

**POSTWAR OPPORTUNITES: GENDER, NATIONALISM, AND THE RECOGNITION
OF WARTIME SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO**

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ABSTRACT

The gendered nature of postwar Kosovo is evident in the prioritization of militarized, protector war heroes and simultaneous marginalization of women / femininities as well as subordinate masculinities. By utilizing theories of nationalism, gender, and the state, this thesis seeks to examine the complexities of the postwar reality for survivors of wartime sexual violence in Kosovo and the impacts of gendered nationalism on state-level policy and recognition for survivors. Two dominant narratives have been established: that of the European aspirational ideal and of the Albanian ethno-national invocation of masculine war heroes and freedom fighters. Sexual violence – and victimhood in general – did not fit into these state narratives, further impacting policy priorities. In parallel with dominant state narratives, the taken for granted androcentrism of the state apparatus continues to impact recognition of survivors of wartime sexual violence. I analyze the 2014 Amendment to the Law on Civilian Victims of War in light of the current application process for state-level benefits for survivors, and argue that the Amendment does well to support some survivors, while still maintaining state narratives of singular, ethnic priorities. Thus, since my research is situated in a particular time when survivors are finally able to access state recognition and benefits, the further implications of masculinized state priorities for women are yet to be determined, but a gender-sensitive lens towards state-level support is imperative for survivors.

KEYWORDS: sexual violence, Kosovo, masculinity, state policy, postwar, commemoration

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for the thesis are accurate:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- EULEX** – European Union Rule of Law Mission
- KLA** – Kosovo Liberation Army
- KRCT** – Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims
- KWN** – Kosovo Women’s Network
- NGO** – Non-Governmental Organization
- RKS** – Republic of Kosovo
- UÇK** – *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës*, (Albanian, see KLA)
- UN** – United Nations
- UNMIK** – United Nations Mission in Kosovo
- UNSCR** – United Nations Security Council Resolution

INTRODUCTION

The construction of the *Heroinat* memorial in Prishtina in June 2015 brought both an array of controversy and widespread accolades for commemorating the sacrifice of victims of wartime sexual violence during the war in Kosovo from 1998-1999. In concept, *Heroinat* was intended to represent all women victims; in reality however, it depicted a woman's face, replicated 20,000 times on smaller medals, to commemorate and honor *Albanian* women who were raped during the war. In March 2015, I visited Prishtina as part of a university study program and met with Linda Gusia, a feminist activist, scholar, and an outspoken critic of the memorial. She believed *Heroinat* limited the conversation of wartime experiences, reducing women to being solely victims – thus avoiding men's victimhood – and ignoring social realities of rape perpetrated against other ethnic groups.

At the time I visited Kosovo in 2015, the monument had not yet been constructed. When I returned to Prishtina in January 2017, the main pedestrian boulevard, *Nënë Tereza*, was covered in ice and snow. People scuttled quickly home, if they braved the cold at all, wrapped in warm layers. I visited *Heroinat*; its face was sprinkled with snow and there were no footprints leading up to the memorial except mine. What struck me as peculiar was that the memorial stood, unmarked, behind a cluster of tall evergreen trees, obscured from view. It felt to me, at the time, that the memorial was a side note, a forgotten tribute to women. Whether those involved in its conception or those who passed *Heroinat* on a daily basis would agree with this sentiment, it was clear that maintenance of the memorial had not been a priority.

By spring 2017, much had changed. The tall evergreen trees had been uprooted, concrete poured around the memorial, and benches and trees installed to create a park. These improvements seemed a long overdue acknowledgement. However, what became even more evident was the

spatial positioning of *Heroinat*. Across the street from the NEWBORN monument – a representation of independence and a newborn country – and gazed down upon by the portrait of revered war hero and freedom fighter Adem Jashari, it was even less surprising that the plaque standing to the side of the memorial was almost illegible. *Heroinat*'s previous concealment seemed all the more pointed. My questions around wartime sexual violence in Kosovo arose from the visual dynamics of this space, which prompted my curiosity toward how and in what ways this category was recognized in society beyond this memorial. What did it mean that women – even though they now had a memorial commemorating wartime suffering – were still relegated to the margins? How might we read the social and political significance of *Heroinat*'s placement in relation to NEWBORN and Adem Jashari? How are memories of wartime sexual violence meant to be positioned in the collective national memory? And what are the public perceptions around the construction of *Heroinat*?

My original aim with this research was to analyze the gendered nature of memorialization, how memorials could be gendered, and how gendered hierarchies could be (re)inscribed. My research has since shifted from that original aim to focus more explicitly on policy and support services for survivors after the war. What follows is an analysis of the postwar political space and its impact on survivors of wartime sexual violence. The gendered ideologies in war and postwar (Borer 2009; Cockburn 2004; Cohn 2013; Enloe 2000; Pankhurst 2008) flatten men's and women's experiences, failing to recognize the nuances of victimhood and agency. Interrogating the postwar space requires a keen focus on the gendered logics of conflict and the state. Žarkov and Cockburn query the postwar opportunity for change, asking “will the familiar old exclusions and oppressions be reproduced? Or will policy-makers be alert to the possibilities of reshaping the relationship between women and men, the feminine and the masculine?” (2002, 11). With a critical

gender perspective one can identify how gender and gendered hierarchies in the postwar space are often (re)produced, amid continuing violence – especially against women (Cockburn 2004; Pillay 2001). Policy priorities thus reflect state institutional dynamics of continued non-recognition, which negatively impact and hinder survivors’ access to state benefits.

My research is framed by the question of postwar opportunities for gendered change that can realize the specific ways in which men and women are differently impacted by war in the postwar space. My main research question broadly queries how gendered nationalism impacts state-level responses and policy toward recognizing survivors of wartime sexual violence in Kosovo. I explore the possibility that new conditions can be created to address the gendered nature of war or whether similar patterns of hegemonic male dominance will prevail in the postwar space. With respect to the applications for state benefits survivors began submitting on 5 February 2018, I question how the process of recognition is gendered and how it has been impacted by the gendered nature of war and postwar. I employ theories of nationalism to illustrate the hierarchized gender regime that has marginalized women’s needs in favor of masculine state priorities. I will further show how war heroes and a militarized, protector masculinity is made to represent the postwar state by de-legitimizing femininities. Due to the persistent work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to support survivors and push for state-level recognition, the Kosovar state signed into force the 2014 Amendment on the Law for Civilian Victims of War that finally included sexual violence survivors in the legal framework. I will examine the catalysts of the amendment and the social and political environment within which survivors can now apply for state benefits.

The case of Kosovo provides a new lens to view postwar realities because of the current access to state benefits for survivors of wartime sexual violence. Further, because activists and

NGOs in Kosovo learned from similar policy procedures in Bosnia and Croatia, they were well prepared to draft legal recognition of survivors once institutional platforms were accessed. Linking gendered nationalism to policy priorities is crucial to explicating the negotiation between recognition and non-recognition of wartime sexual violence survivors, which was enabled by key critical activists.

Ultimately, I argue that Kosovar state institutions have not adequately responded to wartime sexual violence due in part to the highly gendered logics of the state – which has advanced masculine state priorities while sidelining ‘gender issues’ – and that the extent to which the state has recently recognized wartime sexual violence is largely due to the impetus of activists and NGOs.

DATA COLLECTION & METHODS

The research presented here is based on in-person interviews I conducted during the month of April 2018. I chose this method of qualitative research and interviews because I wanted to speak directly with those engaged in supporting survivors of wartime sexual violence: survivor advocates in NGOs, academia, and the political sphere. Feminist qualitative methods allow “participants to speak about their own experiences” (McHugh 2014, 145) in order to make visible lived experiences of marginalized groups (Nelson 1989). I wanted to learn from respondents their perspectives on the discourses and dynamics I analyze here, of which could not be discerned solely from published work. This method substantiated and strengthened the information I collected from scholarly texts and academic books, deepening my knowledge and allowing me to build a stronger assessment on this topic. During the writing process, interviews were summarized, coded, and organized into themes which constituted the basis of my analysis.

I conducted 11 semi-structured interviews with activists, members of NGOs, members of parliament, and scholars. I also include an interview from October 2017 which I conducted for an academic course in the early stages of developing my research. Most interviews were with a single respondent – except for one interview where two people were interviewed at the same time – and lasted between 30 – 75 minutes. One respondent was interviewed twice. All interviews were conducted in English except for two, which were conducted with support from a translator: one was in Albanian and the other in Serbian. Before each interview, I discussed the aim of my research and my broader research questions, making clear how participant responses would be used. All participants gave informed oral consent to participate; each was notified of their right to withdraw any responses from the research and to remain anonymous. After each interview, I sent a follow-up email to the participant with a summary of what was said during the interview for transparency and to ensure clear comprehension of the knowledge conveyed. All interview transcriptions were

completed by me. Additionally, I include notes taken during a public event with Kosovo's first woman president, Atifete Jahjaga. Through these sources I collected my primary data for analysis. Lastly, living in Prishtina at the time of research allowed me to observe the political and social environment, get a sense of how people interacted with the discourses I analyze here, and engage in countless informal conversations with friends and colleagues that informed my analysis.

For my interviews, I wanted to speak to actors working directly with survivors of wartime sexual violence and the process of recognition because I believed this would allow for the most informed insight into the long struggle for state-level recognition. I initially identified interview participants through four main organizations which have been tasked with supporting survivor applications for recognition under the 2014 Amendment. These organizations include Medica Kosova, Medica Gjakova, Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims (KRCT), and the Center for the Promotion of Women's Rights in Drenas (the Center). To support these interviews, I also reached out to activists, scholars, and politicians who have been well-known in the feminist community and have positioned women's rights at the center of their agenda, namely Igo Rogova, Linda Gusia, Nita Luci, and Mimoza Kusari-Lila. I also wanted to get the perspective from the Serbian community so I spoke with a member of a prominent women's NGO in North Mitrovica – a Serbian enclave in Northern Kosovo. Most interviews were conducted in Prishtina except for interviews in Gjakova, Drenas, and North Mitrovica; in such instances, these organizations were based in cities outside the capital to provide accessible services to survivors. The process of securing interviews was supported by my previous experience living in Kosovo and the contacts I made at that time.

Lastly, I choose here to use the English spelling of *Kosovo* (instead of the Albanian spelling, *Kosova*) because it appears most frequently in the literature, and for ease. In a few places,

the spelling *Kosova* is used when in a quotation. When I refer to cities within Kosovo I have chosen to use their Albanian name since my research is focused primarily on the Albanian perspective in Kosovo. While some authors and many international agencies choose to use both the Albanian and Serbian spellings (for example, Gjakova, *Alb.* / Đakovica, *Srb.*), and although I admire this practice since it respects both communities, I do not use this technique as it might prove difficult to read and the flow of analysis would be interrupted. I also use Albanian translations of certain words and phrases in the text when describing events, names, or common references.

A Note on Positionality

During an interview at the University of Prishtina, Nita Luci, a professor of anthropology and gender studies, reminded me of the complex pitfalls of doing international research. She asserted that it is imperative to be aware of “larger frame[s] of knowledge production” when approaching research in cultural and linguistic environments different from one’s own. Luci continued:

One of the existing and dominant perspectives has been that international researchers come in to do the research and local scholars really just provide for the raw material... What we’re also trying to do [though] is produce that knowledge for ourselves.

I remained acutely aware of this dynamic throughout all my interviews, but had not directly engaged with any participant in a conversation on positionality and ethics.¹ Luci’s comment became especially significant because it was attuned to both the “visible and invisible” power (Ackerly and True 2008, 693) inherent in transnational research contexts.² Epistemological

¹ I would like to note that although I interviewed two professors who were more engaged in the larger conversations in academia about knowledge production and ethics, other interview participants did not necessarily take part in such conversations – for example, members of NGOs who were focused on direct support and services.

² Sondra Hale (1991) discusses her position as a researcher in Sudan spanning almost three decades to illuminate that even through feminist reflexivity, one can still remain ignorant to ethical

challenges cannot work to deny the inherent benefits derived from a privileged position of the researcher. However, to mitigate harm, as a feminist researcher, I engage with critical feminist “questioning practices” (Ackerly and True 2008, 693) which necessitate “criticism and self-reflection” (Alexander and Mohanty 1997, xx).

What felt unavoidable to me during the interview process was the extractivist and exploitative nature of research: indeed, “being a researcher is itself a boundary that affects research” (Ackerly and True 2008, 698) whereby practices of study do intrinsically elicit an extractor relationship, regardless of personal connections. As Nancy Naples explains, even though “reflective strategies [adopted by] feminist [researchers] work to reveal the inequalities and processes of domination that shape the ‘field’”³ (38), in the end, “[adopting] participatory and dialogic strategies... cannot eliminate all power imbalances” (Naples 2003, 197). I acknowledge both the power imbalances that are inherent to interview-based research, while also being aware that my research will not in itself deconstruct these larger hierarchies and systems. Lessening my impact was sometimes the best I could hope for.

The feminist practice of situating oneself in one’s research is imperative, but can often surface as superficial. I believe many researchers are too quick to identify and categorize themselves in an attempt to move past their positionality without critically engaging with it. Patai argues accurately:

Sometimes these tropes [i.e. ‘as a white heterosexual woman...’] sound like apologies; more often they are deployed as badges. Either way, they give off their own aroma of fraud, for the underlying assumption seems to be that by such identification one has paid one’s

dilemmas and international challenges. Useful here is also Ackerly, Stern, and True’s work on feminist international relations methodologies (2006).

³ See Richmond, Kappler, and Björkdahl (2015) for a critique of the ‘field’ in International Relations research. They argue that the ‘field’ denotes “colonial baggage” where agentless subjects of research can be decontextualized to legitimize western hegemonic discourses of ‘intervention’ (Richmond, Kappler, and Björkdahl 2015, 25).

respects to ‘difference’ – owned up to bias, acknowledged privilege, or taken possession of oppression – and is now home free. (Patai 1994, 36)

Simply providing my demographic background should not be used as an excuse to then disregard relations of power. Instead, situating oneself can make visible boundaries and systems of race, class, gender, and geo-political location that impact the research (Ackerly and True 2008). Further, those demographics are inherent to who I am as a researcher. As Naples reminds us – quoting Dorinne Kondo – the “textual product is necessarily ‘partial and located’ and ‘screened through the narrator’s eye/I’,” thus revealing the inherent subjectivity materialized in research, mine being no exception (Naples 2003, 39). My position – in other words – has inevitably shaped the research and analysis presented here. This does not absolve me from avoiding pitfalls that further overlook and make invisible power dynamics (Ackerly and True 2008, 698), but instead shows that one cannot remove oneself completely from the research to create the illusion of objectivity – this objectivity being something futile and unrealistic to seek.

Ultimately, I am guided by Patai’s note:

The fact that doing research across race, class, and culture is a messy business is not reason to contemplate only difficulties and ourselves struggling with them... Ultimately we have to make up our minds whether our research is worth doing or not, and then determine how to go about it in such ways that it best serves our purported goals. (Patai 1994, 37)

I believe that a conscious attention to power and privilege can serve one well during research, especially when “in an unethical world, we cannot do truly ethical research” (Patai 1994, 37; see also Ackerly and True 2008). My contribution to the literature supports what local scholars are producing, is situated in a particularly relevant time frame in Kosovo, and in no way seeks to replace what has been written.

I would like to note some of the methods I employed during my research that deliberately challenge many problematic structures and tendencies of extractivist research. My main research

focus of studying power dynamics was framed by caution in an attempt to mitigate further harm or to reproduce any asymmetries (Ackerly and True 2008). While developing my topic, I was conscious of Meger's analysis of the "fetishization of sexual violence" (2016). She argues that sexual violence too often becomes objectified, whereby "securitization produces conflict-related sexual violence as a commodity fetish" (Meger 2016, 149). I want to avoid contributing to this pattern of fetishization. In my research, I avoided shocking statistics of violence, I did not search for gruesome stories of trauma during interviews, and further, I did not seek out individual survivors, but instead connected with NGOs, activists, state-level actors, and scholars addressing such issues with relevant perspectives to share.⁴ I also sought to employ a strategy of listening and observing "vulnerably" with my interview participants (Behar 1996). Although I did not use methods of oral history like Behar does, I attempted to remain honest and humbly human, whereby my amiability stood along side my awkwardness at times.

Further, I am aware that I cannot exist objectively outside of my research, nor can my position as a researcher disregard the inescapable fact that research is in some way exploitative. Unfortunately, as is inevitable with my research and positionality, I also use and depend on English-language texts. My reliance on English publications – especially those produced by local scholars in English – limited my scope and hindered further development of my topic. My interviews were primarily in English which similarly resulted in imbalances in the interview space as well as impacting a deeper engagement with participants. I hope, however, that by engaging with my participants and intentionally being alert to the power imbalances, I have gained some

⁴ Local actors themselves have produced important work on narratives of personal memory and wartime testimonies. For a powerful example of this, see the recent publication, *I Want to Be Heard* (Integra 2017), that presents the story of ten survivors of wartime rape. Similarly, there are ample publications written about Kosovo by Kosovars themselves, much of which has been used in this thesis (see for example Gusia n.d.; Luci 2002; Luci and Gusia 2015; V. Krasniqi 2007, 2014).

insights in order to accomplish what I set out to do. This research is, of course, filtered through my own subjective lens because my positionality is unavoidable. Pulling from literature and theory produced by local scholars and other international researchers, as well as my own interviews, I have tried to represent accurately the main actors and influences in the ongoing process of recognizing survivors of wartime sexual violence in Kosovo. In this way, I hope I did justice to those who shared their knowledge and expertise with me. Any failings are my own entirely.

CHAPTER I: SITUATING GENDERED NATIONALISM & WARTIME SEXUAL VIOLENCE

This chapter will present the theoretical framework that informs further empirical analysis throughout the thesis, while addressing and contextualizing the case of Kosovo. I start by examining theories of nationalism and gender that underpin my analysis of Kosovo, which make intelligible ‘imagined communities’ of belonging in Kosovo and the positioning of femininity and masculinity. Nationalism is often constitutive and productive of (ethnic) identity constructions and relies on assumptions of othering (Anderson 1983; Calhoun 1997). Logics of gender, race, and sexuality are embedded within discourses of orientalism, balkanism, and nationalism, illuminating how tendencies of othering are perpetuated in the Balkans – and specifically in Kosovo – from both outside and within. However, these processes of othering are based specifically on essentialist and orientalist assumptions of colonial logics that rely on gendered hierarchies and patterns of violence. Thus, an examination of how the state (and therefore also the postwar state) becomes, or has historically been, masculinized (Peterson 1992; Young 2003) illuminates how gender and sexuality have been instrumentalized within war and the postwar space (Enloe 2000; Pankhurst 2008; Žarkov 2007). The recognition of gender(ed) hierarchies and power relations is crucial to interpreting the logics of wartime sexual violence, the privileging of hegemonic, protector masculinity, and the resulting postwar policy priorities – as will be examined in the following chapters.

Constructions of Gendered Nationalism

Central to understandings of nationalism, gender, and patterns of othering sits Edward Said’s (1978) concept of orientalism, which illuminates a discursive reproduction of the ‘other’ through naturalized representations along which dominant narratives of (often colonial) power are reinforced. In this way, groups and regions are homogenized and forcibly, violently essentialized.

Hale further explains this concept, stating, “Orientalism is about representation, about the ‘Other,’ but most especially it is about the ways in which the Other is transfixed by the gaze, is reduced, exaggerated, exoticized, eroticized, romanticized, truncated, and always decontextualized” (2005, 3). Here it is clear that the ‘transfixed gaze’ of orientalism supposes constructions of a decontextualized, foreign other, whereby social realities become flattened and homogenized, always in relation to constructions of the west.

Developing this further in the specific context of the Balkans, Milica Bakić-Hayden argues for what she calls ‘nesting orientalisms’ “where the designation of ‘other’ has been appropriated and manipulated by those who have themselves been designated as such in orientalist discourse” (1995, 922). The gaze is thus shifted from oneself onto others, nesting associations of superiority with the west / Europe / civilized ideals to hierarchize the ‘other within’ the Balkans (Bakić-Hayden 1995; Helms 2008; Žarkov 1995). This dynamic positions some groups as being more ‘European’, marginalizing and othering Muslim Bosnia and Kosovo, where Islam becomes a ‘non-European’ and ‘improper’ representation of the living legacy of the Orient (or Ottoman Empire) (Hayden 2000⁵). Thus, as seen in academic and public discourses, Kosovo becomes posited and naturalized as inferior, de-legitimized, and inhibited by this nested category.

In a similar vein, Maria Todorova, in *Imagining the Balkans*, explores the relationship between orientalism and balkanism. Although quick to separate the two as distinct phenomena, Todorova analyzes how balkanism has become a “frozen image” (1997, 7) through which states and people of the Balkans are, by an essentialist logic, categorized and restricted to a narrow signifier and “synonym for a reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian” (1997, 3). The temporally fixed Balkans have been imagined in recent media, memory, and politics

⁵ See also Karić (2002) for an account of the social and political discourse of ‘Euro-Islam’.

as being the symbol for division, a separate and dissimilar other within Europe. Balkanism evokes “image[s] of a bridge or a crossroads,” presupposing its transitory status as “semideveloped, semicolonial, semicivilized, semioriental” (Todorova 1997, 15-16). Thus, the Balkans as territorially European is challenged by the oriental influence of the Ottoman Empire (thereby concretizing their ‘semioriental’ status). The bridge metaphor makes visible naturalized discourses which (mis)represent those in the Balkans (and thus Albanians within) as almost-civilized and almost-developed, conjuring gendered, racialized, and sexualized essentialisms that feminize and subordinate the not-yet-civilized other. The complex workings of orientalism, balkanism, and nationalism however must not be understood as discrete phenomena, in a similar way that Žarkov (1995) examines the relationship between socialism, post-socialism, and nationalism, but are in fact constitutive of each other. Although orientalism, balkanism, and nationalism are not located concretely in a singular temporal frame, the essentialisms and conceptions of these phenomena seem to be imagined as frozen and fixed.

Todorova suggests a predominantly masculine, male-dominated balkanist representation, where images of over-sexualized and exotic women of the orient are stripped away, presuming masculinity as representative of this Balkan, violent other (1997, 14). Many other authors have noted the inconsistencies in this argument, pointing out that Balkan representations are not necessarily devoid of gendered configurations, but instead that gender and sexuality do become inextricably tied to notions of masculinity and orientalist discourses (see Hayden 2000; Helms 2008; Jansen 2003; Žarkov 2001). The masculinized dynamic is illuminated in Kosovo through assumptions of Albanian social and political backwardness and of the Albanian man’s reproductive virility (and equally the Albanian woman’s ability to reproduce, if not complete reduction to reproductive functions) (Bracewell 2000; Mertus 1999). In this way, Albanians are

othered and relegated to the primitive, uncivilized, and backward masses excluded from the west / Europe, but still linked, where patterns of othering in Kosovo are situated within the larger frame of the “ways in which civilizational missions espoused by first, the Yugoslav, and later, the Serbian state, relied on the construction of the Albanian Other” (Luci and Gusia 2015, 216-217; see also Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006b). Therefore, the history of Ottoman, Yugoslav, and Serbian (and more recently, the international regime’s) colonial influence in Kosovo⁶ have resulted in naturalized constructions of the violent, primitive Albanian man.

What is important here are the assumptions of violence as embodied by the Balkans – and specifically, the image of the Albanian man. Linda Gusia, a professor and scholar at the University of Prishtina, remarked during an interview that violence becomes inextricably tied to Balkan states, where nationalism is the presumed expression of identity: “the richer the state, the more noble it looks; the poorer the state, the more banal and vulgar it looks.” This works to reinforce visions of a civilized Europe while dismissing Balkan states as being the epitome of violence and nationalism by naturalizing east / west and uncivilized / civilized differences. Relying on depictions of man’s savagery, these (presumed) natural tendencies denote racialized, gendered, and sexualized primitiveness from the outside.

Further, women – and in particular Albanian women – become placed on a hierarchy along these othered and gendered logics, situating women lower on the stratification of power and civilization (Iveković 1993); not necessarily denoted as violent, but instead a victim of men’s barbarity. Therefore, the internalized hierarchies of masculinities and the subordination of

⁶ Some authors have argued for a Serbian colonial regime in Kosovo (see V. Krasniqi 2007, 2014; also Luci and Gusia 2015, who argue for the case of Yugoslavia), however, here my aim is to elucidate the complex nature of orientalism and othering towards Kosovo – and further nested, Albanians – which is intricately tied to notions of colonialism and civilizing missions.

(presumably all) femininities was a consequence of the western gaze reinforced by local nationalisms. From this, women could be posited as a potential tool for exploitation to (re)situate a society closer to European ideals. For example, through representations of gender, urban and secular Bosnians were able to assert their association with the west / Europe through assumptions that often relied on both the hierarchy of the rural / urban dichotomy as well as through symbols of religious affiliation (Helms 2008). Elissa Helms explores how in Bosnia cultural emancipation was a marker of civility, with women and cultural codes acting as that marker, but specifically through placing themselves above and in comparison to those deemed rural, uneducated, and backward, or in comparison with those they represented as their less-developed, and thus less civilized and less European, neighbors to the south and east (usually implying Albania and Kosovo) (Helms 2008). Thus, women become the site through which European-ness was conveyed, and their position is instrumentalized and naturalized within the nation.

It should be noted how gender is being used here and the significant contribution attention to gender can provide to studies of orientalism, balkanism, nationalism, and – as will be analyzed in subsequent sections – sexual violence. I understand gender as a powerful relational category that provides insight into hierarchies of power and privilege. More than simply considering men and women in this thesis, I analyze the intricate and complex workings of masculinity and femininity in relation to the nation and the state, the (re)production of “systems of meanings” (Cohn 2013, 11), and embedded discourses (Peterson 2010). As an analytical tool relevant to *both* men and women, masculinity and femininity, gender thus locates representations of authority, and is by no means meant to merely signify ‘women’ (Cohn 2013). As Sjoberg and Via remind us, traits ascribed to and associated with masculinity and femininity – respectively – are not “value-neutral” but instead, “manliness is prized whereas femininity is undesirable” (2010, 3). Hetero-

patriarchal hierarchies constitute a process of institutionalizing power, whereby “privileging who and what is masculinized is inextricable from devaluing who and what is feminized” (Peterson 2010, 18). Such assumptions constitute and reinforce presumptions of masculinized, male-centered systems of power. Although women and their experiences of wartime sexual violence are the focus here, logics of gendered violence and postwar response are rooted in both “an empirical and an analytical category” of gender and constructions of social order that have consequences for men *and* women, masculinities *and* femininities (Peterson 2010, 18).

Depictions of othering are especially relevant – in fact integral – to theories of nationalism, where identity formation often assumes difference. Nationalism creates conceptions of collective identity, which more easily and readily facilitate Orientalizing tendencies in the Balkans (and elsewhere). Benedict Anderson’s theory of nationalism as “imagined communities” identifies how common mutual identity or kinship is formed (1983, 6). By ascribing a collective ‘our,’ imagined communities establish shared associations with particular cultural and national identities; in this way, distinct nationalisms have been constructed to exclude those who are not within the conceptual framework of what is considered to belong (Anderson 1983). Anne McClintock reminds us, however, that “all nationalisms are gendered” and rely on “gender *difference*” within power relations (1993, 61; see also Nagel 1998). Thus, men are the assumed citizenry of the nation (Enloe 1989; Luci and Gusia 2015; McClintock 1993), evoking paternalist and familial associations.

McClintock argues for the trope of the family as representative of this imagined community: “the family offers a ‘natural’ figure for sanctioning social *hierarchy* within a putative organic *unity* of interests” (McClintock 1993, 63). Constructions of collective identity serve to promote, and often catalyze, processes of othering, whereby women’s position in the family (and

thus within the nation) were naturalized as subordinate to men's. V. Spike Peterson (1999) analyzes nationalism as an inherently gendered dynamic that rests on heterosexist assumptions. Intertwined with standards of heterosexual expectations, gender and sexuality become tied to constructions of the nation. Identifying linkages created between gender and the other within such appropriations of gender in nationalism, Rada Iveković highlights:

In this process the enemy, the other nation, is made to be the Other, as is the Female. The symbolic system of nationalism in fact needs the construction of "the Other" as an indirect means for its domination; "the Other" is thus its constituent part. (1993, 115)

This illuminates not only the logics through which nationalism naturalizes women's position in the nation as the other within the national family, but also how masculinity becomes privileged as the dominant self of that nation (Iveković 1993; McClintock 1993).

Women are at the same time othered within the nation and made to represent the borders of the nation, a complex and paradoxical process. "Nationalist regimes position and exploit women," thus illuminating dynamic hierarchies of gender and sexuality that further locate women and the feminine as subordinate (Cockburn 1998, 43). Anthias and Yuval-Davis outline women's roles in the nation, wherein women are seen as, and assumed to be, both "reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national group" and as "signifiers of ethnic/national difference (1989, 7). In this way, women's bodies become the representative and symbolic marker of national boundaries with an assumed social and political "duty" to reproduce the nation (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Buss 2009; Elshtain 1987). Thus, national difference is often inscribed onto women as they become the site through which to recognize (and police) distinct cultural, racial, and ethnic customs in service of the (masculinized) national family. However, this contradictory process situates women and femininity as both integral reproducers and markers of national identity, embodying representations of the nation, while at the same time serving as the foundation of the

“object” or “other” by which the nation instrumentalizes for the “male ideal” during times of war (Iveković 1993, 122-123). McClintock’s (1993) ‘social hierarchy’ of the family is exploited when conflict threatens the familial fabric of the nation. Thus, gendered logics are heightened during conflict and often result in inconsistent patterns of (re)inscribing hierarchical divisions.

Applying theories of gender and nationalism to the case of Kosovo makes visible Orientalizing tendencies that position primitive, virile (and thus threatening) Albanian men as emblematic of the semi-oriental status of Kosovo and – paradoxically – women as reproductively essential to maintaining the nation and imagined community of and for men. Consequently, naturalized images of women – and femininities – as subordinate to men – and certain, dominant masculinities – in Kosovo reproduces feminized and ‘othered’ associations of women’s rights, de-politicizing such issues within state institutions.

A Contextual History: Positioning Men and Women, Masculinity and Femininity

Situating Kosovo within a larger frame of history will serve to illustrate how dominant assumptions of nationalism and state authority function in Kosovo today, and to locate women and gendered relations of authority. The territory of Kosovo has experienced a varied history in terms of changes in political and provincial administration. At various times being a part of the Illyrian, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires, Kosovo was a site of contestation between rule by both the Austrians and the Bulgarians during World War I and struggles to regain territory in the name of ‘Greater Albania’ by the Albanians until World War II (della Rocca 2015). The socialist state of Yugoslavia under the slogan ‘brotherhood and unity’ espoused by Josip Broz Tito was meant to unite the region as a multinational state (della Rocca 2015, 37-38). Historically, Kosovo has been inhabited by people ascribed to multiple ethnic groups, including Albanians, Serbs, Bosnians, Turks, Goranis, Roma, Egyptians, and Ashkalis (V. Krasniqi 2014). The composition of ethnic

groups has shifted under different regimes of authority, though today the country is predominantly populated by Kosovar Albanians. During periods of semi-autonomous status within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Kosovo experienced relative social, economic, and political freedom until 1989 (della Rocca 2015; G. Krasniqi 2012; Luci and Gusia 2015). At the beginning of Slobodan Milošević's rise to power, he revoked this status, effectively taking away all autonomy from Kosovo, resulting in the dismissal of most ethnic Albanians from the work force (G. Krasniqi 2012; Luci and Gusia 2015).

Prior to 1989, increasing political mobilization of Kosovo Serbs emerged where – supported by the Orthodox Church – the Serb community invoked a victim-status of ethnic genocide due to the virility and increasing birthrate of Albanians and a threatened sovereignty (Bracewell 2000; Bieber 2015). A resulting period of systemic ethnic discrimination against Kosovo Albanians by Serbian authority ensued in Kosovo during the 1990's, prompting, in response, Kosovo Albanians to establish parallel structures of education and medicine as mechanisms for peaceful resistance, undermining the Serbian regime (G. Krasniqi 2012; Kumrić 2015; Luci and Gusia 2015). This period holds specific importance for situating civil society, because “this parallel structure became a center of civic and national resistance” (Luci and Gusia 2015, 201).

For many women, “it seemed that participation in the Kosovar nationalist movement offered new channels through which women could enter the public space,” but was, at the same time, paralleled by non-engagement, or lack of access to the political sphere, by women in many rural areas (Luci and Gusia 2015, 201). Women's involvement during the 1990's was often inconsistent, wherein no singular trend of engagement can be assumed. Activism became a space within which many women could express their national identity, something that had been

constrained in the previous years of ethnic discrimination, and become involved in civic and public life: it “was not just about claiming public space but also demonstrated to the international community a new emancipated nation where women can take to the streets and be active citizens” (Luci and Gusia 2015, 206). This sentiment is reflective of a similar process in Bosnia (Helms 2008), where women could mark the development of social ideals, positioning a society closer to that of the west / Europe. Women were able to (re)negotiate their status in relation to the nation through civic participation in spaces previously dominated by an “assumed male citizenry” (Luci and Gusia 2015, 208). Not only were women becoming more active in public spaces, but peaceful resistance became a tactic of community-building which produced new active and visible⁷ identities during the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Placed within a larger historical frame of gender regimes in Yugoslavia, women in Kosovo have experienced contradictory statuses in the public sphere. Luci explains, “under Yugoslav state-socialism gender inequalities were officially said to have been resolved. The state legally was to provide equal employment, education, and participation at all institutional levels” (2002, 73; see also Duhaček 2006; Slapšak 2001). Although this made invisible many of the continual impacts of patriarchal power, it contrasts with women’s position in the gender regimes during the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Adriana Zaharijević examines an active feminist citizenship in Yugoslavia defined by women’s experiences of resistance and activism. Similar to processes in Kosovo, she studies how the relationship between feminists and the state changed dramatically in Yugoslavia, “from [being] benevolent dissidents [under socialist Yugoslav ideologies] feminists were turned into disloyal citizens [during the dissolution]” (Zaharijević 2015, 94). Women’s roles

⁷ Luci and Gusia (2015) note that many elite women were previously active in the (visible) public sphere during the socialist Yugoslav era, but for many non-elite women, “social agency” became newly accessed in the public and political spaces during the 1990’s (201-202).

during this time highlight a gender regime that was influenced by the active engagement of many women, challenging established gender roles and positions.

Ending almost a decade of peaceful resistance during the 1990's, armed conflict broke out in February 1998, lasting until June 1999, between Yugoslav and Serb forces and paramilitary on one side, and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA; *Alb. Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës*, UÇK) on the other. The war in Kosovo was defined by tactics of widespread displacement, killing, torture, rape, and disappearances (Human Rights Watch [HRW] 2000). It is estimated that “approximately 70% of the Albanian population had been either displaced within Kosova (500,000 to 600,000 people) or had fled as refugees to other countries (780,200 people)” (Luci 2002, 72). There were also targeted displacement and killings directed toward minority communities in Kosovo (HRW 2001). In 1999, a three-month NATO-led bombing intervention ended the war and the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established as an interim international administration and system of governance (HRW 2000; G. Krasniqi 2012). In the years following the war, the international presence has become inescapable and integral to Kosovo's institutions (V. Krasniqi 2014). After almost a decade of heightened tension and contested statehood, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, which is still disputed and not recognized by the Serbian government (Kumrić 2015). However, independence was supported by many western states, including the United States, and international bodies, namely the UN (G. Krasniqi 2016). Kosovo has continued to build governance structures despite Serbia's non-recognition.

The gendered nature of war has been written about extensively (Cohn 2013; Enloe 2000; Pankhurst 2008; Sjoberg 2013), where gender roles are often (re)produced and gendered violence targets assumptions of masculinity and femininity, and presumed sexualities, to make intelligible the enemy other (Peterson 1992, 2010; Žarkov 2001, 2007). Traditionally, studies on war and

conflict have been “genderless,” obscuring the social realities of militarization and violence (Sjoberg 2013). However, feminist scholars have made visible the production of gendered hierarchies in war and how they are (re)inscribed, wherein bodies become the site through which masculinity and femininity are identified and reinforced (Shepherd 2010; Žarkov 2007). Not only does the gendered nature of war impact the positioning of gendered assumptions, it also functions along manifestations of the power structures of ethnicity, race, class, and sexuality, which is especially relevant to the war in Kosovo.

The (re)inscription of ethnicity and hierarchies of gender during conflict underpin an analysis of the postwar space (Handrahan 2004). In *The Body of War*, Dubravka Žarkov provides an original approach to ethnicity during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, arguing through an analytical lens of gender, sexuality, and media that ethnicity has been *produced* by both the media and ethnic wars. Analyzing representations in the Croatian and Serbian print media, she argues that particular bodies and (presumed) sexualities were used to convey meanings of ethnic identity through violence and rape: “without notions of masculinity and femininity, and norms of (hetero)sexuality, ethnicity could have never been produced” (Žarkov 2007, 8). Theidon writes of a similar pattern in Peru where rape was used to produce hierarchies of gender and race, or what she calls, “racing rape” (2013, 134). The gendered logics of war as central and imperative features of conflict were produced and reproduced in Kosovo. Such intricate workings of ethnicity, race, class, and sexuality during war reinforce social hierarchies that establish authority rooted in the state.

Operating on parallel gendered logics, war and the state have historically been male-dominated, producing assumptions of masculinized priorities, functions, and interests of the state (Peterson 1992, 2010). Peterson argues that normalizing the devaluation of femininities thus

legitimizes “exploitation of feminized practices and persons,” which do not necessarily signify only ‘women’ (2010, 19). Privileging state sovereignty leads to constructions of authority, reflecting gendered, racialized, and classed power relations and hierarchies (Peterson 1992). The heavily androcentric and masculine characteristics of state dynamics operate from the top down, but are equally reflected from bottom up as these elements become banal, and are thus made invisible. The default and taken for granted practice of assuming men / masculinities as the referent is shaped by and shapes how we perceive and legitimize state institutions (Cohn 2013).

Young similarly asserts an analysis of “a logic of masculinist protection” (2003, 2), whereby the state structures its authority based on a protector-status in relation to the subordinate, dependent, and feminized citizens, namely “womenandchildren” (Enloe 1993). This “paternalistic state power” serves not only to explain state institutions but also provides a means through which to interpret them (Young 2003, 2). What then becomes naturalized is the production of the state as the referent source of authority – much like that of the father in the nation-as-family (McClintock 1993) – embodied by the “vertical encompassment” of the state apparatus (Ferguson and Gupta 2002, 982). Here, the state is taken for granted as both sitting ‘above’ civil society, community, and citizens, and ‘encompasses’ the territory of the nation-state, thus enforcing its authority (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). Thus, men / masculinities situated as the protector authority of the state is situated within discourses of gendered hierarchies to reinforce the paternalism of the nation, relegating women / femininities as subordinate. As seen in Kosovo, a specific militarized, protector masculinity that becomes valorized is reflective of this state-level protectionism: martyrs and fighters become heroes based on their role as militarized protectors of the nation.

Wartime Sexual Violence

During the war in Kosovo, widespread rape and sexual violence was used as a tactic of ethnic cleansing (Amnesty International 2017b; HRW 2000; Luci 2002). The gendered nature of war demonstrates how wartime actors constitute and are constitutive of gendered power relations, through which manifestations of gendered ideologies position authority based on ethnicity, race, class, and sexuality. In this way, gender and sexuality were integral to making national identity intelligible, and thus establishing the boundaries through which transgressions against the enemy other occur. In Kosovo, it is estimated that between 10,000 – 20,000 women were raped during the war, with the latter figure being used most often as the official figure (World Health Organization 2000). The largest number of rape victims were Kosovo Albanian women.⁸ However, Albanians were not the sole ethnic group victimized. After the war ended, between 1999-2000, ‘revenge’ displacements, killings, and rapes were perpetrated against the Serb minority and other ethnic minorities believed to have been colluding with the Serbs during the war (Amnesty International 2017b; Bieber 2015).

Within a larger frame, wartime sexual violence has to be seen as more than simply a byproduct of war, with attention paid to the ways gender, sexuality, race, class, and political factors impact its use: the “absence of complexity has the unintended consequence of depicting rape as almost a natural, or inevitable gendered consequence of” war (Buss 2009, 148). In addition to other social factors, rape as a tactic of war often functions along a rationale of “hetero-patriarchal nationalism” where assumptions of heterosexuality underpin the intelligibility of women’s sexuality (and thus, violability) (Peterson 1999). Therefore, (heterosexual) men embody dominant

⁸ Less researched are the incidents of rape and sexual violence against men in Kosovo during the war. However, Bracewell (2000) analyzes threats and accounts of sexual violence against men in Kosovo during the 1980’s.

norms of masculinity, positioned as militarized protectors, to safeguard vulnerable, violable women. Žarkov's analysis of media in Yugoslavia illustrates consequently how sexual violence against men can posit a further questioning of men's 'proper' sexuality, and can be used by the enemy to demean their status within the nation (Žarkov 2001, 2007).

In this way, gendered – and presumably heterosexual – bodies were instrumentalized within nationalist rhetoric. This dynamic was illuminated during an interview with Vepror Shehu. As director of Medica Kosova, an NGO that supports survivors of wartime sexual violence, Shehu has extensive experience working on this issue to add to her previous background in researching war crimes with the International Crisis Group. She explained how sexual violence was a weapon of war: “they wanted to express their nationalism on the bodies of women and send messages to the other party, that what we are doing is we are humiliating your nation.” This embodiment of the nation is inextricably tied to notions of gender and sexuality through women-as-nation and familial honor in the trope of family-as-nation (McClintock 1993). Veena Das identifies how women's bodies – as demarcating the borders of the nation – also “become the sign through which men communicate with each other” during “incidents of collective violence” (1995, 212; see also Brownmiller 1975). Thus, communication between men becomes the site across which messages of national belonging are conveyed and inscribed for the assumed nation-as-male. Here, the symbolic representation of bodies demarcating the nation (often perpetuated by and reflected in the media) resulted in the literal and physical act of violence onto those feminized bodies (Bracewell 2000; Das 1995; Žarkov 2007).

Another respondent, Korab Krasniqi with NGO Forum ZFD, echoed Shehu's sentiment: “If you look at military strategy, it is in a way communication between men, it is not about the woman per se, but it is destroying this sense of belonging to a unified family.” Acceptance within

the collective family of the nation (McClintock 1993) is threatened by sexual violence because the social fabric of the nation (or family) is being violated by the enemy men, marking dishonor and shame to the raped nation.⁹ Thus, the bodies of women (and men) become decontextualized as symbolic markers functioning within a larger system that presumes community cohesion. “It was done [for] the purpose of not destroying only the individual but to destroy even the community,” remarked Sebahate Pacolli Krasniqi, who has worked with KRCT for almost 15 years. The positioning of gendered, racialized, sexualized bodies during war in Kosovo was not an accidental phenomenon, but became central to understandings of community (and ethnic) identity and thus, sites of violence where gendered logics are (re)produced to demarcate and destroy the enemy other.

Within some nationalisms – as is the case of Kosovo – women are assumed to be *only* victims and potential victims during war. Many authors have written about this dynamic (Enloe 1989; Helms 2013; Kapur 2002; Luci 2002; Žarkov 2002), where in the former Yugoslav wars, women were not only reduced to victims, but their agency, activism, and citizenship were obscured. Gusia argues that “a sole focus on women’s war experience of sexual violence flattens any differentiated and deeper understanding, as well as the recognition of, women’s experiences,” especially since most women also “experienced other forms of torture and violence” (n.d., 5-6; Čigon 2015). Arguably, this reduction invalidates women’s experiences (as victims, fighters, and activists) and also functions to perpetuate the valorization of male heroes’ sacrifice to the nation as the dominant accolade of war. In the case of Bosnia, Helms argues that a distinct pattern of assumptions of victimhood were evoked (and expected) to represent the true, moral victim: “victimhood must apparently be total, with no hint of complicity, responsibility, or even agency,

⁹ Žarkov expertly analyzes how the raped woman becomes representative of the nation through media depictions of the ‘rape of Bosnia / Croatia’ during the 1990’s (2007).

for such ambiguity may lead to suspicions of guilt or inauthenticity” (2013, 7). “Collective innocence and moral righteousness” was the foundation upon which victimhood rested, since claims to victimhood could not exist without the imperviousness to wrongdoing (Helms 2013, 5). Women’s assumed moral purity was not only a means through which women – and their sexuality – was regulated, but it was also the basis for their victimhood if violated. Ultimately, other facets of identity were collapsed and women were narrowly conceptualized as *only* victims of violence, in need of protection as always *potential* victims (Žarkov 2007).

During an interview, Luci explained that what has been established in Kosovo is “a more military masculinity of the warrior, the martyr, with very little attention to anything based on victims of the war.” This specific militarized, protector masculinity¹⁰ – reflecting the protector-status state (Young 2003) – has been constructed in reaction to the threat that wartime sexual violence poses to women as the delineation of the nation and to the nation itself. In this way, sexual violence sullies both the pure ethnic reproduction of Kosovar-ness and the symbolic representation of upholding Kosovo nationalism. Logics of militarization emphasize – and privilege – qualities associated with armed fighters, to the point that they become banal and naturalized (Enloe 2000, 2002). The privileging of a militarized, protector masculinity becomes, then, not a conscious, intentional act, but instead is assumed and taken for granted as the equivalent of legitimate masculinity, which is then projected onto male bodies (especially during conflict). Thus it becomes an “obvious connection” – yet unnoticed – that men and masculinities are associated with war and conflict (Hearn 2012). The result is a hierarchy of masculinities (subordinating devalued masculinity of, for example, men who refuse to fight or of non-normative sexualities) that ultimately positions and values one type as the dominant, hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2002),

¹⁰ See also Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006b.

relying as well on a parallel and lesser femininity (Bracewell 2000; Enloe 2002). What results is the reification of the (male) national martyr, freedom fighter, and war hero, his symbolic importance (re)produced in the national memory through image and monument across the country.

However, this valorized and hegemonic masculinity is both (re)inscribed and challenged by sexual violence when perpetrated against ‘their’ women, a complex and often contradictory process. Since women’s bodies demarcate the borders of the nation, they become an impetus for – and requirement of – this protectionism, further entrenching dominant narratives of masculinity as embodied by the freedom fighter / war hero. Yet, because militarized, protector masculinity rests on the construction of and reliance on an equal and reflective (assumed) passive femininity, the occurrence of gendered and sexualized violence is a direct challenge to and manifestation of the failure of that dominant masculinity. Mimoza Kusari-Lila, a member of parliament and formerly Kosovo’s first (and only) woman mayor, stated in an interview that survivors are seen as “a reminder that we did not have [very] strong heroes. Because if they were well-protected, then these 20,000+ women who were raped in Kosovo could not have been raped. So they are a constant reminder of men not being there when needed.” The continued reproduction of heroic narratives in Kosovar society and in public space is a perpetual reminder of this privileged masculinity, an attempt to obscure the memory of masculine failure to protect their women, and thus the nation.

In Bosnia and Croatia, a similar paradigm of reinforced masculinity has been documented. Helms examines the pattern, whereby even if not explicitly stated by officials, “the extent of the violence against women made plain that this time Bosniac men had *failed* in their roles as protectors. They had not lived up to the requirements of manhood in the logic of patriarchal nationalisms” (Helms 2013, 229-230). In Croatia, Schäuble (2014) argues that uncomplicated valorization of war heroes works best when the war hero is in fact a martyr, avoiding any potential

obstacles to clear symbolization of the heroic nation. The simple (re)inscription of “the logic of woman-as-nation / men-as-protector” prevails, attempting to obscure, or at least divert attention from, failed protectionism (Helms 2013, 230).

War heroes and martyrs are so valorized because they stand as the epitome of desired masculinity and the symbol of a free and independent nation in Kosovo. The positioning of certain men / masculinities as dominant and privileged over women / femininities is a result of gendered nationalism and tropes of the nation-as-male as was explored in this chapter. Taken for granted assumptions of gendered hierarchies become institutionalized and inscribed in the political and social fabric of war and postwar in Kosovo. War and militarism have been widely analyzed as inherently gendered structures (Enloe 2000; Pankhurst 2008). In postwar spaces, women are heavily impacted by the effects of wartime sexual violence and the continuing violence; thus, the instrumentalization of women – and women’s bodies – during war translate into the postwar space where state institutions are male-dominated and women’s experiences are marginalized and obscured. The next chapter will further analyze postwar state priorities in Kosovo and its lasting effects on policy initiatives. However, such policy priorities are directly impacted by gendered nationalism and a masculinist state apparatus, whereby peace-building excludes women and sexual violence from the agenda to ensure “peace agreements between elites proceeds unhindered” (Hudson 2012, 445). Consequently, policy priorities are embedded in relations of power where elites (usually men) with decision-making power set the agenda, thereby de-politicizing (Gusia n.d.), feminizing (Peterson 2010), and thus relegating women’s rights to the margins of policy-making (KWN 2011; Sahin and Kula 2018). In the postwar moment, women’s rights and complex needs tend to be sidelined for masculinized state priorities (Žarkov and Cockburn 2002).

CHAPTER II: POSTWAR STATE AND WARTIME MEMORY

Many authors have written about gender and war, but as Borer states, “less recognized are the ways in which the postwar period is equally gendered” (Borer 2009, 1170). As societies transition into a postwar space, gendered power relations that have been disrupted during war have the potential for systemic change. However, we must investigate this process where wartime gendered realities can shift both to provide new outlets to subvert patriarchal paradigms and to (re)entrench gender(ed) hierarchies (Meintjes et al. 2001; Ni Aolain and Rooney 2007; Pillay 2001; Žarkov and Cockburn 2002). Patterns of women’s exclusion from armed fighting, peace processes, and political institutions (not to mention the deeply gendered aspects of these structures) suggest that women are rarely central to post-conflict transformation. In the aftermath of conflict, women face a variety of challenges ranging from losing property, to re-traditionalized gender roles and a lack of legal restitution, to name a few (Meintjes et al. 2001; Pankhurst 2008). Consequently, women’s exclusion from the postwar state reinforces androcentric authority, whereby gendered hierarchies can be (re)established, impacting further policy priorities and naturalizing the position of dominant masculinity as privileged above femininity (Peterson 2010). Meredith Turshen illuminates this dynamic and what it really means for women after conflict:

Women are *always* central to state power, even when they are invisible in state formation, occupy political and leadership positions in symbolic numbers only, and receive no remuneration for their labour. States institutionalise men's control of women's productive and reproductive labour in part by institutionalising men's control of women's sexuality, and the role of social violence in maintaining this control is widely documented. (2001, 86)

Instrumentalizing and deploying logics of gender(ed) systems embeds men’s domination of the postwar space (and state) relying on women’s productive and reproductive labor to maintain institutional, economic, political, and social order (Meinjtjes et al. 2001). In short, the absence of women’s physical bodies in armed forces, peace negotiations, and political decision-making does not mean that hetero-patriarchal power relations are non-existent. These gendered logics maintain

and naturalize male authority in the postwar state even when women and their diverse experiences are not given central focus.

As will be shown in this chapter, the postwar state in Kosovo functions along gendered logics, whereby priorities are illustrated as aspirations towards European integration and through the valorization of male war heroes in public discourse. Institutionalizing men / masculinities as sources of authority cements the power of an androcentric state apparatus, invoking a selective past to underpin international ideals and ethno-national narratives. This is then reflected in the spatiality of memorials. Wartime sexual violence has not figured prominently in either of the state narratives since the end of the war, which has marginalized such topics and is illustrated in current policy priorities that has a limited scope on addressing wartime sexual violence.

Constructing Two Dominant Narratives

There are two parallel and somewhat contradictory logics of nation- and state-building in postwar Kosovo: that of the ‘multi-ethnic’ principle espoused by the international community and used by Kosovar institutions to aspire to western / European ideals (G. Krasniqi 2010, 2012; V. Krasniqi 2014; Ströhle 2012); and that of the predominantly ethno-national pattern¹¹ of invoking a singular memory and narrative of wartime heroes, sacrifice, and honor (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006a, 2006b; Luci 2002; Schwandner-Sievers 2013; V. Krasniqi 2007). These two dominant processes have existed alongside each other in the postwar period, heavily influencing social and political relations. Simultaneously, both narratives have effectively sidelined women from the central focus, devaluing and depoliticizing “feminized” (Peterson 2010,

¹¹ For the purposes of this study, the Kosovo Albanian ethno-national narrative will be analyzed. Although outside the scope of this research, similar patterns have been documented within the Kosovo Serb population, whereby selective histories of victimhood center a narrow remembering of the past and manipulation of myths to bolster current claims for political legitimation (see Bieber 2002; Mertus 1999; Mihaljčić 1989; Pick 2001).

20) issues such as wartime sexual violence and victimhood (Gusia n.d.). What follows is an exploration of these two constitutive and consecutive processes, through which dominant identities are constructed in Kosovo. In light of this dynamic, the (limited and contested) postwar response to sexual violence will be analyzed in the subsequent chapter.

European Aspirational Narrative

The first trend of the postwar Kosovo state is the significant impact of the international community on the social, political, and economic fabric of Kosovo, from the many international organizations and donors present immediately after the war to UNMIK's comprehensive interim administration – established in 1999 – and the Ahtisaari Plan¹² – which created an independent Kosovo in 2008 (G. Krasniqi 2010; V. Krasniqi 2014). Much of the immediate postwar space was dominated by development projects and attempts to focus on “democratization, liberal democracy, modernization and Westernization” (V. Krasniqi 2014, 145). Emphasis as well has been on citizenship and functional institutions (G. Krasniqi 2010, 2012; V. Krasniqi 2014), thereby sidelining deeper social issues, such as attention to women's wartime experiences.

The principle of ‘multi-ethnicity’ promoted by the international community was institutionalized and adopted into the constitution, defining Kosovo as “a state of its citizens” (G. Krasniqi 2012, 358). However, even before the 2008 independence, UN and European agendas concentrated on rebuilding wartime Kosovo into a ‘multi-ethnic’ liberal democracy (V. Krasniqi 2007), much like in the case of postwar Bosnia (G. Krasniqi 2010), justifying foreign intervention and donor funding for NGOs (Helms 2013). As Vjollca Krasniqi demonstrates, the “symbols and

¹² The Ahtisaari Plan was established as a framework for Kosovo's “status settlement” proposed in 2007 (Republic of Kosovo [RKS] 2007). It created – among other things – a system of state governance, constitution, judicial system, and police for Kosovo as it declared independence from Serbia and allowed autonomous institutions separate from UNMIK.



Figure 1 - Kosovo Flag

rituals” of the Kosovo state have been specifically constructed to represent all citizens, whereby ethnic insignias have been avoided, and even the national anthem is devoid of lyrics so as not to denote a particular ethnic and linguistic identity (V. Krasniqi 2014, 147). Similarly, the colors chosen for the

Kosovo flag (Figure 1) are demonstrative of the state’s desire to join the EU: blue and yellow constitute the primary colors with six white stars (representing the ethnic groups of Kosovo) invoking direct associations with the EU flag (V. Krasniqi 2014, 147-148). A focus on becoming a European state resonates with institutional attempts to dispel orientalist and balkanist assumptions since European-ness is seen as the ideal of modernization – and thus would allow Kosovo to rid itself of ‘oriental’ and ‘primitive’ assumptions.

Many interview participants illuminated this trend of aspiring toward European standards with a model of the ‘state-to-come,’ conjuring a dependence on “the frustrations and aspirations of men” (McClintock 1993, 62; see also Enloe 1989, 44). Linda Gusia remarked that “the general sense [after the war] was that there was this urgency of creating a state.” She continued that “looking towards the future” was how organizations and institutions positioned themselves, and that overall, “the general narrative of [the Kosovo] state and government [has been] to be and to become.” The priority of looking forward does not allow for nuanced and complex experiences seemingly disregarding ‘tricky’ histories of sexual violence. “The future was somehow pre-constructed” in terms of wanting to join the west and integrate into the European Union, noted Korab Krasniqi who works with the German development organization for peace, Forum ZFD.

The state – by and for men – did not have room, nor was it attuned to allowing, for a gender-sensitive lens in the postwar space.

Although lauded as a UN priority – especially under UNSCR 1325 – gender mainstreaming in UNMIK’s agenda was not a primary consideration. As the KWN report adeptly explains, women were not included in the peace-building process, and in fact were forcefully and ignorantly excluded by international committees facilitating postwar reconstruction based on the assumption that Kosovo was too heavily patriarchal and did not *require* women’s participation (KWN 2011). Thus, both international agencies and state institutions were reproducing masculinized, balkanist perceptions by feminizing social issues and ‘devalorizing’ them (Peterson 2010). Such assumptions further reinforce the state-as-male paradigm, a paradox for European aspirations that – ideally – position women’s rights as a core tenet of European modernity. Even with the implementation of UNSCR 1325, larger international conversations around women’s inclusion in decision-making, and the incorporation of women into larger governance systems, this remains a slow process and has not resulted in a distinct shift in state policy or priorities.

Such lauding of gender equality, women’s rights, and gender mainstreaming thus becomes a rhetorical marker of European aspirations of the Kosovo state institutions while not entirely subscribing to such ideals. Paradoxically, Kosovo state institutions at the same time implicitly assume associations with Europe while also obscuring larger social issues, de-emphasizing and de-politicizing ‘complicated’ social issues. Women’s rights are one such issue that state institutions ascribe to, but only in a limited and rhetorical manner. Within the postwar reconstruction paradigm, Kosovo has prioritized assumptions of state-building and modernization – thus inscribing European ideals – while marginalizing women’s rights as not corresponding with masculinized priorities of governance in an assumed too hetero-patriarchal country.

In many ways, as G. Krasniqi (2010), Deimel (2015), and V. Krasniqi (2007) have each pointed out, the international presence after the war has functioned as a ‘neo-colonial’ experiment in Kosovo after an arguably colonial regime under Serbia (see V. Krasniqi 2007, 2014). Promoting western notions of liberal democracy, these initiatives forced Kosovo into a rapid period of state- and nation-building, which resulted in delayed attention to many social hardships (or perhaps the intentional dismissal of delicate – and thus complicated – social problems). Michael Ignatieff, examining Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, argues in a similar manner for this ‘quasi-colonial experiment’ by the international community, where these sites are viewed as

laboratories in which a new imperium is taking shape, in which American military power, European money and humanitarian motive have combined to produce a form of imperial rule for a post-imperial age. (Ignatieff 2003, quoted in G. Krasniqi 2010, 531)

Thus, the neo-colonial experiment in Kosovo resulted in both the state’s dependence on international presence¹³ and the establishment of public distrust toward such neo-colonial regimes.



Figure 2 - 'EULE(KS)PERIMENT', Prishtina (Photo by author, 2015)

¹³ UNMIK’s interim governance prevented Kosovo from building independent institutions while at the same time, the Kosovo state and NGOs were dependent on international aid – a complicated paradox.

Expressions of this can be found spray-painted on walls in Prishtina. One example of this graffiti reads, ‘EULE(KS)PERIMENT’ (Figure 2) asserting discontent towards the European, EULEX experiment in Kosovo (denoted as KS), and the broader patterns of neo-colonial control and power over Kosovo’s not-yet-autonomous status. This implores at the same time societal disapproval of neo-colonial regimes while also acknowledging how international presence can be a gate to European standards, thereby suggesting at the same time dependence on the plethora of development projects to help support Kosovo’s aim of EU integration.

In another photo (Figure 3), the image of the crossed out EULEX/UNMIK graffiti appears, accompanied by the Albanian double-headed eagle and a tag that reads *Blej Shqip*¹⁴ (‘buy Albanian’). Here, suggestions of neo-colonial rule sit next to symbols of Albanian pride. In the center of the image, a series of statements illuminate the pattern of dissatisfaction with voting in Kosovo, where everyone votes, but *ata përfitojnë* (‘they profit’¹⁵). More than just a public display of

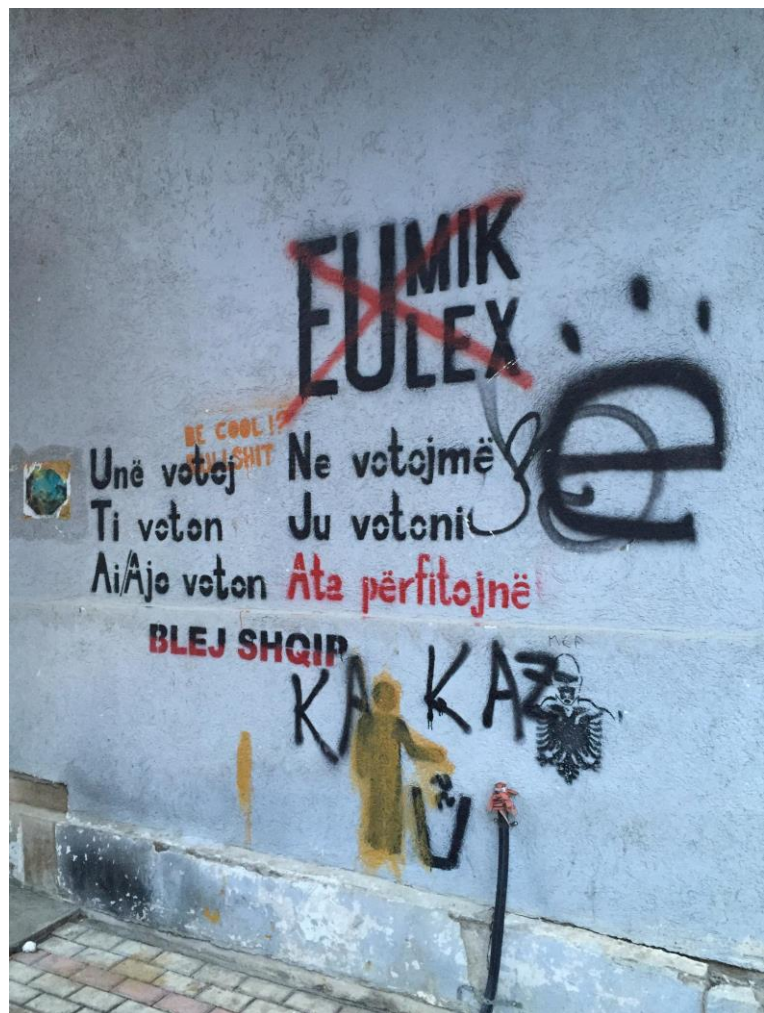


Figure 3 - Graffiti in Prishtina (Photo by author, 2015)

¹⁴ I would like to thank Edita Pozhegu for support and guidance with translations.

¹⁵ This can also be translated as ‘they benefit’, evoking comparable sentiments of elite rewards and community suffering.

societal frustrations, this second image specifically identifies how the political elite (predominantly men) maintain authority while the public are disenfranchised, often restricted by what those elites deem important.¹⁶ The masculinized, neo-colonial principles of the (male) state-as-protector and guardian (Young 2003) – and as the referent of authority – (re)inforce and (re)institutionalize assumptions of an androcentric state.

Images of Kosovo as a ‘newborn’ state – eliciting impressions of rebirth and newness – can be seen as a bridge between the international ideals of European-status and the reification of ethno-national logics of nation-building. Together with masculinized visions of the ‘state-to-come’ that interview participants emphasized, this ‘newborn’ state depiction worked to “reinvent Kosovar society in terms of self-understanding and outside perception,” disregarding memories of victimhood and shame from the war (Ströhle 2012, 228). Gusia, who researches memory constructions, gender, and the symbolic meanings embedded within spatiality, remarked that the embodiment of this sentiment in the NEWBORN monument (Figure 4) is evocative of “no memory, no past, no guilt. There’s a sense of innocence. It’s a newborn baby, it’s a newborn state without the past,” which suggests erasure. Resonating with the ‘state-to-come’ and international pressure for state-building, the image of being a ‘newborn’ state represents not only what Kosovo aspires to, but it also obscures certain memory of the past. Memories of victimhood and sexual violence are erased to achieve a newborn status, if not also to evoke – as Ströhle argues – an infantilized (and feminized) colonial subject without the means with which to attain liberal democracy (2012, 232; see also V. Krasniqi 2007). Therefore, although the newborn ideology

¹⁶ This will be further complicated in the next chapter. NGOs were instrumental in applying pressure on state-level institutions to achieve recognition of survivors of sexual violence; therefore, citizens are not completely at the whim of the political elite, but often face many challenges with actualizing their needs.



Figure 4 - NEWBORN monument, Prishtina (Photo by author, 2017)

works to position Kosovo as more European / western / developed (and determined to reach full integration), it can be argued that because it relies on a selective, amnesiac memory, Kosovo has not yet moved to entirely adopt these principles. This further supports the aim for the frozen ‘state-to-come’, always moving forward, not succeeding. What this shows is an androcentric (re)production of the state-as-male, often obscuring – and normalizing – gendered systems of power that position men / masculinities as dominant (Peterson 2010).

The Ethno-National Narrative

Central to the development of Kosovar autonomy and statehood is building state institutions and establishing effective structures of governance. During this process, women’s rights have been ignored and marginalized. This implies that women’s well-being and security are not integral to the androcentric state, which is demonstrative of state failures in its duty to all citizens. Parallel with this is the tendency to invoke selective memories of the past for political

legitimation. Notions of state authority were constructed in correlation to a dominant ethno-national narrative of masculine honor, duty, and sacrifice that has become a principle characteristic of nationhood in Kosovo (Luci and Gusia 2015).

Similar to attempts at European integration and the newborn ideology, the reliance on selective memory supports the construction of this ethno-national narrative. As Julie Mertus reminds us, “our identities as individuals and as members of groups are defined through the telling and remembering of stories” either “real or imagined” (1999, 1). These stories define an “imagined community” (Anderson 1983), through which social, cultural, and ethnic belonging is rooted. Based not on definitive facts but rather on stories and collective truths, the nation-as-community establishes and legitimates narratives of identity. In Kosovo, gendered patterns of the postwar state pivoted on a foundational ethno-national myth of the war hero, where the wartime reality for women is obscured if not reinforcing the freedom fighting ideals that are central to the Kosovo state’s acclaim for authority. Anna Di Lellio further illuminates this gendered paradigm of the state:

Postwar Kosovo’s main preoccupation was building a foundational myth for the state-to-come. Emptied of the memory of rape and loss of honor, public space was filled by the memory of a liberation war fought by a few male heroes who had rescued the nation not only from foreign oppression, but also from the shame of acquiescence and victimization. There was no room left for women – not even for women veteran fighters, let alone survivors of sexual violence – in the heroic pan-Albanian narrative. (2016, 631)

Despite competing histories of masculinity during the 1990’s – of peaceful resistance as espoused by Kosovo’s leader, Ibrahim Rugova (V. Krasniqi 2007) and of militarized fighters for the independence of the nation, as embodied by Adem Jashari – today, the predominant pattern is of reifying and celebrating the latter, a legacy of freedom fighters and heroes (Luci 2002; Ströhle 2010; V. Krasniqi 2007). The political movement of *Ilegalja* establishes recent aspirational associations of militarized masculinity and national liberation in a longer history of Albanian

resistance (Schwandner-Sievers 2013, 955). Today, politicians are the living embodiment of this selective history of (male) fighters (instead of victims). For example, Kosovo's current president, Hashim Thaçi, and the prime minister, Ramush Haradinaj, were both leaders in the KLA during the war (Schwandner-Sievers 2013; Ströhle 2010). Thus, the state apparatus, unofficially, positions itself in relation to reifications of national honor and duty.

Dealing with certain aspects of the past “was too tricky, too complicated,” explained Gusia. It was easier for the state to legitimize its authority through the militarized, *Albanian* protector hero (reflecting the relationship of gender and the androcentric state) than to address the realities of wartime sexual violence (a history of victimhood), thus maintaining the image of the state (and those in power) as the protector and provider of security, governance, and state benefits (Pankhurst 2008; Peterson 1992, 2010; Young 2003). To be clear, the ethno-national narrative that has taken precedence in Kosovo today is the Kosovar Albanian struggle for independence, which is then reflected in the Albanian-dominated governance structures. The feminization of women's rights, less privileged masculinities, and victims supports the hegemonic construction of an androcentric state (Peterson 2010). Thus, what proved challenging to naturalized constructions of man-as-protector and state-as-provider was the complexity of victimhood.

Mimoza Kusari-Lila, a current member of parliament, remarked that political elite distanced themselves from such feminized associations, because “we are not talking about bravery or heroism; we're talking about victims [when addressing wartime sexual violence].” Women's (and men's) victimhood – instead of heroic honor – undermined the state's ethno-national selective memory, proving no incentive to address sexual violence.¹⁷ Thus, wartime sexual violence as

¹⁷ This is not meant to write out the many NGOs that have been supporting survivors to address their social, economic, and medical needs, such as Medica Kosova, Medica Gjakova, KRCT, and the Center in Drenas.

‘feminized’ was not viewed as a relevant category for state-level attention (Peterson 2010). Speaking at a public event, the former president Atifete Jahjaga expressed exasperation with the political agenda of those in power: “You have political leaders that are more oriented on going after the votes than going after the needs of the people.” As this statement indicates, many of the political elite are not attuned – nor held accountable – to addressing social and structural issues that were not “politically advantageous” to the “political leadership [or] political elites,” such as sexual violence, remarked Nita Luci.

Many respondents echoed this sentiment when asked about what the state has prioritized and why sexual violence has not, for many years, been on the agenda. Embodied in this dynamic is what Mimoza Kusari-Lila explained: “When it comes to discussing women’s priorities, there’s always something more important.” What takes precedent is liberal democratic, political, and economic postwar agendas (especially those espoused by the UN and EU projects). Women’s productive and reproductive labor as wives and mothers becomes useful for wider state-level priorities to support the male-dominated public sphere, but the realities and complexities of women’s wartime experiences are not necessarily considered since they are seen as ‘hindering’ peacebuilding processes (Hudson 2012). Therefore, without dealing with the ‘tricky’ pieces of the wartime past, politicians and institutions relied on the subordination and sidelining of women (and sexual violence) as long as they remained dutiful (re)productive citizens (Pankhurst 2008; Turshen 2001).

Through these two parallel narratives, gender hierarchies (and gender roles) are visible in Kosovo, positioning men / masculinity as politically and socially more valued than women / femininity (Peterson 2010). Institutional practices have been embedded within structures of legal frameworks, governmental policies (or lack thereof), and social interactions. Attempts to separate

from balkanist and orientalist associations meant that the Kosovo state positioned itself close to the international community. The interaction between the two narratives of western ideals and an Albanian ethno-national heroic memory is clear: the reification and remembrance of a past narrated through a nationalist lens sets up and facilitates the creation of a future ideal and goal of European integration. In the postwar space, crowded with international agencies, NGOs, and conflicting political agendas, issues of gender and sexual violence have been sidelined to instead prioritize wider, conventional state-building policies, which excluded women (both physically and symbolically). This reification of a male-dominated, masculine state – an embodiment of the postwar space – refused a gender-sensitive lens. The dominant narratives are both produced by and productive of the relationship between the state and society, whereby these dynamics become embedded within the national memory and are then (re)produced between generations, families, and communities. Without being challenged, these narratives homogenize experiences and desires, and assume a common identity. Gendered logics delayed and ignored broader social issues, which silenced the complexities of wartime experiences, and further obscured sexual violence almost completely from the agenda, relying on women’s productive and reproductive labor to (re)entrench gender hierarchies (Hudson 2012).

Commemorating War Heroes

In Kosovo’s (Albanian) selective memory, national martyrs, war heroes, and freedom fighters have come to represent the nation and state-level protectionism, and the struggle for an independent state. Sites of memorialization serve to reinforce these state priorities, where Kosovar society tends – as Gusia remarked – to “commemorate and glorify” certain heroic deeds of protectionism and masculine honor, while ignoring victimization of both men and women. Peterson’s “feminization as devalorization” works to as well remind us of the converse, a

masculinization as valorization (2010, 17). The image, and physical monument, of the male war hero who sacrificed for the nation becomes emblematic of the nation itself. The shift from the pacifist, non-violent (passive) masculinity embodied in Ibrahim Rugova to the protectionist, violent (active) masculinity manifested in war heroes like Adem Jashari celebrates male freedom fighters and martyrs whose veneration stands to mark a collective identity of sacrifice, honor, and nation-building (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006b, 518; V. Krasniqi 2007). Comparable patterns of valorizing martyrs can be seen as well in Croatia (Schäuble 2014) and Bosnia (Bougarel 2007). In the postwar space, Luci has identified how a pattern of “‘renewed’ Albanian masculinity” in public and private discourse serves to cement this heroic protectionism (2002, 75). Hegemonic masculinity is both symbolically and physically enshrined in the image of Adem Jashari.

Arguably the “most esteemed hero in the public mind in Kosovo” (V. Krasniqi 2014, 153) and the most well-known freedom fighter and martyr, Adem Jashari embodies such valorized heroic, protector masculinity, “a mythical figure who binds past and future generations to the nation” (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006b, 514). Known as *komandant legjendar* (‘The Legendary Commander’), Jashari was one of the founders of the KLA. The myth of his sacrifice emerges from his martyrdom in his family home, where after a three-day attack by Serb forces, Jashari and most of his extended family were killed (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006b). From this incident, Jashari – and the general image of masculine freedom fighters – supports the ethno-national state narrative of Albanian independence.

Proof of Jashari’s immortalization is found in textbook narratives of the war and the history of KLA fighters (V. Krasniqi 2014), in the “many schools, barracks, squares and streets all over Kosovo that are named after him” (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006b, 517; see also Luci 2002), and in sites of memory such as the “sacred shrine” and memorial complex of Jashari’s

family home in Prekaz, Kosovo (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006a). Similarly, his memory has been situated within the legal framework, where “the Assembly of Kosovo adopted the Law on the Memorial Complex ‘Adem Jashari’ [that] turned the family compound... into a site ‘of ontological, anthropological historical, cultural and civic significance for the wider Albanian nation’ for all ethnic Albanians” (V. Krasniqi 2014, 154). This freezes a selective memory of war heroes into public memory and discourse, but of specifically Albanian heroes who fought – what is seen as – the colonial regimes of Yugoslavia and Serbia. The construction of a purely militarized, heroic masculinity – and therefore war hero – also relies on assumptions of a passive, weak, and subordinated femininity to underpin this national conviction (Enloe 2000; Peterson 1992, 2010; V. Krasniqi 2007). Consequently, the “nationalisation of memory” (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006b, 515) conjures images of an honorable nation of male war heroes that is necessary for the continuance of the state and its dominant narratives for political legitimization.

Building symbolic representations of heroism, ex-fighters are able to claim political legitimization in the new state – and in the ‘state-to-come’. Luci explained in an interview that the veneration of freedom fighters has “been part of the way in which [the political elite] built symbolic dominance and legitimated their authority and political” validity. Mimoza Kusari-Lila also spoke about the instrumentalization of the war veteran for political gain, since, as she explained, it is understood that heroism holds political capital for those in office, and those hoping to be in office. *Because* freedom fighters were heroes – and thus not victims – they were able to utilize that status within the public sphere. Political parties exhibited assumptions of previous valor to idealize their ex-fighter-status after the war: “They considered the war to be the foundation of the nascent state and strove to maintain their constituencies’ support by perpetually militarizing the political discourse, bolstering their claim to power” (Ströhle 2010, 500). Not only were militarized,

protectionist ideals embedded in the platform of many postwar political entities, but political elites also used their background in the armed liberation as a qualification for their role in politics (Ströhle 2010).

However, this becomes further complicated. The image of the martyr suggests a “dead body politics” (Verdery 1999) of continually invoking past martyrdom, whereby the legitimization of the present restructures a glorified past (Helms 2013, 32). In the case of Croatia, Schäuble argues that “victims-turned-martyrs become sacrificed figures” not solely in their accessibility but also in the uncomplicated and problem-free invocation they provide as martyrs-not-victims (2014, 160). Therefore, the plight of veterans – those closer to victimhood than pure martyrdom – was also a difficult one; access to adequate state benefits was not a pre-ordained assumption even though veterans were included in small benefit schemes since the time of UNMIK. However, this cannot be equated with the challenge faced by survivors of sexual violence since their suffering was relegated almost exclusively to the victim-category, and thus ignored.¹⁸ The continued glorification of the war hero and veteran fixes this image into the national memory, whereby Veprare Shehu explains that they were proud, they demanded their rights, and they received them. Thus, the war hero image demanded recognition within state narratives that was not accessible to sexual violence survivors. This selective memory of heroism has served the political elite well, constructing a postwar ethno-national narrative of sacrificial honor for further glorification.

Memorialization and Space as a Reflection of Nation-Building

The construction of spatial locations and physical monuments that create and (re)produce social meaning in society reflect current state dynamics of commemoration and valorization of

¹⁸ Unless their suffering is invoked as a sacrifice to the nation as it is implied in the *Heroinat* memorial.

war heroes in postwar Kosovo. The constitution of identity and belonging or non-belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006) in the postwar space often reflects dynamics of the conflict itself, which has been studied as reproducing a spatiality of peace and conflict (Björkdahl and Buckley-Zistel 2016; Stavrevska 2016; Michael et al. 2016). Through space, “abstract social relations become concrete” and thus space, and spatial narratives, are “complex social construction[s] composed of social norms, values and ascribed meanings” (Björkdahl and Buckley-Zistel 2016, 3). Both conflict and post-conflict spaces are replete with political, ethnic, religious, and gendered meanings that continue to (re)produce and demonstrate the social relations of those with a share in the social order. As Yuval-Davis asserts, “belonging tends to be naturalized, and politicized only when it is threatened in some way” (2006, 197). The expression of this need for belonging is clear in Kosovar society as their precarious statehood remains uncertain, continually questioned. However, this “dynamic process” of social relations and belonging constantly (re)produces dominant, individual and collective narratives, where meaning is reinforced and projected onto the physical, public space (Yuval-Davis 2006, 199).

In Kosovo, spatial dynamics reflect the dominant state narrative, examined above, which constructs a framework that privileges certain ethnic, gendered, and sexualized ideologies (Žarkov 2007). The intervention into public memory of war heroes is clear in “the sheer number of monuments that mushroomed across the rural landscape [which] has made the former KLA hyper-visible in postwar Kosovo... occup[ying] the public symbolic space” (Ströhle 2010, 481-482). The very visible nature of monuments both identifies the social importance of such figures and constitutes patterns and formulations of identity. Elena Stavrevska has examined spatial governmentality in postwar Bosnia where “ethnic spaces” are produced and establish relational boundaries suggestive of the wartime past, because spaces are “constituted and populated by the

way people experience them” (2016, 142). In Kosovo as well, sites and locations of memory – embodied in monuments and statues – serve an ethno-nationalist narrative. Schäuble argues in the case of Croatia that “memory sites are not fixed or static spaces but instead gain their meaning solely through ongoing interaction with the people whose memories they are meant to symbolize and maintain” (2014, 162). Thus the relationship between nation and memory is evidenced and exhibited in public spaces.

To return to war hero imagery in Kosovo, squares, such as the Zahir Pajaziti square, are filled with heroic, larger-than-life bodies of freedom fighters privileging militarized, masculine bodies. On one side of a square in central Prishtina, Zahir Pajaziti stands, commanding attention as a proud hero with his hands gripping a large gun. Zahir Pajaziti’s death in 1997 is believed to have inspired other fighters, such as Adem Jashari, suggesting a dominant historical memory of male sacrifice (Schwandner-Sievers 2013). Many similar monuments, statues, and embossed grave stones sprinkle the Kosovar country-side.

An Accidental Manifestation of State Narratives?

A particular illustration of the gendered, postwar logics of spatiality can be found in the positioning of three well-known monuments. As described in the introduction, the interaction between Adem Jashari’s portrait, the NEWBORN monument, and *Heroinat* in downtown Prishtina elicits a need for closer scrutiny of the power dynamics at play (Figures 6). Since an analysis of Jashari’s placement within Kosovar memory and the importance of the ‘newborn’ ideology have already been examined, here I will evaluate the significance and contention of *Heroinat*, before exploring the relationship between the three memorials.

Heroinat (Figure 5) was built in 2015 at the initiative of Alma Lama – a member of parliament – with the support from the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning to



Figure 5 - Heroinat memorial, Prishtina (Photos by author, 2018)

commemorate women's sacrifice and experience during the war (Blakçori 2014; Čigon 2015; Ferizaj 2015). After an open call for artists, a design was chosen that – instead of representing all experiences – highlighted specifically the extensive accounts of the rape of women (Čigon 2015). As elucidated by the almost illegible plaque next to the memorial, an issue due to its opaque design, *Heroinat* represents heroines: “built by 20,145 medals, which symbolically honor the versatile *contribution and sacrifice* of every ethnic *Albanian* woman,” *Heroinat* also “remembers the cruel crime of rape carried out by the Serbian forces during the last war against nearly 20,000 women” (emphasis added). The ethno-national narrative is here epitomized in the presentation of a single, homogenized portrait of an *Albanian* woman's face in relief which is replicated on each of the

20,145 medals.¹⁹ Blakçori – the artist who developed the design for *Heroinat* – used documentary images of women from the war, combining them and extracting the most common features to create a “unique yet representative face of Kosovar women” for the portrait on the memorial (Čigon 2015).

The engagement of state institutions in public memorials is fraught with complexity. The only memorial established and commemorated within the legal framework of the state is the Adem Jashari family compound in Prekaz – a note Linda Gusia also emphasized in an interview – whereas other monuments are private initiatives (Sweeney 2015, 12). For *Heroinat*, state support, though not drafted into law, was intrinsic to the construction of the memorial because of financial assistance and the geo-spatial location. Because of this institutional interaction, it is notable to recognize that there *is* a memorial commemorating women, whereas none exist in neighboring Bosnia. However, in line with previous discussions on state narratives, Sweeney has argued that “common manipulation of the past and the politicization of memory” by state institutions has resulted in widespread distrust of memorials that come from the state or affiliated parties (2015, 18). For many activists – as was made clear during interviews – state support often only comes with a caveat of state-centered interest.

Heroinat’s execution essentializes and homogenizes the complexities of women’s experiences of wartime violence, assuming both a singular narrative of *how* women experienced sexual violence and that women *only* experienced sexual violence during the war. Thus, it directly ignores Serbian women, women of other ethnic groups, and men’s experiences of wartime sexual

¹⁹ The use of medals here evokes images of the medals given to soldiers for their bravery and sacrifice fighting for the nation. In this context, it stands as an uncomfortable reminder that women’s bodies – as sexualized – and the violence perpetrated against them are used in service of the nationalist cause for independence.

violence. To elaborate, this pattern of essentializing denies the agency of women as actors in and supporters of the conflict. Women's bodies became violable through transgressions of a sexual nature, reducing them not only to passive victims but also *sexualized* victims, and further, it sexualizes their victimization. The memorial caused a stir of controversy after its construction, especially by those who are very critical of the state (Čigon 2015). Linda Gusia remarked that she hoped the memorial would represent the intricacies of wartime realities, but instead “it hijacked the complexity of experiences of these women, survivors” since it focused only on representing – through medals – the service of (Albanian) women for the (Albanian) nation. There is no mention of women's roles as armed combatants in the KLA, differentiated experiences with wartime violence, or women's active condemnation of war, a cause in which many activists across Yugoslavia were engaged. Thus, situated within the rhetoric of nationalism, the memorial “simplifies the debate” to the protection of ‘our’ women, as Gusia continued, instead of allowing for nuance and the agency of women to be represented.

The spatial positioning of *Heroinat* across from the NEWBORN monument and gazed down upon by Adem Jashari's portrait is emblematic of many of the state dynamics in Kosovo today. The paternalistic figure of Jashari as a national father figure²⁰ looks down upon the newborn state and the symbol of women's instrumentalized bodies. Since NEWBORN serves to “quintessentially represent this state policy of Kosova being a newborn state,” as Gusia elucidated in an interview, its position under Adem Jashari's portrait constantly reminds the new state not to forget its wartime, militarized, and honorable past. Further, *Heroinat* elicits memories of victimhood in stark contrast to the history-less NEWBORN and the heroic Jashari. Emblematic of

²⁰ See also V. Krasniqi's (2007) discussion for a parallel illustration of how images of Ibrahim Rugova and Hashim Thaçi similarly work to infantilize and paternalize the Albanian society, and in particular, Albanian women.



Figure 6 - Spatial positioning of Adem Jashari, NEWBORN, and Heroinat in Prishtina. Adem Jashari's portrait peers down from behind NEWBORN, looking across the street toward Heroinat (Google Satellite Images)

current state narratives and priorities, the gendered relation between these monuments illustrates the privileging of western / European ideals and the protectionist, masculine ethno-national account. Even though it is notable that there is finally a monument recognizing women's experiences during war, *Heroinat's* placement serves not only as a reminder that women are seen largely as homogenized victims, but also acts as a reminder that the state has taken almost two decades to recognize the suffering of wartime sexual violence survivors.

The highly gendered postwar space in Kosovo constructs, reifies, and privileges a militarized, protector masculinity, while feminized victimhood follows nationalist logics of shame and dishonor. The production of gendered nationalism did not only position different ethnicities in a hierarchy, but it also privileged a dominant masculinity that relied on heterosexuality. State narratives that were explored at the beginning of this chapter illuminate how the gendered postwar

space has sidelined women and femininities – as well as victimhoods – for the larger narrative of European integration and heroism. Valorizing male freedom fighters (and protectionist masculinity) is not only seen in physical space and memorials, but is also a direct reflection of state dynamics in Kosovo today. What follows is an examination of how gendered nationalism and dominant state narratives have impacted the recognition of wartime sexual violence. I contend that because state priorities simply were not focused on women's wartime experiences, sexual violence has been consistently marginalized and ignored, and survivors have been left to suffer without state-level recognition or benefits.

CHAPTER III: POSTWAR POLICY AND RESPONSE – RECOGNITION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

The Kosovar state policy towards recognizing wartime sexual violence has been influenced by the gendered logics of war, postwar, and masculine state mechanisms, whereby the Amendment to the Law on Civilian Victims of War in 2014 was the first legal recognition of wartime survivors. Prior to this, survivors of wartime sexual violence were not recognized within any legal framework, which compelled NGOs and activists to seek formal legal recognition of survivors and – ideally – compensation for previous harm. This chapter will examine the dynamic between activists and state institutions in postwar Kosovo, and further analyze the role of social stigma and silence on survivors' access to the new recognition procedures. Social stigma causes further challenges for survivors trying to access the state benefits outlined in the amendment. I present an analysis of the Law and the Amendment in order to assess their significance and illuminate their consequences for the application process for recognition and state benefits. I argue that there are many important elements in the Amendment that do well to support survivors and its significance in society should not go unacknowledged, but implementation procedures still prove to be an obstacle for fully supporting survivors, which must remain within the frame of the earlier patterns of ignoring this issue in society, as was explored in previous chapters.

Tracing State Response and Benefits for Wartime Sexual Violence

After the war, UNMIK provided small benefits for “war invalids... who ha[ve] received physical injury” and “next of kin of those who died as a result of the armed conflict in Kosovo” specifically providing access to monetary support, tax breaks, and free medical services (Amnesty International 2017b; UNMIK 2000). However, after the 2008 declaration of independence, Kosovo needed a state-level regime for addressing these wartime categories. Approved in December 2011 and entered into force in early 2012, the ‘Law on the Status and the Rights of the

Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of Kosova Liberation Army, Civilian Victims of War and their Families’ (hereafter the Status Law) was passed by the Kosovar Assembly (RKS 2012). The Status Law provided state benefits in the form of monthly pensions, access to healthcare, education, job priority, and economic benefits – to varying degrees – for KLA veterans, war invalids with physical wounds, and family members of both KLA and civilian victims who were killed. However, the Status Law, like the previous UNMIK regulation, did not provide access to benefits for sexual violence survivors, given that specific mention of sexual violence does not appear, nor an attention to psychological wounds (RKS 2012). Further, the Status Law required physical proof of disability, which many survivors could not provide if medical records were destroyed or were not recorded in the first place – as was common during the war. Therefore, although not explicitly excluded, it was very difficult – even impossible – for many survivors of wartime sexual violence to access these benefits. Thus, survivors were denied recognition of the physical and psychological trauma of their wartime violence (Amnesty International 2017b; Gusia n.d.).

In March 2014, due to the joint efforts of activists, NGOs, then President Atifete Jahjaga, and international agencies, an amendment to the 2012 Status Law was passed in the Assembly (hereafter the Amendment). The Amendment explicitly incorporated “sexual violence victims of the war” into the legal framework (RKS 2014). The Amendment, using non-gendered language, stipulated that survivors of wartime sexual violence were entitled to a monthly pension, limited healthcare, and educational and economic benefits, and required the establishment of a Government Commission to process applications (RKS 2014). However, the consequences of the dominant narratives outlined in the previous chapter have resulted in a pattern of neglect that is evident in the prolonged process for tangible recognition and distribution of actual benefits. Not

only did the initial law disregard the category of sexual violence, but survivors suffered lengthy delays until an Amendment was passed, and then faced additional time before they could apply for benefits. After the 2014 Amendment, it was not until February 2016 that the Government Commission tasked to process applications was established (RKS 2016b), not until 2017 that a national budget allocated funds for the monthly pensions and support for the Commission, and not until 5 February 2018 that survivors could apply to be legally recognized (Halili 2018). Although it was a major success, the passage of the Amendment came very belatedly for survivors and the process has elicited distrust from both survivors and their advocates in civil society.

Before the 2014 Amendment, there had been no state-level recognition of wartime sexual violence survivors within policy or legal frameworks. In addition to the limited work by the UN on transitional justice and various programs providing support by NGOs, a couple projects should be noted. One, the “regional truth commission in the former Yugoslavia” (RECOM), has been tasked as a truth-telling, transitional justice mechanism (Di Lellio and McCurn 2013, 130). Although it serves as “a regional initiative lobbying for an official truth commission” involving government institutions, NGOs, and international organizations, RECOM does not explicitly focus on addressing sexual violence, nor has it been a reliable process due to inconsistent commitment by various actors (Di Lellio and McCurn 2013, 130). A similar initiative by the Humanitarian Law Center (HLC) works to identify crimes against humanity and war crimes (HLC n.d.). Like RECOM, HLC projects do not solely investigate crimes of a sexual nature, though sexual violence does remain a piece of its work. These projects sit within the larger frame of Kosovo’s regime that has not always given attention to sexual violence. Additionally, *Ženski Sud* (the Women’s Court) was an informal feminist mechanism for truth-telling and a grassroots initiative aimed at

reinterpreting the dominant wartime narratives,²¹ urging state-level response to wartime violence (O'Reilly 2016). O'Reilly ultimately points out the inherent need for “extensive state-sponsored, collective measures to achieve the significant redistribution of material resources” that are simply not available simply to NGOs and activists (2016, 432). While it is necessary to make visible informal processes, state institutions are still central to providing legitimation and recognition.

Effective mechanisms for dealing with the past could have allowed for a gender-sensitive transition and avoided the creation of a singular ethno-national narrative of selective memory and heroic masculinity (Gusia n.d.; Ni Aolain and Rooney 2007). Unfortunately, international regimes did not set a precedent for addressing sexual violence – as evidenced in UNMIK’s almost complete disregard and mishandling of testimonies of rape²² – which in turn influenced and couched the systemic non-recognition of survivors by the Kosovo state. Sebahate Pacolli Krasniqi spoke about the lack of state response in an interview. KRCT, the organization she has worked with for almost 15 years, has supported survivors of all types of trauma since the war. Krasniqi specifically reflected on the technicalities of why – in many ways – the government had not addressed this issue:

Our government, or our institutions, our public system, health system, they didn’t have any services to deal [with this], even for torture survivors, not at all talking about survivors of sexual violence. So what is done [has been] done mainly by civil society organizations.

²¹ See also Ross (2003) for an account of post-war reconciliation in South Africa and its impact on women and their silences.

²² Both UNMIK and EULEX failed considerably in their duty to use legal measures to process testimonies and try perpetrators after the conflict. Amnesty International documented this failure, pointing out that UNMIK did not process or indict a single rape case during their time, and passed on only nine open case files to EULEX, who similarly only processed two cases themselves (Amnesty International 2017b). This does not bode well for Kosovo’s Special Prosecution Office which is due to receive thousands of testimonies and case files in June 2018 with only two staff members to process all cases, not just those regarding sexual violence.

What she highlights here is how, although the state was generally unprepared to deal with all the trauma and consequences of war, survivors of sexual violence were even further disregarded and relegated to the margins. But this argument does not absolve the state of its duty to recognize and support sexual violence survivors. Because of this, survivors and their advocates continue to distrust state institutions. Thus, the state's inability or unwillingness to recognize survivors in favor of focusing on state-building without a gender-sensitive lens is unacceptable.

Societal Stigma and NGO Response

Underpinning the discussion on state-level recognition for wartime sexual violence in Kosovo is the deeply engrained hetero-patriarchal stigma and shame, resulting in the precarious position of survivors in society. Stigmatization operates through parallel processes of institutional sidelining and societal-level ostracism, processes which construct and constitute each other. Relying on assumptions of women's (hetero)sexuality, tropes of women's presumed shame and dishonorable victimhood surrounding wartime rape work to 'other' and feminize victims; similar patterns have also been documented extensively in the cases of Bosnia (see Amnesty International 2017a; Helms 2012, 2013; Olujić 1998) and Croatia (see Olujić 1998; Žarkov 1997, 2001, 2007). There is a contradictory process at work here however. The framing of wartime sexual violence in Kosovo has become a "tacit agreement to ignore what everyone knew" (Di Lellio 2016, 631). Therefore, concealment of the violation of women's sexuality was widely known, but at the same time it was not often spoken about in public discourse.

Writing about Bangladesh, Nayanika Mookherjee examines a similar pattern of what she calls the "public secret"²³ of sexual violence (2006, 434). Creating a dynamic by which

²³ The 'public secret' of rape or mass atrocities during genocide is also discussed in Jennie Burnet's work on memory in post-genocide Rwanda, where she argues that an "amplified silence" is at

communities can move forward without dwelling too deeply on the past, this ‘public secret’ maintains the assumption that wartime rape can be knowable while at the same time being noticeably hidden. Thus, at the community and institutional level, the public secret of wartime sexual violence becomes “indispensable to operations of power and subservience” that rely on the (hetero)sexuality of women and work to institutionally downplay wartime violence and victimhood through the lens of hegemonic state power and protection (Mookherjee 2006, 235). Theidon, in her study of violence and reconciliation in Peru, reminds us that “to talk about rape is to talk about silences,” suggesting not a society ignorant of these acts, but instead the use of an intentional strategy of obscuring memory (2013, 108). The true weight of this is explained by cultural and social norms of (hetero)sexuality, marriageability, and honor in Kosovo.

Central to an analysis of the public secret of wartime sexual violence in Kosovo is the approach through which many survivors address their own victimhood in relation to the shame and stigma that surrounds it, resulting in patterns of both telling and concealing such violence at different times. Invoking a tactic of strategic agency, survivors themselves might choose to remain silent about their experience as a form of self-preservation. Di Lellio discusses this phenomenon, where “women’s silence [can] be seen in this context as an affirmative, strategic choice, and did not mean inaction” (2016, 633). As agents, survivors might view silence as a method through which to maintain their social position without enduring further harm. Theidon, analyzing silences in postwar Peru, agrees that this “may constitute a form of agency” (2013, 104). Helms (2013) connects these patterns to postwar Bosnia. Because of the social pressure of the ‘public secret’ and community assumptions of shame and dishonor, it is evident that coming forward with an account

work in these cases: “amplified silence is simultaneously the state of silence and the action of silencing” (Burnet 2012a, 111-112).

of being a victim of wartime sexual violence might result in being ostracized in the home, in the community, and within the institutions of social services.

Cultural and social factors interact to produce social and economic consequences, wherein survivors – especially women – become ineligible for marriage or are forcibly removed from their homes,²⁴ or worse, as many survivors have attested to in Kosovo (Di Lellio 2015; Integra 2017). Similarly, Burnet writes about methods of “silence as protection” after the Rwandan genocide which, for some, was meant to safeguard survivors from the onslaught of psychologically traumatic memories, while, for others, it became a “culturally appropriate coping mechanism”²⁵ (2012a, 114-115). Rwandan society highly values virginity, “or at least the illusion of virginity,” which forces survivors to remain silent about their experience: “for maidens²⁶ raped during the genocide, entering into a legitimate marriage was virtually impossible unless they kept their rapes secret” (Burnet 2012a, 135). At the societal level, open discussion of this issue is still hindered by misperceptions and assumptions around what is seen as the stripped honor and shame a survivor carries if they are public about their experiences. Thus, agency in silence is one strategy for dealing with wartime sexual violence.

Accounts from the war in Kosovo show that in the immediate aftermath of war, victims were hesitant to talk about what happened to them, even though the threat of rape was widely known in many communities. H.A., a woman who anonymously shared her firsthand account of

²⁴ It is estimated that women in Kosovo own as little as 8% of property (KWN 2015, 27). The continuum of violence (Cockburn 2004) from the war into peacetime often exacerbates levels of domestic, economic, and social violence for women, who face structural impediments to realizing not only their legal status as wartime victims, but also their position in their community and in their family (see KWN 2015; OSCE n.d.; RKS 2016a).

²⁵ See also Burnet’s other work on Rwanda (2012b) and Das’ documentation of strategic choice around marriages after violence during the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan (1995).

²⁶ The term ‘maiden’ is used by Burnet to understand *abari*, or more clearly, “girls ripe for marriage” (Burnet 2012a, 42).

wartime rape in the memory book, *I Want to Be Heard*,²⁷ navigated the shame and stigma by not talking about what happened to her and to others: “We did not dare tell anyone what they had done to us. We said that they beat us up really badly, but nothing else... I told my husband later, when the war ended. Nobody else knows” (Integra 2017, 42-43). Based on hetero-patriarchal assumptions of women’s sexual honor as representative of familial honor in Kosovo (Luci 2002), speaking out about wartime sexual violence was taboo. For some, coming forward to tell their story to UNMIK was intended to bring about legal restitution and peace of mind upon seeing perpetrators locked up. Unknown to them at the time of reporting, their testimonies received little follow-through and societal judgments were swift to impose restrictions.²⁸ Igo Rogova, director of KWN, spoke about this backlash in an interview, stating that women never felt that they were guilty immediately after the war, “that happened later, society made them guilty. So they isolated themselves.” Projections of guilt and shame further feminized victims and acted as a genesis for their othering from communities. Both silence and vocalization are evident after the war, yet the larger pattern of obscuring wartime sexual violence became the common practice in public discourse (Di Lellio 2016; Luci and Gusia 2015).

During our interview, Sebahate Pacolli Krasniqi told me a story that exemplifies the effects and consequences of the social stigma for survivors. She spoke of a 60-year-old woman who had begun to seek support and assistance at KRCT in 2017 after years of not seeking help or telling anyone about her experience. When asked why she had not come sooner and why she was only coming now, Sebahate explained that the woman said, “My husband died two years ago, he

²⁷ The title of this memory book is significant. In the case of Bosnia, a similar account was published by the name *I Begged Them to Kill Me*, evoking a total victim-status of suffering. Whereas in *I Want to Be Heard*, images of women speaking and demanding to be heard becomes central to their accounts of wartime violence.

²⁸ See Amnesty International’s (2017b) report, “Wounds That Burn Our Souls.”

[wouldn't] let me ask for my rights, and my children have settled down, so now it's time for me to take care about myself... just now I will have time and courage to care about myself." This woman had prioritized her family and her children before herself; she knew the social stigma was strong and that if anyone found out she had been raped during the war, her daughter might not be desirable for marriage. This story shows the lengths to which survivors will go to protect their families and to hide what happened to them for fear of the social consequences that result from the deeply engrained stigma, the shame that persists, and the gender regime that places strict controls on women's sexuality.

Confronting the shame and stigma of wartime sexual violence has been a priority for many NGOs and non-state actors in Kosovo since the end of the war. Beyond the services – psycho-social, medical, and legal – that NGOs provide for survivors, there have been multiple public and art interventions aimed at de-stigmatization, bringing this issue to a larger public platform. Many interview respondents spoke about where and when they saw shifts in public perceptions of wartime sexual violence. I will examine three of these campaigns that were identified as bringing about the most social change and impacting further discussions at the institutional and state level. The first of these was the 8 March protest organized by KWN in 2012. Igo Rogova spoke stirringly of this event saying, "that was very powerful. We broke the doors of silence and taboo." Protesting under a banner reading "We don't want flowers."²⁹ We want justice for women who suffered sexual violence during the war," activists brought wide scale, public attention to this issue for the first time (Di Lellio 2016, 635). Many interview respondents identified this protest as the turning point

²⁹ The phrase 'We don't want flowers' has been used at previous 8 March protests. In Yugoslavia, 8 March or International Women's Day also became a quasi-mother's day where women were gifted flowers and candy. The use of 'We don't want flowers' challenges societal perceptions of women as simply caretakers and is often meant as a political critique.

in shifting the social stigma. Subsequently, Igo Rogova recounted how the creation of documentaries and songs, followed by Atifete Jahjaga's establishment of the National Council for the Survivors of Sexual Violence during the War and later the Amendment in 2014, were pivotal for altering public perceptions of women's shame.

Then, in the summer of 2015, two separate art installations further interrupted social assumptions. The first was the inauguration of *Heroinat*, discussed in the previous chapter. Although contested, its establishment did allow for a public platform to address wartime sexual violence. The second, an art installation, *Mendoj Për Ty* ('Thinking of You') by artist Alketa Xhafa-Mripa, served as a collaborative process to collect almost 5,000 dresses and skirts from citizens for display on clotheslines in the stadium in Prishtina to recognize and remember wartime sexual violence: "Thinking of You plays on the notion of airing dirty laundry, because sexual violence is still shrouded in so much silence, stigma and secrecy here," writes Di Lellio (2015). Again, Igo Rogova remarked, "For me the installation was the visual moment to see society changing. I saw how people wanted to say, 'Forgive us' to survivors by bringing something of theirs. So it was a way of asking for forgiveness." These public art interventions have been crucial for intervening into the institutional and community silence around addressing wartime sexual violence in Kosovo and for efforts to eliminate stigma. Thus, responding to survivors' often strategic choice to remain silent about their experience, NGOs and non-state actors have stepped in to provide a public platform for those willing and able to tell their stories to those ready to listen.

Catalyzing the Amendment

As documented in the 2011 Kosovo Women's Network report, women's rights activist Nazile Bala stated, "We've used [UNSCR] 1325 since 1999, even before such a Resolution existed, and how much it has been implemented by those who have the responsibility is a question

that needs to be answered” (KWN 2011, 5). Although the focus of this research is not directly on UNSCR 1325 nor the wider UN agenda of Women, Peace, and Security, this sentiment illuminates the essential nature and commitment of NGOs in Kosovo before, during, and after the war. It was the will and insistence of NGOs such as Medica Kosova, Medica Gjakova, Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims (KRCT), the Center for the Promotion of Women’s Rights in Drenas (the Center), and KWN that catalyzed the response for wartime sexual violence (Di Lellio 2016; Gusia n.d.; Medical Mondiale 2016).

Even before the war, members of the Center for the Protection of Women and Children (CPWC, no longer in operation) explained how they supported refugees and survivors of rape fleeing the war in Bosnia during the mid-1990’s. Unintentionally, this became a “rehearsal” for CPWC, which would eventually use this knowledge to support sexual violence survivors when armed conflict broke out in Kosovo in 1998 (Di Lellio 2016, 629). Many organizations continue to work with survivors, providing psycho-social support, access to medical treatment, economic empowerment, and legal advice. “Women’s groups kept working on identifying and rehabilitating survivors, thus mitigating institutional neglect and broader social denial,” and it was this work that provided a platform from which to mobilize state-level support (Di Lellio 2016, 623). The alliance between NGOs, activists, key state figures, international organizations, and survivors themselves proved fruitful: “in less than one year women’s groups had raised enough awareness, both institutionally and in the society, to overcome opposition” (Di Lellio 2016, 636).

When interview participants spoke about the Amendment, it was clear the central role NGOs and survivor advocates played. “It started from [the] NGOs,” Mirlinda Sada, director of Medica Gjakova, explained that “the voice of the civil society was heard for the first time... They [the state] accepted what we said because we had the expertise on this issue. Even the government

doesn't have it." It was not a forgone conclusion that the state would shift its policy priorities, which makes the attention given to NGOs even more important. Most respondents remarked that the shift in priorities would not have happened otherwise, insisting that the role of NGOs in the process was invaluable. Sebahate Pacolli Krasniqi stressed to me, "I'm very convinced when I say never, never... I would not ever think they will do it without the pressure they had from civil society organizations and from survivors. Because without civil society organizations it wouldn't be at all possible to bring the law amendments to the Kosovar Assembly." Most respondents underlined this pattern: NGOs were compelled to step in where the state had previously failed since women's rights were frequently de-legitimated. It was unclear how and whether attention would have been paid to this issue without pressure: "Nobody cared," stated Vepore Shehu. Simply put, this summed up the crucial positioning of survivor advocates and the support they provided survivors while the state marginalized them – both in policy and through social stigma.

What is suggested, then, is the need for joint cooperation between civil society-level support for survivors and state mechanisms for change. Although not all activists and actors agree on this point, Igo Rogova, director of KWN noted how integral teamwork and collaboration is, not only for supporting wartime sexual violence survivors, but on any marginalized issue:

I believe there is no future for women's rights implementation if you don't think of the generation to come, somebody to push; if you don't think of involving men; and if you don't work with institutions. I don't think that can happen without these three. And of course, street advocacy, research, everything else there, but these three you have to have.

In the past, Rogova has received pushback from other activists for her work with institutions, who argued that this type of cooperation undermines Rogova's feminist work. But the need for cooperation is illuminated in the referent of state-level authority and the legitimation by the state on these issues. Similarly, this collaboration between actors serves to elevate the issue of wartime

violence. Of course, this is not meant to diminish the crucial value of NGO work, but instead to highlight its positioning within the larger frame of state mechanisms for social change.

In this regard, a crucial element credited with highlighting this issue and generating state-level response from within the state itself was Kosovo's first woman president, Atifete Jahjaga, who made sexual violence one of her main priorities during her time in office from 2011-2016. Her efforts to listen to the voices of survivors and to prioritize responses to wartime sexual violence were elevated by civil society-led initiatives, and ultimately proved invaluable for these efforts.

Atifete Jahjaga: A State Ally

In 2011, Kosovo elected its first woman president, a first in the region as well (Plesch 2015). Atifete Jahjaga has proven to be a force for change and a strong ally for women's rights activists. When armed conflict broke out in Kosovo, Jahjaga was completing her law degree at the University of Prishtina. After the war, she joined the Kosovo police force and worked her way up the ranks to lieutenant colonel general, before being nominated for the presidency in 2011 (Plesch 2015).³⁰

Since her inauguration as president, Jahjaga has listened to the stories of countless survivors across Kosovo, reinforcing her full commitment. Her first encounter with this issue was when she met with survivors at the Center in Drenas. Igo Rogova recounted this story to me, speaking softly, but with purpose, knowing her words had weight. She said that when the group in Drenas called her they told her, "Igo, women are so disappointed, and they just want to meet with you." She told them she would come, and then asked if she could bring the president with her. Since Jahjaga had previously been a member of the board of KWN, Rogova was hopeful she would

³⁰ Noting Jahjaga's training in the police force highlights presumed qualifications for public office, which does not complicate the image of militarized, fighters in the public domain in Kosovo.

come, and she did. Mirlinda Sada of Medica Gjakova spoke about what that meeting did for the survivors and for the recognition of women's wartime violence:

She came and talked to the women directly, and spoke with them, listened to them, and cried with them, laughed with them. So then for the women, it was something big. Because the president of the state came to hear us, to share with [our] experiences.

The importance of this visit goes beyond the impact on the individual survivors. When Jahjaga returned to Prishtina, after visiting Drenas – without official cars, publicity, or media – she decided to establish the National Council for the Survivors of Sexual Violence during the War (the National Council), bringing together essential actors to address the issue. Rogova again spoke highly of Jahjaga and her initiative, stating that the National Council “was the turning point for everything,” because she could bring everyone to the table; “she could do that. Not me, not anyone else.” From then on, wartime sexual violence became a top agenda priority for Jahjaga.

Jahjaga's position as a key state ally helped to further the conversation and elevate it to a wider national – and even international – platform. As Krizsán and Roggeband have analyzed in the case of domestic violence law in Central and Eastern Europe, the placement and utilization of key state actors and allies can be crucial for advancing policy change: actors within the state “can act as a powerful alliance and promote policies to advance gender equality” (2018, 117; see also Htun and Weldon 2012; Weldon 2002). Allies from within institutions provided the attention civil society is not able to deliver on its own. Jahjaga “had a great impact. I think she was instrumental to actually raise awareness of this category. Absolutely, no one can deny she's done so much more than anyone before her in that office... She had a role, and she used it for the benefit of these women” remarked Kusari-Lila, who, as Kosovo's first woman mayor and now acting as a member of parliament, has also placed significant attention on women's rights and wartime sexual violence in her agenda. Being at the highest level in the government forced acknowledgement of the issue,

such that no one could continue to sideline wartime sexual violence and survivors for other state-building priorities. Nita Luci explained that fundamentally Jahjaga “went against the dominant, international, diplomatic position on dealing with survivors of wartime sexual violence” because no one before her, in state institutions or international agencies, had recognized this issue or raised it to the level of their agenda platform. Consequently, “she started to bring trust of women [back] to institutions,” emphasized Korab Krasniqi. For many activists and survivor advocates, Atifete Jahjaga was crucial.

However, this complicates the dominant critique of the state failing to provide proper support for survivors. The state itself should not be seen as a monolith, but state institutions have indeed promoted and maintained masculinized governance policies for the male-dominated state apparatus, failing to address sexual violence during the war almost entirely. State policies had not provided recognition or support to survivors. But state-level initiative – at the insistence from NGOs – came with Jahjaga’s determination. This should not work to obscure the persistent efforts within civil society to this end, but it instead reveals a deeper dimension to dominant state narratives.

It was Jahjaga’s personal initiative to foreground this platform, rather than a shift in state institutional priorities since institutions have not changed and are stronger than a single individual. In many ways as has been argued in the KWN (2011) report on 1325 – women’s inclusion in state processes may not necessitate structural change or a focus on women and gender issues, but gender mainstreaming can support increased focus on women’s rights. However imperative this is, it rests on and (re)produces an essentialist notion of women’s work as being dependently tied to issues pertaining to ‘women’, supposing these issues cannot be addressed without having women at the top positions of decision-making. Assuming that women will automatically work towards

initiatives for women's rights absolves others of the need to address such issues. Along this gendered logic, it is assumed that men will focus on conventional and (presumably) necessary state-building and women will bring in a focus on gender issues,³¹ the (assumed) superfluous and nonessential elements of state policy.

The problematic nature of this assumption can undermine further attempts to disrupt and deconstruct patriarchal notions of gender equality. Respondents reflected on Jahjaga's presence: "we saw the gap we had after the president went... [Jahjaga] worked a lot and helped us a lot to achieve what we did," explained Mirlinda Sada, illustrating this very consequence of state priorities shifting back into old patterns after Jahjaga's presidency. In a similar vein, Rozafa Kelmendi, of UN Women, remarked that that subsequent state agendas have not placed the same focus on wartime sexual violence. Thus, state priorities have not shifted structurally, whereby the same masculinized, gendered logics of the state marginalizes women's wartime violence in favor of conventional state-building priorities. At one time the face of the Kosovo state, Jahjaga's presence cannot absolve the current state institutions and future policy agendas of their failure to acknowledge sexual violence and the continued need to recognize and support survivors.

An Analysis of the Law and the Amendment

An analysis of the original 2012 'Law on the Status and Rights of the Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Member of Kosova Liberation Army, Civilian Victims of War and their Families' (the Status Law) illuminates the gendered logics of conflict and the postwar state narrative of militarized masculine heroism. A short evaluation of the Status Law will make visible the logics and patterns that have been analyzed in the thesis thus far. The Status Law promotes a very singular

³¹ This also assumes that an incorporation of 'gender' issues into state policy is comparable to simply including 'women', thus equating the two.

ideology of militarized, protector masculinity and continues to (re)produce ideas of nationalism in which male heroes that died for the nation are expected to be celebrated and memorialized (see Kent and Kinsella 2015; Luci and Gusia 2015; Schäuble 2014). The language of the Status Law valorizes the “contribution and sacrifice” of soldiers (i.e. heroes and “*dëshmor i kombit*” (‘martyrs of the nation’)) for the “freedom and liberation” of the nation, directly positioning it within the frame of nationhood, honor, and sacrifice (RKS 2012). (Re)inscribing gender in this way exemplifies what Di Lellio argued, as quoted earlier, that the state narrative has become “emptied” of dishonor and victimization and instead has been constructed to represent the efforts of national heroes (2016, 11; Luci and Gusia 2015). The core representation of the nation is illuminated by invoking the memory of Adem Jashari (*komandant legjendar*) as the ultimate war hero and protector-figure freedom fighter, whose sacrifice was to be enshrined in the Status Law and in national memory for generations to come. Although Jashari and other martyrs died during the war, they are (re)signified as contributing toward independence instead of as only being victims of Serbian aggression.

The Law stipulates state support beyond financial assistance. Applicants can also receive “special benefits” depending on their category of status as either veteran, civilian invalid, or family member of martyrs or civilians killed during the war (RKS 2012). A monetary monthly pension is provided to all categories recognized in the Law. Additionally, those recognized also receive educational support, job priority, healthcare, medical treatment, rehabilitation, and economic assistance, available to varying degrees (see RKS 2012). The importance placed on medical support in the Status Law is significant when compared with the 2014 Amendment, where such provisions are less comprehensively stipulated, as will be examined below.

In 2014, the Assembly of Kosovo ratified the Amendment to the Status Law, officially including the recognition of “the status and rights of sexual violence victims of the war” in the legal framework (Halili 2018; RKS 2014). The rhetoric of gendered nationalism seen in the 2012 Status Law is not as prevalent in the Amendment. What is particularly notable, in addition to the sheer existence of the Amendment, is the non-gendered and non-ethnic language that is used when describing sexual violence victims. “Person” is the term given to victims, importantly employing language that does not assume only women as victims of wartime sexual violence. Therefore, the Amendment (ideally) allows any person – including men – who suffered sexual violence to apply for benefits without denoting a particular ethnicity (RKS 2014). Secondly, the Amendment guarantees victims of sexual violence are “excluded from the degree of invalidity” that veterans and civilian victims of war are required to verify, where they must prove between 20-100% disability (RKS 2014). This consideration is essential for the psychological well-being of survivors to prevent any further re-traumatization that this process often triggers (Amnesty International 2017b).

Lastly, as has been identified as a method of best practice, the Amendment has a specific provision for the protection of data of the applicant. The applicant is not required to be present before the Government Commission (unless requested by the Commission to obtain further information) and the submission of their application remains confidential because all members of the Commission are bound by a non-disclosure agreement (RKS 2014). Not only must Commission members adhere to confidentiality guidelines, but the physical process of applying as well remains private with applications enclosed in sealed envelopes without an electronic data trail. Vepore Shehu, whose organization Medica Kosova is helping with survivor applications, remarked that the security and guarantee of confidentiality “is what motivated [many] women to

apply.” This process in Kosovo was created specifically to provide survivors with as much privacy as possible. Actors involved in drafting the Amendment learned from activists and experts in Bosnia, ensuring “the system [in Kosovo] was designed so that all declarations are only for the purpose of verification” (Halili 2018). Many respondents echoed the same sentiment. These provisions work together to provide survivors with some level of dignity and security when applying for the status and rights of sexual violence victims of war.

Although the Amendment is imperative in supporting survivors, there are some harmful and insufficient measures outlined in the Amendment that continue to fail in providing adequate state-level assistance. First, the time frame during which violence had to occur for applicants to request recognition is limited to dates between 27 February 1998 and 20 June 1999 (RKS 2014). This definition of ‘wartime’ relies on “how war has been traditionally defined” as being “sustained”, violent (to kill), and between multiple (male) actors (Sjoberg 2013, 16). Thus, ‘wartime’ here stipulates only rapes that occurred during what is understood as direct armed conflict and validates certain ethnic rapes (of Albanians) while delegitimizing the rapes of members of minority ethnic groups. Women (and men) who were subjected to sexual violence after the armed conflict officially ended are not included in the Amendment, meaning that the ‘revenge’ rape that took place against Serb communities and other ethnic groups is not recognized. As Mirlinda Sada expressed, this becomes a “discrimination towards those women” (and men) who do not qualify for benefits or state-level recognition under this amendment. The timeframe is problematic for all victims, but is especially prejudiced towards victims in ethnic groups that were targeted after the war officially ended.³²

³² See Burnet for an account of violence and rape in Rwanda and a similar dynamic of delegitimizing certain forms and periods of violence, where many Hutu victims were “erased by the public discourse” (2012b, 111).

Additionally, survivors are only able to apply for recognition under a single status category in the Law (Halili 2018; RKS 2012). This means that receiving benefits as a family member of a civilian victim of war prevents one from applying for the status of sexual violence survivor, or forces one to decide in which category they would prefer to be recognized under in order to receive state benefits. The pension for sexual violence victims is averaged at 230 euros per month, whereas the status category for families of martyred or missing KLA fighters receive 358 euros and families of civilian victims of war receive 135 euros. The dilemma of choosing a status category proves a prohibitive facet of the Amendment and access to recognition. Further, because many survivors in Kosovo have not disclosed their wartime experience to their family members, this might prompt familial questioning when receiving previously unexpected income, which could also act as a deterrent for survivors (Amnesty International 2017b). Continued efforts to eliminate the stigma around wartime sexual violence are also imperative in this regard.

The special benefits provided in the Amendment are not adequate in general, but the problems become especially evident when compared with certain categories in the 2012 Status Law. Although sexual violence survivors will be granted monthly monetary support (230 euros), access to health services abroad³³ (for deteriorating health that cannot be addressed in Kosovar institutions), job priority (though unclear how this will be established), and some economic tax and housing support, survivors are not entitled to most of the more tangible benefits outlined in the previous Status Law (RKS 2014). Most importantly, survivors will not be considered to receive “medical and physical rehabilitation” or “primary, secondary and tertiary health services”, as well

³³ This provision was identified by a few respondents, including Vepror Shehu and Sebahate Pacolli Krasniqi, as being a typo in the Amendment. Activists were clearly unhappy with the inconsistent provision of health care. This is hopefully being revised, but it is unclear what this process is like and how long it might take to resolve.

as, less crucially, electricity support, priority to education, and funeral expenses (RKS 2012). The glaring problem here is the failure of the state to provide sexual violence survivors access to adequate healthcare. This should be a central and essential provision in the Amendment. Without comprehensive healthcare, survivors cannot be fully supported. For many survivors, healthcare is the key to rehabilitation and reintegration into community life, whereas the lack of medical attention has caused lifelong difficulties for many, including psychological impacts from the inability to bear children, physical symptoms developed from damaged reproductive organs, deteriorating eyesight, and untreated post-traumatic stress disorder (Chick 2018; Integra 2017). State-level response should encompass the complete needs of wartime sexual violence survivors, with keen attention paid to compensate survivors for the lengthy process that led to recognition, providing reparations for their previous negligence.

Discourse in Practice

The written document of the legal framework can only stand so long as a marker of progress for survivors. What is most important here is the implementation of the Amendment and effective access for survivors. “There’s this thing in general in Kosovo, that there are great laws, but then there’s the lack of implementation,” remarked Rozafa Kelmendi of UN Women. Almost every respondent noted that the 2014 Amendment represents best practice in the region – having learned from similar processes in Bosnia and Croatia – but the real assessment now lies in how the institutions respond to survivor’s applications, how survivors are able to access the mechanisms, and whether they are able to receive adequate compensation.

Central to the analysis of the Amendment is the recognition of the diversity and complexity of survivor experiences. The Amendment does not cover all the potential needs of each victim, as Kelmendi comments, “because [the needs] are specific and they are different and [there are] many

layers of needs.” It is impossible to encompass what each survivor requires within a single legal framework, which is relevant to analyzing the incomplete and inconsistent state-level support. Attention to the nuances of women’s experiences by state institutions is assumed to be too ‘complicated’, thus hindering peacebuilding initiatives. The nation-as-male is reproduced in state institutions which feminize and de-politicize victimhood – which sits outside heroic images of freedom fighters – and women’s rights as complicated obstacles to achieving European statehood.

During many interviews, activists and survivor advocates observed social, economic, and regional differences between survivors’ access to recognition and support. The most apparent was the rural / urban divide. For many survivors in rural areas, which were often the most devastated by the war, access to medical, legal, or economic services was especially limited. Further, hetero-patriarchal traditions are perceived to be stronger and adhered to more strictly in rural areas, maintaining balkanist and orientalist assumptions of women’s subordination. Kelmendi gave the example that for many rural women, “they have spent their lives in this triangle” between their “husband’s house, their father’s house, and then [the] doctor eventually,” advancing the image of the Albanian man as hyper-patriarchal, and thus primitive. By contrast, for survivors in urban centers, like Prishtina, Gjakova, and Prizren, access to these services is considerably more available with the support from NGOs. Because survivors are homogenized into a single category of victims by state mechanisms, processes of maintaining the ‘public secret’ of rape become more easily facilitated, leaving survivors unaddressed and ignored by state institutions. A nuanced and more regionally and situationally appropriate amendment is required. It is evident, then, that although Kosovo has advanced to find more suitable and fitting responses to survivors than can be argued is evident in neighboring countries, there is still more to be accomplished.

“It’s a process. And in that process, survivors were hurt a lot” stated Igo Rogova. She explained that many sexual violence survivors are waiting to confirm that confidentiality guidelines function sufficiently, since institutional trust has been (rightfully) weak after the end of the war. Rogova stressed that she is confident survivors will apply when they are assured of successful mechanisms. A recent article in the *Christian Science Monitor* investigated application procedures. Using interviews with survivors who have applied, they explored the social consequences of applying and the success of the confidentiality guidelines. Even though the process is confidential, in-person interviews with the Commission are not,³⁴ which was the experience of one survivor recently. While at the Commission office in Prishtina, she ran into a relative, resulting in a chain effect of her entire family finding out what happened to her during the war (Chick 2018). She was subsequently kicked out of her home, left to stay with her sister, and was incapable of finding income (Chick 2018). There have also been problems with the Commission requesting medical documents that are too specific or unavailable. Veprorë Shehu pointed out that often survivors visited doctors or gynecologists in neighboring countries like Albania when they fled Kosovo. It is likely the documents no longer exist, and even if they do, survivors who do not have the economic means, nor the familial support, to travel to Albania cannot access these documents. Some applications have resulted in rejection,³⁵ a further blow to survivors’ trust in the institutions after so many years of suffering.

³⁴ A few interview respondents remarked that the Commission has requested many survivors to appear for an in-person interview. Those working with NGOs, like Veprorë Shehu, Sebahate Pacolli Krasniqi, and representatives from the Center in Drenas, were frustrated with this, because while the drafting of the Amendment, it was designed so that survivor testimony was enough to grant legal status to survivors. In-person interviews were ideally meant for applications that were incomplete or misleading. However, if NGO advocates were aware of the reasons behind this, they were not forthcoming with the information.

³⁵ Survivor advocates I spoke with did not expand on the reasons for rejection and it is unclear whether these are merely technical reasons or deeper substantial causes. As per the Amendment,

Further, some respondents alluded to the inclusion of men survivors of wartime sexual violence and their ability to now apply for recognition, although they did not have specific information regarding the status of this group. The experiences of male survivors of sexual violence are even further feminized and de-valued by societal norms of dominant (hetero)sexuality and consequently, men's victimization becomes hyper-obsured. Sebahate Pacolli Krasniqi spoke about how KRCT had received many inquiries from men survivors over the past years as they saw how much support women were receiving. At the time, KRCT was not able to provide adequate support for men, but they have remained in contact with those who came to the organization. Now, Krasniqi remarked that some of them will be applying for their legal status.³⁶

Another aspect of this Amendment that needs to be addressed is the effect on minority communities in Kosovo. As has been indicated, the Amendment is prejudice towards those who were raped with ethnically motivated intention after the official ceasefire in June 1999. Although this includes survivors of all ethnicities, Serbs, Roma, and other minorities were prominently targeted in a series of 'revenge' attacks (Amnesty International 2017b). The way the Amendment is written means that they are not able to apply for state recognition or benefits. Such provisions reinforce the ethno-national narrative of *Albanian* victims and the *Albanian* experience. A member of a prominent NGO in North Mitrovica, a Serbian enclave,³⁷ communicated that even if there are Serb survivors still living in Kosovo who are eligible to apply, it is unlikely that they have or ever

survivors have 15 days to appeal decisions of rejection (RKS 2016b). Many respondents commented that their organizations are supporting survivors in the appeal procedure.

³⁶ At this stage, it is unclear the impacts for men survivors as applications only commenced a few months ago.

³⁷ After the war, many multi-ethnic cities and regions became largely mono-ethnic due to forced displacements. Northern Kosovo – including North Mitrovica, Zvečan, Zubin Potok, and Leposavić – has the largest density of Kosovo Serbs living in Kosovo, however there are other smaller enclaves in Štrpce, Gračanica, and Novo Brdo for example. Here I use the Serbian names of the enclaves in light of the population density living there.

will apply for benefits because there is little to no support for this category in society.³⁸ However, to reiterate, within a legal framework, this law is seen as best practice. Ideally, survivors of any gender, ethnic, or socio-economic background should be able to apply. How this Amendment functions in practice is still being determined.

For many survivors, economic support in any form is beneficial. Many survivor advocates working with NGOs spoke to me about economic empowerment initiatives being implemented in recent years, illustrating the impact of small grants that support countless survivors and their families.³⁹ In this way, a monthly pension can also increase the economic and social self-sufficiency and independence of survivors. Moreover, Sebahate Pacolli Krasniqi – with KRCT – commented on the more symbolic importance this amendment brings:

Its meaning goes beyond this monthly compensation because it is more support from the government and for the survivors it means a lot because they feel more encouraged, and they feel more supported, and they feel more hope for the future. Because when you have support from the state, when your status and your suffering has been recognized, then even within your community it will be easier for you to go on.

In sum, despite the problems, the combined economic benefits and state-level recognition for most survivors acts as a huge step for Kosovo. Survivors are finally being recognized and are able to receive state benefits.

³⁸ This respondent wished to remain anonymous, therefore the name of the NGO is also not provided.

³⁹ Most of the prominent NGOs in Kosovo have programs that provide agricultural products for small businesses, such as bees, livestock, and machinery, as well as training programs to support their economic independence.

CONCLUSION

I would like to return to the question posed by Žarkov and Cockburn to reflect on the consequences of the postwar space for women. Their question attends to the potential opportunity generated by the postwar period: “will the familiar old exclusions and oppressions be reproduced? Or will policy-makers be alert to the possibilities of reshaping the relationship between women and men, the feminine and the masculine?” (Žarkov and Cockburn 2002, 11). How has this dynamic played out in Kosovo?

I began by outlining the theoretical framework through which to analyze further empirical contributions. Orientalism, balkanism, and nationalism – constantly interacting with each other – produce a rich groundwork for examining Kosovo’s assumed and naturalized semi-oriental, and thus semi-developed, status in which Albanian men are posited as primitive and patriarchal and Albanian women are reduced to their reproductive abilities to produce the nation by and for men. Utilized to demarcate the borders of the nation, women’s (heterosexual) bodies become sites onto which to enact sexual violence in order to make intelligible the enemy other. Because of naturalized assumptions of men-as-protector and an androcentric state, the postwar space in Kosovo was dominated by European ideals of integration and an ethno-national narrative that relied on a selective memory to invoke militarized, protector war heroes – thus making invisible women’s (and all victims’) experiences. The impacts of these gendered logics resulted in almost 20 years of non-recognition of wartime sexual violence survivors within the Kosovo state. I have argued that the gendered nature of the recent Amendment and implementation of application procedures have reflected these dynamics of hetero-patriarchal nationalisms. However, the Amendment does finally recognize survivors due to the tireless efforts by NGOs, activists, and a few key actors, and survivors are now able to apply for state benefits.

In Kosovo, a question of whether or not “familiar old exclusions and oppressions” were reproduced and how – and if – policy-makers were “alert to the possibilities of reshaping” gendered power dynamics is too narrow to encompass the contradictory relationships between women and the nation, gender and the state, and masculinity and the political. Ultimately, it goes beyond a dichotomy of (re)traditionalization and emancipation. In the muddy space between the two sits the varied and complex experiences of women in Kosovo whose wartime experiences are incapable of being reduced to simple narratives. The previous failure of Kosovo state institutions to recognize and address wartime sexual violence was a consequence of gendered logics and an androcentric state that has informed policy priorities. But insistence from NGOs and activists saw radical change at the community level, which further permeated state policy. The future implications of this will hopefully continue to hold state institutions accountable for supporting survivors of wartime sexual violence in the wake of continuing applications for state-level recognition and benefits.

The link between gendered nationalism and policy priorities reveals negotiations between recognition and non-recognition of wartime sexual violence. In postwar Kosovo, bringing women and women’s rights to the peacebuilding table was assumed by the male-dominated state institutions as being too complicated and thus a hindrance to liberal democracy. Victimhood – of both men and women – was feminized and de-politicized in favor of masculine, male freedom fighters. Without a proper contextualization of nationalism, balkanist historical representations of Kosovo and of women, and the masculinized, hetero-patriarchal state, policy priorities to recognize sexual violence could not be analyzed or understood in their complex and paradoxical logics. The postwar space cannot produce an either / or dichotomy of the fulfillment of women’s rights, nor can state-level policy and recognition of wartime sexual violence be posited as simply having been

achieved or not. Homogenizing victimhood and experience serves to further harm survivors and obscure their needs.

The implications of this research go beyond women's experiences of wartime sexual violence in Kosovo. A larger study could fully encompass the lived realities of the under-researched – and under-reported – experiences of men survivors of sexual violence. Although eluded to in this thesis, a deeper analysis is necessary to make visible the social, political, and economic factors impacting the widespread marginalization of such victimhood and assumed 'failed' masculinity. Similarly, further research could be done to ascertain how survivors of other ethnic groups are receiving support – or the lack of support available. Ultimately, the material presented here is one facet of the complexities of gendered logics of wartime sexual violence and the resulting postwar policy recognition for survivors.

Underpinning the gendered potential for change after conflict is the need for sustained attention to gendered logics and postwar reconstruction efforts that do not simply insert women into the conversation and into decision-making roles. Instead, a gender-sensitive lens towards state-level support is imperative for survivors. To do otherwise would de-legitimize and further marginalize survivors of wartime sexual violence in Kosovo and the social and political realities of the postwar space.

APPENDIX I: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Linda Gusia	27 October 2018	Professor, University of Prishtina	Prishtina
Mirlinda Sada	6 April 2018	Medica Gjakova	Gjakova
Veprorre Shehu	10 April 2018	Medica Kosova	Gjakova
Mimoza Kusari-Lila	11 April 2018	Member of Parliament	Prishtina
Rozafa Kelmendi	12 April 2018	UN Women	Prishtina
Igo Rogova	13 April 2018	Kosovo Women's Network	Prishtina
Sebahate Pacolli Krasniqi	13 April 2018	Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims	Prishtina
Korab Krasniqi	19 April 2018	Forum ZFD	Prishtina
Nita Luci	23 April 2018	Professor, University of Prishtina and RIT Kosovo	Prishtina
Linda Gusia	23 April 2018	Professor, University of Prishtina	Prishtina
Two Anonymous Participants	26 April 2018	Center for the Promotion of Women's Rights Drenas	Drenas
Anonymous Participant	26 April 2018	NGO in North Mitrovica	North Mitrovica

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