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## The Romani Place in Kosovar Space: Nationalism and Kosovo's Roma

Melissa Hughes  
*University of New Orleans*, mh11c@my.fsu.edu

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The Romani Place in Kosovar Space:  
Nationalism and Kosovo's Roma

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
In  
Sociology

By

Melissa Hughes

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## Dedication

For my father who taught me the value of an education and instilled in me a sense of justice.

## Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to my committee, Dr. Vern Baxter, Dr. Rachel Luft, and Dr. Susan Mann, without their support and encouragement, despite the complexity of this topic, the idea for this work would have been forgotten and exchanged for a more mainstream topic. I am also indebted to Hana Synkova for introducing me to the Roma and the injustices of their world, wherever that may be. And, to my son, for keeping me in a steady supply of Starbucks, despite the liberal arts jokes.



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## Abstract

On February 17, 2008, Kosovo declared its independence. The path to independence and the claim to Kosovo was a long process that developed in three primary phases: A) the fostering of territorial solidarity under direct rule and an emphasis on historical ties to the territory; B) the foundation of the national idea within the realms of proto-nationalism; and C) the emergence of peripheral and mass nationalism. This research seeks to define the development of nationalist ideologies in Kosovo and to explore where Roma fit within those ideologies. An historical and sociological approach to nationalism in Kosovo is critical in understanding the current situation of Roma living in, and deported to, Kosovo, including the recent phenomenon of ethnic scapegoating of the Roma by both Serbs and Albanians.

Kosovo, Roma, Nationalism, Yugoslavia

*L'Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli italiani.*  
(Italy has been made; now it remains to make Italians.)  
- Massimo D'Azeglio (1868)

## Introduction

In his landmark account of nation development, Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, noted that “Nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so” (1992:12). Literature defining “nationalism” engages in theoretical debate as to its development, progression and outcome. However, from theoretical analyses, there is a consensus that nationalism is an imagined, socio-political construct that creates a strong sentiment of “us” and “them.” Real or imagined, there is no doubt the wave of nationalist ideologies washed a bloody tide over Yugoslavia. As the tide receded, Yugoslavia had been ethnically cleansed and separated, her republics wrapped in militantly guarded national and cease-fire borders.

If, like history, historical memory and narrative are destined to repeat, such is the case with Romani victims of human atrocities. Just as the Roma<sup>1</sup> were largely categorized as “other” in the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia, they are lost amidst the victims of Yugoslavia’s wars of ethnic cleansing during the 1990’s. In order to avoid social stigma, Roma have a long history of integration into the dominant group of their society. However, in this case the dominant groups were in conflict, resulting in a

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<sup>1</sup> *Gypsy*, and its equivalent European language terms, is often considered derogatory. The Roma in Kosovo are divided into three ethnic groups: Egyptians, Ashkalija and Roma. Several subgroups also exist under these headings. The groups do not consider other groups to be *gadje*, the Romani term for non-Roma, and they do intermarry, therefore I use *Roma* as an umbrella term for all three groups.

situation where Roma were forcibly pitted against other Roma. Those in the middle were expelled or murdered. Unfortunately, at conflicts' end, the Roma became the scapegoat of revenge for both sides. Evidence of this is quite clear today throughout pockets of former Yugoslavia where Roma remain targets of vengefully violent discrimination and segregation. Many European nations, including Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Norway and Belgium, are forcibly returning Roma refugees to Kosovo<sup>2</sup>, exacerbating ethnic tensions in an already unstable region. For example, in June 2010, the UN Secretary-General reported a Roma woman wounded on 7 March, when a bullet was fired into her house near Priština. "According to a community representative, a few weeks before the incident the woman's family had received a threatening letter asking them to abandon their property" (2010:5). In the same report, the UN Kosovo Mission reported 275 "ethnic incidents" from January through August of 2009, further stating that Roma groups are the most vulnerable in Kosovo.

Given the rise of nations out of the ashes of ethnic conflict, how do nationalist ideologies view minorities? More specifically, where do the Roma fit into the emerging nationalist ideology of Kosovo? I intend to explore the answer to this question with a focus on the Romani minority within Serbia as a whole historically, narrowing in on present-day Kosovo as it works toward independence. My research seeks first to define the emerging nationalist ideologies of Kosovo from a socio-historical to a more modern perspective; and secondly, to explore where Roma fit in the nationalist hierarchy, if such

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<sup>2</sup> "Kosovo" is the Serb name and "Kosova" is the Albanian name. Countries that recognize independence refer to "Kosova," while those that do not, especially Serbia, continue to refer to "Kosovo." Because this research is historical and refers to specific events and organizations, "Kosovo" will be used. The usage is purely for purposes of consistency and is unrelated to any political intent.

exists, within this polyethnic<sup>3</sup> region.

Historically, former Yugoslavian countries, including the autonomous region of Kosovo, are unique to other post-communist countries. Titoist Yugoslavia (1953-1980) did not mirror other communist countries of the time by adopting assimilationist policies. Instead, Tito stressed equality for all under the banner of “Yugoslavic” identity and “brotherhood and unity.” Nationalism, for Tito, was a bourgeois ideology that, along with capitalism, led to internal conflict. Additionally, unlike other communist leaders, Tito did not create a centralized system of authority. Instead, he gave recognition and self-rule to Kosovo and Yugoslavia’s republics.

First, I will argue that historically shared conditions shape emerging nationalist ideologies of new countries in the region. Therefore, I will begin with a foundational analysis of (un)nationalist sentiment in the former Yugoslavia, with a primary focus on Serbia, under Tito (1939-1980) and the collective presidency (1980-2000), including that of the infamous Milošević (1997-2000). Historically, this research focuses on the period of the Second Yugoslavia, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, existing from November 1943 to the dissolution of its borders throughout 1992. The first Yugoslavia, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, operated under a constitutional monarchy until Nazi occupation in 1941. Second, I will outline a socio-historical account of how nationalist ideology has developed since the UN administration began in 1999. Third, I will investigate where Roma fit within the nationalistic ideology of Kosovo throughout these phases in terms of social and minority status and non-Roma attitudes toward Roma.

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<sup>3</sup> With the emergence of new countries, the lines between nationalities and ethnicities blur. In order to avoid detailing that debate, and any confusion with *nationalism*, I use “ethnicity” to cover both nationality and ethnicity interchangeably.



Finally, I will examine the implications of nationalist ideologies for the future of Roma living in, and deported to, Kosovo, including the recent phenomenon of ethnic scapegoating of the Roma by both Serbs and Albanians.

It is only recently that sociology has begun to examine “nationalism” apart from related concepts such as the “state” and “nation.” The untangling of nationalism from patriotism and other sociological concepts provide a theoretical challenge. While I intend to present opposing frameworks within my literature review, my approach both to nationalism and the Romani place within nation-building is Marxist-inspired, synthesizing the theories of Marxists such as Hobsbawm (1992), Hroch (2000), and Hechter (2000) into three distinct phases, A, B and C. In connecting the place of Roma within nationalism, particular attention is paid to Miroslav Hroch’s nation building process in Europe, in which three keys shape the character of the nationalist movement:

“(1) a 'memory' of some common past, treated as a 'destiny' of the group - or at least of its core constituents;

(2) a density of linguistic or cultural ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group than beyond it;

(3) a conception of the equality of all members of the group organized as a civil society"

(Hroch 2000:13).

## Background

Kosovo declared its independence in February of 2008. In July 2010, the United Nation's top court ruled Kosovo's Declaration of Independence is legal (International Court of Justice 2010). Serbia announced it would never give up its claim to Kosovo. In order to best understand Serbia's claim to Kosovo as well as nationalist attitudes in Kosovo amongst Serbs and Albanians, it is important to understand the history of this disputed region. It is not the purpose of this research, nor of the researcher, to take a side in the recent war or the bid for independence, but to present a history that best defines the major events contributing to the development of strong nationalistic attitudes within Kosovo and her quest for independence. Such a history also serves to demonstrate how the Roma of Kosovo came to be between two fires.

In the Middle Ages, Kosovo was the base of the Nemanjic dynasty and the political, religious, and cultural capital of Serbia. In 1386 the Turks invaded Serbia, setting the stage for one of history's most famous battles, the June 28, 1389 Battle of Kosovo. After a long battle upon the "field of the blackbirds," Kosovo fell to Ottoman invaders. Both sides lost the majority of their troops in what was essentially a tie. The Serbs killed the Turkish King Murad, and prevented the Turks from completely conquering Serbia, but, low on troops, were ultimately forced to retreat leaving Kosovo to the remaining Turks. The Serb leader, Prince Lazar, was captured and beheaded. The battle plays an important role in Serbian history and continues to serve as the foundation of Serbian myth, legend and national patriotism.

The Turks returned and by mid-fifteenth century, the whole of Serbia was an Ottoman vassal. Albanians converted to Islam; Serbs did not. The Roma, who had previously settled among the Serbs as they escaped slavery, began settling among Albanians. As the Albanian population grew, Roma converted to Islam and counted themselves among the Albanians. The Ottomans banned the Roma from nomadism and confined them to mahalas<sup>4</sup>, mostly within Priština where, according to an Ottoman census, 164 Roma families lived in 1525 (Malcolm 1999:203). Meanwhile Serb society remained cohesive through the Orthodox Church and fostered the Serbian memory of Kosovo. The forced religious division further served to inspire in Serbs a sense of nationalism that played itself out during a Serb revolt in the first decade of 1800. However, the Ottomans crushed the revolt causing over 100,000 Serbs to flee into the Austrian Empire. As Serbs fled Kosovo, Albanians took their place. Kosovo was becoming Albanian.

Serbia continued to fight for Kosovo, failing in various coups until finally realizing victory over the weakening Ottomans during the first Balkan War in 1912. By this time, Kosovo was majority Albanian and anti-Serb sentiment was rising. Serbs viewed the Roma and the Albanians as Turkish leftovers who were impeding on their cherished Kosovo lands. The Roma and the Albanians fled for the mountains as Serb peasants took their land and their homes.

It has been argued that Serb nationalism was the spark that lit the flames of World War I. On June 28 1914, the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, Gavrilo Princip, a member of the Serb nationalist organization Black Hand, assassinated Austrian

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<sup>4</sup> Mahalas are neighborhood quarters that are ethnically and administratively segregated from the dominant population.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. When Serbia refused to meet Austria's demands for justice, Austria declared war. The sequence of events that followed, mainly the domino effect of allied declarations, increased tensions between Serbs and Albanians. Albanians, eager to see - and to help - Austria conquer Serbia, began to return to Kosovo. Austrian and Bulgarian troops entered Kosovo, overwhelmed the Serb armies and sent them retreating into the winter mountains of Albania along with hundreds of Serb civilians. More than half of the Serb population perished due to typhus and flu outbreaks, starvation, the harsh winter, or the violence of war. In the end, the peace agreements of World War I drew the borders of a new Yugoslavia and returned Kosovo to Serbia. Serbs returned to Kosovo and took their revenge on Albanians.

The lack of cohesion among the many groups in Yugoslavia made the country an easy target for the Nazis. German and Italian forces invaded Kosovo in 1941. Germany kept the mining towns of Kosovo, but handed the remainder over to the Italian occupied Albania, fulfilling Mussolini's long held designs on Balkan expansion. Kosovo's Serbs found themselves under Albanian rule and the target of Albanian revenge. Thousands of Serbs were murdered or forced to flee Kosovo. Roma throughout Serbia were rounded up and executed or dispatched to concentration camps.

The end of World War II brought in the Second Yugoslavia, under Josef Broz Tito, a communist partisan resistance leader. Tito's communist Yugoslavia suppressed nationalism in favor of *Bratstvo i Jedinstvo* - "brotherhood and unity."<sup>5</sup> In the

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<sup>5</sup> Brotherhood and Unity was the foundation of Yugoslav patriotism. In the post-war environment it wasn't the cornerstone of socialist relations, as the name may imply, as much as it referred to the war experience - the brotherhood of bloodshed and strength. In

constitution of 1943, Tito granted Kosovo autonomy. Tito's split with Stalin made Yugoslavia the first state to break with Russia, but sealed the border between Kosovo and Stalinist Albania. Albanians in Kosovo were to be Yugoslavs. Tito classified the Roma as a national minority, banned the word "Gypsy" and instituted quotas that would ensure equal education and employment opportunities. For the first time in European history, Roma were treated as citizens – they were Yugoslavs. Kosovo at last experienced relative harmony.

Tito died in 1980. Fully exploiting Serb nationalism, Slobodan Milošević garnered Serb support speaking to all Serbs from the battlefield of Kosovo, site of the famous battle so etched in the collective Serb memory. Fearing Kosovo secession, Milošević repealed Kosovo's autonomy and sent Serb police forces to Kosovo to instill marshal order. The next ten years would give rise to the term "ethnic cleansing" (a term originally used by the Serbs to describe acts of the Albanians) as Serbs and Albanians armed themselves for a civil war that would eventually invoke NATO bombing of Serbia.

Though the border between Kosovo and Albania is now open, Kosovo Albanians have no desire to become Albanians. An entire generation has grown up with no sense of their homeland. With Kosovo's independence Albanians in Kosovo are now Kosovars. Serbs remain, mostly in the north, and ethnic tensions still run high, resulting in violence on a near daily basis. Bitterness toward the Roma runs on all sides. Accused of being traitors, deserters or cowards, the Roma remain trapped between two fires.

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other words, as Malešević (2002) defines the message: "only when we fight together are we strong and powerful" (144).

## Literature Review

“[Nationalism is] a set of beliefs taught to each generation in which the Motherland or the Fatherland is an object of veneration and becomes a burning cause for which one becomes willing to kill the children of other Motherlands or Fatherlands.”

*Howard Zinn*

### Conditions of Nationalism

The literature on nationalism is a “conceptual labyrinth characterized by questionable instruments, a lack of valid empirical data, and poor explanatory power (Dekker, Malová, and Hoogendoorn 2003:345). It is a subject “fraught with difficulties, conceptual and empirical,” wrote Anthony Smith (cited in Guibernau and Hutchinson 2001:10). The literature is ambiguous in defining the concept of “nationalism,” and varies widely, intersecting across the following dimensions: as the process of nation-building, as a movement, as an ideology and form of behavior, and as a political orientation.

Literature on nationalism tends to focus almost solely on origins, seeking to explain its cause rather than its effects. Some argue nationalism is the result of modernity (Anderson 2006; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1992); others maintain that it is rooted in more unique historical conditions (Armstrong 1982; Connor 1994; Kohn and Calhoun 2005); while others take the theoretical middle ground, arguing it is a combination of the two (Hroch 2007; Smith 1987). Ken Wolf (1974) sums up the ambiguous nature of nationalism in a review aptly titled: *The Historian, the Sociologist and Nationalism*:

Students of nationalism have generally handled their subject as if it were the proverbial elephant examined by the ten blind men. The political scientist, touching one leg, declares that he has

discovered the results of the doctrine of popular sovereignty or a clue to the coordination of interest group behavior. The psychologist examines another leg and "sees" men responding to a basic human need-an individual must work out or sublimate his problems by finding a higher group loyalty. The anthropologist touches the trunk and provides a structural-functionalist analysis of national symbols. Those interested in religion grasp the tail and discover a new religion, complete with liturgy, heaven, hell and redeemer; they too provide convincing interpretations of national symbols. (342)

Wolf's point is clear – commitment to a discipline prevents scholars from realizing that nationalism cannot be defined merely as a sum of its parts. Therefore, a review of literature on nationalism must be interdisciplinary – that is, it requires digestion, in small bites, of the entire elephant.

Geertz (1973) and Shils (1957) carry the banner of perennial national, one that is tightly bound to the staff of culture. They argue that nationalism has a primordial attachment that stems from the "givens" of social existence: descent, religion, language, and social practices. History, language and common experiences form natural boundaries and divisions based on levels of comparisons. That is, "givens" hold social values that become markers of identity, difference and societal cleavage. Modern nationalism counters perennialism, arguing that nationalism is not historic and enduring; it is a modern development. Because it is a mass movement, requiring mass communication to spread, it can only be a modern phenomenon. Modernization theories are not as rigid as perennialist and fall under three types of modernization theories: social communication (Anderson 2006; Deutsch 1966; Rustow 1967), economic (including Marxist and non-Marxist) (Gellner 1983; Hechter 2000; Hroch 2000; Nairn 1977; Wallerstein 1974), or political (Mann 1992). The modernist key,

however, is that nationalism develops as societies transition from traditional to modern societies.

### **Perennialist Nationalism**

The histories of ethnic wars, imperial expansionism and colonialism, genocide, and ethnic cleansing imply a deep connection of nationalism to ethnicity. Perennial nationalism as an ideology and form of behavior is closely linked to ethnocentrism (Kellas 1991) and the creation of “in-group” (majority) and “out- group” (minority) attitudes. Anthony Smith’s assertion that nations have “ethnic origins” (1987) and Armstrong’s (1982) extensive historiography of nationalism require a perennialist examination of nationalism within an historical context. Perennial theories of nationalism adhere to the idea that nations are built upon natural social groupings marked by cultural features such as language, religion, and a shared history. This idea is especially relevant in the study of nations whose very boundaries have been carved and re-carved around ethnic identities. An historical context is also particularly important in a study of Kosovo since there exists a common consensus that the break-up of Yugoslavia was compelled by atavistic ethnic hatreds. Indeed, even before its break-up, Banac (1984) blamed the nationalist problems of Yugoslavia on incompatible national ideologies, particularly the nationalistic idea of a “Greater Serbia.” Almost 20 years later, the same incompatible “Greater Serbia” presses upon Kosovo, making difficult her move toward independence, while fueling the development of an emerging Kosovar nationalism. George and Patricia Klein, in their discussion of Yugoslav nationalism, reasoned that “all multinational states are balancing acts” (Klein and Reban 1981:249). In the case of Yugoslavia, Tito’s Communist Party not only maintained that balance, but also managed to freeze post-World War II ethnic unrest within the country.



Liebach (1998) argues that the death of Tito, and, in turn, the death of Yugoslavian Communism “unfroze hoary national sentiments” , creating pockets of ethnocentric nationalism that would later manifest itself in national violence. Breuilly (1993) recognized the propensity for increased ethnic tensions with the loss of political stability. He blames a lack of civil society in regions where there was mass membership in the Communist party. When people have few, if any, ties to civic associations or memberships, they align themselves with the “institutional” nationalism of the state or the “ethnic” nationalism of locality (Breuilly, 1993:386-389). When the state and locality are fundamentally incompatible, the very fabric of the “nation” becomes fragile and vulnerable. Michnik and Matynia (1991) compare it to the opening of Pandora’s Box and also the “the last word of Communism” that acts as “a final attempt to find a social basis for dictatorship. Kim Il Sung, Castro, but also Milošević, the leaders of Serbia’s communists, are good illustrations of that” (Michnik and Matynia 1991). That is, a causal link is developed between the end of communism and the rise of nationalism. The challenge of transitional society and the strains such changes set on the individual push people to adopt nationalist ideologies. More importantly, the state of change makes people more vulnerable to manipulative nationalistic tactics. Mungui-Pippidi (2004) argues that communism, by its authoritative nature, may have laid the grounds for nationalism. The promotion of social envy, mistrust, paranoia and competition for essential goods created “fatalistic and passive political attitudes” (Mungiu-Pippidi and Krastev 2004:56). This last theory seems to neglect the competitiveness of capitalism entirely. It rests on the notion that communism forced people to compete for essential

goods that were not readily available without recognizing that capitalism causes people to compete for the economic means to purchase goods that are readily available.

### **Modern Nationalism**

While perennialist theories begin from a foundation of nation before nationalism, arguing that nationalism exists as an historical continuum, modernists stress nationalism is solely a modern phenomenon, and it is nationalism that makes the nation. Modernists understand nationalism only as it arose from modern institutions which “construct, preserve and transmit national identities, and which connect those identities to interests” (Breuilly 1996:151). Any reference to historical nationalism, to the modernist, is charged as hollow “retrospective nationalism” (Hobsbawm 1992; Smith 1987).

The rise of capitalism, particularly the spread of “print-capitalism,” was an important contributor to nationalism according to Anderson, who views nationalism as existing within “imagined political communities” (2006:15). Anderson argues that widespread print media is a precondition to nationalism, as it represents the use of a common language through which nationalist ideologies are disseminated. As groups of people attempt to define their social and political identity in relation to other groups, they create a concept of social solidarity (community) that, in reality, does not exist. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) point out how, in the absence of historical continuity, nationalists invent traditions (anthems, remembrance holidays, monuments, etc.) and rewrite history in order to root nationalist ideologies within an historical context. Is not Milošević’s parade through Yugoslavia with the 600-year-old bones of Prince Lazar a perfect example of invented history as a means to manipulate nationalist rhetoric? Breuilly supports the notion of imagination and invention, though he outright calls

political nationalism a fraud. There is a “special power,” unmatched in other ideologies, within the “self-reference quality of nationalist propaganda and the theme of a restoration of the glorious past in a transformed future” (Breuilly 1993:68). The power of imagination and invention led Hobsbawm to note that “nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so” (1992:12).

In contrast, Gellner (1983), a prominent modernist theorist, argued that nationalism is not invented, nor imagined, but that it is a very real and powerful response to modern political and economic conditions. Nationalism, according to Gellner, has a direct and positive correlation to modern industrialization. The process of industrialization requires a nation to transform a hierarchical, low cultured (agro-literate, peasant) society into a homogenous, high cultured (specialized, modernized) society. The modern state requires homogeneity to function at a high level – one common language, one common culture, and one common education all serve to create a high culture that “pervades the whole of society, defines it, and needs to be sustained by that polity. *That is the secret of nationalism*” (Gellner 1983:18). Gellner’s theory is perhaps the most ambitious and widely used theory of nationalism in industrialized nations. However, it fails to explain nationalism in pre-industrialized societies or in contemporary, but non-industrialized countries like Kosovo. Throughout the 1990’s Kosovo experienced mass de-industrialization, disinvestments and mismanagement of operations, primarily of its mining resources. Traditionally agrarian, the recent war took a heavy toll on Kosovo’s agricultural production, which is only now beginning to rise above subsistence level. Still isolated from the world economy, Kosovo remains heavily dependent on foreign aid and is deep in remittance. Since Kosovo gained her

independence, the economic situation has deteriorated. Short on energy and rife with organized crime and corruption, Kosovo struggles to compete in the international investment market.

Gellner's (1983) "objective need for homogeneity" of the *entire* population, a top-down driven movement, completely neglects culturally diverse societies. For cases that are not fully industrialized, we must return to the perennialist view. For cases that betray the modernist view that nationalism attempts to homogenize an *entire* population, we must consider also Marxist inspired theories of inequality. Ironically, Marxist theories are particularly salient when examining countries undergoing post-Communist transition.

### **Marxist Nationalism & the Middle Ground**

The contradictory nature of Marxism and nationalism has been a thorn in the side of sociohistorical debate. Most Marxist inspired theorists tend to accept a combination of perennial (history of oppression) and modernist (oppression by capitalism) views. These views would argue that both the invisible inventions of nationalism and the historical conditions of nationalism serve as a tool of exploitation and power of the bourgeoisie. Tom Nairn (1981), despite his Marxist standing, quipped that "the theory of nationalism represents Marxism's great historical failure." Nairn engaged in heated debate with Hobsbawm, the former insisting nationalism was a progressive movement that would lead to the end of the British Empire. Hobsbawm, a Marxist historian and staunch anti-nationalist, believed nationalism would wither away with the bourgeoisie. To date, both theories are incorrect.

Common themes in the literature of Marxist theories are internal colonialism, world systems, and unequal development. Hechter (1999), in his landmark study on

British national development, argued against homogenization. He found that the increased interaction of different ethnic groups, particularly under uneven industrial development, actually lead to ethnic conflict, rather than unity. Hechter hypothesized that “internal colonialism” (1999:6) and uneven industrial development within Britain relegated the Celtic fringe (Ireland, Wales, Scotland) to a periphery position that is economically dependent on the core (England). Hechter termed this strained relationship between the periphery and the core a “cultural division of labor” (1999:10). The periphery reacts with hostility toward the core, eventually leading to ethnonational movements that result in nationalism. Hechter’s theory, often viewed as too reductionist (Smith, 1983), came under criticism because it focused on the Celtic division of labor, which was not entirely uneven, particularly in Scotland where “cultural” positions were traditionally high paying positions in law. However, Hechter’s application of cultural labor division and uneven development to ethnonationalism should not be ignored in cases where nationalistic attitudes are those of the state majority. Hechter, no doubt, was inspired by Wallerstein’s world-systems theory, reducing class status to capitalist interests and the nation to a “product of the capitalist world-economy” (Wallerstein 1987:387).

The Czech historian Miroslav Hroch (2000), in his empirical study across small European nations, emphasized the social history of nationalism. The process of nationalism, Hroch noted, contains three keys: “(1) a ‘memory’ of some common past, treated as a ‘destiny’ of the group – or at least of its core constituents; (2) a density of linguistic or cultural ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group than beyond it; (3) a conception of the equality of all members of the group

organized as a civil society” (Hroch, 2000: 13). In Hroch’s theory, stages of national awakening coincide with and have been referred to as the “A-B-C Theory” - Phase A as the “period of scholarly interest,” Phase B as the “the period of patriotic agitation,” and Phase C as “the rise of a mass national movement.” Phase A is the defining phase, typically when the three keys above take shape, during which groups seek definitions that set them apart from others. Phase B is particularly critical as it enforces a sense of belonging and consciousness. Phase C involves a mass movement that draws the lines of division between “us and them.”

Hobsbawm, Hechter, and Hroch’s theories of the development of nationalism and nation-building essentially involve stages or criteria that yield the same result: strong nationalistic ideology that acquires mass support and leads to civil incorporation.

Stages can be summarized as follows:

**Table 1: Theory Synthesis and Triangulation Model**

<b>Theorist</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Hobsbawm (1992)	Emergence of cultural traditions: 1. Historic association with a current state or one with a lengthy and recent past. 2. A long-established cultural elite, possessing a written national literary and administrative vernacular 3. A proven capacity for conquest	Popular Proto-Nationalism: Emergence of the “national idea” and beginnings of political campaign for this idea. Requires development of common language, ethnicity, religion and consciousness of belonging.	Nationalist ideology acquires mass support
Hechter (2000)	Direct Rule with sufficient cultural homogeneity to foster territorial solidarity	Temporal Lag: Time is required to build up effective political organizations	Peripheral Nationalism: Culturally distinctive territory resists incorporation or attempts to secede
Hroch (2000)	Development of the “three keys” Activists strive to set the basis for a national identity through the cultural, linguistic, social and sometimes historical attributes of a non-dominant group in order to raise awareness of the common traits—but they do this “without pressing specifically national demands to remedy deficits	A new range of activists emerged, who sought to win over as many of their ethnic group as possible to the project of creating a future nation	The majority of the population forms a mass movement. “In this phase, a full social movement comes into being and movement branches into conservative-clerical, liberal and democratic wings, each with its own program

Theories of nationalism have been placed in theoretical boxes, constraining and isolating them rather than viewing how they work together to explain a rather ambiguous concept. Instead of pitting theories against one another and pointing out their differences, a combination of theories may serve well to explain the rise of nationalism in Kosovo and how it led to secession and independence. There are portions of primordial, modern and Marxist theories that apply to Kosovo throughout her tumultuous history. Many of the theories discussed in this literature review will be revisited and further examined throughout this research. However, particular attention will be paid to the theories of Hroch, Hechter and Hobsbawm in the above table as the “ABC” stages parallel the three time periods of this research.

### **Scapegoating Theory**

The term “scapegoat” entered the English language within Tyndale's 1530 translation of the Bible: “And Aaron cast lottes ouer the .ii. gootes: one lotte for the Lorde, and another for a scape-goote.” The story is of two goats. One goat is sacrificed for the Lord during the rites of Attonement. The second goat, bearing the confessions of all the people, is allowed to escape into the wilderness, carrying with him the burden of all the sins. The second goat is the “scapegoat.” The modern translation is in Leviticus:

And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send [him] away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. (Lev 16:21)



In time, “scapegoating” came to refer to one who bears the blame for others. Gordon Allport (1954) defined scapegoating as:

a phenomenon wherein some of the aggressive energies of a person or a group are focused upon another individual, group, or object; the amount of aggression and blame being either partly or wholly unwarranted.

According to scapegoat theory, when the level of frustration increases in society, people seek an outlet for that frustration. Rooted within the frustration-aggression hypothesis,<sup>6</sup> scapegoat theory posits that frustration leads to prejudice and generates aggression that is displaced upon “scapegoats.” Scapegoating, according to Allport, is the last process in a continuum of social relationships that ranges from friendly cooperation among groups to aggressive scapegoating:



Figure 1: Continuum of Social Relationships

Dollard (1967) outlines the process of scapegoating by three factors: first, there must be a “store” of built-up aggression; second, there exists a social permission to release it on a target; and third, that target must be readily identifiable. Within societies, instability, upheaval and change increase the collective level of frustration, which has the potential to build up anxiety and aggression among groups. Citing the demise of the Soviet Union, Gibson and Howard (2007) add that exogenous events generate

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<sup>6</sup> See Dollard, John, Leonard William Doob, Neal E. Miller, Orval Hobart Mowrer, Robert R. Sears, and Yale University. Institute of Human Relations. 1939. *Frustration and Aggression*. London, Oxford University Press.

uncertainty, anxiety and perceptions of threat that can result in intolerance and prejudice.

Displaced hostility is rationalized through blame and stereotyping. Allport (1954) refers to this process as “extropunitiveness,” the tendency to “see (and seek) outside agencies to blame” (349). While individual acts of scapegoating do occur, when granted permission from an authoritative source, such as the government or religious leaders, society will divide itself among the aggressors and the scapegoats. Shirking their own responsibility, political actors mobilize support for repressive actions against scapegoats in society (Howard 2007:198). The blame for society’s problems shifts to innocent, often powerless groups, allowing others to feel free from guilt.

According to theorists, scapegoats generally meet particular characteristics or conditions. Girard (1977) contended that the scapegoat is an arbitrary victim that is not only vulnerable and on the margins of society, but close at hand. The victims must also have specific traits that separate them into a group: “distinguishing, salient characteristics” (Allport 1948:25); women, members of religious, ethnic or national minorities, the poor (Girard 1986:22); with “little possibility for retaliation and accessibility” (Allport 1948:26). Girard (1986) emphasized a power-laden perspective: victims of scapegoating are chosen because they “bear the signs of victims” (21). Their very place in society as victims actually perpetuates their victimhood.

Scapegoating does not relieve nor remove frustration. As Allport (1954) explains, “It is not a successful drainage of aggression because the continuing frustration constantly builds new aggression. Nature never created a less adaptive mechanism than displacement [scapegoating]” (351). In fact, even when the conditions that caused

frustration are alleviated, the aggression initially directed toward scapegoats does not diminish. Lessened frustration can actually increase violent ideologies toward the victim (Billig 1976; Newman and Erber 2002). Perpetrators then seek justification for their violent actions, deepening commitment to scapegoat ideology and increasing its future potential. The cyclic process results in a “continuum of destruction” (Staub 1989:17).

Scapegoat ideology exaggerates the malice and power of the victim in order to legitimize blame (Friedländer 1997). Hitler blamed all of Germany’s economic ills on the Jews and succeeded in convincing German society that if Jews did not exist, Germany would prosper for a thousand years. After the Holocaust, the Palestinians became scapegoats for Zionism and the collective guilt of European countries that failed to stop the Holocaust. Palestine and her people became the new sacrificial goat (Mueler 2002). Hovland and Sears (1988) found a correlation of anti-Black violence and economic recession that they attributed to the frustration–aggression hypothesis that led to scapegoating.

There has been little work done on scapegoating in relation to the instability of the former Yugoslavia. Keith Doubt (2007) used scapegoating to explain ethnic cleansing after the break up of Yugoslavia. Doubt points to the Serbian Orthodox Church as the aggressor that fueled Serb nationalism in an effort to “transform the organic solidarity of Yugoslav society into the mechanical solidarity of a particular ethnic group” (16). Mechanical solidarity, according to Durkheim (1984), strengthens the collective consciousness, leaving little or no room for individual differences. Because mechanical solidarity is repressive, restrictive and demands uniformity, it lends itself well to scapegoating of the “other” and to ethnic cleansing. Although Doubt’s analysis

is remarkably one-sided, it does highlight the dangerous intersection of scapegoating and nationalism.

In his *Hypothesis on Nationalism and War*, political scientist Stephen Van Evera (2001) touches on several dangers of nationalism that are complimentary to the process of ethnic scapegoating discussed above and the Roma of former Yugoslavia. Of particular relevance is Van Evera's discussion of the adoption by a nation of "distorted pictures of their own and others' current conduct and character that exaggerate the legitimacy of their own cause" (47). The exaggeration, as in most nationalistic movements, is accomplished through varying degrees of myth making, including false blame upon the minority for past crimes. The nation uses the myth of past crimes to justify subjugation and oppression of the minority – if they are left unsuppressed, the minority poses a danger (Van Evera 2001:50-51). In this case, Serbs and Albanians alike morally justify oppression of the Roma because Roma were not (and are not) viewed as allies in the war and thus are viewed as present and future enemies of the nation. Because the myth is perpetuated and vigorously defended by everyone *but* the Roma, the likelihood that it will be challenged remains quite slim. The actions of other nations, particularly those with good standing in the United Nations, against Roma, including deportations, mass violence and widespread oppression, serve to further lend legitimacy to both the myth and the hostility that springs from its origins.

## Methodology

The design and methods of this research closely follow the case study design and methods of Yin (2009) and Stake (1995). The research is a qualitative, instrumental case study with dual purpose: 1) to triangulate Marxist theories of nationalism to the case of Kosovo, and 2) to discover where Roma fit into Kosovar nationalistic attitudes. Yin (2009) defines case study inquiry as a method that:

investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident . . . [and] copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result; relies on multiple courses of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result; and benefits from the prior development of theoretical proposition to guide data collection and analysis. (18)

This case study seeks to understand nationalism in Kosovo within the context of civic and ethnic domains and to examine patterns of inclusion and exclusion of Roma across those domains. Although the time period of study coincides with specific sociohistorical events from 1943 to 2010, the analysis focuses on the contemporary result of nationalist ideology and the region's largest minority group with an eye toward future implications.

According to Yin (2009), the chronological time-series analysis is an insightful technique for comparing chronology with that predicted by an explanatory theory, specifically when examined events are sequential and/or contingent. By using this analytical technique, combined with theoretical pattern matching, this study seeks to compare the sequence of events leading to the development of nationalism with the events described in the theoretical framework examined in this research.

## Data Sources

Yin (2009) defines three principles of data collection that establish construct validity and reliability of a case study. The first, a primary characteristic of case study research, is the triangulation of multiple data sources. Multiple sources of data, when used properly, also serve to increase credibility of data (Yin 2009). Sources of evidence related to each phase of examination are presented in Table 1 at the end of this section.

The second principle of data collection involves maintaining a case study database to increase reliability of the entire case study (Yin 2009:119). Documents collected during the study are organized within an annotated bibliography accompanied by corresponding notes. Document notation will also help to recognize the document's original objective, therefore increasing critical interpretation and decreasing overreliance on particular pieces of evidence. All additional notes, correspondence and materials are stored, organized and categorized in electronic and/or hard copy format available for later access if necessary.

Yin's third principle is the maintenance of a chain of evidence that serves also to increase reliability as well as construct validity (2009:121-124). Chain of evidence requires sufficient citation; availability of actual data, including the relevant time and place data were collected; consistent research procedures and questions; and finally, the research protocol should link back to the research questions. The chain allows the reader (or future researchers) to follow the evidence from research question to conclusion and vice versa. The chain of evidence is maintained throughout the research and is rigorously connected to sources within the database.

Interviews used for this research are drawn from a variety of primary sources. Several United Nations and nongovernmental organizations have conducted interviews during field visits to Kosovo over the period of this research. Reports of these interviews are available within the organizations' country reports. Activist Paul Polansky recently published a three-volume collection (1,549 pages) of oral histories of the Yugoslav Roma before, during and after World War II. The collection, "One Blood, One Flame" was a three-year project, filming interviews with 154 Roma throughout former Yugoslavia. Each volume contains a DVD with filmed interviews recorded in the natural environment, thus allowing for a small degree of informal observation. This research relies heavily on the filmed interviews. Interviews conducted by The Balkan Project between January and July of 2003 are also analyzed. Although the Balkan Project interviews were informally conducted<sup>7</sup> their candidness and unstructured format provide an intimately valuable glimpse into the lives of Kosovar Roma. Throughout this study interview data is identified as follows:

Interviews by Polansky are indicated by a single asterisk (\*)

Interviews by the Balkan Project are indicated by double asterisks (\*\*)

All other interview data will be identified as they are referenced.

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<sup>7</sup> In an introduction to the project, Bobby Anderson discusses how they began conducting random interviews: "We're not scholars. We thought that we would paint a picture of a world that no longer existed. We'd find Roma that could remember a southeastern Europe before the borders were solidified, and later sealed. We got romantic; it was naïve, and it was stupid and wrong."

## Data Analysis

Studying nationalist ideologies as everyday discourse is one of the most difficult tasks in historical research: the reception of ideological forms among ordinary people (Hau 2008). This research will examine nationalism primarily from a cognitive collective approach, allowing a variety of methodological tools including content analysis, discourse theory (Sutherland 2005), and frame analysis (Snow 1988). The foundation of this research requires tracing chronological periods of nationalism guided by specific theoretical propositions that set a blueprint for a three-step process of nationalistic development. Data will be organized by patterns that give meaning to both the stages of nationalistic development and the place of Roma as “Kosovars” within emerging nationalistic ideologies.

Table 2 Stages and Sources of Evidence

STAGE	Conscious Nationalism shared memory and culture of a particular territory	Quiet Nationalism increased ties, build up of the national idea	Mass Nationalism nationalist idea gains mass support, secession
← Time Series →			
ANALYSIS	Sociohistorical analysis of shared memory, folklore, literature, linguistics, and cultural/physical borders	Evidence of development of organizational groups, promotion of the national idea socially and politically	Defining the nationalist idea, population of support, and strategies of independence



Table 2, continued

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE			
<b>Primary</b>	Physical artifacts, interviews, newspaper articles, photographs, documentation, speeches, maps, art, literature, performance, film	Organizational records, interviews, documentation, photographs, speeches, art, posters, autobiographies, court cases	Audio, video, interviews, newspaper articles, interviews, physical artifacts, documentation, data sets, court cases
<b>Secondary</b>	Oral histories, textbooks	Oral histories, biographies, commentaries	Oral histories, Internet, political policy, field reports
<b>Tertiary</b>	Chronologies	Documentaries	Documentaries

## Coding

Throughout the interviews collected for this study, I intend to use inductive coding to generate themes of information related to the Romani place throughout Kosovar nationalism. For content analysis, I use both deductive and inductive coding.

Deductive codes examine the development of nationalism and nation building according to the theories of Hroch (2007), Hobsbawm (1992) and Hechter (1999). Therefore, deductive codes will be: memory, destiny, linguistics, culture, equality, territory, national consciousness, proto-nationalism, mass support, and folklore or myth.

## Limitations

The primary limitation to this research study is the dependence upon secondary analysis of interviews and oral histories. Interviews and other sources of evidence also have potential to lose data both in their transcription and translation to English. Many of the Roma interviewed are elderly and have lived through three wars in Kosovo (Albanian, World War II, NATO). In some cases, it is clear that the memories of those

wars have blurred, skewing the chronological order, and making it difficult to determine the time frame discussed. These particular failings of human memory limit the accuracy of oral histories. In cases where time is unclear, I have either made a note or used terms to determine what the speaker meant. For example, in one interview the interviewee begins speaking of his experiences in World War II, briefly mentions the NATO war, returns to World War II, but then begins talking about the UCK (Kosovo Liberation Army). Because the UCK was a part of the NATO war, I attribute that part of the history to 1999.

### **Implications of Research**

Kosovo is currently undergoing stages of socio-political development and its own identity as a nation, as it disengages from Serbia and UN administration, therefore this research offers an opportunity to examine minorities in the genesis of nationalist ideology. An investigation of Romani status within Kosovo is also critically important in addressing much broader international policy issues of forced refugee returns into a region that has not yet established political independence and stability.

Historical analysis of nationalistic attitudes in Kosovo lends itself to a spiraling pattern that has generated violence of neighbors against neighbors. A more in-depth analysis combined with the experiences of minorities within Kosovo could serve as a predictor to conflict in ethnically diverse regions of Kosovo as well as other areas of the former Yugoslavia. As Samantha Powers writes:

Citizens victimized by genocide or abandoned by the international community do not make good neighbors, as their thirst for vengeance, their irredentism, and their acceptance of violence as a means of generating change can turn them into future threats (Power 2002).

## Roma Identity in Kosovo

“If I am Roma, then I am Roma, and I cannot be anything more.”  
*Isak Avdo*

Ethnic identity among Romani groups in Kosovo is complicated. Indeed, the very term “ethnic identity” is complex, involving internal and external factors that require a degree of political and social negotiation. Kanchan Chandra (2006) defines ethnic identity as a “subset of identity categories in which eligibility for membership is determined by attributes associated with, or believed to be associated with, descent” (397). Chandra’s definition differs from other academics in that it leaves out those aspects that are “only sometimes associated with the identities we think of as ethnic and thus cannot be thought of as defining characteristics” (397): common culture, common history, common territory and common language. His definition is particularly fitting to the Roma because not all Roma share those common characteristics. Those who have assimilated or practice ethnic mimicry often leave their cultural traditions and language behind. Not all Romani groups speak Romany or the same dialect of Romany. Because the Roma community lacks an historical tradition (except among some elite), many Roma are not even aware of their historical heritage. Too often, the history that Roma do have is that which has been told to them by Romani elite, often with a personal agenda, or by *gadje* (non-Roma). Roma are a people without a homeland

whose diaspora has spread throughout the world, thus they have no common territory.<sup>8</sup>

The use of this definition does not imply that Roma do not share the common characteristics typically connected with ethnic identity. However, it is a common misunderstanding and, to some extent, stereotype that Roma are a homogeneous group. They are a quite diverse group that can be differentiated by their sedentary or nomadic lifestyle, language, tribal affiliation, occupation and religion.

Romani scholars use the terms ethnic and race interchangeably and ambiguously as applied to the Roma. Both terms have evoked multiple definitions and charged criticism within the field. In his aptly titled book *Gypsy Identities, 1500-2000: from Egipcians and Moon-men to the Ethnic Romany*, Mayall (2004) notes:

The views of authors change over time and the use of labels and boundaries can vary even within the same text and from one paragraph to another with no explanatory comment from the author or any indication or recognition of incongruity and contradiction. A confusion of labels is applied to the group, usually without any clarification of the reasons for the preferred use of one alternative over another. (14)

With the exception of Ian Hancock, it is notable that the ethnic/racial labeling debate has been carried out by non-Roma.<sup>9</sup> Hancock, a prominent Rom and professor of linguistics, argues that classification is far more complex than specialists comprehend. Because of their interaction with various European groups and their fragmentation, Hancock (2004) argues that Roma have emerged as “a continuum of distinct ethnic groups constituting a larger whole” (18).

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<sup>8</sup> Indian origins theories, though strongly based on compelling linguistic evidence, are still inconclusive. More importantly, many Roma are unaware of their possible Indian origins and others, like the Egyptians, dispute this evidence.

<sup>9</sup> For varying views on the race/ethnicity debate see (Acton 1997; Fraser 1995; Hancock 1998; Kenrick 1998; Liegeois 1994; Okely 1983)

Without doubt, the most distinguishing feature of the Romani people is what has been described throughout history as *difference*, qualities that have given them markers of marginality within *every* community in which they have lived. Like other minorities whose appearance and culture differs from the dominant white society, the term “race” arose to describe and differentiate them. Fraser (1995) and Mayall (2004) both point to Macfie, Honorary Secretary of the Gypsy Lore Society from 1907 to 1914, as providing the fullest account of the features of the Gypsy race:

The race is slightly dolichocephalic, or long-headed, and the average height is 5 feet 4.9 inches. Their limbs are wiry, their movements vivacious, and their hands and feet small. Their features are regular, and in youth often extremely beautiful, though the mouth is not small; the teeth are good and white, and the nose straight with a tendency to be hooked. They are deeply pigmented, the skin of pure Gypsies being olive or even darker, and the hair straight and black with the peculiar blackness which is described as blue-black. The iris is dark, especially among the women, and the eyes have a lustre which everybody notices but nobody has yet succeeded in describing. (Macfie 1912:71-72)

Grellman, considered the father of Gypsy studies, wrote the first major study on Gypsies for his dissertation in 1787. It is through his lens that future researchers framed the racial representation of Gypsies. His lens was most definitely a very European one that contrasted whiteness with the way in which “the dark brown, or olive coloured, skin of the Gipseys, with their white teeth appearing between their red lips, may be a disgusting sight to an European, unaccustomed to such objects” (1787:10).

*Swarthy* is a common adjective applied to Gypsies. For example, in a book review for Borrow’s classic *Isopel Berners* (1901), Helen Biddell (1915) writes of the protagonist and her Gypsy friends:

. . . this tall blonde of heroic mould, like a Norse queen, with fair hair hanging free, deep blue eyes and fine features, showed plainly that she was as far removed

from her swarthy gypsy companions, and as different from them, as light from darkness. (74).

Writing about his bicycle trip around Hungary, Austria and Germany, Thomas Stevens (1885), utilizing the race term, also referred to the Gypsies he crossed as *swarthy*:

Gangs of gypsies are now frequently met with; they are dark-skinned, interesting people, and, altogether different-looking from those occasionally encountered in England and America, where, although swarthy and dark-skinned, they bear no comparison in that respect to these, whose skin is well-nigh black, and whose gleaming white teeth and brilliant, coal-black eyes stamp them plainly as alien to the race around them. Ragged, unwashed, happy gangs of vagabonds these stragglers appear . . . The black eyes scintillate as they take notice of what they consider the great wealth of sterling silver about the machine I bestride. (175)

These few quoted passages not only draw distinctions along racial color lines, but they expound upon an “us” versus “them” division, as well as an exotic othering.



**Photo 1: Measuring the skull of a Romani woman**

Eva Justin of the 'Racial Hygiene and Demographic Biology Research Unit' in Nazi Germany measuring the skull of a Romani woman.

Today, in an environment of political correctness, color is largely absent from the Roma rhetoric, but *difference* is more closely aligned with cultural differences. Perhaps the most important aspect of Romani culture is the practice of *marimé*. *Marimé* is the Durkheimian equivalent of the sacred and the profane, the division between what is pure (*vujo*) and what is impure (*marimé*). It is also a social sanction; a Rom who is *marimé* is expelled from the community and considered a pariah.<sup>10</sup> Weyrauch (2001)

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<sup>10</sup> Roma have their own court system, *kris*, that render judgments on a community member's *marimé*.

argues that the Roma's determination not to assimilate stems in part from their belief that *gadje* are in a state of defilement because of their ignorance of the rules of purity and impurity (29). Because the laws of *marimé* strictly regulate interactions between Roma and *gadje* they serve as a function of boundary maintenance between the Romani world and those outside of it. Traversing the *gadje*'s world requires precautionary measures because most everything the *gadje* touches – dishes, utensils, countertops, toilets – poses a danger of impurity and disease. Such strict self-imposed segregation from the outside world shrouds the Romani world in impenetrable mystery, subjecting it to suspicion and myth.

Elaborating on how “gypsiness” is an “ascribed identity,” Tierney (2000) writes that the “characterization as ‘Gypsies’ of musicians, wooden spoon and wooden trough carvers, brush makers, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, horse traders, smallholders, bear trainers, beggars and a host of other occupational groups living in, or moving between, numerous European countries with which they had been associated for varying lengths of time, and speaking a startling variety of languages and dialects . . . doesn’t correspond with the Gypsies’ view of themselves” (179). These characterizations, made by *gadje*, play a major role in labeling *who* is a Gypsy. Even in a modern, capitalistic society, Roma refuse wage-labor employment, engaging instead in various nonindustrial self-employment. Wage-labor is seen as a temporary situation or the last act of desperation. The dominant society views the Romani refusal to slip into the 9-to-5 rut of the proletariat as backwards and an outright defiance of *normal* social standards.

The strands of difference based on physical attributes, language, attitudes, beliefs, rituals, morals, and self-imposed boundary maintenance have, throughout



history, created distinct Romani enclaves within the host population. The Roma have precariously negotiated boundaries through the processes of protective self-isolation or assimilation/ethnic mimicry. The latter involves unraveling those strands of difference only to stitch a new identity in a strange world. The language of their everyday life becomes the language of the dominant society, to use the words of Fanon (1991), “to speak a language is to appropriate its world and culture (21).

The Roma community is divided across endogamous groups that differ along lines of religion, culture, and ethnicity. Statistical counts of Balkan Roma are unreliable and underestimated. Because Roma are considered the pariah group of society, those who are able (particularly those with muted anthropological features) tend to self-identify with higher ranked groups in their surroundings. The practice of ethnic mimicry renders Romani census data insufficient. In his work on the Roma of Yugoslavia, Vukanović (1963) noted “a widespread tendency among the “Gypsy population . . . to hide its real racial character, pretending to belong to some other Balkan ethnical group . . . which results in reducing the estimated number of Gypsy inhabitants” (29). Kosovo was born out of ethnic identity, its very borders drawn to divide one ethnic group from another. Those who do not belong to the collective identity of the new nation are defined as “other” and thus are excluded from its citizenship. In a nation ethnically conceived, the concept of “citizen” is replaced by one of “nation.” National identity becomes ethnicized where the “primary loyalty” is to the dominant ethnic group (Friedman 1994). Therefore, if Roma want a place in the new society – if they want to *survive* in the new Kosovo – they must become a part of the national identity. Many Roma do so by becoming Albanianized, others by creating a new ethnic identity.

The emergence of new groups of self-identification among Roma in Kosovo has further complicated the collection of population data. The UNHCR reports approximately 130,000 Roma in Kosovo before 1999 (Ringold 2000). Between 1991 and 1994, 4% of Central and Eastern Europe Roma lived in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia.

Table 3 Romani Population, 1991-94 (Thousands)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Roma population</i>	<i>Total population</i>	<i>Percent of Roma</i>
Albania	95	3,421	2.8
Bosnia	45	4,383	1.0
Bulgaria	750	8,459	8.9
Croatia	35	4,788	0.7
Czech Republic	275	10,323	2.7
Hungary	575	10,280	5.6
FYR Macedonia	240	2,191	10.9
Poland	45	38,446	0.1
Romania	2,150	22,761	9.4
The Slovak Republic	480	5,345	9.4
Slovenia	10	1,993	0.4
Turkey	400	59,461	0.7
FR Yugoslavia	425	10,675	4.0

*Notes:* Roma population estimates are midpoints of ranges.

*Sources:* Wheeler, 1999, from Roma population estimates: Liegeois, J-P., *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers* Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1994, p. 34. Total population data: *World Bank Atlas*, 1995.

Today the estimate varies from 20,000 to 30,000. However, it is important to note that Roma can be included in the counts of Egyptians, Serbs, Albanians, Turk, and/or Other/s either by choice or forced assimilation. In a region where numerical domination

equals political domination, some Roma were forced to change their names. As

Bajram Jashari<sup>11\*</sup> explained:

I think the Roma here took the surnames of the *gadje* because of a big pressure from the *gadje*. Roma had to take those surnames, otherwise they would be expelled from where they were living and working. Because we didn't have anywhere to go, we had to accept their customs and habits.

Nijaz Saiti\* also remarked on his family's name change:

We lived mainly with Serbs. There were no Albanians in our neighborhood. Our name was Saitovich, when the Albanians came they wrote our name as Saiti. We stayed with that surname.

While census data undersamples the Romani population, Romani NGOs and elites inflate the population. William Lockwood concluded, "Half a millennium of persecution has given Romani culture ample opportunity to develop means to evade and mislead both the census taker and the would-be Gypsy scholar" (Lockwood 1993).

The map below shows the distribution of Roma in Kosovo. Kosovar Roma self-identify into three groups: Ashkali, Egyptian, and Roma. Most scholars consider Egyptians and Ashkali to be subgroups of Roma who lost their language and became Albanized. Both groups share an affinity with the Albanians, but remain rejected by the Albanians (OSCE/UNHCR 2001:1). The ethnic boundaries between the three groups (and their metagroups) are weak; the groups intermarry<sup>12</sup> and do not consider each other to be *gadje*. The emergence of new subgroups and metagroups within the Romani community expounds the extent to which outside forces shape ethnic identity. Political recognition of a particular ethnic group reshapes the group's self-awareness

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<sup>11</sup> A popular Albanian surname shared, ironically, with one of the founders and commander of the KLA.

<sup>12</sup> It is extremely rare for a Roma to marry a *gadje*.

and organization, and increases identification and mobilization among unrecognized ethnic groups, thus promoting formation of new ethnic groups (Nagel 1994). Despite the intergroup differentiation of Ashkali and Egyptians from Roma, outsiders view them as one group. Surrounding populations (Albanians, Serbs, Turks, Greeks, Macedonians, etc.) each have a word that translates into “Gypsy,” and this is how they refer to all Roma. Political actors also make little distinction between Romani groups, collectively referring to the Romani population in Kosovo as RAE (Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian). According to Marushiakova and Popov (2001a), an understanding of the ethno-social and ethno-cultural features and contemporary problems of Roma in Southeastern Europe hinges on the consideration of two circumstances:

1. Roma are a specific ethnic community that has no analog in other nations of Europe. They are divided into groups, sub-groups, and metagroups with their own special features and problems that are not susceptible to generalizations.
2. The historical and cultural context of Roma in different countries is extremely important. The complex histories and present day situation of the region differentiates it from other regions.

Several factors form a basis of exceptionalism for the Roma. Most important among them are the lack of a solidly dispersed identity, uniform religion, collective memory or historical consciousness, a strong oral or written history, and a commonly accepted ancestral land. Although this research uses the term “Roma” to refer to all Romani

groups in Kosovo, it does not imply, as will be shown, that they are a cohesive group. Even among the three primary groups in Kosovo (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians), there are many sub-groups with differences among them. Obviously Romani groups in Kosovo, having undergone centuries of forced and voluntary assimilation, do not always share the same religion. Further, there is a tradition among some Roma to not speak of the dead. This, combined with a low literacy rate, lack of archival materials and widespread racism prevents Roma from sharing their history internally and externally. Although it is widely accepted (though still debated) that the Roma originally come from India, this is a history given them by non-Roma. Indeed, throughout many of the interviews utilized in this research, the Roma say that they were told from external sources that they come from India. It is with these circumstances in mind that this research does not compare the Roma of Kosovo with those of other countries or to other transnational ethnicities.

**Ethnic composition of Kosovo (2005)**

Legend:

- Albanians
- Serbs
- Turks
- Bosniaks
- Gorani
- Roma
- others

Percentage of minority populations:

- 30 - 49 %
- 15 - 29 %
- 5 - 14 %
- > 0 - 4 %

## Rom

41

to settle among the Serbs.<sup>13</sup> A law decree from Sultan Suleiman I, dated 1530, placed a special tax on “Gypsies,” separating them as the “true believers” (the Muslims) and “the infidels” (Christians), the latter were assigned a higher tax (Marushiakova, Popov, and Kenrick 2001). Today, Roma are further divided into groups based on geographical location and language. Roma are traditionally blacksmiths. Before 1999, Kosovar Roma were semi-nomadic or settled in ethnic enclaves. New metagroups are emerging, but the common groups are Gurbeti, Arlija, Bugurdije, Muhadjeri, Divanjoldije and Srpski Cigani. The Srpski Cigani (Serbian Gypsies) are most closely settled with the Serbs.

### Ashkali

The Ashkali live in central and eastern areas of Kosovo, historically within Albanian communities. They have their own political and social organizations and are the only group with a political party, the Democratic Party of Albanian Ashkali. Miljaim Ramadani’s\* self-identification is somewhat ambiguous:

I am Ashkali. I didn’t live where there were many Roma. Roma lived in Moravska. I lived where Albanians lived. Roma in Priština lived in the settlement across from the cemetery. Although we didn’t live with Roma, we had very good relations and we lived very well with them. We also lived well with Albanians. I have a document that I am Albanian since 1946 but my father and my uncle said we are not Albanians although we speak the Albanian language. We are Ashkali.

Though the Ashkali claim to have arrived in the Balkans from Iran in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, they only emerged as a separate ethnic group after 1999, likely to separate themselves from the Roma and the violence directed toward them. There is no census designation

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<sup>13</sup> Roma were slaves throughout the Romanian principalities until slavery was abolished in 1856, at which time the second migratory wave of Roma moved westward across Europe.

for Ashkali. The Roma argue that the Ashkali are Roma; the Egyptians insist the Ashkali have been forced by the Albanians to present themselves as a new ethnic identity (Marushiakova and Popov 2001b).

## Egyptians

The origins and actual existence of Kosovar Egyptians continues to be a fertile debate between the Romani community, NGOs, and international institutions. The Romani community views the Egyptian identity as a separatist movement that weakens Romani unity. Egyptians accuse the Romani community, NGOs, and international institutions of forced assimilation. The Ashkali accuse the Egyptians of trying to assimilate them into Egyptians; likewise, the Egyptians accuse the Ashkali of assimilation by denying Egyptian identity. It is a complex and accusatory situation that ultimately creates tension between all three Romani groups.

Egyptians are generally blacksmiths, farmers, or musicians. They tend to be settled and acculturated (Albanized) in the western part of Kosovo. In 1974, the new constitution allowed for ethnic self-identification and the Egyptian movement gained momentum as Egyptian political and cultural organizations formed and began to protest for a place on the official census. The Egyptian category was not officially added to the census until 1991. In 1993, the Association of Egyptians conducted their own census in Kosovo and Metohija with a final tally of 120,000 Egyptians (Marushiakova and Popov 2001a). It is a case where one must consider the source in evaluating the count. Though there is historical and archeological evidence of Egyptians in the Balkans, many



scholars consider the Egyptian ethnicity to be another form of ethnic mimicry and an attempt of Roma to distance themselves from being “gypsy.”<sup>14</sup>

Folklore is an integral part of identity and this is especially so in the Balkans where myth and folklore are a powerful influence in shaping both nation and identity. Ignoring folklore that has been passed down from generation to generation, many scholars point to linguistic evidence to *tell* Roma their origins. Several Roma interviewed mentioned learning of their Indian origins from an outside source. Adem Kurezi said, “We heard the Roma came from India, and all the people are today telling us that Roma came from India.”\* Djemilja Alija learned through the television, “I didn’t know that Roma came from India. I didn’t know about that. We saw that on television.”\* Egyptians continue to argue their Egyptian origins. Bajram Jashari insists, “As we heard it, Roma came from Egypt, and the Roma were once slaves. That’s how Roma came to Yugoslavia. We have similarities with those people from Egypt.”\*

In Romany, there is a saying, *kon mangel te kerel tumendar roburen chi shocho phenela tumen o chachimos pa tumare perintonde*, “he who wants to enslave you will never tell you the truth about your forefathers.” To deny self-identification or reduce it to ethnic mimicry is to give all Roma an “immutable character” that they allegedly acquire at birth and to deny them “‘right of exit’ from group constraints (Hollinger 1995; Trubeta 2005). Refusal of Kosovar Albanians to distinguish between Romani groups allows Albanians and others outside the Romani community to maintain the “Gypsy” stereotype

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<sup>14</sup> See Z. Barany, “The Roma in Macedonia: Ethnic Politics and the Marginal Condition in a Balkan State,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1995, p. 517; Poulton, *The Roma in Macedonia*, p. 43. E. Marushiakova and V. Popov, “Myth as Process,” in Thomas Acton, ed., *Scholarship and the Gypsy Struggle. Commitment in Romani Studies* (Hatfield, Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2000), pp. 81–93.

without differentiating between groups or giving them a chance to rise from their marginalized social status. Isak Avdo's\*\* comments illustrate how Albanians respond to Romani self-identification:

“They can call themselves whatever they want: but when Albanians call them, they don't say ‘Hey, Ashkalija,’ or ‘Hey, Egyptian, come here.’ They say ‘Hey, *Madjup*<sup>15</sup> come here.’”

In Kosovo, within the current political context, a Rom is either an Albanian or not an Albanian. The latter category relies heavily on the color of a Rom's skin and facial features. There can be no in between for Roma in Kosovo. Explosive nationalist conflict and crisis has left little room for neutral actors (Trubeta 2005). Ultimately, self-identification has little, if any, bearing on Roma in Kosovo. It is the State, in this case the Albanian dominated Kosovo state, which dictates identity. The state is thus a powerful “identifier,” not because it can create “identities,” but because it has the material and symbolic resources to impose and enforce categories of identity to which non-State actors must refer (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). For Roma it is a double-edged sword of identity, they not only lose the right to self-identify, but they are also forced to adhere to categories of identification assigned to them by others. Ironically, the Albanians, who have become Kosovars, are refusing the Roma the same national status as Kosovars. To Albanians, thus to Kosovo, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians remain *madjusp*.

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<sup>15</sup> Albanian word for “Gypsy”

## Roma under the Third Reich

“With respect to the extermination of antisocial forms of life, Dr. Goebbels is of the opinion that the Jews and the Gypsies should simply be exterminated.”  
*Nazi Reichsminister of Justice Otto Thierack, September 14th, 1942(Whalen July 2003)(Whalen July 2003)(Whalen July 2003)*

“The Gypsies had been murdered in a proportion similar to the Jews: about 80% of them in the area of the countries which were occupied by the Nazis.”  
*Simon Wiesenthal, in a letter to Elie Wiesel, December 14th, 1984*

Although the time frame for this research focuses on the time of Tito to the present, an overview of the Partisan movement and the genocide of Roma under the Nazis in Yugoslavia is directly relevant to the region’s turbulent history and its present situation. Dennis Reinhartz reminds us of the importance of acknowledging significant events of the Romani past to hopefully obtain a “clearer discernment of their present” (cited in Kenrick 2006:95). Influenced by policies of racial hatred, Nazism in Yugoslavia gave license to a genocidal slaughter of Roma. Perhaps more than any other region of Nazi occupation, Roma were systematically “disposed of” by mass shootings and mobile gas chambers, particularly in retaliation for the deaths of German troops at the hands of Partisans. The Partisans, mobilized under Tito, would not only form the new government of Yugoslavia after the war, but their legacy would forge a central memory in nationalistic ideology for the next half-century.

On March 25, 1941, under pressure from Hitler and surrounded by Axis countries, Prince Paul of Yugoslavia reluctantly signed the Tripartite Pact. Serbian officers were outraged at what amounted to their government’s betrayal and, with backing from Britain, overthrew the government the following night. Churchill proclaimed that the Yugoslav nation had “found its soul,” calling the coup a patriotic movement of “a valiant

and warlike race at the betrayal of their country by the weakness of their rulers and the foul intrigues of the Axis Powers.” “Cherish the hope,” Churchill enthusiastically continued, while promising British aid to the new government (Churchill and Gilbert 1999:408). On the streets, Serbs gathered and exuberantly shouted, “Bolje rat nego pakt! Bolje grob nego rob!” (“Better war than pact! Better graves than slaves!”). Hitler was furious, making a promise of his own – to punish Belgrade and the Serbs. In a victory speech the following summer, Hitler recalled:

We were all stunned by that coup, carried through by a handful of bribed conspirators who had brought about the event that caused the British Prime Minister to declare in joyous words that at last he had something good to report. You will understand, gentlemen, that when I heard this I at once gave orders to attack Yugoslavia. To treat the German Reich in this way is impossible. (Copeland, Lamm, and McKenna 1999:478)

On March 27, 1941 under Directive 25, aptly called *Fall Strafe* (Operation Punishment), Hitler ordered Belgrade “to be destroyed by continuous day and night attacks of the Luftwaffe” (Domarus and Hitler 1990:2387). On April 6, 1941, Germany’s 12<sup>th</sup> Army advanced into Yugoslavia. By April 12, Serbia was under the quisling government of Milan Aćimović. In August, the Serbian government was reorganized as the puppet Government of National Salvation and Aćimović was replaced with Yugoslav Army General and Nazi loyalist Milan Nedić. As a World War I war hero and Serb politician, Germany expected Nedić would calm the Serbs and subdue the Partisans. The plan only served to fuel resistance. Once again, Hitler was faced with the nationalist pride of the rebellious Serb resistance.

On September 6, Hitler issued a reprisal decree that for every German killed, 100 Serb civilians would be shot; for every German wounded, 50 Serb civilians would be

shot. German forces did not waste time applying the new law. In October, the Serbian Volunteer Command entered the Serb town of Kragujevac and carried out one of the most brutal massacres of World War II. In retaliation for a Partisan and Chetnik attack near Kragujevac that killed ten German soldiers and wounded twenty-six more, the Serb Volunteer Corp rounded up civilians for execution, including 300 secondary school students and their teachers. The executions lasted two days, October 20 and October 21. The German command reported 2,326 executed. It took the survivors four days to bury the dead.

On October 26, 1941, General Harald Turner issued order number 44/41, specifying that Jews and Roma should be the primary targets of retaliation. He further stated:

The Gypsy cannot, by reason of his inner and outer makeup, be a useful member of international society ... As a matter of principle it must be said that the Jews and Gypsies represent an element of insecurity and thus a danger to public order and safety. It is the Jewish intellect that has brought on this war and that has to be destroyed. Gypsies, on account of their inner and outer disposition, cannot be useful members of the family of nations. It has been established that the Jewish element plays an important part in the leadership of the bands and that Gypsies in particular are responsible for special atrocities and intelligence. That is why it is a matter of principle in each case to put all Jewish men and all male Gypsies at the disposal of troops as hostages. (NA, NOKW-802, 26 October 1941; Nuremberg Documents Rights June 28 2005)

In a report on the shooting of Jews and Gypsies, Lieutenant Walther, head of the execution squad, complained that digging the graves was most time consuming as the “shooting itself goes quickly (100 men in forty minutes).” Of the Roma, he added:

The shooting of Jews is simpler than that of the Gypsies. It must be admitted that the Jews are very cool in the death - they are very quiet - while the Gypsies cry, shout and move constantly when they are already on the shooting place. Some even jumped off the volley into the pit and tried to play dead (Walther 2004:121)



**Photo 2: Roma walking to their execution**

A Serbian gendarme serving the Serbian puppet government led by Milan Nedić, escorts a group of Roma to their execution.  
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Muzej Revolucije Narodnosti Jugoslavije.

In 1942, Schutzstaffel Officer Turner drafted a report for the new Generaloberst Löhr in which he itemized the accomplishments of the previous administration. He wrote, "Serbia only country in which Jewish question and Gypsy question solved" (NA, NOKW-1486, 29 August 1942; Nuremberg Documents 2002).



**Photo 3: Retaliatory execution in Pancevo, Serbia**  
Courtesy Deutsches Historisches Museum.

Some Roma managed to survive the shootings and avoid the camps by hiding or joining the Partisans. Reili Mettbach was eight years old when her family fled Germany in 1939. Himmler's *Decree for Basic Regulations to Resolve the Gypsy Question as Required by the Nature of Race*, issued December 8 of 1938, finalized the "Gypsy

problem” as one of race and set the stage for annihilation of the Romani people across Europe. The waves of deportations and arrests of Roma quickly followed. Reili’s family went first to Yugoslavia. When the Germans invaded Yugoslavia they fled to Romania. As the Germans invaded Romania and Hungary, her family fled once again, this time to Bulgaria. When the Germans invaded Bulgaria, Reili’s family returned to Yugoslavia. Faced with shooting squads or camps, her family learned to hide. Reili, like many young Roma in Yugoslavia, became a messenger for Tito’s Partisans.

They picked me to bring the message there because I could speak Yugoslavian. And I blended in with the Yugoslavian kids: I was dark, skinny, barefooted, raggedy. Who would pay attention to a kid? And they said to walk on the railroad tracks so I don’t get lost . . . And I walked down the railroad tracks. It was late evening. There was woods on one side. And on the poles where the telephone wires went, they had three or four Yugoslavians. Partisans. Hung them. And when I walked, I saw the legs and looked up. They already hung there three or four days. (Sonneman 2002:98)

Reili’s family hid in a farmhouse with two other families. It was four o’clock in the morning when the police stormed the farmhouse and forced all three families into a truck. “Everybody was crying and screaming and the kids were crying too because the mother cried. And we knew it was bad, bad, that we had to go in the bad camp” (Sonneman 2002:99). Reili’s family was sent first to Ravensbrück and then to a forced labor camp on the Yugoslavian border. Her father was sent away to the men’s camp and her mother sent to work in the kitchen. Reili and her cousins were placed with the other children and forced to work in a rock quarry day after day, each blurring into a year and a half of internment.

There was no Sunday. There was no winter day. In the winter-time they give you thin clothing, just for the meanness of it. They give you wooden clogs, if they fit or if they didn’t fit. You just followed orders. You didn’t say were [sic] too weak. You got beaten, you got hurt, you got taken away. You just don’t say, “I



don't feel good, I'm tired, I don't want to, I'm homesick, I'm still a child." You followed orders. You made no waves. (Sonneman 2002:101)



Photo 4: Reili Mettbach

Reili is on the first row on far right with her extended family in 1938. The man in the middle in the plaid jacket is her uncle Eduard, who was killed in Dachau. Photo from collection of Dr. Ludwig Eiber. Reprint from Toby Sonneman.

It is also during Nazi occupation that the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was dissolved and carved amongst Germany and her allies. Most of Kosovo was annexed from Serbia into Italian controlled Albania, fostering the idea of "Greater Albania." As the Turks did in 1389, the Italians (and Germans after capitulation) encouraged Albanians to move into Kosovo, pushing the Serbs out as they did. The success of such

encouragement is stunningly clear in a 1942 statement issued by Kosovo Albanian leader, Ferat-bey Draga, "the time has come to exterminate the Serbs . . . there will be no Serbs under the Kosovo sun" (Bajrami 1983:313). In Kosovo, as with much of Yugoslavia, World War II incited violent civil wars between Chetniks, Partisans, German and Italian forces, and the ethnic Albanians. The majority of Albanians were aligned with the Germans and Italians.

The Roma of Kosovo fared better than those in the rest of Yugoslavia. Why this is so is not particularly clear, but evidence points to a high number of Roma Partisans in Kosovo and the surrounding mountains (Crowe 2007; Guy 2001; Kenrick 2006). It is also likely that Albanian hatred of ethnic Serbs, encouraged by old animosities, overshadowed ill will toward the Roma. The Italians were not as enthusiastic about the Nazi pogroms and often refused to enforce deportations and executions. That is not to say the Roma in Kosovo escaped Nazi persecution entirely. Germany reoccupied Kosovo in 1943 when the Italians surrendered to the allies. Himmler's infamous Skanderbeg Division, made up primarily of Albanian Muslim nationalists, was not so sympathetic.<sup>16</sup> The Division's goal was to create an ethnically pure "Albania" of Kosovo and southern Serbia. The result would be a deepening of the division between Albanians and non-Albanians. During the post-war tribunals, the Skanderberg Brigadeführer, August Schmidhuber, was found guilty of atrocities against civilians and sentenced to death - an outcome that would replay itself fifty-two years later against Serb leaders.

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<sup>16</sup> Himmler had previously recruited troops from Balkan Muslims with assistance from the Grand Mufti, Haj Amin el-Husseini. For recent work on the Arab-Nazi relationship see Herf, Jeffrey. 2009. *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*. New Haven, Conn; London.

Because records of mass murders are largely non-existent or were destroyed, the number of Roma victims is not known. It is estimated that two-thirds of Yugoslav Roma were exterminated during World War II. The Romani Holocaust, or *O Baro Porrajmos* (The Great Devouring) as it is called in Romany, is the Forgotten Holocaust. The lack of census data on Roma before the war, the random rampages of the *Einsatzgruppen*, and the absence of death records ensure no researcher can claim accurate numbers of Romani deaths, despite their many attempts to escalate and to minimize the toll. All of the conditions above allow revisionists to continue to write out the suffering of the Roma or group them as “other” victims of the Holocaust. All too often the debate becomes one of who suffered more when it should be enough that suffering existed. At the 1987 conference of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, Erika Thurner emphasized the consequences of historical neglect of the *Porrajmos*:

Ignorance as to the fate of the Sinti and Roma in the Third Reich has made historical reconstruction especially difficult. It has led to further discrimination against Gypsies, and to the refusal to recognize their right to restitution of both a material and ideal nature. (7)

Romani scholars have a responsibility to the memory and to the present relevance of the *Porrajmos*. Therefore they must, at every opportunity, work to correct history in order to shed light on the present.

## The Golden Man

“One happy day, a new (true) Yugoslav constitution may open with the following words: In our country all memories are equal.”

*Bogdan Bogdanović*

Unlike other countries that were liberated by Allied powers, Yugoslavia rid itself of the Axis. Yugoslavia's self-liberation excluded the country from Stalin's collection of vassal states. The pride of this self-liberation laid the foundation for a new Yugoslavia built upon a fierce *Yugoslav* nationalism. As commander of the victorious Partisan army and leader of the Communist Party, Josep Broz Tito became the *de facto* leader of the new Yugoslavia. He constituted the country as a federal republic consisting of six constituent republics, largely divided along ethnic lines: Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenia. Kosovo and Vojvodina, highly populated with non-Slavs, were granted autonomous provincial status. Under the control of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), autonomy was more temporary appeasement than permanent practice.

So popular was Tito's political and socio-economic success that Soviet leaders held him up as a role model for others to follow. In fact, the Cominform, the official organization of the international Communist movement, was initially seated in Belgrade. However, in the spring of 1948, Tito, a leader rather than a follower, made a bold move that surprised Stalin and the West. After effectively neutralizing the minority of cominformists within the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), Tito stood up to Stalin and withdrew from the Eastern Bloc. The separation from Stalin is more complicated

than time allows for this paper, but most relevant was the unfettered development of a new form of socialism that would come to be called Titoism.

Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform was made official on June 28, 1948, St. Vitus, a day that is repeatedly etched in Yugoslav nationalism.<sup>17</sup> Djilas would recall:

. . .its promulgation on the anniversary of the traffic battle in 1389 as Kosovo, which had inaugurated five centuries of Turkish rule over the Serbian people, cut into the minds and hearts of all Serbs. Though neither religious nor mystical, we noted with a certain relish almost, the coincidence in dates between ancient calamities and living threats and onslaughts (1985:201).

Stalin threatened Tito with invasion, made various attempts at internal coups, instigated border clashes, and flooded Yugoslavia with propaganda. He reportedly told Khrushchev, "I will shake my little finger and there will be no more Tito. He will fall" (1976:62). Though his tactics proved useless, Stalin would spend the remaining five years of his life purging Titoism in areas under his control, including popular Communist leaders such as Hungarian László Rajk, Bulgarian Traycho Kostov, and Czech Rudolf Slánský. Tito never waived in his boldness, sending a note to Stalin that read: "Stop sending people to kill me. We've already captured five of them, one of them with a bomb and another with a rifle (...) If you don't stop sending killers, I'll send one to Moscow, and I won't have to send a second" (Sebag Montefiore 2003:647).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> It was the day of the 1389 famous Battle of Kosovo; the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand; the constitutional founding of the first Yugoslavia; the day of Milošević's infamous battle speech; and, ironically, also the date Milošević was sent to The Hague on charges of war crimes.

<sup>18</sup> The note was allegedly found hidden in a newspaper in Stalin's desk after his death, along with a letter from Lenin demanding an apology for Stalin's rudeness to his wife and the infamous Bukharin final plea. Recent scholars question the legitimacy of these letters, citing they are anti-communist revisionist fabrications. See (Herf 2009)

Tito turned to the West. Quick to cooperate with any country that rejected Stalinism and hopeful of the Yugoslav experiment, the West granted Tito trade agreements, treaties, and poured loans and grants into Yugoslavia's growing economy. By 1955, the United States had given \$598.5 million in economic aid and \$588.5 million in military aid to Yugoslavia (Campbell and Council on Foreign Relations. 1967:29). After Stalin's death, Khrushchev's conciliatory and apologetic gestures toward Tito led to the signing of the Belgrade and Moscow Declarations and an eventual rapprochement between the two states and the differing Communist Parties. The Soviet Union would no longer dictate Marxist interpretation to other socialist countries. Tito, a "convinced Marxist but no student or servant of doctrine" (Campbell 1980:1055), reinterpreted Marx-Leninsim in a most unique way by combining it with democratic capitalism. Politically savvy and charismatic, Tito played the game well, winning the adoration of the West. A well-liked communist, Tito stood high on the world stage, an image larger than his little country warranted, with one foot in the West and the other in the Bloc. It was a balance he would maintain well throughout the Cold War.



Photo 5: Tito with Churchill

It would be a mistake to say that nationalism did not exist under Tito in Yugoslavia. Although certainly more subtle than the nationalism that would dominate

the 1990's, Tito meticulously orchestrated the creation of the *Yugoslav* national consciousness in his campaign of *Bratstvo i Jedinstvo*, Brotherhood and Unity. A modern nation cannot exist without national consciousness that manifests itself in an awareness of group membership and that membership is inherently valuable (Hroch 2000:12). From the beginning, Tito rallied his people first around the recent memory of the common goal of liberation, and second around a Marxist socialist liberation from oppression. With impressive charisma and persuasion, Tito emphasized the urgency of Yugoslav unity during a speech held at the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences, "Concerning the National Question and Social Patriotism" in 1948:

The reason why we were able to settle the nationalities question so thoroughly is to be found in the fact that it had begun to be settled in a revolutionary way in the course of the Liberation War, in which all the nationalities in the country participated, in which every national group made its contribution to the general effort of liberation from the occupier according to its capabilities. (1963:99)

Tito's partisans had truly been the only non-segregated, multiethnic military force during World War II. This common history, a valiant battle, served as the prologue to a new multiethnic, liberated Yugoslavia. Indeed, the role of Tito's partisans as liberators continues to dominate the collective memory as an historical point of reference and legitimacy of the communist era. Ludanyi (1979) labeled the pervasion of the partisan legacy the "Partisan Myth," and argued it was designed with the purposes of ensuring the leading role of the Communists and to self-define the nationalities of Yugoslavia according to a common destiny (238). The identity of Yugoslavs as well as the basis for its leadership was entirely dependent upon *national* history, legacy and myth. Simply put, the people of Yugoslavia, shell-shocked and seeking a savior believed everything and forgot everything.



Tito argued that a socialist patriotism is international and therefore cannot be construed as nationalism. When confronted with the nationalist question, Tito responded, "We are nationalists to the exact degree necessary to develop a healthy socialist patriotism among our people, and socialist patriotism is in its essence internationalism" (1963:105). "Patriotism" required assurance that no ethnic group had more power than another. Tito firmly placed the burden of past oppression upon the "great-Serb capitalist clique" of old Yugoslavia. It was in line with weakening that clique and former Serbian power (and Albanian concessions) that Tito initially separated Kosovo and Vojvodina from "Serbia proper," granting them each autonomy, a situation that would increasingly frustrate and anger Serbs. After the July 1966 removal of Aleksandar Ranković, a top Serbian leader, vice-president of Yugoslavia and head of state intelligence, the proposition that Tito's regime was "purposely anti- Serbian grew more tenable" (Miller 2000:272).<sup>19</sup> The sacrifice of Serbian territories in the name of equality, as well as the purging of Serb officials, placed Yugoslavia on a fault line that would eventually contribute to the break up Tito's legacy. Indeed, methods of ethnofederalism inevitably lead to partition and a highly politicized ethnic nationalism. At the collapse of communism, the three existing ethnofederalized systems – Yugoslavia, Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia – broke apart, all along ethnic lines.

Unlike other communist countries, Tito did not take an assimilationist approach to deal with the various ethnicities of Yugoslavia. While other eastern European countries, Hungary for example, applied the assimilationist formula of "(Gypsy) + (Socialist Wage-labor) + (Housing) = (Hungarian Worker) + (Gypsy Folklore)" (Stewart

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<sup>19</sup> For an analysis of the significance of Ranković's dismissal see Voyles. 1966. "The removal of Rankovic; an early interpretation of the July Yugoslav Party plenum." RAND Corporation.

1990), the Yugoslav “key” ensured proportionate representation of minorities and national groups at all levels of the government. Minorities had the right to official use of their own language, including in educational institutions, and the right to establish and maintain their own cultural practices and associations. State aid was made available for the creation and distribution of minority newspapers, publication of books, maintenance of theaters, libraries, folklore groups, and choirs (Shoup 1963:74). Not only was Yugoslavia leading other socialist countries in terms of economic growth, living standards, consumer goods, and personal freedoms, it also lacked the social problems of race and gender that heated the West. As Richard West so succinctly puts it, “there was socialism but not much sociology in Yugoslavia” (1995:338).

According to the census, “brotherhood and unity” had an impact on self-identification as a “Yugoslav.” Between the 1971 and 1981 censuses in Yugoslavia, the number of individuals who declared Yugoslav identity increased from 273,077 to 1,219,024 (Burg and Berbaum 1989:535). Those identifying as “Romi/Gypsies” more than doubled. There is little doubt that Roma still counted themselves among the Yugoslavs as well as other ethnic identities, but for the first time in their very long history Roma officially identified themselves as Roma and held all the rights of full citizenship.

Table 4: Estimated 1981 Population Changes

Estimated 1981 Population Deficits and Surpluses, by Group					
Group	A 1971 Population	B Projected Natural Increment 1971-80	C 1981 Population	D 1981 Deficit or Surplus (C minus [A + B])	E D as % of (A + B)
Montenegrins	508,843	60,070	579,043	10,110	1.8
Croats	4,526,782	262,126	4,428,043	-360,865	-7.5
Macedonians	1,194,784	139,490	1,341,598	7,324	.5
Muslims	1,729,932	316,001	1,999,890	-49,043	-2.4
Slovenes	1,678,032	90,989	1,753,571	-15,450	-.9
Serbs	8,143,246	539,865	8,140,507	-537,126	-6.2
Albanians	1,309,523	441,780	1,730,878	-20,426	-1.2
Bulgarians	58,627	2,512	36,189	-24,950	-40.8
Hungarians	477,374	-7,568	426,867	-72,939	-15.5
Romanians	58,570	-1,354	54,955	-2,261	-4.0
Romi/Gypsies	78,485	25,289	168,197	64,423	62.1
Slovaks	83,656	1,209	80,334	-4,531	-5.3
Turks	127,920	16,787	101,291	-43,416	-30.0
"Yugoslavs"	273,077	55,227	1,219,024	890,720	271.3
Total	20,522,972	1,916,606	22,427,585	-11,933	-.1

Source: Ruza Petrovic, "The National Composition of the Population," *Yugoslav Survey* 24, no. 3 (August 1983), Tbl. 3, p. 26; *Statisticki Bilten*, no. 1295, p. 8.

### The Roma Remember

Several themes emerged out of interviews with Roma, but one sentiment was unmistakably present: Roma had a better quality of life under Tito. Every Roma interviewed by various sources held an unwavering and emotional sense of Titoist nostalgia. Interviewees spoke of improvement of life, the right to education, the right to employment, and sincere admiration for Tito. Their sense of freedom was frequently mentioned and measured in the very basic ability to walk along the streets without harassment.

Djemalj Kajtazi\* was born in 1922 in Priština. Djemalj grew up in a small shack made of mud and tree branches. It wasn't until Tito came, Djemalj recalled, "and freed Yugoslavia did "poor Roma start to live better." When Tito was in power, Djemalj

worked in the hospital as a cleaner and porter. He stated that he never had any problems with “Serbs or anyone else all the time while Tito was in power.” He worked and the money that he earned had value. Everyone worked, Djemalj reminisced, “not like now. I am not useful for anything; I can’t work now.”

Nadzija Gradina\* also pointed out the value of money in Tito’s time, “When Tito came to power, we could buy a lot of things that the small amount of money. Money was worth a lot then, and you could buy what you wanted. We had enough money in Tito’s time.” The daughter of a blacksmith, Nadzija lived and worked the fields in harmony with the Serbs and Albanians during Tito’s years. Her husband held a state factory job and she remembers that his salary allowed them to live “a good life.”

“A good life.” It is a phrase spoken often by Roma who lived under Tito’s brand of communism. The good life, for the Roma, was not contingent upon fancy cars, jewels, or even homes of brick; instead, it meant electricity, radio, and bread. Miljaim Ramadani\* is an Ashkali born in Priština. He doesn’t know how old he is because his father did not register his birth, but he believes he is seventy-six. Miljaim worked in the factories for thirty years. He recalled the ease of those years: “We lived very well in Tito’s time. Roma and Ashkali had a very good life. We had electricity in Tito’s time. We can indulge ourselves and buy a television set, radio, and better things for the house. We lived better.”

Nijaz Saiti\* grew up amongst Serbs in Priština. A survivor of World War II, Nijaz joined the Communist party in 1950 and eagerly took part in voluntary work gangs. He lamented how it has been forgotten that Roma helped to rebuild the country after World War II. Later he worked as a house painter for the army and then for the Angropromet

supermarket. Nijaz reflected on life under Tito: “I lived well too when Tito was in charge of this country. I was on many commissions. I lived well and I had a good salary. We had everything.” Najiz added a message to young Roma to go to school despite the difficulty Roma face in the educational system and the violence from other students. Again, he turns to the past: “Everyone who wanted could find a job or go to school. Life was better then. We had freedom; nobody touched us.”

Ahmet Mehmeti\* echoed Najiz’s comments about availability of work: “Everybody who wanted to work could find a job. There were as many jobs as you wanted, as your heart wanted. Nobody asked you about your education you apply for a job then. I have 26 years of work service because I wanted to work.” Ahmet held that harmony existed among all when Marshall Tito was alive. After Tito’s death, friendships disappeared, “there is a very big cold between people,” and it is “like a family without a head of household.” He recalled that his family got along well with both Serbs and Albanians, but “that good time has passed.”

For many Roma interviewed, it was not only harmony between ethnicities in Kosovo that made their lives easier, but also mutual respect. Respect seems to have significant value in how Roma refer to their Serb or Albanian neighbors in the past. They often say that it did not matter that they were “Gypsies” when they had respect. Bajram Demiri\*, for example, recalls: “In ex-Yugoslavia we were respected by Serbs and Albanians. We were gypsies but it didn’t matter; they wanted us because we were brushing their shoes then. They gave us what to eat because they said we roam over not bothering anyone, that we were not making any problem for anyone.” Sabedin Musliu\*\*, a Muslim Roma, reflected on how peaceful interethnic relations were,

“Everybody lived together then- Albanians, Turks, Ashkalija and Roma. It was very peaceful; in that time Tito ruled us, and everything was okay.”



Photo 6: Sabedin Musliu

*Courtesy of Balkan Project*

Riza Dukich\* is Kovachi Roma<sup>20</sup> from the village of Dobrotina. Riza voluntarily joined the Partisans in 1942, where he served “marching for Tito” until 1947. Riza lost many of his friends on the front. He speaks fondly of respect and of freedom, another theme woven throughout Roma interviews:

Roma started to live a little bit better when freedom came. Roma started to work in state-owned factories. Roma had to eat. Children were going to schools, and life started to be better for Roma. Tito made all that possible for Roma. For the first time, we had salaries; we could build better houses; we were getting credits and we were filling our houses with furniture. It was much better for us then. I work in a factory. There were no problems with anyone. No one told you that you

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<sup>20</sup> Kovachi Roma are blacksmiths.

were Rom. Nobody underestimated you. It was respect between people, and poor people started to climb up the ladder. It wasn't like before.

Though there is a tendency of politicians to paint Roma as wanderers, eastern European Roma are typically not those one may imagine in a "gypsy wagon" roaming the countryside. The nomadic myth of Roma is at once symbolic of a freedom many wish to have, yet demonized as irresponsible and selfishly bohemian. In other words, to long for such freedom is perfectly acceptable, to act upon it, however, is criminal. Indeed, throughout all of Europe legislation has existed for hundreds of years that criminalizes and/or ghettoizes Roma that do caravan. The problem then occurs that when Roma do travel, nomadic or not, they are seen as criminals particularly as they travel as a rather large family.

Zufa Shalja\* talks often of freedom during her interview. Originally from Peč, Zufa lived four years in a cave during World War II, hiding from the Germans. Today she sells goods that cure children of their fears and spells. She says she cannot reveal the secret of how she cures them because someone taught her. She has ten children and "fifty or sixty grandchildren." She misses the freedom to travel she once had:

We lived well in Tito's time. We were rich: we had it all. And nobody bothered us. We could sleep even under the open sky. I slipped out with my family. We were free to sleep out. I traveled a lot to Italy, and we didn't have a room to sleep in, we slept under a bridge. We were big group. We were about 20, and nobody bothered us. But today we can't go anywhere.

The daughter of Partisans, Ljubica Stankovich\* spent three months of her childhood interred in the Sajmište concentration camp during World War II. Naturally, the first sentiment she recalls having after the war was of freedom. She had very little in her childhood, much under Tito, and now has returned to a loss of freedom – "You could

move freely. You could sleep on the street and nobody would touch you. And now, you can't even walk freely on the street."

Radmila Djordjevic\* comes from a family of musicians. The Germans executed her father and brother. She remembers well bodies hanging in the square during the war. On the first day of liberation, she recalls at once feeling freedom. Like Ljubica, Radmill remembers she could walk outside and no one would touch her. "We could even sleep out then, on the benches, anywhere we wanted. Nobody dared to touch us then. Nobody was touching anybody then. That feeling was so good; I felt joy inside my soul, as if I was reborn."

Tito's death hit the Roma especially hard. To Roma who had survived the horrors of fascism, Tito had brought freedom and prosperity. For all Roma, life under Tito offered education, employment, freedom to travel, and respect – even for "Gypsies." The words of Radmila Djordjevic\* express well the general sentiment of many Roma upon Tito's death and the years that followed:

The day Tito died the whole world was crying. We lost something very important in the world. We haven't had such freedom since. Everything was slowly ruined until we came to the minimum . . . All was lost with Tito.

When Tito died, the Romani place would be ineluctably returned to a position that was little better than that during the bloody years of Hitler and the fascist gangs that roamed and hunted the villages of Yugoslavia. Tito took with him the only stability the Romani people had ever known.



## Divide and Conquer

*Balkanize* /ˌbɒlkəˈnɪz/

verb [ trans. ]

1. to divide (a country, territory, etc.) into small, quarrelsome, ineffectual states.

2. to divide (groups, areas, etc.) into contending and usually ineffectual factions: *a movement to balkanize minority voters.*

Collins English Dictionary

The Balkans was never the powder-keg but just one of a number of devices which might have acted as detonator. The powder-keg was Europe itself.

Misha Glenny (1999)

The ethnic wars that would soon rage across the country and splinter her borders should have come as no surprise to anyone that was paying attention. Indeed, as the nation mourned the loss of her grandfather politicians and diplomats gathered at his funeral to discuss and debate her future. Assuming that Tito had held together Yugoslavia's multi-ethnic "brotherhood and unity," predictions of civil war and the demise of Yugoslavia dominated the primary talking points at the leader's funeral. Why would world leaders, so early on, predict the dissolution of Yugoslavia? More importantly, *how* could they predict civil war in a country that was, at that time, a socioeconomically sound model federation? Did Tito's death indeed unfreeze "hoary national sentiments" as Liebich (1998) asserted, or were other forces at work?

In this section I intend to consider the questions above in order to explore the contributing factors that turned *Bratstvo i Jedinstvo* into a virulent nationalism, made enemies of neighbors, and left the Roma deeply despised by all. I will argue that the flames of nationalism were fueled by external opportunism in a country made vulnerable by regime change. Further, it was not the "ancient hatreds" of Yugoslavs, particularly

the Albanians and Serbs, that incited violence, but racist balkanophobia, greed, and imperialism of the West. I will also contend that the subsequent and tragic situation of the Roma was fostered by the neglect of international organizations and a history that essentially morally anaesthetized the people of Kosovo and government agencies to their plight. I will demonstrate how rising nationalist ideologies, manipulated by external forces, adhere to the process of nation-building and nationalism according to the theory triangulation presented earlier in Table 1.

Though the collapse of authoritarian rule has the potential to render states particularly prone to violence, it would be a simplistic and weak explanation to blame the ethnic violence of Kosovo (and Yugoslavia in general) on the death of Tito.<sup>21</sup> To be sure, “ancient hatreds” did exist in the region, but the West played a major role in fueling their fires. In order to shed light on the nationalism and violence that dominated the period after Tito’s death, it is important to consider how the western view of the Balkans has historically been seeped in racial stereotypes. Andrej Grubačić, a libertarian socialist deeply inspired by the work of Staughton Lynd and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, demonstrates throughout his numerous essays on the demise of Yugoslavia that Western views of the Balkans are racist at their very core, manifested through imperialist opportunism and a Western “othering” of the Balkan people. Grubačić recalls the view of Western commentators, particularly one British journalist:

The ferocity of the Balkan peoples has at times been so primitive that anthropologists have likened them to the Amazon’s Yanamamo, one of the world’s most savage and primitive tribes. Up until the turn of the present century, when the rest of Europe was concerned as much with social etiquette as with social reform, there were still reports from the Balkans of decapitated enemy

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<sup>21</sup> For support of this statement see the work of Hodson, Sekulić, and Massey (1994); Cohen (1995); Denitch (1994); Silber and Little (1996); and Woodward (1995).

heads presented as trophies on silver plates at victory dinners. Nor was it unknown for the winners to eat the loser's heart and liver . . . The history books show it as a land of murder and revenge before the Turks arrived and long after they departed (2007b:124).

The term “Balkan,” Turkish for a “chain of wooded mountains,” first referred to the mountain chain that runs from Bulgaria to the Black sea and divided the area into smaller regions. The mountain chain acted as a geographical barrier that divided various ethnic groups and shaped a cultural landscape that attached social groups to the territorial divisions and created the symbolic notion of a nation. The landscape and the accompanying concept of nation became linked to a national history, thus embodying “national spirit” and “national characteristics,” such as honesty, sobriety, modesty, strength, love of freedom, solidarity, and steadfastness that developed as a result of a harsh mountain life (Brunnbauer and Pichler 2002:79).

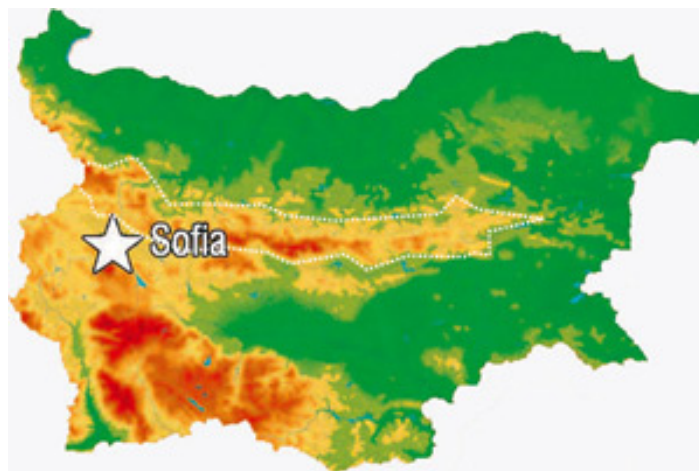


Figure 3: The Balkan Mountain Range

By the late nineteenth century, Balkan came to signify the geographical territories under past or continuing Ottoman control. Geographically within Europe, but culturally outside of Europe, the Balkans were the “internal other” of Europe. That which is not

Europe, is not civilized. Indeed, by the twentieth century, Balkan was far from a geographical term, but a pejorative inextricably linked to the process of modernization within a number of struggling nation-states. The struggle of those nation-states to modernize accompanied by excessive nationalism within their borders twisted the term “Balkan” into a “symbol for the aggressive, intolerant, barbarian, semi-developed, semi-civilized, and semi-oriental” (Todorova 2009:194). A perfect example is the image and accompanying description below, found on the first page of American journalist John Reed’s coverage of war in Eastern Europe (1916).



HALF-SAVAGE GIANTS DRESSED IN THE ANCIENT PANOPLY OF THAT CURIOUS  
SLAVIC PEOPLE WHOSE MAIN BUSINESS IS WAR.

Photo 7: Balkan Stereotype by John Reed

In her powerful and influential book, *Imagining the Balkans*, Maria Todorova (2009) challenges the Saidian concept of Orientalism<sup>22</sup>, with her own *Balkanism*. Todorova marks the difference between the two, apart from the obvious geographical concreteness, as an “imputed opposition” (Orientalism) and an “imputed ambiguity” (balkanism) (17-18) that is neither liminal nor marginal, but lowermost – “the shadow, the structurally despised alter-ego” (Schwartz-Salant and Steins 1991:40-41). The Balkans lacked the European prerequisite for modernization and democratization: “the ideal political order of one nation, speaking one language, ruled by one state, within one bounded territory” (Irvine and Gal 1999:63). The Balkans, simply put, were too ethnically heterogeneous for Europe. As Lindstrom and Razsa argue, Europe may be afraid to recognize how the violent origin of its own system of nation-states is reflected in recent Yugoslav wars, “the result of several centuries of social engineering – ethnic and religious war and expulsions accompanying the process of centralization – triggered by a fundamental hostility to heterogeneity, which in the end brought about relatively homogeneous politics that ‘organically’ grew into the modern nation-states” (Lindstrom and Razsa 1999:15). Slavoj Žižek’s work enforces not only the myth of ancient hatreds among Yugoslavs, but also the way in which Yugoslavia mirrors Europe’s “repressed reverse:”

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<sup>22</sup> Many Balkan scholars have applied Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), the Western othering of the Orient, to the relationship between Europe and the Balkans. For discourses of the Balkans and Orientalism, see Vesna Goldsworthy (1998), Andrew Hammond (2006), and Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden (1992).

The fantasy which organized the perception of ex-Yugoslavia is that of 'Balkan' as the other of the West: the place of savage ethnic conflicts long since overcome by civilized Europe; a place where nothing is forgotten and nothing is learned, where old traumas are replayed again and again; where the symbolic link is simultaneously devalued (dozens of cease-fires are broken) and overvalued (primitive warrior notions of honor and pride)... behind all this lurked the primordial trauma of Sarajevo, of the Balkans as the gunpowder threatening to set the whole of Europe alight. . . . Far from being the Other of Europe, ex-Yugoslavia was, rather, Europe itself in its own repressed reverse. (Žižek 1994:212)

Othering is closely related to guilt alleviation. As Brummett (2008) puts it, othering “alleviates imperialist guilt by casting the targeted country or group of people as savage and in need of Western influence” (78). Western influence upon the others is necessary because they must be saved from themselves, but it also serves well to keep the dominant group in power. So destructive is this notion of “other” as tied to the territory of Europe that Bruce Baum argues it “was itself one of the most important antecedents of the modern “race” concept (2006:25).

Grubačić terms the phenomenon of a whole complex of elite (racist) reactions as “‘political balkanophobia’: an elite fear of autonomous spaces” (2007c:12071). The crucial component of balkanophobia is *debalkanization*, or Eurocentric universalism.

The ideological balkanophobic response is:

a process of “othering” of the Balkans, in the struggle to “break the heavy mute spell of wilderness,” where the Balkans had become a symbol of everything mysterious and threatening in European culture. The Balkans became a “wild” Europe, an entangling, intricate labyrinth inhabited by the creatures of sin and insolent nations incapable of governing themselves: a place in the heart of European darkness where an evil thought will carry a good man out of the light; a place outside, if on the doorstep, where people need to be evangelized in the name of civilizing missions, human rights and civil society. (Grubačić 2007c:12087).

According to Grubačić, the “deep-seated cultural derision” of the Balkan people is the crucial aspect of “balkanization from above,” a practice that has been “remarkably consistent in history, of breaking Balkan interethnic solidarity and regional socio-cultural identity; a process of violently incorporating the region into the system of nation-states and capitalist world-economy; and contemporary imposition of neoliberal colonialism” (2007a:42-43).

Racial degradation and “balkanization from above” by the West had a unifying effect on her people, spurring nationalistic ideologies and ethnic divisions. Political Scientist Crawford Young’s (2002) study on identity politics and civil violence in Africa illustrates that cultural pluralism is not necessarily a prime determinant of civil violence. However, the coupling of armed conflict and violence compels identity to become a major component of patterns of confrontation, even when diverse communal determinants are at play (540). Further, where ethnicity is not the cause of disorder, violence predictably embodies discourses of difference, specifically because “ethnicity armed escalates mutual fears, anxieties, and insecurities; communally targeted violence inscribes memories of ineffable loss of kin and fellow ethnics, and inspires dreams of vengeance” (556).

Memory and vengeance were no doubt at the forefront of violence in Kosovo, but, as Young’s study shows, this does not necessarily imply they were the root cause. Years, indeed centuries of racial stereotyping and pressure to “Europeanize,” that is to form homogenous nation states that conformed to European ideals, propelled Yugoslavs, particularly Serbs, to their own strong ideals of self-preservation. To Serbs, the threat to evolve into the folds of Europe or else became poignantly clear when the



West accepted Slovenia and Croatia's independence. Support for Croatia and Tudjman, an icon of democracy over communism, grew in the West. In early 2000, Secretary of State Madeline Albright commended "Croatia's rapid move into Europe" while expressing hope that the "Croatian example" will "make the Serbs think hard" (Erlinger February 3, 2000).

The political redrawing of the borders of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina left a third of Serbs outside their republic (Mandić 2007:78). Restrictive and selective sanctions served to further isolate the Serbs, while the West's support and encouragement of that isolation further frustrated them. However, these events also united Serbs around rising nationalistic ideologies for a single Serbian state with Milošević at the helm. In a survey of post-breakup Yugoslav literature, Danilo Mandić noted a trend that perpetuated Serb nationalism as "an anomaly and exception in its unusual aggressiveness, irrationality, intolerance, aversion to multiculturalism, propensity for violence, expansionist tendency or general 'backwardness'" (Mandić 2007:16). For example, Branimir Anzulović (1999) in *Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide* differentiates Serb nationalism from that of other Slavic people by its "genocidal" nature. This type of approach, coupled with the Western media's play on atavistic hatreds in the region, not only neglected the *reactive* nature of Serb nationalism and the response (or, in most cases, nonresponse) of ordinary citizens<sup>23</sup>, but diverted all culpability to one actor – communist leader Slobodan Milošević, dubbed "the butcher of the Balkans" by the West.

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<sup>23</sup> Studies of Serbia and Croatia during the Yugoslav conflicts of 1991–5 found that most people were preoccupied with mundane bread-and-butter issues rather than with fratricidal hatred (Gordy 1999; Gagnon 2004).

The first hint of serious trouble in Kosovo came on March 1981 when Albanian university students in Kosovo revolted against the poor quality of food in their canteen. Though their grievance seemed benign, it was a catalyst for revolts across Kosovo that soon took on a political nature as a national revival for Kosovo's status as its own republic. Despite the fact that Kosovo had become overwhelmingly Albanian, Kosovo's place in Serbian mythology maintained the region as the cradle of Serb history and nationalism. Accordingly, revolts were repeatedly squashed by Serb led police and military. It is at this point, not in ancient history, that nationalism in Kosovo entered Phase A, Conscious Nationalism, and the point at which the Roma, being neither Serb nor Albanian, became outsiders in the nationalist ideology.

#### **Phase A – Conscious Nationalism**

A conscious development of shared memory and culture of a particular territory constitutes Phase A of nation-building according to the theory triangulation model. Phase A takes place in territory under direct rule with sufficient cultural homogeneity to foster territorial solidarity (Hechter 2000). According to the 1981 census, Kosovo's Albanians made up 77.42% of the population. In 1991, the Albanians, Muslims and some Roma boycotted the census (a practice that continues today), under the claim made by Rugova that the census underestimated their true numbers.<sup>24</sup> However, Yugoslav statistical projections set the Albanian population at 81.6%.

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<sup>24</sup> In an interesting replay of history, Albanians in Macedonia are boycotting the 2011 census for the same reasons.

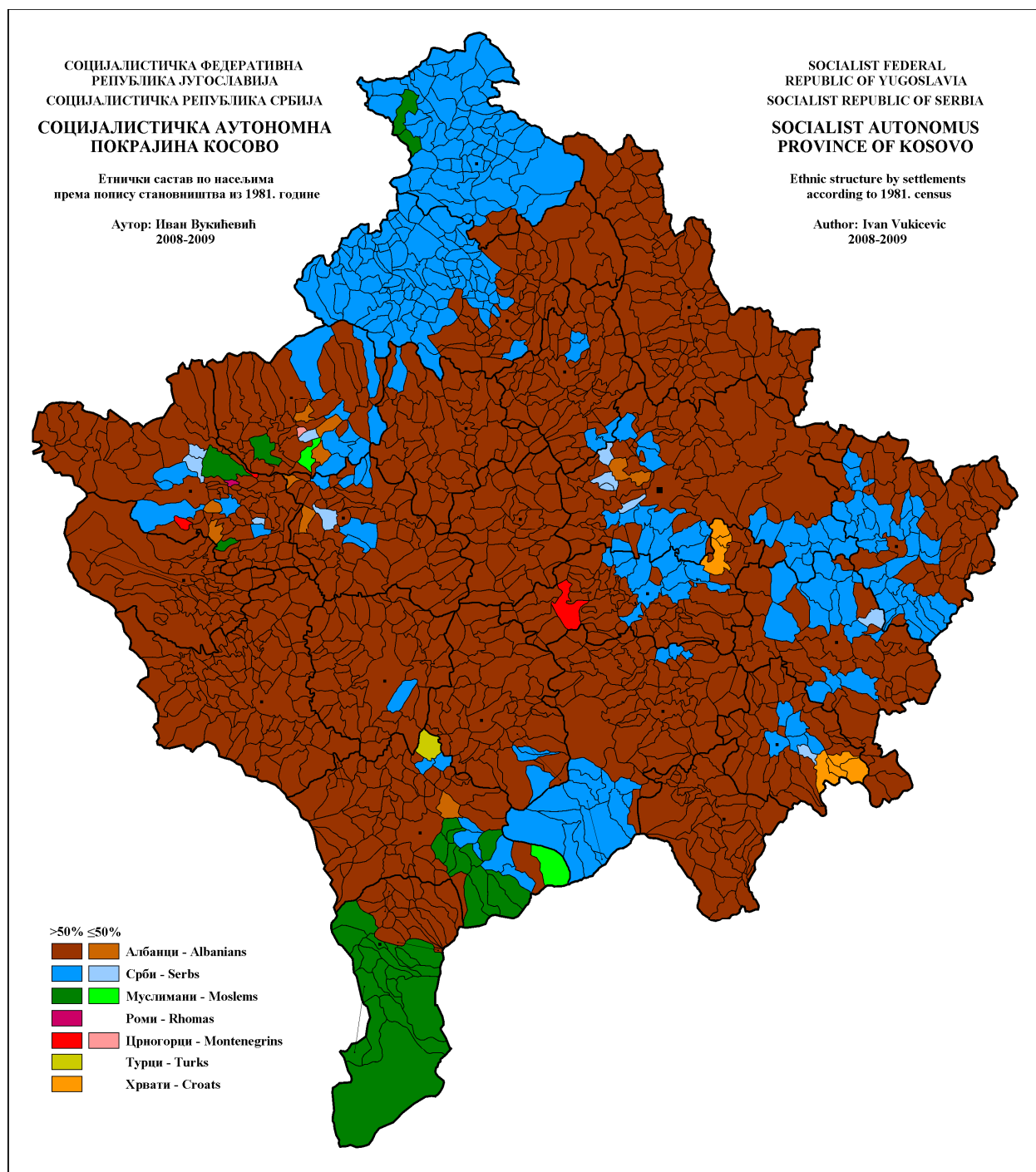


Figure 4: Kosovo Demographics 1981

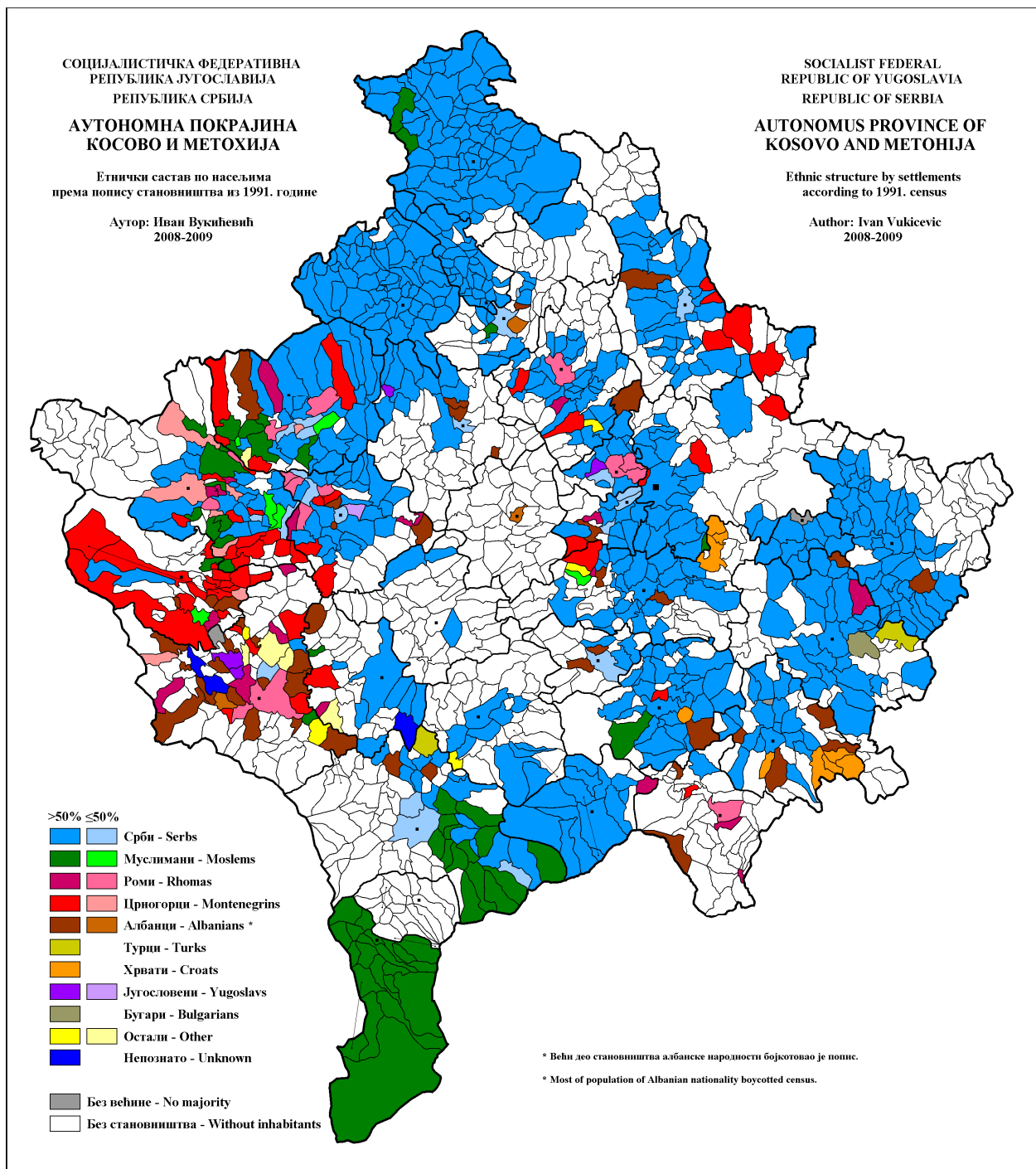


Figure 5: Kosovo Demographics 1991 (est)

Census data show there was indeed “sufficient cultural homogeneity” of Albanians in Kosovo to render Kosovo an Albanian majority. For Albanians the claim to Kosovo was,

and always has been, rooted in ethnicity. The census numbers laid the “basis for the subsequent formation of a national identity” (Hroch 1996).

	<b>Albanian</b>	<b>Serbian</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>Total</b>
1948	498,242	199,961	29,617	727,820
	68.46%	27.47%	4.07%	
1953	524,559	221,212	62,130	80,7901
	64.93%	27.38%	7.69%	
1961	646,148	264,604	52,779	963,531
	67.06%	27.46%	5.48%	
1971	916,168	259,819	67,706	1,243,693
	73.67%	20.89%	5.44%	
1981	1,226,736	236,525	121,179	1,584,440
	77.42%	14.93%	7.65%	

Table 5: Population of Albanians and Serbs 1948-1981

Since the end of World War II the Albanian population in Kosovo increased from 68% of the total population in 1948 to 77% in 1981. In a 2003 article for the online independent Balkan analysis website *Serbianna*, M. Bozinovich (2003) provided an in-depth statistical analysis of Kosovo’s growing Albanian population. An economist, mathematician and political scientist, Bozinovich statistically challenged the popular arguments put forth by the West and the Albanians for the population increase: voluntary Serb emigration and increasing Albanian birth rates. Bozinovich found the following compelling evidence:

1. Kosovo’s Albanian homogenization is .47% per year - precisely the difference between Albanian growth rate and the growth rate of the total population. In other words, the total population is missing 0.47% annually, which is precisely the rate at which Albanian population share has been increasing. The implication is that

the homogenization may not be due to disproportionately larger birth rate of the Albanians against others but rather due to a declining population of non-Albanians.

2. Economic incentives as sole reasons for migration of Kosovo Serbs strikes as fundamentally unsound on two levels. First, while migratory economic incentives exert uniformly upon all populations, the Albanian majority, nevertheless, maintained its exponential growth rate while Serbs were forced into a parabolic decline. On the second level, there exists no population model where economic incentives are a sole cause for an overall population decline.

Ironically, Bozinovich's parabolic growth equation, shown below, suggested that Kosovo Serb population should have reached zero 58.96 years from 1948, positing that Serbs would be exterminated from Kosovo by November 16, 2006.

a	-173.3
b	6869.25
c	1975.764
r	0.98031
dy = -346.6X + 6869.25	

Table 6: Kosovo Serb Parabolic Growth

The Statistical Office of Kosovo reported Serb population at 5.3% in 2006, the majority of which had been pushed into ethnic enclaves in northern Kosovo, an area still rife with violence and political tension.

It was also during this period that the division of Roma into Serb speaking Roma and Albanian speaking Ashkali and Egyptians solidified (Marushiakova and Popov 2001a). Many Serb speaking Roma fled to northern Kosovo and into Serbia proper.

Most of the Ashkali continued to live alongside their Albanian neighbors and registered as Albanians. Albanians in Kosovo have historically put pressure on the Roma to Albanize in order to increase their numbers. Salja Bajrush\*, a Rom born in Kosovo, explains that his name is Albanian, although he is Rom: "They even gave us their names and we were talking their language. And we didn't have the right to register ourselves as Roma; we had to register as Albanians. We had to do that . . . But I am not Albanian. I am Rom."

In 1991, the Egyptian activists upset the process of Albanizing Roma by persuading Yugoslav authorities to include the Egyptian identity on the census. 3,307 people, 0.2 % declared themselves as Egyptians in 1991 (Friedman 1993:197), an amount disputed by Egyptian activists, prompting petitions and media attention. Yugoslav headlines ranged from seriousness to satire, running captions such as: "Egyptians on the Territory of Yugoslavia", "The Egyptsis are no Longer Roma", "The Egyptians are in the Census", "They are no Longer Albanians", "Egyptsis - Egyptians from Ohrid and Struga", "Neither Albanians nor Roma", "Where are We, the Egyptians", "What is happening to the Egyptsis", "Egyptians - a New Nationality", "Heirs of the Sun God", "Ohrid is Full of Pharaohs" (Marushiakova and Popov 2001b; Zemon 1996). The German magazine *Der Spiegel* reported that Yugoslav President Milosević decided to recognize Egyptians as a distinct population group in advance of the forthcoming elections: "The Serbian leader suddenly claims that the Albanian majority in Yugoslavia are in reality Egyptians . . . The chief of the federal commission for the next census, Hisein Ramadani, comes closer to the truth: The hundreds of Egyptians represent at best a handful of Gypsies who have been Albanianised for a long time but suddenly do

not want to be Albanians” (*Der Spiegel* 1990, as cited in Trubeta 2005:71). Although Serbs were heading north, the Serbian government still strategically held Kosovo. It was beneficial for Roma to disassociate from the Albanians and side with the Serbs or create a new identity. It is not difficult to imagine the push-pull factors that put the Roma in a precarious position that forced them to question, negotiate or hide their own ethnicity. Nor is it difficult to understand the confusion Roma must have endured, as King and Mason (2006) explain, “Albanians controlled the private sector while Serbs controlled the public sector” (40).

While the Albanians’ nationalism was fostered through cultural homogeneity, the Serbs validated their hold on Kosovo and their rallying nationalism through history. Adhering well to Hobsbawm (1992) and Hroch’s (2000) theories of history and cultural destiny, the Serbs evoked memories of the Battle of Kosovo and cited its long history as the heart of Serbian culture and statehood. The thousands of Orthodox churches and monuments dotting the Kosovar landscape were physical testaments to Serbian historicity. Serbian history and culture is deeply embedded in the crumbling Orthodox foundations of Kosovo.

Kosovo in Serbian translates to the “field of the blackbirds.” It was upon this field, near Priština, on June 28 1389 that the Serbian Prince Lazar met Ottomon Sultan Murad in battle after refusing to submit to Turkish rule. Legend tells that God came to Lazar the night of the battle and offered the prince a choice: God could intercede on behalf of the Serbs to save the Serbian state – their earthly kingdom; or they could face the invaders alone, perish and ascend into God’s heavenly kingdom with the promise that the Serbian state would one day be resurrected. Lazar must then choose between



his earthly kingdom, or a heavenly kingdom, the latter representative of sacrifice and martyrdom of the Serbian people. Though historical facts of the battle are uncertain, both leaders and the majority of their men lost their lives in a battle that essentially ended in a tie. Lazar's remains lie perfectly preserved at Ravanica Monastery in Serbia, his coffin opened on Sundays for the devout to pay their respects. It is said his remains cure diseases and make miracles.

The Battle of Kosovo is deeply embedded in the Serbian national history through school history books, art, poetry, theater and movies. Most prominent is the epic poem and song, "The Downfall of the Serbian Empire" (Vuk Karadžić 1815, English translation in Noyes and Bacon 1913):

*Flying hawk, grey bird,  
out of the holy place, out of Jerusalem,  
holding a swallow, holding a bird,  
that is Elijah, holy one;  
holding no swallow, no bird,  
but writing from the Mother of God  
to the Emperor at Kosovo.  
He drops that writing on his knee,  
is speaking to the Emperor:  
"Lazar, glorious Emperor,  
which is the empire of your choice?  
Is it the empire of heaven?  
Is it the empire of the earth?  
If it is the empire of the earth,  
saddle horses and tighten girth-straps,  
and, fighting men, buckle on swords,  
attack the Turks,  
and all the Turkish army shall die.  
But if the empire of heaven*

*weave a church on Kosovo,  
build its foundations not with marble stones,  
build it with pure silk and with crimson cloth,  
take the Sacrament, marshal the men,  
they shall die,  
and you shall die among them as they die."  
And when the Emperor heard those words,  
He considered and thought,  
"King God, what shall I do, how shall I do it?  
What is the empire of my choice?  
Is it the empire of heaven?  
Is it the empire of the earth?  
And if I shall choose the empire,  
and choose the empire of the earth,  
the empire of earth is brief,  
heaven is everlasting."  
And the empire chose the empire of heaven  
Above the empire of the earth.*

After the battle Archbishop Danilo recorded the following words allegedly spoken by Lazar:

It is better to die in battle than to live in shame. Better it is for us to accept death from the sword than to offer our shoulders to the enemy. We have lived a long time for the world; in the end we seek to accept the martyr's struggle and to live forever in heaven. We call ourselves Christian soldiers, martyrs for godliness (Bideleux and Jeffries 2007).

This famous speech has been woven in the Serb narrative for centuries and was much quoted throughout the 1990's. "The martyr's struggle" has, in a very strong sense, become the cultural destiny of the Serbian people. It is, as Smith writes, "nationalism, as an ideological movement that . . . draws much of its passion, conviction and intensity from the belief in a national mission and destiny; and this belief in turn owes much to a powerful religious myth of ethnic election. Modern nationalism can be seen in part as deriving from powerful, external and pre-modern traditions, symbols, and myths which are then taken up and recast in the nationalist ideologies of national mission and destiny as these emerge in the crucible of modernization" (Smith 1999:107).

Lazar was sainted and the Serbs, emblematic of good Christians, called themselves God's chosen people, the servants of God.<sup>25</sup> The fervor with which the Serbs embraced not only their religiosity but their religious designation as servants of God, holders of Kosovo's resurrection, gave the long quest to reclaim and "avenge" Kosovo the characteristics of a holy war. The reclamation of their sacred land gave to the Serbs Hobsbawm's third criteria: a proven capacity for conquest, because "there is nothing like being an imperial people to make a population conscious of its collective existence" (Hobsbawm 1992:38).

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<sup>25</sup> For a deeply religious and poetic view of Serbian history see *Srpski Narod kao Teodul* (The Serbian People as a Servant of God) by Bishop Nikolai Velimirović of Thrice-Blessed Memory and translated by Fr. Theodore Micka and Fr. Steven Scott. All ninety-nine chapters are available online at <http://www.sv-luka.org/library/ServantOfGod.html>.

The Serbs mark Lazar's martyred sainthood on St. Vitus Day, June 28, a day intentionally shared with other key historic events. It is possible no other national history is so strongly connected with a single date (Bieber 2002:107). More importantly, the celebrations of St. Vitus day began with the peasants, a bottom up movement, as opposed to a nationalist movement pushed down from political elite. This ties in tightly with Hobsbawm's caution that students of nationalism must understand nationalism from the lives of ordinary people, that is, to take the view from below "in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people" (Hobsbawm 1992:10).

St. Vitus Day was officially recognized in 1889 at the commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle. The opening speech during this period of celebration, given by Serbia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Čedomilj Mijatović, was patriotic and emotional and serves as a symbol of Kosovo's link to Serbian history:

An inexhaustible source of national pride was discovered on Kosovo. More important than language and stronger than the Church, this pride unites all Serbs in a single nation ... The glory of the Kosovo heroes shone like a radiant star in that dark night of almost 500 years ... Our people continued the battle in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries when they tried to recover their freedom through countless uprisings. There was never a war for freedom (and when was there no war) in which the spirit of the Kosovo heroes did not participate! The new history of Serbia begins with Kosovo - a history of valiant efforts, long suffering, endless wars and unquenchable glory ... Karadjordje breathed with the breath of Kosovo, and the Obrenovici placed Kosovo in the coat of arms of their dynasty. We bless Kosovo because the memory of the Kosovo heroes upheld us, encouraged us, taught us and guided us. (Mijatović 1889)

The Roma too hold a history that is entwined with the epic of Lazar. In 1915, John Reed (1916) wrote his accounts of wartime travel through the Balkans:

Every regiment has two or three gypsies, who march with the troops, playing the Serbian fiddle or the bagpipes, and accompany the songs that are composed incessantly by the soldiers – love songs, celebrations of victory, epic chants. And all through Serbia they are the musicians of the people, travelling from one country festa to another, playing for dancing and singing. (41)

As stated earlier, it is difficult to find data on Roma in Kosovo, both historically and statistically. Their history is often a postscript in other histories of the region as in the single paragraph above found in Reed's book. Although they did not identify with a nation-state or rest their existence on myth and legend, their history in the region helps to explain where they fell between Serbian and Albanian nationalism. Stigmatized, punished and marginalized by Ottoman society, an examination of Roma in the region also offers insight into why many of them sided with the Serbs. With the domination of the Ottomans over Balkan lands, a distinct divisional line was drawn between Muslims and non-Muslims (*zimmis*), creating a sort of "moral community" (Durkheim 2006) in which non-Muslims were excluded. It was a deeply entrenched Muslim society wherein "Islam is a precondition of active political participation" (Gellner 1981:44). Most Roma and the Serbs collectively fell into the non-Muslim division. Rather than expel non-Muslim, the Ottoman Empire used them to their advantage. As Gellner (1981) explains, "Non-Islamic status can of course be a positive advantage and enhance the usefulness of a group . . . quite apart from the feature of making it liable to special taxation, the political disfranchisement of a group makes it a more attractive partner for special purposes" (44-45).

Muslim Roma, or those who had converted (and the majority did convert), were never fully trusted as such; they were seen as “part of the Empire’s establishment” (Crowe 2007). They were taxed higher than non-Roma Muslims because converted Roma, in the eyes of the Serbs, were betrayers who had essentially become Turks. From their early history in the Balkans, Roma were forced to choose a side, neither of which pulled them from the margins of society. Indeed, aside from Muslim and non-Muslim, the Turks instituted another social category reserved for Gypsies. All Gypsies paid taxes; the tax for non-Muslim Gypsies was higher than that of their Muslim counterparts. Obviously Roma who converted to Islam fared better under Turkish rule and, for a while, Roma under the Ottoman Empire fared better than their European counterparts.

During the early eighteenth century, many Roma found safe haven in Serbia as they escaped slavery and political instability in Wallachia and Moldavia. To avoid mistreatment as Turks, they began to identify themselves as Roma, more so after the Serbian insurrection of 1804-1806 (Petrović 1935). Many returned to Christianity and settled well with the Serbs, a situation that theologian Edson L. Clark (1878) found “peculiar and very different:”

In Servia, the leveling power of Turkish rule, exerted for successive ages, had the effect of elevating the Gypsies somewhat toward the social status of the other rayahs. Here, therefore, although they are still an inferior caste, and not allowed to exercise the rights and powers of citizenship, the Gypsies are perhaps less widely separated from the peasantry around them than anywhere else in Europe. They fought bravely with their Servian neighbors against the Turks, and as smiths, farriers, and dealers in live stock, have many of them earned a comfortable livelihood, and proved themselves respectable members of society. (504)

“Respectable members of society,” however came with a price that Clark fails to mention. In his 1903 dissertation, ethnologist Tihomir Gjorgjevic compiled a list of what had been done for and against the Roma in Serbia to put them “nominally on an equal footing with the rest of the inhabitants of Servia” (43). Those caught wandering were to be arrested and imprisoned. “Equal footing” of course included equal religion, thus Bishop Melentije “issued a confidential mandate ordering the Serbs to make Orthodox converts of ‘irreligious’ Gypsies. The Bishop “bestirred himself and had no less than 2222 Gypsies baptized in his diocese in 1892-95” (24).

David Crowe (2007) turns to the census data to demonstrate why the Serbian government enforced a sedentary lifestyle for the Roma. Settled Roma were more likely to move into urban areas than roam the countryside where resources were more readily available and they could ply their trades. Census data show an increase of Romani population in urban areas. Crowe (2007) points out that Roma in urban areas were more likely to speak Serbian than their native Romani or Romanian, thus strict mandates against wandering served to Serbianize the Roma. The process worked, making the Roma “loyal Serbian citizens” (211) who fought and died alongside their Serbian neighbors throughout the wars of the twentieth century.

Another sector of nationalism that often goes unrecorded in Yugoslavia is the deflection of Western nationalism upon the Balkan region. To the West, Milošević represented the last stronghold of communism in Europe; to unseat him would give the West economic influence over Yugoslavia. An example of this came in 1992 when the US State Department allowed a naturalized citizen, Milan Panić, to return to Belgrade as Prime Minister of Serbia. Milošević invited Panić hoping he would have a positive

influence on the international isolation of Yugoslavia. Though it is a violation of US law for any citizen to vote in or run for political office abroad, the US believed Panić would have a positive influence on democratic ideology. Panić was the ideal American rags-to-riches image. Born to poor parents in Belgrade, Panić defected to the West in 1956 and went on to become a pharmaceutical multimillionaire. The State Department provided Panić an ambiguous waiver allowing him not only to serve as Prime Minister but also to run against Milosević for the presidency. The plan backfired when state controlled Serb media attacked Panić as a traitor, calling him Bush's secret agent who negotiated with "Albanian separatists" in Kosovo and whose true purpose was to keep the new Yugoslavia under sanctions indefinitely (Udovički and Ridgeway 2000:117). Panić had indeed gone rogue; it cost him the election and colored him a "bad Serb." It also loosened restraints on Milosević's designs for Kosovo.

### **Phase B – Quiet Nationalism (1986-1996)**

The transition from a conscious nationalism to mass movements of nationalism is not instantaneous. The ideologies of the elite, those propagating the myths of history in the case of the Serbs or those manipulating census data in the case of the Albanians, must take hold within the larger population. One of the ways in which the common people become members of an historic state is through the production of proto-nationalism (Hobsbawm 1992), a sentiment akin to modern patriotism, but one that must be planted into the minds of the less literate and is often based on old religious foundations (67), ethnicity (64), language (52), cultural icons (72), and/or the consciousness of belonging to a lasting political entity (74). Hechter (2000) adds that an amount of time must pass to persuade recruits that the new regime will last. It is in Phase B that the time and resources needed to build up political organizations are

acquired. Recruits must be secretly trained and provisioned. Temporal lag is due to the “time intensity that is inherent in organizing militant collective action” (1897). During this lag Hroch’s (2000) phase manifested itself through the development of various Albanian organizations and the leadership of Milosevič, both seeking “to win over as many of their ethnic group as possible to the project of creating a future nation, by patriotic agitation to ‘awaken’ national consciousness among them” (81). The following section seeks to detail the events between 1986 and 1996 that are parallel to Phase B of the triangulation table. Additionally this phase demonstrates how Hechter’s (2000) peripheral nationalism rose in Kosovo after Serbia abrogated Kosovo’s autonomy.

Though nationalism in Kosovo, indeed in the whole of Yugoslavia, has been portrayed as rooted in ethnicity, irredentism, and age-old hatreds, the very foundation of national movements is solidly situated on power and the means to maintain that power. After the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War, Western ideology posed a direct threat to the Serbian Communist Party, led by Milosevič. Other republican leaders, first in in Slovenia and Croatia, viewed the break from communism as their path to independence. Kosovo followed suit, first staging mass demonstrations for a Kosovo Republic, improved conditions for workers and students, freedom for political prisoners (60% of Yugoslavia’s political prisoners were Kosovo Albanians), and unification with Albania (King and Mason 2006). Conservatives in Serbia responded by shifting attention toward ethnic questions, in particular the alleged “ethnic cleansing” of Serbs in Kosovo. According to Van Evera (2001) the twentieth-century Serbian national identity relies on a recent binary opposition, in which the enemy is seen as “fascist” or almost “genetically programmed for genocide.” If this is indeed the case, Milosevič used it to



his advantage in manipulating Serbs into divisional lines of ethnic hate. The government-controlled media reported violence against Kosovo Serbs on a daily basis. Reports claimed the Serbs were leaving Kosovo under pressure from the Albanians, Serbian women were raped, their houses plundered and burned. The news from Kosovo of the alleged atrocities – the *ethnic cleansing* – of fellow Serbs enraged the public.

On April 24, 1987 Milosevič went to Kosovo Polje to meet with angered Kosovo Serbs. Milosevič tapped into the discontent of his fellow Serbs in a speech greatly reminiscent of Lazar's battle speech:

First I want to tell you, comrades, that you should stay here. This is your country, these are your houses, your fields and gardens, your memories. You are not going to abandon your lands because life is hard, because you are oppressed by injustice and humiliation. It has never been a characteristic of the Serbian and Montenegrin people to retreat in the face of obstacles, to demobilize when they should fight, to become demoralized when things are difficult. You should stay here, both for your ancestors and your descendants. Otherwise you would shame your ancestors and disappoint your descendants. But I do not suggest you stay here suffering and enduring a situation with which you are not satisfied. On the contrary! It should be changed, together with all progressive people here, in Serbia and Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia does not exist without Kosovo! Yugoslavia would disintegrate without Kosovo! Yugoslavia and Serbia are not going to give up Kosovo!

The echoing cries of history, however, would not be enough to hold on to Kosovo.

In March 1989, the Serbian Parliament adopted constitutional measures that revoked Kosovo's legislative, executive and judicial powers and passed direct control of Kosovo to Belgrade. It is difficult to imagine the timing, coinciding with the collapse of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, as a coincidental event. It was a move that resulted in political chaos and sent Yugoslavia into political turmoil.

By the beginning of 1990, Kosovo declared itself a republic, set up a shadow government, and instituted parallel Kosovo Albanian-run institutions. The Kosovo Albanian strategy, influenced by the situation in Croatia, was to attract the attention of the West in order to garner its support and emphasize Kosovo's intent to Europeanize. Five of the most significantly active opposition groups, the "National Liberation Movement of Kosovo and Other Parts of Yugoslavia", "Kosovo Marxist-Leninist Organization", "Communist Marxist-Leninist party of Albanians in Yugoslavia", "Red National Front", and the "Popular Movement for the Republic of Kosovo", merged into one organization, the "Popular Movement for Kosovo" (*Levizja Kombetare per Clirimin e Kosoves* or LPK). Because of their positions as political activists in a climate wrought with tension, many members of the group were composed of Kosovo Albanian diaspora, operating from Germany and Switzerland.<sup>26</sup> The mission of the LPK follows:

To achieve the national objectives, the liberation of the country, LP will employ every form of liberation wars: democratic, peaceful, as well as those of armed uprisings. (Kelmendi 1999)

For many years the Albanian resistance movement in Kosovo operated under these national objectives with varying strands of non-violent and armed groups. As members became disillusioned and frustrated with the non-violent approach, offshoots of the "armed uprising" objectives sprung from the LPK, but were not organized enough to fully develop. Members of the LPK did provide political and financial support for the growing armed resistance, assistance that created the "right conditions for the establishment of

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<sup>26</sup> Operating at a distance did not ensure their safety. At a meeting near Stuttgart on January 17, 1982, Jusuf Gervalla, founder of the Movement for the National Liberation of Kosova, his brother Bardhosh Gervalla, and Kadri Zeka, leader of the Group of Marxist-Leninists of Kosova (GMLK), were gunned down by unknown assassins.

the KLA” (Berghof Conflict Research 2010). Little is known about the establishment of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA, in Albanian *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës* or *UÇK*), but the first record of its existence is found in a letter dated November 19, 1994 in which the organization took responsibility for insurgent attacks against Yugoslav police (Elshani 1998). The KLA was also financed by the Albanian diaspora in the west. The “Homeland Calling” fund was based in Switzerland as a depository for Albanians abroad to support the war for liberation. The Albanian diaspora in the West were asked to pay 3% of their salary or 10% of business profits (Judah 2000:70-71). Members were sent to Albania where retired Albanian military officers volunteered to train KLA members in guerilla war tactics. The group carried out random attacks through 1996, but wouldn’t gain major momentum until the collapse of Albania in 1997.

Although the period between 1986 and 1996 was not without sporadic violence, it was in a space of “temporal lag” during which the Milosević regime and the KLA recruited, manipulated and indoctrinated the “national idea.” Much of the resistance in Kosovo remained underground for fear of assassination or imprisonment. Milosević, meanwhile, campaigned for communism and the idea of a “Greater Serbia,” not unlike the one for which Lazar died. He also appealed to the Roma of Kosovo, a population the Kosovo Albanians currently neglected. For their support, Milosević offered them the shallow promise of political representation. Some were persuaded, others stayed out of politics because they felt trapped between the “exacting standards of loyalty among the Albanian community” and the “omnipresent Serbian police” (Cahn and Peric 1999:22).

### Phase C – Mass Nationalism (1996-Present)

Hroch, Hechter, and Hobsbawm's third stage of nation-building and nationalism all point to a gain in mass support. The mass support of the nationalist movements in Kosovo and Serbia proper against Kosovo is much more complicated than it would appear. One must question the general support of the Serb people when conscription was implemented and little more than 50% of soldiers actually showed up for duty. In Kosovo, the average civilian was too burdened with fear to act against his or her own neighbor. The KLA wasn't just targeting non-Kosovo Albanians, but its attention also turned inward, extending to anyone, Kosovo Albanians included, who did not support independence or their means for achieving it. In this regard, "mass support" takes on a bit of flexibility to encompass the support of the *dominant* population. Coercion, threats, and violence have an uncanny way of garnering support. The exchange of populations across borders, non-Kosovo Albanians (and some Kosovo Albanians) fled to Serbia and Albanians trickled into Kosovo, also helps to increase support in the host country. Essentially when people are afraid to speak out, their silence can be mistaken for passive support.

The Yugoslavian police, still under Serb control, and the now dominant KLA had one primary means of silencing the opposition and reaching their goals: violence. The KLA, which had begun with a small group of armed resisters, received a major gain to its membership and arsenal in 1997 when anarchy broke out in Albania following a series of collapsed financial schemes. Weapons flowed across the border, some in crates for about \$10 a piece and others in the arms of thugs. A UN study found that at least 200,000 Kalashnikov automatic assault weapons stolen from Albanian military armories wound up in the KLA arsenal (Khakee and Florqui June 2003). This did much

more than simply level the bloody playing field; it gave the KLA more than three times the amount of militia held by the Serbs.

It is difficult to place the KLA within the realms of a nationalist group. For one, its political ideology tended to shift from communism to anti-communism to neutrality depending upon whose help it sought. As war correspondent Chris Hedges reported to *Foreign Affairs* in June of 1999, "the KLA splits down a bizarre ideological divide, with hints of fascism on one side and whiffs of communism on the other. . . [it] is led by the sons and grandsons of rightist Albanian fighters -- either the heirs of those who fought in the World War II fascist militias and the Skanderbeg volunteer SS division raised by the Nazis, or the descendants of the rightist Albanian rebels who rose up against the Serbs 80 years ago." There is also extensive evidence that the KLA's largest funding mechanism came through the Albanian mafia's drug smuggling cartel based in Priština.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, many members of the KLA were motivated by opportunism rather than ideology. "Nationalism is a refuge from uncertainty," wrote Sam Vaknin (Viviano May 5, 1999) in his essay on the KLA. The uncertainty of Kosovo's future coupled with the growing fire power of the KLA (and no doubt the spoils of war) served as a successful recruiting tool for the KLA. "All the people of Kosova will join us when they realize there is no peace to be made with the Serbs," the commander of the KLA is reported to have touted, "All these Serbian police you see on the roads—prepare next week to see their bodies. My mother brought me into this world to die for Kosova and I am ready to do this" (Pascal 1999:55).

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<sup>27</sup> The KLA's association with drug money is well documented. See Michel Chossudovsky, *Kosovo Freedom Fighters Financed by Organized Crime*, Covert Action Quarterly, 1999. As a result of this, the Balkans today accounts for 90% of the heroin exports into Europe (Viviano May 5, 1999).

The KLA carried out various hit and run attacks against Yugoslavia police (again, mostly Serb) and military posts. At times, in order to gain support, they blamed the attacks on the Serbs, arguing that it was a setup to provoke Kosovo Albanians. Eventually they took all the credit, in turn provoking the Serbs into more direct action. The Serb forces responded by burning KLA held villages displacing some 200,000 people while the KLA retreated. Because the Serbian government considered the KLA a criminal organization and despite the mass displacement and fear of thousands of civilians, the Serbs believed their actions were justified. For a brief time, this sentiment was echoed by the United States, as *Agence France Presse* reported on the words of Kosovo special envoy Robert Gelbard on February 23, 1998:

“The violence we have seen growing is incredibly dangerous,” Gelbard said. He criticized violence “promulgated by the (Serb) police” and condemned the actions of an ethnic Albanian underground group Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) which has claimed responsibility for a series of attacks on Serb targets. “We condemn very strongly terrorist actions in Kosovo. The UCK is, without any questions, a terrorist group.”.

If the KLA was a terrorist organization, didn’t that give Serbs the go-ahead to eliminate them?

On March 5 1998, Serb forces launched a vast operation to decapitate the KLA by eliminating Adem Jashari and his comrades, considered to be the core of the KLA. The stand off in the village of Drenica lasted for two days, finally ending with the execution of the entire family and several villagers, including women and children (eighty-five deaths total). This event changed the climate in Kosovo from civil unrest to full blown war. More importantly, it caught the attention of the West. Robert Gelbard modified his statement to the New York Times on March 13, noting that “while it has

'committed terrorist acts,' it has 'not been classified legally by the U.S. Government as a terrorist organization.'" When asked if the US may consider military strikes against Serbia, Gelbard said the US would first try to end human rights abuses against the ethnic Albanian majority through "every possible economic sanction or other kind of tool we have diplomatically, but we're not ruling anything out" (Shenon March 13, 1998). The KLA was no longer a terrorist organization and had achieved its goal of Western support. The UN stepped in issuing a resolution that condemned Serb attacks and instituted an arms embargo in Yugoslavia (Resolution 1160).

Any work on recent Balkan history details the failure of the Rambouillet Agreement and the intense fighting that continued through March of 1999. By then the credibility of the West's ability to stop the war in Kosovo was in question. As Gearóid Ó Tuathail (1998) argues, "Failure by the European Union would not only reflect badly on the ability of that institution to develop its own independent security identity separate from the Americans but also tarnish the continental myths -- peace, progress and prosperity through integration and unity -- that underpinned the European Union. The EU's failure would ultimately involve the United States for it served as the ultimate guarantor of the European security order" (176). The guarantor would be NATO, an organization with questionable value since the end of the Cold War and one in desperate need of establishing its "credibility."

In the summer of 1999, NATO asserted that its new role would be to perform European crisis management and peacekeeping in co-ordination with the CSCE/OSCE, the European Union, the West European Union, and the United Nations (Ullman 1996:25). Tony Blair asserted that NATO's commitment to "spread[ing] the values of

liberty, human rights, the rule of law and an open society” would make Europe a “safer” place (“A New Moral Crusade” June 14, 1999). Thus, the nationalistic ideologies of the European Order would be dropped upon Serbia in the form of “peace bombs.” From March 24 to June 10, 1999, NATO dropped bombs on strategic targets in Serbia. Some were indeed strategic – military installations, government run (but civilian employed) media stations, but others, according to NATO Air Commodore David Wilby “fell short of the target” (BBC 1999). Those that “fell short” included convoys of refugees fleeing Kosovo, an elementary school, a national forest, an oil refinery that sent carcinogens into the air and water, and bridges that carried people to the hospital. The US dominated NATO forced Milosevič to capitulate and withdraw forces from Kosovo. The US took on responsibility for securing the borders, spearheading the imposition of NATO “peacekeepers” throughout the region. In the words of one commentator, the strong sense of the necessity of “humanitarian interventions” evoked a kind of “reworking of the white man’s burden discourse” (Stråth 2000:419). The Western intervention resulted in Resolution 1244 and created a complex and ambiguous political situation for Kosovo after the NATO bombing. It established a formal declaration of the right to independence, instituted an international civilian administration, known as the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), approved the deployment of the NATO-led multi-national Kosovo Force (KFOR), and promised a secure and safe environment for all the inhabitants of Kosovo.<sup>28</sup> All, of course, under the guiding hand of the West and according to their stipulations.

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<sup>28</sup> 1244 opened a Pandora’s Box in the international community by creating a potentially dangerous precedent for other groups that seek independence based on ethnic divisions.



The NATO bombing, intended to end the war, did little to end the violence. Between June and December 1999, 454 murders, 190 kidnappings, and 1,327 incidents of arson took place in Kosovo (UNMIK, August 2000). The ongoing violence *after* Resolution 1244 demonstrates that the Kosovo Albanian national movement was built purely upon the basis of ethnicity. Even while travelling the road to full-fledged independence, the priority was to ethnically cleanse the new Kosovo of all non-Albanians. The vision, therefore, of a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo in the post-NATO period was “doomed to be a desirable but unrealistic vision confined in the speeches of members of the international community” (Sahin 2009:247).

## The Unmaking of Kosovar Roma

It was clear there would be no place for non-Kosovo Albanians in the landscape of a Kosovo fighting for independence based on ethnic purity. This not only meant the elimination of Serbs from its internal structures, but also put Kosovo's Roma in a precarious position. In Kosovo, Serbs and Albanians have "denied, hidden, forcibly removed and then recalled the Roma whenever required by their political needs" (Sigona 2003:72). Throughout the violence in Kosovo, Roma reacted in different ways – some fled the region by force or choice, some sided with the Serbs, some with the Albanians, others did nothing. Many of those who did take up sides did so under threat, promises of a better future, or simply for essential supplies like food or the spoils of looting. Investigators for The Humanitarian Law Center (1999) found that both sides coerced the Roma to take part in the war by looting and burning homes, manning checkpoints, and burying (hiding) the bodies of the opposition.

Roma working for Serb public companies were ordered to steal by their superiors or lose their positions. R.R., a former employee of the Klanica enterprise in Kosovo Polje, reported that Roma employees were forced to loot warehouses owned by ethnic Albanians:

They made us go into Albanian warehouses. We didn't want to because we were afraid of what would happen to us afterwards. We carried out home appliances, furniture, doors, windows, building materials, paint, bathtubs and sinks. We even loaded one truck with medicines from an Albanian warehouse in the Velanija neighborhood. Everything was taken to the Gornje Dobrevu pig farm in Kosovo Polje. The boss, Gemaljević, and the chief stock keeper, Doberović, took pictures of us as we were taking stuff from Shiptar warehouses.

Despite the Albanian claim that all Roma sided with the Serbs, the Humanitarian Law Center (1999) reported on cases where Roma were forced to perform war tasks for

the Albanians in equal number to those performed for the Serbs. Albanians gave no recompense for the work performed, only the incentive of living through the day. A Romani man from Peć told investigators that he and his brother were made to loot Serb houses:

A KLA man came to our house at the end of June and ordered me and my older brother to go with him to load and unload goods the Albanians were stealing in houses from which Serbs had moved out. We didn't want to, but went when he threatened to bring his men and put us and our families down like dogs. We had to go to save the lives of our families and our own lives.

F.T. of Obilić recounts how Roma were forced to bury bodies of Serbs. Albanian neighbors stormed into his house and ordered him to do "sanitation work" for them. "That meant that I had to go clean up and bury dead bodies. Otherwise they would have killed us all."

M.L., a twenty-three-old employee of the Priština Sanitation Department, describes how he and nine co-workers were ordered by their manager and Serbian police officers to bury bodies of Kosovo Albanians:

They told us to collect and bury the bodies, which were lying by a river. To reach the place, we had to go down a steep slope for about 50 or 60 meters. We carried the bodies one by one in blankets up the slope and put them in a trailer attached to a tractor. There were about 40 altogether. All were men in civies, from 25 to 50 years old. They were wearing pants or jeans, leather and ordinary jackets, sweat suits, sneakers or shoes. They had two, three or more gunshot wounds in the head, chest or belly. The bodies were still warm. Some had stiffened, others hadn't. We buried them in the village's Muslim graveyard, one by one.

In a telling but tragic statement, Nijaz Saiti\*, told interviewers that "Roma have always been damned and killed in every war." Nijaz is from Priština and grew up with Serbs.

Recalling how Serbs looked only after themselves and made Roma break into stores, he believes the war "wasn't a real war; it was robbery."

Many Roma also told investigators they were eyewitnesses of murders by KLA members. N.T. of Brestvenik village near Peć recounts how his relative Halil Muzija was killed on 16 June. Several KLA members came to the victim's home and demanded that he turn over his rifle on pain of death. Though Halil did not own a firearm, the KLA men took him away. "The next day, at sunrise, about 5 a.m., Halil's wife went to look for him. She found his body some 300 meters from the house. There were chains around his neck and it looked to her that he had been tied to a car and dragged behind it. There were bloodstains on the road. He also had three stab wounds" (HLC 1999).

It is said that the victor writes history. This is so in Kosovo where the Kosovo Albanians have erased not only the memories of their previously peaceful Roma neighbors, but they systematically deny enlisting, by force or any other method, the assistance of Roma in their brutalities. Instead, they vehemently argue that all Roma took up arms with the Serbs. "The Gypsies always came here and shouted insults at us," relayed Behar Hoti, an Albanian who stayed with his family in Vranjevac during the worst of the Serbian reprisals. "The Gypsies were together with the Serbs. They told them exactly who had money and where to go" Mr. Gashi, a former coal miner, added that the Serbs despise the Roma almost just as much. "They always go with those who are in power" (Lucian Kim 1999).

Once NATO intervened and independence was on the horizon, the Kosovo Albanian nationalist movement had no tolerance for Roma in the new Kosova. In June 1999, a single month, 4,000 Roma from Priština were displaced. By July, of 1,700

Roma in Vucitern, only 70 remained. Meanwhile the whole of the Romani district in Mitrovicë, the largest Romani community in Yugoslavia, had been burned to the ground. (Mattern 2011:43).



**Photo 8: Ruins of the Roma Mahalla in Mitrovicë**  
(S L James 2005) Contested Spaces Video Project

Despite the presence of international actors, Roma faced enormous challenges in finding safety. Some Roma in Priština, for example, moved into Serb areas. Although it was clear Priština was a dangerous place for Serbs, and “thus an extremely unpromising centre for a new multi-ethnic society” (King and Mason 2006:70) the

international community, via UNMIK established itself there, while declaring Serb populated areas “no-go” for “security reasons” (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo 3 March 2000). The lack of international security in these areas left remaining Roma more vulnerable to violence. Further, at the lower level, aid organizations were primarily staffed by Albanians who not only influenced the organizational agenda but also had a tendency to turn the other way. This meant that Roma in IDP camps were not exactly in safe shelter.

Human Rights Watch reports during the NATO “peacekeeping” years consistently contain reports of attacks on Romani inhabited shelters and homes. Roma in the Djakovica camp told Human Rights Watch that eight Roma men had been abducted by men in KLA uniforms in the end of June and July. Bekim Mazdreku and Syl Golluba were taken on July 20 from the bridge just outside the Roma camp. Four males from the Rexha family, aged seven to fifty-five, were reportedly abducted on approximately July 7, and the Roma in the camp have no information about their whereabouts. Another Roma man, Bashkim Imeraj, was reportedly abducted in the end of June from his Djakovica home by three men in KLA uniforms, according to a family member who was present. His whereabouts are currently unknown (Human Rights Watch 1 August 1999).

In the Cesmin Lug Temporary Community Shelter (TCS), an unknown person, allegedly armed with a machine gun and hand grenades, poured gasoline on the face of a Roma boy, set him ablaze on January 26, 2003; the perpetrator fled the scene and the victim was hospitalized for burn injuries. Roma remaining in their homes were likewise terrorized, generally with persistent threats to vacate their homes. An

Ashkaelia family in Hallaq, Lipjan municipality, was attacked for the ninth time on July 21, 2003, with a grenade allegedly thrown into their garden. In 2001, three family members of this same family were killed when stepping on a booby trap placed at their doorstep. Lirak Celaj, a spokesman for the KLA in Priština, denied that the group was involved in attacks against Roma. "We have sent many of our people to appeal (to Albanians)," he said. "Stop doing this to these people." But he acknowledged that resentment of Gypsies is high. Asked how many of the refugees he believes may have collaborated with Serbs, he said, "Most of them" (Heintz 1999).

In Kosovo there are different conceptions of ethnic violence: direct physical and psychological violence, indirect psychological violence, and ethnic violence designed to prevent or punish inter-ethnic contact and cooperation. Many consider this last factor as the most important one sustaining hostility between groups (Chigas 2006). It is a factor that is particularly poignant to the Roma who are collectively punished for any association with the Serbs. Djemalj Kajtazi\* claimed he had a good relationship with Albanians before the war. His children went to a Serbian school and because of that he says the Albanians burned down his house. "Everything was gone in one night," he lamented. We had to escape or the Albanians would have killed us. My son escaped because he was afraid. I have very beautiful daughters-in-law so the Albanians either would have raped them or killed them. That is why we escaped. The pressure was too great."

Miljaim Ramadani\*, an Ashkali with Albanian papers, suffered conflicting punishments from the Serbs and the Albanians. One evening, his son Ramadan was beat by Serbs because they overheard him speaking Albanian with his brother. Miljaim

reported that his son was beaten so badly that he was unable to walk home. However, Miljaim had problems with the Albanians too, despite having spent his entire life living with them, as one of them. He told interviewers the Albanians were convinced he was collaborating with the Serbian police. They searched his house and then gave him twenty-four hours to leave. Miljaim swore to the Albanians he was not collaborating and that Ramadan had given the KLA 500 euro. They would not listen; instead they beat him, his son, and his wife. Miljaim finally flagged down NATO troops, who would only stop after he shouted “Albanians! Albanians!” NATO guarded them for three hours until an Albanian woman told the troops to stop guarding them because they had done “bad things to Albanians.” NATO left. Ramadan died soon after due to the injuries.

Bajram Jashari\* lived through World War II and remembers well his family’s fear of the Germans and Albanians. He is again afraid of the Albanians, reporting that when the NATO bombs fell, there was more fear than when the Germans were in his town. The bombs shook his house and windows. Bajram believes NATO “didn’t hit the military targets, only the civilians.” He spent the weeks of NATO bombing sitting under the eaves of his home. He was afraid if he went inside a bomb would fall on his house.

Bajram Demiri\* is a Muslim Rom with an Albanian surname. In 1999, his Albanian neighbors beat him and looted his house. He recalls that five KLA soldiers with machine guns entered his house around four in the afternoon. After they beat him they asked for his identification. When Bajram gave the soldiers his identification card, they told him he was not the Bjaram they were seeking. They took everything from his house anyway. Bajram’s teeth were all broken and he subsequently spent thirty-one days in the hospital recovering from the beating.



In March of 2004, a drive-by shooting of a nineteen year old Kosovo Serb in the principality of Priština kicked off a new round of ethnic violence throughout Kosovo. Serbs blocked the road from Priština to Macedonia and threw stones at KFOR and UN troops. The next day, the Kosovo media reported on three Albanian youth who had drowned in the river running through Mitrovicë after being chased by Serbs with dogs. The outlash against non-Albanian Serbs in Kosovo was devastating and widespread. Over the next three days 4,100 minority community members were displaced – which is quantitatively more than the total number of minorities who had returned to Kosovo throughout 2003 (3,664 persons) (United Nations High Commission for Refugees June 2004). Serb churches were made into bonfires and their cemeteries desecrated. These days served as a litmus test for the international community's promise of protection, peace and multi-ethnicity. It failed miserably, especially for remaining and returning Roma. Several international aid organizations reported KFOR and UN troops left their posts as mobs approached, while some members of the newly formed Kosovo Police Service (KPS) actually joined the mob and participated in the violence (Human Rights Watch March 2004; International Crisis Group July 2004).

ERRC research established that approximately 70 houses belonging to Ashkali were set on fire by Albanian attackers (referred to locally as "protesters") on March 18, 2004, in the town of Vushtri, about 10 kilometers south of Mitrovicë where the pogroms on Kosovo Serbs had begun the day before. The houses were completely destroyed. According to Hamit Zymeri, an Ashkali, the total number of people burned out of Vushtri in the attack was 257; there were 87 children, 85 women, two of whom were pregnant,

13 children under three years of age, and 18 babies under six months of age (Petrova 2004).

Though some Roma did side with the Serbs, under duress or not, Albanians scapegoated all Roma in order to eliminate non-Albanians. When a nation is built on ethnicity it must remove polluting factors. The basic nationalist ideology seemed to be that Kosovo could not become Kosova unless it was ethnically pure. The forced exile of Serbs alleviated much of the frustration. However, as previously mentioned, lessened frustration can actually increase violent ideologies toward the victim (Billig 1976; Newman and Erber 2002). Scapegoating and ideology strengthen identity and connect people to others who join them in working for a shared cause against a targeted group. The cyclic process results in a “continuum of destruction” (Staub 1989:17). The idea that “most” Roma engaged in “bad things” against the Albanians allows the perpetrators to legitimize acts of retaliation. On the other hand, the idea that many Roma registered as Albanians and sided with the Albanians legitimizes Serbia’s stance on returning them to Kosovo. Ultimately, all Roma regardless of where they stood during the war years, have become scapegoats for both sides.

Because Roma, not unlike Europe’s Jews, have long been scapegoats in all parts of the world, the international community not only ignores their status as such, but also becomes an accomplice in their condemnation. Just world thinking (Lerner, 1980), the tendency to believe that the world is a just place, makes perpetrators and bystanders see the suffering of victims as deserved, either because of their actions, or their character, or both. One commentator stated that the hatred of the Albanians toward the Roma is “understandable” (UNHRC 2010:22)

The intervention of international forces in Kosovo put them in an unequivocal position to set the post-war agenda. Therefore, the Western view toward the Roma inevitably is pressed upon Kosovo's new democracy. While not blatantly marginalizing, the discriminatory practices of the West against Roma have been characterized by the economic, social and political exclusion of the Roma. If the West, more specifically the European Union, is to be a role model of the new Kosovo, what will that mean for the Roma? If European Union member countries like the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria can neglect to address violent movements against their own Roma, why should Kosovo protect theirs? If France, Germany and Italy face no repercussions for expelling thousands of Roma from their borders, why should Kosovo make citizens of theirs?

For Yugoslav Roma, democracy is much more part of the problem than part of the solution. This is primarily because democracy addresses, empowers and safeguards the rights, interests and aspirations of the dominant ethnic collectivities much more than it empowers and safeguards the rights, interests and aspirations of other minorities (Bideleux and Jeffries 2007:16). Salja Bajrush\* words echo this ideology. Salja is seventy-three years old. Born in Kosovo, she worries she will not live long enough to see Roma have the "same democracy" Europe promises. Salja sadly stated that she has a feeling that "this new democracy won't include our Romani children." If the situation in Europe's older democracies is any indicator of the Roma's future, she is no doubt right.

The European ideology is infused with a hatred for Roma. They are often depicted as the scapegoat for all of society's ills, social, criminal and economic. In the

United Kingdom, British Conservative Party Councillor Margaret Tookey stated in a public address in March, 1990, that she would like to see “all filthy, dirty Gypsies dumped in the sea” (Acton September 1990:13). Ironically, in August 1999, more than a hundred Roma drowned when a boat smuggling them to Italy (for \$1100 per head) from Kosovo capsized (“A Gypsy Awakening” 1999). According to the *Prague Daily Monitor*, on April 2 2007, Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek attacked equal opportunities during a speech at the launch of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. Prime Minister Topolánek reportedly stated, “No well-meant effort to make equal that cannot be equal, no positive discrimination will guarantee the equality of opportunities. Positive discrimination sounds about the same as a pleasant beating.” Prime Minister Topolánek also attacked multiculturalism, saying that money spent by the state, “must go to the assimilation of individuals, not in support of the chimera of multiculturalism” (“Equal Opportunities for All” April 2, 2007). In Italy, a recent law requires that all Roma submit to fingerprinting while campaign posters displayed in Milan during the 2011 municipal election campaign warned against the risk of the city turning into a “Gypsy town.” In Hungary, the far right Jobbik party, which holds four seats in the European Parliament, is well known for its hateful rhetoric against the Roma. Among their racist ideologies is the desire to segregate Hungarian Roma in special camps. Prefect of Rome, Achille Serra, after visiting several Romani camps around Rome in May of 2007, had this to say: “ten o’clock in the morning I saw children, dirty, playing with a ball . . . The women were not around because they are at the metro stealing purses and the men were sleeping because perhaps they worked all night robbing apartments” (Beard 2007). This small sample of politicians and their

views against the Roma is representative of a Europe that is going to bring a multicultural democracy to Kosovo.

## Kosovo's Roma Today

Roma are the last Yugoslavs. Roma from Kosovo have relatives in all of the states of former Yugoslavia, many of them living in extremely precarious circumstances. They have no idea what would happen if Kosovo became a republic, and the insecurity of the future makes most Roma cling even more to a sense that Yugoslavia was the best arrangement for everyone. Most of the Roma in Kosovo are Muslim and some of them are Christians. Some of the Kosovo Roma are pro-Albanian and some are pro-Serbian, but all of them are in the middle. They are caught between two sides of a war. Neither side is the Romani side, and all of their decisions are made from a position of weakness. There is no word in our vocabulary for war. The idea to take up guns and organise killing people does not exist in our culture.

Orhan Galjus<sup>29</sup>

Despite the presence of international community-based projects, conflict building, special provisions and regulations to encourage the participation of minority groups, the relations between ethnic groups that currently live in Kosovo remain polarized, and dangerously influenced by ethnic strife. Roma living in and returning to Kosovo continue to face enormous challenges across all spheres of life. The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees<sup>30</sup> provide that persons fleeing persecution across borders deserve international protection, including freedom from forcible return (refoulement) and basic rights necessary for refugees to live a free, dignified, and self-reliant life. These rights include the rights to earn a livelihood—to engage in wage-employment, self-employment, the practice of professions, and the ownership of property—freedom of movement and residence, and the issuance of travel documents (UN General Assembly January 31 1967; July 28 1951).

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<sup>29</sup> Personal testimony as told to the European Roma Rights Center, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. The 1967 Protocol removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention.

## Repatriation

Though Kosovo is still a dangerous place, preventing the right to return in safety and dignity, Roma continually face forced return to Kosovo. They are not able to seek asylum or refugee status because most countries consider them internally displaced persons (IDP). In Germany, for example, they are given “tolerated status,”<sup>31</sup> which is a special provision that allows the state to return the Roma at will. The right to return is set out in Article 13(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as in various General Assembly Resolutions. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees refers to repatriation in terms of *refoulement*, whose application requires official refugee status:

No Contracting State shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (Article 33(1)).

The UNHCR Statute calls on the High Commissioner to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees when necessary. The 1985 UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusion No. 40 (XXXVI) on Voluntary Repatriation emphasizes *voluntary* – “at their freely expressed wish” - return in “conditions of safety and dignity” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees October 18 1985).

Despite these specific international mandates, Kosovo continues to sign readmission agreements with third countries that are eager to remove Roma from their borders. In the words of one European Commission official, “there is no appetite in

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<sup>31</sup> *Duldung*, or “tolerated status,” is unique to Germany. Those with such a status are barred from possessing regular employment, moving freely within Germany, and accessing most welfare programs.

Europe for more asylum seekers from that region.”<sup>32</sup> Deportations began in late 2003 with a short moratorium during the riots of 2004. To date agreements have been signed with Albania, Belgium, France, Macedonia, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Austria, Slovenia, Benelux countries, Czech Republic, and Sweden. Negotiations with Italy and Hungary are currently underway. In June 2007, the OSCE criticized the government of Kosovo and the UNMIK for these agreements before providing an environment of safe and sustainable returns. According to Kosovo Minister of Internal Affairs, Bajram Rexhepi, Kosovo signed repatriation agreements in order to lessen visa restrictions on its citizens living in Europe (Lampard 2010).

UNMIK estimates that a total of around 51,000 people were “readmitted” to Kosovo between 1999 and the end of 2007, citing Germany, Switzerland and Sweden as the countries returning the most people to Kosovo during that time (United Nations January 15, 2008).

<b>RAE forced returns January 2003 – April 2010</b>									
Ethnicity	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Roma	1	1	36	49	48	54	127	82	398
Ashkali	104	79	234	389	244	236	184	41	1511
Egyptian	71	39	64	23	21	14	9	1	242
Total	176	119	334	461	313	304	320	124	2151

(Data provided by UNHCR Pristina)

**Table 7: Forced Returns, 2003-2010**

In 2010, a total of 5,198 persons were repatriated to Kosovo from Western European countries. This yields an average of about 100 persons per week. Of these, 65% came

<sup>32</sup> Comment by European Commission official participating in a meeting about the situation in the Roma camps organized by the member of the European Parliament Baroness Emma Nicholson, attended by Human Rights Watch, Brussels, November 12, 2008.



from just four countries: Germany alone accounted for 935 repatriations, followed by Austria with 888, Sweden with 793 and Switzerland with 736 (Knaus 2011).

Returnees by countries in 2010	# of persons	%
Germany	935	18%
Austria	888	17%
Sweden	793	16%
Switzerland	736	14%
France	377	7%
Hungary	328	6%
Norway	274	5%
Belgium	220	4%
Finland	213	4%
Luxembourg	101	2%
Others <sup>15</sup>	333	7%
Total	5,198	100%

*Source: Ministry of Interior, Annual Report 2010*

**Table 8: 2010 Repatriation Statistics**

Most of the 5,198 returnees were Kosovo Albanian men. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians combined were the second largest group<sup>33</sup>; in total 671 Roma (40% of whom were women and girls), Ashkali and Egyptians were repatriated last year, constituting around 13 percent of all repatriations. Every second Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians repatriated in 2010 had lived in Germany.

Repatriated Roma experience the same problems as Roma previously living in Kosovo. However, their problems are often compounded because the family, over the years, made a new life in another country. Entire generations of children, many of whom have never set foot in Kosovo, have been forced to start their young lives over in foreign land still characterized by violence and ethnic strife. The Miftari family was

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<sup>33</sup> The 2010 breakdown is as follows: Albanians: 4,017, RAE: 671, Serbs: 269, Gorani: 96, Bosnian: 66, Others: 79.

returned after a sixteen-year stay in Germany where two of their sons, now seven and eleven and both profoundly deaf, were born. "In Germany the conditions were ideal. They went to a specialized school which picked them up from home each day and returned them," their father Shemsi Miftari said sadly. "Here they are forced to collect scrap metals and tin cans" (Hajdari August 18 2010).

### **Proof of Citizenship**

Many Roma fled their homes in a state of panic, often leaving behind important documentation such as identity cards or birth certificates. Others hold Yugoslav identity papers that are no longer recognized or valid. Furthermore, most official records are no longer available in Kosovo following the removal of civil status registry books to Serbia, or damage to or destruction of the registry books as a result of the 1999 conflict (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees November 9 2009). Kosovo does not recognize Serbian documentation. This means that Roma who did have official documentation when Kosovo was under Serbian rule, no longer have legal documentation.

Lack of civil registration<sup>34</sup> impedes access to fundamental rights. Those without it cannot access social security, health care, education, or employment and cannot participate in public life, vote or repossess their occupied property. The issue is particularly difficult for Romani children. Because parents lack proper documents they are unable to register the birth of a child, so the child is also without a legal identity. According to a UNICEF report (2009), 14% of children under 18 years old in the Albanian-majority area and 5% in Serb-majority area have not been registered (7).

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<sup>34</sup> The term civil registration is used in the meaning of civil status registration and registration as habitual resident of Kosovo in accordance with the applicable legislation.

Considering that OSCE estimates between 20% and 40% of Roma are not registered and that the birth rate among Roma is traditionally high, these numbers seem low. The numbers also indicate Roma living among Albanians are more reluctant to seek registration for themselves and/or their children in Kosovo. However, it is worth noting that a parallel system of Serb state administration exists still in northern Kosovo. Therefore, Roma residing in Serb areas may be registering their children under that system.

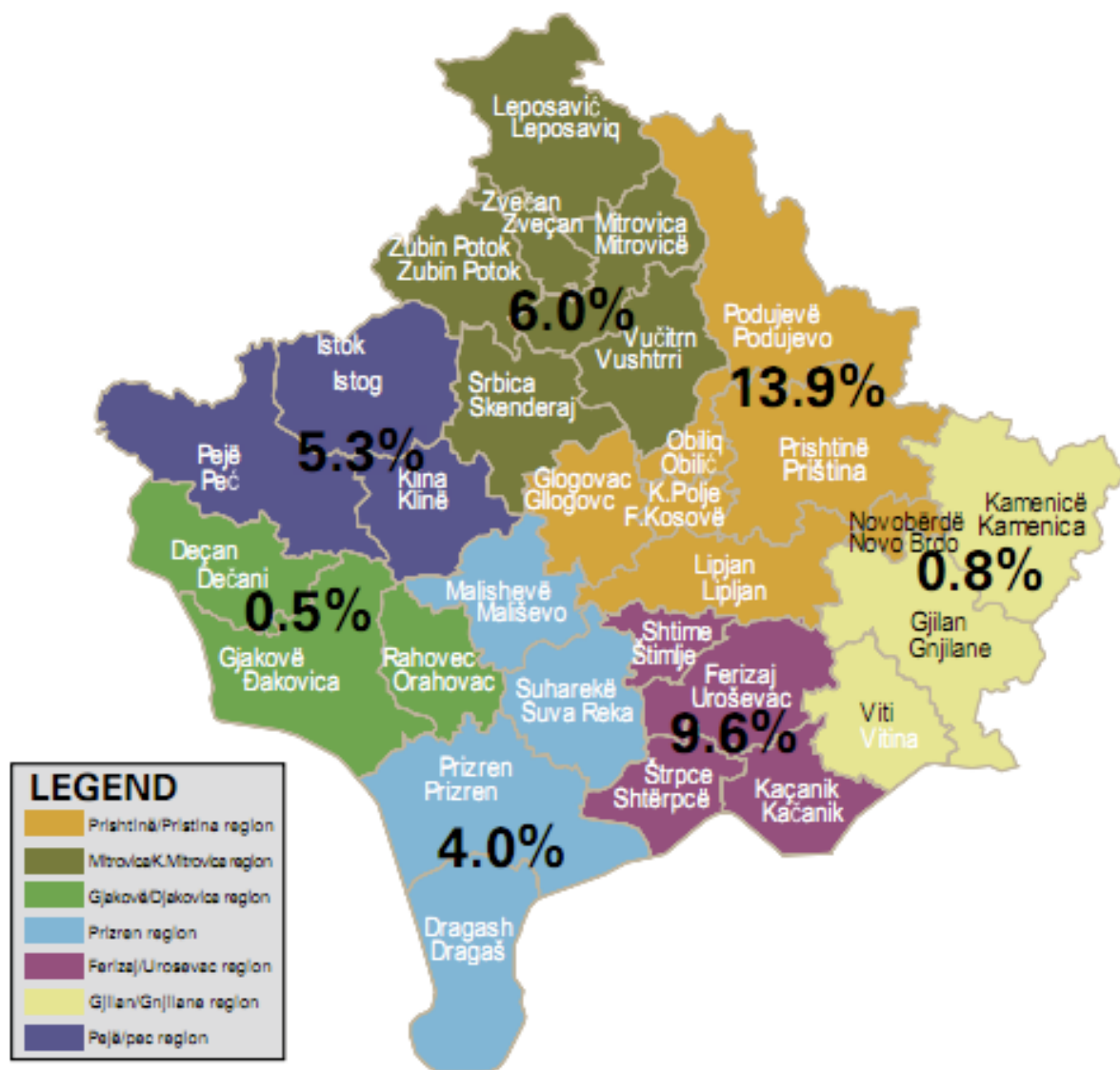


Figure 6: Birth non-registration rate for children under 18-years-of-age

(The United Nations Children's Fund 2009)

Beginning in Spring 2000, a Joint Registration Task Force of UN and OSCE set up civil registration offices in each municipality of Kosovo to help address the problem of civil registration. Though reports indicate the situation is improving, many Roma are still

left stateless without basic social services and rights afforded citizenship. Lack of documentation essentially comes down to “no registration, no rights.”

## Housing

In the aftermath of war, lack of housing is not an uncommon problem facing (re)constructed governments. However, in the aftermath of ethnic conflict during which thousands of minority homes were burned to the ground or occupied by the majority population, safe housing for IDP's poses a complicated, if not unsolvable, dilemma. International organizations address the housing issues of refugees and IDPs through encampment. It allows them to address security and solve the problems of accommodation, even if the security is biased or scarce and the accommodation is entirely substandard. Research has indicated that warehoused (confined to camps or segregated settlements) IDPs do not experience physical security or adequate livelihood in the settlement structure. A recent report from the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (February 2007) argues that warehousing IDPs violates refugees rights and often reduces them to “enforced idleness, dependency, and despair” (1). In Kosovo, Roma security is not only a heightened issue due to their ethnicity, but some local Serbs and Albanians allegedly oppose Roma IDPs being permanently resettled in their regions because they fear that changes in local demography could impact on local politics (OSCE-ODIHR 2010).

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided assistance to the Roma IDPs, distributing food and organizing makeshift camps in Cesmin Lug and Zitkovac, to which many of the Roma moved in October 1999. With the exception of Leposavic, all the IDP camps created were in the vicinity of the Trepça

complex. The complex, where lead levels reach up to two-hundred times the accepted level, has been an environmental hazard for years. What was supposed to be a temporary settlement turned into a decade, with a new generation of Romani children growing up in lead contamination. In September 2004, WHO released a report demonstrating very high levels of lead contamination among the Roma population in all the camps. Despite warnings from the World Health Organization, the international community continued to use the mine area for settlements. Results of April 2008 tests demonstrated unacceptably high lead levels in the children tested. Out of the 53 children tested, 21 had lead levels qualifying these children for immediate medical intervention (over 65 mcg/dl, which is the highest level the equipment can record) (Human Rights Watch 23 June 2009:38).

Boro Boracic, a Serb who heads the Kosovo Red Cross that supervises the camp, said his agency is desperate for more food donations. He lamented: "the simple people are suffering the most." Then, showing the suspicion that so many in Kosovo harbor toward Gypsies, he said: "some of them in the camp, they're just there because they heard the food was free. They're used to living without working" (Heintz 1999). This statement from the head of the Red Cross in Kosovo is sadly indicative of the prevailing attitude toward Roma in Kosovo and abroad. It serves to demonstrate well why the Roma, after more than ten years, are still living in squalor and uncertainty.



Photo 9: A Romani girl stands near her home in the Chesmin Lug camp

Courtesy Darren McColleston, The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting





**Photo 10: Fushe Kosovo**

This abandoned railway building is home to Sadik Bajrami, his wife Igballe Kadrolli, and their three children. The Ashkali family was displaced from another part of the town in 1999, when their family house was burned. At the time of this photo, the family had been living here for twelve years.  
(Courtesy Human Rights Watch in 2010).





**Photo 11: Urosevac, Metal Container Housing**

These containers have no electricity and no running water. Upwards of fifteen family members live in the small shed-like containers.

(Courtesy Human Rights Watch 2010).

Although much of the Romani Mahalla has been rebuilt, Roma return to camps out of fear for their safety. The Mahalla is on the line dividing Serbs and Albanians, an area still wrought with ethnic tension and violence. Others return to take advantage of Serbian welfare system that services that area of Kosovo and pays more than Kosovo benefits, or because their registration papers are Serbian. Further, the parallel government in northern Kosovo provides educational and health care services to Roma.

The Pinheiro Principles<sup>35</sup> state that “All refugees and displaced persons have the right to have restored to them any housing, land and/or property of which they were arbitrarily or unlawfully deprived, or to be compensated for any housing, land and/or property that is factually impossible to restore as determined by an independent and

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<sup>35</sup> United Nations Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons

impartial tribunal” (Section II, Principle 2). Though organizations are in place to restore property rights to displaced persons in Kosovo, the process requires proper documentation. Again, the lack of documentation impedes the Roma’s ability to try and return to their homes. As is the case in much of southeast Europe, the Roma have lived in informal settlements over several generations, often without any type of property deed. The transition to private property has opened the door to capitalistic greed and many Roma returned to find their previous lands occupied. Even when Roma do have property deeds, public authorities fail to enforce the laws and there are widespread allegations of “nepotism, corruption and links with organized crime” (Republic of Kosovo Ombudsperson Institution July 21 2008). To date, none of the municipalities in Kosovo have taken steps towards finding sustainable housing solutions for Roma, nor are there currently any forthcoming projects in their budget plans to meet the housing needs of Roma.

## Education

According to the Ministry of Education in Kosovo<sup>36</sup>, there are no statistical data on the percentage of Romani children attending primary education (of the total Roma children of the primary school age), primarily because no ethnically disaggregated census exists in Kosovo<sup>37</sup> and many Roma children are not registered anywhere. This statement is problematic in two ways: first, it reveals the Ministry’s awareness that Romani children are not registered; second, it demonstrates the Ministry’s lack of initiative to perform needs assessments of the Romani community. While the latter is

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<sup>36</sup> Human Rights Watch telephone interviews with an official from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, August 12, 2010.

<sup>37</sup> The last census in Kosovo was collected in 1991.

not meant to imply a total disregard by the educational system in addressing Romani needs in the community, it is a telling point because such assessments are required in order to secure programmatic funding. Gleaning information from various organizational reports throughout Kosovo municipalities provides a snapshot that may be generalizable to the larger Romani population. For example, in the municipality of Gjilan, once the center of Romani education in Kosovo, UNHCR reported a population of 1,160 Roma families. A survey of those families exposed that not one of the children from these families attended school (Whalen July 2003).

Even without data, it is not difficult to predict the problems Romani children face in the parallel education system: language barriers, issues of safety, costs of school supplies, and general frustration with the system by students and parents.

Despite the fact that the new Kosovo constitution<sup>38</sup> recognizes the right of students to access education in their own language no provisions have been made to honor that right. Albanian schools teach only in the Albanian, Turkish and Bosnian languages. With the exception of a few municipalities, Serbian schools teach only in the Serbian language. Neither offers instruction in the other language. Additionally, none of the schools have curricula on Romani culture, which can serve to deepen the division between Romani and non-Romani students. In Fushe Kosove, Human Rights Watch (2009) spoke to an Ashkali family of five, deported from Kusel, Germany to Kosovo in the winter of 2006. The family fled the war in 1999, and stayed in Germany on a

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<sup>38</sup> See Art. 4.4(b), Constitutional Framework, UNMIK Regulation 2001/9, 15 May 2001, and subsequent amendments (Constitutional Framework); Art. 19.1, Law on the Use of Languages, UNMIK Regulation 2006/51 (Law on the Use of Languages); Art. 59.2, Constitution promulgated on 15 June 2008 (2008 Constitution); Art. 8.1, 2008 Law on the Rights of Communities.

renewable toleration permit. None of the children were going to school at the time because their Albanian was “not up to standard.” But also because their German school certificates were “not recognized in Kosovo.” The father, Avni Lahi, said that all his children used to go to school in Germany and were “very good students.”

Albanian and Serb children do not attend school together. For example, at the Sveti Sava school in Bresje, students attend education at separate times and on separate floors without communication between school managers, teachers and students of the two systems (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe April 2009:19-20). The OSCE report of April 2009 provides an astounding example of parallel education and segregation involving Roma and Ashkali students:

Primary education in Janjevë/Janjevo illustrates further paradoxes of co-habitation. The school has three different directors and names. The Serbian curriculum director calls it “Vladimir Nator”; the Kosovo Croat director calls it “Janjevo;” the Lipjan/Lipljan municipality and Kosovo Albanian director call it “Shtefan Gjeqovi.” The Kosovo Croat director is appointed by the municipality but pupils of this community attend Serbian curriculum education. Kosovo Albanian, Ashkali and Kosovo Turk students receive education in Albanian on one floor; Kosovo Croat, Kosovo Bosniak, and Roma students receive education in Serbian on the other. (17)

Which school Romani children attend is an indicator of which group they associate with outside of school. This can pose a danger, particularly in multi-ethnic environments where ethnic violence continues. Freedom of safe movement in these environments prevent many Romani children from attempting to attend classes. Further, even though Kosovo has passed anti-discrimination legislation banning all forms of discrimination and segregation, the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (UNMIK and the Government of Kosovo) (July 2007) recognize multiple cases of discrimination against members of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities within the school system.

Suzana was eleven and Anita ten when they were repatriated from Germany to Banjae Pejes in Western Kosovo. When their father went to register them for school, the director turned him away, arguing that without school certificates from their previous school in Germany, Suzana and Anita could not register. The father had a friend in Germany send him the school certificates. When he returned to the school, the director still refused to enroll the girls. This time, the director argued he could not accept the original German school certificates without verification by the Ministry of Education in Priština. Discouraged and upset, the father gave up. UNICEF research documented several school directors in towns and villages who actively prevented repatriated Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children from enrolling at their schools. (Knaus 2011)

## Employment

Kosovo has the highest unemployment rate in Europe and Central Asia at 45% (Central Intelligence Agency 2011) and rising. In 2006, the unemployment rate for Roma in Kosovo was 73.2% (O'Higgins and Ivanov 2006:10). Today, organizational reports range from 80% to 90% unemployment within Kosovo's Romani population. For Roma the chances of gaining stable employment are impeded by their lack of documentation, generally low level of education, and discriminatory practices in a competitive and newly privatized, but small marketplace. Businesses in Kosovo are generally small with only a handful of employees. Before the war, Kosovo's largest employment sector was agriculture (53% of Kosovo's land is agricultural). However, the amount of foreign food aid pouring in to the country after the war crippled small farmers, many of whom abandoned their farms. Kosovo's economy is dominated by illegal activities: drug smuggling, organized crimes and trafficking. UNMIK estimates that

organized crime accounts for 15% to 20% of Kosovo's economy, "a figure that would presumably be far higher if one subtracts the substantial portion of Kosovo GDP made up of foreign aid" (Rosenthal February 2 2008). There is little room for Roma in Kosovo's economy.

Even when employment does not require an education, Roma are discriminated against in hiring practices all over Europe. Common stereotypes against Roma often prevent employers from hiring a Rom over a member of another ethnic group. There is a prevailing stereotype that Roma don't want to work, don't show up regularly, are loud, argumentative, irresponsible and lazy. Those that do find work are often paid less than non-Roma and hired under a contract basis without benefits. In a recent survey, Human Rights Watch (2010) found that some municipalities (Gjakova, Prizren, Lipjan, Kamenice, and Fushe Kosove) employed Roma, but only in small numbers. In most cases, there was only one Romani employee for the entire municipality, and the individuals concerned had low-level jobs, such as drivers, doormen and cleaners. The representation of Roma within the public work sectors seems to indicate that public companies in Kosovo have made no effort to integrate Romani employees in their workforce. Kosovo Police Service (KPS), Kosovo Electric Company (KEK), Post and Telecommunication Kosovo (PTK), Kosovo Railroad, Kosovo Transport, Priština Airport have nearly 20,000 employees; however only 0.5% of the employees are Roma (Republic of Kosovo 2008:9).

Gani Elshani, 45, worked in a pharmaceutical factory in Prizren for 18 years with other Roma. When the factory was privatized he and the other Roma were let go with the explanation that the factory was cutting back on employees. According to him, none

of the other Roma workers were employed after the privatization of the factory either ("Memorandum of the European Roma Rights Centre: In the Aftermath of Ethnic Cleansing: Continued Persecution of Roma, Ashkalis, Egyptians and Others Perceived as "Gypsies" in Kosovo " 2006). Considering there are currently no labor laws or labor courts in Kosovo, private employers are able to hire and fire as they wish and Roma are more likely to be the first to go.

In order to provide for their family, many Roma are often forced to seek income through dangerous and often illegal means. During a monitoring investigation in North Mitrovica, the Kosovo Roma Refugee Foundation (2011) discovered a Serbian smelting operation that paid Roma, including children, to extract lead from vehicle batteries. No protective clothing was provided to the Roma and the facility was without washing areas. Another income generating practice, referred to as "urban mining" or "rag and bone," involves combing city dumps and trash areas for anything that can be sold. According to NGO staff in the Roma community of Gjakovë/Djakovica in the municipality of Pejë, 80% of Romani families collected rubbish for a living (Kayo Kasai January 2004).



Photo 12: Urban Mining

Photo by Samir Delic from the *Urban Miners* exhibition at the Belgrade Center for Cultural Decontamination, 2011.



## Conclusion

In a recent sermon, the Serbian Patriarch Irinej pointed out that Kosovo is the holy Serbian land which is soaked in blood and cemented by the bones of the holy martyrs (Diocese of Raska-Prizren 2011). According to Van Evera's hypothesis on nationalism and war, ethnic mythologies that are passed from generation to generation become distorted and exaggerated (Van Evera 2001). This was no doubt the case for Serbian nationalism. Rooted in ancient beliefs postulating that Kosovo was the cradle of Serbian civilization, Serb nationalists dug up the bones of the past to maintain claim to Kosovo. The Albanians sought to draw borders around their language and culture, while looking to Western ideologies of democracy and modernity. Nationalism in Kosovo stands in the threshold of perennial and modernist approaches. However, we must not reduce it to mean the perennial side of Kosovo's nationalism is based on the ancient blood feuds of savage mountainous people. That "intellectual sloth" of doing so is, as Glen Bowman Bowman (1994) argues, to "not only deny such ethnographic evidence and ignore the recent history of modernization in Yugoslavia but also effectively cast Yugoslavs out beyond the pale of what we term 'human society' (172-3).

The approach to nationalism in this study sought to synthesize the three-part nation-building and nationalism continuums of Hechter (2000), Hobsbawn (1992) and Hroch (2000) as applied to Kosovo. The first phase is based on history, national identity and direct rule. The second phase is a period of relative quiet during which nationalist movements mobilize and recruit. The last phase is a mass movement of peripheral nationalism. The theories in this approach take a middle ground between perennial and modernist nationalism. That is, they recognize the validity of history, require cultural homogeneity, and interweave in the importance of cultural destiny, while acknowledging

the “supranatural restructuring of the globe” (Hobsbawm 1992). The model is particularly fitting to Kosovo, a new nation that is trapped between perennial and modernist ideologies. Nationalism in Kosovo built up along this continuum within which various factors played a role in propelling it forward, ultimately leading it toward ethnic violence and war.

Even within the framework of the above phases, nationalism does not occur in a vacuum. There must be a threat, real or perceived, to the ideologies of the people within a specific territory. In the case of Kosovo, an autonomous region, the threat came in the form of direct rule and the opposition to that rule. The Serbs were afraid of losing Kosovo; Kosovo was afraid of Serb domination. Once the walls of communism came crashing down throughout Eastern Europe, a new threat from the outside arose. Kosovo had a choice: maintain the bonds of communism or embrace the European model of capitalism, the latter most certainly enabling, with the assistance of the West, freedom from Serbian rule. What was a choice of the lesser of two evils appeared to the West to be a desperate plea for help from Serbian oppression as well as an opportunity for the West to destroy the last communist hold out in Europe, thus bringing Yugoslavia into the European model. As we have seen, the call was answered.

History plays a critical role in the development of nationalism in Kosovo. In perennial theory, history is the search for “collective immortality” (Smith 1999). The modernists confine nationalism to rudiments of modernity, while pointing out the “myth” of historicity. What gets lost in the theoretical debates is that the two views are not mutually exclusive. Instead of making a “myth” out of a culture’s history, we can recognize that the process of nationalism occurred before modernity *and* alongside it.

Additionally, as an agricultural, low-culture region, Kosovo was not making a move into modernity. Despite the Western designs for Kosovo, the country has yet to have a full electrical grid and is barely moving into the processes of industrialization, relying instead on an economy that is seeped in criminality and corruption. Unless human trafficking and drug trade is the move to a modern empire, Kosovo is only moving backwards, even with Western assistance.

Hammond contends the intervention in the Balkans was “part and parcel” of the European Union’s project of dominance over its eastern border, a “cultural racism” that has dominated the last fifteen years of EU enlargement predicated on a “symbolic ordering” that places the region at a “lower level on the evolutionary scale” (19). The playing of the “race card” emphasized the ethnic differences in Kosovo, an issue that could only be resolved by solidifying borders based on those differences. This process is far from over in Kosovo as proposals for northern partition cross international conference tables. Now that the region is infused with the ideal of European homogeneity, the process will not be complete until her borders are ethnically pure.

Members of a dominant group who are not successful in achieving their goals unleash “frustration-produced-aggression” against the closest group that cannot retaliate (Allport 1958 331-32, Dollard 1939). With the West watching, why not choose a group that the West also marginalizes? The Roma served as a perfect scapegoat for the warring parties. Hobsbawm (1992) suggests that political loyalty and ethnicity are linked (66). Though there exists a degree of ethnic mimicry among Roma in the region, on the whole they belonged to neither Serbs nor Albanians. They could therefore not

be trusted with loyalty to the cause of either party. They found themselves between two very dangerous fires, forced to choose a side or perish within them.

After autonomy, the Western ideal of wealth and prosperity did not materialize. Instead of capitalism, the transition took place in the form of what Hayden (1992) refers to as "state chauvinism," when socialism's "class enemy" is replaced by the national enemy identified by the particular local chauvinism (659-60). With the Serbs largely cleansed for Kosovo, something – or *someone* – must be blocking Kosovo from achieving its goal. It is important to reiterate Friedländer's (1997) assumption that scapegoat ideology exaggerates the malice and power of the victim in order to legitimize blame, especially considering the Roma had little nationalist ideology of their own and were not in any way mobilized in Kosovo. However, because some Roma sided with the Serbs, they must be impeding the ideal and likely still plotting the destruction of the new Kosova. The generalization of Roma as Serb collaborators made them the new state enemy. They could not retreat to their home nation, as the Serbs did, because they had none. In fact, those who fled to Serbia were often turned away; not only might they be collaborators with the Albanians, but they simply were not Serbs. Further, after years of refuge in Western countries, the West believes it is now time to force Roma to return to Kosovo where they continue to live as scapegoats for Al Kosovar frustrations.

The situation of Roma in Kosovo today is shockingly reminiscent of the *Porrajmos*. Roma are blamed for the ills of society. Burned out of their homes, they are forced to live in isolated camps. They receive no recognition as victims of war, no restitution, no help. The ongoing war trials, other than a passing footnote, offer them no

voice. The international community continues to ignore the worsening situation of Kosovo's Roma. Indeed, if cultural homogeneity is a template for the European model, one cannot help but ask, what does that mean for minorities like the Roma, not only in Kosovo, but also across Europe?

## Endnote: Future Research

Throughout my research, I repeatedly touched upon areas that I believe deserve more attention than time and space allowed to be given here. The issue of gender, for example, merits more attention particularly given the widespread cases of rape during the Kosovo conflict. Kosovo's recent place as a hub of human trafficking is especially relevant to gender issues plaguing post-war Kosovo. The US Department of State reported in June of 2009 that "Kosovo is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children trafficked across national borders for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Kosovan women and children are also trafficked within Kosovo for the same purpose. NGOs reported that child trafficking, particularly from Roma communities, for the purpose of forced begging, was an increasing problem." Though statistical data from within Romani communities is unlikely available, investigation into the impact of rape and trafficking of Romani women and children should be included as another aspect of the danger of forced returns.

The nuances of race, nation and ethnicity were not clearly defined, particularly in an historical sense of parsing out the differences. The complexities of different brands of socialism should also be more thoroughly detailed, especially during the shift from Tito to the collective presidency. The role of the West, or "Balkanization from above," as an influence on nationalism was a theory that emerged from this work. Given the complexity of such a bold statement and the research necessary to construct a compelling argument, the theory was only briefly introduced here. I believe the foundational research would make an excellent springboard for a deeper study.

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## Vita

Melissa Hughes was born at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi on November 1, 1968. The daughter of a military father, she lived in many places and attended several schools. She completed her B.A. in Sociology at University of New Orleans in 2009. After studying abroad for a year at Charles University in Prague, Melissa developed a strong interest in Romani Studies within the disciplines of sociology and history.