Legitimizing National Identity through 'Transnational Existences': Post-war Kosovo and its Relationship with the European Union, 1998-2008

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The act of remembering plays a crucial role in constructing national identity.[1] So too, do transnational linkages arising from a pluralization of political spaces. These transnational linkages strengthen connections between various actors, both state and non-state. The questions that arise from this interconnectivity are: what is the future of national identity in the age of transnationalism? What happens to the 'nation' at a time where notions such as 'state sovereignty' and the 'nation-state' are being contested? These questions, although valid, implicitly de-emphasize the role that nationalism and national identity play in constructing transnational connections. While the concept of the nation-state is constantly changing, it does not completely eliminate the role of the nation in developing transnational relations. For instance, various nation-states rely on transnational relations with either other nation-states or institutions (such as the EU) to legitimate their national sovereignty as well as their national identity.[2]

This is the case with Kosovo and its relationship with the EU, where the EU's dual identity as an 'imagined community' and a 'transnational existence' emerges.[3] The former presents the EU as a 'national' body whose 'European' ideal—a multinational EU with member states sharing common 'European' traits—has revealed itself as an objective for the European future of its member states, becoming the basis for the reimagining of Kosovar national history and memory.[4] It is the EU's status as a transnational entity that has enabled this 'European' ideal to influence the national politics of Kosovo.[5] The result of this idiosyncratic interplay between Kosovo and the EU raises the question of what kind of 'identity' is desirable for Kosovo.[6]

This paper will explore the way the category 'nation' is shaped and reshaped, institutionalized and framed, how history and memory is restructured along national as well as transnational lines, and how transnational relations force a nation to reimagine its national history and memory. As such, my aim is twofold: to examine the extent to which Kosovar Albanians forged an identity through the act of remembering to legitimate their claims to national self-determination, and to examine how the EU defines the memory of the Kosovar nation through its status as an 'imagined community' with the power to recognize statehood.

I begin by discussing the origins of the political problems of sovereignty in Kosovo and why they resurfaced in the 1980s as a contentious issue, drawing on the historical tensions between Albanians and Serbs. I examine how the Kosovo War influenced the emergence of new ways of thinking about Kosovar identity, that is, how a national myth became the symbol of Kosovar resistance. I then tie this issue of sovereignty and memory by looking at how it became subject to further reimagining as a result of Kosovo's transnational link with the EU. In this instance, Kosovars began to identify with the idea of being 'European'. Finally, I examine the implications of this relationship on other nation-states as well as on the EU itself. I make the conclusion that it is not about whether or not Kosovo

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1   For constructive analysis on 'identity', see Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 28-64.

2   While the EU is a politico-economic union, I will refer to it as an institution. By adopting this perspective, I will be able to combine the status of the EU as a union of 28 states together with its four main institutional frameworks: the European Parliament, the European Council, European Commission and the Council of the European Union. This will allow me to adopt the viewpoint of the EU as a 'national' actor with a unified transnational agenda, instead of a combined union with conflicting transnational interests. For analysis on the status of the EU, see John McCormick, *Understanding the European Union: A Concise Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 6th ed., 2014).

3   Benedict Anderson uses the term 'imagined communities' to refer to the way nations are formed based on representation—that is, the nation is a representative body that does not attach itself to the personal life of individuals, but rather their imagined connections to each other. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006). The term 'transnational existence' is used by Akira Iriye to refer to international organizations or institutions that attempt to establish connections across national boundaries despite existing as separate entities from nation-states. See Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 15.

4   Kosovo's relationship with the EU is not based on its EU membership. In fact, Kosovo has still not joined the EU due to the political and national tensions between it and Serbia. In this paper, 'member-states' will refer to EU members, aspirants, and those under the influence of the EU, unless explicitly stated.

5   While I do borrow the term 'transnational existence' from Iriye (see footnote 2), I will also refer to the EU as a transnational entity for the reason that 'existence' does not fit well structurally in some cases. As such, both 'existence' and 'entity' will be used interchangeably.

6   See Laura C. Ferreira-Pereira, 'The European Union as a Model Power: Spreading Peace, Democracy, and Human Rights in the Wider World', in *The Foreign Policy of the European Union: Assessing Europe's Role in the World*, eds. Federiga Bindi and Irina Angelescu (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2012), 293-305.

truly desires a national or international state-building project; rather, it is about the way transnational linkages between nation-states and institutions have the potential to affect the national memory and identity of a nation.

Memory and the 'National' Question

Nationalism or national sentiment is complicated by the fact that meanings of nationalism continue to be contested, resulting in a multitude of theories, concepts, and categorical attempts.[7] Although complicated, this opens up opportunities for crossovers between discourses, or an emergence of new ways of thinking about identity formation. Indeed, memory and identity are interrelated concepts, and, as John R. Gillis has argued, 'the core meaning of any individual or group identity … is sustained by remembering', and 'what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity'.[8] Kosovar identity is determined by the relations between antagonistic nationalities inside Kosovo—Albanians and Serbs—who base their national identity on a single, shared event: the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.[9]

Benedict Anderson's notion of 'imagined communities'—where nations are formed on representation through imagined connection—can be applied to explain how it is not what happened during the battle that is important, but rather the significance of its aftermath; for it is the representation of the battle as a legend that has enabled Kosovars reimagine their identity against Serbian nationalism. Florian Bieber has argued that with regard to the Battle of Kosovo, Serbian political discourse focuses on the political manipulation of memory due to the revival of perceived national suffering throughout the 1980s.[10] Here, Kosovo as a national idea as well as a territory re-entered Serbian national consciousness after Kosovar protests emerged in 1981 calling for the recognition of Kosovo as a republic independent from Serbia.[11] From this, historiographical disputes surrounding the Battle of Kosovo revolved around territorial claims. For Serbian nationalists, Kosovo is seen as the cradle of the Serbian nation, and the Battle of Kosovo, where the Turks defeated the Serbs, became 'a totem or talisman of Serbian identity'.[12] For Kosovar Albanians, however, this battle was used to claim independence from Serbian authority. Kosovo for them became the cradle of *their* nation for it was in Kosovo in 1868 that the national Albanian movement was established.[13] As such, when the war in Kosovo broke out in 1998, both nations claimed history to be on their side.

In this perspective, memory was used to bind a national identity to history. Richard Handler has argued that nations, as 'natural things' in the real world, are bound by 'definite historical origins… that can be traced back to an indefinite past'.[14] Even before 1998, Kosovars and Serbs have used memory to legitimate their claims to sovereignty. In 1974 Communist Yugoslavia, Kosovar Albanians were considered to be a *narodnost* (nationality) rather than a *narod* (nation).[15] This justification on the part of the Communist Party (KPJ)—the idea that their homeland was outside Yugoslavia, not within—denied Albanians a republic, which, in turn, fueled their desire for recognition as a sovereign state.[16] However, as the 1980s neared, the Battle of Kosovo was increasingly used to foment Serbian nationalism in an attempt to suppress Albanian claims for independence.[17]

However, national identity can also be reconstructed and reimagined to suit a political goal not necessarily tied to an 'indefinite past'.[18] Eric Hobsbawm has termed this process 'invented traditions'.[19] These 'invented traditions' are usually formed on the basis of 'national sentiment' that connects one group of people while differentiating it from another, leading to a sense of national identity and the development of collective memory.[20] While the Battle of Kosovo is an important event in understanding Kosovar identity, it is the recent myth developed during and after the Kosovo War (1998-2008) that really shaped Kosovar memory. When the war erupted, the political party governing Kosovo—the Democratic League of Kosovo (DLK)—was at war with a rising resistance group known as

7   Most notable historical works of nationalism include, though are not limited to: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation*, trans. Ida Mae Snyder (Paris: Calman-Levy, 1882); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). For an overall assessment of various theories on nationalism, see John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

8   John R. Gillis, 'Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship', in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.

9   For historiographical comparison on the Battle of Kosovo, see Anna di Lellio, *The Battle of Kosovo 1389*, trans. Robert Elsie (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009).

10   Florian Bieber, 'Nationalist Mobilisation and Stories of Serb Suffering: The Kosovo Myth from 600th Anniversary to the Present', *Rethinking History* 6, no. 1 (2002): 97.

11   Bieber, 'Nationalist Mobilisation', 99-100.

12   Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998), 58.

13   Jelle Janssens, *State-Building in Kosovo: A Plural Policing Perspective* (Antwerp: Maklu, 2015), 51.

14   Richard Handler, 'Is "Identity" a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?', in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity,* ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 29.

15   Howard Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 39-40.

16   Bieber, 'Nationalist Mobilisation and Stories of Serb Suffering', 100, 102.

17   Ibid., 102.

18   See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

19   Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition,* eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1.

20   Ibid.

the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).[21] The KLA surfaced from the desire to create a sovereign state, and instigated small-scale guerrilla attacks against Serbian police and those who collaborated with them. On the other hand, Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the DLK, refused to escalate Kosovar Albanian resistance to the level of armed confrontation. His reasoning was based partly on his Gandhian belief in non-violent resistance, and partly because he feared that the Serbs would use Kosovar resistance as an excuse for the mass extermination of the Kosovar population.[22] Nevertheless, it was the KLA that gained the approval of the people upon the death of KLA's militant leader, Adem Jashari.

His death signaled a new turn in Kosovar memory as Kosovar Albanians began to label him as the new national hero. The imagery of Jashari became a mainstay in post-war Kosovo, becoming known as the *komandant legjendar* (the legendary commander): 'a national hero who binds past and future generations of Kosovars to the nation'.[23] But why did this figure emerge as the new national hero? Some historians have argued that national myths and claims on national identity usually result from trauma experienced after war.[24] Such trauma manifests a 'shared self-understanding'—a collective memory—of an 'oppressed nation looking for political and psychological deliverance'.[25] For Kosovar Albanians, this new hero symbolized a promise of a new statehood based on national suffering. Indeed, at the end of the war, Jashari emerged as the 'builder of a new era', whereupon he symbolized a historical shift in Kosovar history: the shift from Serbian oppression to national self-determination.[26] Adem Jashari's surviving nephew interpreted Jashari's mythical status clearly, when he stated in an interview that

> Each nation has a saint and a story that is the foundation that forms the society, its basis. My family's story is the link of a chain, a historical movement [...] Albanians have always been under oppressive foreign power [...] and there have been many moments of fighting for freedom: this is the Albanian national question in the Balkans.[27]

Here, the Kosovar Albanian struggle is presented as a long historical struggle for the national revival of an oppressed nation.

While it becomes clear that Adem Jashari represents a link to memory, his image was not entirely accepted at the grassroots level.[28] Many Kosovar Albanians felt disenfranchised with the status of Kosovo and its history, preferring to look beyond the trajectory surrounding the Kosovo War and inclining toward the European ideals espoused by the EU.[29] While Valur Ingimundarson argued that the refusal of the international community to address Kosovo's sovereign status seriously from 1999 to 2005 made it inevitable that Albanians would focus more on the past than on the future, he failed to emphasize the growing attachment of Kosovo to international institutions, particularly to the EU, as it was the policies of the EU that began to shape the national identity of Kosovar Albanians.[30] While the objective was still based on national self-determination, this time, it was formed not from national myths, but from the desire to become a modern nation-state: nationhood was sought by getting close to 'Europe'.[31] For Ingimundarson, this shift came as a result of the realities of the Kosovo War.[32] Far from being a narrative of 'heroism and victimhood', which itself is marked by 'ambiguities, contradictions and selective memories', the Kosovo War was fought in a 'distinctly unheroic fashion': air power by NATO, with 'laser-guided bombs and precision guided weapons'. In other words, he concludes, it was 'the antithesis to what the KLA was trying to project'.[33]

If the formation of collective memory is based on revitalization and the 'invention of traditions', then the reconstruction of both collective and individual identity in post-war Kosovo is nurtured more by new national inventions, and increasingly oriented toward an international presence in Kosovar national historiography and memory, than it is by, and toward, historical or 'invented traditions'.[34] The shift has moved from the emphasis of national history based on an indefinite past, to national history driven by the need to build an efficient, modern state. As Clifford Geertz has argued, the modern nation-state is driven by 'allegiance to a civil state' with other states and institutions, rather than traditions.[35] The next section will explore how Kosovo's transnational relationship with the EU led to the further reimagining of Kosovar identity.

The EU's Transnational Influence over Kosovo

21   In Albanian, the DLK is called *Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës* (LDK) while the KLA is referred to as *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës* (UÇK).

22   Ronald Dannreuther, 'War in Kosovo: History, Development and Aftermath', in *Kosovo: Perceptions of War and its Aftermath,* eds. Mary Buckley and Sally N. Commings (London: Continuum, 2001), 17.

23   Anna di Lellio and Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, 'The Legendary Commander: The Construction of an Albanian Master-Narrative in Post-war Kosovo', *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 3 (2006): 514.

24   See Patrick Finney, 'On Memory, Identity and War', *Rethinking History* 6, no. 1 (2002): 1-13.

25   Anna di Lellio and Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, 'The Legendary Commander', 514.

26   Ibid., 516.

27   Quoted in Ibid., 517.

28   Ibid., 518.

29   See Ruth Seifert, 'Nationalism and Beyond: Memory and Identity in Post-war Kosovo/Kosova', in *After Civil War: Division, Reconstruction, and Reconciliation in Contemporary Europe,* ed. Bill Kissane (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 213-243.

30   Valur Ingimundarson, 'The Politics of Memory and the Reconstruction of Albanian National Identity in Post-war Kosovo', *History and Memory* 19, no. 1 (Spring/Summer, 2007), 98.

31   Seifert, 'Nationalism and Beyond', p. 238.

32   Ingimundarson, 'The Politics of Memory', 105.

33   Ibid.

34   Seifert, 'Nationalism and Beyond', 238.

35   Clifford Geertz, 'The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States', in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Free Press, 1963), 108, 110.

As a study of 'movements, flows, and circulations' and the way they cut across national boundaries, transnationalism began to challenge traditional notions of territory and national identity upon its emergence in the 1990s.[36] It challenges how national boundaries are understood, leading to their reinterpretation, both in the territorial as well as the national sense.[37] Hobsbawm hinted at this new change in 1992, asserting that the end of the twentieth century would see nationalism become 'historically less important' in conditioning public policies as new supranational structures take its place. This process itself will give rise to new entities unclassifiable as 'nations' in the classical sense.[38] Simply put, transnationalism defines a nation not only by its immediate territorial space, but also by its relations with other nation-states and institutions. From the perspective of memory, Gillis was right to note that neither memory nor identity can be regarded as natural facts for 'they are political constructs that are highly selective, inscriptive rather than descriptive, serving particular interests and ideological positions'.[39] For Kosovo, it was the prospect of a European future—one away from the narrative of tradition—that motivated the emergence of a transnational link with the EU, in which the EU's status as an 'imagined community' influenced the reimagining of Kosovar memory.[40]

However, the idea of 'European identity' remains ambiguous. It can refer to either the identity of Europe as a product of the unique historical and cultural process that led to the establishment of a European continent, or it can refer to the identity of the people as Europeans constructed through collective social imagining – that is, identifying with Europe as a nation.[41] Gerard Delanty effectively distinguished between the two when he wrote that 'the idea of Europe existed long before people actually began to identify with it and to see themselves as Europeans' – the former is presented as an imagined geography, while the latter is an imagined community.[42] Both definitions highlight how Europe is 'embedded within connections and circulations', which then 'crystallized [Europe] into a construct that has received growing attention in the modern age'.[43] In the case of Kosovo, it is the idea of Europe as a nation that influenced the 'revival of a national identity in a new and different form'.[44]

Part of this motivation for a 'European' future can be ascribed to the confusion over the Kosovar identity by Kosovars themselves. Attempting to foster a new image for Kosovo a year before its declaration of independence, linguist and editor Migjen Kelmend put it rather aptly

> When you ask a Kosovar, 'are you a Kosovar?'
> They will answer 'no, I am Albanian'.
> If you ask a Serb, 'are you a Kosovar?'
> They will answer 'no, I am a Serb'.
> Then, who is Kosovar? [45]

Even Kosovo's Hashim Thaçi expressed that a 'Kosovo identity does not exist', however, he added, 'but the taboo is beginning to crack'.[46] Sure enough, upon gaining independence on 17 February 2008, old traditions—those defined by Serbian nationalism and Albanian historiography[47]—were recast, as third-generation Kosovar historians and locals began to think about ways to appear 'European' and place Kosovo under international sovereignty. Some Kosovar historians drove this shift as a result of their view of history as a political activity rather than a scholarly discipline. For example, Jahja Dran-

36   Literature on transnationalism has expanded since coming to the forefront of historical debate, with multiple historians across fields commenting on its influence on the study of history. Ian Tyrrell, 'Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice', *Journal of Global History* 4, no. 3 (2009): 454; Chris Bayly et. al., 'American Historical Review Conversation: On Transnational History', *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006): 1445. For a general discussion on transnationalism see Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick and J. T. Way, 'Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis', *American Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (September, 2008): 625-648; Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Jürgen Osterhammel, 'A "Transnational" History of Society: Continuity or New Departure?', in *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives,* eds. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 39–51; C. A. Bayly, et. al., 'AHR Conversation: On Transnational History', 1440–1464.

37   In the case of Kosovo, it is the latter that is affected by transnationalism for the reason that its link with the EU has challenged the nation's idea about itself, its history and its memory. This will be explored within this section.

38   Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed., 1992), 183, 191.

39   Gillis, 'Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship', 3-4.

40   Denisa Kostovicova and Natalija Basic, 'Conference Report Transnationalism in the Balkans: The Emergence, Nature and Impact of Cross-National Linkages on an Enlarged and Enlarging Europe, 26-27 November 2004', *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (November 2005): 585.

41   Józef Niżnik, 'National Identity and the Process of European Integration', *Polish Sociological Review* 4, no. 132 (2000): 393.

42   Gerald Gelanty, *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), 4. Michael Bruter also makes a distinction, stating that there is 'a *civic* meaning attached to the EU and a *cultural* meaning attached to Europe as a civilisation.' See Michael Bruter, *Citizens of Europe? The Emergence of a Mass European Identity* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2005), 110-11.

43   Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Learning by Doing: Notes about the Making of the Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational history', *Journal of Modern European History* 6, no. 2 (2008): 177.

44   Niżnik, 'National Identity', 385. See also Lisbeth Aggestam, 'The European Union at the Crossroads: Sovereignty and Integration', in *Rethinking the European Union: Institutions, Interests and Identities*, eds. Alice Landau and Richard G. Whitman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 75-92.

45   Quoted in Dan Bilefsky, 'A Difficult Question for Kosovars: Who Are We?', *The New York Times*, December 9, 2007, accessed June 2, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/09/world/europe/09iht-kosovo.4.8660025.html.

46   Ibid.

47   For an overview of Albanian historiography, see Robert Elsie, *Studies in Modern Albanian Literature and Culture* (New York: Boulder, 1996).

qolli stressed that the time had now come to rewrite Kosovar history.[48] But it was Jusuf Buxhovi, a former member of the DLK, who effectively placed Kosovo on the map of European historiography.[49] Considering that the Albanians who inhabit Kosovo are of Pelasgian origin, he argued that Kosovo was not the cradle of the Serbian nation, as Serbs suggest; rather, it is the cradle of European civilization.[50] In this way, Albanian history—and now Kosovar history—is presented as being part of the Occidental world. Although influenced by the politics of the DLK, Buxhovi's approach to Kosovar identity is tied to KLA historiography which strongly emphasizes that it is only by gaining statehood that Kosovar history and memory can be independent from Albanian historiography.[51] Ruth Siefert argues that this rethinking of Kosovar national identity is a natural process for newly formed (or acknowledged) nation-states, as once the 'processes of nation-building have been initiated', she argues, the 'question of "what is the nation?" surges up.'[52]

Kosovar locals also identify with, and express, the need for Kosovar history and memory to be reimagined as a European one. Based on in-depth interviews with Kosovar Albanians, Seifert highlighted that many felt that by having their national identity and memory tied to Albanian discourse, Kosovo appears 'not very advanced'.[53] Some expressed that Kosovo is 'too traditional and should adopt the good things from Western European culture'.[54] Thus, according to one Kosovar, the only solution is to 'become part of Europe.'[55] Such aspirations for a European identity is linked to Kosovar memory as defined through collective experiences. Often, what is reimagined is closely linked to the reconstruction of the future. In this case, the will to move away from, or even forget, an Albanian past has led to the development of a desire to become European. For Kosovar locals, established memories remind them of a painful past, during which Kosovars were marginalized from the economic, social and political sphere because of their ethnic background as Albanians, leaving them subordinate to the 'ethnic "majorities" around them'.[56] As a result, these locals expressed that the only way to overcome this is 'not so much seen in developing a national culture'—like that in Albania—'but in making Kosovo European'.[57] How else to do so, but to establish a strong transnational link with the EU?[58]

Indeed, the EU symbolized a new beginning, so much so that the new Kosovo flag that emerged on independence day resembled the flag of the EU: a map of Kosovo set against the backdrop of European blue with six yellow stars (representing six ethnic communities within Kosovo).[59] By replicating the EU flag, Kosovo established a permanent transnational link with the EU and the European community in general. This is because the EU flag symbolizes European integration, going beyond the EU itself to incorporate 'Europe's unity and identity in a wider sense'.[60] Although this desire for a European identity may seem like a conscious decision on the part of the Kosovars, another dimension in this complex relationship is the idea that the EU, as an 'imagined community', cultivates these 'symbols' (i.e. the flag) to transmit a European 'meaning' onto its member-states.[61] The member-states disseminate this identity to their nation who then utilize these symbols to express a new national allegiance toward the EU. Thomas Risse has argued that by incorporating a European identity into the very content of their national identity, as in the case of Kosovo and its flag, national identities become—or appear—Europeanized.[62]

In a speech about shaping an effective EU foreign policy, Javier Solana highlights how this process of Europeanization (i.e. adopting a European identity) contributes to the growing interaction between the 'national' and the 'European' spheres.[63] He states,

> From the outside it looks like a loose '*European model*' exists, both as a way of organizing our societies and in approaching international affairs… There can be

48   Bilefsky, 'A Difficult Question for Kosovars'.

49   Oliver Jens Schmitt, 'Historiography in Post-Independence Kosovo', in *Civic and Uncivic Values in Kosovo: History, Politics, and Value Transformation,* eds. Sabrina P. Ramet, Albert Simkus and Ola Listhaug (New York: European University Press, 2015), 60, 62.

50   Ibid., 67. Pelasgian: of Greek origin, or relating to Greek ancestry. See Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer, eds., *Albanian Identities: Myth and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

51   Third-generation Kosovar historians are split into three schools of thought: the Tirana school is largely based on Orientalist discourse, with some historians claiming it to be conformist to Yugoslav nationalism; the Pristina school attempts to link Kosovar memory to the Albanian nation-state; and, the KLA strongly emphasises national self-determination. The DLK is less prominent, but still influential, highlighting Albanian links to Europe. See Schmitt, 'Historiography in Post-Independence Kosovo', 53-74.

52   Seifert, 'Nationalism and Beyond', 213.

53   Ibid., 234.

54   Ibid.

55   Ibid.

56   Janet Rieneck, 'Seizing the Past, Forging the Present: Changing Visions of Self and Nation Among Kosovo-Albanians', *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 11, no. 1 (1993): 105.

57   Siefert, 'Nationalism and Beyond', 234.

58   Kosovo's relationship with the EU is not based on its EU candidature. In fact, Kosovo has still not joined the EU due to the political and national tensions between it and Serbia. See Eiki Berg, 'Reexamining Sovereignty Claims in Changing Territorialities: Reflections from "Kosovo Syndrome"', *Geopolitics* 14, no. 2 (2009): 219-234.

59   Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, 89; Tim Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 144.

60   'The European Flag', European Union, accessed June 4, 2016, http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index_en.htm.

61   Brent F. Nelsen and James L. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union: Confessional Culture and the Limits of Integration* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2015), 327-8.

62   Thomas Risse, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 38.

63   Dimitris Papadimitriou, et. al., 'To Build a State: Europeanisation, EU Actorness and State-Building in Kosovo', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 12 (2007): 225.

no simple export of whatever we think the *European model* is, but the EU is seen as a source of inspiration. And of course, *imitation* and *adaption* are easier than invention.[64]

This statement also exemplifies how, as a result of transnational linkages, the EU is able to take part in the national politics of its member-states. As such, in being 'sustained by increasing transnational linkages and identities', Kosovar politics has ultimately been reworked to suit the politics of its transnational influence—the EU.[65] This reworking of Kosovar politics as well as the transmission of symbols can be ascribed to the EU's insecurity over its lack of decision-making in Kosovo's desire for independence from 1998 to 2008. The Spanish Minister for Europe, Alberto Navarro, expressed his frustration over the fact that the future of Kosovo was 'decided in Washington…and not in Europe', seeing as Kosovo's claim for independence was essentially a European issue.[66]

The result of this inaction, however, led to the (semi-)permanent presence of the EU in Kosovo. Indeed, from 2000 to 2008, the EU implemented the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAP). The aim of SAP was to ensure that EU member-states 'adopt and implement international and European standards' along with 'achieving stabilization and a transition to a market economy…for the preparation of EU accession'.[67] But SAP was not established alone. Also in 2000, the European Agency of Reconstruction (EAR) opened in Pristina and has since been the largest and the most 'visible' actor of the EU in Kosovo. Its initial aim was humanitarian work after the Kosovo War, though it subsequently began to focus on EU institution building throughout the country. As a result, it became Kosovo's largest foreign donor, channeling over 1.1 billion euros.[68] This then led to the establishment of an EU office in 2004.[69]

For Anna di Lellio and Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, this process of taking part in the politics of the nation is problematic. 'The international agenda [the EU], in attempting to impose its own universalistic, abstract values, appears to be an obstacle to the local state-building project'.[70] As such, they assert that the Albanian storyline, based on 'heroic resistance', reaffirms Albanian agency and its commitment to independence.[71] By obstructing this process, Albanian history and memory that defined much of Kosovo's past becomes erased. Although valid, their argument fails to take into consideration the fact that it is Kosovar memory and national identity that is in the process of being reimagined—in opposition to Albanian discourse—for the reason that Kosovars are in the process of building a state where their nationhood is defined by getting close to 'Europe', not Albania. Nevertheless, they raise the contradictory impact of transnationalism in relation to Kosovo's—or other nation-states'—quest for European integration, in that it is used as a stimulus for advancing yet hampering national self-determination. This then leads to a polarizing effect between and within nation-states. The last section of this paper will examine the implication Kosovo's transnational link with the EU has on the institution itself.

Kosovo and the EU: Implications

Prior to becoming transnational, Kosovo was governed by 'parallel institutions' whereby the Serbian government built an administrative structure in Kosovo around Serbian law as part of its strategy to hold on to Kosovo and challenge the independence project built by Kosovars.[72] When Kosovo declared its independence, its transnational link with the EU allowed it to rebuild the Kosovar state on its own terms, away from Serbian authority.[73] This, however, only replaced Serbia with the EU. Thus, because of the EU's status as an 'imagined community'—that is, a European nation—Kosovo embodied its 'fundamental freedoms'. Title 5, article 21 of the consolidated version of the Treaty on the EU reads,

> The Union's action in the international scene should be guided by principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms.[74]

While it may lead to a greater consciousness of European ideals, this objective of Europeanization is not straightforward. For example, in prioritizing its transnational link with the EU, Kosovo has neglected opportunities to strengthen transnational ties with Serbia. This neglect demonstrates the diminished potency of the emerging transnational links within Kosovo between different groups and, more broadly, between Kosovo and its surrounding neighbors. From this stems the process of na-

64   Emphasis added. Javier Solana, *Shaping an Effective EU Foreign Policy* (Brussels: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2005), accessed on June 2, 2016, http://www.kas.de/wf/en/33.6011/#.

65   Natalija Basic, 'Transnationalism in the Balkans: An Introduction', *Ethnopolitics* 5, no. 3 (September 2006), 218.

66   'EU Splits on Kosovo Recognition', *BBC News*, February 18, 2008, accessed on June 6, 2016, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7249909.stm.

67   Janssens, *State-Building in Kosovo*, 295.

68   Papadimitriou et. al., 'To Build a State', 230.

69   Ibid.

70   Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers, 'The Legendary Commander', 527.

71   Ibid.

72   Chris van der Borgh, 'Resisting the International State-Building in Kosovo', *Problems of Post-Communism* 59, no. 2 (March/April 2012): 31, 36-7.

73   Vedran Džihić and Helmut Kramer, 'Kosovo after Independence: Is the EU's EULEX Mission Delivering on its Promises?', *International Policy Analysis* (July 2009): 3.

74   EUR-Lex, 'Consolidated Version of the Treaty of on the European Union', *Official Journal of the European Communities* 59, C 202 (2016): 28, accessed on June 9, 2016, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2016:202:FULL&from=EN.

tionalization, as nation-states are 'forced to formulate national positions and vital interests' to secure their national identity and memory.[75] This is precisely what occurred.

On February 21st, 2008, Kosovo's independence instigated mass Serbian demonstrations: some 200,000 Serbs gathered in protest against the proclamation of a 'false state' on Serbian territory.[76] Under a huge banner 'Kosovo is Serbia', they proclaimed

> What is Kosovo? Where is Kosovo? Whose is Kosovo? […] Kosovo – that's Serbia's first name. That's how it has been forever […] There is no force, no threat, and no punishment big and hideous enough for any Serb, at any time, to say anything different but, Kosovo is Serbia![77]

Patrick Hutton's conceptualization of memory is useful in understanding the Serbian reaction to Kosovar independence. He states that the result of memory consists of two moments: repetition and recollection, in which the 'past exists insofar as it continues to be in living memory [repetition], and it is so remembered as long as it serves the present need [recollection]'.[78] For Serbia, to react this way was necessary, because Kosovo, 'as an idea and a political problem', has been the cornerstone of Serbia's national identity and has been politically central to Serbia since the 1980s.[79] In many ways, then, this protest highlights how memory becomes politicized in order to serve the current national interests of a nation-state *as a result of* another nation-state's transnational link with institutions such as the EU, who are able to—directly or indirectly—influence the sovereign status of its member-states. The question thus arises: to what extent do transformations of memory and identity promote or hinder transnational linkages within and between nation-states? Further, what implications does this have on the EU itself?

European integration has, in some cases, thwarted existing transnational relations in South East Europe (SEE) as SEE states are divided into aspirants on the one hand and EU candidates on the other.[80] Kosovo's independence complicated Serbia's prospect of becoming a candidate of the EU, which hindered the EU's integration project. Question 150 of Serbia's pre-accession questionnaire reads, 'please provide an overview of your relations with Kosovo and your efforts to ensure effective cooperation on EU related matters and inclusive regional cooperation.'[81] This question, implying that accession to the EU requires a resolution to the deadlock between Kosovo and Serbia, puts Serbia at odds with the institution. For Serbia, the objective of accession is to have Kosovo as Serbia's constituent territory. Thus, 'EU demands for the normalization of relations with Kosovo' is seen a direct threat to Serbian sovereignty.[82] This reaction can be partly be ascribed to the fact that in 2008, only 46 out of 192 UN and 22 out of 27 EU member-states formally recognized Kosovo.[83] This gave Serbia the incentive to proclaim Kosovo was a 'false state', as not all recognize Kosovo.[84] Seeing Serbia as the heart of SEE, the implication of this tension on the EU is that it threatens the stability of SEE, which would then directly affect the EU's credibility as an 'imagined community'—its image as a European nation—and its future chances of expansion.

For Peter G. Mandaville, who uses Arjun Appadurai's term 'translocality', the implications of national reimagining on the part of the Kosovars on the one hand, and the stringent hold onto national memory by the Serbs on the other, illuminates how a change in the nature of understanding boundaries has led to a disjuncture between 'one's legal identity as a citizen of a territorial state and one's political identity as an actor in the public sphere'.[85] Understanding the dynamics of memory and national identity requires going beyond thinking of the nation as 'real' phenomena to, instead, understanding how nationhood works as a practical category, is institutionalized, and how it can be viewed as a contingent event.[86] As such, another implication can be drawn from Kosovo's national reimagining and its transnational link with the EU: more communities within, or under the sovereignty of, nation-states are developing national consciousness.

While the emerging desires for independence allows the 'Eu-

75   Basic, 'Transnationalism in the Balkans', 219. See also Karl Magnus Johansson, 'Europeanisation and its Limits: The Case of Sweden', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 2, no. 2 (1999): 169–186.

76   'EU Splits on Kosovo Recognition'.

77   Quoted in Judah, *Kosovo*, 146.

78   Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993), 17; Kerwin Lee Klein, 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse', *Representations* 69 (2000): 132.

79   Jelena Obradović-Wochnik and Alexander Wochnik, 'Europeanising the "Kosovo Question": Serbia's Policies in the Context of EU Integration', *West European Politics* 35, no. 5 (2012): 1166.

80   Kostavica and Basic, 'Conference Report Transnationalism in the Balkans', 585.

81   European Commission, *Questionnaire: Information requested by the European Commission to the Government of Serbia for the Preparation of the Opinion on the Application of Serbia for Membership of the European Union* (November 2010), accessed on June 6, 2016, http://www.seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/upitnik/srb_questionnnaire_engl.pdf.

82   Obradović-Wochnik and Wochnik, 'Europeanising the "Kosovo Question"', 1159, 1164.

83   Since 2008, Croatia has become a member of the EU, totalling the number of member-states to 28. Berg, 'Reexamining Sovereignty Claims in Changing Territorialities', 225; Obradović-Wochnik, 'Europeanising the "Kosovo Question"', 1164.

84   'EU Splits on Kosovo Recognition'.

85   Appadurai used 'translocality' to refer to the ways situated communities become extended through the geographical mobility of their inhabitants across space. See Arjun Appadurai, 'The Production of Locality', in *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, ed. Richard Fardon (London: Routledge, 1995), 204; Peter G. Mandaville, 'Territory and Translocality: Discrepant Idioms of Political Identity', *Journal of International Studies* 28, no. 3 (1999): 657.

86   Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 13-22.

ropean' community to expand, it also challenges the identity of the EU as tensions between EU member-states and their de facto minorities increase. For example, Kosovo's independence not only increased tensions between Kosovo and Serbia, but it led to the *Republika Srpska* – the Serb dominated entity in Bosnia – to demand the same rights of secession.[87] Serbia's leader at the time proclaimed: 'we do not see a single reason why we should not be granted the right to self-determination'.[88] On the other hand, while Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) believed a similar result like that of Kosovo can be achieved for them, the Turkish Cypriot president proclaimed that 'there is no direct link between the situation in Kosovo and the Cyprus problem.'[89] The People's Party of TRNC thought otherwise, stating that 'Kosovo's independence brought a new chance to world politics, that a nation cannot imprison another people in its sovereignty'.[90] Although TRNC declared independence in 1983, it is recognized only by Turkey. Their desire, this time, was to gain further recognition, though it placed them at odds with the EU candidate, Southern Cyprus.[91]

These two examples highlight the problem facing the EU as a result of its transnational link with Kosovo.[92] By desiring independence, these two de facto states are: offering prospects for EU expansion as, according to Józef Niżnik, 'the national identity of the people of Europe will inevitably have to come to terms with the European identity'; while also increasing instability within the EU due to conflicting desires within and between EU member-states.[93] Kosovo's declaration of independence, resulting from EU involvement in Kosovo since 1999, has encouraged both stateless minorities and inspired nationalists within nation-states to advocate for independence based on the Kosovo model. In this way, national identity and memory becomes politicized through transnational linkages. Pierre-Yves Saunier emphasized the significance of this interconnectedness between identity and transnationalism by arguing that, 'history's purpose might not be to substitute a history of the nation-state with a history without or against the nation-state, but to find a way to study how nation-states and flows of all sorts are entangled components of the modern age.'[94] The EU's status as an 'imagined community' and 'transnational existence' provides insight into the way conceptions of identity—being European—can be transmitted across borders and within nation-states, to the point that this transnational linkage leads to the reimagining of a nation's history and memory as they incorporate the image of Europe into their identity.

Conclusion

The national identity and memory of Kosovo has undergone a series of reconfigurations. This process emerged as a result of three key instances. Firstly, Kosovo's historical tensions with Serbia fostered new national aspirations for an independent state and therefore a desire to shift Kosovo's history away from Serbian sovereignty. Secondly, consisting of a predominately large Albanian population (92 per cent),[95] Kosovar identity has been influenced by Albanian historiography. This resulted in the confusion over Kosovar identity, which then led to Kosovar historians and locals to emphasize a new national outlook— the idea of a European identity, structured in opposition to Albanian history and memory. Thirdly, Kosovo's transnational relationship with the European Union solidified this new national reimagining as a result of the EU's ability to disseminate a European outlook onto its member-states. The interplay between these three actors over Kosovo—Serbia, Albania and the EU—means that Kosovar national identity and memory can never be fixed.

This paper argued that it is not about whether or not Kosovo truly desires either a national or international state-building project; rather, it is about the way transnational linkages have the potential to affect the national memory and identity of a nation. It analyzed the historiography of memory and transnationalism to argue how 'national identification and what it is believed to imply' can shift dramatically and quite quickly.[96] Although referring to the Balkan region in general and how they perceive themselves, Diana Mishkova's summary can be applied to capture the interplay between memory and transnationalism in Kosovo: 'it is…easier to presume that just as the discourse of Balkanism has helped to shape the self-understanding of Europe, so too have Balkan perceptions of Europe shaped local narratives of collective cultural and social identity'.[97] It is Kosovo's adaptation of a European identity that will most likely result in a more stable self-conception of Kosovar identity.

87 Misha Glenny, 'Black Cloud over the Balkans', *New Statesman*, December 6, 2007, accessed June 11, 2016, http://www.newstatesman.com/world-affairs/2007/12/serbia-kosovo-russia-balkans.

88 'Dodik Insists RS has Right to Self-Determination', *B-92*, March 9, 2008, accessed June 11, 2016, http://www.b92.net/eng/news/region.php?yyyy=2008&mm=03&dd=09&nav_id=48307.

89 Quoted in Berg, 'Reexamining Sovereignty Claims in Changing Territorialities', 229.

90 Ibid.

91 Selçuk Çolakoğlu, 'Time for Independence for Northern Cyprus', *Turkish Weekly*, November 2, 2011, accessed June 12, 2016, http://www.turkishweekly.net/2011/11/02/comment/time-for-independence-for-northern-cyprus/.

92 For further examples see Rick Fawn, 'The Kosovo and Montenegro Effect', *International Affairs* 84, no. 2 (March 2008): 269-294.

93 Niżnik, 'National Identity', 388.

94 Saunier, 'Learning by Doing', 169.

95 Republika e Kosovës, *Kosova në Shifra 2008* [*Kosovo in Figures 2008*] (Pristina: Enti i Statistikës së Kosovës, 2009), 10.

96 Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 11.

97 Diana Mishkova, 'Symbolic Geographies and Visions of Identity: A Balkan Perspective', *European Journal of Social Theory* 11, no. 2 (2008): 239.