hours...we saw, experienced many things,

Me: What did you fights against?

Beni: We fought to live a normal life, to have comfort, to have families,

Me: Why was there war?

Dani: It became clear that an agreement could not be made...things kept getting worse, the beating, the jailing...in the villages, those classes felt this the most...

Me: As a person what did you gain?

Beni: Freedom, lack of fear. You gain many *things* but freedom is the most important.

Me: Were men and women affected differently?

Beni: There were not differences ... As Albanians we were all being attacked ... but not only in Kosova, anywhere in the world everybody would be angry at something like that to happen to them...for them it is better to be dead then to be raped.

### **Mainstreaming Gender: Patriarchal Men and Democratic Gentlemen**

In April 2010, the Institute for Albanian Studies (sometimes Albanological Institute; *Instituti Albanologjik*) hosted the Conference on the Activity of Women in



the National Movement for Liberation. The conference served to commemorate the contribution of women to the *Ilegalja* movements as well their many roles in the KLA. Among the several suggestions for how to best conduct a public recognition, considering that women are generally absent from the “history of the National Movement for Liberation,” a proposal was issued to erect a monument. A more elaborated proposal came from a University professor who argued that a special parliamentary decision should be issued to erect an obelisk that honors “the Albanian woman” in “preserving the biological and demographic substance of the nation” (E. Krasniqi 2011: 103-104). Elife Krasniqi, devastated by this proposal, has discussed her reasons for participating at this conference as an attempt to write in women’s political activism and leadership. Conducting “history from below,” she aims to “bring to the surface the stories and experiences of those who were not the dominant class or elite” (2011: 103).

In post-war Kosova, the power-structures of an urban-rural and seemingly corresponding socialist-patriotic divide appear to have been flipped. Depending on the person with whom one speaks, this reversal is an indication “of intentional marginalization and animosity towards the educated and intellectual classes” that held power during socialism, or “an opportunity to right the wrongs of socialism committed towards those whose priority had been national preservation.” However, Schwandner-Sievers has shown that such distinctions are never clear-cut (Beyond the Family 2011). In her critique, aimed at culturalist essentialisations and frequent conclusions that the Albanian patriarchal family is the obstacle to democratization, she shows that, long in Albanian history, “there always existed intermediaries between village and city life and the state, and labour migration, introducing experiences from new social context” (Schwandner-Sievers 2011: 5). Distinctions of all kind, however, persist. Mamdani has

argued that, “civil society politics where the rural is governed through customary authority is necessarily patrimonial: urban politicians harness rural constituencies through patron-client relations” (1996: 289). Any such historical grounding was absent from discussion at the aforementioned conference. The many movements seeking Kosova’s independence were joined in a singular “National Movement for Liberation,” and the call to recognize the “contribution of the Albanian woman” is neither a grammatical, nor a semiotic mistake or accident.

In the broader context of former Yugoslavia’s disintegration, as Dubravka Žarkov has argued, “States and their national and ethnic groups became personified or symbolically represented as female or male bodies; in which the notions usually associated with norms of sexuality or assumptions of “proper” manhood and womanhood were suddenly associated with matters that concern state territory, daily politics, and— last but not least— ethnicity” (Žarkov 2007: 13). While I do not attend to all of these formations here, there are a number of intersecting discourses and practices that I wish to elaborate.

Most often, recommendations, such as the one given by the professor mentioned above, for an obelisk that celebrates women’s contribution to national reproduction, are in line with gender equality discourse that dominates democracy building, and, to a certain extent, the human-rights agenda of post-war state building. Frequently I have been asked, “What more do you, women, want?” There is no expectation of response. The question is rhetorical. My question, however, asks how gender relations – the mutual constitution of womanhood and manhood; femininity and masculinity - have figured in and shaped notions of civic participation at the end of the war in Kosova, and asks what disagreements have arisen between projects for gender equality and new patriarchy in post-war state-building. We have only just begun to understand these

kinds of dynamics in post-conflict, post-war protectorates, as well as within the structural dependencies of capitalism in post-socialist contexts.<sup>139</sup> By focusing on assertions that “gender equality” has been gained through post-intervention bylaws, I would argue that citizenship becomes constituted through civic participation in the spaces and practices between a political public - of assumed male citizenry - and a private public - of women, in their segregated roles in nationalist reproduction (Krause 2005; Rivkin-Fish 2011).

In Kosova, women activists and politicians in the years following the war imagined that United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 would be a precursor of, and a necessary legal basis for, the Ahtissari Plan, a settlement that would have to seriously consider the much needed and key role of women in status talks and post-war state-building.<sup>140</sup> The Ahtissari Plan failed to offer any such provisions. Both the Resolution and the Plan have been implemented through arrogant and disdainful stances of the “international community.” They have treated gender as a women’s issue, and have interacted with local patriarchies through oscillating *friend-foe relations* that do little to disrupt masculine privilege.<sup>141</sup> Serious lines of consent and dissent have emerged around the meanings and practices of gender mainstreaming and gender equality mechanisms. Kosova has become a site of projects that aim to mainstream gender, as outlined in UNSCR 1325, other international agreements, and in the statements of various agencies. But these same agencies do not practice what they require of “local counterparts” (Ingimundarson 2004; Gudmundsdottir 2012). Introduced by many international agencies and aid organizations, and most prominently

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<sup>139</sup> See Fraser 1997, Joseph 1997 for some earlier analysis.

<sup>140</sup> Formally: Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement. A number of authors have shown how in post-conflict countries processes of state building have lead to the advancement of women in politics unmet by established democracies. See Tripp, Aili Mari (2000).

<sup>141</sup> See Ramya Subrahmanian 2007.

by the United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo, Resolution 1325 has been promoted as a means of gender inclusivity in peace-building, although activists in Kosova often note that they were implementing 1325 before there was a 1325.<sup>142</sup>

The international administration in Kosova, as in other, similar, instances, has become a means of solidifying what are often assumptions of previous power- and gender-structural arrangements. An example in point is the issue of the participation of women in the status talks for Kosova. In 2006, women's organizations and women political leaders had come together to rally for their participation in the talks being led by Martti Ahtisari, Finnish Ambassador and Special Envoy to the Kosovo Status Negotiations. Many saw it as an opportunity to at least begin remedying the post-war exclusion of women from local decision-making positions and political structures (Farnsworth 2011).<sup>143</sup> On 8 March 2006, women's non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors protested this exclusion under the banner of "No more flowers! We want power." Following the protest, activists exerted much pressure on diplomats in Kosova to gain a hearing. In the end, through the Regional Women's Lobby and Women's Peace Coalition, an audience was secured with a fact-finding mission of the UN Security Council.<sup>144</sup> Ljiljeta Vuniqi, director of the Kosovar Center for Gender Studies, noted that one ambassador protested that the diplomats had not come to Kosova to discuss women's rights. According to Vuniqi, the ambassador was upset that the women "did not take the stance of the victim" (Farnsworth 2011: 50).

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<sup>142</sup> See resolution document: [http://www.un.org/events/res\\_1325e.pdf](http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf).

<sup>143</sup> International organizations have also continually failed to create gender proportionality within their own structures, although it is called for in Resolution 1325. For figures on the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), European Rule of Law Mission (EULEX – fairing much better), etc.

<sup>144</sup> <http://www.rwlsee.org>; See statement issued by Women's Peace Coalition <http://www.womensnetwork.org/documents/20130124004353118.pdf>; <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/impact/news/43/394>

Veprorë Shehu, executive director of Medica Kosova, an organization that has mainly offered support to women raped during the war, noted her frustration when another ambassador remarked on women's exclusion from the negotiation process by stating Albanian traditionalism was an obstacle. He claimed, "We did not want to break tradition" (Farnsworth 2011: 47).

It would certainly be accurate to recognize the hope women activists and politicians had placed on the international community and on laws that would protect against gender-based discrimination. For example, former women combatants of the Kosova Liberation Army believed that its transformation into the Kosova Protection Corps, and later to the Kosovo Security Force, would guarantee their places in new military structures being assembled.<sup>145</sup> Further analysis would be required to understand the gendered dynamics at play in the oversight of the military environment in Kosova, as well as the various understandings surrounding women's participation in the war. However, similar to some of the members of the political elites of the 1990s, many former combatants were also able to translate their previous social capital into political capital after the war. Most, nonetheless, remain unrecognized.

The "political motherhood" that was mobilized during the 1990s has now been replaced by national narratives and international administrative bureaucracies that assume that women have identities primarily as either victims of men of their own ethnic group, or of the adversary ethnic group. There is certainly little room for women fighters in the public imagination. Xhevë Lladrovci, who fought together with her husband Fehmi Lladrovci, is the only recognized woman martyr of the war and her memory has been kept alive much due to the insistence of her husband's family.

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<sup>145</sup> Interviews with members of KPC. See also Ströhle 2011.

Discussion of women's sexuality has also proved controversial and dangerous, and discussions concerning victims of rape have remained marginal, although a recent initiative has emerged after much pressure from the Kosova Women's Network, the political party Vetvendosje!, and a number of feminist scholars. I discuss this in the following chapter.

Sanam N. Anderlini, in a review of challenges and achievements of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, concluded by noting that “[w]hatever the reasons for the exclusion or oversight of information regarding women, the net result is a perpetuation of the cycle of invisibility” (2010: 28). Lynne Alice has also shown that there is inability and unpreparedness among international agencies and makers-of-peace after war, or intervention, to implement gender-equality provisions. This work is most often passed to the “local counterparts,” who are then evaluated for their ability to achieve “international standards of democracy and human rights” (2010: 173). The failures of the latter are most often reported and analyzed as reflections of local patriarchy. For example, in 2006 the UNMIK office for Gender Affairs supported the making of a film on the topic of human security from a gendered perspective. I was interviewed and appear in the film. In the film, then Special Representative of the Secretary General, Soren Jessen-Petersen claimed, “Resolution 1325 calls for women's participation in all political and social processes...In Kosovo's case it is the responsibility of those in authority. We can request, push, and insist but we can not guarantee if leaders do not decide to invite women to participate” (UNMIK Office for Gender Affairs 2006). While Petersen was considered by many women's organizations and activists as one among the few international decision-makers prepared to help and listen, his statement is indicative of the general perception that women must be invited by men in order to take part in political processes.

At the same time, the post-war political and social landscape has become dominated by narratives of sacrifice, martyrdom and victory, leaving no room for the painful stories and experiences of war. The Kosova leadership legitimates its position through this new symbolic order, and the marginalization of other experiences is often claimed as a necessity in order to build reconciliatory relations and promote a strategy of “forgive and forget.” In tandem, these processes have produced a general ignorance of history and erased the memory and history of the internationalist paradigm - of women’s civic engagement that characterized civil resistance in the 1990s, thereby erasing the existence of a history of activism. As Einhorn argues, once gender-based demands are subordinated to the goal of national independence, their mobilization does not result in feminist post-war agendas, and women become cast “as symbolic markers and policy objects, not as active political subjects” (2008: 206).

Guðmundsdóttir’s research on gender and peace-building in Kosova has also shown that “the gender essentialist notions that had grown strong during the conflict were equally enforced by international action in the peace building process. Local women were kept in the margins. Their grassroots work on ethnic reconciliation was idolized as a natural feminine and pacifist phenomenon, while the same men that fought the war were given the reigns of the state under the supervision of international actors” (2012: 83). Therefore the ambassador’s reply, noted earlier, that they *did not wish to break tradition* refers to the general tendency to see Kosova as a place of backwardness and patriarchy much harsher than what one finds in Western Europe. Nonetheless, the experiences of women activists and civil society organizations has led most to be uncertain whether it is local or foreign traditions that international actors fear to break (Helms 2003).

Again, we may turn to the Ahtisaari Plan to examine principles structuring power relations in Kosova, both those ethnic and gendered, within the contested frame of human rights and freedoms. The document, which provides the details of Kosova's status resolution and the machinery of state-building, makes reference to gender equality in the area of reconciliation, participation in the Constitutional Commission, Kosova Assembly, and civil service. An addendum to each article regulating these areas contains a copy-pasted text referring back to Article 2, without recognition of the particularities that make gender a very different category in any of these institutions, "having due regard for internationally recognized principles of gender equality, as reflected in the human rights instruments referred to in Article 2 of this Annex." Paragraph 5 of the document is the only instance in which gender appears as a relevant category in its own. "Kosovo shall promote and fully respect a process of reconciliation among all its Communities and their members. Kosovo shall establish a comprehensive and gender-sensitive approach for dealing with its past, which shall include a broad range of transitional justice initiatives" (UNOSEK 2007).<sup>146</sup>

While the Ahtisaari Plan had been based on a framework of human rights to secure some participation on the basis of gender equality, it has also reinforced ethnic/community/national identifications, as well as rights and claims to participate, including in political office. A number of scholars have already remarked that the plan creates a "state of exception" and preserves the legitimacy of international organizations and governments to define the limits of Kosova's sovereignty (Pula 2007). If we turn to the area of transitional justice, and more specifically, initiatives for dealing with the past, we find aestheticized representations and practices of national political culture that exist in a public space – where sovereignty is constituted and

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<sup>146</sup> [http://www.unosek.org/docref/Comprehensive\\_proposal-english.pdf](http://www.unosek.org/docref/Comprehensive_proposal-english.pdf)



dominated by male political subjects and female bodies – and a new gendered division of labor in the making of history, with remembrance taking place in the political-private-sphere.

The memory work of Ferdane Qerkezi, a woman from Gjakova, is notable but also exemplary of the way in which transitional justice remains confined to patriarchal economic and political arrangements, and masculine national memory. The night of 27 March 1999, Serbian paramilitary and police took Ferdane Qerkizi's husband, four sons, and her nephew. She has not seen them since. She has, since, turned her home into a museum. She and the home now preserve the moment of capture, loss, and pain by maintaining the home exactly as it was when her family members were removed. More recently, her husband's family members have begun to assert pressure on her to leave the house, claiming she has no right to its inheritance. By forcing her to leave, they would not only rid her of her economic resources, but also of the knowledge and experience of war and its memorialization. Such a memorial, and the struggle for its maintenance, does not easily fit into the dominant images of martyrs' and fighters' sacrifices for the fatherland.

At the same time, new categorizations of gender differences create new class-based vulnerabilities that push women to new limits. The work conventionally done by women (childcare, care for the elderly, the sick, etc.), which the socialist state had highly subsidized, has now been privatized twofold. Privatization has moved all of this work to the sphere of the home and has added additional burdens to women's unpaid work, or to the private market, enabling new structural and cultural class distinctions to emerge. The low participation of women in the official labor market (ranging between 26 percent and 33 per cent), and their lack of property ownership (estimated at 2 per cent), among other indicators, are most often construed as examples of local patriarchy,

not lack of economic development policy, insufficient protection under the labor law, and/or general corruption. Nonetheless, human security and mainstreaming paradigms, as well as civil society strengthening initiatives where women retain some power, are part of “transitions”<sup>147</sup> and “globalization” where “the distribution of political power in society [changes] in favor of corporate capital against the institutions that have responsibility for the general welfare of the citizenry” (Klein 2004: 275). Although I do not treat this topic in the detail it deserves, it is possible to at least consider how the political and economic domains intersect to create new dependencies and the particular precarious position of women in such arrangements.

The general failure to implement necessary measures, whether Resolution 1325 or the National Gender Equality Law, or a series of other laws and mechanisms that could help economic and political participation, has not prevented political attention toward the topics of sexual exploitation, such as trafficking in human beings, and domestic violence. Within these spheres of concern, women can be placed within their conventional and traditional contexts of visible vulnerabilities: in chains (in awareness-raising posters), or with bruises on their faces (in public service announcements). Consistently addressing the symptoms, not the causes, has enabled the disappearance of women’s work, and perhaps all work, from public consciousness. Young women working the cash registers in Kosova’s mushrooming supermarkets and malls confided their need to conceal their pregnancies, often tying stomachs with cloth, and to postpone a job loss. With a new labor law in place that requires six months paid maternity leave, most private businesses find a way of dismissing these pregnant, or future pregnant, workers. Lack of oversight, from both a weak judiciary and from politicians with shares

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<sup>147</sup> There is a large body of work in anthropology, and some in sociology, that provides analysis and critique of “transition” discourses and policies in post-socialist Eastern Europe. See Katherine 1996; Kennedy 2002; Gal and Kligman 2000; Berdahl, Bunzl and Lampland 2000.

in most of these businesses, further aids the impoverishment of the female poor. On the other hand, men continue to be treated as physical, economic and political aggressors, with dominant conceptions of masculinity reinforced.<sup>148</sup>

In the post-intervention context of Kosova, as is the case in other post-war, post-colonial, and peace-building missions, the intersection between gender, nation and state-building has also included the racialization of national culture and re-traditionalization of gendered hierarchies (Chant and Gutmann 2002). Although ethnicity has been used to describe the underlying causes of the wars that took place, and also to describe the distribution of power in all of the former-Yugoslav successor states (Bosnia and Herzegovina being the prime examples), the discourse of the wars' analysis and peace-building mechanisms also set up new intersections with judgments about cultural heritage and belonging in Europe. The racialized underpinnings of segregation in 1990s Kosova are either unknown or dismissed in critical analyses, while they are quite poorly articulated in nationalist histories.

Analyses provided by feminist scholars from former-Yugoslav republics, attempting to point to the dangers of nationalism, often conclude by eliding difference in experiences of the wars in former republics. They also fail to recognize the complicity of "ordinary people" in the violence that was committed, or the subjugation of particular "ethnic identities", similar to those in colonial contexts, to perceived universal ones. Here, Kosova is the prime example. It is quite safe to say that even the most critical scholars have not shown that they know *what to do with Kosova* and have

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<sup>148</sup> See Lukose 2005, who shows how the transformation of these domains in the context of market liberalization has affected education in the Indian state of Kerala. While she is interested in the relations between the market and the state, the main focus is on the competing notions of the public and the meanings of citizenships. In these instances, new gendered identities, through processes of marketization and privatization, become implicated in emerging class differences and in new economic rearrangements that, in turn, result in both restrictions and civic engagement.

failed to acknowledge ways in which civilizational missions espoused by the Yugoslav, and later, the Serbian state, relied on the construction of the Albanian Other.

In post-1999 Kosova, often masking underlying assumptions about cultural identities and moral orders in relation to markers of religion, class and sexuality, a legalistic order has been erected that makes Kosova appear as a site of the clash of civilizations. In this context, Vjollca Krasniqi has argued that Kosovar Albanian politicians have created “a western self-representation through a gendered abnegation of Islam,” particularly by banning the headscarf in public institutions (V. Krasniqi 2007:3). For example, the Kosovo Women’s Network protest of the Pristina-Belgrade negotiations was organized under the slogan of "Justice and Dignity Before Negotiations," held on 3 November, 2012. The key demands in the protest, according to organizers, were a public apology by the Government of Serbia for the war crimes committed, the return of missing persons, justice for crimes and rapes during the war, as well as compensation for moral and economic damages. KWN received great public and media support for the protest and its director, Igballe Rogova, was lauded for her commitment to the national cause. Nonetheless, when she participated in the launch of the Kosovo 2.0 magazine issue on sex, which addressed issues of sexuality and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual rights, she and the magazine staff were attacked, shunned, and escorted by police to ensure their safety. In a recent blog post, a reader thanked Rogova for returning to issues of primary importance for Kosovo, such as the economy and international relations, and for not sticking to issues that are marginal for Kosovar society, such as LGBT rights.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> <http://thenewcivilrightsmovement.com/organized-thugs-attack-kosovo-2-0-magazine-launch-sexuality-edition/news/2012/12/15/56422>.

Competing political and economic interests of secular and religious political parties have begun to use the veil, in particular, and sexuality, in general, to assert limits and possibilities for civil engagement and democracy. Issues of religion and sexuality will provide new challenges to testing those limits in Kosova. As new religious groups emerge requesting extended presence in public institutions, the taken-for-granted assumptions underlying Kosova's secular nationalism are being challenged.<sup>150</sup> On the other hand, the promotion and meanings of human rights as a modernization discourse has been constituted through a cultural pedagogy that is perceived as Western and, thus, is increasingly attacked by new political entrepreneurs who aim to restore moral order in what is called corrupt and westernized gendered exploitation.

Although the national-subject is reaffirmed through maleness, and women remain in liminal nature-culture/politics space, this is not true for all women. For many local feminists, attempts to generate a critique of power/difference produced through international peace-building, and rule-of-law-building enterprises is also an attempt to recognize the ways in which women have sought political legitimacy through identification with nation, state and citizenship. Gender mainstreaming has further strengthened the power and position of two groups of women, those who were activists during the 1990s, mainly urban and well educated, and those who emerged out of the more militaristic underground movements. Gender mainstreaming has also produced a shift from grassroots activism to a top-down political agency; the gender equality law has resulted in thirty percent representation by women in parliament, and has led, indirectly, to a women president and several women ministers. Yet, there is no single

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<sup>150</sup> Islamist influences have grown stronger, particularly from Wahhabi sects, and the Catholic Church remains publicly silent on most issues. Emerging cultural, economic and political rearrangements, dependencies and identifications beg for further analysis, especially those that do not construct the debate along superficial East-West dichotomies, but which do recognize that globalization does not have, solely, a western point of departure.

mayor of a city that is a woman, nor do any women hold leadership or decision-making positions in local government. Simultaneously, gender mainstreaming has not been accompanied by a change in the urban-rural divide. Rather, self-declared middle-class, emancipated, and politically aware women continue to dominate the public, governmental and non-governmental landscape.

Women's civic engagement and contribution in Kosova has been continuously silenced by mainstream remembrance and historical accounts. Most feminist scholars in the region are still struggling to produce analysis about Kosova, and have created superficial accounts of women's experiences there. When Kosova is concerned, prejudice, lack of recognition, and communication prevent these theorists from acknowledging the work, perspectives and context of Kosovar gender studies. Western scholars have been interested in the power dynamics of intervention, but they fail to recognize the longer history and continuity of women's political agency in Kosova (Milevska 2011). Women's activism has, at best, been "added" in the form of special editions of books, written mostly as interventions from today's women's movement in an attempt to rewrite women stories and their role as active agents of struggles and political movements (KCGS - History Herstory 2008). In Kosova, these interventions have focused on highlighting women's involvement, rather than viewing their actions as cultural or discursive projects in which ideals of womanhood and manhood in nationalist movements were also deeply modernist, or as a new vision of builders of a new society (Schwandner-Sievers 2011).

The relationships women have created with the state and nation have been complex, and require historical contextualization and a multidimensional vision of experiences and practices. The gendering of national identities has interacted with and has been challenged by women's activism, although very often within shifting

patriarchal ideologies. The space to create gendered equality was and continues to be sought and negotiated through ideas about modernity, democracy, and human rights discourse. Kosova has often been used as an example of exceptions, with frequent emphases on its particularity, if not backwardness. This serves, often, to disable recognition of the ways in which such views lead to a provincialized view of multiply-linked and structured power relations. The challenge has been to offer a historically grounded discussion when the present is continually described as backward and belonging to the past, and when political survivors have become “the best” historical witnesses. In Kosova, nationalism has been viewed as that which kept it apart, but the insistence on ethnic identities and politics in building a multi-ethnic state has almost entirely stripped people of citizenship, and has made women, again, markers of moral and traditional codes. It is to this that I turn in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Aesthetics of Power: Billboards, Art and Rape**

### **Aesthetics of Power: Context**

On 17 February 2008, the Kosova Assembly declared Kosova an independent state. Kosova's Constitution states that Kosova is a "country of its citizens." International intervention and a dependent 'new state identity' have produced policies that aim for the creation of a multiethnic democracy. However, these policies disable citizen-based identifications, and strengthen ethnic belongings and new patriarchal power relations. International political interventions, such the Standards Before Status package, argued that a series of economic and political standards (pro human rights, anti-corruption, and overall liberalization) would have to be met by Kosovar institutions before the "international community" would organize negotiations for its final status. All decision-making mechanisms were outlined in UN Resolution 1244, which marked the end of the conflict and commenced the installment of the United Nations Mission in Kosova (UNMIK) and the Kosovar Provisional Institutions of Self Governance (PISG). For the most part, post-war supervision mechanisms and measures have guaranteed international control of Kosova's local and national politics, as well as any international relations. In 2006, Kosovar institutions had not been deemed mature enough to move away from "provisional" status. However, the adoption of the UNOSEK (United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosova) final status resolution document in 2007 enabled Kosova's declaration of independence. Yet, according to a number of analysts, these measures create a "state of exception." International organizations and governments have preserved the provision to define the limits of Kosova's sovereignty (Pula 2007; Ströhle 2012).

This complex terrain of power-sharing arrangements has had multiple implications. Here I focus on the effects of institutional engineering that further strengthen an idea of a public composed of ethnic communities whose national cultural heritage is the property of corresponding ethnically-marked boundaries. This place



where people are asked to forget a past sometimes seen as dangerous, atavistic, and often rooted in uncivilized and medieval tradition, is also where American visitors note, in amazement, the numbers waving Albanian national flags (although quite often I was told “Americans place their flag on everything”). Here, a whole politics of aesthetic representations surrounds manifestations of identity and power between domestic participants and international observers/interveners, and continues to shape the imagined national identities of the future. As a worker in one of Kosova’s cultural institutions marked jokingly, “We are a multi, multi, multi vitamin.” The most common protest heard in Kosova is: “We are multiethnic and have to respect the rights of minorities more than they do in Europe itself.”

Instead of focusing on common understandings and sites of cultural heritage (mosques, churches, archaeological sites and artifacts, museums, etc.), this chapter highlights public performance and proposes to look at sites of conflict and possibilities that contemporary art and public art can inhabit. This is something I aim to frame as *aesthetics of power*. Recent and increased interest in cultural heritage and museum studies reminds us that corresponding institutions “are deeply located *in* cultural history, on the one hand, and are, therefore, also critical places for the politics *of* history, on the other” (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1990: 406). Nonetheless, with publics “tacitly universalized,” what is needed is recognition of public[s] that “not so much *respond* to museums but [are] rather created...” (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1990: 405). Here I intentionally use “publics” in plural form, and, via Ranciere, aim to consider politics not as the mere exercise of power, but as the conflict over the framing of a space as political (Ranciere 2006). Any such conflict will require a consideration of the systems of representation according to which some political actions receive support and others do not, or, perhaps more accurately, serve as a means of establishing

distinctions, in the sense offered by Bourdieu (1984). Here I specifically mean this idea: “Explicit aesthetic choices are in fact often constituted in opposition to the choice of the group closest in social space, with whom the competition is most direct and most immediate...” (Bourdieu 1984: 53).

I provide readings of two public and marketing campaigns, a series of commemorative and protest events, and artistic performances. One of these campaigns refers to the ambiguous “international community” and a European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) billboard that depicted an idyllic Europe to be sought behind the Alps in the north. Whether these Alps are Slovenian or Austrian is unclear. The other refers to the market in travel and a British Airways campaign that claimed, “Its time to go visiting.” In a country whose citizens need visas to all but four countries in the world, Albert Heta, a Prishtina-based artist and curator at Stacion -Center for Contemporary Art, was compelled to ask: “Can an Albanian be a tourist?” Heta intervened on the billboard with a “No visa required” sticker. British Airways threatened to press charges for vandalism of property. Billboard advertisement space is rented from the municipality, which tenders them out to private companies. The complaint claimed that Heta’s actions were not those of an intellectual.

Billboards, a marketing novelty in Kosova, have become a means by which Kosovars are educated about how to become citizens, most notably during election campaigns, but also through a series of awareness-raising projects on ways to become multicultural, consumers, gender aware, law abiding, and, of course, European. The examples I treat overflow with signification of cultural, political and economic distancing and containment, and present a conflict between multiple publics otherwise homogenized by national imagery and international intervention. Therefore, I turn to these and two other artistic interventions regarding national symbolism, new

commodity forms, and borders. I juxtapose these artistic practices with governmental capitalization of commemorations, as these have served to construct national and gender identities, and have produced commensality among people through the creation of martyrs. Such state-sponsored public history erases women's political agency and aids the strengthening of national/ist manhood. Examples from the visualization of history on the public landscape can illustrate some of the concrete ways in which meanings of cultural and political belonging are represented. Political rallies, protests, commemorations, art exhibitions and performances, all become sites where communities share their sense of belonging to the nation. Here, communities transform the meanings of their belonging – national, political, economic - to fit or critique the new contexts.



Figure 15. Photograph of electoral campaign billboard for Hashim Thaçi, Kosova Prime-Minister and president of the Democratic Party of Kosova (PDK) and Ramush Haradinaj, President of Alliance for the Future of Kosova (AAK), 2000. PDK's slogan was *Kosova First*, and that of the AAK *For the Good of the Country*. Figure 16. Photograph of JFK cigarettes billboard and Vetëvendosja! protest. The photograph captures an advertisement for a local cigarette brand, JFK – Just for Kosova (the brand disappeared from the market despite a large marketing campaign and teaser adds). In the background are participants at a Vetëvendosja! (Self-determination) protest.

Taking a cue from the argument that the nation is primarily a masculine project, the goal of this chapter is to introduce the gendered dimensions of commemoration,

martyrdom, and contemporary artistic practice in Kosova's state building, most evident in discourses that define ethnic and civic belongings (McClintock 1993). I argue that aestheticized representations and practices of national political culture exist in a public space dominated by male political subjects and female bodies, and reproduce a new gendered division of labor in the making of history. To rephrase a question posed by David Harvey (Harvey 2000: 101) about the relation of bodies to capital, I would ask: if in the national body politic all are bodies exist for its reproduction, how could we measure anything outside of the relations and semiotics of national belonging? Whose bodies serve as a measure? And how do they establish the legitimate and legitimating body politic? As public and political morality in Kosova is guarded through new fathers of the nation, how do aesthetic practices speak of consent and politics?

The aim here is to identify particular regimes of representation, the discursive practices, and the visual repertoire of representations, which enabled the *demarcation of boundaries* between national and gender identities. It is here that some of the most culturally and politically relevant relationships emerge. For example, Kosova's status is most often referred to in international and national media, and other public and private discourse, as a "young state." The NEWBORN obelisk unveiled on the day of the declaration of independence is the most visible *sign* (Ströhle 2012). Perhaps inadvertently, most Kosovar youth who make up the majority of this newborn state seem to be convinced that Kosova's history begins in 1999. They are generally unaware of or unknowledgeable about any cultural, political, economic, and social formations produced within Kosova outside of current knowledge monopolized by its nationalist and corrupt political elites. Educational institutions have generated consent for a historical discourse written by politicians of history who hold the conviction that they are the bearers of modernity in Kosova. This is particularly evident in the boom in

doctoral degrees in History and in Political Science granted to members of the Assembly, to ministers, and to former political prisoners, who are then awarded lecturing positions at the university. Concurrently, neo-liberal projects in Kosova appear to be the only modern project Kosova has ever or could ever witness.<sup>151</sup>

Such situations reverberate with Albert Heta's concern that Kosova has become "a country with diminishing archival culture and disappearing public institutions that can function as a memory of a society," where "'history making' as a tool for erasure and engineering the past, for the present power players, is a dominant practice". (Heta, *Baby (Revolution) Comeback* 2011). One does not have to look very far to notice events, spaces and aesthetics that not only celebrate those martyrs and heroes who are politically desirable, but also punish and exclude those who are not. For example, Prishtina's airport is called *Adem Jashari*, a new highway linking Kosova and Albania is *The Road of the Nation*, and busts of KLA soldiers adorn streets, squares and roadsides. Kosova's public landscape – cities, parks, schools, squares, and roadsides - continue to speak of a loyalty to an aesthetics that challenges Arleen Raven's assertion that "public art isn't a hero on a horse anymore" (Raven 1989: 1). Public aesthetics in Kosova continue to be measured by the presence or absence *of a hero* on a horse, and that hero is most definitely male. However, I turn into a question Raven's conclusion that, "Art in the public interest extends the possibilities of public art to include a critique of the relations of art to the public domain" (1989: 1). I ask: can public art achieve this critique and, if so, what would it look like?

Protest movements in Kosova, such as *Lëvizja Vetëvendosje!* (Self Determination Movement), which latter became a political party, have generated

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<sup>151</sup> Here we may be reminded of Polyani's argument about the mutual and planned creation of modern state and capitalism (2001).

aesthetic practices that provide a critical engagement with the international protectorate in Kosovo. However, through some examples I treat here, it is quite clear that they are detached from a desire to engage a representational system that might disrupt a patriarchal or populist order. What general and public opinion has consented to is an ethnicized patriarchy, often violent, embedded in all its structural and representational forms. Through the naturalization of bodies and the body politic, both the dominant and oppositional political forces in Kosovo fall short and fail horribly to create a “civic” option for politics and culture. This becomes particularly evident when wartime rapes are discussed. At the end of this chapter I examine an artistic performance staged in Prishtina days after the Kosovo Assembly debated the status of “rape victims.” I discuss this performance in relation to the long silence of survivors in relation to the public’s inability to find a place for this “category of victims.”

### **Superfluity: Practices of Distance and Containment**

Superfluity does not only refer to the aesthetics of surfaces and quantities, and to how such an aesthetics is premised on the capacity of things to hypnotize, overexcite or paralyze the senses...superfluity refers also to the dialectics of indispensability and expendability of both labor and life, people and things. It refers to the obfuscation of any exchange value or use value that labor may have, and to the emptying of any meaning that might be attached to the act of measurement and quantification itself...But the abolition of the very meaning of quantification...is also a way of writing time, of forgetting and remembering.

– *Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall*

Upon reading *European Cultural Policies 2015*, as a kind of inspirational point of departure for this text, my initial thought was that the essays would provide analyses of contexts very different from those in Kosovo (Lind and Minichbauer 2004). In my prejudice, all that which could be said of Europe would somehow place Kosovo as particular, different, and much more *Other*. To speak of cultural policies in their contexts would entail recognition of all the lacks and inadequacies of a post-socialist,

post-conflict protectorate aiming to be a state. Sezgin Boynik, sociologist and art theorist, has claimed:

There is no contemporary culture in Pristina. Both economics and pedagogical factors could be blamed for this. However the most important reason is this tradition of isolated and underground resistance [of parallel institutions of the 1990s], which has created the discursive sphere in Kosovo public space (Boynik 2003).

Boynik has been an important critic of nationalist art practices and institutions, questioning the “a-historicity” of a young generation of artists and their lack of a sustained rebellion against previous generations who aimed to “capture authenticity.” Boynik’s comments also came after René Block had curated *In der Schusten Der Balkans*, and had called Prishtina the center of the Balkan avant-garde. Block’s comments also referred to the *Missing Identity* project run by the LAB for Contemporary Art, EXIT Gallery in Peja, and the Gani Bobi Center for the Humanities, as well as *Relations*, based in Germany. The project created a following beyond the University of Prishtina Arts Academy, which, for Shkëlzen Maliqi, is characterized by self-content and academicism.<sup>152</sup> I joined this project in 2007, as well as a later Rhyzoma space project, at the invitation of Mehmet Behluli, the force behind student courses run with Maliqi. Based on my experience at that time, and my continued collaboration with these artists, curators, and critics, as well as my conversations with Boynik, I prefer his definition of the “contemporary” as the lack or presence of sustained critique, not as temporal or stylistic categories. If used in the latter sense, Boynik’s otherwise explicit anarchism itself becomes an expression of “a-historicity.” In his writing, it is clear that he does make a *distinction* between a pop-rural-turbo-folk and an underground café-social exchange. One is kitsch and the

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<sup>152</sup> I do not treat the work of Mehmet Behluli and Sokol Beqiri, who were the precursors of the current contemporary art scene. In many ways, they formed and laid its foundations. I am grateful to Mehmet for inviting me to *Missing Identity*, the continued discussions, and all that I have learned from him.

other contemporary (Boynik 2003). However, my distinction is between an anthropological approach, which focuses on the process whereby cultural formations are made versus the social and art critic approach interested in power and art, but not in the people who also make “mainstream kitsch.” Boris Buden reminds us:

There is a major problem with the question we are supposed to answer here: contemporary art and nationalism? It suggests that only one side of the relation, art, can be defined in terms of its historicity. We are asked about the relation between one historically particular form of art – contemporary, and not for instance, modern or renaissance art – and nationalism, as though the other side of relation, nationalism, is a timeless phenomenon, which could be traced in (esthetic) reality regardless of its historical transformations (Buden 2007: 12).

There is the potential to see, or read, Kosova as much more connected with and in similitude to Europe than its Other. There could be a number of frames through which either argument could be constructed, but they would all first require discussion of references that can define meanings attached to both Europe and Kosova.

A number of years ago, Laszlo Kurti stated, “The fashioning of Eastern Europe as an intellectual space is a curious blend of fact, fiction and political demagoguery” (Kurti 1996: 11). Therefore, the types of questions and formations we choose to analyze define Eastern Europe as both a conceptual category and a cultural geography.<sup>153</sup> This is a truism, but one which is easily forgotten when we claim to be presenting the “lived local realities of peoples,” while continuing to uncritically examine the conceptual categories we employ. Although critiques of Balkanization<sup>154</sup> have been emergent, popularized phrases such as “the culture of violence,” “violence-prone areas,” etc., have become defining concepts through which international

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<sup>153</sup> Although this has been a well-elaborated and critically-evaluated methodology in anthropology in general, it still remains to be better acknowledged in regard to inquiries of Eastern Europe. See Appadurai, 1986; Kideckel 1997.

<sup>154</sup> One of the most widely-cited texts is Todorova 1997. See also Bjelic and Savic 2002. For a text that applies Said’s notion of Orientalism to the Albanian context, see Sulstarova 2006.



agencies (UN, NATO, IMF, EU, etc.), not excluding those that fund and promote culture and art, have viewed and constructed their relations with the former Yugoslavia and its successor states (Woodward 1997). If the Balkans are distinct from the West due to their violent nature, as various opinions assert, the effect of this discourse is even more powerful because it also gives particularly relevant definitions to notions and to the language of mediation, such as “containment,” “state-protection,” “humanitarianism,” etc. According to Woodward, “the perception that violence was inevitable in the Balkans” and that “despite geographical propinquity they were not real Europeans programmed a nearly automatic distancing” (1997: 20).<sup>155</sup>

Indeed, the breadth of knowledge produced concerning Kosova and the region fails in the same way Mbembe and Nuttall cite failure regarding interpretations of the African continent. According to them, the sign (*read Africa*) is so over-determined that “it sometimes seems impossible to crack, to throw it open to the full spectrum of meanings and implications that other places and other human experiences enjoy, provoke, and inhabit” (2004: 348). Therefore, it seems relevant to propose new readings, inquiries, and productions that would unsettle commonplace imaginings of Kosova, and the region. While Mbembe and Nuttall choose the city as the locale through which to conduct such an intervention, I propose the same site by way of contemporary art in the cityscape. Here, I propose *superfluity*, in a fashion similar to Mbembe, as a relation between aesthetics and labor, a relation that can aid us to

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<sup>155</sup> Veena Das and Athus Kleinman begin the introduction to this volume by claiming that, “[a] new political geography of the world has emerged in the last two decades, in which whole areas are marked off as ‘violent-prone areas,’ suggesting that the more traditional spatial divisions, comprising metropolitan centers and peripheral colonies, or superpowers and satellite states, are now linguistically obsolete” (1997: 1). See also Malki 1992. Since then, specifically following the 11 September terrorist attacks in New York, a new language of distinctions has emerged. See Asad, et al. 2009.

understand the wide spectrum of cultural and artistic production. Such a frame reverberates with Dren Maliqi's art piece, "To be an artist you must arbeiten" (D. Maliqi 2006). Referring to the absence of an art system or art market, artists' work is often invisible, seen only as an expression of an internal psychological need for expression, or as an aesthetic surface. But an artist who "works" makes that presence visible.

Dren Maliqi's statement piece is reminiscent of Alaina Lemon's account of her landlady in Moscow who critiqued speculators who earned "without labor" (1989: 28). Lemon convincingly argued that both socialism and capitalism have relied on particular utopian constructions of a "cash-less future," and that statements about money and its uses, in Russia, "were less a product of a unique Russo-Soviet-socialist culture, or even of the Cold War, than of European discourses about development and modernity" (1998: 25). Lemon's conclusion can be applied to other political projects that have, so far, been analyzed in terms of chronological breaks. For example, the tendency to read nationalist movements in Eastern Europe after 1989 as eruptions of formations that socialism had suppressed relies on a teleological understanding of history. Here, history becomes the linear development of society; a pre-socialist modern moment was thwarted but can continue now that these societies have re-joined the path of progress, or modernity (Stokes et al 1996; Halpern and Kideckl 2000). Homogenizing modernity as a European phenomenon is a problematic move, particularly when we know that socialism itself was a modernist project (Boym 2001; Lemon 2000; Slezkine 1994; Burawoy and Lukacs 1992). By realigning Eastern Europe, and, perhaps, more accurately, state socialism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a larger global history, and as part of a wider discussion on modernity, we can perhaps uncover some of its contexts of discovery (Gupta 1992; Chakrabarty 2002; Asad

1987). Eastern Europe and the Balkans, then, could be seen as projects of a number of intellectual and political genealogies, and mutually constituted traditions and economies, that are made possible through the construction of various projects, such as socialism, capitalism, feminism, or the nation-state (Wolff 1995; Kundera 1984; Antohi 2002; Brubaker 1995; Drakulic 1995).

### **It's Only a Work of Art/Don't Play with Albanians/Balls! Balls! Balls!**

Two examples from Kosova's visual landscape can illustrate some of the concrete manifestations in which meanings of cultural and political landscapes were constructed, but by which such artifacts also gave definition to larger global, political, economic, and cultural interdependencies. Both are examples of billboards, which, as I noted earlier, are a novelty in Kosovo, but also an incredibly popular means of communication between different "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983). Boasting posters whose key reference was Europe, both are examples of particular *distancing* and *containment*; one is also an attempt to make borders more porous and expose the unequal relations of access to the movement of *people, ideas, and things*. They differ in their aesthetic intentionality and imaginings of political agency.

In the fall of 2006, roads and streets all over Kosova were lined with billboards whose placement was funded by the European Agency for Reconstruction. One poster depicted a newly paved road, with green pastures on both sides, leading to Alpine mountains and snow-covered peaks. In the background, a bright yellow sun shone in a clear blue sky. The blue and yellow of the sun and sky stood as metonymic reproductions of the EU flag. Interestingly, Kosova's flag, similarly to Bosnia's, is an adapted copy and variant of the European flag's palette and design. This idyllic representation of a European future, of what Kosovo is to become, marked the road that

Kosovo has to take. Europe shines in welcome *behind* the mountains; yet, regardless of how close it may appear, they are both temporally and spatially distant.<sup>156</sup> The pastoral calm of the image, in addition to this distancing and nature/al bounding of space, also rewrites acknowledgements of presence. That is, it erases the presence of particular peoples in/of Europe. The labor and political strife of people who have, for decades, worked as guest laborers, or sought asylum, or who have made their life and created families in countries of Western Europe seem to disappear in this representation. (Locally, guest workers are generally referred to by the German *gasterbeiter*.) These were workers who, as a result of agreements made by several western European countries and Tito's Yugoslavia, were allowed the "privilege" of working abroad. The arrangements entailed supplies of cheap labor from the latter in return for benefits via loan agreements, visa-requirements, etc. The guest workers' labor, in the *Road to Europe* billboard, although indispensable in the re-construction of both Kosova and Europe, becomes erased.

Today, an estimated seventeen percent of Kosovars live abroad, about three hundred and fifteen thousand, and, of these, seventy percent send remittances to family members in Kosova. This means that every fifth family receives support from relatives abroad (amounting to more than the formal foreign aid Kosova receives). In 2004, Kosova ranked seventh in the amount of remittances received (including Europe and Asia), and was twentieth worldwide. For the year 2007, an estimated seventeen percent of Kosova's GDP came from remittances, and, despite warnings that the global financial crisis would thwart this support, remittances increased in 2012 (Forum 2015

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<sup>156</sup> Akhil Gupta argues that the discourse of development carries precisely this definition of space and time (1998).

& Riinvest: 2007).<sup>157</sup> Visualizations of Europe's promise and labor are varied. While the EAR commissioned the poster, it is likely that a local designer provided the design (this is something I was not able to confirm). The production of such an image can be seen as an example of not only *how Europe sees Kosova*, but also *how Kosova sees itself*.

As roadsides and streets of towns in Kosovo are increasingly lined with billboards, not only with political statements, but also with product advertisements, responses have been in order.<sup>158</sup> One such response was Albert Heta's intervention on a British Airways billboard with the words, "Its time to go visiting" (2003). Heta produced a sticker that read: "No visa required." He then placed this sticker on a number of billboards featuring the British Airways slogan. "I though the design of the advertisement could be improved," he remarked jokingly. Not wishing to give an interpretation of his work when we discussed it, I remarked that the stylistic intervention on the balance of form and color of the original would make his intervention an apolitical statement. Heta's work, however, is highly political, and I would suggest it provides a good example through which to interrogate emerging relationships between new commodity forms, mobility, wealth, and the lack thereof. It also suggests that all of these threads come together at one juncture – *visa* – where power between people, states and borders is vigorously negotiated. Visa (in the original Latin *videre* - to see), carries the meaning of endorsement and permission, but certainly

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<sup>157</sup> In large numbers they work in service, with men concentrated in construction, where only an estimated three percent have supervisory or decision-making positions. Women comprise thirty-five percent of the diaspora (and, on average, have fewer children than their families in Kosova.) Of these women, eighteen percent work in education and health. Good gender disaggregated data is missing, but the tendency is for women to work in education and health, earning less than men, but when employed they hold more socially prestigious employment.

<sup>158</sup> New relations with markets have remained poorly examined in Kosovo, but attention is increasingly placed on marketing and business management as forms that signify development. The American University in Kosovo is one example of an institution that aims to "stimulate and expand the entrepreneurial spirit of students," but such discourse is not lacking in other institutions as well, whether private or governmental.

meaning and application are also about who is not endorsed or permitted. Previous British Airways advertisements had boasted a split picture of a person jumping into a Prishtina bus and stepping out of a London double-decker. While proximity to London was emphasized in this ad, the commodity and manner in which it is being sold (the idea, the identification, etc.) mark the inequality of access that persists. The same question reemerges again. *Can an Albanian be a tourist?* Certainly one can also ask: can a Somali, Palestinian, or Syrian be a tourist in Europe?

Borneman and Fowel have argued that tourism, including sexual tourism, form “a central domain for negotiating and reconfiguring popular and political authority in the context of Europeanization” (1997: 506). If, as they argue, the sexual geography of Europe is best revealed in its spatial diffusion and regulation of bodily practices, then Bunzl’s Prague Experience of “gay male tourism” from Germany to the Czech Republic is one of the best examples of how spatial categories also become “embodied borders” (2000). Bunzl refers to these dynamics as “imperial experience,” with tourism as a “site of the neocolonial re-territorialization” occasioned by the transition from “state socialist to capitalist social orders” (2000: 72). This process, and this definition of (neo)colonial reterritorialization, sees current processes of globalization as neocolonial. This neocolonialism accounts for the relations of power that form particular kinds of subjects: those subjected to someone else by a relation of control and dependence, and those tied to one’s identity through self-knowledge (Foucault 1982). With attention increasingly placed on the movement of people, ideas, money, and borders, a seeming erasure of various barriers is also produced, while various social and cultural groups continue to have disproportionate access to resources and re/presentation (Partridge 2012).

Recent research on “visa economics,” conducted by GAP (Institute for Advanced Studies, Prishtina), shows that almost ten percent of all Kosovars applied for visas between 2010 and 2012 (GAP 2013). Currently, citizens of the only country in the new category of Western Balkans, (i.e., not European Union member states, with visa requirements to the EU Schengen area), Kosovars spent almost nine million euros between 2010 and 2012 for application fees, and an additional fifteen million for other required costs (excluding Serbs and Albanians, who also hold citizenship from other Yugoslav successor states, with Kosova Serbs holding dual Kosovar and Serbian citizenship). Local diplomatic missions and businesses, travel agents, photo shops, etc., profit; in a country where the average salary is just above two hundred euros, not all costs or profits are monetary.



Figure 17. Photograph of visa waiting line in front of the German Embassy in Prishtina, 2011. Figure 18. Photograph of advertisement for visa travel insurance, Prishtina, 2011.



Figure 19. Photograph of “No Visa Required” public intervention on British Airways billboards by Albert Heta 2003. Courtesy of the artist. ©Albert Heta 2003.

Not surprisingly, following Heta’s intervention, the local British Airways office was flooded with calls by people wishing to know whether they could truly fly to London without a visa. In an email to a Swiss curator, during an exchange that became a continuation of “It’s time to go visiting,” Heta wrote:

Anyway, the BA immediately reacted as they saw the stickers and made a lot of pressure to the company that owns the space, and somehow after 11.30 AM on the July 3rd they realized who did it. I was called for a meeting by the company, and was warned that there will be consequences after what I did. One very interesting sentence that the owner used was "How can I explain that an intellectual like you did this!" I tried to explain that this is "only" an artwork, but it didn't work so much.

That the work was “only art,” somehow above and beyond the realm of material consequences, would mean that it should not upset, while the condemnation “that an intellectual like you did this?” is part of the expectations placed on and by “real artists” (characterized by a social and aesthetic conservatism), who produce “a search for something that is to be illustrative of an authentic Kosovar and Albanian fine arts” (S. Maliqi 2003). For this reason, Boynik considers Erzen Shkololli, until recently a Peja



and Berlin-based artist, and now director of the National Art Gallery, one of the few in Kosovo producing brave and self-critical art work among a new generation of contemporary artists.



Figure 20. Still from video “Don’t Play with the Albanians” by Erzen Shkololli 2002. Courtesy of the artist. © Erzen Shkololli 2003, 4’27”.

Representing a still from a Shkurte Fejza music video (discussed in a previous chapter), the photograph offers an emptied background, demonstrating UNMIK’s policy of forgive and forget (Boynik 2003). Fejza is a ready-made subject/object of representation, an icon of folk and national song, of mourning and revenge, and of a national womanhood.

We should be reminded of Benjamin’s assertion that no photograph is or can be a transparent document, that the “camera never offers a mimetic representation of what it captures through its lens,” and that it opens up structural formations of the subjects it records that are entirely different from those perceived by the naked eye (1999: 230). Shkololli’s photograph invites a viewing strategy and a knowledge that does not ask for sympathy or empathy, as does Fejza’s song, or as do many of Shkololli’s contemporaries. Rather, the image reminds that, “observers are culturally and socially

embedded as much as the subject they observe, and can never be fully in control of the systems of power and history that work through them” (Rotas 2008: 22). Rotas, a photographer and theoretician, found it relevant to refer back to Clifford in her analysis of Phil Collin’s *delivery series*, which includes sets of family photographs made and delivered between Prishtina and London (Clifford 1986). Collin’s work resonates an almost ethnographic reflexivity that averts closure and distance. In his photographs, he signals us to think of what exists beyond the margins and frame of the photographs (Collins 2004). Similarly, Shkololli, who relies on “ready-made” objects, inserts a creative process that does not foreclose multiple sites and subjects of art production:

In my approach I’m not, so to say, a folklorist, someone who is in loved with tradition either because they appreciate the old and conservative values, or because they like the charm and beauty of past times. I have a more specific relation to the values of tradition...They are like a reality to me, something that exists today too, but in the social margins and margins of creation, as a phenomenon in disappearance and retreat, and even as a silent reality or even as despised by the modern dynamic, industrialized and serialized life... Traditional artifacts such as dresses, shirts, vests, *dimitë* [ottoman pants], etc., are almost completely removed from everyday life, they are kept sealed in chests or in the ceiling, and are taken out and used less and less, only in exceptional cases, usually festive occasions. But, these removed items immediately become extremely important when the question of national, or regional, identity and uniqueness is raised, for example, of a province or of a city... (S. Maliqi 2012)

A contemporary art movement in Kosova has not been able to create oppositional discourse, and was never established in a consciously open space, Boynik rightfully asserts. However, Jiří Ptáček, a Prague-based curator and art critic, is not as harsh. He sees, in this art, “an erotic appeal pronounced as a self-ironic gesture in the midst of interpersonal disasters; it is pronounced with the awareness that it probably won’t influence the surroundings much” (Ptáček 2004). At the same time, and in many ways, *culture*, in its folkloric definition, had replaced “art.” This is what most of the rebellion was about.

However, another rebellion had been brewing for some time. When told by her colleagues that the Kosovar contemporary art scene has so few women artist because “they do not have the balls for it,”<sup>159</sup> Flaka Haliti, now in Vienna (having graduated from the Städelschule in Frankfurt), produced one of the most serious challenges to institutions of art in Kosova. Her action entailed placing a number of livestock testicles at the entrance of the National Art Gallery, having wrapped them as a gift in a box. If Shkololli’s work had challenged the assumed pre-social and biological belonging of nationhood, Haliti had questioned the interconnected and assumed pre-social and biological superiority of manhood.

Residents of Yap Island in the Pacific Ocean had told Schneider that coitus and pregnancy do not necessarily go together, and that a promiscuous woman would not be rewarded with pregnancy. Schneider went on to observe and learn that a boar might have his testicles removed in order to make him grow. Schneider was confused. In the end, one of the men saw the conceptual dilemma, and said: *but people are not pigs* (Schneider 1968: 127-128). Haliti’s act contains understandings similar to those offered by the Yap men with whom Schneider conversed. “A woman can have balls,” but, just as for men, they do not signify a scientific biological identity. The assumption of biological essence, masculinity, and institutional power has so thoroughly naturalized sex and reproduction, a public cannot imagine women as begetting, only as bearing (Tsing 1995). The same concept was applicable to re/production in art. In Albanian mythology, it is the seed that generates, creating links of kin, tribe, and nation. While

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<sup>159</sup> A joke told in the corridors of the Kosova Government building, some years ago, went something like this: A local bull had taken charge to get to the grazing cows, offered as a donation by the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development. He injured himself on the face, but the villagers found a solution. “We’ll turn him into an advisor. He might not be able to do, but he knows how.” Today most Kosovars rely on civil service employment, still considered stable in comparison to the fragile, corrupt, and “dirty” market. An “entrepreneurial spirit” is not missing, but a civil service position is quite often entrepreneurial, gained predominately through family connections or payment. In one case, I was told someone paid five thousand euros for a job that pays two hundred and forty a month.

“trees of milk” and matrilineal ties may create connections, they are much weaker than patrilineal “trees of blood.” Haliti is ultimately not concerned with women’s roles and positions. However, many of her colleagues are, as is seen in the prevailing positivism and functionalism of the social sciences and humanities in Kosova overall. The bodies Haliti interrogates are at times dissected, they are missing from war, mass-produced, and, at times, cyborgs. They feel pain, and love.<sup>160</sup>

I would suggest that we treat these works, acts and interventions both as the sensual and the quantifiable relations of a particular biopolitics *read as* superfluity. Europe *overexcites* Kosovars as the past and future of belonging, but, at the same time, materializes as a present of racialized and sexualized contiguity and difference. What we have is a fragmented political and cultural geography as social processes, “reflecting and constituting depictions of rapid change in the apparent stability of place” (Berdahl 2000: 6). This geography goes beyond the framed depictions of landscapes, for it also includes the subterranean world of accumulated dwellings, graves, illegal border-crossings, and bodies. Often, these have been covered by new landscapes, or even by the subterranean processes that Fritz Lang’s Manhattan-inspired utopian *Metropolis* depicts, with workers underground who maintain the privileged above ground. Both Europe and Kosova represent types of frontiers, a look westward, and a look inward, whereby meanings of freedom and equity remain fraught with tension, at best. At the same time, in the struggle of bodies within the national body politic, where all are bodies of the nation seem to exist for its reproduction and representation, Haliti’s work is about measuring and claiming presence and knowledge outside of the relations and semiotics of national belonging.

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<sup>160</sup> For her most recent installation *I Miss You, I Miss You, 'Till I Don't Miss You Anymore* see Katja Kobolt’s review at <http://www.stacion.org/?cid=2,2,135&mode=article>.

## **Plazma Biscuits, Rubber Bullets and Mother Theresa**

On 10 February 2007, the Vetëvendosje! Movement organized a demonstration opposing the ongoing negotiations between Kosova and Serbia that lead to Ahtissari's Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement. The demonstration, with some two thousand and five hundred participants, was tragically concluded when two of the protesters lost their lives due to what largely has been seen as disproportionate use of force on the part of the security forces (the Kosova police, and especially the UNMIK police.) An independent investigation was immediately announced and the chief of the Kosova Police Services resigned. This was hailed as a sign of democracy, since officials never resign in Kosova.

The Ombudsperson did not have a mandate to investigate the actions of UNMIK police, but produced a detailed report on the accounts of that day. The UNMIK international police were, for the most part, involved in maintaining order. They lost control of the situation when, in an attempt to disperse the crowd, they discharged tear gas and rubber bullets. Their Kosovo Police colleagues were not wearing masks. The results of the investigations were later made public but no legal or other measures were taken to identify those responsible for the death of the protesters. Albin Kurti, the Vetëvendosje! party leader, was jailed for instigating violence, and the UN mission sought to identify him as the guilty party.

The Ombudsperson reported that rubber bullets used by the Romanian unit of the international police force had passed their expiration date by thirteen years. The German Federal Office of Criminal Police Investigation suggested that the rubber bullets "were more dangerous than one had originally assumed" (Republic of Kosovo Ombudsperson Institution 2007). Members of the Romanian unit were recalled,

disregarding the UN Headquarter's request that they remain and continue to cooperate in the investigation. To the protest participant and the viewing public, even those not sympathetic to Vetëvendosje!, the important fact was the clear disregard for regulations, namely, the prohibition against directly targeting the upper body of protesters when discharging rubber bullets.

The Ombudsperson's report concluded that "nineteen persons were arrested, while eighty-two others requested medical assistance...thirty of them were injured by rubber bullets, fifty-six others had body injuries in different parts of their bodies, mostly caused by the use of excessive physical force" (Republic of Kosovo Ombudsperson Institution 2007). The report also stated that an investigation conducted by the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo (PIK) showed insufficient communication between police officers on the ground and those in the main offices. By April 2007, an international prosecutor announced that the evidence led to the conclusion that, "the deaths of Mon Balaj and Arben Xheladini had been unnecessary and avoidable." But, "the state of evidence gathered did not meet the threshold of reasonable suspicion of criminal activity committed by any particular person...There appeared to be a divergence between Romanian domestic law and generally accepted international law and guiding UN principles on the use of deadly force and very possibly on the use of rubber bullets" (Republic of Kosovo Ombudsperson Institution 2007).

The miscommunication, lack of clear and applicable laws, distribution of responsibilities, excessive force, and a general 'state of exceptions' further strengthened Vetëvendosje!'s claim that Kosova has no need for international supervision and should claim its rights to full sovereignty. In a context where justice is served disproportionately, anti-colonial, leftist, and nationalist threads underline Vetëvendosje!'s discourse and activism. Lead by Albin Kurti, former student organizer

and leader of the 1997 protests in Kosova, and former prisoner of Serbia’s Milosevic regime, Vetëvendosje! is a populist movement whose main criticism has been leveled against the UN administration in Kosovo, and in support for the principles of self-determination.

Vetëvendosje! has consistently used graffiti, stencils, and other visual forms to intervene in public space. Actions include spraying “Big Brother is Watching” on KFOR (NATO forces in Kosova) billboards, “Times Up UNMIK go Home 12:44,” graffiti, referring to UNSCR 1244, and a stenciled poem sprayed on any available wall: “I vote, You vote, He/She votes, They profit.” Criticism is directed towards the Kosova government, as well. One of the major Vetëvendosje! campaigns centered on an appeal to boycott Serbian products imported to Kosova. Activists publicized products’ barcodes and mobilized the public to boycott them. More recently, they ran a positive campaign promoted through the *Duaje Tënden* (Love your own) and *Blej Shqip* (Buy Albanian) slogans.<sup>161</sup>



Figure 21. Design of Boycott Serbian Products campaign poster. The text at the bottom reads, “Are you full of this? Do not buy!” Figure 22. Design of “Love your own/Local product” campaign sticker. The sticker is placed on locally made products.

Posters in the boycott campaign show the cross of Serbia’s flag with a coat of arms made out of Plazma biscuits. Plazma was one of the more successful products of

<sup>161</sup> See <http://www.duaje.com/>

the Bambi brand in former Yugoslavia and was a popular treat for children. The cross is directly associated, in all post-Yugoslav war zones, with the violence and wars led by Milosevic's regime and military apparatus. Although Serbian states and the Serbian Orthodox Church have used the cross since the Middle Ages, its use in the last Yugoslav wars was a practice reminiscent of the Nazi swastika. Aesthetically, it draws from medieval scripts and forms. It was often spray-painted on any surface when paramilitary, police, and military would drive inhabitants out of destroyed villages and towns. The four Cs, in Cyrillic, refer to the unofficial Serbian motto, "Only Unity Saves the Serb."



Figure 23. Design of web-image "Kosovo/Srbija - For the Honest Cross and Golden Freedom." Signs boasting the cross and four Cs have disappeared in Kosova, but were omnipresent during the 1990s throughout former-Yugoslavia. Photo taken from <http://www.desura.com/groups/serbian-group/images/kosovo-je-srbija>. Figure 24. Photograph of Peter Mlakar (Leibach), Belgrade 1989. The second photograph is of Mlakar, from the well-known Slovenian-based punk band Leibach, part of the Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) collective. NSK powerfully challenge totalitarian and nationalist movements and re-appropriate authoritarian kitsch (Žižek 2006). Before their Belgrade shows in 1989, "Laibach projected a World War Two German propaganda film on the bombing of Belgrade, accompanied by extracts from agitation speeches by Milošević," spoken in German, while wearing Nazi uniforms: <http://www.laibach.org/bio/>. More recently, they produced the soundtrack for the movie *Iron Sky*, and performed parts of it in Prishtina, in 2012, at their "We Come in Peace" event.



On the day of the 10 February demonstration, Rron Qena and Fatmir Mustafa (aka Karlo), both part of the contemporary art scene, appeared with a folding table and tea. They served to all those present. They served the more “traditional” Turkish tea. While not a direct comment upon or support for Vetëvendosje!’s *Plazma* campaign, the performance could be seen as an invitation to partake in a local paradigm and to observe *the world* through a local practice of commensurability. The next day, during a vigil for the two deceased protesters, the two artists blindfolded the eyes on a statue of Mother Theresa and two children holding hands. Here, Mother Theresa is reinvented, not only as a symbol of wisdom and peace, but also as an international and national symbol whose intentional blindness comments on international incapacity for introspection. Based on the artists’ intervention, Mother Theresa and her children are both blind and blinded.

The artists’ interventions, and those of Vetëvendosje!, can be seen as actions to protect a particular cultural heritage that un/conventionally include memories of the recent war, commodities that have mediated cultural proximity and distance, and that are free of foreign (international community’s) conceptions of multi-ethnicity. Meanwhile, the reactions of the international police, by assuming the meanings of international law and human rights, and by mediating the publics’ belonging in public space, have flattened a rather complex terrain. A positive response to Roni and Kalro’s invitation could have aided in creatively rethinking a worldview, that, more than often, limits the desire or possibility to discuss diverging experiences, such as suffering and authenticity, and various claims to their ownership. Nonetheless, “the current moment is characterized by a criticism blind to crisis, and a crisis blind to criticism,” as Boris Buden observes (2009: 41).

There have been other attempts to insert communication between communities with shared and contested experiences into landscapes determined by containment. One interesting example is Ivan Fijolić's statue of Bruce Lee in the divided city of Mostar in Bosnia and Hercegovina (Makaš 2007). D'Alessio has explained that the choice was based on the fact that Lee:

Was a global myth with no relations to the local environment, but the shared memory of a child's age (like the mythical golden age of nationalists?) in a common state where the urban interaction in Mostar was not strongly limited by physical or apparent borders. In an open contestation with the view of constant territorial marking by the two dominant communities in competition for the control of the urban space, Urbani Pokret Mostar [Mostar Urban Movement] intended to be provocative and to raise problems to the established view of a divided town (D'Alessio 2009).

*Bruce Lee* in Mostar is not the only example of a martial arts icon to receive such a prominent place in the Balkans, although they differ in intentionality (Volcic 2010; Von Eschen 2006). However, free of local nationalist signification, such icons can nonetheless become appropriated, as the example of Chuck Norris, below, shows. After it was vandalized, the Bruce Lee statue was moved to Zagreb for an exhibition, and has since become marked by a nationalist geography, just as has the Norris photograph. We can thus attempt to account for the construction of particularly politicized, gendered, and ethnicized subjectivities and collectivities, while accounting for the relevance of their historical genealogies. While dynamics of globalization produce homogenization, they, at the same time, create processes of fragmentation that involve the drawing of new borders.

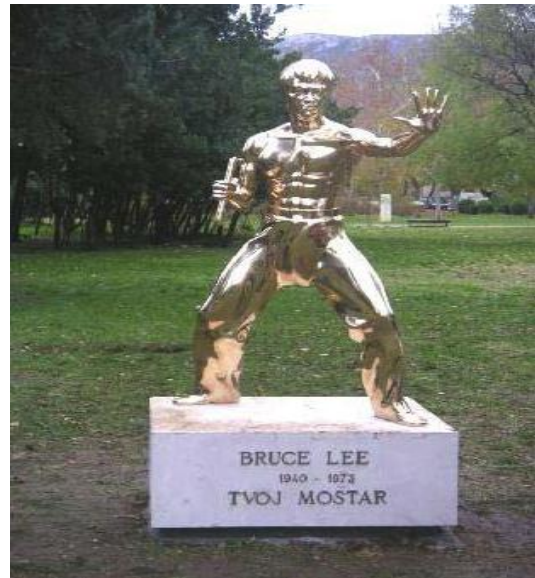


Figure 25. Web-Image of Chuck Norris on “Kosovo is Serbia/When Chuck Talks You Listen.” Image taken from: <http://www.moddb.com/groups/chuck-norris-lovers-group/images/chuck-kosovo>, accessed 10 April 2011. Figure 26. Photograph of Bruce Lee/Your Mostar statue (1,68 m) - Mostar, Bosnia and Hercegovina, by Ivan Fijolić 2005 (Mostar Urban Movement).

### They Killed the Architect: Commemorations and Art in Public

All of those who attack the city need to understand that the city will take vengeance one day. Rexhep Luci<sup>162</sup>



Figure 27. Photograph of European Commission *Europe St.* promotion campaign, Prishtina, 2013. Figure 28. Photograph of public intervention banner “Kosovo: Primitive Non-EU Citizens,” 2013. When the European Commission turned Rexhep Luci Street into a site of celebration for Europe Day, 9 May 2013, photo to the left, a group of young graphic designers responded.

In his analysis of relations between Holocaust memorialization and contemporary racialization of subjects, Damani Partridge argues that: “nationalism

<sup>162</sup> See Surroi 2000.

qualifies citizenship” (2010: 826). As Partridge shows, contemporary racism plays out in Germany by way of nationalized memory within the sphere of European nation-states. A program designed to teach right wing and immigrant youth about the Holocaust, and often delivered by 1968-generation teachers, turns into a commemoration of the nation-state and not necessarily the anti-racist politics it should engage (Partridge 2010: 832). Both Jews and current immigrants are made past and present non-citizens. That the Holocaust should *never happen again* is also predicated upon the commitment of *Europe* to prevent it from occurring. In its current memorialization, the Holocaust and racism are thus presented as past historical moments, and as a practice that mainstream Europe has overcome (Partridge 2010: 835). Similarly, ethnicized subjectivity is emphasized in Kosova by means of a multi-ethnicity that qualifies citizenship. As with the “immigrant” youths who behaved “inappropriately” during a study-visit and film showing, in Partridge’s accounts, any treatment of memories and experiences of the war in Kosova are to be determined through supervision (848). Public displays of those memories also have to be made “less irritating.” Ströhle uses the notions of “therapeutic governmentality,” and totalitarian post-traditional authority, to explain the processes put in place: *the EU helps, but it is up to the Kosovars to decide whether to become European or not* (Ströhle 2012).

Recent attention to commemorations, space, and violence shows that new elements are mapped onto older forces and grounded in regional histories. Although borders, subjects, and histories are moved to new locations, they do not disappear. This mapping is what Eliza Hoxha’s recent *Urban Diary: The City and Love* captures (2013). A collection of editorials and articles written over a five-year period, the work is a beautiful and painful text to read. It contains a reflexive, critical, and honest

collection of textual interventions from an architect who is pained by what the city has become. I cannot do justice to her many insights. I do wish to refer to a piece she wrote in 2007, because I believe it is relevant to an understanding of commemorative practices I address below, as well as the conflicts that underline meanings ascribed to urban spaces and experiences of the war.

In a piece dedicated to the deceased head of urban planning for Prishtina, *The Murder of the Architect and the City*, Hoxha claims: “Since the murder of Rexhep Luci the city began its decline...the city is suffocating, while it also suffocates us, as [he] had warned” (2013: 56). I have long wished to take up this topic and offer it the proper care it deserves. Perhaps I wish to repay a debt I feel I owe. So many have shared memories of my uncle, and have told me how important he was for the city. I was always jealous; I did not have the abundance of professional exchanges they had had. My last memory of my uncle is a small moment when I returned a book I had borrowed from him; he gave me a high-five. My uncle was murdered on 11 September 2000, a little over a year after the war ended. He was returning home on the final night of a three-day seminar called *The Vision for Pristina 2000-2005*, a conference meant to plan Prishtina’s urban future.

He had been reinstated in his position as head of urban planning for the city. He had been fired from work in the 1990s, as most Albanians were. His apartment, also, had been taken away. In 2000, he was shot on the steps of the entrance to his home. He had been receiving death threats, but was determined to stop the booming illegal construction in the city. According to Surroi, Rexhep Luci was a man, “who believed that the city is an identity, a heritage and a future, and therefore must be protected...a man who was killed because he loved the city of Pristina so much” (Surroi 2010). “They killed The Architect,” Arber Shita, one of his colleagues,

exclaimed to me. Shite wrote about the murder on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rexhep's death: "Two thousand suspects, five hundred thousand guilty...I can still smell the aroma of the coffee he left behind in my office as he ran out to the conference. That was the last time I saw him...The next day, we could not find a casket that would fit him, not only because he was so tall, but because we were not ready to bury him" (Shita 2012)

Rexhep Luci had already produced a 2000-2020 plan, but UNMIK, in customary fashion of ad-hoc and short-term reconstruction interventions, insisted that a five-year plan would suffice. Policies for long-term development would have to wait, and, perhaps, this is also a reason why so much of Kosova city space looks amateurish, shortsighted and incomplete. The fault, as some of my uncle's colleagues told me, "is also ours." This is a sentiment shared by Eliza Hoxha as well. On 22 August 2009, Hotel Union (built circa 1920), one of the few surviving protected buildings in Prishtina, burned down. Only the exterior front wall remained. Through petitions and protests, a group of citizens had prevented its destruction two years before; but, as a piece of prime real estate, adjacent to the National Theater and across from the Government Building on Mother Theresa Boulevard, many had an eye on it. Hoxha wrote:

In the whole mess, beginning with privatization, unclear institutional competencies over a protected monument, and citizen protests against its destruction, on the one hand is the call of Prishtina's Mayor to destroy the building 'on behalf of citizens,' and on the other, the ping-pong game between institutions, the private company, the negligence and lack of transparency in the whole process, including the draft project-proposal. The irresponsibility and perhaps even the ignorance for how to confront such a challenge, tells us a great deal about our approach to the city, level of governance, worldview and urban culture overall (Hoxha 2013: 142-143).

In 2000, UNMIK had released Regulation 2000/53, originally named “Rexhep Luci Regulation on Construction,” but it did not receive enough merited support for implementation. The original plans for the city became plagiarized and dissected to meet the needs of new investors in the city, the political, war and memory entrepreneurs. In a city lost to illegal and improper buildings, where everyone seems to be implicated in some kind of corrupt transaction, where a Government and Municipality have done nothing to prevent illegal construction throughout the city and the country, and where political party activists rub shoulders with traffickers of drugs, weapons and people (they often the same person), only a nationalist aesthetics of power seems to be able to accommodate them. Therefore, when Rexhep Luci Street was turned into Europe Street this year, there was an attempt to capitalize on the symbolic relevance of Rexhep Luci’s name and legacy by those who, themselves, have built an apparatus that destroyed the city.

Throughout Eastern Europe, bodies and bones have been reburied, statues have fallen, new ones have been erected, names of streets have been changed, bodies have been mutilated and raped, and ceremonies of rebirth have taken place. It is not surprising, then, that the same has occurred in Kosova. In order to construct authority and political legitimacy for emergent and old political parties, one of Prishtina’s main capillary streets, Mother Theresa, boasts statues of the medieval Albanian hero, Skenderbeg, and the more recent Mother Theresa. Women’s non-governmental organizations from Gjakova, a town that suffered heavy civilian casualties, protest for the “return of their sons” from foreign land. The reburials of war heroes and martyrs, and the erection of statues, busts, and plaques are almost daily occurrences. These practices of remembrance, as well as practices created by the state and by civic institutions, through the erection and decoration of monuments and buildings, aim to

create connections between narrative, landscape, and memory in the maintenance of a political economy by way of a historical sense of the nation.

Between 5 and 7 March 2004, the nation held a commemoration in Prishtina's football stadium in remembrance of the National Liberation War, led by the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA), which also marked the fifth anniversary of the death of Adem Jashari. That year, the *KLA Epopee* was a three-day-long event that included a memorial service, speeches, and various performances in remembrance of war. It culminated on 7 March with the Night of Fires (*Nata e Zjarreve*), whence torch fires throughout Kosova, beginning in Prekaz, were lit as a sign of remembrance of those who had died "for the freedom of the Albanian people." Numerous leading political figures, performers, and ordinary citizens attended the event. Politicians spoke of the values of the liberation war and a future European integration, a troop of actors that had formed during the war re-enacted the call to arms of Adem Jashari, the legendary commander. Poems were read; songs of national belonging were sung, and television stations provided a live transmission of the event.



Figure 29. Photograph from the 2013 KLA Epopee at the Prekaz Memorial Complex. Taken from: <http://www.prolajm.com/pr/fillon-manifestimi-epopeja-e-uck-se/>





Figure 30. Photograph from the 2004 Kosova Liberation Army Epopee, Prishtina Football Stadium. I attended this event but image is taken from <http://dardanie.de>, accessed 5 March 2005.

The complex interweaving of performances and discourses created a seemingly unified narrative of national liberation and identity in what have now become legitimate political and cultural spaces for the enactment of loyalty. While national belonging remains a seemingly undisturbed grand narrative, various contradictions and negotiations do emerge, particularly as various political actors have very different ideas regarding the future of Kosova.

A few months before the remembrance, the refurbishment of the Kosova Assembly offered another kind of commemoration. Kosova's institutions were to be given a new, legitimized space to practice their newly acquired, albeit limited, powers. The paintings placed on the walls of hallways depicted what are considered major historical events of Albanians, giving depth to popular images of national manhood. The connection between the current members of the Assembly and the councils and battles of the past was unspoken. The affect was the depiction of the longevity of a tradition of self-governance. Harry Holkeri, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG; UNMIK's chief administrator), did not attend the opening, arguing that the paintings in the building depicted a "mono-ethnic history." Serbian representatives in the Assembly also boycotted the opening. The contradictions between the different visions for Kosova's future, between a nation-

state and a multiethnic state, became evident in this process of constructing a linear progress of history within a cityscape that unites a homogenized past and present, while dispelling political alternatives.

In this light, we can also argue that the organization and maintenance of spaces, particularly the city and its seat of governance, was remade into a function of “the government of society.” Foucault argued that, beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, cities “were no longer islands beyond the common law. Instead...[they] served as the models for the governmental rationality that was to apply to the whole territory” (1994: 351). Cities, as many argue, serve as sites through which identities, citizenship, violence and other social formations are significantly constituted (Holston 1999; Breckenridge et al 2002; Low 1996, 1999). The attempts to build a new Prishtina, and the “sociology of urban chaos” that has ensued, as sociologist Hivzi Islami has called it, serve as perfect examples of the ways in which a new kind of governmentality is being constructed in the city.



Figure 31. Sislej Xhafa, *Giuseppe* 2003. Terracotta, sugar cubes, plastic bag, 162 x 31 cm. Collection Tullio Leggeri.

Attempts by Kosova's government, in this instance, are not unique in the history of Europe, specifically in attempts to create nation-state-building cityscapes. National heroes riding their horses into battle adorn main boulevards and streets of all capital cities, just as Skenderbeg does in Prishtina and Tirana. Nonetheless, everyday practices of people can create small acts of resistance that go unnoticed. Sisley Xhafa's statue of Garibaldi, the 'father of modern Italy, is a telling example. Xhafa, a New York-based but Peja (Kosovo) born, artist depicts Garibaldi holding a bag of sugar. His horse is missing (2003). Nationalized-cities seem to lose the power they once held in a world where previous colonies and margins now move to the metropolises and, there, create new political aesthetic practices. It is no surprise that the violence that occurred in Kosova's built landscape was aimed at the elimination of sites that resist a homogenized depiction of landscapes, memory and identity.



Figure 32. Photograph of Revolution Monument at Adem Jashari Square, formerly Brotherhood and Unity Square. Photograph by Marko Krojac, courtesy of photographer. For *Revelution*, Albert Heta, 2012.



Figure 33. Photograph of street light restoration in the revolution square, Prishtina. Photograph by Albert Heta. “Restoring the street lights in the Square of Brotherhood and Unity and the Monument of Revolution in Prishtina. *Revelution* aims to restore and activate the street lighting in the Square of Brotherhood and Unity with the Monument of Revolution. The intervention aims to light up a view of the architecture of Kosovar society and the surplus created by the state-building politics used to engineer a project for a new state in Kosova. *Revelution* is also about how we can expand the space for thinking beyond the stigmatization of unifying social ideas of the past and the eclipse of the signifiers of the anti-fascist struggle of the people of Kosovo. In addition, *Revelution* is a public space to pause. We used to say Prishtina looks beautiful at night” (Heta, *Revelution* 2012).

### **Internal Territories: Defending the honor of rape victims and The Trouble with their Voices<sup>163</sup>**

The Kosova war for territories was tread through internal human territories, where the cruel and maniacal sexual instincts to abuse and belittle, and then dishonor and maim, become evident. –*Halil Matoshi*<sup>164</sup>

Kosovo shall establish a comprehensive and gender-sensitive approach for dealing with its past, which shall include a broad range of transitional justice initiatives. –*UNOSEK document for Kosovo status*

At a 2005 showing of the documentary film *elementi FeM* (FeM element), which tracks a chronology of women’s participation in Kosovar politics, a viewer angrily stated “What more do you women want?” (Kastrati, Kastrati and Cooper

<sup>163</sup> Taken from Chatterjee 1993.

<sup>164</sup> Sepse lufta e Kosovës për territore ishte një ecje nëpër territoret e brendshme të njeriut, ku vijnë në pah instinktet mizore dhe maniakoseksuale për shfrytëzim dhe përlulje, pastaj për ç’nderim dhe në fund gjymtim.

2005). Sevdie Ahmeti, then director of the Center for the Protection of Women and Children, replied with a question: “During the war, and even before that, when Serbian police, army and paramilitary forces came to your home looking for the men of the house, who opened the doors? It was your mothers, sisters and wives.” Kosovar society has failed to recognize the many ways in which women were active agents of change throughout its recent history. Numerous opportunities, persistently stymied through particular masculine paradigms, were missed in addressing gendered relations of power. The UNOSEK document, cited above, added an additional layer to an existing paternalist history. Aligning transitional justice work, such as forgiving, reconciliation, and nurturance, with women’s work created a *Cinderella effect*. Men are expected to, naturally, at one point, come to the rescue and then gradually become accustomed to women in power. Twelve years after the war, an official recognition of war rapes had still to be made. Albanian women, in particular, had been targets of a planned strategy, although not on the scale it was carried out in Bosnia. Serbian, Roma, and other women in Kosova were also targeted.

The amendment to the *Law on The Status and The Rights of the Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of Kosovo Liberation Army, Civilian Victims of War and Their Families* was passed in the Kosovo Assembly on 14 March 2013. It is the first legal document to include a special status for victims of sexual violence, and a first broader public acknowledgment of wartime rapes in Kosova. The amendment passed by a majority, but a number of Assembly members voted against. The main opposing arguments included worry about the burden the amendment would place on the Kosovo budget, hesitation regarding the accuracy of possible claims, and concern that went so far as to include a debate about the difficulty of administering medical exams

(rape kits) twelve years after the war.<sup>165</sup> The sexist language of the debate was protested by a group of feminist scholars and artists.



Figure 34. Photograph of Public Performance “Ekzaminim,” by *Have It*, 2013. Photograph by Alter Habitus.<sup>166</sup>

In an attempt to capture and redefine the terms of the debate, Alter Habitus Institute for Studies in Society and Culture and the *Have It* art collective staged a performance on 30 March. *Have It* placed folding tables in front of the Kosovo Assembly main gate. They covered the tables with a white linen sheet on which they wrote *Examination*. They placed fresh red apples on cutting boards, and then smashed the apples with wooden mallets. Vetëvendosje hijacked this initially-independent event; they were the ones who had brought the amendment to the Assembly. One of their activists, Nazlije Bala, had received death threats, and was later physically assaulted. Massive support poured in for Nazlie, not only locally, but also

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<sup>165</sup> <http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/Law%20on%20the%20status%20of%20the%20martyrs.pdf>. Accessed 30 March 2013.

<sup>166</sup> For the artists’ intervention and protest see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCcNjZ026yg&feature=youtu.be>

internationally, through social media networks. Alter Habitus' popularity also soared. After front-page coverage by *Koha Ditore* daily, the institute's Facebook reach went from two hundred on a good day to over ten thousand.<sup>167</sup> The otherwise "radical feminist organization," as it is often considered in the mainstream, was congratulated. It was difficult for the media to disregard the "sacred cause" the organization had taken up; therefore, media, politicians, donors, and the general public "did not have face" to criticize them at this time. What *Have It* and Alter habitus achieved was political subjecthood, defined by Ranciere as a capacity to stage scenes of dissensus. "Through their public action that they *had* the rights denied to them...that they could *enact* those rights...as subject that did not have the rights that they had and that had the rights that they had not" (Rancière 2010: 69).

Griselda Pollock reminds us:

For it is a striking fact that many of the canonical works held up as the founding monuments of modern art treat precisely this area, sexuality...So we must inquire why the territory of modernism so often is a way of dealing with masculine sexuality...Sexuality, modernism or modernity cannot function as given categories to which we add women. That only identifies a partial and masculine viewpoint with the norm and confirms women as other and subsidiary. Sexuality, modernism or modernity are organized by and organizations of sexual difference. To perceive women's specificity is to analyze historically a particular configuration of difference (Pollock 1988: 247, 48).

The past decade has witnessed radical redefinitions of "gender" in Kosova. During the 1990s, women activists, non-governmental organizations, and political professionals struggled to convince various institutions and sections of society to address the legitimacy of their concerns. These women aimed to create publics more sensitive to gender inequities; however, their concerns were ultimately linked to and

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<sup>167</sup> The organization was founded in 2009 but had been active since 2004. Together with Elife Krasniqi, Linda Gusia, Elmaza Gashi and Dafina Zherka, I am also one of the founders.

overshadowed by “broader” national interests. A dominant discourse reinforced the norm that “we have more important things to worry about before we can begin to speak of providing equal rights to women.” Nonetheless, local discourses were, and remain, fraught with conflicting claims and political perspectives. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, “Women, Peace and Security,” which necessitates that member nations, through various specified obligations, address the impact of war on women, as well as women’s contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. In Kosova, many women’s groups saw the resolution as a guarantee of women’s participation in negotiations for Kosova’s final status. The negotiating teams, nonetheless, remained composed entirely of men, who sidetracked gender concerns. The resolution’s fundamental flaw, as academic feminists have pointed out, is that it signifies the reintroduction of women through their vulnerabilities, such as victims of political violence, or as peacemakers and nurturers. It is through that essentialist lens that women are considered suited for work, thereby ensuring successful peacekeeping/peace-building.

The so-called transition that Kosovo is undergoing revolves around a central discursive and representational axis of ethnicity and cultural rights.<sup>168</sup> Therefore, definitions of political rights and political representation have placed great attention on the delineation of cultural heritage and sites of ethnically-defined historicity.

While protection and unhampered access to such resources is relevant to community

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<sup>168</sup> I use the term transformations, joining others who have provided critiques for the assumption of developmentalist discourse of shedding socialism and autocracy for socio-political arrangements of capitalism and democracy. An important theoretical shift has entailed a re-focus from solely broad understandings of macro-processes and structures, to social relations of power, constructions of identity, and history at various levels. Verdery has proposed a possible theoretical shift, by arguing for a more inter-disciplinary approach between studies of post/socialism in Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union, with post-colonial studies. See Verdery 1991, 2002; Wolff 1994; Brubaker 1995; Asad 1987; Wanner 1998; Chakrabarty 2000; Antohi 2002.



empowerment, and is an increasingly important topic for “transitional justice,” such practices are also part of the writing of a national-timeline of politically charged memory. As the examples, above, have hopefully shown, control of the representations of social life is not only a source of power; it is also a likely locus of conflict and struggle (Gal 1989).

In previous chapters I argued that “tradition” provided a new form of entrenchment and possibility for conceptualizing everyday life during times of outright violence. Nationalism and tradition provided frameworks within which life and survival and home and family became sites of hegemonic pressures and limits, while also questioning and contradicting these limits through oppositional articulations. As violence, and in particular rape, was used to undermine family and group cohesion, and to transform domestic spaces of the home from sites of security and “ordinary” practices of the “everyday” into those of everyday violence, men and women became emblematic of the larger political system of nation-state formation. The “naturalization” of gender identities, Lukic has discussed, was dependent on the mobilization of male and female bodies for war (2000). Men were mobilized as soldiers and defenders of national territory; “lost” territories to be regained. Women as well, quite conventionally, became bodies for the reproduction of the nation in all the ways that Anthias and Yuval-Davis have enumerated (1989; McClintock 1996).

In interviews with survivors of sexual violence, Linda Gusia relates that some women were forced to retrieve their bridal attire from their dowry chests and wear this attire while dancing in a circle in a courtyard. Then they were raped (Gusia 2013). Gusia also assumes, based on her experience during the war as a fixer for international media in the field, that the male kin, who were fighting in the hills above, could see what was happening but were unable to come to the women’s rescue. As is rightly

argued, violence against women is not restricted to war; rather, its roots are well established in peaceful times and, thus, the use of sexual violence against women in times of war cannot be understood without understanding pre-existing sociocultural dynamics. The rape of women in their bridal dresses in Kosova corresponds to the dynamics that controlled Albanian women's sexuality as the site of men's own sexuality and power. I have been told on numerous occasions, "Albanian men keep their women to themselves." The moral superiority of Albanian men, predicated upon the chastity of "their women," was the source of frustration for the rapists: *if you think you are better then us see what happens*. The traditional, overly-re-productive Albanian family would have to be destroyed.

Gail Kligman has argued that: "political self-determination in the region [Eastern Europe] has always been linked to the control of women's bodies. That was true for the communists, and it is true for the regimes that have followed them" (Kligman 1993). Although this is not specific to Eastern Europe, a discussion of sexual violence that occurred in Kosovo would in no way be complete without a discussion of nationalism. Only a gendered perspective, one which links sexuality to national identity, can adequately ascertain whose roles are created by masculine state/power politics, or perceive women as agents in shaping and defining the condition of post-war Kosova, rather than as bystanders or symbols of "traditional life."

As Veena Das has argued "sexual and reproductive violence cannot be understood as part of the discourse of family [or the state] alone. It has to be understood as doubly articulated in the domain of kinship and in the domain of politics" (Das 1995: 212). If, after Strathern, as Pamela Reynolds argues, we see kinship as a modeling of ideas about intimate relations and human nature, "then the

character of kin ties that is maintained during periods of stress and rapid change may inform us about these ideas” (Reynolds in Das et al 2000: 141). In Kosova, in a very different way than what Das concludes in regard to India, these domains have been collapsed in a way that does not seem to hold an internal contradiction. The code of honor of the family *is* the code of honor of the nation. But, if this is true, how then does one account for the apparent oppositional politics being formulated in Kosova today? I suggest recognition of “the fact that the ways in which societies compose and invent themselves in the present (the *creativity of practice*) is always ahead of the knowledge produced about them” (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004).

A pertinent step toward this recognition is to identify sites and agents through which the seeming oppositional politics of speech and silence are articulated. The notion of “finding one’s voice,” particularly among those whose identities are premised on notions of difference and Otherness, has been the project of many scholars. As Susan Gal notes, in the multiple approaches to write about women’s “voices,” to hear “women’s words,” to discuss “silence and cultural mutedness...it is not clear that they mean the same thing when they say voice, words, silence and language...” (Gal 1990: 169). I would argue that there are various emergent (new and old) strategies in which women engage to create new definitions of nationalism and “womanhood.” As Gal states, “Silence of women in public life in the West is generally deplored by feminists. It is taken to be a result and a symbol of passivity and powerlessness; those who are denied speech, it is said, cannot influence the course of their lives or of history” (Gal 1995: 171). All accounts regarding rape in Kosova have stressed, extensively, the reluctance of women to speak. The need to keep things hidden and secret has, nonetheless, been met by pressures to make things known.

In the previous chapters, it was possible to argue for women's agency within the home, through the performance and articulation of speech, and through the relations constituted with family and kin. I would suggest that similar sites provide evidence of similar formations in regard to sexual violence. In this respect, it perhaps becomes possible to see how the "silence" of women in Kosova becomes a strategy of resistance, not a symbol of passivity and powerlessness. However, while silence can also be a strategic defense against the powerful, changing definitions of participation in political life now require women to mobilize "their voice" in the "public sphere."<sup>169</sup>

While silence can be seen as a reflection of the patriarchal order, and as the embodiment of political and social oppression, the continual (re)creation and manipulation of the "public" and "private" spheres by women remains a site for further inquiry. Such inquiries, nonetheless, would not be complete without a consideration of the way in which nature has been used as a political category in the region (Gal in Scott et. al 1997: 31). An important conceptual and political intervention requires a "denaturalization of kinship," i.e., an understanding of the ways in which reproduction, biological relatedness, blood relations, and the "unity of substance" etc., are used by various institutions and states as the means to control and define the bodies of their subjects, and to place them in particular domains of (re)production.<sup>170</sup> In Kosova, ideas of "purity of blood," and the "recognizably-distinct" nation connected through blood have been particularly important for claims of unity and authenticity. These claims were disrupted by the sexual violence committed during the war.

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<sup>169</sup> Re-conceptions of public and private in Kosova, and Eastern Europe as a whole, are intrinsically connected to attempts to define and construct "democratic civil societies." Nonetheless, as Peggy Watson argues, "civil society itself *mobilizes* those same differences that subvert its universal ideal" (1997).

<sup>170</sup> Michael Foucault's concept of biopower is of particular relevance here. See Foucault 1978, 1990: 135-145.

War rapes in former Yugoslavia would not have been such effective weapons of torture and terror if not for attempts at essentializing identities at the level of the body and biology, and, equally importantly, without concepts of honor and shame that are attached to bodies in peacetime (Olujic 1998). On the other hand, rape has been effective in breaking up family cohesion and in questioning the masculinity of Albanian men, not only because of the shame experienced by women once their chastity suffers (thus making rape both a physical and moral attack), but also because of the humiliation and dishonor of husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons who were not able to protect the victims.

In these circumstances, women's honor reflects that of men's, which in turn reflects that of the nation (Olujic 1998: 38). Women, thus, conceal their suffering to protect men (and the nation) from public shame. As long as women are able to hide, and their families can successfully censor these women's experiences of sexual violence, men's honor can be preserved. On the other hand, "normal structures of kinship" also fail to "absorb" women in such instances and, thus, have resulted in the breakup of marriages, engagements, and other relationships. At the same time, rape as a "means of ethnic cleansing" is connected to the notion that ethnic groups can be assumed, and that these groups are characterized by "pure bloodlines." Because descent and lineage are traced by the male (blood) line, the purpose of rape, which might seem contradictory to the imagining of a "pure" ethnic group, was to "clean" women of their ethnicity and, thus, take away the ability to reproduce the nation from the men of the ethnic group to which women were assigned.

The result of war, thus, have been an "interest in women...not as citizens but as sexual and reproductive beings," as Das argues, although I would add that the definition of women as citizens is intrinsically connected to their sexuality (Das 1995:

221). One of the primary concerns of the Albanian government-in-exile, as the war went on, and after almost one million people had been expelled from Kosova, was to address the issue of possible victims of sexual violence. Refugee camps in Albania, Macedonia, and elsewhere immediately set up clinics to provide rape kits and abortions (according to interviews with aid workers and volunteers). The argument was that, unless abortion was made possible, these women would lose all honor and all chance to return to “normal life.”<sup>171</sup> Equally important were comments concerning the honor of the male kin, which would also suffer, and explicit depictions of rape as an act that polluted the blood of families and the nation.

Women who suffered sexual abuse during the war seem to have been mostly forgotten in Kosova.<sup>172</sup> Blood-feud reconciliation and the re-making of manhood at the beginning of the 1990s gave *human rights* and relatedness, *through love and respect for each other*, particularly salient power, and reinforced women’s roles as reproducers and carriers of the cultural uniqueness of the nation. During the war, men became fighters for freedom; the majority of Kosovars no longer viewed peaceful resistance as a viable option. At this time, women’s symbolic and cultural-political *value* has to be defended again. The *freedom won* at the wars’ end, and the celebrations of Kosova’s new war heroes, both male and female, as well as the remembrances of victims, did not have a space, or *rights, love or respect* for those women who had been *dishonored*.

Officially, gender inequalities were resolved under Yugoslav state socialism; the state would provide equal employment, education, and participation at all

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<sup>171</sup> See [www.kosovapress.com](http://www.kosovapress.com) for archives of articles during that period. The international press also reported such statements and often reiterated them themselves.

<sup>172</sup> The Center for the Protection of Women and Children offered the most support to survivors in the first years after the war. Since then the center has mainly focused on domestic violence. Currently, Medica in Gjakova is the primary provider of support for war survivors.

institutional levels. Nonetheless, as Renata Salecl has argued, “once patriarchal domination officially ceased to exist it also became officially invisible, which means it also became much more difficult to recognize its effects” (Salecl 1994: 370). In the same way that nationalism, which did not officially exist, but nonetheless remained at work in a concealed way, “patriarchal domination, although officially overcome, remained a surmise of political discourse” (Salecl, 37). Because of Yugoslavia’s hidden patriarchy, “it was not difficult for the post-socialist moral majority to articulate patriarchy in a new way, to present the return to “natural” sexual roles as an attempt to introduce morality in a previously “immoral” social regime, and to reinterpret the moral-majority ideology in a nationalist way” (Salecl, 37).

Tropes of suffering and endurance, which re-emerged as significant strategies for mobilizing political action in Kosova, are particularly salient concepts around which notions of Albanian uniqueness and tradition have been formed. Janet Reineck argues that Albanians cope with marginality by cultivating their identity as an oppressed people, “accentuating an ideology of persecution has been pertinent in attempts to transform inferiority associated with marginality into a sense of superiority associated with uniqueness.” Defense of collective worth on the basis of ethnic purity and moral uprightness has been significant for “the keepers of a tradition,” uncorrupted by the breakdown of gender barriers and the individualism found among their neighbors (Reineck 1993). In her study of gender relations in Kosova’s villages, one of Janet Reineck’s informants noted the following: “We’ve always been too busy struggling against political oppression and poverty to worry about the emancipation of women and other issues of change” (Reineck 1993: 15).<sup>173</sup> The national cause for independence has taken precedence over any attempts to

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<sup>173</sup> Julie Mertus notes the same arguments in her interviews from the early 1990s (1999).

contest this situation, but Reineck fails in her historical contextualization. In a study “among” the Kosova Albanians, typical of studies “among” X, Y or Z people, their traditions and practices appear timeless.

Articulations such as this one are no longer characteristic of how most women express their social belonging or participation in political life in Kosova, nor did all women previously express their beliefs as such. The politicians, intellectuals, and academics who often feel uncomfortable with the strengthened women’s movement in Kosova, as well as recent legislation addressing gender equality and anti-discrimination protection, most frequently fall back on claims that Albanians have historically valued women because they have always been considered “the pillars of the family, house, and nation.” Although notions of female victimhood have been rejected from within the women’s movement, mainly pertaining to cases of prostitution and family violence, critiques of nationalist dis/appropriations of gender, regarding constructions of both womanhood and manhood, still have to emerge. Twelve years after the war in Kosova, the national cause for independence has taken other meanings and forms. The political platform of *Standards Before Status*, introduced through the United Nations Mission in Kosova, and now the EULEX Rule of Law mission of the European Union, is read as a roadmap towards Europe and will inevitably necessitate new forms of governance and relatedness among people as they struggle with economic, political, social, and cultural change.



## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

The aim of this dissertation has been to understand mobilizations of national and gendered ideologies in Kosovo since the beginning of the 1990s. It has been guided by attempts to find and re-surface cultural-political experiences that could remake some current telling of social change in Kosova's history, especially its state building and independence projects. The entry points to these experiences, projects, and histories have been events, sites and people that have both become codified in national histories and collectivized memories, particularly commemorative practices, and those that continue to hold diverging meanings and relevance in the making of national and gendered identities, such as private spaces of homes, public art, and protest. Through focus on intellectuals, soldiers, politicians, activists, and artists, I show how narratives, performances, and built forms are made cultural resources for enacting and constituting national and gendered body politics. Specifically, this dissertation accounts for the ways in which both manhood and womanhood have figured into the cultural formations that aimed to produce national solidarities.

It has not been possible to imagine Kosovar national projects without contemplating the place of men and women in customary law and kinship, collective memories of violence, and the state. The main argument of this dissertation is that national and gendered belongings and histories are made through a persistent reframing of traditions, the spaces in which these traditions appear, the conflicts over the legitimacy of state institutions, and the political practices of diverse socio-cultural

groups. Despite having achieved independence, state, national, and particularly gendered norms remain not only sources of change but also sites around which possible futures are imagined. Although these belongings often appear stable, they are laid over socio-economic divides, particularly rural-urban ones, as well as ethnicized, gendered, and ideological distinctions. Movement and a constant remaking of difference also characterize them, and therefore the nation is an always-ongoing negotiation of history, aspirations, and varied gender relations of power. In my analysis gender serves as a vehicle for a historically minded inquiry and can create room for histories and memories that state-sanctioned remembrance, dominated by narratives of sacrifice, martyrdom and victory, would dismiss.

Instead of seeing these projects as mere reflections of nationalist ideologies, and the resurfacing of tradition, I argue that new cultural values and emerging power relations are continually set by creative and self-empowering motivations. For these reasons, neither state sponsored violence, international military intervention, nor international governance, could produce assumed and desired results. Kosovars objected to the first, and for this reason might have welcomed the intervention, but they remain critical of the marginality the latter has produced. Also, tensions between goals that aimed to create a governing homogeneous national group, both before and after the war, and a post-war citizen-based identity, paradoxically built on ethnic identification, may enable more than they restrict. Imaginings of national homogeneity and cultural particularity create all kinds of pressures for people to belong, but they are just as powerfully challenged. Such challenges appear in formal and informal structures of power, including civic initiatives and state sanctioned inclusion.

I refrain from giving any definitive demarcation to Kosovar Albanian culture, or the practices, norms or values that would make up that culture. Placing focus on the

historical developments of repression in Kosova shows that national and gendered identities were mutually constituted. They were also made through cultural references and drives to speak to sets of histories in the global realignments of the past three decades, such as the creation of and challenges to socialism, state building, European integration, etc. Therefore I investigate the *cultural work* that goes into making gender and nation relevant categories of a dynamic everyday life, which are equally relevant to larger social processes. Part of this is conducted by foregrounding the expert knowledge—historical, ethnological, artistic, and political—that Kosovars created about themselves as a response to the political apparatus they believed had kept them back. On the other hand, comparison not only to other places in the region, with which Kosova shares terms of history and social change, but with contexts of segregation and apartheid, and of socialism and nation-making in post-colonial societies, better explains how power was encountered and questioned.

A number of central questions have guided my research, also formed by the contexts in which they were asked. I began my research soon after the end of the 1999 war in Kosova. The war had resulted in an estimated 12,000 deaths, some 450 destroyed villages, large parts of towns burned down, and some 50,000 destroyed or uninhabitable houses. The number of victims and survivors of systematic sexual violence is still being debated. Most research at the time focused on understanding the effects of this war. Under the adage of a post-conflict society, research at the time was focused on inter-ethnic relations of post-war Kosova and the Balkans. However, this research failed to address Kosova's and the region's recent socialist past. On the other hand, historians of socialist-Yugoslavia were looking at structural and policy effects of its disintegration but, with some exceptions, left aside the social and cultural relations these had engendered.

My first set of questions meant to generate a response to what appeared as dramatic changes in gender roles and the uncertainties of post-war Kosova. I was interested in the ways in which dominant forms of manhood and womanhood appeared and created references and experiences that are commonly and nationally shared. In 1999 Kosova had become a protectorate under United Nations administration and since its declaration of independence in 2008 has been overseen by European Union bodies. Having established provisional institutions of self-governance, the Kosovar government was the ground on which a whole set of policies and resolutions was tested. These included a new gender equality law that required 30% of members of parliament to be women. Also, there was mass migration from villages to cities, affecting family composition and structures. The majority of casualties of the war were men and the category of “women headed household” was being debated. Gender equality became a mechanism through which to build democracy, peace and inclusion, but no real shifts in power were appearing to take place.

However, I came to understand that these changes, and experiences of the war that preceded them, were being remembered and cast through a retelling of a recent past. New distributions of political power and social capital associated with military mobilization, both Kosovar and international, challenged previously held renderings of Kosovar trajectories to nationhood, especially those of the 1990s. Therefore I have argued that the only way to understand these new circumstances was not to give explanation of how an existing culture affected emerging politics, or vice-versa, rather to examine transformations in relations of power.

A new push towards achieving social and political equality of women also assumed its absence in the past. When it was recognized, it served the new state-makers either (1) to assert the need to preserve a moral past of national womanhood (a tradition

of a sacrificial political motherhood), or (2) to make claims on the modernization of traditional values by disregarded socialist-emancipation projects. At the same time, these questions bypassed and assumed the roles of men. Therefore I asked: how do people make their gender and national belonging known to others and to themselves? I located answers to these questions in the meanings and practices of peoples' relatedness to one another, in their memories, their bodies, and in the varied cultural forms through which their acts were articulated. These included participation in protests, imprisonment, grass-roots activist work, participation in war, in peace building initiatives, in public art, and in academic production.

I show that gender is a performative and intersecting practice, which significantly draws from assumptions about naturalized character of bodies and social relations, particularly when national belonging is surfaced. Whether the latter is articulated as the historical goal of a naturalized collectivity, and made of the particular contribution of gendered bodies, such as reproduction, or, whether national belonging is understood as the projection of political agency that aims to reverse structures of power, it almost always makes an incursion into the sphere of kinship. Therefore, when violence was used to undermine group cohesions of various kinds, the family was targeted, and men and women became emblematic of the larger political system of nation-state formation. New gender regimes were remade through attempts to re-create cohesion in such contexts. Through participation and inclusion in public and private spaces, performing attributes of kin obligations and roles, and taking on new practices attributed to resistance, women and men enacted new identities. While women could enter the public spaces of male political arrangements, men could also assert honor - the dominant marker of their identity - through options less available to them, such as forgiveness and reconciliation, as well as vulnerability.

One of the recurring arguments in this dissertation is that men are constantly placed under pressure to perform acceptable forms of masculinity, just as women are required to do their part. But, what those forms are, what they entail, and even yet require, are expressions of unstable and shifting understandings of gendered subjects, their capacities to live, work, and create, and their potential to serve as cultural and spiritual pillars of groups. Relations of power, based on different roles assigned to men and women, enabled a terrain for creating a story of national liberation as one of universal equality. This mainly required the insertion of women into already existing narratives and structures, but which they ultimately transformed.

Men, also, cannot be reduced to any one single practice of masculinity. I therefore locate masculinity in varieties of gender relations, both spatially and temporally contingent. Instead of focusing only on the dominant and hegemonic, I point to the fault lines between what men do, how they do it, how they express control and vulnerability, in an attempt to insert historical action in Kosovar understandings of manhood. In Kosova, national manhood became that space where the apparent impossibility of alternative action was turned into a possibility for empowerment. I argue that men acquire, act on, and follow the sensibilities and conflicts that emerge between socially dominant and shifting cultural inscriptions of manhood. Many of these sensibilities emerge out of a dialectic relation between vulnerabilities and strengths, as well as the structural hierarchies of gendered and national identities.

While war is a destructive force, social realignments that follow can generate incredibly productive potentials. Practices of war remembrance, mainly by way of memorialization, are at the center of building state institutions. These practices serve to transmit, tell, and determine the language of remembering, and condition social

concepts of masculinity. Although they do not go unchallenged, the progenitors of national culture become men and their deeds.

I have argued for an analysis that sees state and nation making projects as the intersection of historical and memory work, of gendered ideologies and practice, of resistance and control. Below I restate the main arguments of each chapter and draw the connections between these intersecting relations.

Chapter One serves to develop a theoretical frame for the analysis of the ethnographic fieldwork. I provide a discussion of the historical contexts through which I build a number of theoretical claims about the relations between gender, memory, and nation. Here I explain what has become the general understanding of Kosova's history in socialist Yugoslavia, and how experiences of that time shaped the political aspirations, and cultural identifications, of groups that articulated projects for a future independent state of Kosovo. I argue that access to education, rural-urban migration, and contests for control of the state apparatus, formed the potential and expectations of these groups. Contests among these groups, as well as emerging ones, are found throughout this dissertation. Therefore, nation and state building in Kosova is not defined only through ethnic conflict, namely between Serbs and Albanians, or between national and international governance of sovereignty. It is largely defined through competing claims to resistance, cultural characterizations of the nation, and the moral claims to legitimacy for defining national tradition. I also conduct a review of the literature on which I base definitions of the categories I employ. Finally, I define the relevance particular events come to hold, not for the telling of history, but in giving shape, making visible, and usurping space, by and for those narratives and experiences that become erased.

My approach has therefore been guided by three interconnected goals: (1) to show the relation between collective and individual memory; (2) to account for the creation of alternative public spaces for articulating and recounting experience silenced by officially sanctioned narratives; and (3) to account for the re-inscription of initial alternatives into official/dominant narratives. This approach did not allow for a chronological account of events, because neither were they thus told or remembered, nor made available for telling and remembering.

In Chapter Two I make the argument that historical turning points are negotiated through diverse social experiences and focus on the “public history” generated around the international military intervention in Kosova. Specifically, I uncover the publicly shared history of Kosova’s recent past, of the resistance to and fears of ethnic cleansing, and show how these issues shaped judgments on intervention. I argue that, as people strive to give meaning to such moments, within global emergences of various kinds, they take part in defining their strategies for action. The international military intervention to end the war was defined as a humanitarian one, but it also encountered competing international definitions of state sovereignty and encountered diverse localized histories of states and understandings of justice. Therefore, the international military and political mobilization, as well as requests for intervention that came from *within* Kosova—that is, by Kosovar Albanians—should be seen as mutually constituted systems of values and morals, and the systems of justice to which they made their appeal. Here neither “international law” nor intervention stand as universal principles of justice. Kosova, also, is not place outside of a global history of violence. In order to analyze the relationships between them, I contextualize the discussion around two key social formations: the 1990s civil-disobedience movement in Kosova, and the armed response of the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA).



Endurance had become the real agent of survival during the 1990s, but was replaced by a move to military action at the end of that decade. I argue Kosovars found justice and moral responsibility embedded in both the KLA and the NATO intervention for a number of reasons. Legitimizing new kinds of social and political confrontations with the state on the part of the KLA was inspired by cultural and historical understandings of justice, Kosova's marginality in former Yugoslavia, and by the constant violence strategically exercised by that state. Albanians in Kosova had also created constant social and cultural confrontations. Formed through a politics of culture that recreated traditions for social solidarity, Kosovars created opportunities to ultimately practice and define survival.

The tension that is produced by the necessity of understanding and claiming agency in the social, political, and cultural realities of pre-war Kosova, also serves to understand post-war memorialization, what I call a public history. The latter, I argue, creates conflicting ideas and practices concerning the national and gendered character of resistance, survival and action.

Having based its political legitimacy on a moral superiority over its enemy, values assigned to certain gendered cultural practices became particularly salient in marking national particularity. Memorialization of the war, and its preceding resistance, would become the means through which a formerly marginalized, and discriminated, socio-political minority of Kosovars, would claim this legitimacy. However, they would have to compete with a new political power inscribed by international governance. On the other hand, both Kosovar and international institutions have received critique by women's groups and leaders, on their exclusion from postwar negotiations and the neglect of their war and pre-war experiences and contributions. However, dominant practices have taken on meanings of dignity and agency that

become ascribed to men, first as leaders of a peaceful resistance and latter as freedom fighters. While women had been part and often lead these movements, post-war memory and state building has pushed them to pre-war “traditional roles,” which I show never fully existed as imagined in the locally and internationally imagined histories.

In order to understand how renderings and enactments of Albanian national and cultural traditions played a role in shaping post-war state building I turn to an earlier moment. In Chapter Three I attempt to unearth the social, cultural and political mobilization that went into organizing the large-scale social movement to reconcile blood feuds in Kosova. I argue that cultural practices of the 1990s sustained an emerging resistance to violence and ethnic segregation, which involved constant renegotiations between modernity and tradition. In particular, the mobilization of the *kanun* (as tradition and customary law) to achieve blood-feud reconciliation provided a new political legitimacy to the Albanian independence movement in Kosova at the beginning of the 1990s.

Understanding the personal histories of those that initiated the movement became a search into the kinds of subjectivities that had been formed by institutionalized state practices that were both violent and emancipatory. I show how a group of students, whom the socialist state had previously imprisoned for “anti-revolutionary activity,” laid the group work for this movement. They sought to transform the ways in which power and honor had been maintained in traditional practice of customary law, and offered an alternative claim to authority. In addition to the experiences with violent and discriminatory state institutions, the movement was deeply engendered by cultural (artistic) performances, defining spaces for enacting memory and social belonging to the family, and inserting agency into the embodiment of national identity.

I see the movement to reconcile blood feuds, and perhaps social movements in general, also as examples of a “deep emotional need” that enables groups and individuals to confront power. Rather than just a bureaucratic response, the evocations of the *kanun* as tradition became politicized once national belonging became threatened. Not only a remnant of pre-industrial society, but very much re-created in response to modernization and industrialization, the *kanun* is premised upon codes of honor as formalizing principles. When used for reconciliation it created relations between codes of honor in the sphere of kinship and national codes of honor. It thus enabled forms of belonging and relatedness between family and nation, which forged cohesion that became detrimental for setting up a parallel Kosovar state during the 1990s.

Animated by an enthusiastic creation of space for the enactment of *public rituals*, reconciliation was constitutive of the meanings and connections between notions of temporality—leaving behind past violence and moving towards a future peace among kin—and spatial belonging, where not only homes but also the open spaces of fields and streets become places for claiming politics and cultural presence. Kosovar Albanians’ national belonging became practiced and imagined through the social and biological reproduction of blood, as an imaginary and real substance of families and the nation. New historical depictions of national culture also emerged, tying together personal and collective memories by means of participation in events, and creating alternative public spaces for articulating and recounting experiences silenced by officially sanctioned narratives.

Having reimagined traditional customs and eliminated this type of violence within the national group, state-like structures and institutions emerged that carried the legitimacy of peaceful resistance, group cohesion and solidarity. These were all put in

service of a 1990s independence project by the intellectual, academic and political elites of the times. In particular, Serbian nationalist discourse and public imagery had constructed an idea of a backward Albanian culture, a violent masculinity, and thus dominated femininity. Therefore, a politics of culture emerged in Kosova, which sought not only to dispel such imaginings, but foremost show that Albanian cultural traditions could animate emancipatory politics.

The roles and representations of women and men that organized and participated in these events were seen as inseparable from narrative and self that was grounded in the experiential knowledge of marginalization in private and public spaces. National unity, as the goal of this movement, relied upon expanding the meanings and practices of forging local kin through customary codes of honor to include reconciliation, honorable manhood, mediation and memory as its basis. The movement foregrounded men's identities that were built on performances and ethics of forgiveness, despite the dominant practice of revenge that had characterized honor in blood-feuds. Women's involvement was highly visible but their enactments of political courage, honor, and place in cultural preservation, were inscribed into a public/private divide characteristic for nation-building and post-socialist political and social realignments.

The significance and reference to this movement had all but disappeared in the aftermath of war. During reconciliation people had forgiven and settled blood-feuds because such was required of and volunteered by them, in order to secure a national future and a democratic modern state. Their honor was predicated on forgiveness and accord with national solidarity. While increased vulnerability of families, and especially men, experienced during that time gave moral weight to peaceful resistance, the structural control—both material and symbolic—to which Kosovar Albanians had

become accustomed was challenged by a project that drew on memories of active agency attributed to fighting back. In Chapter Four, I turn to the competing discourse that produced a new kind of national imagery, which I argue is defined by a national manhood, characterized by interplay between the outpouring and disciplining of practices it signifies.

By focusing on assertions that “gender equality” has been gained through post-intervention bylaws, I argue that the Kosovar state is exemplified by a citizenship constituted through civic participation in the spaces and practices between a political public (of assumed male citizenry) and a private public (of women) in their segregated roles in nationalist reproduction. The mutual constitution of womanhood and manhood that have figured in and shaped notions of civic participation at the end of the war in Kosova have made new disagreements arise between projects for gender equality and new patriarchy in post-war state building.

In this chapter I provide the bulk of my theoretical framework through which I inquire into the intersection of masculinity, femininity and nation. I focus on the stories of martyrdom and heroism that now traverse public and specialized historical accounts, and juxtapose them to the everyday practices of women and men who are either left outside of this paradigm or significantly engage in political action to have it questioned. I argue that a dominant and socially practiced concept of masculinity in state-building serves as a vehicle to transmit, tell, and determine the language of remembering. While, for example, women have been able to secure important positions of power in state institutions through international gender-mainstreaming mechanisms and positive discrimination policies, this rarely leads to public and official recognitions of women’s contribution to the longer history of national and state building projects I have discussed in this dissertation.

I specifically point to the practices and institutions—commemorations, oaths, armies, government agencies, and civil society organizations—that re-structure hierarchies of gendered and national identities. Here, more than in other parts of this dissertation, I locate my own experiences and difficulties in coming to terms with anthropological literature that treats violence, a commitment to social justice, recognition of civilian death (and not only military heroism), and the effects of discourses that aim to normalize structures of power. As an answer, my analysis centers on understanding how shifts in political systems empower and disempower constructs of political agency based on gender for men and women.

The gendered dimensions of commemoration and martyrdom established through state sanctioned and community-supported initiatives, described in this chapter, are compared to contemporary artistic practice in the final chapter. While commemorative narratives and structures serve to create pride and heroic resistance, as opposed to victimization, they delineate boundaries of exclusion that are gendered and political, and employ symbolism, that lead to new socio-economic and political group identifications. Academic feminists, activists and artists, join to critique the reintroduction of women through their vulnerabilities—as victims of political violence, or as peacemakers and nurturers. It is through that essentialist lens that women are considered suited for work, thereby ensuring successful peacekeeping/peace-building. However, changing definitions of participation in political life now draw more women to mobilize in negotiations over public and private spaces.

I then compare these governmental capitalizations of commemorations with artistic practices, to analyze the politics of aesthetic representations surrounding manifestations of identity and power in public space. Conducted as ethnography of contemporary art and new visual repertoires in public space, I highlight public

performances, public marketing campaigns, and the symbolic architecture of state building, protests, and contemporary art works and public art interventions. The aim here is to identify particular regimes of representation, the discursive practices, and the visual repertoire of representations, which transform the meanings of national, political, and gendered belongings to fit or critique the new contexts.

I argue that the formation in 2008 of an independent Kosovar state has become incorporated into “aesthetics of power” through public art forms, whereby power is mainly characterized by conflicts over defining political spaces. I locate Kosova’s state building in the conflicts. On the other hand, in order to create alternative political and cultural options, contemporary art contributes to the reemergence of negotiations between meanings of tradition and modernity. The formations that had most characterized the initial projects of 1990s Kosova, are again the ground on which its future is imagined. They are certainly not the same ones, but transformations in gender relations, in kinship, state institutions, and national ideologies, are made by new accounts and claims to the past.

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