'No Negotiations; Decolonization!'

A Discursive Mapping of Anticolonial Critique in Albanian Movements for Self Determination in Kosovo

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ABSTRACT

This research examines how intellectuals and political activists have used anticolonial discourse to critique the actions of the Serbian state and of international intervention in Kosovo. In order to investigate the historical processes that have instigated the production of this discourse, this study takes an intellectual history approach to incorporate components of social movement theory and narrative studies to answer this central research question: *Why has anticolonial discourse been a mobilizing factor for the Vetëvendosje movement?* Data from six qualitative interviews contributes to my argument that such a discourse has been a mobilizing factor of the Kosovar movement for self-determination because: (i) Vetëvendosje engages in a two-part anticolonial critique—the first, against the Yugoslav and Serbian states, the second, against the international protectorate—which narrates a tradition of Albanian resistance against hegemony. (ii) Vetëvendosje uses anticolonial discourse strategically in its claims-makings. (iii) Vetëvendosje is an intellectual movement that draws upon a wide body of political philosophy to educate and mobilize its base, and to advocate for praxis of anticolonial theory. (iv) Anticolonial discourse is an oppositional discourse. Vetëvendosje names a discourse of neoliberal intervention and peace-building missions, and then provides its own alternative lens of analysis.

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Introduction

Much of the research on the Albanian movement for self determination and statehood in Kosovo focuses on Kosovo's position as a disputed territory, debates on multiculturalism and the state, and studies of social prejudices and minority protections. But a fascinating detail, overall, tends to be mentioned in passing rather than put into focus. There is a gap in the literature on discursive practices within Kosovar political and intellectual circles that call for liberation through a process of *decolonization.*

In 1994, at the height of the Milošević regime, sociologist Gani Bobi wrote a book titled *Konteksti i Vetkulturës* (*The Context of Self-Culture*) in which he used Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* to call for Albanians in Kosovo to recognize their positions as colonized subjects in need of a collective liberation movement. Today, voices from academia continue to critique the actions of Serbian state and/or international bodies in Kosovo and frame the national movement in Kosovo as an anticolonial and neocolonial struggle and the historic socio-political position of Albanians in Yugoslavia and in Europe as an uniquely othered group. The multifaceted social movement turned political party Lëvizja Vetëvendosje! (referred to hereafter simply as Vetëvendosje) places anticolonial discourse at the center of its political platform. Often called leftist, idealistic, and nationalist, Vetëvendosje is most known for its support for potential unification with Albania, its scathing critiques of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and its opposition to the Brussels Negotiations. Yet there is less focus in the literature on the anti-colonial discourse woven throughout many of their political statements and party agendas.

Such a study of the attractiveness and relevancy of anticolonial discourse to the socio-political visions of those engaged in current social movements will offer a new and relatively underrepresented lens to studies of colonialism and nationalism. Some comparative political thought has grappled with relating processes of disintegration of communist Europe to decolonization in the global south. Can postcolonial theory be applied to certain post-socialist spaces, or does this constitute superficial and tendentious appropriation? Literature on such discursive borrowings focuses on the pitfalls, legitimacies, and problematics of the comparisons. I find these normative arguments incredibly interesting, but I am more interested in the historical processes that have instigated the production and saliency of these narratives; I am interested primarily in piecing together a minor intellectual history of the political and academic actors that have engaged in the discourse. In order to investigate the historical processes that have instigated the production of these narratives, this study takes an intellectual history approach to incorporate components of social movement theory and narrative studies to answer this central research question: *Why has anticolonial discourse been a mobilizing factor for the Vetëvendosje movement?*

I provide analyses from six semi-structured qualitative interviews with Vetëvendosje activists and commentators, along with a literature review of post-colonial, social movement, and narrative-construction theories in order to support and describe my findings. Chapter I presents the normative debates on applying post-colonial theory to post-socialist studies and spaces, along with subchapters on literature that situates Yugoslavia and Kosovo within post-colonial studies. Chapter II is an overview of my methodological framework and methodologies, including introductions of my interviewees and a note on my positionality. Chapter III presents an intellectual history of anticolonial discourse in Kosovo from the Second Yugoslavia, to the Kosovo war, to the international protectorate and independence. My conclusions reiterate my main argument, which is that anticolonial discourse has been a

mobilizing factor of the Kosovar movement for self-determination because: (i) Vetëvendosje engages in a two-part anticolonial critique—the first, against the Yugoslav and Serbian states, the second, against the international protectorate—which narrates a tradition of Albanian resistance against hegemony. (ii) Vetëvendosje uses anticolonial discourse strategically and tendentiously in its claims-makings. (iii) Vetëvendosje is an intellectual movement that draws upon a wide body of political philosophy to educate and mobilize its base, and to advocate for praxis of anticolonial theory. (iv) Anticolonial discourse is an oppositional discourse. Vetëvendosje names a discourse of neoliberal intervention and peace-building missions, and then provides an alternative lens of analysis.

Chapter I: The normative debates

Perhaps the first undertaking in this study of the production and consumption of anti-colonial discourse in Kosovar self determination movements is to mention that post-colonialism studies is burdened with much conceptual perplexity and debate around nomenclature and classifications, and confusion around the ways in which field's conceptualizes race, ethnicity, and nation. What is and was "colonial," and what does the *post*-colonial space include? Stephen Slemon agrees that there is disciplinary anxiety and a lack of consensus around definitions and terms, which national groups and geographical frameworks deserve inclusion, a tendency for post-colonial studies to mirror essentialisms and binaries within Western thought (i.e. metropolis-colony, self-other, centre-periphery) even while attempting to deconstruct them, and that too many concepts within political and critical theory that are "being run together under the name of post-colonial."[1] I'll summarize some of the literature in order to give a short overview of present the normative debates, and

[1] Stephen Slemon, "Post Colonial Critical Theories," In *Postcolonial Discourse: An Anthology* edited by Gregory Castle (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 104.

also because the actors in Vetëvendosje movement are reading, writing, and engaging in this literature as well.

I.I: Postcolonial analyses relating to post-socialist Southeast Europe (SEE)

Scholars who are debating the usefulness and legitimacy of analytical borrowing between post-colonialism studies and post-socialism studies raise questions on the political and conceptual problematics and possibilies of a blending of the two fields. Overall, scholars who position themselves within post-socialism studies tend to argue for an inclusion, either complete or partial, of post-socialist spaces within the post-colonial paradigm (Liviu Andreescu, Sharad Chari, Katherine Verdery, Henry F. Carey, Rafal Raciborski, and Jill Owczarzak, to name a prominent few). Piotr Piotrowski argues that post-colonialism studies produced an oversimplified and congregated notion of 'Europe.' To refer to the whole of Europe as a colonizing entity, Piotrowski says, constitutes a form of geographic reductionism and a lack of investigation into the 'European peripheries' such as Ireland, Poland, Greece and Moldova. Piotroski is not arguing, like many of the other scholars, that the historical experiences of these places would benefit from a reading informed by post-colonial studies; he sees them as actually deserving to be understood within the traditional colonial locus. He says, Europe "was both the colonizer, and colonized, imperial and occupied, dominating and subordinated."[2]

Others take a more critical approach to categorizing European experiences of imperialism, inter-European systems of oppression and exploitation, and prejudice constructions within the same categories of analyses used to study European hegemony in the global south. Ania Loomba says that almost any historical encounter situated within the

[2] Piotr Piotrowski, "East European Art Peripheries Facing Post-Colonial Theory," *Nonsite* 12, 12 August 2014, *Nonsite.org*.

context of conquest and oppression, such as Ottoman rule, the Roman Empire, and the Crusades, gets called "colonial" in critical theory, and this is problematic because it is important for current anti-colonial scholarship to reckon with its modern European particularities, for this system "ushered in new and different kinds of colonial practices which altered the whole globe in a way that other colonists did not."[3] Similar criticisms may even be revealed in the language used to describe the discursive and analytical relationship between the fields. At a 2016 conference at Princeton University titled "Exploring the Postcolonies of Communism," Dirk Uffelmann presented a paper titled "Varieties of Nationalism in Polish and Russian *Appropriations* of Postcolonial Theory"; Diana T. Kudaibergenova presented "Unidentified Diffusion: The *Use and Abuse* of Postcolonial Discourse in Post-Independent Kazakhstan," Saygun Gökariksel presented "Misadventures of Transitional Justice: Rightwing Lustration in 'Postcolonial' Poland"; and Zsuzsa Gille, "Postcoloniality in 3D: The East-European New Right Wing's Cognitive Map" (all emphases my own). Does the post-socialism studies utilization of major themes within post-colonial theory constitute an act of superficial borrowing? Andreescu argues that this question depends on how post-colonial theory is framed—as a "context bound inquiry" that may be tightly bound to a specific location or group, or as a set of "general epistemological insights" able to be applied globally.[4]

Chari and Verdery question the centrality of theories on racist ideology and othering to post-socialism studies; they state that one of post-colonialism studies' most important aspects has been its contribution to the analysis of othering, and how constructions of the 'self' and 'other' have gone hand in hand with power and oppression. Post-socialism studies

[3] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism,* (Routledge: London, 2000), 21.
[4] Andreescu, Liviu. "Are We All Postcolonialists Now? Postcolonialism and Postcommunism in Central and Eastern Europe." *In Postcolonialism / Postcommunism: Intersections and Overlaps*, edited by Monica Bottez, Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru and Bogdan Stefanescu (Bucuresti: Editura Universitatii din Bucuresti, 2011), 60-62.

is also particularly interested in dissecting systems of state sanctioned violence, bio-politics, and constructions of "internal enemies," as socialist states created internal enemies in order to promote fears and to achieve political goals. The question is then on the centrality of racism and whether the construction of a Slavic identity, for example, can be questioned using the analytical tools used to study racism—tools that were partially established by post-colonial studies. Chari and Verdery say that Cold War binaries of East and West have continued to affect critical studies by inhibiting the creation of a deep connection between post-colonial and post-socialist studies. They reference Pletsch (1981) to argue that cold war divisions of intellectual labor continue to permeate academia. Pletsch said that the world is conceptually divided amongst two axes—communist/free and traditional/modern. Mainstream academia pushed the assumption that the second world could join the first if it could throw off the yoke of "ideological constraints," and the third world could join the first if it could transform its "traditional culture."[5] An infusion of the two fields, Chari and Verdery argue, rejects these arbitrary and discriminatory divisions of "intellectual labor."[6]

Post/colonial Analyses: Yugoslav Specific

Maria Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans* as well as Obrad Savić and Dušan I. Bjelić's *Balkan as a Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation* both present the Balkans through the paradigm of Said's *Orientalism.* Todorova understands the Balkans as a historical socio-cultural imagined space whose construction is primarily impacted by Ottoman imperial legacies and "Europeanization" projects.[7] Dunja Njaradi agrees with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, one of the scholars who advocates for a deeper relationship between the fields, in that

[5] Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, "Thinking Between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography After the Cold War," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51.1 (2009) 6-34, *JSTOR,* 18.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Balkan Studies scholars can use the theoretical frameworks of post-colonial scholars such as himself, Said, and Bhabha, to create a model for analytical borrowing and to "break postcolonialism into pluralizad (Eur)Asias." She also argues that the Balkans Studies field has produced arguments against seeing the region as a "Western imposed hegemonic construct."[8] Analyzing the Western gaze upon the Balkans is useful for studies of how everyday people were stereotyped during the media and academic coverage of the fall of Yugoslavia. Authors who focus only on this aspect ignore the ways in which Balkan self-imaginings have occurred outside of the Western gaze and alongside a shared Ottoman past.[9]

In their position to the question of the former Yugoslavia's space in the post-colonial paradigm, Henry F. Carey and Rafal Raciborski note Gita Itonwana Welch's assertion that a colonial system inherently includes constructions of Western-Native binaries and conceptions of primitivism and inferiority. They also employ Osterhammel's definition of colonialism, which focuses on the territorial aspect of *colonization* and the center-periphery sociopolitical organization of a *colonial system*. Integral to both definitions, Carey and Raciborski argue, is a foreign power's control of a territory. These authors say that Albania, the former Yugoslavia, and post-Soviet states can all be analyzed within the colonialism and post-colonial studies framework because regardless of the split between Tito and Stalin and the elimination of Soviet presence from the Balkans, "the communist system was indirectly exported by the Soviets." [10] They say that analyzing post-communist democratization processes and human rights violations within a post-colonial paradigm can be a useful framework for not only the post-Soviet states but also the former Yugoslavia.

[8] Dunja Njaradi, "The Balkan Studies: History, Post-Colonialism and Critical Regionalism," *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe,* 20.2-3 (2012): 185-201.
[9] Ibid., 198.
[10]Henry F. Carey and Rafal Raciborski, "Postcolonialism: A Valid Paradigm for the Former Sovietized States and Yugoslavia?" *East European Politics and Societies* 18.2 (2004): 191-235.

I.II: Postcolonialism studies as related to Kosovo

I will now summarize some of the literature that applies post-colonial studies to the Kosovar context in order to present a short overview of how Kosovo has contributed to the normative debates and to further emphasize the relationship between the literature and the social movement. One of the most recent relevant works is Albert Doja's forthcoming essay "Post-imperial Truth Claims and Postcolonial Knowledge Production in the Post-Communist Balkans." This essay, presented at the above mentioned conference *Imperial Reverb,* argues that discourses of the post-conflict international intervention "resonated with colonial and postcolonial discourses," particularly regarding the international community's attempts to "constitute and stabilize the identity of the West" and its discourses of accession of "Supracolonial" Europe's periphery through a process of Western supervision.[11] Such discourses, Doja argues, have particularly permeated public life in Albania and Kosovo.

After our interview, Albin Kurti, one of the interviewees for this project, e-mailed to ask if I had come across the work of Vjollca Krasniqi. Krasniqi, professor of sociology at the University of Prishtina, is one of the most prominent scholars studying the international protectorate and structures thereafter with a neocolonial critique. She says that her "reading of Kosova is informed by what Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (1997) call 'scattered hegemonies', such as global economic structures, patriarchal nationalisms, 'authentic' forms of tradition, local structures of domination, and legal-juridical oppression on multiple levels.'"[12] Her article "Imagery, Gender and Power: the Politics of Representation in Post-

[11] Albert Doja, "Postcolonial Balkans," Filmed [14 May 2016], University of Princeton. Youtube Video, 26:43 Minutes, Published [15 May 2016].
[12] Vjollca Krasniqi, "Neo-Colonial Regimes, Gender Politics and State-Building in Kosova," PDF, Web, pp. 1-13. Originally written for: Konrad Clewing and Vedran Džihić (Ed.), *The new Kosovo: Statehood, Democracy and Europe. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag*. Series: Südosteuropäischen Arbeiten (2013), 2.

war Kosova" examines UNMIK propaganda posters regarding the 'status before standards' policy[13] with a postcolonial studies and women's studies lens. (See Appendix, III).

The photo of the boy with his mother says 'Children are our future… Standards.' Such representations of gender and family, Krasniqi argues, evoke Western literature's presentation as the 'native' woman symbolizing as nature and the nation, and the boy symbolizing the nation-state; furthermore, "the image of boyhood fosters colonial notions of 'not being ready' for self-government."[14]

Agon Hamza, a political philosopher who collaborates with and studies the work of Slavoj Žižek, also uses examples of propaganda from the protectorate in his work to demonstrate the prejudiced and degrading messages of the 'international community' towards the Balkans. He refers to a billboard administered by Kosovo Force (KFOR) that showed a cat and a dog hugging. In Serbian and in Albanian language, it said: 'If they can do it, so can you.'[15] He, like many others engaged in an anti-colonial critique of Kosovo, position the first layer of colonial power as the Serbian state, and the second as the neoliberal institutions in Kosovo. Hamza's work argues that Serbia is engaging in neo-imperial practices through its "hegemonic aspirations… especially in the North of Kosovo."[16] He also engages in the post-colonial studies practice of studying how regimes operate through critical discourse analyses of literature produced by colonialists. Western academics—which contribute to legitimizing neocolonial interventions and power structures in Kosovo—obsess over deconstructing the myths of the former Yugoslavia, but "'demystify' one myth by creating another one."[17] He

[13] Status before standards refers to UNMIK's roadmaps for Kosovo to complete (regarding issues such as rule of law, minority rights, et cetera) before a final status negotiation.
[14] Krasniqi, Vjollca. "Imagery, Gender and Power: The Politics of Representation in Post-war Kosova." Feminist Review 86 (2007), 86.
[15] Agon Hamza, "Beyond Independence," *From From Myth to Symptom: The Case of Kosovo* by Agon Hamza and Slavoj Zizek (Prishtina: Kolektivi Materializmi Dialektik, 2013), 89.
[16] Ibid.,74.
[17] Ibid., 78.

argues that this work tends to create a cycle, in which "many benevolent 'pro-Kosovo' academics find themselves," of 'racist' depictions of the Balkans.[18]

Besnik Pula, a scholar on comparative political economies who has several essays published on Vetëvendosje's website, studies the impacts of the collapse of socialism and globalization on international principals and norms around state sovereignty. He argues that supranational, EU institutions struggle to attain and maintain authority above territorial sovereign laws particularly regarding the economic sphere, labor, and the flow of capital. This has actually created a re-visioning of the relationship between periphery-core, and Kosovo is a prime example of Europe's new construction of a local periphery both socially and economically. He draws on analyses of the relationship between colonialism and European legal discourse (though notes that its not a direct repeat of old forms of colonial imperialism) to describe a new form of sovereignty characterized by the dissolution of the nexus between law and territory. He presents a reading of the EU's institutional structure in Kosovo is a prime example of the reconfiguration of sovereignty. He states,

> in contrast with the classic nationalisms of the nineteenth century, or even the nationalism of the decolonization era, was that in the Yugoslav conflicts of the 1990s nationalism was not simply a call to the revival of a "repressed" cultural identity which a group or community are claimed to have possessed in the past (an act which, under specific circumstances, could be an emancipatory one, such as in many anti-colonial struggles), but a constitutionally – i.e., already state-defined – nationalism.[19]

Pula and Hamza were suggested readings given to me by Nita Luci after I attended one of her lectures and asked for further literature on neocolonial analyses and anticolonial critique in Kosovo. Luci uses post-colonial studies and gender studies lenses to understand post-Independent Kosovo. She states that her questions come directly from calls to analyze contemporary problems in Kosovo that have arisen from globalization and their relevance to

[18] Ibid., 79.
[19] Besnik Pula, "Iterations of Sovereignty: Kosovo and the New Mode of Peripheralization," *Napon.org* n.d., 1-10.

post-colonial studies. Although many of the experiences of the Yugoslav republics under socialism were shared, she states that Kosovo was the only independence movement positioned itself as a quest for de-colonization. Her primary focus is on the ways in which the Kosovo war shaped imaginings of gender and national inclusions and exclusions, particularly by using postcolonial studies to study the ways in which colonial regimes utilized and transformed constructions of masculinity and womanhood.

This short overview of post-colonial studies in Kosovo reveals that the decolonization era in the global south has impacted current national movements and post-socialist analysis in Europe. Partha Chatterjee says that scholars of nationalism have agreed that nationalism in the colonial world "was a Western import," yet he emphasizes that these national movements were not built simply on the consumption of Western ideology—the global south has not been a passive consumer of "modernity," but it has shifted the politics of nationalism and the development of national consciousness in ways that have been distinct from the West. [20] If we can agree that decolonization in the global south has not only been impacted by Western models of nation-state building, but has also impacted current discourses of liberation within Europe, then the next task is to ask: how then do we study these interactions?

Chapter II: Methods and methodology

My methodology is centered on presenting a set of qualitative semi-structured interviews using the key informant interview method, a framework borrowed from social movement studies that encompasses aspects of oral history and expert history interviewing methods. I have chosen to study the diffusion of anti-colonialism in Kosovo through the intellectual history methodology because I believe it provides the best toolkit for presenting multiple first-hand points of view, multiple historical factors, and multiple theoretical

[20]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 4.

devices: my intellectual history project, which will employ the semi-structured qualitative interview model, will hopefully provide new explanatory insights into the circulation of discursive framing across space and time.

Social movement research is dominated by mixed methods.[21] Most research studying social movements and the proliferation of political ideas and agendas has done so through querying political opportunity structures and issue framing, and most of this research is problem oriented rather than method oriented.[22] Even the theoretical approaches used to study social movements are eclectic and there's a lot of blending and inter-disciplinary styling. This methodological pluralism is not emerging out of a set of deliberate choices in relevant academia but rather has occurred as an environmental outcome.[23] Most often, research studies of social movements employ a mixture of ethnographic research (to study social constructions), life histories and intellectual histories (when focusing on specific events and for memory studies), and in-depth interviews.[24] This has led me to feel some methodological freedom in my own research plan, as I am studying various approaches to borrow what seems the most useful for my own toolkit. And perhaps not surprisingly, each of these approaches I will draw from tend to be described in the literature and by methodologists also as loose, fluid, ambiguous at times.

Although this could potentially create drawbacks for the research, it also opens space for creativity in the design of the research. And it can be seen as a reflection on the topics within my study—definitions and types within post-colonial studies happen to also be strongly characterized as fluid and ambiguous. So I approach the research within the

[21] Donatella della Porta, "Social Movement Studies and Methodological Pluralism," From *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* ed. Donatella della Porta. Oxford Scholarship Online (2014). 1-31.
[22] Ibid., 3-4.
[23] Ibid., 6.
[24] Ibid., 7

somewhat lose framework of intellectual history, which encompasses critical cultural studies and memory/narrative studies.

II.I: History of ideas as an interdisciplinary task

Intellectual history is described by one of its central contributors as "an unusual discipline, eclectic in both method and subject matter."[25] Some distinguish an intellectual history approach, which tends to focus on larger historical overviews of social movements, from the sub-field referred to as the *history of ideas*, which tends to encompass studies on the development and diffusion of particular socio-political concepts and how they relate to specific contexts and time periods, with a focus on the social actors behind the circulation of ideas. Some historians advocate for a blending of the two methodologies, others insist upon a clear distinction. I am concerned with understanding *who* is doing *what*, and *why* anti-colonialism is or is not a mobilizing idea in Kosovo self determination movements. So for the purposes of this study, which looks to particular people as actors in the dissemination and circulation of an idea, I understand the terms somewhat interchangeably. Two of the main schools within the intellectual history/history of ideas umbrella are political theory and cultural theory. A political theory approach utilizes intellectual history to understand the history of political thought by studying political narratives and a focus on cultural history is action-oriented and looks closely at the circulation of an idea in a society rather than simply at the idea itself. This latter approach is greatly influenced by Foucaultian tradition and the study of discursive constructions.[26]

Different theoretical approaches within the field are not sharply delineated by intellectual historians. One study may encompass components of political theory, cultural

[25] Peter E Gordon, "What is Intellectual History? A Frankly Partisan Introduction to a Frequently Misunderstood Field," *The Harvard Colloquium for Intellectual History* (Spring 2012), Web, 1-19, 2.
[26] Ibid., 11.

theory, and other influences such as critical theory or memory studies. It is a field that is in part defined by its "boundless" nature and its refusal "to confine itself to any one discipline."[27] Intellectual historians take a variety of methodological choices in their research projects and often use mixed methods. In sum, Peter Gordon states, "intellectual history at its best traces out the paths of thinking, without excessive regard for the rules of the disciplines."[28] Adham Saouli applies political theory analysis to a study of how intellectuals shape worldviews and political movements through a case study of Fadlallah's impact on the Hizbullah movement. In his work, he defines an intellectual as someone in the position of producing knowledge and meaning, with aspirations "either to transform or preserve certain values or political configurations in society"[29] Intellectuals, he says, engage in discursive battles in an attempt to direct socio-political behaviors, or what students of social movements call political framing mechanisms. Political framing involves the categorical ways in which politicians, scholars, and activists "interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists."[30] To understand processes of mobilization within a history of the anticolonial ideas of Vetëvendosje, the best way forward is to explore a history focusing on the people involved in discursive battles themselves and to gather info from scholars and Vetëvendosje activists through qualitative interviewing methodology.

Qualitative Interviews: Cultural Studies and Memory Studies

I approached this research starting with the general semi-structured, qualitative interview method. In Uwe Flick's guide to qualitative research, he says that the crucial first

[27] Ibid., 19.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Adham Saouli, "Intellectuals and Political Power in Social Movements, The Parallel Paths of Fadlallah and Hizbullah," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 41.1 (2014), 97–116, 100.
[30] Ibid.

step to carrying out an interview-based research project is to reflect on the theoretical foundations of the project.[31] Though there is always room for flexibility depending on the directions the research takes during the interview process, it is useful to first spend time on connecting the theoretical base with the methodological plan. Within the general qualitative interview methodology, there are multiple established theoretical methods that can direct the ways in which the researcher thinks about the project. I will look to how cultural studies and memory/narrative studies utilize qualitative interviewing methodologies.

The cultural studies approach to qualitative research is born out of a desire to creatively synthesize various research methodologies, challenge notions of the researcher's objectivity, and establish more dialogue between different methods. Because it is a relatively new field, there has not been a single "how to" guide or a strict formulization for researchers interested in carrying out a cultural studies fieldwork project.[32] The field is grounded in desires to understand and even redirect and transform power structures. It is influenced by Gramscian conversation on hegemony and resistance, the notion of the organic intellectual, and grassroots participation (Gramscian philosophy, by the way, is hugely influential to and well-read by Vetëvendosje leaders), as well as a Foucaultian approach to the social constructive role of language.[33] Qualitative data in the cultural studies context is meant to serve as a way to empirically examine conjunctures and relationships between experiences and practices and cultural material within a specific context. The role of the researcher, Flick argues (via Grossberg, 2005), is "to construct or reconstruct this context," and in order to do so, a trans-disciplinary and fluid methodological approach is necessary.[34]

[31] Uwe Flick, *An introduction to qualitative research* 3rd ed. (London, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2009).
[32] Ibid., 249-251.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 248.

Cultural studies is not meant to look at events or cultural practices in isolation, but "is driven by the attempt to radically contextualize cultural processes" and aspirations to describe the complexities, politics, and relational processes of a given practice within a given space and time.[35] This point is further made by Frow and Morris who argue that in cultural studies, there tends to be a focus on the regional and local cultural processes; however, culture is not to be seen as the "essence" of a nation or a region but instead should be understood as a relational process encompassing contested embattles and shifting borders.[36] These qualities make cultural studies an attractive paradigm for my exploration of discursive and analytical circulation between political actors in diverse social locations—modeling my interview questions and aims on an attempt to better understand critical junctions between post-Yugoslav, Albanian intellectuals and the post-colonial discourses they draw inspiration from in their political rhetoric.

This research's focus on rhetoric may lead one to question why the methodological approach is not approached through a discourse analysis or even a critical discourse analysis. Studying a particular text or piece of discourse would certainly be an interesting way to approach similar research questions to my own. However, the focus I have chosen to take is that of narrative and memory studies, which is a common component of the social movement studies field. Bryman warns that "discourse" is one of those words in scholarship that varies considerably and is used in various contexts, which can create conceptual confusion.[37] Thus it is important to clarify that for this project, a study of anticolonial discourse in Kosovo is centered on questioning the diffusion of a narrative and its historical process. One emerging field that is booming with new theoretical and methodological approaches to studying discourses within histories of ideas is that of memory studies.

[35] Ibid., 247.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 511.

Many memory studies projects employ oral history interviewing methods, though there is even confusion here about what methodological aspects constitute the boundaries of oral history. Oral history is usually seen as a methodology, but it is also becoming theoretical framework encompassing narrative and collective memory studies (though there has yet to have been an establishment of a single body of oral history theoretical concepts). Oral history praxis was originally established during the civil rights era and as a feminist mechanism to promote agency for marginalized groups to tell their own stories historical works.[38] Historians working with memory studies tend to connect the narrations they gather through qualitative interviews with larger social processes, whereas oral historians are primarily focused on the individual.[39] (Though other scholars argue further that oral history is distinguished from a life history because life histories encompass a narrative reconstruction of an individual's life since birth whereas an oral history interview is more specific, reflecting on an event or a period).[40] Because I focus on the social processes, I have decided not to approach my interviews as oral history interviews, and instead stick with the more general framework of semi-structured qualitative interviews. However, the above content about oral history theory and methods has certainly shape my approach.

Elite, Expert, Key Informant?

I also looked literature on the relevancy of the expert interview style for my methodological framework. Since I focus on the scholars, activists, and politicians who are the direct actors in the subject at hand, I looked into elite and expert interviewing models. Again I found that boundaries of what constitutes the elite and expert interview camps are

[38] Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth Century History and Theory* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 230-231.
[39] Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, "Introduction: Building Partnerships Between Oral History and Memory Studies," From *Oral History and Public Memories* ed. Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 2008), 4.
[40] Bryman, 441-442.

also somewhat ambiguous. Bogner states, "in scientific and technical circles, researchers are currently rethinking what really constitutes an expert and where the 'relevant' knowledge for political decisions actually lies."[41] He says that the "third wave" paradigm in the expert interviewing field assumes that "expertise is real" and that individuals acquire expertise through their membership within particular groups… against this background expert interviews can be understood as a form of "'bargained research'" where the interests of both the expert and the researcher has to be considered."[42]

Elite interviews, on the other hand, often refer to research that attempts to collect information on politicians. It's a method often used in journalism, but also important to political science and sociology, conflict studies within critical theory, and ethnography as a tool look to micropolitics of relationships between people in or struggling for power in order to better understand larger power structures.[43] Social movement studies use a sub-method with components of elite and expert interviews often referred to as key informant interviews. The encyclopedia for social movement studies considers activist interviews as a major component of key informants who can bring human agency to the center of studying an idea and its movement[44] and to gather personal information on "mobilization strategies and internal dynamics."[45] Interviewing activists and other key informants in social movements allows the researcher to delve deeper into propaganda materials produced by activist groups, and to construct a nuanced story about the meaning that activists give to their work, their

[41] Alexander Bogner, Beate Littig and Wolfgang Menz. "Introduction: Expert Interviews – An Introduction to a New Methodological Debate." From *Interviewing Experts* edited by Alexander Bogner, Beate Littig and Wolfgang Menz, *Research Methods Series* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 3.
[42] Ibid., 10.
[43] Adrianna Kezar, "Transformational Elite Interviews: Principles and Problems," *Qualitative Inquiry* 9.3 (2003), 395-415, 397.
[44] Kathleen Blee, "Interviewing Activists," From *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements, Volume II: F-Pe* edited by David A. Snow, Donatella della Porta, Bert Klandermans, and Doug McAdam, 2013.
[45] Donatella della Porta, 3.

motivations, and personal biographies in order to explain constructions of identity in movements and how movements mobilize.[46]

The relationship between activist/key informant (in this study, I use the term activist when discussing the Vetëvendosje participants and political party members) interviews and the oral history method is that both forms of interview are often grounded in a critical theory lens. Particularly in social movement studies, these interviews are meant to aid in analysis of how power structures are enacted in leadership and politics.[47]

II.II: Sampling

Guiding my sampling techniques is what della Porta's describes as "iterative sampling," or moving backwards from theory reflection to sampling choices.[48] This means that I entered the field with particular sampling choices in mind, but I left space for new directions to emerge depending on circumstances such as new turns in my research question, new contacts made from previous interviews, et cetera. della Porta suggests that researchers, especially when setting up key informant interviews, should utilize the connections with people most accessible to the researcher and then move forward from there in a semi-structured fashion.[49] Using iterative sampling as well as the snowballing method to locate new interviewees allowed me to learn from each previous interview, reflect, and then go into the next "more informed and legitimate."[50]

This study includes six interviews. Four of the interviews are 'key informants' of Vetëvendosje, and I have used their names in the research. Albin Kurti is a founder and former leader of Vetëvendosje. He is currently a Deputy at Assembly of Kosovo. He was a

[46] Blee, 623-624.
[47] Donatella della Porta.
[48] Ibid., 19.
[49] Ibid., 20.
[50] Ibid., 8.

student activist during the nonviolence movement of the late 1990s, and later a translator for Adem Demaçi when Demaçi was the head of the Kosovo Liberation Army's political wing. Kurti was sent to a Serbian prison as a political prisoner from 1999-2001. My second interview was with Glauk Konjufca, the editor of Vetëvendosje's journal and current Member of Parliament. He studied philosophy at the University of Prishtina during the years of the international protectorate. He was active in student protests that demanded better educational conditions and opposed corruption at the university. Kurti and the other founders of Vetëvendosje approached the students involved in protest (at this time, the movement started as the Kosovo Action Network, an NGO that dealt mainly with missing persons issues) and thus Konjufca became a part of Vëtevendosje's formation.

I next interviewed Boiken Abazi, Vetëvendosje's Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Abazi is from Albania, though he moved to Michigan for university studies and later to New York City before traveling between Tirana and Prishtina as a member of Vëtevendosje. I then interviewed Arbër Zaimi, who is also from Albania. He is one of the founders of University of Tirana's Instituti Antonio Gramshi, and he is currently Vetëvendosje's Coordinator of Political Committees. I interviewed Gramshi and Zaimi over the Internet, because at the time of research, both were in Albania because they had deported by Kosovar authorities. The deportation was issued due to 'visa issues,' but they are currently working on a legal case against the decision, arguing that it was politically motivated. My last two interviewees were with graduate students. One is an activist with Vetëvendosje, the other is not. I will refer to the activist student as V., and the other as B. V. is a current Masters student in pharmaceuticals. She has spent the last several years working and volunteering in civil society, and has recently become an activist with Vetëvendosje. B. is a current Doctoral student studying development, and has formerly studied in Germany and the United States and worked with the American Council of Kosovo. Although many of his peers are either

Vetëvendosje activists or supporters, he himself strongly condemns their political philosophy and agenda.

A limitation that I will discuss in Chapter VI is that this study does not include any interviews with the University of Prishtina professors who are engaging in neo-colonial analyses and anti-colonial critique of Kosovo's history and present. This was my original intention, but because of scheduling conflicts during my short research period, I was not able to conduct the interviews I had hoped. However, I have been able to communicate with some of these professors over e-mail, and I have read their works extensively. Some events that I attended have also informed this research: Professor Sociology Linda Gusia's 'Memory Walk' of Prishtina, which was a lecture given to World Learning's Undergraduate SIT Balkan's Study Abroad program (for which I was a guest attendee); a Memory Studies lecture by Professor Nita Luci; two lectures on Kosovo's state-building process given by former Vetëvendosje MP Ilir Deda; and an informal meeting in Summer 2015 with the current mayor of Prishtina, Shpent Ahmeti (elected from the Vetëvendosje party).

II.III: Positionality and ethical considerations

Flick states that through qualitative interviews in the cultural studies fashion, the researcher becomes aware of the particularities of the interviewee's perspectives and constructions of reality. But this is a two-way street; "knowledge gained is always localized socially and politically so the researcher is also required to question critically the discourses and positions that characterize his or her own thinking."[51] My choice to do key informant

[51] Flick, 49.

interviews created some ethical and personal implications that are important to continuously reflect upon.

It is important for me to remain conscious of what attracted me to this research question in the first place. My interest stems from my background in Africana Studies and my previous experience as a student and researcher in the Balkans. As a student who has academically and personally found importance in interrogating racism as an ideology and the socio-psychological impacts of colonialism, I was surprised when I first began noticing groups in Kosovo naming particular power relationships within Kosovo as racist, colonial, and neo-colonial. I was at first even uncomfortable and critical towards such discourse. I was studying alongside two other American friends and colleagues when I first began to notice Kosovar social movements and individuals using the language of racism to describe systems of oppression, women who are deeply involved with anti-racist social movements and studies of American racism. We were also being exposed at the time to a lot of literature within the ethnic-conflict studies paradigm, and we together were trying to work out such politics of categorization. What was missing from our conversations was a closer look at the anti-colonialist aspect of conversations about racism and Albanian identification. Thus the research was directly born out of my personal desires to better understand the origins of the discourses that I myself was consuming and reacting to.

A guiding factor in the iterative sampling technique is the researcher's ability to build and maintain forms of trust. Yet trust is not a technical issue. As Stefan Malthaner says, trust is not something the researcher has or does not have, nor is it some "magical element" existing between interviewer and interviewee. Rather, it is based on the personal relationships between researchers and interviewees/informants. This will look different in different contexts. It may be "a mixture of personal and respect and affection," broader patterns of social relationships within the local setting and beyond, [and/or] institutional legitimacy and

professional status; it is the dynamic between the interviewee and interviewer in which both consider the potential risks and benefits of participation.[52]

One of the exciting aspects of oral history and cultural studies styles is the academic departure from any strict paradigm of academic objectivity. This conversation is stirring within fields such as Africana Studies, Peace Studies, Women's Studies, Sociology, and Anthropology. Richard Rorty says that objectivity is a Western scientific notion with origins in the Enlightenment period's search for Truth and rationality. He does not object to this tradition entirely, but argues that academic objectivity often creates a dynamic in which "insofar as he seeks objectivity, he distances himself from the actual persons around him not by thinking of himself as a member of some other real or imaginary group."[53] Sajeeva Samaranayake also speaks about objectivity and its role in colonial education: colonial administrations "relied on a brand of objectivity and reason that dominated or excluded subjectivities and emotions."[54] The methodological departure from pure objectivity is not a rejection of objective reasoning and critical thinking—it is rather a balance of the quest for objective reasoning with the acknowledgement and critical analyses on ones own subjectivities, attachments, and solidarities. In other words, "the solution is not to reject the objective or subjective but to bring them both into a perfect balance of cooperation with each other."[55]

Kezar speaks to this departure from objectivity and detachment between researcher and subject. In her interviews with elites, Kezar attempts to bring in methodological cues

[52] Stefan Malthaner, "Fieldwork in the Context of Violent Conflict and Authoritarian Regimes," From *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* ed. Donatella della Porta, Oxford Scholarship Online (2014), 1-32, 15.
[53] Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity," from *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation* edited by Michael Krausz (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 167.
[54] Sajeeva Samaranayake, "Flawed (Western) Objectivity And The Long Journey Back To Self," *Colombo Telegraph*, 15 March 2014, Web.
[55] Ibid.

from feminist theory—she says that feminism has broken down the concept of neutrality to show that it does not always serve a purpose.[56] Instead, the researcher should focus on reflexivity and contemplation on how positionality impacts the project. In fact, the researcher can even be open with the interviewee about these reflections.[57]

This will has been especially relevant for me as an American woman potentially seen to represent the international community's actions in Kosovo (which are a major defining aspect of Kosovo's social sphere). For several years, the United States Embassy, which constantly negotiates and collaborates with Kosovar parliament, has refused to meet with representatives from Vetëvendosje until they denounce instances of violence, particularly property damage, committed by grassroots activists at several rallies and street demonstrations. Such instances remind me to always consider my own social positions (which, of course, are fluid) and how these impact my own analyses and how I may be perceived by others during my research.

When a researcher does not attempt to project objectivity, there may be clues that an activist interviewee picks up on about the researcher's opinion on the movement. This may lead the interviewee to feel as though there is a struggle over "who controls the story that is conveyed in an interview" (especially when scholars categorize them with labels not used by the activists themselves). Erin Jessee's warns that "by uncritically disseminating the narratives of complex political actors who seek to delegitimize their governments… oral historians risk inadvertently becoming part of the machinery of propaganda by promoting memories and myth..."[58] I trust my own abilities to recognize nuance and the multifaceted nature of this political movement and to practice critical thinking at all points of the research, including my own personal reactions and implications to the phenomenon I'm studying. My

[56] Kezar, 400.
[57] Ibid., 401.
[58] Erin Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology Amid Highly Politicized Research Settings," *The Oral History Review* 38.2 (2011), 287–307, 300.

task has been to study the empirical nature of the usages of anticolonial discourse rather than contribute *here* to the normative debates on analytical borrowing of postcolonial analysis in post-socialist spaces. Here is where notions of objective thinking have in fact been important to my research: to engage in my own opinions I wanted to first better understand the narratives of the intellectuals and activists "without necessarily adopting their definitions of reality."[59] Though, an exciting aspect of this research is that the information and analyses I compile *can* assist normative debates and my own imaginings regarding social justice, the politics of categorization, identity politics, oppression, and solidarity.

Chapter III: Discourse and social movements

In order to understand the historical developments of discursive borrowing as a *practice,* it is useful to situate the history of anti-colonial rhetoric and identification of Kosovo as a colonial space/Albanians as a colonized people alongside some literature on memory studies, critical theory, and "identity." The attempts to explain constructions of racial, religious, sexual, national, and ethnic identities within the 'identity studies' umbrella is perhaps even more teeming with ambiguity than post-colonial studies. In any study of social mobilization and social life, Brubaker says, we should resist the tendencies of a "groupism" mindset—he cautions against attributing interests and agency to assumed "substantial entities," or to present the social world as comprised of a "multi-chrome mosaic of monochrome ethnic, racial or cultural blocs."[60] A history of a development of an idea about how to classify a group should see identification as an event and a project, a category employed as a way that individuals have attached to "to make sense of the social world."[61] In "Beyond Identity," Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper argue that we should seek to

[59] Blee, 625.
[60] Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups" *European Journal of Sociology* 43:2 (2002): 163-189, 164.
[61] Ibid., 170.

explain how social categories create a powerful reality, but we should avoid reproducing and uncritically adopting these categories as 'real.' Their desire to go 'beyond identity' is not to reject studies of such topics in the name of some "imagined universalism" (in other words, this isn't an argument for rejecting identifications—they aren't suggesting that national and racial identities should just be replaced with assumed colorblindness, for example), but it is instead a call for more conceptual clarity. They thus offer four other categories of analysis, one of which is especially relevant here. *Self Understanding and Social Location* is a category to be used when analyzing one's subjective sense of self and of social locations, and the cognitive and emotional senses one has of oneself and the world.[62]

This 'imagined' nature of self understanding and social location (to borrow from Benedict Anderson's cornerstone text *Imagined Communities* on the imagined nature of the nation) is illustrated by Ruth Wodak et al. in *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. The authors borrow from Anton Pelinka's analyses of the Austrian nation as a political invention. In fact, Pelinka says, "all nations are political inventions."[63] The discursive component is central to the political imagination and to the plurality of political subjectivities and identifications. There is no one essentialized national identity, for example, but rather, "identities are discursively constructed according to context" and these discourses are certainly not static, but dynamic and vulnerable.[64] A social movement can be considered a conglomeration of individual narratives, which syndicate into a discourse.

Gary Allen Fine presents social movements as shiftable "bundles of stories" that shape discourses and action through the process of ideo-culture. Activists may assume that the ideology of the group is shared and that explicit discussion of ideologies would be seen as

[62] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity," *Theory and Society* 29 (2000): 1-47.
[63] From Ruth Wodak, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl, and Karin Liebhart, *The Discursive Construction of National Identity Second Edition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 187.
[64] Ibid., 186-187.

patronizing. Sometimes assumptions of shared beliefs even go unspoken.[65] Still, an oppositional political discourse serves the roles of articulating an ideology and creating a framework in which to see the world, analyzing power relations and encounters with systems of oppression, and politicizing everyday lived experiences. Michael D. Kennedy, an American sociologist who studies public knowledge and Eastern European social movements (and who is partner with University of Prishtina's Philosophy and Sociology departments), is interested in how intellectuals are "obliged" to fill the role of ideological production by articulating a discourse.[66] He uses Stuart Hall's description of articulation as a process of bringing together different ideological elements under certain conditions—which may articulate and build a coherent discourse "at specific conjectures, to certain political subjects."[67]

III.I: Issue framing and the politics of categorization

Especially in this post-World War, globalized era in which the international human rights regime demands legitimacy, discourses are consequential. The ways in which political subjects articulate ideology influence the implementations of policies and norms that produce major impacts on peoples' lives. There is a video-interview conducted by Serbian journalists of then-political-prisoner Kurti which is well-known in Kosovo and which was known to some Americans during the Kosovo war (as early as 1997, Kurti was communicating with

[65] Gary Alan Fine. "The Storied Group: Social Movements as 'Bundles of Narratives.'" *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements*. Ed. Joseph E. Davis. New York: State University of New York, n.d. (229-45), 239.
[66] Michael D. Kennedy, "Articulations of Transformation: Subjectivities and Structures in Crisis," in Njohja: Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities, ed. Hasnije Ilazi et al. (Pristina: University of Pristina, 2013), 112.
[67] Ibid., 113.

activists in American nonviolence organizations about the student protests he was involved in). In the interview, Kurti spoke of a colonialism process implemented in Kosovo by the Serbian state, the violence and injustice of crimes committed against civilians regardless of nationality, and the illegitimacy of the Milošević regime, and independence being "the only solution to Kosovo's status."[68] A journalist asked, "what do you think of the international community, which doesn't accept the plan to partition Serbia?" To which he answered that they didn't accept the independence of Slovenia or Croatia at first, but they do now; "this is the process of awareness of internationals."[69]

The role that international and regional bodies (such as NATO, the UN, the EU, et cetera) and international legal norms (such as the Charter of the United Nations) play in shaping how actors frame a conflict or resistance movement is crucial. Will Kymlicka's extensive works on the diffusion of liberal multiculturalism policies explore the politics of recognition and claims-making. He shows that even though the development of international norms is often ambiguous, withdrawn, and unsolidified, the rights that are established for particular groups is often dependent on how these groups organize. In "Beyond the Indigenous/Minority Dichotomy?" he illuminates the outcomes of indigenous movements in demanding legal remedies and group-based rights in an attempt to correct the impacts of colonialism. There has been a legal categorization of minorities into groups such as ethno-national and indigenous. Although ethno-national minorities may often share many of the same claims to group-based rights as indigenous rights movements, the particularities of the indigenous rights model has resulted in a dichotomy between national minority rights and

[68] Blerta Rustemi, "Albin Kurti - In Serbian Prison, English Subtitles," Filmed [n.d.], Youtube video, 9:49 minutes, Posted [16 July 2012].
[69] Ibid.

indigenous rights. This is the direct result of the ways in which indigenous rights movements fashioned and articulated notions of post-colonial justice.[70]

Scholars in Kosovo have studied the ways in which the Albanian nonviolence movement during the Milošević regime understood the importance of articulating their oppression in a way that would appeal to international institutions to intervene on their behalf. Luci states that during the 1990s, Albanian men showed their scars and stressed their victimization under the watch of the international community, and that this became congruent with national masculinity. And the impact of globally idealized stories of peaceful resistance in the face of oppression is presented in the ways in which Albanians and international journalists referred to leaders during this period—do an internet search for 'the Albanian Gahndi' and several news articles about Ibrahim Rugova will appear; 'Kosovo's Nelson Mandela' will bring up images of Adem Demaçi. Even once civil disobedience became militarized and national solidarity became expressed as *fighting back,* Luci says, Kosovo Liberation Army leaders knew that emphasizing their involvement in the war as a liberation war for *justice* within the discourse of human rights was vital; they knew that international intervention relied on being perceived as "those who fought back for a just cause."[71]

Helena Zdravkovic-Zonta uses "ideological criticism" to examine the role that victim narratives play in the everyday discursive practices. She distinguishes between person, collective, and official historical narratives, but points out that all of these narrative layers

[70] Will Kymlicka, "Beyond the Indigenous/Minority Dichotomy?" in Stephen Allen and Alexandra Xanthaki (eds.), *Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2011), 183-208.

[71] Nita Luci, "Seeking Independence: Making Nation, Memory, and Manhood in Kosova," (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2014):1-295. Print, 163. Luci's dissertation also describes how militirazation and war martyrdom dominant the public discourse regarding war memorialization. The peaceful resistance movement is not emphasized in the dominant discourse. "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," Luci 43.

interact with each other to produce narratives of victimization.[72] She argues that traditionally, work on Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia tends to dwell on attempts to establish factual and objective truths, or "'real' victimage," and these narratives are then utilized for political purposes.[73] She says that measuring narratives against a truth standard sets up false binaries.[74] Such dyads influence the way people interpret history and also how the international community has intervened in the legitimization of particular victim narratives.[75] Zdravkovic-Zonta's points are important to consider, but a critical approach to narratives of victimization should not counteract the goals of 'dealing-with-the-past' and transitional justice efforts to establish facts and implementing justice remedies. In other words, critical approaches to discourse should not depoliticize history—this is the view of those scholars, activists, and political leaders who are critique and *compete with* discourses of liberal peace-building missions. This will be further discussed in Chapter IV, but while discussing political framing and discourses, it is relevant to introduce some of the literature coming from Kosovo on the discourses used by the 'international community.'

III.II: Discourses on security and peace-building

There is a body of literature discussing the ways in which international intervention and institutional missions are conducted through a legitimizing discourse about peace-building and the protection of human security. This idea will be expanded upon throughout the next chapters, but it is useful to mention here that not only are social movements mobilized by analyses woven into a discourse which elucidates, rationalizes, and frames claims-makings; international peacekeeping missions also support and uphold a framework of

[72] Helena Zdravkovic-Zonta. "Narratives of Victims and Villains in Kosovo." *Nationalities Papers* 37.5 (September 2009): 665-692, 665.
[73] Ibid., 666.
[74] Ibid., 677.
[75] Ibid., 668.

analyses and a body of language which legitimizes and directs their presence. Gëzim Visoka discusses the discourses of liberal peace-building missions and explores the potential applicability for Kosovo to be analyzed under Richmond's post-liberal emancipatory peace critique of these missions. He says that expressions of resistance against international missions in the post-conflict context share "many similarities with local resistance in colonial and post-colonial contexts," referring to literature on post-conflict and post-colonial similarities written by Edward Said, Ilan Kapoor, and John Gledhill.[76]

Vjollca Krasniqi states that her neo-colonial analyses stems from a call to unpack and critique the "'discourses on peacekeeping/ peacemaking/ protectorates,'" discourses that she describes as hegemonic, which perpetuate inequalities and "othering mechanisms" (both symbolic and structural, such as poverty), which produce economic and political stagnation (vis-à-vis neoliberal policy), are patriarchal, and which emphasize minority rights for purposes of stability rather than a full-fledged transitional justice struggle.[77] The hegemonic discourses and practices of the international community and of patriarchal nationalisms are woven together to corrupt the democratization process. She calls this "a thinly veiled neocolonial discourse" and a "colonial pedagogy," and underneath the discourse, she argues, lays the geopolitical agendas of the intervening nation-states, agendas which compromise democracy for stability in attempt to establish "a peacekeeping success story."[78] As the chapters progress, I will argue that anti-colonial discourse and neo-colonial analyses is able to mobilize because it is able to explain and oppose the problematics of the discourses around peace-building, security, and ethnic conflict that the international intervention has employed.

[76] Gëzim Visoka, "International Governance and Local Resistance in Kosovo: the Thin Line between Ethical, Emancipatory and Exclusionary Politics." Irish Studies in International Affairs 22 (2011): 99-125, 100.
[77] Vjollca Krasniqi, "Neocolonial regimes…"
[78] Ibid., 3.

Is the development, the borrowing, and the transformation of anti-colonial discourse applied to post-socialist space simply the result of globalization? Does globalization and the spread of the most globally dominant stories of suffering and resistance, prejudice and progress, create discursive connections, or is does to diffusion of these stories only help to describe current social movements? This next section will explore the fluid and migratory aspects of a discourse, and the ways in which groups thread together historical narratives and the current socio-political situation in order to construct their claims.

Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class (edited by Don Kalb and Gabor Halmai) focuses on the rise of "neo-nationalist," right ring populist groups in Eastern Europe and to the importance of injustice framing to political mobilization and oppositional social movements. The texts in this book may also be relevant to leftist movements, which are often mobilized against injustices and which also utilize justice-framing mechanisms. Kalb and Halmai's introductory essay argues for a assessment of these movements that takes into account neoliberalism and globalization—they advocate the "need to uncover the hidden histories of dispossession, disenfranchisement and subalternity that feed the particular alienation of the resenting classes in their volatile dialectic with global, national and local histories of neoliberal trans-nationalization."[79] There is need for an approach that looks to social relations as much as or even more than cultural symbols to study new nationalist movements. Such studies also need to forefront and question the relationships "between local politics and global processes," or what Roland Robertson calls "glocalization" (known more generally in the literature as global assemblage).[80] Similarly, Arjun Appadurai's also speaks

[79] Don Kalb and Gabor Halamai (ed), *Headlines of Nation, Subtexts of Class: Working-Class Populism and the Return of the Repressed in Neoliberal Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books 2011), 7.
[80] Ibid.,11.

about global cultural flows and how the spread of human rights discourse has shaped the "vocabulary of politics."[81]

Deborah Yasher warns scholars to not place too heavy a hand on the role of globalization on the political framings of social movements. International norms, especially around human rights law, environmentalism, democracy, and indigenous rights are all important to contemporary social movements—but often, she argues, these norms "followed rather than catalyzed the movements in question."[82] She reviews the broad literature written on how globalization has been woven throughout various social movement discourses, such as Falk, Melucci, or Wapner's different discussions on transnational advocacy networks and global civil society[83] and Alison Brysk's work in conceptualizing the relationship between such movements and international actors, emphasizing the importance of globalization to shaping current identity politics and movement building in a certain space and time.[84] But, she says, contemporary globalization shouldn't be understood as a causal determinant for the narratives and activities of resistance movements, as many movements emerged well prior to modern global exchange and neoliberalism.[85] Globalization can certainly help to describe the discourses and actions created by current leftist, indigenous, and human-rights-based social movements, especially regarding claims making. The most prominent example is the impact of human rights discourses on national discourses in Europe (studied, for example, by Soysal).[86] "Yet we need to be careful not to mistake discourse for motives and international

[81] Arjun Appadurai, "How Histories Make Geographies: Circulation and Context in a Global Perspective," *Transcultural Studies* 1 (2010): 4-13, 6.
[82] Deborah J. Yashar, "Resistance and Identity Politics in an Age of Globalization." 160-181. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 610, NAFTA and Beyond: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Global Trade and Development (2007), 170.
[83] Ibid., 167.
[84] Ibid., 161
[85] Ibid., 160.
[86] Ibid.,168.

audiences for social movement constituencies… We need to be vigilant to avoid using contemporary discourse to explain why movements emerged at a prior moment."[87]

The five interviews which I conducted with Vetëvendosje members and activists revealed a party platform and manifesto which aligns closely with some aspects of Yashar's description of indigenous movements: an opposition to neoliberalism, to privatization, and to the decline of the welfare state.[88] In everyday language, in publications, and in public demonstrations, Vetëvendosje also describes the period of the 1990s and other historical moments as occupation, apartheid, and as a colonial administration. Even though sociologist Linda Gusia explains that the Yugoslav period is actually quite absent from the everyday discourse or the public education system, Vetëvendosje weaves together periods from the history of the Albanian movement for self-determination in Kosovo in order to frame the present. The next chapter will outline the history of protest since the middle of the twentieth century with a focus on anti-colonialist thought.

Chapter IV: An intellectual history of anti-colonialism in Kosovo

Vladimir Arsenijevic's essay In "Our Negroes, Our Enemies,"[89] argues that the second Yugoslavia always had undertones of social and ethnic divisions that were split into power hierarchies, into what he calls a "proverbian European vertical," with Albanians always positioned at the bottom. He says that othering techniques included myths of Albanian primitivism, overpopulation, and alien culture, and after Tito's Yugoslavia, these othering-

[87] Ibid., 169-170
[88] Ibid.,161.
[89] The title of this paper itself warrants its own discussion. Another usage of this phrase "our negroes" can be found in Kosovo journalist and former Vetevendosje member Rron Gjinovci's article on the situation of Roma in Kosovo. He said, "We both have been poor. In the '90s when our parents weren't allowed to work, when we lived in apartheid – we were poor. We were the equivalent of "negroes." Our schools had separate classes for Serbs and Albanians. We were 40 'negroes' crammed into a class of 20 square meters…Yes. 'Our Negroes.' The fact that our society has incorporated racist behavior." See Rron Gjinovci and Arian Maloku, "The Little Teacher's Big Task," *PrishtinaInsight,* 11 March 2016.

myths were instrumentalized by nationalist movements—in Kosovo's case, Milošević drew upon them when mobilizing Kosovar Serbs for political mobilization. Vetëvendosje refers to Yugslavia's structures of inequality in their argument that Kosovo aligns with center-periphery analyses in post-colonialism studies. Arbër Zaimi said, "during Yugoslavian times Albanians were discriminated in many ways. If in 1945 the income per capita in Kosova was three times lower than the average in Serbia, in 1989 it was seven times lower. So, under socialism the differences between center and periphery only grew."[90]

Zaimi also spoke about the major demonstrations that took place in Yugoslav Kosovo, in which people with various grievances and claims came together to mobilize for a general movement for self-determination. Such protests called for the abolishment social inequality and political persecution, for workers movements, some were advocating for the unification of Kosovo with Albania, and others calling for greater rights and autonomies within Yugoslavia such as language and education rights. Zaimi said, "the discourse in the '60s was mostly influenced by Albania's Marxism and Leninism. It became more anti-colonialist in the '80s, when workers and students were asking for more rights, for equality and for a Republic, whether within or without Yugoslavia."[91]

Zaimi said that the first time the word Vetëvendosje was used was in the protests of 1968. Albin Kurti also told me about historical usage of 'Vetëvendosje' in Albanian protest—though he cites the first usage of the word before WWII, influenced by the Wilsonian notion. It was always used, Kurti said, alongside calls for unification with Albanian.

> It was used within the 1943-44 Bujan conference, where Kosovar partisans voted to join Albania. And it was the main slogan in 1968 protests. It's a very rich word, it's not like self determination in English. It's richer in Albanian. Vet, means self. Vendosje, means decision. Vend means place. It has more soul.[92]

[90] Arbër Zaimi, interview with the author, Prishtina and Tirana, 19 May 2016.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Albin Kurti, Interview with the author, Prishtina, 12 May 2016.

Vetëvendosje was formed as a social movement when an international principle—often used in the context of English language international law—had recently been put back onto the table after the wars of Yugoslavia. This calls for self determination was formed in opposition to the international protectorate and to territorial control from Serbia. But the name itself exemplifies the call on tradition—framed as a tradition of resistance to outside rule—to elucidate the conditions of the present. Kurti closed our interview by saying, "1968, 1981, 1989, 1997. I belong to this. I feel at home."[93]

IV.I: The second Yugoslav Period (1934-1999)

The 'Second Yugoslavia' refers to the three states of: Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (1943–1946); Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1946–1963); and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963–1991). For the purposes of this paper, the period of 1991-1999 will also be included within this heading since during this decade Kosovo was under the administration of the Milošević regime until the international protectorate was established after the NATO bombing campaign. This study will not cover the historical shifts in the territorial 'status' of Kosovo before the period of the international protectorate. But I do want to note that a reference to empires, kingdoms, and administrations—the Ottoman Period, the Kingdom of Serbia, Yugoslavia, the protectorate, et cetera—and a reference to continued and persistent experiences of occupation are both a part of the Albanian historical canon. And, I will include instances in which interviewees mentioned particular dates of importance for them. For example, Arbër Zaimi states that the year 1919 was an important one for the beginning of colonial rule in Kosovo; he said, "Kosova was occupied by Serbia and for nine decades it was a colony of Belgrade."[94] He referred to displacement of Albanians during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Četnik movement, and the Serbian academies approaches to "dealing

[93] Ibid.
[94] Zaimi, interview with the author.

with the 'Albanian problem.'"[95] He referred to Vaso Čubrilović, a professor at the University of Belgrade and a Bosnian Serb politician who advocated for the expulsion of Albanians from Yugoslavia (though he later distanced himself from an Pan-Slavism and later nationalism).[96]

In 1941, Kosovo briefly was incorporated into 'Great Albania,' and most Kosovar Albanians wanted maintain this structure. Thus, Albanians in Kosovo didn't particularly support the communist movement because they saw Tito's Yugoslavia as a potential obstacle to self-determination. When Kosovo was incorporated into the Yugoslav republic of Serbia in 1943, Albanians formed the first Nation Liberation Committee for Kosovo.[97] Of the four Vetëvendosje party members I interviewed, three spoke about the importance of the Bujan Conference of 1943-44 to the Albanian national movement in Kosovo. At this conference, Zaimi says, Serbia "acknowledged the request for self determination" when

> Serbian and Albanian Communist Party (with members from Albania and Kosova), in the presence of representatives from the UK and other countries, decided to join forces and fight against the Nazis together, on the condition that after the war, the Albanians living under ex-Yugoslavia would get the right to self-determination. And

[95] Ibid.

[96] Though a closer look of this time period would be beyond the scope of this study, Dorde Stefanovic wrote a fascinating study a narrative studies analysis of pre-1939 history of the construction of an Albanian identity within the Serbian dominant imagination, in which he speaks about Serbian leadership using language of "savagery" (472) and engaging in patterns of systematic expulsions to what he calls Serbian "colonial rule" of Albanians in Kosovo (480). He also puts his historical overview into the modern context and poses large questions for the region, such as what happens to minority national movements after they capture state power? Why were some groups considered targets for assimilation (Bosniaks) and others not (Albanians)? Though my study will not trace this time period, some of the historical events and the collective memories around them may he outlines are fascinating. For example, the myths around Christian uprisings against the Ottoman Empire were used to rally political support for a "pure Serbian nation-state" in the late 19th century; in 1878, there was an ethnic cleansing of Albanians from Serbian territory. The author calls this "the first large-scale injustice" which resulted in the League of Prizren (1878). He also outlines the cycle of systematic oppression that has gone hand-in-hand with personal violence and the construction of the dominant narrative: Albanian Muslims who faced ethnic cleansing by Serb forces then created a hostile environment towards Kosovo Serbs, as well as for Catholic Albanians (472). For more, see Dorde Stefanovic, "Seeing the Albanian through Serbian Eyes: The Inventors of the Tradition of Intolerance and Their Critics, 1804-1939." *European History Quarterly* 35.3 (2005): 465-492. *SAGE Publications.* Web.

[97] Kosovar Stability Initiative. *A Power Primer: A Handbook to Politics, People, and Parties in Kosovo* (2011), 16.

> thus, Serbs and Albanians fought side by side against the Nazis in WWII; however, we know how the story went after the war ... and the condition for self-determination was not met.[98]

The post-WWII period that Abazi is referring to is particularly defined by the rule of Aleksander Ranković, who established the Yugoslav Department of National Security (OZNA) in 1944 (which disintegrated two years later) and ran Kosovo as a police state until he was expelled from power in 1966 for bugging Tito's home. Ranković was known for his opposition to Yugoslav decentralization (arguing that it would be against the interest of Serbs) and hostility towards Albanians in Kosovo, especially the prosecution of people deemed to be involved with 'counter-revolutionary' activities such as advocating for succession. Zaimi also referred to Ranković: "Hundreds of Albanian activists were sent in Yugoslavia's prisons. They were labeled irredentists, nationalists, separatists, rightists, et cetera by the socialist government, but most of them were part of Marxist-leninist inspired organizations, or social-democratic anti-colonialist movements."[99]

Economic development during this period in Kosovo remained low in comparison too other territories of Yugoslavia. A year after Ranković's dismissal, Tito visited the region and condemned the poverty Kosovar Albanians were experiencing and what he deemed as the role of Serbian supremacy in maintaining socio-political dominance over the population; in 1968, protests from underground movements such as the Popular Movement for Kosova called for social and political rights vis-a-vis greater autonomy for Albanians.[100] Protestors made demands for an Albanian language university (the faculties at the time were Belgrade branches), for republican status within Yugoslavia, and waved slogans such as "Long Live Albania!" and "Down with the colonial policy!"[101]

[98] Boiken Abazi, Interview with the author, Prishtina and Tirana, 18 May 2016.
[99] Zaimi, interview with the author.
[100] Luci, 13.
[101] Kosovar Stability Initiative, 17.

An important global historical moment to contextualize is the development of the Nonaligned Movement, which started in Belgrade in 1961. Tito was the president of the movement and lead alongside Nasser, Nkrumah, Sukarno, and Nehru. Sometimes called the Third World Movement, the Nonaligned Movement was not only a product responding to the Cold War, but to the rejection of imperialism more broadly; this is illustrated in Fidel Castro's "Havana Declaration 1979" speech which later framed the organization as a way to ensure the "territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries… in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony."[102] I did not locate research that reveals any direct link between the Non-aligned Movement and anti-colonialism within dissents for Albanian autonomy and rights. But it may have been that the some of the protestors in Kosovo during the Yugoslav years found the Non-aligned Movement as containing contradictions with Yugoslavia's socialist message and Tito's involvement in an organization central to solidarity between states emerging from decolonization, while structural poverty and social discrimination were occurring at home. Albin Kurti said,

> What to do with 'third way' when second way is gone? The non aligned movement… It didn't manage to get positive content; it was only a way to distance yourself. We didn't like that because that was a time that Albania and Yugoslavia were at very bitter relations. We didn't know what was going on in Albania, it was totally isolated. But we had this fantasy of their people being free… not like we in Yugoslavia who were imprisoned, because we are not a Slavic people during the so-called golden years of Yugoslavia for these Yugonostalgics. Even back then, self-determination was a request, which was articulated against Serbia's colonization of Kosova. Although self-determination was not achieved, these protests opened the path for the autonomy that Kosova gained under ex-Yugoslavia with the changes of the Constitution of ex-Yugoslavia in the seventies, for the establishment of the University of Prishtina in Albanian language, and for the building of an industrial base in Kosova.[103]

Late 1970s Kosovo saw progress for Albanian minority rights with the removal of Aleksandar Ranković from power a decade earlier, as well as Tito's opening of Yugoslavia's

[102] Dennis C. Canterbury, *European Bloc Imperialism* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 79.
[103] Kurti, interview with the author.

first Albanian language university in 1969 and his granting of Kosovo's autonomous status within the Serbian republic in 1974. The 1970s and 80s saw a period of progress and the establishment of a new educated class. Illiteracy rates, which were highest amongst Albanians in Yugoslavia, fell from from fifty-two percent to twelve percent.[104] Still, throughout this period, a popular slogan in Kosovo—'Trepca radi, Beograd se gradi' (While Trepca [mine] works, Belgrade is being built)—was often sung at protests. The phrase reflected the frustration with unequal regional development.

Student demonstrations for greater rights and against the still-remaining poverty and inequality in Kosovo continued to unfold. In 1981, students demonstrated for Kosovo's republican status rather than that of an autonomous province,[105] as well as against the University of Prishtina's sole focus on the humanities (with a focus on Albanian language and culture) and the lack of technical and scientific faculties. Thus the nationalist movement found its most support amongst the university students—the "young, educated, and unemployed."[106] This was rooted in socio-economic concerns and high rates of unemployment (a minority of protestors were focused on unification with Albania—this wasn't the main or only sentiment, but was emphasized in Yugoslav media).

The years after these protests were known as 'the return of repression.' There is a body of theory in the sociology of prejudice called Right Wing Authoritarianism which looks to how fear about social change can lead to constructions of out-group prejudices. If such a framework is used to study this period in Kosovo, reactions and the media and political levels of the Serbian republic may be correlated with Kosovo Serb social anxieties about the growing protest movements. Ensuing media hysteria contained a growing discourse of prejudice on the dangers of Albanian masculinity and the threat of rape of Serbian women.

[104] Luci, 10.
[105] Ibid, 11.
[106] Kosovar Stability Initiative, 20.

Public discourse criticized Albanian family sizes for being too large, and this was used in propaganda that positioned Albanian men as primitive and repressive sexual beings. Nita Luci calls on Stoler's analysis of colonial rule through racialized sexuality to argue that Albanian men were constructed as sexual aggressors with Serbian women as their preferred pray. This discourse was not only present in the media and at the political level; Atanasije Jevtic, a Serbian Orthodox priest, released public statements that Albanian men are a threat to Serbian women.

During the 1981 protests, the University of Prishtina (at the time the University of Kosovo) was highly politicized during a wave of demonstrations against Yugoslavia's leadership. There was a media and political campaign led by the Communist League of Yugoslavia in in Belgrade called "ideological-political differentiation," which was aimed at delegitimizing the University of Prishtina and maligning the intellectuals and students who were participating in demonstrations.[107] Professors faced dismissals and arrests conducted by Yugoslav secret police on the grounds that they were acting as 'enemies of the people and the state.' The Philosophy and Sociology departments were particularly targeted.

In 1986, two hundred and sixteen Serbian intellectuals drafted and signed a document that was introduced to Yugoslav parliament that became known as 'The Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.' The memorandum argued that Serbia was being subordinated by the economically stronger republics of Slovenia and Croatia, and that in Kosovo, high Albanian birth rates were leading to what they called a Serb cultural genocide. Luci says, "Batakovics memorandum made public what had been silenced and censored during Tito's rule: Albanians were seen as a threat to the cultural, economic, and

[107] Shemsi Krasniqi, Shemsi Krasniqi, Philosophy and Sociology Studies at the University of Pristina," in *Njohja: Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities,* ed. Hasnije Ilazi et al., (Pristina: University of Pristina, 2013), 13.

demographic well being of Serbia."[108] The memorandum era's prejudices, hysteria, and threats to revoke autonomy created an even more repressed situation in Kosovo. By 1988, three thousand Trecpa miners protested the oncoming revocation of Kosovo's autonomy alongside around one hundred thousand teachers, students, and working class people (people very integrated into the Yugoslav system) who were articulating their grievances in public space. What followed was the dissolution of the communist party in Kosovo as people turned in their membership cards in masse. About seven hundred thousand people joined the Democratic League of Kosovo party.[109] This same year, Milošević capitalized on rising fears about Albanian nationalism in Kosovo when he gave his infamous speech at the site of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo—the speech in which Balkan historians tend to cite as the beginning of the Yugoslav wars. He called for Serb resistance in the tradition of fighting the Islamic Ottomans in Kosovo, concluding with "six centuries later, now, we are being again engaged in battles and are facing battles. They are not armed battles, although such things cannot be excluded yet."[110]

The Dialectic Between 'Traditional' and 'Modern': Albanian Blood Feud Reconciliations

The speech at Gazimestan and the turn of the decade began the period of ethnic segregation and police state of the Milošević regime. Though the different periods—the nonviolence movement, the arming of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the NATO bombing campaign which ended the war—are each memorialized differently and unequally in the dominant socio-political narrative, overall the period remembered as a time of solidarity against segregation and inequality.[111] There was a fascinating social movement during the

[108] Luci, 149.
[109] Kosovar Stability Initiative, 22-23.
[110] From a translated transcript of Slobodan Milošević's 1989 St. Virtus Day Speech, Gazimestan, June 28, 1989.
[111] Luci, 73.

years of 1989-1992 in which university-related activists joined with local community political leaders throughout Kosovo to conduct a mass reconciliation of blood feuds (*Gjakmarrja,* or 'blood feud,' was a practice outlined in the Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit, a set of Albanian customary social laws dating back in to the bronze age and published in writing during the twentieth century. Gjakmarrja was interpreted to denote the will to avenge previous murder or moral disgrace between families, based on notions of *nder,* or honor).

Though the blood feud reconciliations were not necessarily a movement specifically driven by anti-colonial thought, its mobilizing factors at hand can help explain the mobilizing potential of anti-colonial discourse and illuminates important facets of the overall movement for self determination in Kosovo. Luci's dissertation is a major sociological work on describing the political and social dimensions of the movement. She explains that the Kosovar student organizations and underground movements that advocated for things such as increased rights, autonomy, and/or succession for Albanians in Yugoslavia, organizations that were mostly illegal and prosecuted during the socialist period, "laid the foundations" for the blood feud reconciliations (and later, many of these groups came to participate as leaders of the Kosovo Liberation Army).[112] Over the years of 1989-1992, over five hundred thousand people took place in almost three thousand public reconciliations of blood feuds.[113]

The role of the university student and professor as a mobilizing force was vital. The intellectual elite and the rise of a newly formally educated class since the opening of the University of Prishtina enjoyed a strong sense of legitimacy in public life. Additionally, the reconciliation movement gained its backing in part due to the specific strategies (which could perhaps be understood as cultural strategies) used to gain trust, respect, and a public following. These activists and intellectuals paid visits to Kosovo communities directly and in person rather than using any through a third party institution or phone campaign. They also

[112] Luci, 14.
[113] Ibid., 101.

understood and applied local hierarchies of power and politics, such as the *oda* (a room in the home where men meet to politik). The concept of *besa,* a deep commitment and connection between individuals rooted in honor and vowel, was transformed by the activists to fit the context of public demonstrations of community. As Luci explains, activists "made university professors and academics the public face of reconciliation but relied heavily on the requirements of local tradition."[114] This process relied fully on cultural practices and utilized mechanisms such as oaths and songs rather than the legal system, and organized reconciliations in public as a performance of solidarity building.[115]

This dialectic between tradition and reinvention is what the literature on national imaginings and nationalist movements describes as 'the invention of tradition.'[116] Again, to cite Luci's work here, "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."[117] And as was happening around SEE during this period, activists called upon the discourses of democratization and human rights in their quests for 'the return to Europe.' Here, the blood feud reconciliation activists applied cultural notions of Albanian traditionalism—including the Kanun, within which blood feuds were codified—to actually apply to reconciliation and solidarity and to advance the discourse of human rights. As Luci puts it, "paradoxically, traditional values could shed backwardness and initiate Kosova's cultural return to Europe."[118]

As much as the reconciliations may be seen as part of the wider post-socialist notion of the return to Europe, they were also an important factor for the strengthening the Albanian

[114] Ibid., 102.
[115] Ibid., 111.
[116] See, for example, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[117] Luci, 69.
[118] Ibid., 69.

national movement at the onset of the Milošević regime. The movement called on people to participate not only for personal cause, but more importantly, for a national one. Instances of resistance vis-à-vis othering mechanisms and solidary-building against the violence of what is still referred to in Kosovo as the 'Serb regime' can be seen in the discourses present in the movement. For example, a lyric from one of the public demonstrations: "o how sweet it is to forgive, and save the mother of the Albanian nation/ in front of the barrel of the Slavic Serb… /O forgive blood, my blood, for freedom and unity."[119] The resistance movements of the 1990s, whether the Ibrahim Rugova-led nonviolence movement and the parallel systems or the rise of the Kosovo Liberation Army were discursively framed by Albanians (and later by the international interveners as well) through notions of morality, human rights, and justification against an immoral regime.

During 'Apartheid': Expulsions, parallel systems, and the nonviolent resistance movement

The 1990s are seen in Kosovo Albanian historiography as the most oppressive period of the second Yugoslavia, and the violence employed by the Serbian state during this era is referred to as an occupation fueled by dehumanization of Albanians. An estimated forty five percent of Kosovar Albanians were expelled from their jobs in the early 1990s, and soon after, about ninety percent were expelled and unemployed. Albanian language and texts were banned from schools and parallel systems were created. Police brutality and eventual armed conflict ensued with the disintegration of the peaceful resistance movement.

Vetëvendosje publications mention the transfer of Serb populations by the Milošević government to Kosovo after the expulsions of Albanians from public institutions of the early 1990s. This is something that Kurti spoke about as early as his widely watched interview from a Serbian prison during the war. Kurti links this period with what he described as the

[119] Ibid., 112.

larger manifestation of Pan-Slavic expansionism coming from Moscow in the Ninetieth Century, which he says Serbia is a part of "by proxy." In our own interview he said,

> For this reason, they were always kicking out Albanians and making new colonies… and it continued even in the 1990s, with the abolishment of Kosova's status in 1989. Serbs who were farmers became mayors, because they kicked people out of the system and didn't have enough people to fill the system. Serbs got the best land for agriculture. Eighty percent of university premises were empty because they didn't have students to fill them. The apartheid became structural, where Serbs were at the top, we were below them. It was a colonization process.[120]

The categorization of the Milošević regime in Kosovo as apartheid and the reading of Kosovo's systematic segregation through the lens of the US Civil Rights Movement is especially common in the literature and in Vetëvendosje's political framing around education. During the expulsions of the 1990s, schoolteachers and community volunteers organized a completely parallel education system (as well as other public systems like health care) for Albanians. I attended a 'memory walk' with sociologist Linda Gusia, modeled after a version of a project she is involved in with Alter Habitus and a lecture she gives to her students at University of Prishtina about the resistance movement and the memories of the nonviolence movement (which she argues have been overshadowed in Kosovar collective memory by stories of masculinity and martyrdom in relation to the Kosovo Liberation Army as well as the discourse of international intervention). In this tour, we attended the building of one of the parallel schools, which is still standing untouched. (See appendix, IV).

Hospitals, schools, and other public services were moved into private homes and basements. But at first, Gusia said, the parallel systems were seen as a temporary solution until Albanian students were allowed back into public buildings. She said that until the late 1990s, the curriculum did not even shift, and textbooks from Yugoslavia as well as Albania

[120] Kurti, interview with the author.

continued to be used. It was a highly organized non-violent dissent composed of popular participation with Ibrahim Rugova as the dominant face of the movement.

After the 1995 Dayton Agreement that ended the war in Bosnia Herzigovina, many Kosovars began to see Rugova's strategy for peaceful resistance as not enough—the Serbian authorities had to be confronted and independence had to be delivered.[121] Militant groups that were rising in the early 90s began to strengthen. Still, nonviolence philosophy continued to play an important role over the next years. Luci explains that one of the processes of 'othering' that emerged from this period was the public display of victimhood and humanity, posed against what was framed as the inhumane activities of the Serbian police. She mentions that an iconic photograph of the period of a man sitting in the middle of the street as Serbian special police chased protestors with batons. This photograph "adorned people's homes, coffee shops, and, all kinds of other public and private spaces."[122] (See appendix, V).

Student protests were also crucial to this period. In 1997, the Kosovo Action Network was formed (which later transformed into the Vetëvendosje movement in 2005). There is an interview conducted in 1997 by David Hartsough, then director of Peaceworkers in San Francisco, in which Kurti spoke about his nonviolence philosophy grounded in the work of Ghandi and King, and nonviolence movements as the "greatest invention of this century."[123] The importance that the resistance movement saw in fostering relationships with the international community, a point mentioned in chapter four's discussion of discourse and framing, is illustrated here: "we hope our protest will be supported by the international community… with the use of nonviolence, we can achieve a lot. Recently thanks to our friend, David Hartsough from the US, we gathered a lot of books about nonviolence and

[121] Kosovar Stability Initiative, 35.
[122] Luci, 62.
[123] David Hartsough, "Interview with Kosova student leader Albin Kurti," *dDH Independent Internet Platform*, 14 Nov 1997, "Hope on the Balkans Archive 1997," Web.

some videos with which we are starting a nonviolence library which will be available for all students."[124]

In 1997, the Kosovo Liberation Army was fully established as a counterinsurgency. There are debates in the literature and in everyday conversations about whether or not the peaceful resistance movement of the early to mid 1990s was a 'success' or a 'failure.' Some say that it was a failure because it did not stop the violence of the Milošević regime or prevent the war between Serbian forces and the Albanian guerilla army. Luci argues that the national discourse saw justice in humanitarian intervention as congruent with seeing Yugoslavia, and then the Serbian administration, especially during the 90s, "as a foreign and colonizing force."[125]

A note on the influence of the University of Prishtina

Gani Bobbi, the sociologist and University of Prishtina professor mentioned above who in 1994 called upon the relevancy of Fanon and the Algerian Independence Movement to Kosovo, was one of the signers of Appeal 212, a petition which demanded that the requests Trepca miners (who were opposing the revocation of Kosovo's autonomy) be met.[126] It is perhaps a global truth that university and education systems are often closely tied to social movements. But this example illustrates just how strong of an impact that Kosovo's higher education system had on Albanian self-determination movements in Yugoslavia. The Milošević regime knew this, and thus targeted the University of Prishtina—it was one of the first institutions to face massive expulsions; by the academic year of 1990/1991, Albanian students were forbidden to enroll.[127]

[124] Ibid.
[125] Luci, 41.
[126] Shemsi Krasniqi, 23.
[127] Ibid.,14.

Many of the professors in the Sociology and Philosophy department wrote works regarding the political rights of Albanians in Kosovo. For example, Hajredin Hoxha, a Sociology professor who "spoke openly against nationalism, Stalinism, and Envirism" (referring to Albania's communist dictator Envir Hoxha—which during his time, was "rare" amongst Kosovo intellectuals), focused on nations and self-determination and the situation and rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia.[128] The University was correlated in Yugoslav media with secessionism and protest. Professors within the political science, sociology, and philosophy departments were particularly targeted during the war. Fehmi Agani, one of the founders of the University of Prishtina, was known for his "intellectual and political contribution" to Kosovar self determination initiatives and the quest for more autonomy and rights for the territory.[129] He was involved in the demonstrations of 1968, 1981, and the 1990s. He was the author of eight volumes, one of them titled *Democracy, Nation, Self Determination.* Agani was murdered in May of 1999. Sociology professor Ukshin Hoti was known for his intellectual endeavors in advocating "national freedom and unification."[130] One of his books is titled The Political Philosophy of the Albanian Cause. He went missing in May 1999.

As outlined in the above discussion of student protests *and* the role of the intellectual in Albanian Blood Feud reconciliations, it is apparent that there is a certain moral authority and guidance that the University possessed in Kosovar political movements. In fact, the political situation of Kosovo throughout the decades since it opened in was always reflected in the courses administered by the department of Sociology and Philosophy. (See appendix, VI).

[128] Ibid., 19.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.

When the University was moved into private homes during the parallel systems of the 1990s, the Philosophy and Sociology departments changed curricula, removing courses such as "Marxist Philosophy" and "The Sociology of Self-Government" and replacing them with courses such as "Social Pathology," "Human Rights," Anthropology courses, and "Sociology of the Family."[131] During the 2000s, when UNMIK was established and Albanian students returned to public University buildings, UNMIK administrators divided the sociology and philosophy departments and the curriculum went through changes, which S. Krasniqi says, created a "completely different program for which we had made no preliminary preparations, nor did we have the required information."[132] This small statement is indicative of the general mood towards UNMIK administration and the anti-colonial discourse that was about to develop against it.

IV.II: The International Protectorate (1999-2007)

After the NATO bombing campaign, UNMIK was established as part of the Security Council Resolution 1244, which was passed on 10 June 1999. UNMIK was mandated to uphold public order and security; oversee the repatriation of refugees and IDPs; perform civil administrations; develop political institutions and local elections; build civil society; and to promote economic development. Its structure is divided into four pillars: 1. management of security and judicial, 2. the international civilian presence and domestic administrative bodies, 3. OSCE's implementation of democratization and institution building projects, and 4. a mandate allowing the EU to hold authority on development projects, including regulating customs and trade, property disputes, and privatization.[133] Vetëvendosje was established in 2004 from the Kosova Action Network. Its original

[131] Ibid., 16.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Visoka, 107.

purpose was to critique and resist with direct actions the international protectorate's corruption scandals and diplomatic immunity, opposition to supervised negotiations for Kosovo's final status, and in demand of self determination through territorial and political sovereignty.

The international protectorate and supervised independence has been vastly critiqued by literature on peacekeeping missions and international intervention and even within the international community and those involved with the mandates themselves. Yet there is no stronger critique than that coming from the intellectuals and political activists engaging with anti-colonial discourse and neo-colonial analyses in Kosovo. One instance of injustice during the protectorate that is often referred to is that of the murder of two Vetëvendosje activists during street protests in 2007. When protestors began throwing sticks and rocks, Romanian UNMIK police shot rubber bullets to disperse the crowd, but the bullets were expired. Seventy activists were hospitalized and two were killed. But a negotiation or trial into this matter never occurred; instead, Kurti was arrested on the grounds that he incited protest conditions that provided a threat of violence. A petition was dispered on the internet and signed by 175,000 people in Kosovo, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia calling for his release, and Amnesty International also got involved. He was eventually released without charges.[134] Even today, the general public is extremely cautious with critiquing the international administration because the international intervention created the pathway for independence after the war. The Vetëvendosje protests are large, but do not draw the entirety of the country. Even still, Lindita Tahiri argues, even if a protest does not draw a crowd, there is a general sense of respect towards Kurti and the movement, for it is seen as a vessel for "the courageous and uncompromising words that no one else dares to say

[134] Lindita Tahiri, Internet activism as transformation of the political discourse, in *Njohja: Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities,* ed. Hasnije Ilazi et al., (Pristina: University of Pristina, 2013), 221.

aloud." During Kurti's period of detention, "there was a full solidarity of Kosovo lawyers who refused to be part of the panel of judges even on the condition of losing their license."[135]

IV.III: ('Supervised') Independence (2008-Current)

Kosovo's declaration of statehood occurred within an overall political climate of Europeanization and outward-looking visions for supranational, European Union inclusion. In 2008 after status negotiations between Serbia and the international protectorate were failing to result in a compromise, Finnish diplomat Martti Ahtisaari developed the Comprehensive Settlement Proposal (the Ahtishaari Plan), which provided the basis for the constitution of Kosovo and the unilateral declaration of independence under supervised transition by EULEX (the period of 'supervised' independence officially ended in 2012, but as of June 2016, EULEX continues to receive extensions on its mandate).

The Vetëvendosje movement, rather than becoming irrelevant after 2008, only become stronger, more influential, and more engaged in opposition politics after the declaration of Independence. EULEX personal were granted diplomatic immunity (despite cases of economic and political corruption), and Vetëvendosje positioned this within its neocolonial critique. In fact, the vague, constrained, and supervised status of Kosovo under EULEX was seen as a direct extension of UNMIK's power structure, and a leadership that was more concerned with status-neutrality and negotiations for Serbia due to security concerns than with Kosovar nation-building.

Kurti describes the politics of the post-protectorate by referencing the Algerian war for independence. He said that there was a decolonization process that systematically introduced sovereignty as part of the nation building process. After independence, Kurti

[135] Ibid., 228.

says, Kosovo did not go through a process of decolonization, but instead has been at the whim of Serbia's hegemonic aspirations over the territory. "The problem with our independence nowadays is that we got it without self determination."[136] A graffiti started to spread around Kosovo which said "EUELX: Made In Serbia!" (See appendix, VII).

In 2009, twenty EUELX cars were damaged by activists aligning with Vetëvendosje. Over the next few years, Vetëvendosje organized a buy national campaign *(Blej Shqip)* and boycott of Serbian imports, organized public demonstrations and performance rejecting privatization, and issued statements against the Brussels negotiation process (saying that in order to negotiate with Serbia on technical issues, Kosovo must be seen as an equal at the negotiation table). In 2010, Vetëvendosje officially registered as a 'citizens initiative' and began to participate in the parliamentary elections. Still, each activist and MP that I've spoken with has refrained from the use or even corrected my own use of the term political party. Abazi stated, "we do not see ourselves as a political party, but rather as a movement spearheaded by the organization we have built."[137]

In its first campaign, Kurti led the movement into 12.7 percent of the vote in Parliament. Today votes continue to grow in number, and Vetëvendosje is the third largest party represented in Parliament. How is the third largest party represented in Kosovo parliament, a party which refrains from even referring to itself as a political party, which constructs an anti-colonial discourse in its opposition to negotiations with Serbia, UNMIK and EULEX, which is not on speaking terms with the United States Embassy in perhaps the most pro-American country on earth, able to mobilize its base? I think their ability to face these challenges can be explained in their ability to operate within a politics of theory-praxis, a defining factor in their potential to mobilize.

[136] Kurti, interview with the author.
[137] Abazi, interview with the author.

Mobilizing Theory and Praxis

When Albin Kurti was a political prisoner, he spent most of his time reading. He was first only allowed to read in Serbian and Russian, and then later was allowed to receive books in jail. He created a schedule: he would read at least three hundred pages a day if it was literature. If it was an academic work, at least on hundred and fifty pages a day. Since August 2015, 348 people have been arrested for Vetëvendosje-related activities—particularly the damaging of property. But the activists remind newcomers that prison can be utilized as a space for educating oneself in political doctrine. Zaimi states that although there are people reading theory while in Kosovo or traveling abroad, "there are also a lot of people who read their books in prison. Myself, I think that prison can give a lot of quality time to study, translate, or write."[138] Albulena Haxhiu seconds this and says, "for activists if they spend in prison a week or two, a month or two, they can actually benefit from reading there."[139]

Every activist I spoke to brought up some of the most foundational figures to the movements political philosophy: Franz Fanon, Martin Luther King Jr., Fan Noli, Ukshin Hoti (the leader of the June Revolution in Albania in 1924 and a philosophy professor from the University of Prishtina killed in 1999), amongst other more personalized favorites. These are the thinkers that have shaped the anti-colonial and anti-racist discourse being used by the party. Though there is not a universal vision of the discourse— Glauk Konjufca, for example, says that though all of his peers were reading Franz Fanon and Gayatri Spivak, and that anti-colonial critiqued helped to make sense of the systematic aspects of segregation and inequalities with power and representation, he does not see Kosovo as a traditional case of colonialism, which he reserves for the period of time between the Berlin Conference and the era of decolonization. Konjufca says that the neocolonial analyses and anti-colonial discourse was most prominent in Vetëvendosje circles during the years of the international protectorate

[138] Zaimi, interview with the author.
[139] This quote is taken from a forthcoming piece written by Valerie Hopkins.

But the political doctrine, Boiken Abazi says, remains to be rooted in the convictions of "principles of equality, anti-colonialism, solidarity, and cooperation between people."[140]

In our interview, Albin Kurti listed the three most important components that have shaped his political convictions. The first, mentioned earlier, is the history of protest in Kosovo during the Yugoslav era. He says that the second aspect of his political inspiration is the nonviolence movements in India and the United States, as well as the overall African American Civil Rights Movement. He says that MLK and Gandhi led him to envision what it means to be courageous and to resist. The third aspect, he says, is "the general anti-colonial struggle in Africa…"

> Especially the Algerian struggle has influenced me. I read Albert Memmi and Franz Fanon. I think that the elements of nationalism that you see within me are inspired by Franz Fanon—not Charles de Gaulle. Because in a way, they were both nationalists, but one was advocating for expansion and hegemony and 'Greater France.' And the other was engaged in an emancipatory liberation struggle. This element of the nation which brings people together—nation as resistance, nation as society, nation as community—is important.[141]

Abazi is from a middle class family and he left Albania at age eleven to attend an American bordering school in Greece. During his senior year of high school, he traveled on exchange to Ozarks, Arkansas and began to critically notice the immense social inequalities. He was surprised to see America different from the America he thought he knew from his private bordering school or what he watched on television. When he got a scholarship to attend the University of Michigan, he realized that many of his classmates did not have the same opportunities for education, travel, and social mobility. "This came as a shock, as I believed that I was the one coming from an underdeveloped country." At the University of Michigan, Abazi participated in Model UN (which he says helped him understand the inefficiencies of international law), and after University he spent time working for an

[140] Dafina Halili, "'This Government Will Not Last Long, and Neither Will the Decision Against Me'—Boiken Abazi," *Kosovo2.0*, 22 March 2016.
[141] Kurti, interview with the author.

international NGO in New York focused on arts and politics. In university, he took classes on structural inequality in the United States, economics of development, and anti-colonial theory. Several texts stuck out to Abazi from college: Paolo Freiere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* the works of Franz Fanon, and Ha Joon Chang's *Kicking Away the Ladder*. Years later while Abazi was organizing a literacy project inspired by Freiere, he saw Albin Kurti on a television interview in Albania speaking about Fanon and Joon Chang. His attention was immediately captured.

Abazi's experiences with educational exchange and the impacts his studies had on his visions of solidarity but also his readings of the history of Kosovo reveals a wider trend in the production and diffusion of anti-colonial discourse in Kosovo. Again, the role and symbolism of being a student of political philosophy from the prison cell is foundational to their movement. But there is also a trend of higher education and exchange. Many of the people I spoke with—whether in interviews or briefly in other settings—spoke about the importance of educational exchange, whether through local networks or study abroad, in positioning their political subjectivities. During the lectures and meetings I had with Shpent Ahmeti and former Vetëvendosje MP Ilir Deda, both referenced the importance of their time studying abroad at Harvard. The University of Michigan and the American University of Bulgaria also often come up in my meetings with actors using anti-colonial discourse in Kosovo. It seems that educational exchange is one major way in which historical figures like Fan Noli are put into conversation with figures such as Paolo Freiere. And one mechanism that such exchange of ideas is diffused even more widely is through Vetëvendosje's political school.

Vetëvendosje's Political School

In 2016, Vetëvendosje MPs snuck tear gas canisters into parliament several times as a tactic to try and prevent developments on the Brussels Negotiations and the subsequent demarcation deal with Montenegro and the plan for Zajednica, deals which they say were

negotiated by a corrupt Kosovo government without regard to constitutionality. Albulena Haxhiu, one of the MPs who released tear gas during session, identifies this tactic as a direct practice of her political philosophy of engaging in direct action, even when illegal, to oppose what she saw as antidemocratic actions by the government. She was a student of Vetëvendosje's political school, organized by members of the party as a classroom for political philosophy and school for direct action and protest. She say, "Vetëvendosje transforms you. I am not the same Albulena that I was. This is a political school that emancipates you."[142] Zaimi, one of the organizers of the school, described its set-up in our interview. It is organized yearly and has four general courses: Political writing and speech class; history; political economy; and philosophy. They invite professors from Kosovo, Albania, and abroad, who share similar philosophical outlooks to the party but may not be activists or members themselves.

I interviewed a pharmacist and graduate student who has recently become a Vetëvendosje activist. For several years she has been involved in Kosovo's civil society sector, especially with the regional transitional-justice based youth group Youth Initiative for Human Rights. V. is an avid supporter of Shpent Ahmeti, so when he was running for mayor of Prishtina, she went into the Vetëvendosje offices to offer a helping hand for his campaign. As she spent time with the activists, she was immediately impressed by their commitment and long hours of work as well as the high level of extensive debate (she explained that any issue, no matter how small, is always up for extensive academic and political debate—sometimes, the Assembly spent entire nights debating). And when Ahmeti won the mayorship, she attended a celebration where, she recollected, Albin Kurti came to her and expressed deep gratitude for her time.

[142] Hopkins.

She continued to be involved with supporting Ahmeti's projects and attending some Vetëvendosje demonstrations, but she did not, for a time, consider herself an activist. She was invited to attend the political school, and that was a transformational experience for her. Because she had studied sciences and medicine at University, this was her first introduction to political philosophy, feminist theory, and sociology. She became more active, and was even invited to participate in the Assembly, though she says she prefers to be an observer rather than take on a leadership role. The school gave her options to form a theoretical lens to apply to her experiences as an activist in civil society and a political activist for the Ahmeti campaign.

V. illuminates another critical aspect of the mobilizing potential of Vetëvendosje's ideology. Although she credits her work in civil society for giving her a "spirit for justice and activism," she was disillusioned with the politics within the sector, particularly the donor-NGO relationship. Organizations she was a part of, she said, compromised their own morals and visions in order to appease the wishes of the donors. The leadership threw out project ideas or took on projects that appealed to the European Union and other international donors, even if the experts in civil society deemed them to be problematic or not useful. And, she said, she watched her peers take on leadership roles within civil society mainly for the monetary benefits and professionalization, particularly when a political leadership opportunity was possible. She saw a lack of values, a praxis that did not match the theory. The political school provided a critique of neoliberalism and the professionalization of politics that provided a lens in which to analyze the situation of Kosovo civil society. Before concentrating on this paper's main argument on the mobilizing potential of anti-colonial critique, I will discuss some of the criticism outlined in the literature that Vetëvendosje faces itself.

Vetëvendosje's Critics: A Note on Unitary and Exclusionary Politics

Vetëvendosje is the third largest party represented in parliament, and the social movement continued to grow since their establishment twelve years—just last year, Vetëvendosje demonstrations drew the largest crowd of proctors since the Kosovo war. Still, while this paper is meant to explain how anti-colonial discourse is a mobilizing factor in the Vetëvendosje social movement, they are still an opposition party. Though the movement mobilizes a wide support base, they also have a wide base of critics (further than just the obvious critics from European and Atlantic embassies). B., the graduate student I interviewed who opposes Vetëvendosje though it is the party that all of his friends support, told me that although he aligns himself with some of the cores of the party's platform—addressing the injustices committed by the Milošević regime, opposition to corruption and anti-democratic actions committed by the Kosovar and Serbian governments—he sees Vetëvendosje as assuming an exclusive moral authority to address these grievances. He also cautions against rhetoric that may distances Kosovo from the international community, particularly the American Embassy and the EU, calling such rhetoric "dangerous." "Although this administration was corrupt and insufficient, it prepared Kosovo for self-governance."[143] He also sees it as a party that organizes around and overemphasizes the nation and ethnicity, and said that Vetëvendosje is "able to tap on these people that still have nationalist feelings. They play the ethnic card fairly often and it has gotten boring and inauthentic."[144] Luci, though not referring specifically to Vetëvendosje, argues that the practice of shifting discourse and national identification to suffering and resistance as "motifs of national tradition" which position Serbia as an unjust and immoral neighbor can also be seen as another form of essentialization.[145]

[143] B., interview with the author, 25 May 2016.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Luci, 31.

Visoka's piece on Vetëvendosje and the line between emancipatory and exclusionary politics also speaks to this criticism. He says that while the grassroots nature of this movement helps to "safeguard the pluralist nature of public affairs," contest the legitimacy of power-holders, and encourage the kind of citizenry that aims to promote governmental accountability, [146] he sees Vetëvendosje's boycott campaign of Serbian products and opposition to minority governing structures and reserved seats in parliament as agendas that support a mono-ethnic emancipation. So on the one hand, Visoka says, though Vetevendojse's rejection of multiculturalism policies aimed at the Serb population is framed as coming from a place of rejecting ethnic politics, the party invokes a distinct and exclusionary Albanian identity.[147]

This is one of the criticisms I often heard from Vetëvendosje's critics, particularly from people who identify, like some of the members of the party itself, as liberal democrats. These critics warn that Vetëvendosje fosters potential for scapegoating and placing the source of all societal-ills not only on the Serbian state, but also on Serb people. Kurti acknowledges this criticism. In almost every instance in which he outlines his views on the colonial and hegemonic aspirations of the Serbian state, he emphasizes that "I am talking about the Serbian state, not the Serb people."[148] V. even told me that some of the activists are currently attempting to recruit Serbs from Kosovo into the movement—without much success, so far, she says.[149] (Though I have met Serbs in Kosovo and in Serbia who do support the party, and I have also seen references to its support in publications from leftist circles in Serbia).

Visoka's discussion on how Vetëvendosje rejects ethno-politics on the one-hand, yet is perceived by a portion of the public as an ethno-nationalist party on the other, brings Kurti's conversation about ethnicity to mind. He said, "I don't like to be called *ethnic*

[146] Visoka, 100.
[147] Ibid., 122.
[148] Kurti, interview with the author.
[149] V., interview with the author, 15 April 2016.

Albanian." He refers to Wendy Brown (a political philosopher who's relevance will be discussed further) and her three theories on the process of national identification. Her third, he says, is the one that most resonated with him. He described it as this: when a person is born, they are immediately socialized ("doomed") into groups, and only later there is potential to transform and step out of your own national identification and to become simply "human." This ongoing process of "becoming human" started for Kurti, he said, when he was a child and he began learning English so that he could read books by Mark Twain and James Joyce in their original language. "I noticed that being Albanian is not sufficient, so I am now in the process of becoming a human being."[150] But, he emphasizes, he is not opposed to politics that utilize and build upon national identification. He refers to an Irish nationalist concept (which he could not remember the name of) that positions the nation as a mechanism *through* which collective liberation can be achieved—the key here, Kurti says, is a politics of *through*, not *beyond*.[151]

Further discussions on this topic with people involved with Vetëvendosje are not within the scope of this study, but this conversation gives nuance to understanding the theoretical underpinnings and ways in which nationality and ethnicity is imagined and disputed. Still, there are varied critiques against Vetëvendosje that calls their politics not only exclusionary, but 'extremist.' In an interview with the online magazine *Kosovo2.0*, Abazi spoke to this: Journalist Dafine Halili asked, "You have often been accused by different

[150] Kurti, Interview with the author.

[151] This concept is also relevant to socialist movements in the United States. As debates raged within the communist party in the 1930s about how to unite the working class (often ignoring black issues—the lack of intersectionality theory has historically been a flaw in Marxist developments), the national question lost importance to the dominant discourse. Some would argue that it was never *actually* a central part of the discourse anyway—Richard Wright for example stated that advocating for black nationalism and territorial sovereignty was just a temporary tool—that "they must accept the concept of nationalism because in order to transcend it, they must possess and understand it." Such debates about identity politics and social justice continue to unfold today. Quote From Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America*, (London and New York: Verso, 1999), 11.

analysts in Kosovo — but also by the media — of being a communist, Maoist, Enverist and nationalist?"

> You also forgot 'radical Islamist,' 'fascist,' 'anti-American,' 'anti-European,' etc. At times we've been labeled with all of these terms at once within the same sentence, despite the fact that they contradict one another… These are absolutely not true. You only need to analyze every stance of Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! and its documents, to notice where the Movement has stood in the past 11 years since its founding.[152]

Abazi dismisses such labels as unfounded and sensationalist notions that disregard the political positionings of Vetevndosje's agenda. But in general, the movement does not wholly reject the label 'nationalist.' Their use of anticolonial discourse and critique is also relevant here. There is a hegemonic nationalism, positioned as a national movement in quest of expansion and domination, and then there is a liberatory nationalism, positioned within an anticolonial quest for sovereignty and restructuring and equalizing of global systems of power (via the nation-state). An article by Arbër Zaimi's article in the newspaper *Zëri* argues that that its hypocritical for the West to be uncomfortable with symbols of the Albanian nation and to presents its own nationalisms as 'banal' national prided and 'Balkan nationalisms' as violent. He points out that far-right parties with hegemonic-racist nationalist agendas are on the rise in the West, and says that a "more generalized label 'nationalist' fails to highlight the important distinction between national-liberator, and national-imperialist."[153]

This act of naming the discourse, showing its hypocrisies, and offering another way in which to understand global politics brings me to the last point of my main argument. Vetëvendosje is able to provide an alternative lens to that of the discourses of Balkanization, ethnic nationalism, and ethnic conflict. Their oppositional frame of analyses employs an anti-colonial discourse in its criticism of notions European supremacy. I argue that a key explanation for why anti-colonial discourse is a mobilizing factor in the Vetëvendosje

[152] Halili.
[153] Arbër Zaimi, "What is behind 'Balkan nationalism?'"*Zëri* 23 October 2014. Web.

movement is because it is an oppositional discourse that first serves to 'unpack' Western neoliberal intervention and then provide a basis for direct action.

Anti-Colonial Discourse: In Pursuit of a Paradigm Shift

I will illustrate this point by discussing two pieces of literature that Kurti noted as important to shaping his values. During our interview, I noticed that Kurti's analyses of the 'international community' contained points that seemed directly aligned with Wendy Brown's *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*. Once I mentioned the book, Kurti eagerly confirmed his relationship to Brown's work. The second work most worth mentioning is Iris Marion Young's "Structural Injustice and the Politics of Difference." After our interview, Kurti left his own printed and highlighted copy at the Vetëvendosje reception desk for me to borrow.

Brown problematizes tolerance discourse by arguing that it has been used *as a discourse of depoliticization* of political phenomenon like inequality and social conflict. The origins of the word "tolerance," Wendy says, are in its use in the United States as a coded word to mean "mannered racialism."[154] It signified racism and Jim Crow policies that were not outwardly violent and did not include formal segregation or overt practices of subordination, "but reproduced white supremacy all the same."[155] Now this term has had a recent surge in use since the 1980s in a global context, and this has gone hand in hand with the liberal-democratic multicultural agendas of international institutions. Though she is not arguing in opposition to liberal multiculturalism per-se, she argues that the *tolerance discourse* used by liberal democratic institutions to depoliticize the "sources of political

[154] Wendy Brown, "Tolerance as a Discourse of Depoliticization," from *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 1-24, 1.
[155] Ibid., 2.

problems" and substitutes political justice projects for "therapeutic or behavioral ones."[156] In the context of global interventions, such political justice projects are subordinated and supported by a discourse of tolerance which attempts to legitimize "Western superiority" and to "legitimate Western cultural and political imperialism."[157] An analysis of tolerance requires detaching from tolerance as a normative, transcendent, and a universal virtue, and instead tolerance discourse should be understood as a practice of governmentality, which is historically and geographically varied.

It is evident why Brown's work would be appealing in Kosovo as a framework for contesting the discursive practices and policies of international institutions. The Brussels Negotiations, for example, have been widely criticized for lacking transparency and bottom-up involvement from the people most impacted by the agreements, for focusing on technical issues rather than larger political issues, and for being lauded as a peace-building success story by the European Union while leadership in Kosovo and Serbia continues to be plagued with corruption scandals and back-hand deals.[158] And, it is true that "tolerance" is a word that can be heard in the everyday rhetoric of top-down politics in Kosovo. I have attended 'tolerance projects' and workshops hosted by the United States Embassy which do, I believe, mirror Brown's critiques.

There are problems in Kosovo regarding structural inequality (particularly regarding Roma, Egyptian, and Ashkali minorities), Serbia's competing kin-state agenda and poor solutions from the Kosovo government regarding maintained geographical segregation of Serbs in Kosovo, and post-conflict divisions and prejudices. Kurti wants to emphasize that these are political problems, not issues of will or ability for inter-ethnic tolerance.

[156] Ibid., 6.
[157] Ibid., 7.
[158] However, it should be mentioned that the Brussels Negotiations have had important consequences impacting the everyday lives of people in Kosovo and in Serbia. For example, some of the agreements deal with increasing freedom of movement between the two countries.

Vetëvendosje's anticolonial critique encompasses this argument that the international protectorate and the institutions thereafter have attempted to pacify emancipatory politics.

Iris Marion Young's essay "Structural Injustice and the Politics of Difference" outlines her distinction between the politics of positional difference and the political of cultural difference. Positional differences concern peoples' placements on axes around sexuality, labor, body aesthetic (such as race), et cetera. Positional differences concern structural inequalities and decision making power—not necessarily based on the amount of goods and power that an individual has a particular time, but more about the vulnerabilities and limitations that someone experiences based on their groups' position along an axes. The politics of cultural difference refer to multiculturalism policies that aim to accommodate and support the plurality and legitimacy of distinctive cultural practices. An interesting point underlined in this text is the distinction between ethnic prejudice and racism. Young insinuates that ethnic conflict or hostility may be driven by the failure to recognize the legitimacy of other ethno-cultural practices and identities. Racism, however, is structural nature of positioning groups along axes, particularly around "body aesthetic" and color, and the practice of one group extracting benefits vis-à-vis its hierarchical relationship to others.[159] "Racism exists in structural processes that normalize body aesthetic," deem servile and physical labor as appropriate for subordinated groups, segregates members of groups, and "renders deviant the comportments and habits of these segregated persons in relation to dominant norms of respectability."[160]

Young states that most issues of justice concern both the politics of cultural difference and the politics of cultural difference. However, she argues, an overemphasis has been placed

[159] Iris Marion Young, "Structural Injustice and the Politics of Difference," in Justice, *Governance, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Difference: Reconfigurations in a Transnational World*, edited by Kwame Anthony Appiah, Seyla Benhabib, Iris Marion Young, and Nancy Fraser, (Berlin: Humboldt University Press, 2007): 103.
[160] Ibid., 89.

on creating policy solutions to the politics of cultural difference and this has obscured and even stifled political action on abolishing inequalities. Kurti sees the international intervention as emphasizing a discourse of the politics of cultural difference that poses the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo as one embedded in historic inter-ethnic hatreds intolerance. He says,

> I think that the historical conflict in the Balkans has not been the one between Albanians and Serbs, Kosova and Serbia. No, it has been between Albanians as a nation and Serbia as a state…. The international community wants reconciliation without political justice, and that's why the international community overrates dialogue. More dialogue with Brussels, more dialogue with Serbia. They create this scenario as if we fought with Serbia because we didn't talk with her or as if we fought because we didn't know each other.[161]

The literature mentioned by the activists whom I interviewed was not always specifically anti-colonial critique or taken from neo-colonial studies. But for Kurti, Zaimi, and Abazi, anti-colonial critique fits within a framework of understanding the past and explaining the present. Vetëvendosje is constructing a discourse meant to explain, deconstruct, and oppose what they designate, along with Vjollca Krasniqi, Gëzim Visoka, and others, as liberal peace-building discourse, which have supported the policies and agendas of the international protectorate. I will provide one more example of Kurti's illustration of his opposition discourse. During our interview, he borrowed my notebook and began outlining what he sees as the discourse of neoliberal institutions in Kosovo, which he referred to as 'postmodernity,' and the discourses of Vetëvendosje, inspired by 'modernity.' (See appendix, VII).

He emphasized several times that he does not see the phenomenon on the left side of the page as 'bad' or unnecessary (except for the concept of ethnic conflict). However, he says, the 'international community' has put too much emphasis on peace, security, stability, diversity, and tolerance (positioning Kosovo as a geography of crisis), which has come at the

[161] Kurti, interview with the author.

expense of justice, democracy, development, solidarity, and cooperation. The international community sees Kosovo as a security issue, and thus democratic processes have been corrupted at the cost of maintaining stability. Closer analyses of the realities of Kosovo's neoliberal democratic policies and impacts of intervention is not the resolution of this paper, though there are several authors engaged in the debate—for arguments in support of anti-colonial critiques and neo-colonial analyses of neoliberal policies in Kosovo, there are the authors mentioned above in Chapter I. The essential point here is that anti-colonial discourse mobilizes as an oppositional lens in which to understand the policies and practices of international intervention in Kosovo. In this country with a new yet incomplete territorial sovereignty, with circulations of development aid money and international peace-building projects yet an unemployment rate of about forty percent, and with the youngest population in Europe, people are disillusioned and disempowered with the status quo. European Union policies towards Kosovo and the negotiations it spearheads lack clarity and grassroots involvement. Anti-colonial discourse provides a way to draw upon global phenomenon to understand these issues and to position Kosovo within a larger body of resistance movements.

Conclusions

> *"There are threads—theoretical and practical, but also family—that connect the anti-colonial resistance… since 1912 until Vetëvendosje, now. We take pride in coming from that heritage."*[162]

> *"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."*[163]

> *"I remember very well the look on the faces of some of my American friends when I told them that I was offered a scholarship to go to university in the state of Michigan… many of them knew that they would never get the same opportunity and would never go to college… This came as shock, as I believed that I was the one coming from an underdeveloped country. I started to make sense of these experiences in my university studies in Michigan. One of my professors, who taught political theory and international relations, introduced us to the African American*

[162] Zaimi, interview with the author.
[163] Luci, 41.

> *struggle, to the structural inequalities in the US, and also to anti-colonial theoreticians like Frantz Fanon."*[164]

> *"I think we are formally independent without substantive independence, which would be sovereignty, territorial integrity, and viable economic development to provide jobs…. We have a king and queen: the US Ambassador is the Queen, the EU Special Representative is the King… We are a weak state, a captured state by the main party PDK, and when it comes to the economy we are a neoliberal state. So we are a weak, captured, neoliberal state."*[165]

The four quotes listed above represent the four main aspects of this intellectual history of anticolonial discourse in Kosovo. I argue that such a discourse has been a mobilizing factor of the Kosovar movement for self-determination because: (i) Vetëvendosje engages in a two-part anticolonial critique—the first, against the Yugoslav and Serbian states, the second, against the international protectorate—which narrates a tradition of Albanian resistance against hegemony. (ii) Vetëvendosje uses anticolonial discourse strategically and in its claims-makings. (iii) Vetëvendosje is an intellectual movement that draws upon a wide body of political philosophy to educate and mobilize its base, and to advocate for praxis of anticolonial theory. (iv) Anticolonial discourse is an oppositional discourse. Vetëvendosje names a discourse of neoliberal intervention and peace-building missions, and then provides an alternative lens of analysis. I will now return to and summarize each point.

(i) Vetëvendosje engages in a two-part anticolonial critique—the first, against the Yugoslav and Serbian states, the second, against the international protectorate—which narrates a tradition of Albanian resistance against hegemony.

The ways in which my interviewees referred to particular years of protest in Yugoslavia helped me to understand how historical moments are woven together into a narrative of national resistance. Anticolonial discourse and characterizes Albanian national history in Kosovo as embodied in experiences with oppression, yet struggles for liberation.

[164] Abazi, interview with the author.
[165] Kurti, interview with the author.

The dialectic between the past and present that an anticolonial discourse offers in this case—one that threads a link between structural inequalities and Serbian expansion during Yugoslavia and the current post-international protectorate situation. Not only does this discourse mobilize because it designs a historical narrative, but also, perhaps, because it provides a way to understand and resist historical traumas. Such a discourse analyzes experiences of disempowerment and provides an alterative historical narrative rooted in a national tradition of resistance. This national history supports and sets the stage for current claims making.

(ii) Vetëvendosje uses anticolonial discourse strategically in its claims-makings.

Anticolonial discourse is a strategic discourse. Identifying the Serbian government, particularly during the protectorate, as an oppressive regime that was built on a history of racism and systematized oppression towards Albanians—to the point of mass expulsions and violence mirroring other infamous regimes which have been widely denounced in global history—beckons undisputable rights and remedies. During the era of decolonization, international law granted former colonies the right the right to self determination via granting territorial sovereignty and throwing off the yoke of the metropol. In the International Court of Justice (ICJ)'s opinion on the legality of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of Independence, Judge Yusuf submitted a separate opinion, in which he states his regret that the normative debates about decolonization were not presented in the court's debate. His separate opinion states,

> From a legal standpoint, the question also concerned whether or not the process by which the people of Kosovo were seeking to establish their own State involved a violation of international law or whether it was in accordance with such law due to the possible existence of a positive right which could legitimize it. Judge Yusuf finds it regrettable that the Court decided not to address this important aspect of the question, thereby failing to seize the opportunity offered by the General Assembly's request to define the scope and normative content of the post-colonial right of self-

> determination. Addressing the question of self-determination and clarifying its applicability to this specific case would have allowed the Court to contribute, inter alia, to the prevention of the misuse of this important right by groups promoting ethnic and tribal divisions within existing States.[166]

Putting Konjufca's statement—that anticolonial critique was most prominently circulated by the grassroots during the years of the international protectorate[167]—into conversation with Judge Yusuf's opinion is fascinating here. And to add another example to this point: Kurti considers ethnic cleansing as a euphemism for genocide. He said that during the wars in Bosnia, "ethnicity became a dominant notion in the discourses of the war. It became a predicate—ethnic Serb, ethnic Croat, ethnic Bosniak, and ethnic cleansing… [The international community did not yet want to use the term genocide] because if you determine that a genocide took place, it automatically gives the right for self determination."[168] I have found through my minor intellectual history of anti-colonial discourse in Kosovo that such conversations and sentiments have been present in politics since the first large demonstrations in Yugoslav Kosovo. But this case especially emphasizes the role that the politics of categorization and particular discourses around human rights and oppression play in claims-makings and the life-changing impacts of international law.

In a response to an article that Boiken Abazi wrote about inter-ethnic/multicultural exchanges[169] (such as the Mitrovica Rock School) as a-political, neo-colonial projects designed on the basis that "if we only were to realize we are all human beings we would not discriminate, we would stop all this irrational ethnic hatred, and maybe even prevent

[166] *Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo (Request for Advisory Opinion)*, General List No. 141, International Court of Justice (ICJ), 22 July 2010.
[167] Konjufca, interview with the author, Prishtina, 13 May 2016.
[168] Kurti, interview with the author.
[169] There is an entire body of literature on exchanges, encounters, and the contact hypothesis theory. A lot of the literature focuses on Israel-Palestine youth exchanges, and the power dynamics and issues at hand. For research on the Kosovo-Serbia context, see the works of Orli Fridman.

violence,"[170] *Kosovo 2.0*'s Online Managing Editor Jack Butcher defended multicultural youth exchange programs and their operations in Europe since WWII. He said, "multi-cultural youth programs should be viewed as a small but important slither of the solution, not a politically vilified part of the problem."[171]

Boiken's response stated,

> At the end of WWII, Germany was: 1. Forced to apologize for its aggressions and atrocities carried out by the Nazi Government; 2. Germany lost all of the territories it occupied. It even lost Alsace and Lorrain, which were given to France. And if this was not enough, Germany was divided in two separate states; 3. Germany paid war reparations for its aggressions and it incurred a high international debt; 4. The Nazi ideology and party was declared illegal and the heads of the Nazi government were punished through trials… None of the above mentioned points happened in the case of Serbia after the war in Kosova. There was no "de-nazification" of Serbia.[172]

Vetëvendosje's slogal—*no negotiations without self-determination*—summarizes their position on the Brussels negotiations and the current international mediation of Kosovo's liberal multicultural (framed as multiethnic) constitution. Their claims for unconditional territorial and political sovereignty are based in the notion that colonial spaces inherently deserve systematic decolonization. Negotiation with Serbia, they claim, calls first for a program of war reparations, apologies, and what Abazi referred to above as Serbian 'de-nazification.'

(iii) Vetëvendosje is an intellectual movement that draws upon a wide body of political philosophy to educate and mobilize its base, and to advocate for praxis of anticolonial theory.

Vetëvendosje is an intellectual movement which converses with and studies

[170] The quote finishes, "However, what lies beneath this type of conviction is also a concealed form of racism from the West towards people living in the peripheries." Boiken Abazi, "Dancing in Kosova," Boiken Abazi, *Kosovotwopointzero.com* 30 December 2014, Web.
[171] Jack Butcher, "Multicultural Youth Play Their Part," *Kosovotwopointzero.com*, 10 March 2015.
[172] Abazi, interview with the author.

sociologists, historians, political theorists, and philosophers in its platforms and its inter-personal debates amongst activists. Leaders of the movement utilize informal and formal education through their political school, their emphasis on the role of theory in public politics and demonstrations, their support of scholarship in prison, and the usage of a wide body of anti-colonial literature and literature critical of neoliberalism. Sociologists like Franz Fanon are put into conversation with Albanian intellectuals, always with an emphasis on resisting and contesting the power of authority.

(iv) Anticolonial discourse is an oppositional discourse. Vetëvendosje names a discourse of neoliberal intervention and peace-building missions, and then provides an alternative lens of analysis.

Vetëvendosjes's anti-colonial discourse describes and opposes what it presents as a discourse of neoliberalism and international peace-keeping missions. Vetëvendosje's website contains a section called 'deconstructions' which contains articles written by activists analyzing mainstream politics. One example is the explanation of 'ethnic decentralization' critiqued through the lens of 'apartheid and institutionalized racism.'[173]

Anticolonial discourse is a mobilizing factor in contemporary Kosovar social movements because it corresponds to a critique of neoliberalism and international peacekeeping missions. Vetëvendosje's use of anticolonial discourse actually *locates and names* a discourse of neoliberal peacekeeping, one that emphasizes the politics of cultural difference and inter-ethnic tolerance and stability. Furthermore, their use of anti-colonial discourse provides an alternative framework of critical analyses—one that examines past and current power relations as defined by systematic oppression and the politics of structural difference. Zaimi wrote an article in which he claimed,

[173] Tahiri, 226.

> The truth is that Thaçi and Mustafa, and PDK and LDK, do not represent anything different from the rest of the region's ruling parties. But, in contrast to those countries, in Kosovo there exists an alternative, a new movement that has been untried before. It is a movement critical towards "democracy as a rotation of parties" in power, a movement with a democratic and an anti-authoritarian organization, a modern leftist subject with an elaborated politics of social equality… it is precisely because of the strength that this moral and legal integrity gives it that it is the only political organization with the audacity to say no to powerful diplomats when such is what the country's best interests demand.[174]

Vetëvendosje actually situates a call for a resignation of the ruling government within their anti-colonial critique of what they deem as a failed international mission and back-handed, political negotiations on Kosovo's status. Michael Kennedy argues that such a partisan statement has often been met with dismissal from the international community and from many within Kosovo, even while a growing movement supports it. But, he says, we should not dismiss Vetëvendosje's broader political philosophy by only focusing on their calls to build something new from the already 'newborn' Kosovo state. His reading of Vetëvendosje is that the movement represents a two-pronged politics advocating for national sovereignty and resistance of Western institutional hegemony. He says, "Vetëvendosje may embody the very revolutionary subjectivities that Europe seek in their own transformation of the European crisis." Vetëvendosje's politics attempt to offer a viable alternative to the status quo.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The most obvious limitation that I have faced in conducting this research is my inability to fully engage with anti-colonial discourse in Kosovo because I do not speak Albanian language. Also, as mentioned in Chapter I, I had originally hoped to better understand the relationship between scholars engaging in post-colonial studies analyses regarding Kosovo with students, activists, and political leaders of the Vetëvendosje

[174] Arbër Zaimi, "Democracy and Autocracies in the "Western Balkans," *Lefteast*, 19 March 2016. Web.

movement. My understanding of this relationship is shallow due to the time constraints and subsequent inability to interview the professors whose work I have been reading.

My research sought to provide some explanatory value to the use of anti-colonial discourse in Albanian movements for self determination in Kosovo. Thus, my intellectual history-inspired methodology and semi-structured interview method was not made in hopes to create any generalizable data. Still, adding more interviews to this research would have certainly taken it further.

Despite its limitations, this research contributes to studies of how social movements syndicate discourse, how narratives shift and spread over space and time, and how anti-colonial discourses plays a role in current social movements in Europe. Also, this minor intellectual history of anti-colonial critique in Kosovo can be a platform for delving deeper into the normative debates around appropriations, legitimacies, and connections regarding post-colonial theory and post-socialism studies.

I would be interested to further study the literature, briefly mentioned in this research, on the "racialization" of ethnic and national identities. I believe that there is empirical and normative research to be done in this area. In general, such normative debates on the topics mention in this research are not only consequential for political philosophy and theorizing. They are important because they can be consequential to framing claims-makings around struggles for justice, postwar remedies, and reckoning with our pasts.

Nationalism studies literature has discussed the ways in which European nationalist movements were transportable to the intellectual and practical efforts of national movements coming from the colonies of the global south. But this research shows that the relationship between 'Western' and 'liberatory' nationalism deserves a more nuanced interpretation. More exploration of how current European social movements are engaging with discourses of liberatory nationalism, such as within Kosovo, can reveal patterns of discursive movement

from the global south to Europe, and may further engages critical studies of concepts such as nationality, self-determination, and state building.

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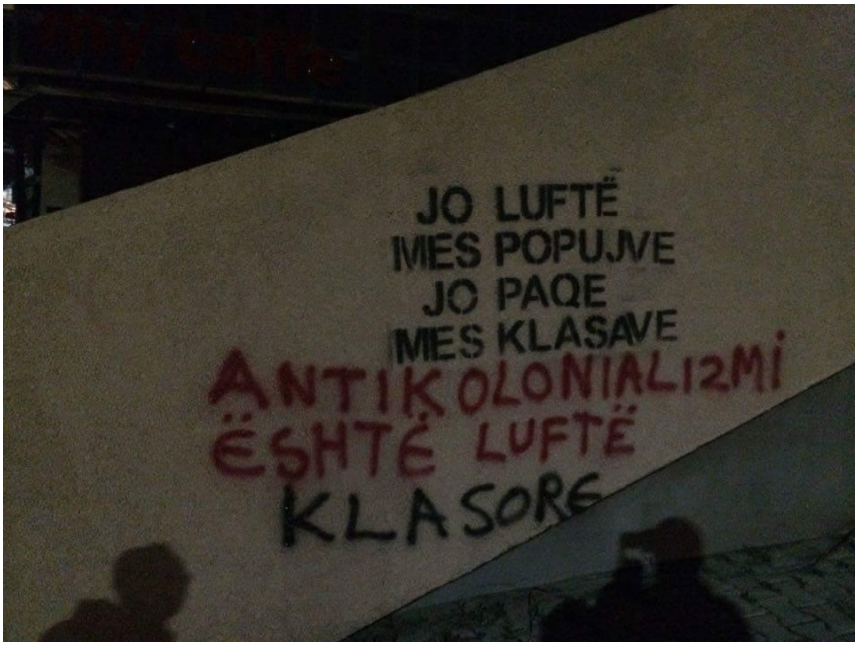
Appendix

Appendix I: The title of this thesis is a reference to A main Lëvizja Vetëvendosje! slogan, “Jo Negociata, Vetëvendosje!” (No Negotiations, Self Determination!)



Appendix II: This street art translates to: no war among people, no to peace among classes, anti-colonialism is a class war

Image 1 *Source*: United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo (2005). UN Propaganda: Infantalized Statebuilding

Image 2 *Source*: United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo (2005). Traditionalizing Women in the Name of Modernization

Appendix III (From Vjollca Krasniqi)

Appendix IV: This is a photograph taken by the author during Linda Gusia's 'memory walk of Prishtina' in 2016. This is a schoolroom still left standing from the era of parallel education being conducted in private homes

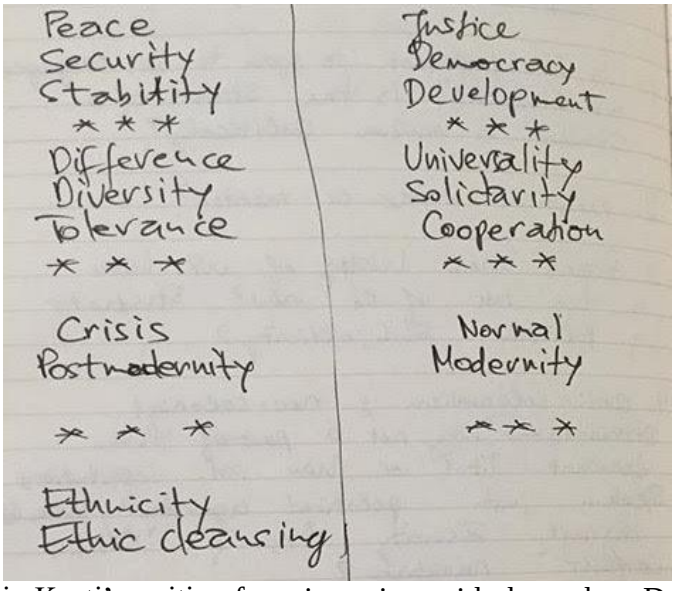
Figure 1. Demonstration in Prishtina 1999. Photograph by Hazir Reka, courtesy of the photographer.

Appendix V: From Luci, 61.

I	II	III	IV
The 70's *1972/73 - 1980/81*	**The 80's** *1981/82 - 1990/91*	**The 90's** *1991/92 - 1998/99*	**The 2000's** *1999/00 - 2012/13*
Establishment and constitution	*Persecution and differentiation*	*Banning and discrimination*	*Reform and development*

Appendix VI: The University of Prishtina's curriculum. Shemsi Krasniqi.

Appendix VI: "EULEX: Made in Serbia."



Appendix VII: Albin Kurti's writing from interview with the author. During his sketch, he said, "Tolerance in this context is passive divison. I am for the unification of people. I'm more of a modernist. I know all of the problems with modernism, I've read them. But I still think its legacy is important."