The Albanians in Socialist Yugoslavia: Oral histories of experience and temporality

By

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Abstract
This thesis seeks to investigate the Albanian experience in Socialist Yugoslavia through the lens of temporality. Understanding time as non-linear, but multi-layered, I argue that this approach helps for a more thorough understanding of the Albanian experience in Yugoslavia. My argument is that the Albanian experience in Socialist Yugoslavia is characterized by temporal breaks. I understand temporal breaks by the divergence of what has been lived and can be remembered (the space of experience) with the horizon of expectation, which is the aspiring future, what has not happened yet. I have been able to identify two temporal breaks: The Brioni Plenum, and the 1981 student protests.
Through conducting nine oral history interviews, I seek to understand how these temporal breaks shaped the experience, interethnic relations and identity of Albanians in SFRY.

Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned, Gentian Doçi, candidate for the MA degree in Nationalism Studies Program declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright.

I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 3rd of June 2025

Gentian Doçi

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my grandma Drita,

this thesis is for you!

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Introduction

The primary association that I had with Socialist Yugoslavia is Slobodan Milošević and the wars of the 1990s. I believe this is the case with many Albanians, especially the younger generations living in Kosovo, Albania, or elsewhere. Due to this negative primary association, there is less focus on the 1970s and the early 1980s. Examining the Albanian experience during the 1970s and 1980s is challenging specifically because of this primary association, and the outcome and the knowledge that we possess now. We are aware of the total exclusion of the Kosovo Albanians from society in the early 1990s, the closing of the Albanian schools, and the parallel state (Pula, 2004). We also know about Milošević and his plan to ethnically cleanse Albanians from Kosovo during the Kosovo war in 1999.

Considering this, I avoid looking at historical events retrospectively. For many Albanians, the Albanian experience in Yugoslavia is reduced to either positive or negative narrative, perhaps negative more than positive. This is due to this negative primary association. This thesis avoids these monolithic claims. My theoretical argument is that understanding time as multi-layered and non-linear allows for a deeper analysis of the multi-layered Albanian experience in Socialist Yugoslavia. My historical argument is that the Albanian experience is characterized by multiple temporal breaks. To explain breaks in historical time, there are two fundamental metahistorical concepts that I draw from: 'the space of experience' and the 'horizon of expectation' (Koselleck, 2004, p. 259). The space of experience is the experience that can be remembered, embedded in one's memory and the horizon of expectation is what has not come yet, but is to be expected in the future. The tension between the experience and expectation brings new resolutions of historical time. Through these concepts, I seek to explain and deconstruct the way Albanians experienced Socialist Yugoslavia in different historical temporalities.

I have identified two temporal breaks in the temporality of the Albanian experience: the 1966 Brioni Plenum and the Ranković purging, and the 1981 student protests. To investigate the temporal breaks of the Albanian experience in Socialist Yugoslavia, I use Reinhart Koselleck's theorization of historical time (Koselleck, 2004, 2020), combining it with theories of identity self-identification (Jenkins, n.d.) theorists like Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall, (Gilroy, 1997; Hall, 1996), who focus on the construction of identity through markers of difference. There is little academic work on the everyday experience of the Albanians in Socialist Yugoslavia. Most of the existing literature does not account for the Albanian population or discusses the Albanian experience primarily from a nationalism or ethnic conflict lens. By centering the Albanians in Yugoslavia, this thesis contributes to a broader understanding of how the Albanians lived and experienced Socialist Yugoslavia, and how the political processes shaped this experience.

This project poses three research questions. The first research question is: 1) What are the breaks in temporality that shape the Albanian experience from this period? How do the legal framework changes and the political processes reflect on the individual Albanian life experience in Socialist Yugoslavia? The second research question: How does geographical location influence the identity construction among Albanians who lived in Kosovo/North Macedonia with elsewhere? The third research question is: 3) How did Albanians living in Socialist Yugoslavia perceive SFRY? What about Socialist Albania? I answer these research questions through conducting interview using oral history as a method. I conducted nine interviews with Albanians who lived in Socialist Yugoslavia.

This thesis is organized into five chapters: Theory and literature review, Methodology, Historical overview, the analysis chapter titled 'Multi-layered experience', and then the Discussion and implications. In the theory and literature review part, I discuss the theories and the existing

literature on Nationalism and place-belongingness, drawing from authors like Anthony P. Cohen, Tara Zahra, and Marko Antonsich. I discuss the literature on identity in general and Albanian identity in particular, as well as Koselleck's theorization of temporality and experience. The last section of the theoretical framework engages with the historiographical work on Albanians and Socialist Yugoslavia. The methods chapter discusses oral history as a method, data analysis, data selection, ethical considerations, and limitations. The Historical overview chapter focuses on the Socialist Yugoslavia, the Albanian position, and the relevant historical events that shaped the Albanian experience like the Brioni Plenum, the 1974 constitution, and the 1981 student protests. The analysis chapter focuses on analyzing the data from the oral histories. The Findings and discussion chapter reflects on the main takeaways from the analysis chapter, and potential ways to complement this research further in the future.

Theory and literature review

This chapter consists of the theoretical framework that I draw from and the literature review. I have organized this chapter into sections: Nation and belonging, Identity, Experience, knowledge and Time, and Historiography. I incorporated the theoretical framework and the literature review within this chapter. Initially, I discuss the theories and concepts I draw from, and then I discuss the state of the art on the topic.

2.1 Nationalism and place-belongingness

Nationalism studies is an interdisciplinary research field which can be, but this study will take a socio-historical and sociological approach. The study of nationalism entails two main approaches: primordial and modernist. The primordial approach considers the nation as natural and ancient while the modernist approach argues that nations are products of modernity. The most famous scholar in the primordial approach is Antony Smith, while the most famous scholars of the modernist approach are Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, etc. Following Anderson's definition in his seminal work "*Imagined Communities"*, "the nation is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (Benedict Richard & Anderson, 1991, p. 6). Antony Smith states that the primordial understanding considers certain features like territory, language, and religion as something given (Smith, 1988, p. 2).

In understanding the conceptualization of the nation, I draw from the concept of a "lived nation" from the perspective of entangled histories of emotion and experience (Haapala, 2021; Haapala et al., 2023; Kivimäki et al., 2021; Kokko & Harjula, 2023). I use the idea of a "lived nation" from the work on the Finnish nation (Kivimäki et al., 2021). This approach goes beyond the bottom-up and the top-down approaches, seeing the "nation" as something that happens in

people's individual and social lives. Aside from this approach, I use Cohen's concept of personal nationalism, which helps in understanding one's personalized conceptualization of nationalism:

> "The arguments for nationalism must be cogent within the experience and the circumstances of the individuals who interpret it as being appropriate to themselves. Nationalism becomes at once a compelling means of both locating and depicting their selves. Through their ownership of their selves, they "own" the nation, or the manner of its representation, just as they "own" culture" (Cohen, 1996, p. 808 in; Kivimäki et al., 2021, p. 8).

Another key term that I draw from is "national indifference" and belonging. In her influential article, Tara Zahra argues that national indifference should be analyzed as a category of analysis. National indifference may be perceived as something premodern – "a reflection of local, regional or dynastic royalties" that with time vanished by "the modernization, state-building and modern mass politics" (Zahra, 2010, p. 7). Despite national indifference not being a perfect term, since "indifference" presupposes something negative, it represents the lack of salience of national identity in different contexts, where regional or another type of identity is more prioritized. The lack of a suitable term proves how nationalist assumptions have shaped the vocabulary of social scientists (Zahra, 2010, p. 7).

Belonging is a term that has been discussed in a lot of academic fields. For this thesis, I draw inspiration from Marco Antonsich, who divides belonging in two analytical categories: belonging as a "personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness) and belonging as a "discursive resource that constructs claims, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion" (Antonsich, 2010, p. 646). Drawing from phenomenological approaches of humanistic geography, 'home' stands for "a symbolic space of familiarity, security and comfort and emotional attachment" (Hooks, 2009, p. 213 in Antonsich,2010, p.646). Antonsich claims that

there are five factors that can influence the feeling of place-belongingness: auto-biographical, relational, cultural, economic, and legal (Antonsich, 2010, p. 647).

2.2 Identity

The concept of identity has a wide understanding and it is challenging to provide a precise definition. When discussing identity, several aspects could be analyzed. The literature on identity includes identity issues related to ethnicity (Brubaker, 2006, 2014; Jenkins, 1994), national identity (David & Bar-Tal, 2009; Huntington, 2004; Jenkins, 2013), and cultural identity (Hall, 1996, 2015). In their paper, Brubaker and Cooper argue that the term identity has been overused and that it 'tends to mean too much or too little' (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 10). They argue that it should be replaced with the term 'identification' or 'self-understanding' to use it as a category of analysis. Jenkins, on the other side, despite agreeing with the argument that the word "identity" has been overused, thinks discarding it as a term is not the solution. The word "identity" does not exist only in the "sociology's established conceptual toolbox" but it also features in public discourses, marketing, etc (Jenkins, n.d., p. 16). Since we also address people outside of academia, discarding it as a term would "deny ourselves one of its words of power, which is not a good communications policy" (lbid, 16).

For this thesis, I draw inspiration from Richard Jenkins, who draws from Fredrik Barth's 'Ethnic Group and Boundaries', focusing on the internal process of group identification and how it influences categorization. Fredrik Barth, in his work, discusses the interconnectedness between ethnic groups. He analyzes the boundary negotiations on ethnicity between different social groups. Richard Jenkins distinguishes between the internal and the external moments of the dialectic of identification: how we identify ourselves, how others identify us, and the ongoing interplay in

these processes of social identification (Jenkins, 1994, p. 1). In this way, he concludes that there are two ideal-typical modes of identification: self- or group identification (internally oriented) and the categorization of others (externally oriented). (Jenkins, 1994, p. 2).

The mode that I am interested in this paper is internally oriented, that is, self-identification. In his seminal work, *Social Identity*, he engages with the existing literature on identity and discusses the scholars who emphasize that difference is a very important marker in constructing one's identity. Gilroy for instance, emphasizes that identity is "as much about difference as about shared belonging, helping us understand the formation of the pronoun "we" and to reckon with the patterns of exclusion" (Gilroy, 1997, p. 301,302). The formation of every "we" excludes another group who becomes "they" making identities dependent on the marking of difference (lbid p. 301,302).

2.2.1 Albanian identity

Most of the literature on the Albanian identity discusses the construction of Europeanness as embedded in the Albanian national identity. An important scholar in this research is Enis Sulstarova with his work "*Arratisje nga lindja: orientalizmi shqiptar nga Naimi te Kadare"* [Escaping from the East: Albanian Orientalism from Naim to Kadare]. He traces back the Albanian Renaissance intellectuals and their orientalist discourse using a Foucauldian-Saidian approach. He argues that this orientalist discourse has been continuous among the intellectual elite since the Albanian national movement, to the Communist and then post-Communist era, creating a West-East dichotomy (Sulstarova, 2006). This dichotomy portrays the West as representing progress, knowledge, and light while the East represents the opposite, that is, regress, ignorance, and darkness (lbid.). Another important work on this topic, but focusing more on the post-communist

discourse and the construction of the notion of Europe is from the Professor of political science, Arlind Qori (Qori & Kocani, 2015) with his PhD thesis "*Ideja e Evropës dhe ideologjia shqiptare: Studimi i rolit te idesë së Evropës në ideologjizimin e ligjërimit shqiptar të pasvitit 1991"* [The idea of Europe and the Albanian ideology: A study of Europe's idea role in the ideologization of the Albanian political discourse after 1991]". He is critical of this usage of Europe by all the political party programs, creating a hegemonic discourse on what Europe is.

There are certain debates on the nature of the Albanian identity among Albanian scholars and academicians. One of the most popular debates on the nature of the Albanian identity was between Rexhep Qosja, (a prominent Kosovo Albanian academic) and Ismail Kadare, (the most popular literary writer in Albanian literature). Kadare's essay comes as a response to Qojsa's article "*National Identity and Religious Consciousness*", in which according to Kadare, Qosja argued that "Albanians should not pretend to be European, as they belong not more, not less to the Islamic civilization and Christian Civilization" (Qosja, 2006 in Brisku, 2006 p. 96). In his essay, Kadare argues that the Albanian identity is European and that the proof of the Europeanness is "the geography, skin color, the medieval Mediterranean European history, the Albanian traditional code and the cultivated literature of the medieval catholic cleric" (Ismail, 2006, pp. 20–23). Kadare's essay was criticized for being orientalist, essentialist, and Eurocentric.

Rexhep Qosja voiced his disagreement with Kadare in his book "*Realiteti i shpërfillur"* [The disregarded reality]. In this book, Qosja responds to Kadare by arguing that this kind of conceptualization of the Albanian identity ignores the diversity of personal, collective, conventional, young, culture-historical, religious, and statist Albanian identities (Rexhep, 2006, p. 29). The Albanian Historian, Artan Puto, agrees with Qosja's criticism but adds that what is missing from his argument is that he does not see the Albanian identity as an ideological

construction of the Albanian intellectuals in the Albanian National Movement and ignores the crucial role of the Albanian nation-state in this process (Puto, 2006, p. 18). Another Albanian Historian, Adrian Brisku, in his paper, argues that Kadare's essay reveals a sense of inferiority when relating the Albanian identity to his essentialist perception of Europe, and he does so through religious fundamentalism and racism, while the academic debates in the EU had been moving towards a constructivist and open approach to Europeanness (Brisku, 2006b, p. 84).

There is academic work that discusses the topic of the distinct Kosovar national identity. The most prominent scholar and public figure who thinks that the Kosovar distinct national identity already exists is Nexhmedin Spahiu (Spahiu, 2004; Spahiu & Nimani, 2010). This is not a popular thesis. Other scholars, like Leandrit Mehmeti, argue that this conclusion is premature and that this cannot happen before Kosovo enjoys political and economic stability (Mehmeti, 2017). Other work on this topic is from Antonina Zhelyazkova giving a historical perspective on Albanian identities (Zhelyazkova, 2000), and Stark Draper, which analyzes Albanian nationalism in the context of three Albanian communities in the Balkans (Draper, 1997) and Dorian Jano's Kosovo's multi-layered identity, comparing the similarities and differences with the Albanian identity. (Jano, 2013). Aside from this, there is also work on the perception of the Kosovo diaspora regarding identity (Hewer & Vitija, 2013).

2.3 Temporality and experience

The concept of time is an important dimension of this thesis. To temporalize the Albanian experience in Socialist Yugoslavia, I draw from Reinhart Koselleck's theories and concepts. The German historian, Reinhart Koselleck made the most innovative and important theoretical contributions to include time in historical analysis. Koselleck argues that in historical research time is treated as linear, as an "arrow of time that heads in a teleological direction" or which is

conceptualized as recurrent and cyclical" (Koselleck, 2020, p. 1). He argues the French Revolution and the Enlightenment offered a new "reorientation toward time, the invention of historical times (Zammito, 2004, p. 126). The past experiences could not any more explain the future. The future contained in this progress contains two main features: "the increasing speed with which it approaches us, and the unknown (Koselleck, 2004, p. 22).

This accelerated time "abbreviated the space of experience and brought into play new, unknown factors" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 22). That is why he proposes a theory of historical times that would "parse historical findings and parse the linear cyclical dichotomy (Koselleck, 2020, p. 4). He argues that historical time is not homogenous and empty but it is full of different layers of time He defines the layers of time as several levels of time of different duration and differentiable origins, which are simultaneously present and effectual at the same time. In a collection of his essays with the title "*Sediments of Time"*, he makes the following etymological point:

> "In Greek, *historia* [history] originally meant what is called *Erfahrung* [experience] in German, and since the related verb *erfahren* [to have an experience] implies going from one place to another, what is involved is something like a journey of discovery. But as a science [*Wissenschaft*], history [*Historie*] first emerges through the report about this journey [..]. By definition, history is the science of experience. When I speak about sediments of time, I always speak about the results of experience" (Koselleck, 2020, p. 4).

I draw from the conceptualization of history as the science of experience. For the temporalization of the Albanian experience in Socialist Yugoslavia, I consider the categories of space of experience (what has already happened) and the horizon of expectation (the possibilities of what could happen in the future. These two concepts are central because every human being and community has a space of experience from which it acts, in which past things are present or can be remembered and on the other hand, one always acts with reference to a specific horizon of expectation (Koselleck & Presner, 2002, p. 111).

The tension between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation brings new resolutions in historical times (Zammito, 2004, p. 129). Koselleck defines experience as something that is present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered (Koselleck, 2004, p. 259). Personal experiences inform how people perceive changes and events in history. He differentiates between historical time as experienced by individuals and conceptual time as articulated through historical narratives. In the temporality of experience, time is not linear. Rather, via layers of experience, past historical times are simultaneously present in the present (Kokko, 2021, p. 114).

2.4 Historiography

There is a lot of academic work on Socialist Yugoslavia, focusing on several aspects and periods. For the 1960s and 1970s, I refer to Steven L. Burg (Burg, 2014), Sabrina Ramet (Ramet, 1992), and Dejan Jović (Jović, 2009) academic works for this period. Burg focuses on the constitutional amendments of 1971 and 1974 and the attempts of the Yugoslav elite to maintain social cohesion, and his analysis is quite thorough. Jović's book offers an innovative argument for the reason why Socialist Yugoslavia collapsed. Even though this thesis does not discuss the collapse of Yugoslavia, his analysis of the Yugoslav system, especially the changes in the 1974 constitution and its impact, established based on Kardelj's interpretation of Marxism and the chapter on the Kosovo crisis remains a point of reference.

In her work, Sabrina Ramet focuses on the Yugoslav system but approaches it from a different perspective. For the historiography literature on Albanians, I rely on the literature on Albanian history in general (Fischer & Schmitt, 2022a; Pettifer & Vickers, 2007) and Albanians of Kosovo (Malcolm, 1999; Vickers & Fraser, 1998) in particular. Noel Malcolm, in his seminal work, *Kosovo- a short story* describes the history of Kosovo from the medieval ages up until the

late 1990s and it is an important work in this regard. His chapters on Kosovo and the Socialist Yugoslavia's period remain a point of reference in the historiography of Kosovo. Another important work is by the Kosovo Albanian philosopher Shkëlzen Maliqi "*Shembja e Jugosllavisë, Kosova dhe rrëfime të tjera: dialog me Baton Haxhiun"* [The fall of Yugoslavia, Kosovo and other stories: a dialogue with Baton Haxhiu] (Maliqi & Haxhiu, 2011). The book is in the form of an interview with the journalist Baton Haxhiu, but it is effectively an autobiographical work, covering Maliqi's life experiences and his opinions as a young Albanian student in Belgrade and beyond.

In the last decades, the social (Archer, 2016; Archer & Musić, 2017), cultural (Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 1992; Čvoro, 2016; Miller & Wachtel, 1999) and everyday life (Luthar & Pušnik, 2010), the historiography of Socialist Yugoslavia has expanded. Still, this literature takes little into account Albanian experiences or engages with sources from places inhabited by Albanians in ex-Yugoslavia like Kosovo or North Macedonia. There is existing research on Albanians in specific neuralgic points, like the student protests of 1968 (Dugolli & Limani-Myrtaj, n.d.) and 1981 (Hetemi, 2018; Limani, n.d.), or the war in the late 1990s. However, there is not much focus on the social and cultural experience of the Albanian population in the seventies and eighties.

The historiographical work on the social and cultural history of Yugoslavia does not include the Albanian population's experience. As Rory Archer mentions in the studies of the labor history of Socialist Yugoslavia, "there is a strong emphasis on reconstructing the history of work in larger, Serbo-Croatian (and Slovene) speaking industrial heartlands at the expense of Yugoslavia's peripheries and non-Serbo-Croatian speaking lands, namely Macedonia and Kosovo" (Archer, 2023, p. 423). I argue this is the case not just in labor history research, but also in other historical aspects of Socialist Yugoslavia. This project focuses on the Albanians who lived

in Socialist Yugoslavia. The Albanians in Yugoslavia were projected to potentially be the third largest group after the Croats and Serbs. The Albanians in Yugoslavia largely boycotted the 1991 census. When discussing the aftermath of the 1981 protests and the Yugoslav authority's response, Branka Magaš indicates that “it is untenable to treat a population which will within ten years be the third largest nationality as a ‘national minority’” (Magaš, 1993, p. 38).

3. Oral History as a Method

This project poses three research questions. The first research question is: 1) What are the temporality breaks in the Albanian experience from this period? How do the legal framework changes and the political processes reflect on the individual Albanian experience in Socialist Yugoslavia? The second research question: How did the Albanians construct their identity? What factors play a role in the construction of their identity? The third research question is: 3) How did they perceive Socialist Yugoslavia? What about Socialist Albania? What factors are important in their perception of these two countries?

The method that is used to answer these research questions is oral history. I chose to use this method because I am interested in people's individual experiences and perspectives. Following Thompson, the relationship between history and community should not be one-sided, but rather a series of exchanges, a dialectic between information and interpretation, classes and generations. (Thompson, 2017, p. 39). In the following sections, I discuss oral history as a method, the data selection, the data analysis, ethical considerations, and the limitations of the research.

Oral history is a multidisciplinary qualitative method used to collect narratives from individuals. Paul Thompson, a social historian at the University of Sussex, played a pivotal role in creating the British Oral History Society in 1973, which would develop the international oral history movement in the late 70s. He became a key figure, and his seminal work "Voices of the Past; Oral History" became a canonical text for oral historians. Thompson argued that oral history opened new fields of inquiry, transforming the field of history and how it is written. One of the paradigmatic shifts occurred in the 1970s when oral history was a response to positivist critiques that the fact that oral history relies on memory is a weakness because memory is unreliable.

The main critique in the early 1970s was the argument that 'memory can be distorted by physical deterioration and nostalgia in an old age, by the personal bias of the interviewer and the interviewee and by the influence of collective and retrospective versions of the past' (Perks & Thomson, 2015, p. 3). By the late 1970s, oral historians had argued that this "unreliability" of memory was also its strength. The fact that memory is subjective can tell us what historical events mean to an individual, the relation between the past and the present, and the relations between collective and personal identity. Alessandro Portelli, an Italian oral historian, argues that 'what makes oral history different is that it tells less about events and more about meanings' Portelli 2015, p. 52). Moreover, he adds that 'oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did'(ibid, p. 52).

Oral history has two philosophical frameworks, the ontological position and the epistemological position. Ontologically, oral history is based on a conception of research as a process, not as an event, while epistemologically, oral history positions the researcher and the participant in a collaborative relationship (Leavy, 2011, p. 8). Researchers and the participants are placed in the same plane during data collection. Frisch coined the term shared authority to denote the unique collaborative nature of knowledge production in oral history. (Lbid. p.8). During the analysis I refer to the participant as the narrator, emphasizing this collaborative relationship with the participant (Leavy, 2011, p. 8). Another confusion with oral history as a method is that it is confused with oral tradition. Although orality is part of oral history and oral tradition, they still differ. Oral tradition is concerned with tales that are passed through generations, like folk tales, myths, and legends, related to collective memory, while oral history deals with recording and documenting events that are within living memory.

3.1 Data selection

The interviews were conducted with Albanians who lived in late Socialist Yugoslavia. The narrators' ages range from 56 to 77. There are nine interviews. To find the narrators, I used the snowball method. Having lived in Prishtina for eight years, I found most of the narrators through people that I know, acquaintances from friends, family, and other contacts. Through these contacts, I selected the narrators who were eligible based on the criteria. The narrators have lived and experienced this period of the research focus. Despite this, I was careful when selecting the sample. The sample is not focused solely on the contacts of one person. The sample is people from diverse backgrounds in terms of class and geographical location. I found some narrators through personal contacts and some others through my family's friends. After finishing the first three interviews, I contacted the remaining narrators.

The period that the interview questions is focused on is the 1970s and the early 1980s. The interviews happened in person in Prishtina, Kosovo. The interviews are conducted in Albanian, both my native language and the narrators'. The interviews are recorded, translated by me, and then transcribed. I managed to meet the narrators during their free time. The first three interviews were conducted in cafes in Prishtina and another three were conducted in their private houses.

Because some of the initially selected narrators were canceled due to various personal reasons, I was unable to conduct all of the interviews in Prishtina. Therefore, I conducted six of them in Prishtina, Kosovo, one in Budapest, Hungary, and two conducted online, via Skype. All the interviews went very well. I did not experience any difficulties nor were there any bad moments that I had to deal with. The only difficulty was when one of the narrators did not want to be recorded. In that case, I wrote down what he had to say in the form of shortened words. I took

notes during his narration and then quickly wrote down everything that I could gather from the notes. I believe that I gathered most of the information that he said if not all of it.

The interviews were unstructured, meaning that they were open-ended. I had specific broad topics and questions that I wanted to discuss, but most of the time, the narrators would bring them up before I had asked about them. The first question would be: Tell me about your childhood in Yugoslavia. After they shared general things about their childhood, then I would try to direct the interview towards a more specific topic. For example, I asked about the relations with other non-Albanian students if they mentioned education. The majority of the narrators mentioned the fall of Ranković as the turning point, the shift in experience after the 1974 constitution, especially in the education field, and the deterioration of the situation after the 1981 student protests. Discussing these topics, I would ask about the relations with the Serbs and other nationalities in everyday life, school, and workplace. One aspect that I did not consider, but came up, was their time in the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) service.

The narrators come from different cities and countries. Three narrators are from Prishtina, one from Peja, one is from Vushtrri, one is from Drenica, one is from Rahovec, one narrator is from Struga (North Macedonia) and another one is from Bujanovc [Bujanovac] (Serbia). In selecting the sample, I considered factors like class and the location where they lived. These factors could influence how people perceive their perspectives and experiences, therefore, the sample selection is this way. The narrators' real names are replaced with pseudonyms to conceal their names and identities, except for one of the narrators, who wanted to speak on the record. He is the Kosovo Albanian philosopher Shkëlzen Maliqi. The pseudonyms are popular Albanian names in Kosovo during the 1970s and 1980s. The choices for the pseudonyms are random.

Table 1. Oral History Narrators

Narrators	Age	Place of Birth	Gender
Agim	68 years old	Llapushnik, Drenas	Male
Arben	63 years old	Struga	Male
Rifat	69 years old	Tërnoc, Bujanovc	Male
Skënder	64 years old	Pantinë, Vushtrri	Male
Dritan	56 years old	Prishtina	Male
Vjollca	71 years old	Peja	Female
Shkëlzen	77 years old	Rahovec	Male
Sami	61 years old	Brainë, Prishtina	Male
Gani	68 years old	Prishtina	Male

3.2 Data analysis

As a term, oral history encompasses two things: "the process of conducting and recording interviews with people to elicit information from the past but oral history is also the product of that interview, the narrative accounts of the past" (Abrams, 2016). Once I transcribed the interviews, the next step is data analysis. Firstly, I reread the transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the data. Through this process, I consider patterns, subtexts, or elements of importance that could help through the next steps of the research. After delving into the data, I focus on the next step, coding and memo writing. Following Saldana (Saldaña, 2009), I consider

coding and memo writing as concurrent analytical processes (Leavy, 2011, p. 58). The coding process could be seen as a step between collecting data and interpreting, reducing the data in volume by highlighting key elements (Leavy, 2011, p. 58). Coding could typically be defined as the following:

> In qualitative inquiry, a code is often a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and or evocative attribute for a portion of ... data (Saldaña, 2009, p. 3).

After coding the data, the next step is a process called meta-code data, which brings similar codes together. In this way, these codes create categories and patterns because they share common characteristics. Then, through patterns, I can form categories, which would help me connect the patterns to the theory in the data analysis section of the thesis. The categories look like this:

Table 2.1
Typical Data Analysis Process in Oral History Research

Immersion into the Data	Coding/ Memo-Writing Cycles	Categories	Theory (Emergent or Supporting Existing)

From (Leavy, 2011, p. 59)**.**

After conducting some of the interviews, the following meta-codes emerged: childhood, Education, work experience, Albanian identity, family history, everyday life in Yugoslavia, relations with non-Albanians, Perception of Yugoslavia, perception of Albania, belonging, military experience, and temporal ruptures. The categories that emerged with from the interview data are: The space of experience – Accumulated past that can be remembered. The second category is life domains in Socialist Yugoslavia with the meta codes being Everyday life in

Socialist Yugoslavia, identity, as well as interethnic relations at school, workplace, military service. The third category is spatial, which is perspectives on Yugoslavia and Albania.

3.3 Ethical considerations and limitations

There are several ethical considerations for this thesis. The first one is informed consent, where all the narrators understand what the research is for, how the interview is used, and what rights they have (including the opportunity to see the final product before submitting). For this, provide a summary of the project and get signed consent. The second issue is confidentiality and anonymity. All the data obtained from the interviews was used solely for this Master thesis, and the identity of the narrators is not revealed. Instead of their names, I use pseudonyms and avoid including other personal information that could be used to identify the narrators.

Another ethical concern that could emerge is potential emotional harm. For instance, for the Kosovo Albanians who lived during Socialist Yugoslavia the subsequent events in the late 1980s and the aftermath in the late 1990s is still a sensitive topic of discussion. Some of the narrators may have been political prisoners, may have abruptly lost their jobs, had relatives who lost their lives during the mandatory military service of the Yugoslav Peoples' Army, the Serbian police maybe mistreated them, they fought during the 1990s war, lost relatives during the war, or were affected indirectly by all of these historical events in one way or another. However, since my focus is the early to the earlier decades prior to the Kosovo War, this topic may not be brought up.

Regarding the limitations, I can say that due to time constraints, it was impossible for me to physically go back to Kosovo for a second time to conduct the interviews that were initially canceled. I was going to interview three female narrators on the topic, but they were unavailable during that period due to personal reasons. One of the narrators was traveling, one was sick and

the other was too young for the sample selection. That is why there is only one female narrator in this project. This is a clear limitation of the project, since a more gender-balanced selection would have been very beneficial and could perhaps impact the findings. It was not possible to find other female narrators in time. The snowball method through my contacts and other acquaintances may not be efficient enough in finding women who experienced this during that time and were willing to discuss these topics. The three female narrators who had initially agreed to do the interview were unavailable for several reasons. Therefore, I had to find other male narrators, which was easier to facilitate and I conducted two of the interviews online via Skype.

4. Historical overview

After the end of World War Two, Socialist Yugoslavia emerged victorious. The first constitution of Socialist Yugoslavia was established in 1946 and was based on the Soviet Union's constitution of 1936. Socialist Yugoslavia was comprised of six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia. Based on this constitution, the Republic of Serbia had two autonomous regions formed: Kosovo[1] and Vojvodina. Despite being autonomous regions, Kosovo and Vojvodina were granted different levels of autonomy within the Republic of Serbia. Kosovo was classified as an Autonomous region, while Vojvodina's status was an Autonomous Province with a governmental structure similar to a Republic (Vickers, 1998, p. 146). The constitution assigned two categories: nationalities and minorities. The constitution recognized five nationalities: The Slovenes, the Croats, the Serbs, the Macedonians, and the Montenegrins (The Muslims with a capital M, today Bosniaks, were recognized in 1968). According to this constitution, the Albanians' legal status in Socialist Yugoslavia was that of a minority.

The Albanians lived in today's Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Montenegro, comprising 6-7% of the population. Tito considered the decision to grant Kosovo's autonomy as some sort of compromise between Serbian claims to the territory and Albanian desires for independence (Calic, 2018, p. 168). The other Albanian-inhabited compact territories were divided among different administrative units. This division, in many ways, neglected the Albanian national question. Kosovo was incorporated as an autonomous region, later as a province, of the federal unit of Serbia, and the other territories became part of the federal units of Montenegro and Macedonia.

[1] Kosovo's official name was Kosovo and Metohija until 1963. I do not use the term "Kosovo and Metohija", because this term nowadays is used to minimize and negate Kosovo's independence, declared on the 17th of February,2008.

Albanians in Socialist Yugoslavia were concentrated on the border between Socialist Yugoslavia and Socialist Albania.

Following the Tito-Stalin split, Socialist Yugoslavia's relations with Socialist Albania deteriorated, with Enver Hoxha siding with the Soviet Union. The influence that Socialist Albania and its leader, Enver Hoxha could have on the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia concerned the Yugoslav authorities. The fear was that Socialist Albania could influence the Albanians living in Socialist Yugoslavia, turning them into ideological enemies, also given their geographical location. In the 1950s and the 1960s, Kosovo was one of the regions with the lowest industrial development in Yugoslavia. Additionally, the Yugoslav authority's policy of the 'Turkification' of the population in Kosovo and Macedonia took place. As Noel Malcolm, in his book, "Kosovo, a short story" states:

> [..] The Yugoslav authorities took unusually active measures to enable and encourage people in Kosovo and Macedonia to identify themselves as 'Turks' by nationality. [..] As a result, the number of people registered as 'Turks in Kosovo' jumped from 1,315 in the 1948 census to 34,583 in 1953 (Malcolm, 1999, p. 322) [..] and in Macedonia, from 95,940 in 1948 to 203.000 in 1953(ibid. p. 323).

This process continued with Socialist Yugoslavia signing a treaty with Greece and Turkey for the emigration of the Yugoslav 'Turks' to Turkey. Between 1945 and 1966, roughly 246.000 people emigrated to Turkey. From an Albanian point of view, this period formed the nadir of the whole period of Tito's rule (Malcolm, 1999, p. 323). This situation was characterized by ethnic imbalance, where Serbs and Montenegrins, 27% of Kosovo's population, accounted for 50% of the Party membership and 68% of administrative and leading positions. (lbid. p.323).

Kosovo first started to receive investment for industrialization under the federal budget only in 1957. This created a huge developmental discrepancy between different parts of Socialist

Yugoslavia, for comparison, by 1959, Kosovo had forty-nine industrial enterprises, while Slovenia had 465 (Malcolm, 1999, p. 322). In 1963, the new Yugoslav constitution changed Kosovo's status from an autonomous region (*oblast*) to an autonomous province (*pokrajina*), but it essentially eliminated its constitutional status on a federal level, functionally making it an internal arrangement of the Republic of Serbia (Malcolm, 1999, p. 324).

4.1 The Brioni Plenum

However, in 1966, during the Party Plenum of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav League of Communists, the situation changed. Also known as the Brioni Plenum, Aleksandar Ranković, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the second most important political figure after Josip Broz Tito, was dismissed from all his political functions. This marked an important shift in the Yugoslav policies towards Kosovo because Ranković was quite unpopular among Albanians, as well as among Croats and Hungarians. (cite)

The following year, Tito visited Kosovo for the first time, and a year later, in 1968, the word '*Šiptar'* (a deformed version of the word '*Shqiptar'*, used to refer to a person of Albanian nationality, carrying stereotypical connotations) would no longer be used. Thus, the official term became '*Albanac'*. These shifts continued with the amendments of the 1963 constitution, defining the autonomous provinces as 'socio-political communities' (Malcolm, 1999, p. 324), similarly used for the republics. The University of Prishtina opened in 1969 and operated in Albanian and Serbo-Croatian. Albanians in Yugoslavia were permitted to fly their national flag and national symbols. After breaking relations with the Soviet Union in 1961 and leaving the Warsaw Pact in 1968 after the Prague Spring, Socialist Albania and Socialist Yugoslavia gradually started reestablishing relations in some fields, namely education.

4.2 The 1974 constitution

The new constitution of 1974 gave Kosovo and Vojvodina increased autonomy on an even larger scale. Even though they were still part of the federal unit of Serbia, they enjoyed a status that was in many ways equal to the six republics, and by most criteria to constitutional law, they were fully fledged federal bodies (Rajović, 1985, as cited in Malcolm 1999; p. 324). Under the 1974 constitution, Kosovo was still an autonomous province of Serbia. This made Kosovo a "quasi-republic" with its government, police, constitution, court, school system, economic industry, and almost everything except for the right to secession from the federation, a right only attributed to full-fledged republics. (Mertus, 1999, p. 18).

Instead of existing categories of nationalities and minorities, this constitution's legal categories for the people living in Yugoslavia were upgraded into nations (*narodi*) and nationalities (*narodnosti*) also known as constituent and non-constituent nations. The constituent nations were the nations whose Yugoslavia was practically considered as their homeland, like Serbs, Croats, and Montenegrins, and non-constituent nationalities were the categorized the nationalities who were considered to have an external homeland, like Albanians, Hungarians, Romanians, etc.

Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins perceived this rapid improvement of the circumstances for the Albanians in Yugoslavia and the improved relations with Socialist Albania as problematic for them. Since the 1960s, the Kosovo Serbs have experienced a demographic decline, mainly because of their migration out of the province and the high birthrate of the Albanians. They felt like they were losing their societal place and being forced to move out. As Branka Magaš points out:

> "There is little doubt that, since 1966, the rapid [..] Albanization of the Kosovo administration, the new ascendancy of the Albanian language and the accompanying

> cultural-national shift in the Province's Schools, media, etc- rendered dramatic by the fast growth of the Albanian population have been very hard for the formerly privileged Slav minority to come to terms with" (Magaš, 1993, p. 64).

During this period, the Kosovo demographics went under a change. The Kosovo Albanians' population went from 67.2% in 1961 to 73.7% in 1971, while the Kosovo Serbs' and Montenegrins' percentages went down, respectively, from 23.6% to 18.4% for the Kosovo Serbs and from 3.9% to 2.5% for the Montenegrins (Vickers, 1998, p. 171). In 1979, the Kosovo Albanians had the highest natural population growth in Europe at 26.1 per 1000 inhabitants, while the Yugoslav national average was 8.6. With these trends, by 2000, the Kosovo Albanian population would have also become larger than the populations of the three Yugoslav Republics (Montenegro, Macedonia, and Slovenia) and the Province of Vojvodina combined (Jović, 2009, p. 180).

4.3 The 1981 protests

The increasing number of Albanian students increased the demand for job opportunities. The first protest was on the 11th of March 1981. Initially, a protest due to the poor conditions in dormitories in Prishtina quickly sparked large-scale protests. The main demands seemed to address dissatisfaction and injustice; "We want words, not deeds"; "Some sleep in armchairs, and others are without bread"; and "We want our friends out of prison" (Report, 185 p.5 in Jović, 2009, p. 184). Once on the main street, they started shouting "Conditions, conditions, conditions" having no slogan. The police intervened brutally and the demonstrators stopped the police from beating up one of the students.

On the 26th of March, 1981, the second protest happened. This was the anniversary of the Relay of Youth *(Štafeta Mladosti*). In addition to the improvement of the dormitories' condition, they also stated demands of a political and socio-economical nature: "the unemployment, a fair census, (mis)use of Trepça by the others, demands the removal of Slavic suffices from Albanian surnames in Montenegro and Macedonia, and so on" (Hetemi, 2018, p. 692,693). Elite forces were brought with helicopters. The intervention was brutal and many students were beaten in public.

This intervention was controversial because the Republic of Serbia could not directly intervene in demonstrations in Kosovo, considering Kosovo's high autonomy status. Even though the units were depicted as SFRY troops, the police units were exclusively Serbs (Hetemi, 2018, p. 694). From that moment, as Hetemi puts it, 'the Kosova leadership lost control of the situation and never regained it (ibid, p. 694)'. The bloodiest protest of the 1981 protest was the third one, on the 2nd and the 3rd of April. Protests erupted all over Kosovo.

Since Prishtina was the only city with a university, the demonstrations in the other cities were supported by other social groups, such as workers, ordinary citizens, and high school students (Hetemi, 2018, p. 694). From the protests of the 2nd and the 3rd of April, eight citizens and one police officer were killed, and 127 police were wounded. (Hetemi, 2018, p. 695). The 1981 protests constituted the first political crisis since the 1974 constitution change. This would turn out to be the start of the political turmoil which would culminate in the breakup of the Socialist Republic and the 1990s wars.

5. Multi-layered experience

The following chapter is where I present the main findings that emerged from the data analysis. This chapter of the thesis answers the three research questions: The first research question is: 1) What are the temporality breaks in the Albanian experience from this period? How do the legal framework changes and the political processes reflect on the individual Albanian experience in Socialist Yugoslavia? The second research question: How did the Albanians construct their identity? What factors play a role in the construction of their identity? The third research question is: 3) How did they perceive Socialist Yugoslavia? What about Socialist Albania? What factors are important in their perception of these two countries?

5.1 The accumulated past

Following Koselleck, experience is "present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 259). This can also be explained by Berger and Luckmann's concept of sedimented experiences, by which they mean experiences that are retained and come off as recognizable and memorable entities (Berger & Luckmann, 2016, p. 85). When asked about how the narrators considered Socialist Yugoslavia as a country, some of the narrators mentioned their family's history and origins. 'Skënder' mentioned how his family moved from Drenica to Pantinë in the early 1920s. Pantinë is a village located in Vushtrri, on the border with the Drenica region in central Kosovo. 'Skënder' states that they moved to Pantinë because of the ongoing uprising called "The Kaçak movement" during the 1920s:

> My family lived in Drenica in a village called Kopiliq I epërm until 1924. At that time, there was a Kaçak movement in Drenica. That small Drenica uprising was bloodily suppressed and Azem Bejta was killed. My grandfather's cousin was affiliated with Azem - he would serve coffee in his *oda* (Albanian traditional room for men). Then the Serbs

> entered and burned our houses in 1924. That is why we moved to Pantinë. This was the old Yugoslavia, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" ('Skënder', 64).

The Kaçak movement (from Turkish, *kaçaklar* – outlaw) was a series of Albanian uprisings from 1918 to 1927. Led by Azem Bejta and his wife Shota, they commanded a group of 2,000 fighters and 100,000 adherents (Banac, 2015, p. 303). Ivo Banac, in his book "*The National Question in Yugoslavia"*, states that the Kaçak action was a "direct result of military repression and the Serbian efforts to disarm Albanians and install Serbian mayors and local officials" (ibid, p. 303). Azem Bejta, sometimes referred to as Azem Galica, after his village Galica, kept the uprising active in his hometown of Drenica in the early 1920s. Even though depicted as a 'bandit movement', this movement had political demands.

The Kaçak's demands were, among others: "to recognize the Albanian right to self-government; to stop the killings of the Albanians; to stop stealing their land, to stop the colonization, to open Albanian schools, etc" (Malcolm, 1999, p. 274). The second family history comes from 'Gani', who was born in Prishtina. His origins are from Shtime [štimlje], where he did his elementary school. Talking about his family history, he discusses how he grew up in a family that had a national tradition:

> Both of my great-grandfathers died in wars against the Serbs, in 1912 and 1914. My mother's father and brother were killed when the first Serbia, as we refer to it, entered in 1912. The Serbian army slaughtered every man in our village. I was raised with the stories of her life, and suffering - her difficult childhood, her love for her father, and the pain she carried because her father and brother were gone. My father was a member of the National Liberation Army, in the 5th Brigade of Albania ('Gani',68).

The Serbian army entered Kosovo after almost 500 years of Ottoman rule in 1912. Depicted by Serbian historiography as the "liberation of Kosovo" (Jovanović, 2019), for the Albanians of

Kosovo, this was experienced as a new occupation. In 1912, the Serbian King issued a decree, placing the region under military rule (Malcolm, 1999, p. 257). Shortly after the conquest of Kosovo, the Serbian army started committing numerous atrocities against the Albanian population. In 1914, an international commission was formed by Carnegie Endowment. Even though there was no estimate of the number of victims, it concluded something that seemed like a systematic policy to transform the ethnic character of this region.

The report wrote: "Houses and whole villages reduced to ashes, unarmed and innocent populations massacred…such where the means which were employed and are still being employed by the Serb-Montenegrin soldiery, with a view to the entire transformation of the ethnic character of regions inhabited exclusively by Albanians" (Malcolm, 1999, p. 257). These historical processes leave lasting layers of memory and meaning in one consciousness, which could endure over time and thus, shape collective identity. This makes the past still present, which conditions historical experience (Koselleck, 2004). 'Gani' talks about how because Kosovo was left out of the Albanian territory, the new Yugoslavia, the socialist one, was also experienced a new occupier. He said this was crucial in experiencing Socialist Yugoslavia as a new occupier.

> In 1945, initially, people saw it as a liberation because the indications and the promises were that whoever had fought against fascism and Nazism would experience national liberation. Under the influence of Serbian politics, Kosovo was betrayed and was left out of the Albanian territory. The Kosovar delegation in Bujan, on 31 December 1943, and 1-2 January 1944, made it clear that Kosovo wanted to unite with Albania. [..] Because of this, the new Yugoslavia was also experienced as another form of occupation - just like the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. ('Gani',68).

The event that 'Gani' is referring to is the Bujan conference held in Tropoja, northeastern Albania, from the 31st of December 1943 to the 2nd of January 1944. The Kosovar Communist delegation declaration was that they wished to unite with Albania (Malcolm, 1999, p. 308). Based

on his grandmother's stories, and his father's stories from the brigade, following their disappointment that Kosovo would remain in Yugoslavia, made 'Gani' perceive Yugoslavia as a foreign country in which the Albanians are living by force. "These stories made me realize that Yugoslavia is not our country and that we are living in it by force and unwillingly. We went to sleep and woke up with the idea of uniting with Albania" ('Gani',68). This constitutes the horizon of expectation. Another narrator, 'Dritan', also shared something from his family's history, when his great-grandfather showed his alignment with Albania and not with Yugoslavia. This family story also shapes the horizon of expectation towards Yugoslavia:

> My family's story reflects how my grandfather, Ramiz Cërrnica, stated in 1945 that we should say "no" to Serbia and "yes" to Albania. Later, my uncle was imprisoned for 18 years for opposing the system. There was danger for the Albanian families during that time because we did not agree with that country, they monitored you, and they persecuted you because you disagreed with their ideas. (Dritan,56).

The Kosovo Albanian philosopher, Shkëlzen also talks about his family history. His father was a Partisan and his mother was Sadik Stavileci's sister, the war hero killed in 1943:

> My father was a Partisan during the Second World War. He was imprisoned in Tirana in 1941 and released in 1943. My mother was the sister of Sadik Stavileci, a war hero, alongside Vojo Kushi and Gjorgje Martini. My mother's family left Gjakova due to their involvement with the anti-fascist movement. She was also friends with Ganimete Tërbeshi. My parents married after the war (Shkëlzen,77).

Ganimete Tërbeshi is a heroine of the National Liberation Army in Kosovo. She joined the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Army at the age of 14, initially illegally, and later was accepted as a young communist. Sadik Stavileci was part of the Communist Youth Group, a faction of the Korca Communist group. Alongside Gjorgje Martini, they were members of the Communist Guerrilla unit. Shkëlzen also added: "I lived in Prizren. My father was a local leader of the Communist Party

and held various positions in Mitrovica, Prishtina, including serving as the Minister of Internal Affairs. I grew up as part of the nomenclature. So, I had no problems" (Shkëlzen).

These narrations illustrate how the space of experience, the accumulated past that a group or society carries with it, shaped by personal memory and collective historical narratives is used to interpret the present and influence expectations for the future. For 'Gani', the accumulated past from his family history influenced the horizon of expectation, conceptualizing Yugoslavia as a foreign country. For 'Dritan', his family's history and his grandfather expressed his alignment with Albania, which also influences his horizon of experience, having a less pronounced affiliation with Socialist Yugoslavia and being more oriented towards Albania. Shkëlzen's parents' involvement with the anti-Fascist movement also influences his horizon of expectation, what the future could withhold.

5.1.1 The 1966 break in temporality

In some of the narrators' stories, the experience in Socialist Yugoslavia is characterized by breaks in historical temporality. One of the clear breaks in temporality and experience is the 1966 purging of Aleksandar Ranković, the head of State and Secret Police at that time. For the narrators who were living in Kosovo at that time, the turning point was 1966. In a Koselleckian sense, this functions as a break in historical times, a tension between the 'space of experience' (the post-Second World War until 1966) that reconstructs the horizon of expectation in a political and cultural sense (until then, a continuation of Ranković's policies, after 1966 - hope for more rights, education, equality). 'Gani' states that Ranković was actively hindering Albanian education and attempting to assimilate them:

> He [Ranković] was approximately pushing Vasa Cubrilović's and Garašinin's projects. The migration agreement between Yugoslavia and Turkey confirms this thesis. This

> agreement was presented as if the Turks were migrating, and they were facilitating this process. They did an operation to gather weapons in Kosovo, where they did a lot of violence, people were beaten up, there were massacres, etc. This is the period from 1945-1966, one of the worst periods for the Albanians in the Yugoslav lands" ('Gani',68).

Vaso Cubrilović was a Bosnian Serb Historian, who wrote a memorandum in 1937 with the title "*Isterivanje Arnauta" [*The expulsion of the Albanians], in which he wrote a detailed plan for the forced removal of the Albanians from Kosovo using state violence, economic exclusion, and other violent means to achieve this goal. Aside from this, he also wrote "*The minority problem in New Yugoslavia*", which was written during World War Two, where he advocated for the expulsion of the minorities, not just the Albanians so that national unity would become more achievable. 'Gani' also mentions Ilija Garašinin, famous in Serbian history for writing the project with the title "*Načertanije*". This project, written in 1844, advocated for the Serbian expansion of the territories.

'Gani' also mentioned the operation for the confiscating the weapons. The operation to confiscate weapons in Kosovo was a campaign carried out by the Yugoslav Secret Police (UDBA). The state security would summon males who were suspected of having firearms. There is evidence that the police, in combination with state security, engaged in the mistreatment of the Albanians during this process. Even if the state did not authorize the use of this violence, they accepted a predictable risk for a possible violent escalation when the order to gather the arms was given (Ströhle, 2021, p. 111). The total number of victims during this operation is contested. The final report of the mission speaks for more than 1,000 complaints of mistreatment, sometimes amounting to torture (ibid, p. 115).

1966 is mentioned by the majority of the narrators as the turning point for the Albanian experience in Socialist Yugoslavia. This constitutes a break from the earlier period, from 1945-

1966, widely known as the 'Ranković area'. 'Skënder' emphasized the 1968 demonstrations, the political demands, the usage of the Albanian language, etc, with all the demands being met, except for the advancement of Kosovo's status from province to Republic. 'Skënder' calls this a period of the cultural revolution: "We experienced a cultural revolution after 1968. The highest level of freedom was from 1968 onwards. It was a renaissance, education, prosperity, power" ('Skënder',64).

Following Koselleck, expectation takes "place in the today; it is the future made present" directing towards the "not yet, what is not experienced yet, to that which is to be revealed" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 259). Especially for the Albanians living in Kosovo at the time, the restructuring of the federation, and the 1974 constitution constituted a breakup of all established temporality and experience. The Yugoslav federal institutions were restructured in 1968. The constitutional amendments in the early 1970s had a direct impact on the Albanian experience. These constitutional amendments were followed by the new Yugoslav constitution, established in 1974. This constitution advanced the rights of the Albanians by also granting the Kosovo Albanians positions in the leadership. The new constitutional reforms amounted to the acceleration of time and progress. The 'space of experience' could not amount to the new historical time. For 'Skënder', Kosovo was not a Republic only in its status, because it had every other element to be considered a Republic. 'Gani' states that he experienced this change first-hand. With the opening of schools and Albanian high schools, a massive wave of education happened and the new elite was emerging:

> It was a major advancement in education. The new elite emerged from it: historians, biologists, doctors, pharmacists, as well as politicians. I lived through this enormous change, even though compared to other Republics, it was not enough. This period was extraordinarily dynamic in the advancement of the rights and knowledge of our people ('Gani',68).

The huge advancement that 'Gani' experienced is also emphasized by Dejan Jović, who states that Kosovo's population was 62.2% illiterate in 1948. In 1981, Kosovo had the third largest university (almost 50,000 students) in Yugoslavia (Jović, 2009, p. 178). Kosovo's economic aspect also improved. Together with Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo was categorized as an underdeveloped region to which money was redistributed from the federal agencies of other Republics (and Vojvodina).

Since 1966, the Kosovo share has increased from 6,30% in the 1966-1970 period, 33.3% in the 1971-1975 and 37% in the 1976-1980 period (Jović, 2009, p. 178). Shkëlzen states that Kosovo's status with the 1974 constitution was almost the same as today: "In 1974, we almost had the same status as today. They gave us everything except for the Republic status" (Shkëlzen,77). The narrators emphasize the improved position of the Albanians in Socialist Yugoslavia that started in 1966 and culminated in 1974 with the new constitution. The improvement was immense, especially in the field of education. The 1966 Brioni Plenum or the purge of Ranković, marked a break in temporality, a new horizon of expectation, which was education, equality, national rights, and increased autonomy. This progress affected the everyday life of Albanians in Socialist Yugoslavia.

5.2 Everyday life in Socialist Yugoslavia

This section of the thesis answers the research question: What are the breaks in temporality that shape the Albanian experience from this period? How do the legal framework changes and the political processes reflect on the individual Albanian life experience in Socialist Yugoslavia? When asked about the narrators' everyday life in Socialist Yugoslavia, several of them mentioned the different opportunities and the economic aspects that the Yugoslav system offered. These benefits were related to travel, health, and other social benefits like housing, employment, and car:

> It was a strong country that provided healthcare and military service, you would travel freely. You could travel from Gjevgjelia [Gevgelija] down south to Triglav in Slovenia. You would hop on the train and you would face zero trouble. Living was not a problem. If you went to University, you would be employed, you would get housing, and a car, and then advance further in life ('Dritan',56).

The system's benefits were also mentioned by 'Arben', claiming that compared to today, the quality of life was better back then: "If we are talking about the state, I still could say that life was better back then. In every sense, relations, friendships, education, health, in every sense" ('Arben,63). He also mentions the economic aspect, stating that people were poorer than today. However, he believes life was better back then: "When I think about it, I think it was better back then, in every sense" ('Arben,63'). 'Vjollca' describes how she comes from a middle-class family from Peja. She says that she had a quiet life, with not a lot of trouble:

> We did not have any ordeals. My dad was a carpenter and was not involved in politics. I was educated in Albanian, my mother tongue. I had a good time. I cannot say that I had difficulties. No one in my family was persecuted. During the Serbo-Croatian classes, the teacher would sometimes be hostile (Vjollca, 71).

Another narrator, 'Sami' is from Brainë, a village located in Prishtina. After finishing elementary school in Prishtina, he applied to the Pilot Academy High School in Mostar, where he got accepted. How they would go on excursions all over Yugoslavia first in the Eastern parts: Sarajevo, Belgrade, Nish [Niš], Shkup [Skopje], and Prishtina, and then to the western part, in Zagreb, Ljubljana. During this excursion, he was in Zadar in the Arbanasi neighborhood, where an Albanian community lives. "When in Zadar, I was aware of the Albanian community there and I went to the Arbanasi neighborhood. We would go to their nightclub. Then I went to study engineering in Sarajevo. It was quite good. Then again, people from all Socialist Yugoslavia were there" (Sami,61). 'Sami' emphasizes the time he had while studying in Mostar as positively

characterized by a multiethnic environment, which would be in harmony. Later in the interview, when talking about working in the military in Sisak, Croatia, he also mentioned the economic difficulties that people faced, for example, housing issues: "I would say 20% had a good life, 60% somewhere in the middle, and 20% were poor. I remember when I got an apartment in Sisak, there were a lot of housing issues" (Sami,61).

When asked about Yugoslavia, Shkëlzen stated: "Yugoslavia had layers of freedom. There was influence from music, literature, art." When it comes to the state, Shkëlzen stated: "Yugoslavia saved us, but not the one we think of it today. Today, we equalize Yugoslavia with Serbia. [..] There were intellectuals in the first and second Yugoslavia that understood the Albanian question" (Shkëlzen,77). Here Shkëlzen discusses how Yugoslavia nowadays is perceived as Serbia and claims that this should not be the case. "The progressive Yugoslavia was the one that enabled us education, before that only the Austria-Hungarians (briefly) opened the school and the Italians during the occupation." He emphasizes the educational aspect that Yugoslavia provided, which was also mentioned by some of the narrators in the previous section. 'Vjollca' described the benefits that the system had:

> "We had more freedom than in Albania. I traveled all over Yugoslavia. We would go on school excursions, in the Montenegrin seaside, Bosnia, and everywhere. We could travel freely. You could buy a house with credit - those were benefits. Of course, the families that had persecution in their family had a different experience ('Vjollca',71).

Another narrator, 'Rifat', was born in Tërnoc i madh [Veliki Trnovac], one of the biggest villages as part of the city of Bujanovc [Bujanovac] in today's southern Serbia. After finishing High school in Bujanovc [Bujanovac], he enrolled in the military academy in Belgrade. After completing the military academy in Belgrade, he was transferred to Trebinje, a town in Herzegovina, where he lived for thirteen years. He was working in the Yugoslav People's Army.

He describes life as good and calm. He emphasized the good life standard and expressed that he had a nice time: “I had a very nice life there. The life standard was excellent. I was present in the environment I lived, at work, and in everyday life. I had a good time. I advanced in my career nicely and with no obstacles” (‘Rifat,69). ‘Rifat’ states that he encountered no problems while living and working in Trebinje. He also emphasizes the free movement aspect of Yugoslavia and the fact that you were able to travel around Europe:

> While Tito was alive, it was kind of a good way to live. It was communist, but also democratic - particularly in terms of movement. We could travel all over Europe [..]. It was a system somewhere between Capitalism and Socialism. Life was normal and good, even though the state did not treat us as equally as others (‘Rifat’,69).

‘Sami’ explains that he thinks that working in a military position was privileged, also emphasizing the multiethnic nature of the military: “I guess I remember only the good things. Just like us, the military staff was the same [multiethnic] everywhere in Socialist Yugoslavia. This was the federal system. I cannot speak ill of Communism because I grew up during it” (‘Sami’,61). In these narrations on everyday life and in Socialist Yugoslavia, there is an emphasis on the benefits, namely, traveling, education, and the economic aspect. The narrators believe that the Yugoslav system was able to provide a good life and several benefits. ‘Dritan’, ‘Sami’, ‘Vjollca’, and ‘Rifat’ emphasized the traveling aspect and the life standard.

5.2.1 Constructing identities

This section answers the research question: How does geographical location influence the identity construction among Albanians who lived in Kosovo/North Macedonia with elsewhere? The narrators have lived in several places. Shkëlzen, ‘Rifat’, and ‘Sami’ have lived long periods in Belgrade, Trebinje, and Sarajevo/Sisak. How does this impact their conceptualization of identity?

For instance, Shkëlzen explains that he was enrolled in an Albanian language school until the 4th grade in schools in Prizren and Prishtina. Then, one of the teachers suggested to his father that it would be better for him to be enrolled in a Serbo-Croatian language school. "I used to write during High school, but I wrote mostly in Serbian. I spoke Albanian, but I mostly knew the spoken language. I lacked the intellectual notions in Albanian" (Shkëlzen,77). In 1978, he was employed in the Albanology department in the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade:

> When I got employed there, I started to "become" more Albanian, in the sense of learning about history. [..] Obviously, I knew I was Albanian, but it was not a burden for me. [..] I built my identity by reading Albanian books in the library, or translations. Books from Albania would come. When I returned to Kosovo, I began writing in Albanian (Shkëlzen,77).

'Arben' recalls how he learned Albanian when he finished High School. "I learned Albanian in the streets, and at work. Until the end of High School, I am not sure if I knew more than 10% of the Albanian language" ('Arben,63). 'Sami' stated that the only times he thought of his Albanian identity while studying in Bosnia was when they would tell him "Eid Mubarak". The narrators state their national identity was not salient in some of the social contexts while living in Socialist Yugoslavia, also known as national indifference (Zahra, 2010). In a multi-ethnic setting, let's say

In his narration, 'Gani' describes the difference between the Albanian's and Serbs' behavior: "Even though I would add, the Albanians were always kinder and more inclined to solidarize. If a Serb would be sick or in a precarious situation, the Albanians were more inclined to intervene and help" ('Gani',68). In his article, Maliqi argues that during the late 1980s, the Albanian self-understanding and the national identity were constructed in opposition to the Serbian national identity (Maliqi, 1993). As Stuart Hall emphasizes, "[identities] are more the product of

marking the difference and exclusion, more than the sign of an identical unity [..] they can function as points of identification because of its capacity to exclude" (Hall, 1996, p. 4,5 in; Jenkins, n.d., p. 20). Describing the situation when the political tensions had already started 'Agim' stated this:

> That situation made us stronger. We had to do everything and deal with every element. They say: The action encourages the reaction. We had to find ways, how to survive in business and everyday life ('Agim',68).

'Agim' experiences the struggle that he went through collectively. As mentioned in the theory chapter, Cohen's concept of personal nationalism explains how nationalism becomes at once a means "of both locating and depicting their selves" (Cohen, 1996, p. 808). Owning themselves, they "own" the nation (ibid, p. 808). For 'Agim', this situation made the Albanians collectively stronger, despite being a difficult situation. As Sara Ahmed puts it, "Feelings make the 'collective' appear as if it were a body in the first place" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 31,32). From this section, the narrators state how they made sense of their identity.

There is a difference between the narrators who lived in Kosovo (and Macedonia) with the narrators who are Albanians but moved outside of Kosovo. The narrators who studied and/or worked outside of Kosovo for a longer time ('Rifat', Shkëlzen, 'Sami') expressed the lack of salience of their national identity in the everyday context. This could be because of overlapping identities, for instance, regional or occupational, or working in the military, which in certain contexts, have more salience than national identity. For Shkëlzen, there is also a temporal dimension. He "became" more Albanian once he started working in the Albanology department in the Philological faculty in Belgrade. For the narrators who lived in Kosovo, they conceptualized their identity, among other factors, by marking the difference with the 'other', which in this case would be the Serbs.

5.3 Interethnic relations

Interethnic relations are one of the most important aspects of the Albanian experience in SFRY. Socialist Yugoslavia was a multiethnic country. Interethnic interactions are ubiquitous, they can occur in settings and domains of life like education, neighborhood, the workplace, or the military service, which was mandatory in Socialist Yugoslavia. The narrators recalled the interactions they had with the non-Albanians in some of these settings. In some of the narrations, these relations are characterized by breaks in historical temporalities. It is argued that the 1981 student protests represented the first political crisis since the 1974 constitution.

For the majority of the narrators, a significant distinction is drawn before and after 1981. 'Gani' explains the 1981 protests as the moment when the desire to part ways with Yugoslavia became more pronounced: "This moment marked the beginning of a new phase characterized by an intensification of sentiment, aspiration, and activism aimed at parting ways from Yugoslavia" ('Gani,68). 'Skënder' expresses the lack of clarity behind the 1981 protests: "To this day, it is still enigmatic who organized them. ('Skënder',64) Since the 1981 protest, he believes that the situation got worse: "We started gradually having political defeats, to politically 'slip' and the competences were taken by Serbia. We 'slipped', we gradually started losing and in 1989, we lost everything. It is a period of huge defeats ('Skënder',64). This break in historical temporality, constructed by the 1974 constitution started to affect everyday life as well as interethnic relations. The breaks in temporality plays an important role in these relations. In this section, the narrators describe their relations with the non-Albanians in everyday life, work as well as during the military service period. The 1981 protests serve as a temporal break for what was before and after this year.

'Gani' emphasizes how despite not being close friends with Serbs, there is a difference before and after 1981. Before 1981, he mentions what the work relations would be like: "You would work somewhere, the conversations would be like "Good day, these are your tasks, these are mine". There were no positive emotions. They were relations between colleagues. That was it." ('Gani',68). He recalled playing football and volleyball with Serbian kids in his childhood. However, he thinks generally, the Serbs and the Albanians were distanced from each other. This distance was even more pronounced after 1981:

> It was rare to find Serbs who wanted to hang out with us, but the Albanians also rarely preferred to hang out with Serbs. However, until 1981, there was some sort of courtesy, to some extent, good and mutual behavior. The relations were complicated after 1981 ('Gani', 68).

'Gani' distinguishes between the Serbs who have lived in Kosovo since the 1400s and the Serbian and Montenegrin colonists who arrived in Kosovo during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. He describes the colonists as more anti-Albanian. Serbs and Montenegrins, especially the Serbs, that came through these colonization programs as more anti-Albanian:

> The Serbs that were, let's say autochthonous, were more trustworthy, and better neighbors. In a village situation, they would let you lend the plow or you would lend it from them, the shovel or the pickaxe. So, there was this difference. After 1981, this difference shrank. It was rare to find families, or better said, individuals who had good behavior towards us ('Gani'68).

This is an interesting distinction that was not made by the other narrators. 'Gani' refers to the Serbian colonization programs in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, carried out in a few

stages. ‘Arben’ is from Struga, a city in North Macedonia. He was educated in Macedonian, both in elementary and High school. He also lived in a neighborhood that was predominantly Macedonian. He finished high school upon the start of the political problems. He states that he had excellent relations with his Macedonian friends at school:

> The relations [with the Macedonians] were excellent. Until then [1981], I had no problems. Some people may have had problems, but not me. I did not experience discrimination against Albanians. My brother was the best pupil of his generation. I heard some other people had issues, but I did not (‘Arben’,63).

After finishing High school, around 1980-1981, things changed and he started to spend time with more Albanians, Turks, etc.: “When the problems started, I saw that my friends started distancing themselves, talking something against Albanians, and in fact, also against me” (‘Arben,63). He continued stating that they would shout “Let's deport the Albanians”: “These were my best friends. Then, even though they were not direct to me personally, I understood their real opinion. I am not sure if this was because of the situation back then or if they just thought like that all the time” (‘Arben’63). ‘Arben' expresses the situation that he was in with some of his former best friends. For ‘Arben’, there is a clear distinction before and after 1981. After the student protests happened, he says, the best friendships ended: “When the problems started, with Albanians, with Kosovo, then even the closest friendships ended. The best of friendships ended. The friends who used to sleep over in my house - my Macedonian friends (Arben’,63)”. ‘Arben’ mentions how the political crisis caused some his best friendships to end. The 1981 protests constitute the second temporal break. ‘Dritan’ explains how his friend group was ethnically diverse. He grew up in the Ulpiana neighborhood in Prishtina:

> We, the people who lived in Prishtina, did not have many troubles. I had a Serbo-Croatian class. I also had to learn Cyrillic. I learned it - no one forced me. I just thought I would

> need it. No one told me not to learn it either. I learned Serbo-Croatian at school, in the streets, in the neighborhood ('Dritan',56).

He also describes his environment as multiethnic: "I had no trouble. I had Serbian friends - half of the building where I lived was with Serbian families" ('Dritan,56), His friend group consisted of Albanians, Serbs, Roma, and Turks who would spend time together, in the same environment. He believes the earlier hatred was passed down to the new generations:

> We had good relations until politics were brought up. The reason was the earlier hatred, where they would call us *Šiptari* (a derogatory term for a person of Albanian nationality), and we would call them *shkije* (a derogatory term for a person of Serbian nationality). The earlier hatred was passed down to us. We played and worked together, but whenever the question of Republic status arose, they never liked it ('Dritan',56).

On the usage of these derogatory terms, 'Sami' said that he did not experience someone referring to him like that: "They did not call me *Šiptar*. They would call you by your name, not by your nationality" ('Sami',61). Dritan on the other side: said: "I did not care. I never called them *četnik* (another derogatory term for a person of Serbian nationality). Sometimes they say it [*Šiptar*] without thinking. I did not put much thought into it" ('Dritan',56). Shkëlzen stated that the Albanian literature was classified in the library as "The Yugoslav literature in the Albanian language[2]", using the adjective version of *Šiptar.*

Another narrator, 'Sami' describes the interethnic relations situation while being in a High school in Mostar: We had a dormitory, and a joint kitchen, my roommates were Croatian and Slovene, the school was there. It was sort of a campus. We had good relations with each other ('Sami',61). He then explains that the high school had pupils from all over Socialist Yugoslavia and that he, alongside the other Albanian pupils had to be in one class because they did not speak

[2] Said in Serbian as: "Jugoslovenska književnost na šiptarskom jeziku".

Serbo-Croatian yet. "I did not know the language [Serbo-Croatian] very well then. They created a seventh grade for us so that we go slower than the others because of the lack of language proficiency ('Sami',61). Later in the interview, he reflects on the division when the political crisis started while working in the military in Sisak, Croatia: "All the nationalities were in the military. The politics ruined this. After this, the Croat went to Croatia, the Slovene in Slovenia, and we [the Albanians] went to Kosovo" ('Sami',61). 'Sami' blames the politics for the division between the people living in Socialist Yugoslavia

When asked about the relations she had with the non-Albanians, 'Vjollca' told a story when she was at a very young age. She talks about how her father would tell her that the Serbian neighbor did not want to allow him to build the courtyard around the house because the view from his window would get blocked. *"*My dad was stubborn and did not ask him. After that, we had no problem with them" (Vjollca,71). 'Vjollca' explains how the political turmoil at the time was reflected in the workplace.

After finishing her studies in Prishtina, she returned to Peja to teach Accounting. She explains how the political tensions between the Serbian and the Albanian colleagues after 1981. She describes the situation between the pupils*: "*The division was more visible. The Serbian pupils would fabricate stories that the Albanian pupils hit him so the Albanian pupils would be expelled. [..]" ('Vjollca,71). This was happening between the working colleagues and the students. Getting warnings from her colleagues, with who previously she would have good relations:

> At a teachers' meeting, one Serbian colleague told me: "Look, 'Vjollca', you talk a lot, be careful[3]!" [..] Until all of this happened, we would hang out together, discuss, and talk to each other. There was no division. When things got worse, they got way worse. The hatred became much present ('Vjollca,71).

[3] This sentence was said in Serbian during the interview: "Gledaj, ti 'Vjollca', mnogo pricaš. Pazi!"

She explains that division was the outcome of the political tensions after 1981: "Then we were divided. The Albanians were on one side, the *shkije* on the other side. And the colleagues whom I had worked with for ten years would tell me that I am talking too much" ('Vjollca,71). Describing his experience with the other nationalities while working in Trebinje, 'Rifat' describes his relations with his colleagues and the people living there as warm: "The relations were excellent. I was close to everyone. They liked spending time with me. I still talk to the Serbian soldiers - they send me messages more often than the Albanian ones" ('Rifat,69).

He illustrates the relations with the Bosniaks as warm and close, as well as with the Croats: "Religion somehow connected us [with Bosniaks], even though we were not religious. I was lucky - my Serbian Commander served in Prizren and he treated me well. Then, a Croat commander came, and the Croats were nicer and kinder towards us ('Rifat,69). Even though 'Skënder' did not discuss any personal relations with the non-Albanians, he briefly pointed out that he worked with Serbian colleagues while teaching in Zvečan until Kosovo's autonomy was removed in 1989. They would have the same curriculum except for history and languages. Shkëlzen explains his relations with the non-Albanians in Belgrade like this: "When I analyzed it, my friends, who I spent most of the time with were from Bosnia, Macedonia from all over Yugoslavia. The locals were more distanced. I also had some good Serbian friends, from University" (Shkëlzen,77).

After studying engineering in Prishtina, 'Agim' started working in the "*Feronikel*" factory in Drenas. He explains that people from all over Yugoslavia were working there: "In Feronikel, it was a Yugoslavia in miniature. There were Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks. I had good relations, especially with the Slovenes" ('Agim',68). After 1981, 'Agim' explains that he was expelled from the workplace:

> I was one of them whom the police violently removed from the workplace. In those difficult survival conditions, I started doing business. I owned a successful business, which I still own today. The Serbian authorities I was one of those whom the police expelled from my job, and I received no compensation ('Agim'68).

The majority of the narrators mention 1981 as the year when the situation deteriorated, in terms of interethnic relations, friendships, and relations between colleagues. The temporalized interethnic relations give a more thorough understanding of the layers that these relations entail. The narrators make a clear distinction about how time is experienced before and after 1981. The narrators make a clear distinction between the time before and after 1981. The 1981 temporal break was a clash between the space of experience (for the Kosovo Albanians, national rights, University, equality, massive education, improved life standards) and the horizon of expectation (demands for the Republic status).

The experience of the "temporal gradations of 'now' and 'then', 'earlier' become differentiated from each other in our historical awareness" (Jordheim, 2012, p. 273). 'Arben' for instance, states how he lost some of his best Macedonian friends after the political crisis started. 'Vjollca' describes how some of her colleagues changed their behavior and were at times hostile towards her, which was not the case before 1981. 'Gani' thinks that before 1981, there was still some courtesy in everyday life between the Albanians and the Serbs, which was not the case after. The 1981 protests were not pronounced much by the narrators living outside of Kosovo (except for 'Arben', who was living in Skopje). 'Sami' who was living in Sisak, blames politics for the division he later saw in the military.

5.2.2 Conscription in the Military Service

The most authoritative work on the military service experience in Socialist Yugoslavia is Tanja Petrović's "*Utopia of the Uniform: Affective Afterlives of the Yugoslav People's Army".* Petrović argues that conscription in the military in Yugoslavia is widely perceived as a meaningful experience (Petrovic, 2024, p. 29). The narrators that were conscripted to military service went there after 1981. For some of the narrators, military service was a time when they felt under pressure. In describing their experience in the military, they also describe the atmosphere and the interethnic relations during their military service. 'Agim' did his military service in Kragujevc [Kragujevac] and Smederevska Palanka. He stated that the Albanians in the JNA had to be very careful, to avoid unnecessary complications for them. Albanians in JNA were perceived as disloyal, and potential separatists after 1981. Some of the complications they could have faced is unequal punishment, accusations of irredentism, separatism, and so on. He expressed that the Albanians who finished the University were more cautious. This careful behavior ensured them to avoid imprisonment and other possible trouble:

> We were more mature when we went to do the military service - I went there when I was 27 years old. We were aware that they might fabricate something to portray us as enemies of Yugoslavia. Because my dad was part of "Balli Kombëtar" [The National Front], in a way, I was under surveillance. We did our best to avoid imprisonment ('Agim',68).

"Balli Kombëtar" [The National Front] was an anti-communist and nationalist movement. The National Front's policy was Republican, Liberal, and strongly nationalist (Amery, 1947, p. 57). Its leaders were Midhat Frasheri and Ali Këlcyra, who were strong opponents of King Zog (Amery, 1947, p. 57). Balli Kombëtar and the National-Liberation Army, despite opposite sides, managed to reach a common program at the conference held in Mukje, a village near Tirana (Fischer & Schmitt, 2022b, p. 253). Balli Kombëtar's program included the creation of an ethnic Albania, but in the common program with the Communist party, that terminology was not used.

The idea of an "ethnic Albania" was not accepted by Miladin Popović, the Yugoslav delegate who assisted in the creation of the Communist Party of Albania. Thus, the Mukje agreement fell through and the Communist Party declared war on the Balli Kombëtar movement. What would follow was a civil war between the National-Liberation army and Balli Kombëtar [The National Front] (Fischer & Schmitt, 2022b, p. 253). Shortly after the Mukje agreement, Fascist Italy capitulated and Nazi Germany took control of the Albanian territories. Considering the growth of the Albanian Communist strength, Balli was pushed into a collaborationist position with the Germans (Malcolm, 1999, p. 304).

Another narrator, 'Gani', said something similar to 'Agim', highlighting the pressure and the general difficulties of going to JNA for the Albanians after 1981. They highlight the importance of going to compulsory military service after graduation. For them, the university experience helped navigate through these delicate situations for them, by not falling under pressure. 'Gani' did his military service in Belgrade, in 1984:

> I am grateful because I learned many things about the art of war and the military structure, even though the pressure against the Albanians in JNA grew at that time. I went there after graduation. As a doctor, my maturity guided me to minimize and navigate the existing pressure. Military service was an obligation, and I participated so as not to worsen my situation. [..] It was difficult for an Albanian to serve in the JNA from 1981 to 1990" ('Gani, 68).

When asked about their relations with the other conscripts in the military, both 'Gani' and 'Agim' pointed out their closer relationship with the Croats and the Slovenes. 'Agim' stated: *"*We had the support primarily from the Croats and the Slovenes. They treated us very well and they respected us". When talking about the relations with the Serbs in the military, he stated: "On the other side, the Serbs... for me, the reality is that the Serbs were scared of the Albanians a little bit [in that setting] because we were 1 vs 1 there, the state was not measuring the forces. So, in that context,

they were nice towards us because they were scared". 'Gani' pointed attention to the hostile approach that the Serbian and Macedonian officers had on the Albanian participants, prejudice, and malicious intentions:

> Some officers still believed that Yugoslavia would not collapse, and were kind. However, Serbian officers dominated with not only prejudice but also malicious intentions and blackmail. They were the most destructive ones. I would say them along with the Macedonians ('Gani',68).

In his classic work, *Discipline, and Punishment*, Michel Foucault coined the term disciplinary power to explain how power operates through surveillance, normalization, and control mechanisms. Disciplinary power is exercised "through its invisibility; at the same time, it imposes on those whom it is the subjects a principle of compulsory visibility" (Foucault, 1975, p. 199). In the case of the Albanians serving in the JNA after the 1981 protests, they felt that they were being under surveillance and had to be visibly not together with the Croats and the Slovenes, so the creation of nationalist groups would be prevented: "We [the Albanians] would hang out with the Croats and the Slovenes. Even then, we had to be careful because they would accuse us of creating nationalist groups or something else" ('Gani',68). When referring to 'nationalist groups', 'Gani' does not mean an ethnically homogenous group for example Albanians, Croats, or Slovenes. Rather, he uses this expression to describe groups of Albanians, Croats, and Slovenes who could potentially organize collective actions against the Yugoslav state.

He further adds: "The Croats, the Slovenes, and to some extent, the Bosniaks had an appropriate behavior towards us. The Serbs and the Macedonians had negative personalities and opinions towards the Albanian participants" ('Gani,68). Aside from this, 'Gani' said that he spent

most of his time reading in the library, gaining more theoretical and historical knowledge on the military.

> I spent most of my time in the library reading about the art of war, general tactics, strategic tactics, human resources, structural management, methods of waging war, and the histories of the Balkan wars, particularly from the perspective of Yugoslav military history. I would say I was very careful during that, to avoid insinuations against me. I respected the military rules and I studied diligently" (Gani,68).

'Dritan' did not go to the military service because of health issues and Skënder only mentioned that he was in Ćuprija and Paraćin, while Shkëlzen did not mention the military service at all. 'Arben' studied "Defense" in Shkup [Skopje], so he went to military service three times, once one year in Osijek, one month in Ohër [Ohrid], and three months in Titograd, today Podgorica. When he started serving in the military, the political problems had already started: "The Paraćin case happened while I was there. Because of this, meetings were held every day. It was not easy - we were afraid that something might happen to us" ('Arben,63). The "Paraćin case" happened on the 3rd of September 1987, when Aziz Kelmendi, a 20-year-old conscript from Kosovo, killed four of his soldier colleagues and wounded six more in Paraćin, Serbia. The victims were two ethnic Muslims, one was a Croat, and one identified as an ethnic Yugoslav (Jović, 2009, p. 263). The members of Kelmendi's family were all arrested and interrogated in a prison in Prizren, and his sister Melihata (aged 16) was expelled from school (Jović, 2009, p. 264).

Branka Magaš states that this opened the door for an "assault in sections of the Belgrade press on the Albanian population as a whole", an assault which expanded into violent actions against Albanian citizens and their property in towns throughout Serbia (similar incidents also occurred in Macedonia and Montenegro) (Magaš, 1993, p. 110). The Serbian as well as the broad Yugoslav press also interpreted this attack as a shot against Yugoslavia and connected it to

Albanian irredentism (Mertus, 1999, p. 145). Aside from being in the military while this happened, 'Arben' expresses that he had good relations with the Bosniaks and the Croatians. He also states that he did not have bad relations with the Serbs in the military, however they were more distanced than the others:

> I had close relations with the Bosniaks and Croatians while in Osijek. Most of the Serbs in the military were not nationalists. However, they tended to keep more distance than the others. Later, when I received the military rank upgrade in Podgorica, my best friend was from Belgrade. We had an amazing time ('Arben,63).

Most of the narrations about the experience in the military and the interethnic relations during the military conscription were characterized by ethnic tensions. 'Agim' mentioned that they felt under surveillance and in potential danger of being accused as an enemy of Yugoslavia, and 'Gani' emphasized the negative behavior of the Serbian and Macedonian officers towards him and the other Albanian participants. As Miranda Vickers points out, "the Albanian conscripts in JNA were always under suspicion by their officers" (Vickers, 1998, p. 256). On the other side, 'Arben' did not mention the suspicion element, however, he also emphasized the tensions and the fear the Albanian conscripts had after the Paraćin case. Despite this, he had a good time.

5.2.3Civilizational differences

Some of the narrators drew attention to the civilizational differences between Albanians and/or other ethnic groups in Socialist Yugoslavia. Drawing from Edward Said's work on Orientalism (Edward, 2003), Milica Bakić-Hayden coined the term 'nested Orientalism'. In her paper, she states that while Europe has "designated its "proper" orient but also parts of Europe that were part of the Ottoman Empire, the Yugoslavs who resided in the Habsburg Empire distinguish

themselves from the areas ruled by the Ottoman Empire, recreating the dividing line of the Empires" (Bakić-Hayden, 1995, p. 922).

These civilizational differences were also mentioned in some of the oral histories. One of the narrators said: "The Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes had more priority because they were more civilized. The other parts, Bosnia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo were intellectually on a lower level. [..] Croats and Slovenes were more upgraded. They were more developed and closer to Europe" (Dritan, 56). As Hetemi argues, "the areas populated by majority Catholic population in Socialist Yugoslavia, saw themselves as different or 'European' in relation to the areas ruled by the Ottoman Empire" (Hetemi, 2019, p. 81). The East-West dichotomy was also present in Agim's narration. While he was talking about the people he worked with, he emphasized that he had worked with the Slovenes, and this work cooperation had continued even after he was expelled from work after 1981: "There was a Western influence regarding the Slovenes, not Russian influence" (Agim,68). From these narrations, we can see that some of the narrators had a hierarchical understanding of the people who lived in Yugoslavia from a civilizational viewpoint.

5.4 Socialist Albania and Yugoslavia

As mentioned in the Historical overview chapter, the legal status of the Albanians in Socialist Yugoslavia was first the category of the minority, which was upgraded to the category of nationality with the 1974 constitution. This differentiation was made for nationalities like Albanians, Hungarians, and Romanians who were considered to have an external homeland. One of the research questions deals specifically with this. This section of the thesis answers the third research question: How did they perceive Socialist Yugoslavia? What about Socialist Albania? What factors are important in their perception of these two countries?

When asked about how they conceptualized Albania during that time, some of the narrators stated that they considered Albania their motherland, which would be able to help them, should they find themselves in a precarious situation. "We always loved Albania. We considered it our motherland. We saw it as a country with the military potential to help us if we were endangered. We loved Albania because we saw it as a potential support in potentially complicated circumstances in Kosovo" ('Gani',68). Albania was conceptualized as a country that would be able to provide support and hope should a potential danger for the Albanians in Yugoslavia 'Vjollca' also points out the way they conceptualized Albania as the homeland from which they would get support: We would always watch the news to see what Albania is saying about us. Once something was broadcast in Albania, we would get very happy because we believed we were receiving support from somewhere" ('Vjollca'). 'Agim' described it similarly:

> It was significant that during that time Albania sustained our hopes. Albania was our dream. This belief held us together - the idea that we have a strong country by our side. Aligning with Albania and not Yugoslavia. Albania was our dream ('Agim',68).

In contrast to 'Gani' and 'Agim', 'Sami' has a different conceptualization. When asked about Albania, he recalls learning about Albania in school: "As a pupil, I would learn about Albania in the Geography class" ('Sami',61). He then describes how they referred to Albania while working in the military:" Then, when I went to the military, for example, we would learn that Albania has 900 tanks, 199 aircraft, helicopters. There was no hate. They would refer to Albania like they would refer to Bulgaria for example" ('Sami',61). This is the second conceptualization that the narrators have for Albania. This conceptualization is more of an official character, mainly information that one gets in education or work. 'Sami' also shared the story of when he saw Albania for the first time, while in Ohër [Ohrid] in 1980. "When I was in Manastir [Bitolja] in

1979 or 1980 and then went to Ohër [Ohrid], that was the first time I saw Albania, from the other side of Lake Ohër [Ohrid]" ('Sami',61). He also tells a story about listening to Radio Tirana with his fellow friends in the pilot academy.

> Once in Manastir [Bitolja], they turned on the radio, and a Fatime Sokoli song playing. They assumed it was a Greek song. Then they switched to Radio Tirana News. They said, 'Let's hear what they are saying about us. The news was focused on Yugoslav Revisionism, but to be honest, my friends did not care. No one cared' ('Sami',61).

'Gani' states: "Maybe we idealized Albania beyond its actual capacity to help us. Nevertheless, it was significantly beneficial, as without it, the migration out of Kosovo might have been considerably higher, or maybe the orientation towards Yugoslavia would be more pronounced" ('Gani'68). This conceptualization was symbolic since Socialist Albania had closed borders. The narrators also express the lack of knowledge about the Enver Hoxha system and the poverty that it had created. 'Agim' stated: "We adored Enver Hoxha's system because we did not know how it is because it was a closed system until the first groups went there for the first time to see the poverty that that system had created" ('Agim',68).

'Vjollca' also states that they loved Albania and Enver Hoxha, without knowing what was going on: We were proud Albanians. We were the majority. When you are the majority, you do not mind. We always loved Albania. We still do. We also loved Enver" ('Vjollca,71). The narrators reflect that their perception of Albania and Enver Hoxha's system was incorrect. However, 'Agim' believes that this symbolic role that Albania played was still very significant: "In contrast to 'Gani' and 'Agim', 'Arben's association with Albania, similar to 'Sami', was a more official character, like from educations. He would also get most of the information about Albania based on the information from school:

> We went there on the first day the border opened. Until then, I had thought of Albania only through what was taught in school. They would say things like: it is a dictatorship, people are imprisoned there, it is an isolated place, and so on. Whatever was taught at school, one tended to believe ('Arben',63).

In contrast to other narrators, Shkëlzen visited Albania in the early 1970s. He visited Albania with his family to visit his uncle's grave, Sadik Stavileci. He describes the major contrast between Yugoslavia and Albania at that time: "Compared to Yugoslavia, Albania at that time appeared dreadful. It left a negative impression on me. The landscape was beautiful, but there was widespread poverty. When I visited the 1990s, the situation had deteriorated further – it was a total collapse." ('Shkëlzen',77). Shkëlzen's conceptualization of Albania differs from the other narrators because, unlike the rest of the narrators, he was able to see the situation in Albania at the time. Later in the interview, he mentions the freedom of speech aspect that the writers would have, compared to Albania: "The writers in Yugoslavia won the freedom of speech, if you attacked the Party directly, you would get backlash, but it was better than compared to Albania, for example" (Shkëlzen,77).

'Skënder' explained how he would walk 50 minutes to the nearest village to hear what the Albanian TV would say: "We struggled to find TV antennas capable of receiving TVSH broadcasts. I walked fifty minutes to the nearest village in Drenica to watch the news, as my village - on the border with Drenica – did not have a reliable signal." 'Vjollca' also shares some of the efforts that she made to make it possible to watch Albanian TV: "We always watched the TV because of Albania. We almost fell several times trying to adjust the cable so we could watch Albanian TV". As Antonsich suggests, 'home' stands for "a symbolic space of familiarity, security, and emotional attachment (Antonsich, 2010; Hooks, 2009, p. 31). The narrators claimed that Albania provided this sense of security, a country that would be able to provide support. The

efforts made to follow Albanian news express the emotional attachment to Albania, despite being unaware of the everyday situation in Socialist Albania at the time.

"Similar to 'Agim' and 'Gani', 'Skënder' claims that the orientation towards Albania was so present, they would have voted in a referendum to join Albania, even though it was a dictatorship: "We regarded Albania as our motherland. Even though it was a dictatorship, if we had been asked in a referendum, whether we preferred to be part of Yugoslavia or Albania, I am confident that 99% of us would have chosen Albania" ('Skënder',64). In a hypothetical scenario, 'Skënder' believes the majority would have voted to join Albania, even if they were aware of the situation there. This also shows the emotional attachment that he had and believes that this attachment is collective.

There are two different conceptualizations of Socialist Albania by the narrators. The first conceptualization of Albania is the motherland, as a country that would be able to provide support and hope, and a possible protection shield should a potential danger for the Albanians occur in Yugoslavia. 'Agim' expressed that the thought of Albania as strong country by their side helped, even though the perception might have been wrong. The narrators also express the lack of knowledge about the Enver Hoxha system and the poverty that it had created, however they emphasize the symbolic role that Albania played the second conceptualization of Albania was on a more official level and it was mainly information that you would get from education or work.

Similar to the previous section on constructing identities, the narrators that studied and/or worked outside of Kosovo for a longer period, had a more "nationally indifferent" approach, or let's say, a more neutral opinion on Albania. The narrators who lived in Kosovo had a stronger sense of belongingness and connection with Albania. A comparison of the systems is present. 'Agim' mentioned that he thought Communism in Albania was similar to Yugoslavia, but he was

wrong. So, in conceptualizing the major contrast between the two countries, the Yugoslav system is a point of reference.

Discussion and implications

This study has arrived at several significant findings and takeaways. In this part of the thesis, I present the main findings, theoretical takeaways, and the possibilities to further expand this research. The first takeaway is that the accumulated past with some of the narrators influenced their approach toward the state of Yugoslavia. Following Berger and Luckmann, the sedimented experience helps determine and construct reality (Berger & Luckmann, 2016). This influenced the horizon of expectation, which for some of the narrators was considering Yugoslavia as a foreign country/occupier or a more neutral stance. The second takeaway is that treating time as non-linear but as multi-layered, helped unpack the Albanian experience in Everyday Yugoslavia. Identifying breaks in temporality, amounted for a more thorough deconstruction of the Albanian experience, parting ways with monolithic claims that characterize the experience as positive or negative.

Two breaks in temporalities were identified: the 1966 Brioni Plenum, the 1974 constitution, and the 1981 protests. The 1966 Brioni Plenum marked a break with the previous space of experience. These temporal breaks coincide with the constitutional reforms and then the establishment of the 1974 constitution. These constitutional changes impacted directly the Albanian experience. With this, the horizon of expectation was equality, national rights, education and so on. The temporal break of 1981 was a clash between the space of experience, the increased autonomy, with the horizon of expectation, which was the demands for the Republic status.

When the space of experience and the horizon of expectation diverge, it makes space for a new historical time, which would be the political crisis. The 1981 temporal break impacted

directly interethnic relations, where friendships, relations between colleagues in settings like work, school or conscription in the military service deteriorated.

The narrators that lived in Kosovo constructed their identity by marking the difference between them and the others. Albanians who studied and worked outside of Kosovo for a longer time had a more "nationally indifferent" approach and their national identity lacked salience in their social context. This could be explained by the horizon of expectation. Similarly, the narrators who lived in Kosovo conceptualized Albania as their motherland, as a country that could offer security and hope, thus having a stronger sense of place-belonging-ness with Albania.

The narrators who studied and/or worked outside of Kosovo for a longer time have a more official level of conceptualizing Albania, mainly information from the school education. When it comes to Yugoslavia, there is a difference between how the narrators conceptualize the state and the Yugoslav system. For some of the narrators, the state is a foreign country, while some others have a more neutral stance. None of the narrators conceptualized Yugoslavia as their homeland. However, the majority of them praise the Yugoslav system and what that system had to offer, in terms of economy, health, employment and education.

For future research, it would be interesting to see how the research findings are if there are more women participants. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, this is a clear limitation of the project. Comparative perspectives would also be a very interesting approach, perhaps comparing the Albanians with another nationality (nation with an external homeland) in Socialist Yugoslavia. What would the differences and the similarities of the way the see the state, the Yugoslav system, their external homeland and so on.

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