A Re-examination of Strategist Perspectives on the Causes of Wartime Sexual Violence in Bosnia


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The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice

‘A Re-examination of Strategist Perspectives on the Causes of Wartime Sexual Violence in Bosnia’

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Except for the appropriately referenced materials, this thesis is entirely my own work carried out under the supervision of Ulrike M Vieten

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This project is dedicated in loving memory of Marin Bajić, and to the Puljić family of Derventa, wherever they now rest.
ABSTRACT

This study examines the extent to which wartime sexual violence campaigns during the Bosnian conflict of 1992 to 1995 are comprehensively explained by strategic rape theory. As strategic rape theory deduces wartime sexual violence to a simple case of military strategy orchestrated by conflict actors, with the intention of instilling fear in opponent populaces, this study critically engages with attitudes towards gender and intersecting concepts of personal and national identity. The author asserts that the social placement of women in the pre-conflict Bosnian region birthed orchestrated campaigns of sexual violence. It is also argued that wartime sexual violence was further propelled by ethnic antagonisms widely controlled under Josip ‘Tito’ Broz during his leadership of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), which fiercely re-emerged in the vacuum created by his death. These assertions are achieved through an extensive review of existing literature, in addition to a critical and interpretive analysis of four films dealing with themes of gender, ethnicity, and wartime sexual violence in the Balkan space. It is intended that this study will inspire further research on the construction of attitudes towards gender and the effects of those attitudes on strategic wartime sexual violence campaigns.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI – Amnesty International
ARBiH – Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina
DPA – Dayton Peace Accords
FRY – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
HOS – Croatian Defence Forces (*Hrvatske Obrambene Snage*)
HVO – Croatian Defence Council (*Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane*)
GFAP – General Framework Agreement for Peace (see ‘DPA’)
JNA – Yugoslav People’s Army (*Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija*)
NDH – Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*)
RH – Republic of Croatia (*Republika Hrvatska*)
RS – Serb Republic (*Republika Srpska*)
SDA – Party of Democratic Action (*Stranka Demokratske Akcije*)
SFRY – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SSA – State Security Administration
UN – United Nations
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPROFOR – United Nations Protection Force
UNSC – United Nations Security Council
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INTRODUCTION

Thematic Context

The Bosnian conflict of April 1992 to December 1995 followed the declaration of Bosnia’s secession from the collapsing former republic of Yugoslavia, historically comprised of six states which have all now gained independent status. The conflict formally resolved with the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), more commonly known as the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA). Generated by the co-operation of both domestic and international actors, the DPA marked both the termination of violent conflict, and the recognition of the legitimate independence of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The Bosnian conflict involved three key belligerent actors loosely based on the ethnic, national, and religious descriptors associated with them; namely, Muslim Bosniaks who campaigned for independent statehood and freedom from Yugoslav rule, Orthodox Serbs who sought to maintain a union between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and the Bosnian region, and Catholic Croats, who sought to absorb areas of modern Herzegovina into the newly independent Republic of Croatia (RH). The United Nations (UN) have long affirmed that a Serbian and Bosnian Serb campaign of ethnic cleansing, executed predominantly against Muslim Bosniaks, began in March or April of 1992 and did not disperse until the implementation of the DPA (Fitzgerald, 2016). A post-conflict study by the Research and Documentation Center in Sarajevo concluded that during the period of conflict, 97,207 deaths occurred, with sixty-five per cent of fatalities of Bosnian Muslim background (BBC, 2007).

Widespread sexual violence was perpetrated by combatants from all three major warring parties, in the form of rape, forced pregnancy, and forced prostitution. Additionally, witness testimony suggests that personnel associated with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), sent to the region as peacekeepers, also conducted sexual violence against women who were illegally held captive and forced to work in makeshift brothels (Allen, 1996). The commonplace nature of wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict has captured belief that sexual violence in conflict only became a systemic phenomenon in late twentieth-century conflicts. However, wartime sexual violence is ancient, in fact featuring in the Torah (Gottschall, 2004). Rape was also widely utilised as a method of ethnic cleansing by the Nazis,
particularly in Poland and France (Neill, 2000). Yet, the use of sexual violence in the context of the Bosnian conflict was the first instance of an enormous systemic campaign being used openly by military operatives (MacKinnon, 1994).

**Research Aims**

The main question that this study examines is, “To what extent do strategist perspectives explain wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict?” This study deconstructs the post-conflict academic trend of blind subscription to strategic rape theory. While disproving wartime sexual violence as military strategy is not the intention, I reframe strategist perspectives as a narrow-sighted and incomplete explanation of the causes of wartime sexual violence, making exclusive reference to the events of the Bosnian conflict. To do so, I examine the effects of pre-existing gender roles and prejudices against women on the creation of conditions whereby wartime sexual violence became widespread. I also assess the quelling of ethnic antagonisms within Josip ‘Tito’ Broz’s Yugoslavia, the subsequent re-emergence of ethnic nationalism between 1980 and 1990 (the period immediately preceding the collapse of Yugoslavia, following the death of Tito), and the contribution of ethnic tension to the advent of wartime sexual violence in the region.

I make the case that dominant discourses of wartime sexual violence, as an apparatus of military strategy, fail to thoroughly consider the intricate and unique social conditions which underpinned the enormity of wartime sexual violence campaigns during the Bosnian conflict. I also argue that these strategist perspectives inadvertently frame Bosnian wartime sexual violence as a historical event, rather than one which has ongoing and serious social repercussions over two decades since the official demise of violent conflict.

**Definitions**

‘Strategic rape’ refers to the theory that wartime sexual violence in the context of the Bosnian conflict was a “coherent, coordinated, logical, and brutally effective means of prosecuting warfare” (Gottschant, 2004, p.131) as part of a wider systemic policy of ethnic cleansing. This is supported by the United Nations General Assembly Security Council’s description of sexual violence as a strategy to initiate hatred in a 1992 report (in Allen, 1996). Likewise, a European Community investigation conducted during the Bosnian conflict found wartime sexual violence campaigns in
the region to be both systemic and mandated in the FRY governmental ‘Ram’ and ‘Brana’ plans, verified by witness testimony (Seifert, 1994). As such, the terms ‘strategic rape theory’ and ‘strategist perspectives’ will be used interchangeably forthwith.

The term ‘wartime sexual violence’ has been chosen over ‘wartime rape’ to include sexually violating experiences which do not meet the conventional criterions of ‘rape’, specifically sexual assaults on men and oral sexual assaults. To clarify, this study defines the three majority ethnic groups of the region separately, as Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. However, the use of the term ‘Bosnian-Herzegovinians’ will refer to the entirety of the populace of BiH, encompassing all involved ethnic groups, where applicable.

**The ‘Numbers Game’: statistical limitations**

A fundamental impediment to studies on wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict is the lack of linear statistics confirming its extent and scope. As such, it is important to be aware of an existing ‘numbers game’ played out to support differing agendas: Whereas the Bosnian government suggests that between fifty and sixty thousand women in total endured sexual violence, the FRY government reported on eight thousand violated Serb women without making considerations towards Bosniaks or Croats. Equally, in 1993 the European Community assessed that twenty thousand Bosniak women had been subjected to wartime sexual violence, without reporting on Serb or Croat victims (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000, p.44). This indicates that individual governmental agendas influence the way in which estimates are made, particularly on ethnic bases, by shifting responsibility away from their own military personnel. European Community assessments also display a shortcoming in reliable statistics by omitting sexual violence committed against Serbs and Croats.

As of 2017, the UN High Commissioner has given evidence on twelve thousand *acts* of wartime sexual violence, rather than total victims (Rose, 2017). This highlights a further issue with statistics, as differentiations are to be made between the number of those subjected to wartime sexual violence, and the number of assaults faced. Additionally, prominent Croatian women’s organisation *Trešnjevka* has received criticism for exaggeration of statistics, as the group suggests that thirty-five thousand
women were imprisoned in rape camps alone, despite only around thirty of these camps being verified as existing (in De Brouwer, 2005, pp.9-10; Allen, 1996, p.65).

It is important to note that, as sexual violence is subject to underreporting in peacetime, measurements of wartime sexual violence are likely subject to the same conditions (Allen, 1996). This presents a statistical issue surrounding men subjected to sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict, substantiated in the fact by 2014, only four men had sought legal action for sexual war crimes through BiH’s domestic court system (OSCE, 2014, p.10). Concerningly, to date there are no statistics on wartime sexual violence experienced by regional ethnic minorities, for instance Romani people and Ruthenians, a self-identifying ethnic minority who follow Greek Catholic practices and speak in the Rusyn language (OSCE, 2012). Such gaps in data impact studies surrounding the underlying causes of wartime sexual violence, as these gaps limit the capacity to understand the scope of the issue.
METHODOLOGY

Approach and Techniques

This study utilises a mixed qualitative research approach, consisting of a secondary extended literature review, and the primary analysis of media content. As the study focuses on the identification and analysis of existing power structures, this is made possible through the utilisation of qualitative methods. I utilise exclusively qualitative methods to rigorously assess the role of imbalances of power, focusing on gendered imbalances and the consequent gendered targeting of wartime sexual violence campaigns during the Bosnian conflict. More focally, this study is founded on a flexible, interpretivist philosophy (Carson et al., 2001): by seeking to achieve depth of analysis of contributing factors rather than a broad, generalised synopsis of wartime sexual violence in the context of the Bosnian conflict, it is intended that this study makes methodologically reliable conclusions about wider societal influences on wartime sexual violence campaigns.

An exhaustive literature review synthesises existing studies on a topic which has, from other angles, been popularly researched. It is necessary to utilise an extended literature review simply to condense and demonstrate existing debates on social issues relating to the use of wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict. Extended literature review applies to Chapters One (Contesting the Placement of ‘Strategic Rape’ in Academic Discourse), Two (Women and Womanhood in Wartime Bosnia), and Three (Precursors to Wartime Sexual Violence: Tito’s Yugoslavia).

To apply conclusions made from primary research, I present a content analysis in Chapter Four (Narratives of Gender and Ethnicity in Film: a media content analysis). I utilise a critical approach to identify and analyse power relations on gendered and ethnic bases as substantiated through film: analysis of media content in film is an ideal method for this study as the wide audiences which films reach infers that the attitudes and themes displayed are popular, and therefore soundly indicate popular attitudes and perceptions of relevant themes. However, I also utilise interpretive content analysis techniques to “recreate the meaning” of the chosen visual texts (Angermüller, 2013, p.17), thus deeply analysing underlying attitudes and themes. To make a thorough assessment, considerations are made to choices of characters, dialogue content, and
the use of colour. By blending both critical and interpretive analytical frameworks, issues raised through an extensive review of literature are reinforced. This blended critical and interpretive content analysis deals with themes present in the opening scenes of four motion pictures from local pre-conflict and post-conflict eras, complemented by analysis of one international film, to effectively make a varifocal assessment of gendered and ethnicity-binary power structures, both regionally and internationally. Key themes presented by critically reviewing literature and analysing media content are synthesised and discussed in Chapter Five (‘Key Themes in Literature and Film’).

Scope Limitations

This study focally relates to the experiences of women who were subjected to wartime sexual violence, while also examining the effects of feminisation and conventional gender roles on adult males who faced sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict. Due to limited existing research and ethical constraints on the study of children subjected to wartime sexual violence, this category is omitted. Similarly, while issues of ethnicity are examined through a primary content analysis, for clarity examination of ethnic minority experiences of wartime sexual violence is also omitted: the absence of foundational studies on ethnic minorities subjected to wartime sexual violence means that there would be no secondary research with which to correlate and verify a primary analysis at this time. Therefore, a research gap is identified here.

Ethics Considerations

While it would be possible to conduct primary research in the form of interviews for this study, immediate limitations would hinder the integrity of the research: due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, it is likely that participants in an interview-based study would be exposed to the possibility of retraumatisation. Additionally, when making considerations towards practicality, survivors of wartime sexual violence in post-conflict BiH are a widely inaccessible demographic: although survivors of wartime sexual violence have generated new research by providing interviews, inconsistencies in recollections of experiences as a natural result of trauma (Mertus, 2004) would detriment the overall reliability of the project, while exposing survivors to the possibility of revisiting severely traumatic experiences.
Similarly, interviews conducted with perpetrators of wartime sexual violence would be both almost impossible and ethically contentious. ‘Verified’ perpetrators, or those who have been convicted of crimes relating to wartime sexual violence, would present a risk of disclosing guilty knowledge during interviews (Westwood et al., 2011). Moreover, it would be both ethically unsound and potentially harmful to correlate research findings between survivors and perpetrators, due to possible data protection issues, and risks of serious psychological and physical harm. As considerations towards research integrity are of paramount importance to this study, the consolidation of broad themes into precise analyses of contributing social factors to wartime sexual violence has therefore been achieved through alternative methods, which bypass immediate physical or emotional risks to participants.
CHAPTER 1: CONTESTING THE PLACEMENT OF ‘STRATEGIC RAPE’ IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

This chapter assesses the validity of popular academic discourse in relation to its subscription to strategic rape theory, and the implications of applying subsequent narrow insights offered by strategist perspectives to the intricate social conditions upon which wartime sexual violence occurred during the Bosnian conflict. This is vital to a wider assessment of strategist perspectives surrounding the Bosnian conflict, to clarify why wartime sexual violence was utilised by conflict actors at all. I make this assessment by firstly introducing alternative perspectives, to indicate the way in which broadly feminist perspectives are bypassed to accommodate strategist interpretations. Additionally, I examine the shift in international perspectives from depictions of perpetrators as disorganised individuals, to the confirmation of a command structure upholding sexual violence as a military tactic. As such, I indicate that perceiving wartime sexual violence exclusively as a military strategy fails to take into consideration contributing social factors.

1.1. An Introduction to Alternative Perspectives

It is necessary to introduce existing alternative theories attempting to explain dominant causes of wartime sexual violence in conflict: in doing so, contestations presented to dominant discourses surrounding military strategy as a standalone explanation for wartime sexual violence are substantiated. Firstly, ‘biosocial’ perspectives argue that wartime sexual violence will be a fixture of violent conflict as violent sexuality is a facet of human nature. Twinned with specific sociocultural factors, in this case the existence of a violent conflict, biosocial perspectives argue that both innate and external factors accelerate sexual violence in terms of its violent methods, scope, and scale (Gottschall, 2004). Biosocial arguments are heavily influenced by evolutionary psychological perspectives on sexual violence as a ‘natural’ progression of human evolution, whereby dominance is asserted over enemies in conflict through sexual assaults (Henry, 2016): according to evolutionary psychology, male anatomical characteristics mean that the penis can be weaponised (Neill, 2000). The identification of the penis as a weapon, and female genitalia as a receptacle of violence, thus influences Brownmiller’s idea of sexual violence as an “accident of biology” (1975, in Gottschall, 2004, p.133). However, biosocial perspectives are inherently flawed, as
depicting sexual violence as an inevitable fact of nature locates perpetrators in a place of diminished responsibility for their actions. This leads to a narrative of sexual violence as inevitable, and essentially something which should be accepted as both normal and natural in conflict settings.

‘Pressure cooker theory’ links embryonic feminist perspectives to the foundations of the biosocial argument on wartime sexual violence. It suggests that men have innate, sexually aggressive instincts that are restrained in peacetime. However, the chaotic violence of war permits male aggression to overflow like the vented gas of a pressure cooker (Gottschall, 2004), leading to campaigns of wartime sexual violence which are uncontrollable. Again, pressure cooker theory asserts that men are powerless to violent aspects of their biological makeup, therefore apportioning blame away from perpetrators of sexual violence as a result of conditions which they cannot escape (Seifert, 1994). Additionally, pressure cooker theory fails to account for sexual violence in peacetime, by depicting violent conflict as the catalyst for widespread sexual abuses. This leads to a disregarding of sexual violence as a wider social issue. Broadly feminist perspectives linked to biosocial arguments surrounding wartime sexual violence are also evident in MacKinnon’s study on rape pornography in the Bosnian conflict (1994; 2006). MacKinnon links some instances of wartime sexual violence to sadistic sexual desires. While careful to differentiate between some cases of sexual desire in a wider campaign of orchestrated sexual violence, MacKinnon is nevertheless criticised for the “rather impressive ignorance” of wider social characteristics of the Bosnian conflict (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000, p.62).

Feminist perspectives affirm that associating wartime sexual violence campaigns exclusively with military strategy fails to consider the multifaceted role of gender in wartime Bosnia. It is worth noting that, while feminist perspectives are loosely focused on gender’s role in the emergence and sustenance of wartime sexual violence, this term encompasses a broad range of thought. As a starting point, Ines Sabalic’s 1992 Report from Zagreb (in Seifert, 1994, p.65) concludes that wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict had clearly ritualistic elements, for example the cutting of breasts and the deep slashing of female stomachs with knives. Such mutilations indicate a cultural hatred of women, thus providing a useful theoretical framework with which to view wartime sexual violence.
It is also important to note succinct critiques of feminist discourses on wartime sexual violence more widely. Notably, Henry (2016) argues that the feminist gaze unduly fixates on the role of the recipient, or victim, of wartime sexual violence. This leads to limited explorations of both sociocultural causes of sexual violence, as well as fundamental understandings of perpetrators of sexual violence. However, I argue that a victim focus is a positive development in theories surrounding wartime sexual violence, as assessment and analysis of victimhood places rectifying injustice as the central objective of academic assessments of wartime sexual violence. Likewise, despite arguing that feminist perspectives limit considerations towards sociocultural issues beyond gender, Henry asserts that feminist scholars do identify problematic gender roles which otherwise invalidate the sexual abuses of men in violent conflict (2016). This inclusion is an important lens with which to assess the replacement of clear gender issues with less in-depth strategist perspectives, as it indicates real and pre-existing issues which accommodated wartime sexual violence as a campaign. Therefore, it is imperative to make considerations towards the gendering of wartime sexual violence as a military campaign.

1.2. “A Matter of Wandering Gangs”?

To assess the placement of strategic rape theory as the main explanation for wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict, it is vital to consider whether wartime sexual violence was indeed employed as a military strategy. In a UN report produced in October 1992, wartime sexual violence as a systemic and organised military strategy was entirely denied: it was instead attributed to “a matter of wandering gangs” of soldiers who acted without orders from higher command (UN, 1992, in Seifert, 1994, p.68). At this stage, there was no evidence that military leaders of conflicting factions planned campaigns of wartime sexual violence, although it was understood that systematic wartime sexual violence was a ‘successful’ strategy elsewhere (such as during the Bangladesh Conflict of 1971, where it is understood that in excess of twenty thousand rapes took place) (Gottschall, 2004, p.132).

The UN has since retracted reports on ‘wandering gangs’, as two interlinking FRY governmental plans, finalised in August 1991, indicate that wartime sexual violence was codified as military strategy. The ‘Ram’ and ‘Brana’ plans outlined a dual attrition and propaganda campaign aimed at creating the “spontaneous flight” of Bosnians and
Croats out of the Bosnian region (Bergoffen, 2005, p.73). ‘Spontaneous flight’ is synonymous with ‘ethnic cleansing’ as a result. However, the plans outlined a broad policy of ethnic cleansing and did not make clear or exclusive reference to sexual violence (Allen, 1996). Amnesty International (AI) resultantly argues that military and political leaders had prior knowledge of wartime sexual violence taking place on a large scale, but failed to act to condemn or sojourn it (1993). A further UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations review of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (2009) suggests that wartime sexual violence would have taken place on a smaller scale, had military and political leaders condemned it as a contravention of human rights. This is flawed, as the UN underestimates the FRY government’s intentions and capacity to actively engage in an ethnic cleansing campaign, which itself is an obvious contravention of human rights. Thus, as wartime sexual violence has historically proven to be a ‘successful’ utility in wider military strategy, the Ram and Brana plans indicate that organised and systemic sexual violence was employed as one facet of a wider, codified, and governmentally-verified ethnic cleansing policy.

FRY and Bosnian Serb Army perpetration of wartime sexual violence on an organised scale is also reinforced by witnesses. Consider firstly the testimony of ‘Mersada’, a Bosniak woman abducted and sexually abused by Bosnian Serb soldiers in 1992: ‘Mersada’ states that a soldier told her, “We have orders to rape the girls” (in Neill, 2000, p.48). The soldier’s choice of language makes it abundantly clear that commands were given from superiors to commit sexually violent acts on a large scale. Additionally, earlier testimony suggesting that soldiers who refused to commit these acts on command faced punishment from military superiors. This led to the widespread use of pornography and alcohol among Bosnian Serb soldiers to maintain erections (Allen, 1996), which supports the testimony given later by ‘Mersada’ (in Neill, 2000). A final piece of evidence taken from testimony is recorded by Bergoffen (2012), who comments on the use of Viagra by soldiers before committing acts of sexual violence: this emphasises that strategic rape theory can be particularly applied to Bosnian Serb soldiers, as failures to be aroused by committing sexual assaults further diminishes the credibility of describing regional wartime sexual violence as due to the actions of ‘wandering gangs’.
While the Ram and Brana plans indicate that the FRY government adopted wartime sexual violence as a feature of a wider ethnic cleansing policy, there is less secure evidence to suggest this was the case for other conflict actors. Fisher (1996) argues that sexual violence committed by the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH) and Croatian Army soldiers was both limited in scope, and unforeseen by the armies’ command structures. Allen (1996) suggests that FRY and Bosnian Serb policy was imitated by Bosnian Muslim and Croat conflict actors due to the fear instilled in enemy targets. Yet, this explanation is limited: Firstly, this contradicts Allen’s concurrent argument display of several witness testimonies affirming that women forced into prostitution were sexually abused by UNPROFOR personnel at illegal brothels (1996). Additionally, at least one detention centre was operated by the former Croatian Defence Forces (HOS), who functioned during the Bosnian conflict despite being absorbed by the official Croatian Army following Croatia’s War of Independence in 1991: testimony of both male and female survivors of Dretelj camp suggest that sexual abuse was routine there (Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, 2012).

Furthermore, it is difficult to find examples of sexual violence committed by the ARBiH during the Bosnian conflict as a distinct lack of research has been undertaken examining the prevalence of Bosnian-Herzegovinian sexual violence. This impediments a conclusive study of whether strategic rape theory can be applied to all major conflict actors. However, because the joint FRY and Bosnian Serb Army’s campaign of sexual violence was overt and visible, the first obvious and major misguided placement of strategist perspectives in academic discourse is that strategic rape theory cannot be verifiably applied to all conflicting parties. An exploration of sociocultural factors contributing to the prevalence of wartime sexual violence is therefore vital to make a thorough assessment of the extent to which strategist perspectives fail to explain its magnitude and sustenance throughout the period of conflict.

The marked change of wartime sexual violence’s explanation, from disorganised, sporadic ‘wandering gangs’, to codified and structured military strategy, makes room for debate surrounding the validity of strategist perspectives. While strategic rape theory offers important conclusions about wartime sexual violence as a weapon of conflict, it equally disregards contributing social factors: by framing wartime sexual
violence as an exercise in achieving dominance in conflict, strategist perspectives do not consider why it was that sexual violence was specifically chosen as an apparatus of conflict. Therefore, I argue that while strategic rape theory is not wrong, it is certainly poorly placed as the ultimate and standalone explanation for the emergence of wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict.
CHAPTER 2: WOMEN AND WOMANHOOD IN WARTIME BOSNIA

This chapter focally assesses the way in which Bosnian-Herzegovinian women were framed in the conflict era, and the effects this had on the targeting of women in military campaigns. Firstly, sexual violence as a genocidal assault on female reproductive capabilities is examined as a gender issue. Additionally, longstanding perceptions of women as symbols of particular ethnic groups are explored to highlight the way in which women were targeted in sexual violence campaigns. Finally, I assess the role of hegemonic masculinity, and methods utilised by conflict actors to treat women from other ethnic groups as both military and sexual conquests.

2.1. Genocidal Rape and the Single Purpose of Women

In shifting the focus of previous research on wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict away from narrow strategist interpretations, the argument surrounding sexual violence as a method of enacting a wider genocidal policy introduces perspectives on gender which maintain a deeper examination of the issue. By assessing the status of women as reproductive vessels, it is clarified that socially saturated prejudices against women significantly contributed to the rise and sustenance of sexual violence campaigns throughout the period of conflict, as an exhibition of “one more manifestation of the “undeclared” war upon women” (Sharratt, 1999, p.1).

While ‘genocidal rape’ simply refers to the military policy of rape for the purposes of genocide, this policy was conducted for two separate purposes in the context of the Bosnian conflict. Firstly, witness testimony claims that Bosnian Serb forces initially conducted sexual assaults in public: this was to incite fear into entire towns and villages at once. Further testimony substantiates that Bosnian Serb forces would then offer safe passage to those agreeing to flee as a result (Allen, 1996). This affirms that wartime sexual violence was indeed used as a tactic to ensure a successful scheme of ethnic cleansing. In reference to Armanda’s depiction of ‘femicide’, it is understood here that the fear caused by public sexual abuse was preyed upon by perpetrators due to pre-existing fears of rape experienced by women in patriarchal societies (in Allen, 1996, p.39).
Moreover, the establishment of rape camps saw continual rapes for both torture and impregnation (Allen, 1996): it is worth noting that one thousand women who survived sexual torture at these camps were made infertile as a result of abuses suffered (Mikulic, 2016). Children produced through abuses in rape camps were considered “miraculously purified” (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000, p.69) of the mother’s ethnicity as a result of Balkan societies adhering to patrilinealism, whereby children are assigned their father’s last name and ethnicity (De Brouwer, 2005). Although this portrays genocidal rape as a counterproductive strategy for perpetrators of sexual violence, patrilineal status in the Balkans is so unchallenged amongst the region’s dominant ethnic groups that the ethnicity of mothers is deemed wholly irrelevant. Furthermore, genocidal rape was based on the premise of women having no characteristics rather than as vessels for reproduction. This is verified as women who were unable to conceive were killed (Allen, 1996). As such, the utility of murder as a response to infertility secures the role of women as subordinates during the Bosnian conflict: to have one purpose in fulfilling a genocidal policy, namely bearing children of a certain ethnic lineage, indicates that women were considered reproductive vessels. As murder was used in the absence of the capacity to bear children, this highlights socially saturated perceptions of women as fit for only one purpose.

The dual utility of genocidal rape brings into question its effects on Bosnian culture during wartime. As Gottschall argues, wartime sexual violence “[degrades] the ability of a culture to replenish itself” (2004, p.131). Yet, legalist perspectives offered by Copelon (in Henry, 2016) argue that the overemphasis of cultural effects produced by genocidal rape results in a diminished understanding of rape more widely, as a violent crime against women. When applied to the use of genocidal rape in the Bosnian conflict, I identify three specific effects that were experienced exclusively by women: Firstly, unwanted pregnancy ensured that women were paraded in communities as receptacles to child-bearing, further ingraining the status of women as mere reproductive vessels. Secondly, genital wounding experienced by women who survived prolonged sexual torture in rape camps ensured that women were conditioned to henceforth correlate sex with danger, pain and infection. This can also be applied to male survivors who were subjected to genital wounds, although there is no evidence suggesting that men were interned in rape camps, but were rather subjected to sexual violence during incarceration in other forms of detention. Finally, the abandonment of
women by husbands and families following exposure to wartime sexual violence portrays these women as having engaged in infidelity, rather than being subjected to unwanted sexual abuse. While Allen suggests that rape camp survivors could not be abandoned as husbands were often killed (1996), it is worth noting that the extent to which wartime sexual violence resulted in divorce or abandonment has not yet been covered in existing literature. However, the cultural effects of genocidal rape experienced exclusively by women indicate the foundations of genocidal rape policy in stereotypes of women as otherwise purposeless reproductive vessels, particularly as these effects have impacted women’s lives far beyond the duration of violent conflict.

2.2. Gender Roles and Symbolism

It is necessary to examine the specific gender roles which are placed on women during conflict, as some scholars argue that traditional roles are challenged as a result of the social upheaval of war. Allen (1996) states that war is a catalyst for changing gender roles, as conflict settings perpetuate idealised standards of women as hunter-gatherers. Thus, it is argued that women benefit from conflict settings as they are attributed to heroic symbolism. However, this is clearly problematic on a practical level, as despite symbolism elevating the status of women, the realities of violent conflict diminish the significance of any heroism considered to be possessed by women. Furthermore, it is affirmed that the elevation of women’s status during conflict is temporary, as narratives of heroism in conflict apply disproportionately to soldiers¹, while “women are left with their shame” (Brownmiller, 1975, p.182). Nothing reinforces the validity of this statement more than the aftermath of abuses suffered by women as a result of wartime sexual violence.

While Allen’s argument that the heroic symbolism attached to women during conflict benefits them raises clear practical issues, it accommodates further debate about symbolism and gender roles in conflict, particularly the kind that harm women. Firstly, “the grand metanarrative of Woman Victim” (Mertus, 2004, p.115) features heavily in narratives surrounding the Bosnian conflict, with “discourses of powerlessness” (Hromadzic, 2007, p.169) perpetuating the timeless gender roles of women as feeble. This is harmful to female wartime sexual violence survivors, as it diminishes the

¹ Conflict parties accommodated female personnel: Allen (1996) exemplifies the ARBiH, and notes that women were usually responsible for positions in offices rather than as combatants (the latter typically characterised in narratives of national heroism).
capacity to feel any sense of empowerment. Moreover, the utility of gender roles as propaganda during wartime sexual violence campaigns elicits a difference between women ‘belonging’ to one’s social grouping, and women ‘belonging’ to enemy groups: this is historically related to the idea that ‘loose lips sink ships’, attributed to women of ‘other’ groups who seduce and untrustworthily give secrets to combat enemies (Niarchos, 1995). The stereotype of women as feeble is also evident in conflict symbolism differentiating between men as the agents of the nation, and women’s compartmentalisation into categories of weakness, such as the ‘mourning mother’, and of course the ‘rape victim’ (Lutz et al., 1995). When applied to wartime sexual violence campaigns during the Bosnian conflict, this ‘othering’ exposes sexual violence itself as a propaganda tool: by minimising abuses committed by their armed groups and focusing solely on violations committed by opponents (Amnesty International, 1993), conflict actors weaponise the ‘othering’ of women. In doing so, conflict actors also substantiate the existence of the aforementioned ‘numbers game’, whereby statistics on wartime sexual violence are calculated and embellished by involved agents (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000). This results in the disregarding and diminishing of the experiences of ‘other’ women, thus placing women firmly in a perpetual cycle of victimhood.

In 2011, the BiH domestic court convicted Albina Terzic, a female, Bosnian Croat former HVO combatant, to five years imprisonment for molesting and sexually abusing male prisoners who were unlawfully incarcerated in a former school and factory in Odzak (OSCE, 2014; Trial International, 2016). This indicates that male wartime sexual violence survivors’ experiences are disregarded as a result of narrow discourses on women as victims and men as perpetrators. However, I argue that men exposed to wartime sexual violence were also subjected to gender roles usually placed on women, in a process of feminisation: witness testimony continually affirms that perpetrators used misogynistic language (particularly ‘bitch’ and ‘whore’) (in Allen, 1996). It is not clear whether any anonymous testimonies expressing this were given by men, but the use of misogynistic language indicates that sexual abuses were carried out with full awareness of how to use gender to humiliate. Therefore, it would be logical for a perpetrator to feminise a male victim through the use of language. Likewise, the targeting of educated, professional women by perpetrators of wartime sexual violence (Allen, 1996; Amnesty International, 1993) indicates that these
women were seen to escape traditional confines into the boundaries of ‘masculine’ work.  

2.3. Hegemonic Masculinity

The gendered limitations placed on both women and men subjected to wartime sexual violence are fully situated only when concepts of masculinity are examined. Due to the widespread nature of wartime sexual violence campaigns during the Bosnian conflict, as well as co-ordinated perpetration of sex crimes rather than lone individuals, ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is an appropriate lens with which to assess gender roles. Coined by Connell in 1987, ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is a starting point with which to “conceptualise the relationship between gender and power” (Walklate, 1995, p.87): the idea argues that, in patriarchal societies, women are seen as sexual objects who provide men with validation through sexual conquests, therefore men compete for women (Donaldson, 1993). When applied to wartime sexual violence, Henry (2016) describes ‘militarized’ hegemonic masculinity, whereby this competition recreates peacetime gender inequalities in an exaggerated and chaotic way. While narrow and basic subscriptions blame perpetrators of wartime sexual violence as individuals rather than collectives (Allen, 1996), it is argued that hegemonic masculinity establishes bonds created between perpetrators in gang rapes (Bergoffen, 2012). As such, it is worth noting that where peacetime rape usually involves one perpetrator and one victim at a time, wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict was often carried out as a series of attacks committed by several perpetrators on one victim at a time (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000).

Continuing the trend of extreme manifestations of sexual violence, the distribution of rape pornography during the Bosnian conflict also links to the concept of hegemonic masculinity: MacKinnon states that rape pornography was filmed and distributed by Bosnian Serb actors (1994), yet it is important to note that research has not been undertaken to assess whether other conflict actors also distributed rape pornography. Although the existence of rape pornography remains contested, adamant reports suggest that in September 1992 a Banja Luka2 television station broadcasted such rape footage to all of Bosnia. The vast distribution of disturbing and illegal pornography in

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2 Banja Luka is the largest city and capital of Republika Srpska (RS). It was the centre of Bosnian Serb military operations during the conflict.
this manner served the purposes of inciting fear into civilian populaces, further humiliating victims, and normalising the threat of sexual violence against women (MacKinnon, 1994; 2006). This links to militarised hegemonic masculinity as a particularly chaotic and extreme manifestation of sexual violence. Additionally, militarised hegemonic masculinity is substantiated in rape pornography as a method of standardising abuses against women, and as an experience which can be revisited by perpetrators.

The preliminary existence of militarised hegemonic masculinity is substantiated in the historical questioning of pacifists and ‘conscientious objectors’, with war as an “initiation to manhood” (Niarchos, 1995, p.669). Simply put, engaging in violent conflict is culturally considered to be an activity which elevates a man’s place on the social hierarchy. On the other hand, socially ingrained and unquestioned ideas of women as ‘belonging’ to particular ethnic groups infer that wartime sexual violence campaigns conducted against women additionally humiliated male opponents: as buses of pregnant women were sent from rape camps to other ethnic territories, the pervasive social value that men have a duty to protect women displayed their incompetence (Seifert, 1994). Therefore, the concept of hegemonic masculinity illustrates complexities in concepts of what it is to be a man, which elevated wartime sexual violence against women to also be harmful to men.

In examining the status of women in conflict-era Bosnia, the shortcomings of explaining wartime sexual violence as a militarily strategic phenomenon are abundantly clear: The use of sexual violence as a genocidal instrument is inherently gendered, due to direct targeting of female reproductive capabilities to incite fear and eradicate ethnic groups. Gender issues are also overt in popular and largely unchallenged gender roles and stereotypes, typical of patriarchal societies and certainly prevalent in wartime Bosnia. Moreover, the concept of hegemonic masculinity demonstrates the way in which wartime sexual violence served perpetrators as an apparatus for bonding and competition. Therefore, focalising women and womanhood in wartime Bosnia is imperative to understanding the emergence of wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict.
CHAPTER 3: PRECURSORS TO WARTIME SEXUAL VIOLENCE: TITO’S YUGOSLAVIA

This chapter will explore the roles of nationalism and patriarchal social structures in the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). It will focus on the specific “socialist experience” (Todorova, 2004, p.16) leading to the complex SFRY social structure following the death of Tito in 1980. I frame the 1980s to 1990s as a time when ethnic antagonisms - which were buried but certainly existent under Tito’s regime - resurfaced. This is important to the wider study of sexual violence campaigns during the later Bosnian conflict, as scholars interpret Tito’s death as a marking point in both historical and new competitions emerging between ethnic groups (Denitch, 1994; Fisher, 1996). Therefore, I argue that ethnic hatreds, in conjunction with a long-standing patriarchal social structure, accelerated the scope of wartime sexual violence campaigns in Bosnia. In turn, I also argue that “cultural settings” (Neill, 2000, p.50) beyond the scope of ethnicity contribute to the individual experience of wartime sexual violence, taking into further consideration intersecting roles of class, profession, education, and age on the targeting of victims.

3.1. A Note on Cultural Orientalism

As the former Yugoslav space is a complex mix of ethnicities, it is important to be aware of orientalism in both international and domestic perspectives. ‘Orientalism’ (Said, 1978) describes “pervasive patterns of representation of cultures and societies” (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden, 1992, p.1), referring to dominant discourses which divide between a progressive, modern West over an exotic, impenetrable and essentially savage East. As Yugoslavia falls into both ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ categories, interpretations can be misled and problematic. Todorova criticises popular Western academic discourses for displaying the memorialisation of historical conflicts as central to Balkan national identity, leading to basic and unchallenged views that the Balkans are “cursed with too much history per square mile” (2004, p.2). The idea that the Balkans is inherently destined to be more violent than the rest of Europe is “methodologically dubious and non-anthropological” (Carmichael, 2002, p.103), as it places misguided limitations on the study of the Balkans by presenting the region as ‘too exotic’ to be understood.
However, it is equally important to note that orientalist perspectives have been historically prevalent within the former Yugoslav space. For instance, Bakic-Hayden and Hayden (1992) frame Slovenes and Croats, who are incidentally culturally aligned to ‘Western’ values, as intrinsically orientalist cultures, because self-identifying as ‘Western’ justifies feelings of domination over ‘Eastern’ Balkan peoples, particularly Serbs and Bosnian Muslims. Locally, women have been identified as objects of orientalist stigmatisation within conflicting Balkan cultures: Žarkov (1995; 2007) explains that the sexuality of ‘other’ women is considered uncontrollable and primitive. This places wartime sexual violence campaigns against women of ‘other’ ethnicities as a brutal display of ethnic antagonism. Therefore, this chapter seeks to thoroughly investigate the scope, duration and limits of these ethnic antagonisms.

3.2. Falsehoods of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’

I firstly assess the notion of harmonious ethnic relations in Yugoslavia, and in doing so I substantiate that Tito’s ‘second Yugoslavia’ (Denitch, 1994) harboured antagonisms between ethnic groups. The SFRY particularly failed to completely quell existing tensions between Serbs and Croats, who have long been considered bastions of East and West respectively (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden, 1992). The ideology of Yugoslavia was based heavily on the slogan of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’, as a marking point of what Bakic-Hayden and Hayden describe as a perpetuation of “pageantry and ceremony… aimed at reinforcing the ideology” of Yugoslavian socialism (1992, p.6). In unpacking the slogan in its most basic form, the ideology of Yugoslavia, then, fed into both gender inequality and hegemonic masculinity, with ‘brotherhood’ referring to harmony between men, and ‘unity’ reinforcing this ideal. Practically, it appears that Tito was indeed able to achieve a level of ‘brotherhood and unity’ within Yugoslavia, as twenty-five per cent of Serbs and Croats were settled outside the borders of their previous republics (Ignatieff, 1994, p.16): this balance enabled Tito to moderate nationalist sentiments. On the surface, this ethnic harmony proved fruitful, and discredits the idea of uncontrollable ancient hatreds among the former Yugoslav republics as little more than a “convenient theory” (Drakulić, 1996, p.211).

Contrarily, Tito’s SFRY wrested on inevitable discrimination. For example, the State Security Administration (SSA) - the secret police service of the SFRY - favoured Serbian personnel, as only one Croat official ever worked at the Sarajevo headquarters
Serb personnel also constituted the majority of Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) officers, with a particularly dominating presence at higher command levels (Vujačić, 2015). This indicates that positions of power were extended to favoured ethnic communities in the most authoritative positions of Yugoslav society. Yet, as Tito was an ethnic Croat, Lendvai (1969) argues that he attempted to detract from the Serbian ruling elite, by giving Republics separate courts, constitutions and legislative powers, as well as declaring the official languages of Yugoslavia as Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, and Macedonian, in 1974. However, the absence of Bosnian as an official language reinforced the status of Yugoslav Muslims as ‘unofficial’, giving recourse to ethnic tension. Likewise, the ‘Croatian Spring’ of 1971, which saw an attempted Croatian independence uprising, challenges the idea that nationalism was entirely eradicated under Tito (Žarkov, 2003). Denitch (1994) argues that apart from Croatian slaughters at the Jasenovac camp during the Second World War and the Chetnik massacres taking place in the interim period between the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the SFRY, Serbs and Croats had good relations for centuries. However, this basic prescription fails to consider the extent of destruction during this time: seventeen thousand Serbs, Jews, Communists and Gypsies were exterminated at Jasenovac during its operational years of 1941 to 1945 (Drakulić, 1996, pp.136-137). Tito bulldozed the camp in the 1960s and replaced it with a memorial centre (Ignatieff, 1994). While this may have been intended as a reconciliatory action between Serbs and Croats, it had the effect of erasing history without proper recognition.

It is also important to understand the placement of Muslims in Tito’s SFRY. ‘Muslims’ were only granted definition in the ethnic sense in 1971, being allowed to recognise the Ottoman influence on their culture (Carmichael, 2002; Drakulić, 1996). As Serbs outnumbered Croats at a ratio of 2:1, Muslims were “poised precariously in the middle” as a group of leverage (Lendvai, 1969, p.157). This relatively new recognition explains slogans and chants devised under the mobilisation of Serb nationalism in the late 1980s, including ‘Oh Muslims, you black crows, Tito is not around to protect you’ (Carmichael, 2002, p.26). This interpretation of Tito’s recognition of Yugoslav Muslims as a standalone ethnic group indicates that new perceived threats to dominant ethnic groups in Yugoslavia, as a direct result of Tito, materialised as a cause for vengeance during the Bosnian conflict. Therefore, the placement of Muslims under
Tito indicates that ethnic antagonisms were indeed moderated during Tito’s ‘second Yugoslavia’, but also certainly existed.

Pre-existing ethnic antagonisms became more apparent in the decade following Tito’s death. This is most evident in the manipulation of ethnic tensions enacted by newly-emerging national and political personalities in the Yugoslav space. For example, in 1970 Alija Izetbegović wrote *The Islamic Declaration: A Programme for the Islamisation of Muslims and the Muslim Peoples*, and was subsequently imprisoned for ‘Islamic activities’. In *The Islamic Declaration*, Izetbegovic wrote, “there can neither be peace nor coexistence between the Islamic religion and the non-Islamic social and political institutions” (1970, in Liotta, 2003, p.89). While this was possibly an expression of anger for the suppression of Islamic culture in the Balkans prior to 1971, it indicates a future of overt ethnic tension in the absence of Tito. As Izetbegović went on to lead the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and became the popular first president of BiH in 1993, this indicates the prevalence of ethnic nationalism and the scope with which it was subscribed to in the vacuum following Tito’s death.

Moreover, Ignatieff (1994) argues that by the late 1980s, Slobodan Milošević intended to directly exploit the collapse of Yugoslavia, as a collapse would mean that ethnic groups would find themselves threatened and vulnerable national minorities. It is important to note however that footage available in *The Death of Yugoslavia: Enter Nationalism* (Percy, 1995) captures Milošević speaking to a Kosovo Serb nationalist crowd in 1987, proclaiming that “exclusive nationalism, based on national hatreds, can never be progressive”. He is met with a reply by a member of the audience who states that “the Communist Party has done nothing for us!”. This highlights marked ideological shifts in Serbian nationalism, away from a hybrid of socialist and nationalist ideals, to a more extreme and rigid form of Serbian elitism. Ignatieff places the cause of Serbian nationalism’s rise on Serb vulnerabilities to Croatian nationalism (1994). This explains the following disproportionate Serbian ethnic cleansing campaign during the Bosnian conflict, but fails to pinpoint why wartime sexual violence was strategised on an enormous scale against Bosnian Muslim women. Ramet (1996) consequently highlights Milošević’s fear of women from other ethnic groups: this is substantiated, considering that the majority of Milošević’s support came from middle-aged, male, ethnic Serb peasants. This contributes significantly to the targeting of educated, professional women during wartime sexual violence campaigns.
3.3. Gender, Nationalism and Identity

In applying feminist perspectives, it is substantiated that gender equality fell short of expectations of traditional socialist ideology in Yugoslavia. It is important to note that Marxism-Leninism was more ideologically prevalent in North Eastern and Central European regimes than in Southern European socialism (Gallagher, 2003), therefore it is difficult to understand the complex role of gender in Yugoslavia. Ideologically however, Tito’s Yugoslavia clearly encouraged women in the workforce. Gal and Kligman (2000) attribute this to socialist ‘gender orders’, whereby gender divisions are erased so that everybody is equally reliant on the state. Therefore, gender was nonetheless dictated and controlled during Tito’s Yugoslavia. Additionally, the paradox of women as symbols of a competent workforce and of mothers led to a ‘double shift’, whereby limiting expectations were placed on women as a result of being required to fit two roles not expected of men (Gal and Kligman, 2000). Inequalities also extended in practicality, as managerial positions were dominated by men across all sectors (Čaušević et al., 2012), despite the industrialisation of agriculture which could have given new opportunities to women in a wider job market. In Tito’s Yugoslavia, clear mechanisms were put into place to reach gender equality. For example, government incentives resulted in forty thousand women becoming literate between 1946 and 1947 alone. However, seventeen per cent of women in rural areas were still unable to read and write by the late 1960s (Čaušević et al., 2012, p.97). Likewise, the contribution of women to the progress of socialism was openly praised during the establishment of the 1974 Constitution, yet ideological feminism only ever reached academic circles (Čaušević et al., 2012). It is also important to note that the first woman to graduate from Sarajevo Theological College did so in 1981 (Clarke and Clark, 1981, p.414): while this can be attributed to religious restrictions or pure coincidence, female breakthroughs in higher education took place only following Tito’s death. This indicates that class issues varied the experience of women in Tito’s Yugoslavia.

The placement of women in discourses implicating Islamic communities is a clear indicator of prevalent gender narratives in Tito’s Yugoslavia. Firstly, nationalist discourses from the ‘westernised’ Yugoslav republics portray Muslim and Orthodox communities as less tolerant of women than Catholics (Ramet, 1996). This heralds internal orientalism, as an illustration of Balkan Catholic perceptions of ‘Eastern’
ethnic groups as uncivilised and regressive. However, it is important to note that the experience of Muslim women in Yugoslavia was unique, in that Sharia Law contains more about the duties of women than constitutional law did (Kalihic-Kaurin, 1994). Kalihic-Kaurin (1994) argues that religious restraints placed on women under Sharia Law have continually reinforced the values of ‘honour’ and ‘dignity’ in the Bosnian Yugoslav space. This is evident in the popular allegory of ‘Emina’, a Muslim woman who, during the Second World War, took up a gun to defend her hometown against invading Chetnik forces. Upon failing to save the town with military force, Emina begged for death before being disgraced. This story indicates conditions in which the Muslim woman is placed, as Emina shows more willing to be killed than to be raped. However, Emina’s role as a soldier defies traditional gender roles associated with women in Islam, as child-rearing and a domesticated existence are traded for weapon-wielding courage. Yet, narratives of Muslim women as mothers evidently permeated society during the collapse of Yugoslavia: a blatant example is testimony provided by a Bosnian Serb soldier interviewed in April 1992, during the Siege of Sarajevo, who stated that, “[Muslim] women are bitches and whores. They breed like animals, more than ten per woman” (in Carmichael, 2002, p.33). This illustrates the structural role of Muslim women as ‘breeding machines’, as internalised by Yugoslavian society. Moreover, it reinforces that wartime sexual violence campaigns were enacted under the awareness that women birth next generations, and therefore women are prime targets.

Seifert (1994) argues that, in patriarchal societies, women are prime targets of violent conflict due to internalised pre-existing symbolism of women as familial. This is reinforced by UN peacekeeper, Patrick Cammaert (in United Nations Office of the High Commissioner, 2008), who asserts that it is more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier during periods of violent ethnic conflict more widely. In the case of the Bosnian conflict, instances of fathers being forced to rape their daughters (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000) indicate the extent to which the family unit was targeted. Additionally, it is noted that a common early tactic of wartime sexual violence was that soldiers would enter homes for illegal weapons searches, and conducting torture and rapes within the homes thereafter (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000). Similarly, testimony provided by a young Muslim woman known as ‘Azra’ affirms that wartime sexual violence was often enacted by former neighbours of victims, due to ethnic
communities previously living together in towns and cities (in Folnegovic-Smalc, 1994). This indicates the invasion of privacy and violation of the sanctity of the home as a result of wartime sexual violence. However, interpreting wartime sexual violence as an attack on the wider community neglects the aspect of destruction of the individual: Skjelsbæk (2012) affirms that the humiliation caused by wartime sexual violence eroded the personal identity of victims, with erosion of communities happening only as a consequence. Moreover, while popular discourses assert that women subjected to wartime sexual violence have re-entered their communities as defiled and tarnished (Folnegovic-Smalc, 1994), it is particularly important to view the stigmatisation of wartime sexual violence victims with caution in cases of violent conflict based on ethnicity. This is because identifying Muslim wartime sexual violence survivors as always stigmatised by their communities has inherently racist undertones (Allen, 1996): disproportionate research on stigmatisation of Muslim women, as opposed to Croat, Serb, or ethnic minority women who were subjected to wartime sexual violence, paints the Bosnian Islamic community as unreasonable and archaic.

Notions of national identity in the SFRY equally contribute to understanding gender as intersecting with ethnicity, religion and class. As such, national identity also had an effect on the placement of women into traditional, patriarchal gender roles, during the Bosnian conflict as well as in the socialist Yugoslav era. Fisher (1996) establishes that Yugoslavian Muslims were historically used as a point of leverage. Firstly, Muslims were pressured to declare themselves as ethnically Serb following the First World War. Equally, Muslims were pressured to align with Croats and the Fascist Independent State of Croatia (NDH) during the Second World War. By being “left to occupy a nebulous undefined category in the eyes of the Yugoslav state” (Fisher, 1996, p.117), ‘Bosnian Muslim’, as an ethnicity, was vacuous and subject to conquering. Therefore, sexual violence directed at Muslim women during the Bosnian conflict stems from aspirations to invalidate the standalone ethnic identity of Bosnian Muslims.

Additionally, measures taken to diminish Serbian dominance in Yugoslavia means that Serbian historical memory defines Tito as anti-Serb: begrudgingly, Serbian industrial plants were transferred to Croatia and Slovenia in the late 1940s (Ramet, 1996). This economic disservice also links to the feeling that Serbs had been
historically marginalised, which directly contributes to later wartime sexual violence as a backlash. However, objective historical memory affirms that, in Tito’s Yugoslavia, people were promoted based on ideology and being of Serbian ethnic background, rather than qualifications and aptitude (Gallagher, 2003). Therefore, Serbian historical memory is imbalanced. Serbian ideas of national identity are further multifaceted by their military history: consider for example dominant discourses of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, which is still referenced heavily. This links to Niarchos’s (1995) argument that the more militaristic a society, the more sexist. Consider the testimony of Borislav Herak, a Bosnian Serb soldier convicted of thirty-two murders and sixteen rapes, who attributed his actions to the need for “Serbian morale” (in MacKinnon, 1994, p.75): Herak describes wartime sexual violence as a pathway to upholding patriarchal Serbian structures. While Serbia cannot be described as a major military power, this does indicate the influences of eight hundred-year old cultural narratives of conflict and the sexist undertones which accompany it. Yet, it is worth noting that the National Museum of Serbia was closed for fifteen years before any resistance to its closure, which remains weak. This indicates that Serbians have a preference “for narratives over proper history and heritage” (Garcevic, 2017). Nevertheless, it remains unclear what ‘proper’ history and heritage is. Moreover, this indicates the power of traditional patriarchal gender roles and the effects that they had on Serb campaigns of wartime sexual violence.

What Ignatieff describes as the “narcissism of minor difference” (1994, p.14) is based on the idea that separate Yugoslavian national identities are based on hatred of the other. For example, a Croat is defined as ‘not Serb’, and a Serb is defined as ‘not Croat’. This toxic method of self-identification contributes to understandings of wartime sexual violence as a tactic to cancel out the ‘minor difference’ in other ethnic groups. Therefore, this is directly linked to genocidal rape. This theme is reinforced widely, notably by Drakulić’s statement that in the late 1980s she self-identified in terms of gender, education and personality, whereas the conflicts in the wake of Yugoslavia’s collapse meant she felt pressured to identify simply as Croatian (1996; Ignatieff, 1994). Equally, it is important to mention that feminist groups from differing ethnic categories refused to meet during the Bosnian conflict (Žarkov, 2003). This indicates the effect of new ways of defining identity and the power ethnicity has on identity. It also typifies social constructivist perspectives surrounding how ‘othering’
can become normalised: Towns’ description of women “as a standard of rank in international hierarchical society” (2013, p.6) suggests that social norms are developed through the idolisation of “civilised” societies, and the demonization of the “barbarous” (p.7). However, this prescription does not offer a full explanation of links between gender and national identity in the Balkan space. Firstly, Serbian tradition means that women are given status with age. Consider the popular phrase, ‘even God has a mother’ (Ramet, 1996): female elders are respected. This indicates that national identity is fluid and susceptible to change on the bases of external influences, such as age. When applied to wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict, narrow descriptions of national identity lead to a problematic assumption that all female victims have the same experience, without considering the role of other categories of identity (Hromadzic, 2007). Essentially, the wartime sexual violence experience of an elderly, rural, woman is completely different to the experience of a teenager from an industrialised town. Therefore, narrow categorisations of national identity harmfully prescribe one single wartime sexual violence experience. This skews the understanding of the Bosnian conflict’s many complexities, and fails to take into consideration the role of intersectionality when addressing concepts of identity.

In examining the social structure of Tito’s Yugoslavia, it is clear that gender was uniquely framed, between socialist doctrines of equality amongst sexes and traditional, patriarchal conditions under which gender was categorised. The social structure of Tito’s Yugoslavia was further complicated by a plethora of ethnic identities attempting to gain recognition and authority. This led to a legacy of ethnic antagonism which played out in the Bosnian conflict, with an amalgamation of ethnic and gender prejudices resulting in the emergence of wartime sexual violence. Therefore, the lasting impression of social conditions under the rule of Tito, and in the period between his death and the emergence of violent conflict, are subject to both domestic and external cultural orientalism, which directly contributes to the flawed framing of wartime sexual violence as a military strategy that emerged from nowhere.
CHAPTER 4: NARRATIVES OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY IN FILM: A MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I interpret prevalent narratives surrounding gender and ethnicity in film, in order to establish clear links between cinematic representations of women, identity, and wartime sexual violence. The opening scenes of four films have been selected for analysis, to illustrate the foundations upon which attitudes towards ethnicity and gender are developed: two films distributed in the decade following Tito’s death (Do you Remember Dolly Bell? (1981) and Time of the Gypsies (1985)), directed by established Yugoslav filmmaker, Emir Kusturica, have been selected as foundations on which I analyse prevalent social attitudes towards gender and ethnicity in post-Tito SFRY. I chose to analyse these particular titles as they deal explicitly with perspectives on gendered, racial and ethnic differences. Additionally, Goran Paskaljevic’s Cabaret Balkan (1998) is explored to reinforce the prevalence of existing prejudices in Yugoslavia following the cessation of the Bosnian conflict. Finally, I analyse Angelina Jolie’s In the Land of Blood and Honey (2011), to assess the lenses in which the international community views wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict. I also exemplify In the Land of Blood and Honey to clearly demonstrate misled and orientalist perspectives on identity. In doing so, I reinforce the argument that wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict cannot be explained by strategist perspectives alone.

It is worth noting the importance of the years in which the four films chosen for analysis were distributed. By choosing a sample of films from a broad time period, I firstly critically assess prevalent attitudes and stereotypes in the era directly following the death of Tito. 1998’s Cabaret Balkan is analysed in terms of clear social attitudes and themes while the Bosnian conflict was still raw and topical in the Balkans. Furthermore, the analysis of an international film distributed sixteen years after the cessation of the Bosnian conflict indicates the longevity and continuation of these themes from external perspectives.

4.1. ‘Do you Remember Dolly Bell?’

Emir Kusturica’s 1981 debut film, Do you Remember Dolly Bell? (original: ‘Sječas li se Doli Bel?’), focuses on a teenage boy named Dino and his life in an undetermined
Sarajevo neighbourhood. Set in the 1960s, Dino’s poverty leads him into the underworld of petty crime, where he provides a hiding place for a young prostitute known as Dolly Bell. The story follows Dino’s falling in love with Dolly Bell, and is the first instance of the ‘coming of age’ theme illustrated in Kusturica’s filmography. Thus, the film’s immediate theme focuses on the salvation of a young woman. This is particularly important when understanding historical contributing factors to wartime sexual violence, as women are placed on a scale of vulnerability and defilation from the outset, based on age and occupation.

The film opens with an SFRY official addressing a community meeting about juvenile delinquency in the area. The first word spoken is “comrades”: this situates the storyline in the context of Yugoslavian socialism. The scene is accompanied by gloomy surroundings, with bare walls, no decorations, and grey and brown tones which are continued throughout the film. This illustrates the austerity of socialism. Ravetto-Biagioli attributes this to a trend of films set in Eastern Europe’s “predemocratic” era offering “poignant criticism of political and social repression under socialism… without also celebrating democracy” (2012, p.77). It is important to note that Do you Remember Dolly Bell? was distributed in 1981, in the year following the death of Tito. Therefore, the film’s setting in the 1960s is an attempt to reminisce on Tito’s regime, whereby the ethnicity or religion of characters is never specifically referred to. This is an insight into Emir Kusturica’s personal feelings towards ethnicity: born in 1954 into a secular Bosnian Muslim family, Kusturica later denounced Islam and was received into the Serbian Orthodox Church, assuming Serb ethnicity as a result (Halpern, 2005). However, Kusturica also describes himself as ‘Yugoslav’ (Halpern, 2005). Kusturica’s complex ethnic identity and presentation of Yugoslavian socialism in film challenges Western perceptions of ethnic division amongst groups in the former Yugoslav space, while also giving insight into the intricacy of self-identity. When applied to wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict, this reinforces Hromadzic’s argument (2007) that ‘identity’ is a term loaded with complexity, thus this needs to be taken into consideration when understanding the experience of wartime sexual violence survivors, ultimately as individuals.

The scene shows ‘Marbles’ emerging from a kiosk to tell stories of sexual exploits to Dino and his young friends. Marbles begins, “What a whore that Ljubica is… I went for her knickers, and, by God, she had none on”. This illustration of an older boy
telling sexually explicit stories to younger adolescents indicates prevalent, derogatory attitudes towards women and the passing-on of these attitudes towards youth. Themes of gender prejudice continue into the illustration of Dino’s meagre, one-roomed home. Dino’s older brother, Kerim, takes food from his younger brothers’ plates and has a demeaning attitude towards his siblings. However, when the drunk father returns home and rouses his three sons from bed to have a family meeting, Kerim is scolded for his bullying, although the father himself goes on to hit and shout at all of his sons: this reinforces a hierarchy of dominance amongst men in Yugoslav households. Additionally, the lack of invitation for Dino’s mother, Sena, to the family meeting suggests the prevalence of masculinity in key decision-making. Meanwhile, Sena is left to clear the table, and is shown mending a leak in the ceiling whilst her sons eat. While the men conduct their family meeting, Sena asks Dino to fetch water, to which the father tells her not to interrupt. This highlights the role of women as disregarded home-makers. It is important to note here that a content analysis conducted between 2003 and 2004 shows that school texts in BiH featured less women than men in texts, while only ten women were mentioned as having professions, opposed to eighty-three men in thirty-two jobs (Paseka, in Čaušević et al., 2012, p.104). Therefore, prevalent attitudes towards women as ambitionless, domestic people are present in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society both before and after wartime sexual violence, displaying the extent to which gendered roles have saturated the local conscious. Conversely, when Dino’s father hits him, Sena immediately steps in to protect her son. This validates arguments on wartime sexual violence as destruction of the community, due to the paradoxical portrayal of women as both helpless and vulnerable, and as guardians of the domestic sphere.

4.2. ‘Time of the Gypsies’

Time of the Gypsies (original: ‘Dom za Vešanje’) is a 1988 movie directed by Emir Kusturica. Like Do You Remember Dolly Bell?, Time of the Gypsies follows themes of coming of age and juvenile delinquency: Perhan, a teenage Romani Gypsy boy with telekinetic abilities, is tricked into a petty criminal lifestyle, and is ultimately led from an undetermined Gypsy settlement in Yugoslavia to Milan.

The opening scene characterises Perhan’s native village as a filthy settlement, with grey buildings and a floor made entirely of mud. Additionally, many farm animals are
shown roaming freely. Narratives of animalism and filth are reinforced when, after losing at gambling, Perhan’s older brother declares that he would have won “if only [he] had a man in front of [him]. But he is a swine”: references to gambling exemplify prevalent racist stereotypes of gypsies as work-shy, and living in filthy conditions because of their reluctance to integrate with wider society. Such persecution is an extension of the domestic orientalist perceptions of ‘Eastern’ former Yugoslav ethnic groups being savage and impenetrable in comparison to ‘Western’ former Yugoslav peoples, as clarified by Bakić-Hayden and Hayden (1992) and Žarkov (2007). The scene shows a Yugoslavia which is rural and impoverished, and links to Ravetto-Biagioli’s analysis of ‘predemocratic’ Eastern European cinema as critical of socialism while offering no clear recourse to alternative systems (2012). When applied to arguments surrounding the onset of wartime sexual violence, portrayals of rural communities living in dirt and without clear amenities reinforces the non-linear experience of wartime sexual violence (Hromadzic, 2007), according to identity factors such as class, location and occupation.

During the opening scene of *Time of the Gypsies*, references of fate and luck are made to situate Perhan’s telekinetic powers, with four uses of the word ‘God’ in the film’s first five minutes. However, these references to mysticism also inadvertently highlight the roots of orientalism in perspectives on wartime sexual violence and the Balkans as a whole: consider for example the live turkey that is brought as a gift to Perhan’s grandmother, Khaditza, by the wife of a man who Khaditza heals of an unspecified ailment. Whereas Khaditza is dressed in traditional gypsy attire, the woman who brings a turkey is dressed in western fashion, and specifies that she is bringing the turkey as a gift “for luck”. The juxtaposition between gypsy and non-gypsy, as well as the reference to mysticism, supports Žarkov’s argument (2007) of otherness between differing ethnic groups in the former Yugoslav space. Therefore, the portrayal of arcane interactions between gypsy and non-gypsy is metaphorical for the perceptions ethnic groups held about each other both precluding and during the Bosnian conflict.

In the opening scene, it is verified that Perhan’s older brother engaged in sexual intercourse with a gypsy girl described as not having reached the age of eleven. While marching her angrily to the door of Khaditza’s home, the girl’s mother hits her before complaining to Khaditza that her grandson has “defiled” and “ruined” her daughter.
Khaditza responds with allegations that the young girl “felt nice when [she] was under him”, resulting in threats of death, eye-gouging and castration. However, both Khaditza and the young girl’s mother agree that a marriage between Perhan’s brother and the ten-year-old girl would be a suitable, non-violent alternative course of rectification. In unpacking this series of events, the placement of women in Yugoslavian cinema and society as a whole is made abundantly clear. Firstly, the young girl being hit by her mother indicates blame placed on victims for non-consensual sexual intercourse. This is reinforced by Khaditza’s allegation: by minimising the lack of consent which a ten-year-old can give, Khaditza rationalises the young girl’s experience as one which she was to blame for. Language used to describe the interaction indicates that how a sexual violence victim is perceived by the outside world is more important than the feelings of the victim themselves. This links to the vilification of wartime sexual violence survivors as a result of external stigmatisation surrounding sex and impurity (Folnegovic-Smalc, 1994). Moreover, marriage between Perhan’s brother and the young girl as a satisfactory resolution to the issue reinforces the extent to which absences of sexual consent is disregarded when dealing with sexual violence in patriarchal societies.

4.3. ‘Cabaret Balkan’

Goran Paskaljevic’s *Cabaret Balkan* (original: ‘Bure Baruta’, 1998) chronicles a patchwork of interlinking stories surrounding twenty people in one night in Belgrade, at an undetermined date in the mid-1990s. This is important as the film is situated in the wake of cessation of violent conflict in BiH, but its distribution in 1998 gives a recent-historical perspective on the conflict from the lens of the final year of the FRY’s existence. Additionally, elements of violence, corruption and sadism which feature heavily throughout *Cabaret Balkan* reinforce feminist arguments of wartime sexual violence as a primarily gendered campaign.

*Cabaret Balkan*’s opening scene introduces the audience to an eighteen-year-old, Alex, driving recklessly without a license, heckling a young woman to get into his car, and chasing her while she runs on foot. Alex then crashes the car and is met with the anger of the driver of the other vehicle, who is later introduced as Jovan. The opening impression of *Cabaret Balkan*, then, is commentary on the way in which women are routinely harassed by ‘catcalling’ in the FRY. However, upon crashing the car, the
young woman winks at Alex, and makes a ‘flipping the bird’ gesture, before walking away calmly with a smile on her face. This links directly to the gendering of wartime sexual violence, as it is inferred that sexually abusive violations against women are criminal, and that gendered violence is ultimately met with reciprocal violence from other men. Jovan’s violent reaction to Alex colliding with his car therefore illustrates hierarchies of command in hegemonic masculine structures: Jovan did not become violent because of Alex’s choice to harass a young woman, but rather because Alex hurt his property. Therefore, belongings are shown to be more important than women. When the same scenario is applied to wartime sexual violence, this is metaphorical for military command structures validating the use of wartime sexual violence, not consciously as a strategy against women, but with blatant undertones of gender prejudices which saturated the former-Yugoslav space. Additionally, this scene brings into play the role of karma, and the idea of poor choices having unfortunate consequences, which links to themes of mysticism and spirituality explored heavily in Kusturica’s *Time of the Gypsies*.

The first scene of *Cabaret Balkan* then follows Jovan’s journey, accompanied by an unnamed friend, to find Alex’s whereabouts. On finding the correct apartment, Jovan confronts Alex’s father, Viktor, and smashes mirrors, cabinets and ornaments in the home. This invasive destruction of property indicates the use of home invasion as a tactic of inciting terror as a fixture in violent exchanges in the former-Yugoslav space, much like Nikolic-Ristanović’s affirmation of wartime sexual violence taking place in victim’s homes during the Bosnian conflict (2000). It is also important to note that Jovan’s unnamed friend takes a photo of Viktor’s wife which Viktor attempts to rescue, and smashes it. Making a point of destroying visual representations of women reaffirms the argument that, as symbols of the domestic sphere, the use of wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict was intended to ruin communities directly by the targeting of women. Moreover, Jovan’s use of popular insults, such as ‘u pičku materinu’ (‘your mother’s cunt’) and ‘pička’ (‘cunt’), indicates the extent to which gendered insults are used with flippancy. This also validates Allen’s argument (1996) that the use of gendered slurs during the enactment of wartime sexual violence is an inherent gender issue, due to the placement of women as degradable.

*Cabaret Balkan* also makes clear use of commentary surrounding culture and differences between ethnicity. Firstly, upon finding the apartments in which Alex
lives, Jovan meets a Bosnian refugee woman who states that she and her family live in a nearby garage. Upon explaining her poverty, Jovan responds that he “[does not] give a shit about [her]”. Disregarding the interaction between the Bosnian refugee and Jovan firmly plants commentary on the dissipation of fierce ethnic antagonisms following the cessation of the Bosnian conflict, being replaced instead with apathy. Furthermore, the use of props and gestures illustrates the effects of westernisation on the FRY: firstly, when Jovan is destroying Viktor’s apartment, an American flag with a car motif is shown on the wall. Likewise, Jovan’s beloved car is a “good as new” Volkswagen Beetle. This highlights attempts made by the FRY to modernise. Furthermore, upon escaping Jovan and his friend by climbing out of a window, Alex makes a ‘flipping the bird’ gesture. Like the reaction of the young woman Alex chases, westernised gestures particularly illustrate the Americanisation of youth. While this does not appear to criticise the westernisation of the FRY, it does indicate apathy towards other cultures in the timeframe between the cessation of the Bosnian conflict and the ultimate collapse of the FRY in 1998.

4.4. ‘In the Land of Blood and Honey’

In contrast to the locale of the previously analysed films, I have additionally chosen to explore prevalent themes in In the Land of Blood and Honey, a 2011 United States feature directed by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Special Envoy, Angelina Jolie (Pohl and Hussain, 2010). In doing so, I synthesise gendered aspects of wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict with criticism of orientalist perspectives towards wartime sexual violence as perpetuated by international actors. In the Land of Blood and Honey follows Danijel, a Serb soldier, and his former, Bosnian Muslim lover, Ajla, who is kept prisoner under a JNA general who happens to be Danijel’s father. Ajla gives Bosniak forces information on Danijel, who is ambushed but survives, and with all intentions of killing Ajla, Danijel hands himself over to international authorities.

Situated in 1992 by an opening caption which expresses so, the audience is first introduced to Ajla in the apartment which she shares with a female friend, listening to rock music and painting a self-portrait. It is only by capturing an image of an Arabic prayer on the wall of the apartment that the viewer becomes aware that Ajla is a modern Muslim woman. This is important as the situation of Ajla as an otherwise
‘western’ character indicates variations and atypicality in the vast identity of the ‘Muslim woman’ in the Balkan context. This is reinforced when Ajla leaves to meet Danijel wearing typical western clothing. Additionally, later in the scene when Serb army personnel separate men and women who have been taken from their homes, the audience sees women who are both young and elderly, dressed in western clothes and wearing traditional Islamic clothing. This reinforces the atypicality of identity in a space which is ethnically diverse. However, young, conventionally attractive women are again separated and taken as prisoners to a rape camp: this is problematic as it portrays wartime sexual violence as a flurry of uncontrollable male sexual urges rather than an abuse of power which extended to all ‘types’ of women. This affirms the invalidity of biosocial perspectives on explanations of wartime sexual violence.

Jolie makes use of colour connotations in the first scene of *In the Land of Blood and Honey*, which are also utilised by Emir Kusturica in his portrayals of poverty in *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?* and *Time of the Gypsies*: as the jazz club in which Ajla and Danijel are dancing is hit suddenly by a bomb, everything in the subsequent wreckage that is visible to the audience is lit in blue. While the colour blue is equally attributed to sadness and depression, it is worth noting that dark blue the most popular colour in men’s tailoring (The Economist, 2010). Therefore, the use of blue refers to masculinity and a possible allegory for bombers ‘getting down to business’. Incidentally, the Bosnian Serb soldiers in the opening scene of *In the Land of Blood and Honey* also wear a lighter blue.

A deeply contentious element of *In the Land of Blood and Honey*’s opening scene, as well as the entire film, is the back-story of love between Danijel and Ajla: consider that in a series of straightforward events, a bus full of young women are parted from their belongings, before one woman is picked from the crowd and raped in front of the others. Ajla is then picked out and undressed before Danijel recognises her and manages to discreetly persuade the other soldier not to rape her. This is problematic as an ally of a soldier who has committed an act of wartime sexual violence is characterised as a compassionate hero figure. The placement of Danijel as a saviour received fierce criticism from Bakira Hasecic, a wartime sexual violence survivor and leader of the Association of Women Victims of War: Hasecic (in Beaumont, 2010) argues that depictions of consensual relations between a Bosnian Serb soldier and a Muslim woman who is being introduced to captivity at a rape camp is offensive, and
a testament to Angelina Jolie’s international lens. To assert that prior consensual relations between a perpetrator and victim of wartime sexual violence have a place in film depictions, reiterates the re-victimisation experienced by those who testify at wartime sexual violence legal hearings. Therefore, the romanticisation of events surrounding wartime sexual violence are directly attributed to Jolie’s choice of storyline.

In critically interpreting narratives in four periodically and thematically different films, clear assertions are made surrounding dominant attitudes in cinema relating to wartime sexual violence and the Bosnian conflict. Firstly, it is indicated that women are condemned to conventions which are simply not put on men in the former Yugoslav space. Additionally, perceptions of ethnicity place further restraints on women, as the unique conditions under which ethnicity is framed in the Balkan region are also indicated in the immediate scenes of the four films chosen for analysis. It is substantiated that specific attitudes towards gender and ethnicity are pervasive. Thus, it is affirmed that perceptions of women as subordinated are focal in understanding how wartime sexual violence emerged as a military strategy.
CHAPTER 5: KEY THEMES IN LITERATURE AND FILM

In this chapter, I synthesise results of my extensive literature review in the previous chapters with my media content analysis of the four chosen films. In doing so, key themes which are made clear through both existing literature and film are affirmed to make a concrete critique of popular attitudes towards wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict, as a simple and unavoidable symptom of aggressive military strategy. By identifying two clear themes in both academic literature and film, I reinforce the foremost significance of the placement of gender and identity in fully understanding the emergence of wartime sexual violence campaigns during the Bosnian conflict.

5.1. Wartime Sexual Violence as a Gender Issue

By analysing the content of four thematically and geographically different films, which were filmed and distributed over a period of thirty years, it is evident that all of the films chosen deal with typically patriarchal perceptions of gender. This correlates directly to the results achieved through an extensive literature review. Firstly, *Do you Remember Dolly Bell?* (1981) deals with overt themes of both female sexuality, and women having limited social mobility outside of the home. The portrayal of female sexuality as uncontrollable makes an important indication about the use of genocidal rape in the Bosnian conflict, as a method of making women subjected to wartime sexual violence feel ashamed for their reproductive capabilities (Allen, 1996). Thus, perceptions of female sexuality reframe wartime sexual violence, as a fundamental gender issue, rather than an issue of military strategy. The use of gendered and sexualised languages in *Cabaret Balkan* (1998) also indicates the extent to which female sexuality is feared in society, and weaponised in conflict settings (Allen, 1996). Furthermore, *Cabaret Balkan*’s portrayal of the routine harassment of women, even after widespread knowledge of wartime sexual violence campaigns conducted in the region during the Bosnian conflict, indicate the extent to which the placement of women is saturated in society, both prior to and following violent conflict.

Likewise, *Time of the Gypsies* (1985) deals with both strong thematic racism, and the rape of a minor, with families experiencing shame until victim and perpetrator are due
to marry. When applied to wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict, this clearly echoes the destruction of the family unit as an agenda of orchestrated sexual violence (Gottschall, 2004), as well as the resultant stigmatisation of survivors by spouses and communities (Folnegovic-Smalc, 1994). Yet, it is important to note that the extent of familial and community stigmatisation of wartime sexual violence survivors has not yet been quantitatively researched, therefore limited data exists on the scale of survivors who have divorced spouses or been shunned from communities.

5.2. Ethnicity and the Construction of the ‘Bosnian Woman’

As the former Yugoslavian space consolidated pre-existing ethnic groups into one state, assessing the role of ethnicity in the targeting of wartime sexual violence victims is of fundamental importance. Concepts of ethnicity were complicated by Tito’s attempts to balance ethnic difference and establish one united, ‘Yugoslav’ ethnic identity during the socialist regime of 1946, until his death in 1980 (Ignatieff, 1996). This indicates that ethnic antagonisms directly contributed to the utilisation of wartime sexual violence as an apparatus for conflict. While this is not a ground-breaking argument, it is important to reaffirm that concepts of ethnicity affected the scope of orchestrated sexual violence on particular groups: for instance, considering that sixty-five per cent of fatalities in the Bosnian conflict were of Bosniak ethnicity, it is clear that Bosnian Muslims were, overall, disproportionately targeted. Applied focally to wartime sexual violence, the Bosnian government suggests that Bosnian Muslim women were also disproportionately targeted (in Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000, p.44). However, this cannot be fully confirmed as research on wartime sexual violence against Bosnian Muslims is also disproportionate, with no existing literature on wartime sexual violence against ethnic minorities and limited research on wartime sexual violence faced by Serbs and Croats (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2004; Žarkov, 2007). Thus, this gap in knowledge asserts that wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict was an apparatus for abuse of exclusively Muslim women, rather than women in the Bosnian region as a collective.

International perceptions of wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict offer an alternative lens with which to view sexual abuse as a utility of violent conflict. However, analysis of films and existing literature suggests that international interpretations are also inherently flawed. For instance, Jolie’s In the Land of Blood
and Honey (2011) shows the separation of young women from the elderly when Bosnian Serb forces organise rape camps: this demonstrates understanding of rape camps, and the selection of fertile women to bear ethnically purified children (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000). However, it also suggests that the experiences of victims who do not fit popular Western interpretations of wartime sexual violence (such as age) are denied validation for their suffering. This is re-confirmed in Do You Remember Dolly Bell? (1981): while the film makes no explicit reference to race or ethnicity, which is interpreted as a nostalgic reflection of society in Yugoslavia, this indicates the dangers of a ‘one ethnicity’ mind-set when attempting to understand the impact of ethnicity on wartime sexual violence. This is due to the simplification of concepts of identity, and consequent denial of every victim of wartime sexual violence having an individual, and personal, experience of abuse.

Yet, the existence of domestic, internal orientalist perspectives is also verified through the analysis of Time of the Gypsies (1985): imagery of filthy surroundings, mysticism and the rape of minors is attributed to closed, ‘Eastern’ cultures. This links to the differentiation between ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ Balkan peoples, by Balkan peoples themselves (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden, 1992; Žarkov, 1995, 2007). When applied to wartime sexual violence, this suggests that perspectives on the role of ethnicity are inherently misled. This inhibits comprehension of wartime sexual violence as a display of gendered prejudices accelerated by ethnic antagonisms, rather than a symptom of a brutal military strategy.

In synthesising key themes identified through a critical assessment of existing academic literature, and film, the narrowness of strategist perspectives on wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict becomes clear: the placement of gender in Yugoslavian and wartime Bosnian spaces indicates that women were subjected to severe social constraints and underlying attitudes of their subordination. Likewise, the films from the post-conflict era reinforce the endurance of these attitudes, prevailing even after the Bosnian conflict. Furthermore, a synthesis of results indicates that perceptions of difference between ethnicities accelerated the scope of wartime sexual violence during the conflict.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In examining the extent to which wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict is explained by strategist perspectives, this study affirms that strategic rape theory fails to effectively take into account contributing social factors surrounding the emergence of sexual violence as a weapon of conflict. I argue that, while wartime sexual violence in the Bosnian conflict was certainly orchestrated by military command structures, strategic rape theory detracts from understandings of why sexual violence was specifically chosen as an apparatus of conflict. Likewise, a victim-focused approach to research is a positive development in understanding wartime sexual violence, and requires movement away from dominant narratives of sexual violence as a mere symptom of military aggression.

I establish that socially saturated attitudes surrounding gender, and condemning expectations placed on women, inspired wartime sexual violence. Firstly, gendered prejudices ensured that organised campaigns of rape and forced pregnancy were successful in inciting fear, and complemented a wider process of ethnic cleansing. This is evidential in the emergence of genocidal rape, which relied on the framing of women as having no purpose but to reproduce. Therefore, wartime sexual violence was a direct attack on women and womanhood. The stereotype of women as reproductive vessels was reinforced by pre-existent gender stereotypes, particularly surrounding “discourses of powerlessness” as argued by Hromadzic (2007, p.169). I also establish that the phenomenon of hegemonic masculinity upheld these pervasive gender stereotypes, as sexual abuses perpetuated in violent conflict became a competition between men.

It is clear that the framing of gender is an issue further complicated by concepts of ethnicity and national identity, which were repressed but certainly still existent in Tito’s SFRY. I argue that the death of Tito established a vacuum in which historical ethnic antagonisms were free to flourish. This had a profound impact on later wartime sexual violence during the Bosnian conflict. Firstly, attempts to encourage gender equality during Tito’s regime were both insubstantial, and easily undermined by the pervasive subordination of women in society. Additionally, both internal and international orientalist perspectives towards the issue of ethnicity in the former Yugoslavian region encourage imbalanced distinctions between ethnic identities. This
results in the framing of wartime sexual violence targets as sharing a singular, specifically gendered and ethnic experience, rather than multiple and personal experiences which differ depending on individual identity.

I reinforce the permeation of specific and rigid attitudes towards gender and ethnicity in the former Yugoslav space through the analysis of films dealing with these themes. In doing so, I conclude that gender stereotypes subordinated women in ways which men were not subjected to. Therefore, I frame gender as a socially ingrained area of contention and hatred, and the fundamental catalyst for enormous campaigns of wartime sexual violence.

The main gaps in previous research that I have identified are as follows:

1. The link between prejudiced and derogatory attitudes towards women and the effect of these historical attitudes on wartime sexual violence.
2. The existence of these gender prejudices in Tito’s Yugoslavia, and the effect of gender on newly-emerging ethnic nationalism following Tito’s death.
3. The treatment of ‘the Bosnian woman’ as one linear identity, failing to take into consideration nuances symptomatic of variations in ethnicity, class, age and profession.
4. The non-existence of literature relating to wartime sexual violence and its targeting of ethnic minorities.

Contesting the effectiveness of strategist perspectives in explaining wartime sexual violence is vital to make a comprehensive assessment of why sexual abuse is utilised as a weapon in conflict. Therefore, this study encourages further research on the role and placement of gender in societies experiencing sexual violence in conflict. Furthermore, this study concludes that wartime sexual violence cannot be considered an event of the past if those subjected to it are revictimised by the continual perpetuation of gender-based stereotypes and prejudices: strategist perspectives fail to take into consideration the realities of re-victimisation as a prolonged form of humiliation. As such, to address existing gaps in knowledge, it is vital that future research explores why survivors of wartime sexual violence feel pressurised into silence surrounding their experiences, and what can be done to rectify such a serious and enduring social issue.
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