

**FROM SILENCE TO SOLIDARITY: A CASE STUDY EXPLORING
POLICY LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THREE PUBLIC ART EFFORTS
ACKNOWLEDGING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND PROMOTING WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT IN POST-CONFLICT KOSOVO**

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Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned Hope Loudon hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no knowledge previously published by anyone else except where properly acknowledged. This thesis contains no work which has been used to fulfil the requirements of any other degree program or institution.

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Abstract

Following Kosovo's 1998-1999 war in which rape was used as a systematic weapon, survivors faced stigmatization, social rejection, and institutional neglect for more than a decade. Women were generally denied a voice in state building, and their concerns were swept under the rug. This research is an exploration of artistic mechanisms to move society from silence to solidarity, a Kosovo case study about three anomalous public art efforts: 1.) The sculpture, Heroinat, which represents Kosovo's first memorial acknowledging women's war contributions and victims of rape, 2.) The 2015 temporary art installation and campaign "Thinking of You," which offered a participatory public centerpiece to highlight sexual violence survivors' plight, and 3.) Kosovo's annual festival FEMART which involves artists, activists, and the broader community in diverse activities exploring feminist themes and ideas. Through in-depth interviews with stakeholders, and participation in the 2018 FEMART Festival, this research aims to tell the stories of the three efforts with the highest possible accuracy, to clarify their intentions and processes, and to explore their implications for social and policy change. This research offers insights and recommendations to improve the impact of these efforts going forward, and to inform future projects and policies of a similar nature.

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List of Abbreviations

CRDP Centre for Documentation and Publication

KIPRD Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development

KRCT Kosovo Centre for the Rehabilitation of Torture

OSCE Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

UN United Nations

Chapter 1: Introduction

During the 1998-1999 conflict in Kosovo, sexual violence was instrumentalized as a systematic weapon of war.¹ After the war, survivors faced revictimization through silence, stigmatization, and institutional neglect which lasted for more than a decade.

This research is an exploration of artistic mechanisms to move society from silence to solidarity, a Kosovo case study about three anomalous public art efforts: 1.) The sculpture, Heroinat, which represents Kosovo's first memorial acknowledging women's war contributions and victims of rape, 2.) The 2015 temporary art installation and campaign "Thinking of You," which offered a participatory public centrepiece to highlight sexual violence survivors' plight, and 3.) Kosovo's annual festival FEMART which involves artists, activists, and the broader community in diverse activities exploring feminist themes and ideas.

I start by situating the three selected public art efforts in the historical context of silence and stigmatization as well as institutional neglect. I then review literature in order to explain the relevance of this case study, and the potential links between these three public art efforts and issues of social and policy change.

The analysis and discussion section present the findings in two parts: 1.) General profiles telling the story of each effort, clarifying its intentions and process of emergence as well as discussing some interviewee perspectives about it. 2.) Discussion around the themes of Potential Policy Impact, Institutional Support, and Process. I follow this with recommendations, suggestions for further research, and some of my conclusions.

It asks the following guiding **research questions**: 1.) What is the story behind each of these public art efforts in Kosovo? 2.) What potential impacts and utility might these public art

¹ Vulaj, E. (2015). Sexual Violence during the Kosovo War: How Acknowledging Rape as a Jus Cogens Violation and Other Steps Can Bring Justice to All Victims. *Gonzaga Journal of International Law*, 1-21.

efforts have in terms of influencing social and policy change for women's empowerment and/or rights and recognition for sexual violence survivors?

Chapter 2: Context

“For ex-prisoners, probably it wasn’t so difficult to come to look for services because they had, you know, this pride. ‘I did this for my land...and they took me hostage...they tortured me.’ But it was completely different for example, [for] survivors of sexual violence. No way. No way to talk about it.” -Interview with Sebahate Pacolli-Krasniqi

2.1 Sexual Violence in Kosovo: Silence, Stigmatization, and Institutional Neglect

As one survivor’s son asked upon hearing about his mother’s rape: “Why didn’t you ask them to kill you instead?”² Some women did ask, and others killed themselves as is the plot of Isa Qosja’s artistic film *Three Windows and a Hanging* which tells the story of one sexual violence survivor’s disclosure leading to the suicide of another survivor.³ The crux of this suicide, however, is not the rape, but talking about it. The stigma attached to sexual violence in Kosovo is so strong that some survivors have told no one to this day.⁴ The number 20,000, the most commonly-cited estimate for the number of women raped in Kosovo, is a good example of one of the harms this silence and stigma has caused. The number 20,000, is hotly disputed and likely completely inaccurate⁵ precisely because no one could talk about it.

The stigma of sexual violence coincided with, and perhaps contributed to the institutional neglect of survivors. Link and Hatzenbuehler suggest a link between stigma and policy inaction. They conclude in their study on the policy implications of stigma that stigmatized groups may be a prime candidate for institutional neglect because: “When

² Chick, Kristen. 2016. *Ending the Shame of Kosovo’s Rape Victims*. February 22. foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/22/the-rape-victims-of-kosovo-bosnia-commission/.

³ Di Lellio, "Seeking Justice for Wartime Sexual Violence in Kosovo", 621.

⁴ Zejneli, Amra. 2014. *How Long Can You Keep A Secret? For Kosovo's Wartime Rape Victims, The Answer Is: Maybe Forever*. May 29. <https://www.rferl.org/a/kosovo-wartime-rape-victims-kept-secret/25403115.html>.

⁵ Ahmetaj, N., & Unger, T. (2017). *Kosovo’s Framework for Dealing With the Past at a Turning Point*. PAX.

stigmatization is successful, the stigmatized count less—they are less worthy of attention, less deserving.”⁶

Kosovo’s Liberation from Serbian oppression did not bring institutional support to survivors of sexual violence, or generally to women’s concerns. As Di Lellio notes, “Though *Milošević* was gone, neither the interim international administration, nor the domestic elites went past the mere formal support of women’s rights.”⁷ During Kosovo’s decade-long period of international administration and intervention preceding its statehood, women experienced policy backsliding in terms of empowerment and inclusion.⁸

Women protested their exclusion from the March 2006 Ahtisaari talks under the banner “No more flowers! We want power,” but their hard-won audience with ambassadors was disappointing. Ambassadors only gave excuses blaming “Albanian traditionalism” and saying they “had not come to Kosovo to discuss women’s rights.”⁹ They revived this protest slogan on March 8, 2012 specifically for sexual violence survivors: “We don’t want flowers, we want justice for women and girls raped during the war.”¹⁰ For most, justice never came. UNMIK’s improper investigation led to a “legacy of impunity which later prosecutors have been unable to remedy,” and very few convictions have been secured across the relevant courts.¹¹ The few survivors who testified at the ICTY suffered in vain: their identities were revealed, they were cross-examined by *Milošević* himself, and *Milošević* died without being convicted.¹²

⁶ Link, B., & Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2016). Stigma as an Unrecognized Determinant of Population Health: Research and Policy Implications. *Population Health*, 655-673.

⁷ Di Lellio, "Seeking Justice for Wartime Sexual Violence in Kosovo", 631.

⁸ Kosova Women's Network. (2011). *1325 Facts & Fables*. Prishtina, Kosovo: The Kosova Women's Network.

⁹ Luci and Gusia, "Our Men Will Not Have Amnesia", 208-210.

¹⁰ Halili, D. (2018, 03 09). *Three Decades of Protest*. Retrieved 06 11, 2018, from <http://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/three-decades-protest/>

¹¹ Amnesty International. 2017. *“Wounds that Burn Our Souls”*. London: Amnesty International Ltd.

¹² Di Lellio, "Seeking Justice for Wartime Sexual Violence in Kosovo", 632.

2.2 Policy Change

A recent UN Report notes that: “In a few short years, discussion of conflict-related sexual violence has increased exponentially at various levels of government” and credits “advocacy campaigns” for this policy change, saying that they: “have served to break the previously deafening silence on sexual violence and strengthen government support for survivors.”¹³ It is beyond the scope of this paper to include a history of all “reparative initiatives” which played a role in this policy change, but the following summary of actions is useful for understanding this paper’s subsequent analysis:¹⁴

Kosovo elected its first female president, Atifete Jahjaga who served from 2011 to 2016, made sexual survivors’ cause a priority for her administration.¹⁵ In 2012, Jahjaga attended the International Summit on Women’s Empowerment which led to the Pristina Principles calling for the state to: “confirm that conflict, post-conflict and transitional justice processes and institutions are gender sensitive[,]...acknowledge the legal status of rape victims, publicly recognize the magnitude of their experiences, compensate them for their injuries and prosecute the perpetrators.”¹⁶ President Jahjaga went on to found the National Council for the Survivors of Sexual Violence (henceforth referred to as “the National Council”) which operated from March 5, 2014 until the end of her presidency.¹⁷ The National Council was a network of activists, including civil society organizations working directly with survivors since the war.

¹³ UN Women. (2016). *The Conflict Did Not Bring Us Flowers*. Pristina: UN Women.

¹⁴ Ibid. For a detailed timeline of “reparative initiatives” for CRSV survivors in Kosovo, see Annex 1 of the previously-cited report.

¹⁵ Plesch, Valerie. 2015. *On the road with Kosovo's first female president*. October 21. Accessed April 17, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/women-make-change/2015/10/road-kosovo-female-president-151021070704139.html>.

¹⁶ Vulaj, Sexual Violence during the Kosovo War,” 6.

¹⁷ *National Council for the Survivors of Sexual Violence in Conflict*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.president-ksgov.net/en/national-council-for-the-suvivors-of-sexual-violence-in-conflict>

Perhaps the most-important change came in 2014, when advocates succeeded in amending Kosovo's law on civilian victims and veterans (henceforth referred to as "the compensation law") to include compensation for survivors of sexual violence. Civil society, victims, and experts were consulted to develop an application process that would be trauma-sensitive and confidential,¹⁸ but survivors may not apply because of the history of stigmatization and institutional neglect among other reasons. Whether or not survivors will apply remains to be seen, as a four-year delay between the 2014 amendment of the law and its implementation has meant that applications just opened February 5, 2018.¹⁹

18 Chick, Ending the Shame of Kosovo's Rape Victims.

19 Morina, Die. 2018. Kosovo Urges Wartime Rape Survivors to Register. January 30. www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-war-raped-to-apply-for-their-legal-status-01-30-2018/1440/2.

Chapter 3: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework:

While “Heroinat” might be considered a memorial in a more traditional sense, “Thinking of You” appears to straddle the line between memorial, art installation, and awareness campaign, and feminist festival FEMART includes performances and other elements which serve political and memory-building ends alongside educative and other aims. Deciding what to call these things together is no easy task, as they do not fit neatly into any one category. I have decided to call them “public art efforts” for the sake of simplicity. The word “public” serves as an antonym to “private,” denoting visibility, participation, and state-support.

I conceptualize this study of the selected public art efforts as a context-specific case study exploring “artistic mechanisms to move society from silence to solidarity,” thus countering the historical silence, stigmatization, and institutional neglect faced by sexual violence survivors and described in Chapter 2. This history forms the basis of the problem to which I assume the profiled public art efforts offer a potential solution. This assumption is based in part on a UN Report which identifies public awareness campaigns and memorialization as possible ways to address stigma, considering them as forms of “symbolic reparations” which have potential to address “harm that cannot be repaired with money (such as stigma)” and reinforce “the message of membership and dignity.”²⁰

There is a specific interest in addressing this stigma in Kosovo, as evidenced by the aforementioned UN report’s recommendations, the existence of the recent KRCT and British Embassy workshop “Hear my voice: Addressing the stigma surrounding the survivors of sexual violence during war in Kosovo.”²¹ One of the gaps which this research attempts to fill is on

²⁰ UN Women. “The Conflict Did Not Bring Us Flowers” 25-26.

²¹ Kosova Women's Network. (2011). *1325 Facts & Fables*. Prishtina, Kosovo: The Kosova Women's Network.

mechanisms for destigmatization of sexual violence survivors. The recent UN report point to the urgency of studying efforts alleviating stigma in light of its possible “life-long, and sometimes lethal, repercussions for both survivors and for children conceived through rape.”

I draw on the literature of memorialization to inform this study because memorialization can include public art and includes research on processes of memorialization. The first recommendation of scholars is not to seek a one-size-fits-all recipe given the necessity of context-specific approaches, but they still offer some general recommendations such as including as many relevant stakeholders as possible, especially survivors.²² The inclusion of civil society is credited with increasing trust in the process, but the inclusion of government can be important when it comes to resources such as: The consensus in the literature on memorialization suggests that purely government-initiated efforts are generally not trusted.

There are some emerging standards by which to assess a public memorial. Some of the suggested standards are: transparency, inclusiveness, public participation, truthfulness, and responsiveness, among other things.²³ For this research, I assume that each public art effort should ideally include as many of these as possible. There is insufficient space in this paper to discuss each one in depth, but the presence or absence of these standards in the process of a particular public art effort will be discussed in relation to potential impacts and recommendations. The literature on memorialization suggests that “historical memory is a fairly new and uncharted area of public policy”²⁴ which means that studies which include memorialization with a focus on policy relevance could have particular value.

²² Brett, S., Bickford, L., Ševcenko, L., & Rios, M. (2017). Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Action., (pp. 1-37).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Barsalou, J., & Baxter, V. (2008). The Urge to Remember The Role of Memorials in Social Reconstruction and Transitional Justice. *Stabilization and Reconstruction*, 1-17.

The general conclusion supported in the literature is that memorialization policy is poorly-developed in Kosovo, although Kosovo has no shortage of memorials. In 2013, Kosovo passed a law to establish an Agency for the Management of Memorial Complexes of Kosovo which documented 132 sites including “92 monuments and 40 martyrs’ cemeteries commemorating heroes and victims of war.”²⁵ The September 2015 Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication made recommendations to shape an inclusive official policy on memorialization,²⁶ but none were adopted. A committee designed for Dealing With the Past Failed.²⁷

The study of memorialization in Kosovo is comparatively well-developed, with explorations considering such topics as ethnic inclusivity in post-conflict memorialization. It is worth noting that ethnically inclusive memorialization is a problem in Kosovo, with ethnically inclusive memorials being exceptionally rare. The one ethnically inclusive memorial I found record of in Kosovo was the 2011 YIHR “Wall of the Missing” which included the names of 1,819 missing persons and placed chairs in front of it to represent the families waiting for knowledge of their loved one’s fates. The wall was vandalized, with names of Serbian missing persons crossed out with spray paint and the memorial ultimately removed.²⁸ Visoka notes that ethnically-inclusive memorialization which takes a virtual form may have more potential for inclusivity. Virtual forms of memorialization are generally beyond the scope of this research, but the Humanitarian Law Center’s Kosovo Memory Book, and story-telling

²⁵ Baliqi, B. (2018). Contested war remembrance and ethno-political identities in Kosovo. *Nationalities Papers*, 471-486.

²⁶ Sweeney, J. (2015). *Post-War Memorialization and Dealing With the Past in the Republic of Kosovo*. Pristina, Kosovo: Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication.

²⁷ Ahmetaj, N., & Unger, T. (2017). *Kosovo’s Framework for Dealing With the Past at a Turning Point*. PAX.

²⁸ Kurze, A. (2016). #WarCrimes #PostConflictJustice #Balkans: Youth, Performance Activism and the Politics of Memory. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 453.

initiatives by CRDP and the NGO Integra, are worth noting because they represent successful examples of memorialization involving bottom-up processes.²⁹

Since I attempt to consider the role of the profiled public art efforts in social and institutional change, I am particularly interested in memorialization and public art as activism. The memorialization of missing persons in Kosovo is a case in point. The category of civilian victims is generally marginalized in memorialization,³⁰ but the missing have been “actively remembered on an individual and social level since their disappearance”³¹ In his work on memorialization of missing children, Berisha links memorialization to activism, suggesting that remembrance is “crucial to social justice to clarify [missing persons’] fate.” Activism for the issue of missing persons has also included several performative art pieces displayed in Pristina in 2012 and 2013.³²

According to Kurze, “performative acts, including temporary street exhibits and interactive installations in public spaces”³³ are an emerging form of youth activism in the Balkans. Kurze defines these performance acts as “strategic confrontation spaces” which he argues lift “governments’ lingering veil of silence around holistically addressing past mass atrocities,”³⁴ a purpose which would be consistent with the reversal of institutional silence and neglect with which this paper is concerned. The public art efforts here are united by their artistic approaches to recognition, acknowledgement, and public visibility of sexual violence survivors’ plights and women’s issues.

²⁹ Visoka, G. (2016). Arrested Truth: Transitional Justice and the Politics of Remembrance in Kosovo. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 62-80.

³⁰ Gordon, C. (2015). A Resistance, Remembered? Remembrance, Commemoration and the Parallel System In Prishtina, Kosovo. *SIT Digital Collections*.

³¹ Berisha, R. (2017). "Forgetting Equals Killing:" Loss and Remembrance of the Missing Children in Post-War Kosovo. *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 39-54.

³² Ibid.

³³ Kurze, #WarCrimes #PostConflictJustice #Balkans, p. 453.

³⁴ Ibid. 467.

The consensus in memorialization literature about memorialization of women's war experiences is that it is rare, especially in "newly democratic societies" where the memorialization honors "the 'great men' who prevailed during the conflict at the expense of marginalized groups, such as women and ordinary citizens also involved in the struggle."³⁵ This trend rings true in Kosovo where even women who fought and died for the KLA "are hardly featured in memorials." (Di Lellio, 2013) In post-conflict contexts such as Kosovo, rape is considered an inconvenient narrative of victimhood (Luci), and the acknowledgement of ethnically motivated rape can be an "unwelcome legacy" during reconstruction.³⁶

The tendency to silence rape has been the norm globally. As Judith Herman explained in *Trauma and Recovery*: "the most common form of trauma of women remains confined to the sphere of private life, without formal recognition or restitution from the community. There is no public monument for rape survivors."³⁷ Usually, this rings true such as in the case of Ireland's insufficiently acknowledged survivors³⁸ (O'Rourke & Swaine, 2017), but is it possible that memorialization and public art are playing a role in the nascent reversal of the tendency to suppress rape histories and banish them from the public consciousness? Recent examples of art-based public acknowledgement for rape survivors include a U.S.-based public art campaign calling for a monument and creating a touring installation of survivors' stories on quilts,³⁹ (Nagle, 2014) as well as Columbia University student Emma Sulkowicz' 2014-2015

³⁵ Barsalou & Baxter, *The Urge to Remember*, 1-17.

³⁶ Kennedy-Pipe, Caroline, and Penny Stanley. 2001. "Rape in War: Lessons of the Balkan Conflicts in the 1990s." In *The Kosovo Tragedy: The Human Rights Dimensions*, by Ken Booth, 67-86. London: Frank Cass Publishers.

³⁷ Herman, J. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery*. Basic Books. 73.

³⁸ O'Rourke, C., & Swaine, A. (2017). Gender, violence and reparations in Northern Ireland: a story yet to be told. *International Journal of Human Rights*, 1302-1319.

³⁹ Nagle, R. (2014, 8 13). Public Monument to Rape Survivors Garners Public Support. Retrieved from Huffington Post: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rebecca-nagle/rape-survivor-monument-quilt_b_5675103.html?guccounter=1

“Mattress Performance” (“Carry that Weight”) which grew into a larger movement against campus sexual assault and perhaps also into the enormous #MeToo movement.⁴⁰

Although the acknowledgment of rape public art seems to be increasing, this acknowledgment appears not to be institutionally-supported. Regionally, such as in Bosnia, where rape was also systematic, the Women Victims of War Association campaigns for recognition of sexual violence and women’s suffering, but its efforts have mostly been rejected by government in favor of less-humiliating narratives which serve ethnonationalist ambitions (Jacobs, 101).⁴¹ Against its own backdrop of institutional silence and failure to publicly acknowledge sexual violence, Kosovo’s recent public art efforts acknowledging sexual violence survivors are particularly interesting. Art appears to be an emerging mechanism adopted to address stigmatization in Kosovo, as evidenced by “funding and support for campaigns utilizing creative art forms such as the song “Silence of a Song”, movie “Three Windows and a Hanging’ as well as theatre and street performances.”

If public acknowledgement of rape is rare, and institutionalized acknowledgement is even rarer, how then did a young, post-conflict country which ignored sexual violence survivors and suppressed women’s concerns end up with highly-visible public art efforts acknowledging them? It is important to note that Kosovo still has examples of performance-based art activism which is far from institutionally supported. Feminist collective HaveIt is particularly famous for “The Kiss,” a performance in which the sisters kissed in public on Valentine’s Day for which they received hundreds of death threats which police dismissed and mishandled. In 2013, HaveIt did a performance in support of sexual violence survivors which protested comments in parliament suggesting that survivors should have to be examined to

⁴⁰ Bishop, C. (2018, January 29). *Emma’s uni didn’t believe she was raped. So she became ‘Mattress Girl’*. Retrieved from Mama Mia: <https://www.mamamia.com.au/mattress-girl/>

⁴¹ Jacobs, J. (101). The memorial at Srebrenica: Gender and the social meanings of collective memory in Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Memory Studies*, 423-439.

receive a pension. The performance involved crushing apples, a cultural symbol of “beauty, virginity, purity” to highlight that examining survivors would require opening them “to see if they are ‘rotten’ or virgins.”⁴²

Since HaveIt’s performance of apples, Kosovo gained the three public art efforts which are the focus of this paper. “Heroinat” is the subject of great controversy and criticism for its lack of survivor and civil society participation, ethnic inclusivity, and transparency. Interviewees in the one study I am aware of which included interviewee perceptions of “Heroinat” discussed criticisms of “Heroinat” on the basis of: lack of survivor consultation and societal discussion, lack of transparency, lack of inclusivity, and the fear that “Heroinat” would be a “throwaway political gesture rather than an offer of genuine support for the victims,” and a variety of other flaws.⁴³ “Heroinat” was the subject of a short documentary which sandwiches the opinions of scholars and activists between conspiratorial black-bar transitions set to foreboding music.⁴⁴ As far as I am aware, no one documented the process of “Heroinat’s” creation.⁴⁵

“Thinking of You,” went viral internationally, but its backstory has yet to be told as far as I know, nor has it been thoroughly or critically analyzed for procedural insights. The process of its creation was documented in a documentary, but the film is mostly promotional. FEMART has received some media coverage, but its story and contribution to social change have also yet to be explored or documented as far as I know.

The memorialization literature emphasizes that a clear understanding of “the goals the project is trying to achieve” as well as “willingness to track changes over time” are important

⁴² Mehmetaj, V. (2017, January 13). *Haveit The Powerpuff Girls of Pristina*. Retrieved from Kosovo 2.0: <http://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/haveit-powerpuff-girls-prishtina/>

⁴³ Sweeney, J. (2015). “*Post-War Memorialization*.”

⁴⁴ Cigon, A. (Director). (2015). *HEROINAT* [Motion Picture].

⁴⁵ It could be that I would find more documentation of Heroinat in Albanian.

prerequisites for tracking the success of a memorial project.⁴⁶ For “Heroinat,” there is relatively little clarity about any details of the process, including the memorial’s intentions. The goals of “Thinking of You” and FEMART are somewhat clearer but could still be better articulated and preserved. This research also contributes to tracking changes over time by documenting perspectives of stakeholders in the present: Three years after “Heroinat” and “Thinking of You” (both unveiled June 12, 2015), and in the 6th year of FEMART.

The documentation comes in the form of short profiles⁴⁷ which, while far from comprehensive, are intended to help clarify the intentions and processes of these public art efforts which I hope might prove thought-provoking, contribute to subsequent analysis, and possibly facilitate further research. Although this study cannot definitively reveal and evaluate the impact of these public art efforts on society and policy, it seeks to consider what that impact might be and offer some analysis in relation to the main themes of institutional support and process. The findings are discussed throughout Chapter 5 and culminate in the list of recommendations and considerations, a further research section, and my conclusion.

⁴⁶ Barsalou & Baxter, *The Urge to Remember*, 3.

⁴⁷ Professor Margaret Jenkins suggested snapshots were the best I could strive for given the limits of the assignment, so I prefer that the reader consider these profiles more like still-developing polaroids.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Limitations

4.1 Methodology

My methods were primarily in-depth, semi-structured interviews which are useful for understanding the details of processes, the participants' goals and motivations, and the opinions of various stakeholders. I rely on thick description which Thompson argues is well-suited to policy research because of its democratic and participatory nature, resonance with the public, usefulness in contextualizing data, and ability to capture depth and complexity.⁴⁸

I conducted 12 interviews ranging from 17:37 minutes to 1 hour and 54 minutes in length. I tried to interview people from various categories including: activists, artists, festival or project participants, civil society, politicians, and survivors. The participants, whom I will occasionally refer to only by their last names, included:

Anna Di Lellio (Producer of “Thinking of You”)

Alketa Xhafa Mripa (Artist of “Thinking of You”)

Alma Lama (Former Parliamentarian and Initiator of “Heroinat”)

Illir Blakçori (Artist of “Heroinat”)

Sebahate Pacolli-Krasniqi (Head of Rehabilitation Unit at KRCT)

Nora Ahmetaj (Transitional Justice Researcher at CRDP)

Agnesa Xheladini (Project Coordinator of FEMART)

Zana Hoxha Krasniqi (Founder/Director of Artpolis and FEMART)

Donjeta Morina (KIPRD, FEMART Participant)

⁴⁸ Thompson, W. (2001). Policy Making through Thick and Thin: Thick Description as a Methodology for Communications and Democracy. *Policy Sciences*, 63-77.

Saranda Bogujevci (Parliamentarian, Former Director of Culture, Survivor, Artist)

Vesa Qena, Hana Qena, and Alketa Sylaj (Members of HaveIt Art Collective)

Mina Nikolić (Serbian Actress Playing Helen of Troy at FEMART)

I began most interviews with the participant's self-introduction, although sometimes this was omitted. I had a list of basic, mostly open-ended questions which I modified to each participant to make sure I could get some specific insights into stakeholders' experiences and perceptions. I asked follow-up or clarification questions when appropriate. A minority of my interviews also took a more informal and conversational tone for various reasons. Sometimes this meant that I was sharing my own thoughts and perceptions, but I took care to withhold my opinions about the public art efforts until after I heard the participants' opinions. It just so happened that I only interviewed one man, Illir Blakçori, although I would have been open to interviewing other men to get a more nuanced impression of their opinions.

I started with a formal consent form offering participants the option of anonymity,⁴⁹ but rejected the use of the form after my second interview. Kosovo is a small place and the topic of these public art efforts (especially "Heroinat") is controversial and political, thus I reasoned that people might be more liberal in offering criticisms if they could be anonymous. What I found is that the consent form would either set the wrong tone (one of excessive formality or suspicion), make interviewees uncomfortable, irritate them, or pose a practical obstacle. In my first interview, Anna Di Lellio expressed her distaste for the practice of having the consent form altogether. In her words:

“I don’t want to even see those things; I’m so against them...You’re not making experiments on me...If I don’t want to say something, I won’t tell you, or I’ll say: ‘Don’t quote me on this.’”

This is the approach that more experienced interviewees seemed to take in terms of feeling comfortable telling me that they would just specify what I could and could not write about or attribute to them.

A form requiring a signature was impractical when interviews were conducted remotely over skype or Facebook call. Two of my interviews took place over skype, and two took place over Facebook call. I was somewhat concerned that contacting participants on Facebook might be considered unprofessional, but it proved very practical given the proliferation of social media. Facebook call also proved more reliable. Calls dropped occasionally or were interrupted, but participants went to admirable lengths to reconnect with me: Saranda Bogujevci even left parliament to talk with me, making several attempts to find new locations in the building with better signal.

I used participant observation to inform my analysis of FEMART. I believe participation in FEMART had the added benefits of helping me conceptualize gender equality in Kosovo and allowing me to interact with stakeholders, including other participants, in a more experiential way. I believe it improved my ability to analyse and contextualize all three public art efforts.

4.2 Limitations and Considerations

Survivor Perspectives: I was open to interviewing survivors, but I did not think I could develop sufficient rapport with survivors, or gatekeepers, given the time I had. I was pleased to find a fantastic alternative in a sensitive and detailed UN report surveying survivor

perceptions.⁵⁰ I was also satisfied with the nuanced survivor perspectives shared by people I interviewed who work closely with them. To their credit, everyone I asked for about survivor perceptions was very conscious that they cannot speak for survivors and gave me a disclaimer to that effect. Some of the thoughts they shared will be mentioned.

Language: My lack of language skills restricted me to English which did not exclude most of the people I wanted to interview, but surely affected their abilities to express themselves.

After or during interviews, it was common for the interviewee to apologize for their English or say they could not find the right words. It was clear that the topic was important to everyone interviewed, so they seemed to place a high value on being understood. I tried to practice active listening and ask for clarification when necessary to check for understanding. I also believe that the language barrier caused some problems in terms of me being understood properly. I am aware that I need to become better at asking clear questions to non-native speakers. Language was also a problem when it came to reading articles or watching content in Albanian, a particularly significant barrier in understanding “Heroinat” since much of the media that exists on it is in Albanian.

Opposing Viewpoints: I did not interview representatives of the Ministry of Environmental and Spatial Planning. I believe that I did get the perspectives of the two most-important stakeholders in “Heroinat” and found consistency between their accounts which suggests accuracy. Still, I believe lack of ministry perspective is a serious limitation in understanding the institutional support and process of “Heroinat.”

Time: Including FEMART my research necessitated delaying my intended research trip significantly to correspond with FEMART’s dates. I could only attend four days of the six-day event because of flight availability and other obligations. Both the timing of the trip, and its

⁵⁰ UN Women. *“The Conflict Did Not Bring Us Flowers.”*

duration were a significant limitation. My trip concluded before several of FEMART's most-relevant activities including a panel on "Justice for Murdered Women as a Result of Domestic Violence," where Former President Atifete Jahjaga would be speaking, a panel on "Young People for Peace and Activism," and the event closing. The late trip left me fewer than two weeks to process all interviews and finish writing, with my last interview taking place a scant ten days before my deadline. I am confident I could have gotten several more very important interviews if I had the time. I will also not be able to include insights from FEMART's own evaluation process that will take place shortly after I hand this paper in.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 “Heroinat”

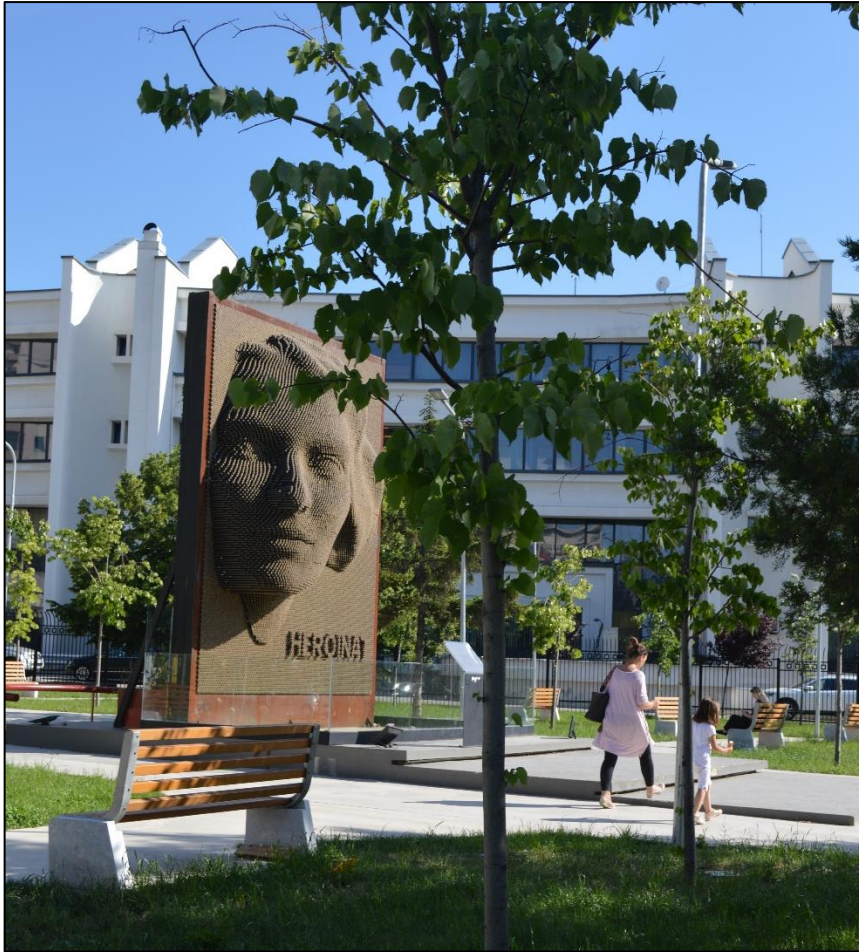


Figure 1 The sculpture “Heroinat” designed by Artist Illir Blakçori.

“Heroinat,” spear-headed by then Parliamentarian Alma Lama and designed by Artist Illir Blakçori, was commissioned by female parliament members and erected in Kosovo’s Parku Heroinat directly across from its famous “NEWBORN” independence monument. The sculpture includes 20,145 medals bearing the image of a typical Albanian woman and combining to form a mosaic of that image.

The full English inscription reads:

This memorial is built by 20,145 medals which symbolically honor the versatile contribution and sacrifice of every ethnic Albanian woman during the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo. At the same time, this memorial remembers the cruel crime of rape carried out by the Serbian forces during the last war, against nearly 20,000 women. By joining the contributions and sacrifices of all women, the huge portrait of the Kosovar heroin is shaped. The portrait reflects values of dignity, dedication, education, care, courage and endurance.

The process of bringing the memorial into being began with a vote to include funding for it in the 2013 national budget. According to Alma Lama, her initial project proposal had the following three components:

1. Recognize women's general sacrifices (e.g. protection of the family, childcare and care of the elderly, going into the mountains, etc.).
2. Recognize the women who fought or died as part of the KLA.
3. To mention/acknowledge the systematic war crime of sexual violence.

The proposal was unanimously selected in parliament, and 120,000 Euros were allocated for the construction, then the project fell into the hands of Kosovo's Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning which was supposed to solicit a design for the sculpture through a contest. The Ministry held three contests soliciting artistic designs for the sculpture, but the first and second contest failed due to an insufficient number of entries.

Lama said the ministry wanted to remove funding for the project which was continuously delayed causing her to take an active role. As she explained:

"It was not my plan to go after the ministry and ask them for every detail, but one day I called them: 'Look, what is going on with this amendment?' and they said "Nothing. We haven't opened the competition.' I said, 'What?'..." "I asked my colleagues in the parliament,

women parliamentarians also, to go and to speak with them....After I see the results of their work, then I included myself.”

Blakçori, the winning artist, applied for the final contest without expecting to win. Both Lama and Blakçori fondly remember his mother presenting his proposal to parliamentarians on his behalf because he was away on business in Albania. It seems that this was one bright spot in a process which had many bitter obstacles.

Blakçori was not expecting to construct the project but found out this was obligatory. Then, he began to realize it would be very expensive. He tried to subcontract it but received a quote that was three times the budget for the project. He says that the construction ultimately went 30-40,000 Euros over budget, which he contributed from his own money because he believed in the mission of the project and was determined not to compromise on the design or quality. Heroinat was a significant construction feat, requiring an estimated 13 km in metal tubing and the drilling of 40,000 holes, as well as 7-8 months of construction work.

Blakçori analyzed photographs of women to design the face, taking pictures of women everywhere he went and drawing hundreds of prototypes in his attempt to reach a facial expression which he believed portrayed “hope.” The initial proposal was a digitized design bearing a face that was criticized for looking like a woman having an orgasm. B explains this: “We had a very few days to apply, and I took a face, a random face, and I started to combine and do some experiments on the face, but that was only a draft idea of what I was trying to build.” The rumors did not end there, as B also faced allegations of plagiarism. He picked up a metal toy and showed it to me: “It’s a pin art,” he said, explaining that pin art has existed for a long time, but that his design idea was original.

Before construction started, he applied to the A’ Design Award and Competition and got the golden award for 2014. He believes the project would not have happened without this

prize which “opened the doors to build it” by changing the response he received from the Ministry immediately. He said he was met with applause on his next trip to the ministry, but “The day before [the prize] nobody even was talking to me how to come up with a situation to bring it to life.”

Heroinat was constantly criticized, but the project went through. Both Lama and Blakçori believe that the criticisms of the project mostly evaporated on the day of its opening when people could see it. Although interviewees mentioned many criticisms about the various aspects of Heroinat’s process and design, several mentioned being happy it exists. As Ahmetaj said: “Heroinat, regardless of what you think about it as a concept, it’s good that we have it.” In five of the other interviews, participants mentioned without prompting, that they believe Heroinat’s image will also change over time. As Hoxha-Krasniqi said: “From the beginning [Heroinat] has raised a lot of discussions, a lot of criticisms, although for me, I think that it is one of these art pieces which will be valued later.”

Blakçori intended to make something modern that would resonate with people 20 years from now, encouraging reflection and reminding the government and society to care about the survivors. In his words: “It is very difficult for those women...Our country didn’t do a lot about this. I wanted to remember, to government, to everybody that they are alive, and we have to take care of them.”

5.2 “Thinking of You”



Figure 2 “Thinking of You” Art Installation 2015, by Alketa Xhafa Mripa, Courtesy of the Artist. Foto Credit: Jetmir Idrizi

On any other day, Pristina’s national football stadium would be full of men playing football, but on June 12, 2015, it was the site of something much different: clotheslines with 5,000 dresses of every size and color, and even a few pairs of pants, fluttering in the wind. The title of this art installation and awareness campaign “Thinking of You,” created by British Kosovar Artist Alketa Xhafa Mripa and Italian Producer Anna Di Lellio, very clearly expresses what the installation intended to do for sexual violence survivors: to show we are thinking about them and to make society think about them. The laundry line was a nod to the expression “airing dirty laundry” (bringing personal issues out into the open), and part of the message was that there should be no guilt or shame for survivors. The dresses were clean.

According to Xhafa-Mripa, although the initial exhibition of the piece was in London at her one woman show “You just don’t talk about it”, the idea was always to realize a much larger-scale participatory version in Kosovo. As I learned from the interviews, the realization of the campaign was directly linked to policy implementation and the need for a destigmatization mechanism.

When Di Lellio saw the installation at Xhafa-Mripa’s exhibition, she could not resist coming back to it repeatedly. She teaches International Affairs at The New School in New York where she had two students who interned with the National Council for the Survivors of Sexual Violence, thus she knew that the council was actively looking to design a public awareness strategy in response to the 2014 amendment of the compensation law. The National Council was concerned that the benefits of the compensation law would not reach survivors because the stigma would prevent them from applying, so as Di Lellio said, “There was a very pressing issue of, I wouldn’t say mainstreaming the problem, but making it less of a taboo.”

Di Lellio and Xhafa-Mripa decided to submit a concept paper to then President Atifete Jahjaga who enthusiastically accepted the idea within a day. The project progressed very quickly: preparation began at the end of March 2015, dress collection began in early May, and the installation premiered on Kosovo’s Liberation Day June 12, 2015 (the same day as “Heroinat”) for a single day only.

Kosovo’s first female president, Atifete Jahjaga, sponsored the campaign and donated the first skirt in a highly-publicized photo opportunity. Di Lellio says people imitated the president in a “ritualized way” when they donated dresses at the 12 collection locations they toured throughout the country. Pacolli-Krasniqi estimated that 90% of survivors receiving services knew about and appreciated it “Thinking of You.” She says survivors also felt solidarity from the society:

“Seeing this population coming and donating skirts, it was very supportive for them... ‘They understand my sufferings. They want to contribute something in order that my situation can get better.’”

Di Lellio also noted that survivors felt solidarity from the world, including the Albanian diaspora: a chance encounter with an Albanian in a park in New York led to an event resulting in the collection of 250 dresses from the United States which Di Lellio then had to transport to Kosovo for the project.

The installation received significant international publicity. One webpage under UK Albanians hosts a list which is not exhaustive, yet still has more than 40 links to news coverage about it. In my interview, Hoxha-Krasniqi said, “well I think that [“Thinking of You”] the most publicly acknowledged art piece in Kosovo. Actually, I don’t think there is a more publicly acknowledged [art piece] both inside and outside... It is unique because it has achieved to do exactly that.”

Although “Thinking of You” was only displayed for a day, its initiators are still spreading it around. Xhafa-Mripa says the piece was for Albanian Kosovan women, whom she interviewed for the project, but she has intentions to expand this piece globally in other countries and sees its relevance to survivors everywhere. Plans to reproduce the piece in London were deferred due to bad weather in March, but Xhafa-Mripa continues to talk about the piece abroad such as in the European parliament in Brussels this coming July.

A documentary was created which seems to have increased the sustainability of the installation’s impact. As Di Lellio said: “We recorded the making of it through a documentary, so the art installation lives on in a way, but not as a monument.” She continues to show the documentary, and even offered me the chance to show it, but prefers not to make it available online so that she can make sure showings include discussions and opportunities for questions.

According to Di Lellio, the project cost was 14,000 euros, including all expenses and the documentary. This money came from the UK Embassy, UN Women, the EU, a private donor, The Office of the President, and the US Embassy.

5.3 FEMART

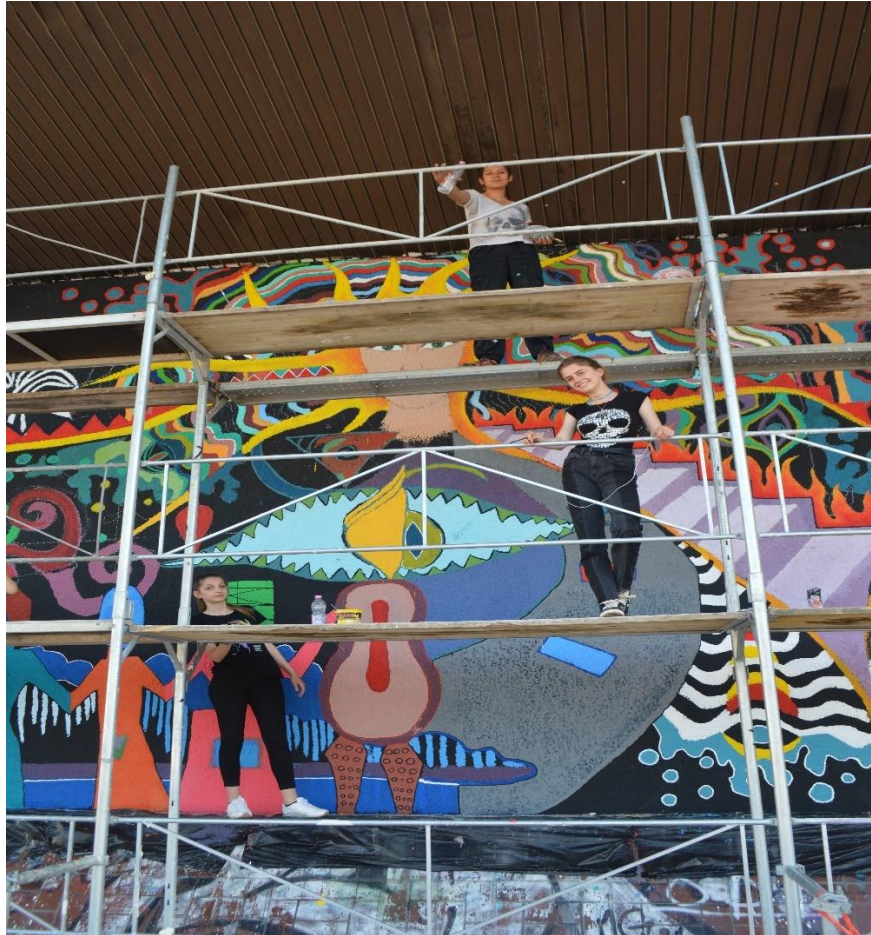


Figure 3 The mural painted as part of FEMART 2018.

From the beginning, it was clear that FEMART was no ordinary festival in the Balkans. This year's program began with a night-time performance of Elizabeth Swados' "The Trojan Women" on the grounds outside of Kosovo's famous national library which seemed appropriately ruinous and ancient by the light of the actors' flaming torches. The performance was made up of rhythmic syllables and chants invoking an ancient language and bringing audiences into the story as they were physically ushered along behind the actors. The themes of war, sexual violence, stigmatization, and oppression were vividly depicted, with the

symbolic rape of Helen of Troy followed by Helen's rejection and humiliation: Her shirt was torn off and the other women smeared her bare breasts with mud before she was dragged to the hillside, bound, and displayed for all to see. In the final scene, all the women donned chains with tears glistening on their cheeks as they embraced each other in solidarity. Estimates from the drone overhead suggest that an incredible 1,000 people attended.

Since 2013, FEMART (a program of non-profit Artpolis) has been "a platform for starting and presenting ideas and creations that bring forward feminist concepts and their development in Kosovo."⁵¹ This year, FEMART took place for six days, from May 25-May 30th, and included more than 40 events in the cities of Prishtina, Ferizaj, and North Mitrovica. The program was diverse and included a little of everything: theater, exhibitions, dance, concerts, panel discussions, films, workshops, etc. The list of donors and sponsors included more than 30 government, civil society organizations, and businesses.

According to Founder and Zana Hoxha Krasniqi, the ideas of "women's empowerment, taking our lives in our hands, [and] not waiting for others to become a leader" were the inspiration for this year's motto: "We Run the Show." I later spoke with Helen of Troy, Serbian Actress Mina Nikolic, who certainly felt empowered. She told me:

"To have courage to stand, and say something, and be heard. That is how I felt that night...I felt that, even though I was half-naked, and I was a woman, in front of all those people in front of the national library...I felt that I had the right to say something and I would be heard, even in a made-up language."

At FEMART, not only do women speak, but women also get paid which is a very important part of the festival's story. "We need to invest in women," Hoxha-Krasniqi said, going as far as to say that investing in men is a waste of money:

"Every man I saw in Kosovo, who says I'm a feminist and so on...for the public eye, yes they are feminists, but when it comes to being just a normal guy, they forget...That's why I am against investing in men. I'm pretty radical about this." Mina Nikolic is a case in point, as she was overjoyed to finally be getting real money for her art which she usually supports working café jobs.

As for the issue of sexual violence, FEMART touched on it here and there. In Ferizaj, they showed the documentary for "Thinking of You" and had a forum theater performance called "Stigma." According to FEMART Coordinator Agnesa Xheladini, a woman from the audience replaced the actress that was playing the victim which represents fulfilling "the highest aim of forum theater" which is "to make you feel that involved that you want to do something for that woman in that moment."

Corresponding with a relevant documentary, FEMART also engaged sexual violence survivors three years ago by hosting 18 of them and a psychologist who supported them. According to Hoxha-Krasniqi, "We never used their story as something to say we're doing this. I'm extremely proud that we handled it this way. That we never used them for any newspaper or story." Perhaps modelling a best practice for how public art efforts should include survivor participation, survivors were treated just like all the other guests, and their attendance was kept totally anonymous.

The festival adopts the same approach when it comes to the attendance of politicians. Former President Atifete Jahjaga was a guest on a panel and one parliamentarian would

perform in the play on the final night, but Hoxha-Krasniqi said FEMART is not meant to a platform for them. As she told me,

“I saw a lot of members of the parliament in the opening yesterday, and there were also political party members whom we don’t treat differently, if they come to FEMART they know there will not be any speech for them.”

The way Hoxha-Krasniqi sees it, the value of FEMART to politicians is as an opportunity to listen to the community, to network, and to hear activist’s perspectives. I met Parliamentarian Saranda Bogujevci at FEMART.

When talking about the value of FEMART to the community, Donjeta Morina cited “discussing topics that are never discussed in public” as well as “education.” She also called FEMART “one of the biggest public events that brought [gender equality] to the forefront” and credited FEMART with bringing Feminism into Kosovo’s vernacular:

“It really helped shift the public discourse on feminism from like, this little group of women doing something to...it can be everywhere, in institutions, in art...everywhere.”

5.4 Potential Utility and Policy Impact:

The interviews revealed a variety of perspectives on the potential utility and impacts of each public art effort. Not all interviewees gave opinions on, or were aware of, all efforts. The perceived positive impacts which were ascribed to all projects by at least one interviewee were: acknowledgment, awareness raising, agenda-setting, and domestic visibility for the issue of sexual violence. Suggested impacts specific to each are as follows:

Heroinat: destigmatization of sexual violence survivors/raising their status in society, appeal to tourists, place to mark anniversaries (e.g. “International Women’s Day” March 8th), permanence, reminder to government to act, message of solidarity to survivors, reflection, and combatting policy inaction.

Thinking of You: destigmatization of sexual violence survivors/raising their status in society, participation of the community, platform for institutional message of solidarity, international visibility, and combatting policy inaction. “Thinking of You” represented a tool for destigmatization with the intention of facilitating implementation of the compensation law.⁵²

FEMART: empowering women, employing women, education about feminism, participation of the community, opportunity for politicians to interact with the community, platform to send a message to government, appeal to youth, and inspiring empathy and action. In my participant observation, I identified international participation, appeal to tourists, and therapeutic value as potential benefits.

Although many interviewees shared criticisms (the more insightful of which are referenced and discussed later) about aspects of the profiled public art efforts’ processes, designs, and participation, only one suggested that they had no impact on changing mindsets domestically⁵³ in Kosovo, or on the lives and fates of survivors. Ahmetaj said:

“I’m not saying that these campaigns can do miracles. No, I don’t expect, I’m not stupid to believe that art can change the lives of people. The message was sent. That’s it...”

Ahmetaj also expressed a belief that art may be suited to other places but is too “abstract” in the villages where survivors “lack very basic things.” This opinion reflects a common criticism of symbolic reparations.⁵⁴

⁵² Di Lellio believes it likely had an impact. She also perceives an increased assertiveness on the part of advocates who are more emboldened to discuss this issue after the international campaign, a perception echoed by Pacolli-Krasniqi.

⁵³ Nora did note impacts for “Thinking of You” in terms of bringing survivors ahead in the agenda and raising awareness internationally.

⁵⁴ Sommer, D. (2015). Symbolic Reparations, a Good Joke. *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, 399-412.

5.5 Institutional Support

“Especially the way things work in Kosovo, you know, when you have institutional support it really gives you recognition in society, and I think that’s really important...For something to have an impact in society...it has to have that acknowledgement.” - Saranda Bogujevci

It would appear from my interviews that having institutional support behind public art efforts has special significance in Kosovo for both practical and symbolic reasons. A survey of survivors found that official acknowledgement and apology from Parliamentarians and the Government was the symbolic reparation survivors wanted most (as opposed to awareness campaigns and memorials).⁵⁵ It is unclear exactly what factors affect whether or not a public art effort will be perceived as a symbol of institutional acknowledgment in fulfillment of that desire, but the potential role and impact of public art efforts in sending a message of institutional acknowledgement merits further discussion.

In the documentary for “Thinking of You,” institutional support was a clear theme frequently mentioned by people who donated dresses. In her interview, the artist specifically mentioned institutional and government involvement as important components of “Thinking of You” according to Xhafa-Mripa who described “Thinking of You” as a “platform” for the President “to reach a wider audience later on.” In this sense, the institutional support for “Thinking of You” made it a means of communication between the institution and the society.

Presidential support may have functioned as a form of official symbolic recognition which lent legitimacy to “Thinking of You.” Although referring to the cause of sexual violence survivors, not “Thinking of You” specifically, Hoxha-Krasniqi situated the importance of presidential support directly in the context of Kosovo’s history of institutional silence and

⁵⁵ UN Women. (2016). *The Conflict Did Not Bring Us Flowers*. Pristina: UN Women. 25-26.

neglect, saying Jahjaga: “acknowledged the responsibility that politicians or the states people have in order to recognize this issue. Before that, it was not recognized by the state.” The role of the president in advancing the cause of survivors, and/or in “Thinking of You,” was mentioned in blank interviews.

It possible that the perception of institutional support as acknowledgement and solidarity depends largely on the public perception of the specific politicians participating. The president was very well-respected by survivors,⁵⁶ but one interviewee mentioned that “Heroinat” was “initialized by women politicians who were not so respected in the community for whatever reason.” She also considered the gender of the artist important in dealing with this particularly sensitive topic, and attributed perceived diminished support for Heroinat to the fact that it was created by men and the opinions of women artists and activists were “not taken into consideration.” The status of the president as a woman was mentioned in several interviews and valued by survivors.⁵⁷

Perhaps the individual status of a particular politician, and that politician’s primary role in sponsoring a campaign, could also run the risk of increasing the perception that they are the only politician supporting the survivors. As the UN report notes: “From the government, only the President has been interested.”⁵⁸

It is difficult to say which politicians’ endorsement will be taken as an expression of institutional solidarity and which will be perceived as individual participation, but the presence and participation of politicians in each of the three public art efforts was cited across interviews as an indication of both institutional support and project success. This finding suggests that increasing and broadening the participation of politicians in public art efforts in Kosovo might

⁵⁶ Ibid. 38.

⁵⁷ UN Women. (2016). *The Conflict Did Not Bring Us Flowers*. Pristina: UN Women.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

increase perceptions of institutional support and solidarity for the issues they address, as well as contribute to the link between institutional support and a message of acknowledgment and apology for institutional neglect.

All three of the public art efforts profiled here received institutional support, but the form (symbolic, monetary, in kind, attendance, etc.) and degree of that institutional support varied dramatically. The significant institutional support for *Thinking of You* seemed to have positive implications for its feasibility. If you recall from the story of *Thinking of You*, the project began as a concept paper in direct fulfillment of a known need⁵⁹, accepted within a day, and executed within a few months. When asked about the importance of institutional support, Anna Di Lellio said, “Definitely there is a connection here. It occurred to me that it could have been done only because of that (institutional support).”

In my interview with Anna Di Lellio, she said, “We did find, really, an open door. The president was supporting us.” Interviews with Lama and B suggest that where “*Thinking of You*” found an open door, “*Heroinat*” found a brick wall. “*Heroinat*” was a top-down process, initiated and executed by the government, yet bogged down in bureaucracy almost immediately after the parliamentarians unanimously voted to fund it.⁶⁰ Ironically, the institutional investment in it was substantial: 120,000 Euros for the sculpture, the location in Parku Heroinat, and the landscaping (also designed by the artist). Still, *Heroinat* does not seem to be accepted as a gesture of “institutional acknowledgment,” supporting the conclusion that funding alone will not translate into community acceptance or a message of institutional acknowledgment.

⁵⁹ Anna Di Lellio’s knowledge of this need was insider knowledge reflecting her unique position as a scholar on Kosovo. Her background may have had bearing on the success of “*Thinking of You*.”

⁶⁰ The lack of further institutional support is reflected in the lobbying Alma Lama had to do for the project, and in the artist’s tremendous personal expense for it. The artist believed it would never have happened if his Golden A award had not changed his reception in the ministry, and he credited Alma Lama with being the only one who cared.

Public art efforts may be an important way for the institution to express support or communicate a message of acknowledgement, but the real value of institutional support for public art efforts which deal with sensitive topics may be in that they raise the stakes for subsequent inaction and influence institutions to change themselves. This may also be a strength of campaigns which are more participatory.

Speaking of “Thinking of You,” Pacolli-Krasniqi said:

“I can see a difference in the mindset in the population, in changing the perception of the population, and the government as well. It really moved things...Our government couldn’t stay aside and just ignoring it or just observing it. [They] have to do something...”

“I really appreciate everything that touched upon the topic of wartime rape because every little action contributed to raising awareness...Also, Thinking of You and Heroinat led to the institutional changes that happened now....That visibility led directly to public pressure.”

Institutional support, however, must be sincere. “Thinking of You” raised the expectations of survivors that other changes would follow, but the snail’s pace of institutions in Kosovo can leave survivors feeling forgotten, betrayed, or revictimized. The delays between institutional and other forms of support/change was difficult for survivors to bear, and difficult for advocates to explain. As Pacolli-Krasniqi told me:

“Within this four years after the law was amended, it was not so easy to convince survivors that this [delay] is the natural flow of things...Of course, for some of them, some of them already died...They will never receive benefits of this law.”

5.6 Participation

“I think that the process [for Heroinat] was wrong because this was funded with public funds, and when it comes to public funds, there should be a larger involvement.”-Zana

Many examples from the stories of Heroinat, “Thinking of You,” and FEMART reinforce the importance of larger public involvement, including consultation and participation, in ensuring the success of public art efforts intended to acknowledge sexual violence and inspire social change. This problem is denounced in the literature, with scholars noting that stakeholder participation is essential. Both “process as goal” and “participation” are seen as essential elements of memorialization.⁶¹

This best practice was echoed by multiple interviewees including Morina who said, “When you do actions like this...you should really consult survivors.” Bogujevci makes a similar point and called explicitly for research being incorporated into the process:

“It’s difficult for me to say that this should be done or that should be done...I think it’s something that you need to sit down and talk to the families, and talk to the victims, and do some research on what’s being done elsewhere in the world and what’s the best way of remembering...and also, what you’re doing, how it’s going to spark interest on people finding more about that.”

⁶¹ Brett, et. al. Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Action. 1-37.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

Heroinat

Education: One of the main hopes of artist and initiator was that “Heroinat” would be used to educate children about women’s contributions to the war. It appears that it has not been fully utilized to this end, although it has at least been included in the field visits

Individual Stories: In her interview, Saranda Bogujevci mentioned the location of Heroinat and suggested that, “in each corner there could have been a story” which would portray survivors as individuals and show the nuance of their experiences. I did not have the opportunity to ask the artist how he felt about this, but he did say that he was initially open to including a quote from a survivor or civil society on the back of the sculpture where a Mother Teresa quote now sits.

Dialogue: The Ministry of Environmental and Spatial Planning intends to add an environmental sculpture to the park which the artist is not comfortable with. Perhaps public discussion should be opened about the use of Parku Heroinat for sculptures that are not related to the war, and/or whether or not an educational or story-based component could be added there.

Put “Heroinat” on the Map: When I first visited Heroinat, I did what many international visitors do and tried to type it into Google maps. Although this can be said for many locations in Kosovo, Heroinat was not on the map. I saw a photo icon for “NEWBORN,” and I suggest that one be sought for Heroinat.

General

Moral Support and Day of Remembrance: A commemoration day could provide a useful opportunity for public awareness and discussion.

Better Not More: Interviewees did not seem interested in more permanent memorials. As Ahmetaj said, “One city to another city, you’ll find more memorials than trees.” The more judicious use and regulation of existing memorials would be more favorable so as not to cheapen their value.

Sincerity: Institutions which support public art efforts should follow-up with other kinds of support so as not to turn these efforts into empty promises.

Follow-Up: Especially when a public art effort is used to facilitate the implementation of another policy (e.g. Thinking of You and the compensation law), follow-up should be done to facilitate implementation throughout.

Document: The realization of public art efforts should be documented for posterity, especially when those efforts are meant to be durable. Documentation would also aid in transparency. Documentation could also be made interactive, just as through a webpage tracking progress and soliciting comments, or through a documentary such as the one for “Thinking of You” which has been used to educate and continue the conversation.

Chapter 7: Further Research

Greater Depth: Each of these efforts was rich enough to be its own case study, and could have been understood in much greater depth or explored from different angles. I choose all three in order to understand their comparative processes and potential, but I would have been able to do this better if more information was available on each beforehand. The need for more documentation remains. Perhaps now that I have told some of their stories, another researcher will delve deeper into them or consider them relative to other projects within Kosovo or around the world.

Institutional Acknowledgement: Is institutional support and acknowledgment as important in older nations with stronger institutions as it is in Kosovo? Is the state as stakeholder in public art efforts as valuable in relation to other issues? Comparing across contexts would be interesting.

Perspectives of Men: I did ask my interviewees how they believe these projects influenced societal perceptions and men's perceptions specifically, but only one of my interviewees Illir Blakçori was a man. I made no effort to exclude men's perspectives from my research and would have been interested in the opinions of men, but men's voices were not a focus of this research. It happened that everyone who was referred to me as having important knowledge on this topic or been heavily involved in one of the projects was female. A recent OSCE study shows much room for improvement in terms of men's perspectives of gender equality, creating a need for more research on interventions which might influence change.⁶² (OSCE, 2018)

Holistic Analysis of Art Events: Donors are interested in cultural and artistic interventions in the interest of peacebuilding, gender equality, psycho-social support, civic participation, and a

⁶² OSCE. (2018). <https://www.osce.org/mission-in-kosovo/382507?download=true>. Pristina: OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

myriad of other causes. More in-depth research into these festivals, shedding light on the interests and roles of the actors involved, participant and wider-societal perceptions and responses to them, etc. would be of interest.

Advocacy Directors' Perceptions: Asking organizations' advocacy professionals about their strategies and perceptions would have been very valuable in understanding how the three public art efforts fit into policy change. I made contact with one such professional, Adelina Berisha who works for Kosovo Women's Network, but it was too late to arrange an interview with her. Other NGO's also have representatives working specifically on advocacy, public awareness, and lobbying. To assess public awareness strategies in Kosovo, and to explore public art's role in these strategies, a survey of these professionals' opinions would surely prove interesting. A possible project focusing on public art as an advocacy tool could also include perspectives from advocacy representatives working on other issues such as missing persons, a highly visible issue with art playing a role.

Donors: I also would have liked to interview more donors such as representatives from UN Women and the UK Embassy to understand why they contribute to projects like Thinking of You and FEMART, and what value they perceive these to have. Why do they donate? Why this project? What kinds of projects do they try to support?

Recommendation Options: Some of the recommendations I make, such as the establishment of a would require significant additional research to determine the specifics of it. Before any such project should be undertaken, a survey should be made of survivors. This should be entrusted to the organizations who have a history of working directly with them, who are familiar with the sensitivities of approaching them about such a topic, and who are invested in their empowerment.

Youth Inclusion: Several interviewees mentioned the perceptions of children of youth and the use of public art for their education on gender equality and women's histories. Context and age-appropriate ways to include children and youth in public art efforts which deal with sensitive matters should be undertaken.

Rural Communities: As Nora Ahmetaj told me: "Prishtina is not society; Prishtina is not Kosovo. Forget Prishtina" and "Art is perfect in other places, but not in Krushe. Not in villages. You bring art there, but it is abstract to them. They lack very basic things." I did not conduct any research outside of Pristina, but I know that FEMART and "Thinking of You" had programs outside of Pristina. More research needs to be done on rural communities in order to understand how public art efforts might be received there and how to adapt them to the needs of each community.

Therapeutic Value: Considering the therapeutic value of each public art effort was beyond the scope of this research, but it is certainly very important. Whether or not public art efforts have a healing effect should be considered, as should any potential they might have for psychological harm. A suggestion for a future study could be surveying psychologists and survivors about their emotions relating to public art efforts. Trauma-sensitivity is paramount.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This research is a meditation on artistic mechanisms which move society from silence to solidarity, a case study about anomalous public art which puts issues of gender and sexual violence into the public consciousness in the young, post-conflict context of Kosovo. Analysis of the public art efforts profiled here shows that institutional support is an important factor in the success of public art efforts in Kosovo, as well as on the institution itself. Public funding alone is not sufficient to function as institutional acknowledgment for survivors, but the degree and type of institutional support, as well as who offers it, may have some effect. I conclude that public art may offer an important tool for reversing the silence and neglect of survivors.

The apparent differences in how the various projects were realized and received formed the basis of an interesting case study in the use of public art efforts addressing sensitive topics, and help illuminate some of the missed opportunities, controversies, and best practices which could be considered in undertaking future public art efforts of a similar nature. The nuances of the projects make them interesting and educative: as no project was without criticisms, and all projects had notable merits. There are many further questions that this paper could not answer within its scope, but I hope that it contributes to the understanding of a neglected group and a neglected topic.

Chapter 9: References

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