

'Is there a right time for gender just peace? Feminist anti-war organising revisited', to be published in *If not now, when? Feminism in contemporary activist, social and educational contexts*. Special Issue *Gender and Education*; Vol. 28 No. 3 (May 2016)

Maja Korac*

School of Social Sciences

University of East London

London

Great Britain

*E-mail: m.korac@uel.ac.uk

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Abstract

This paper addresses the question of totalising gender power relations that have led to and shaped the wars of the 1990s in Yugoslavia and the emerging ethno-national states on the 'periphery' of Europe. I argue that the same type of gender power relations continue to dominate the region, notably Serbia, and to perpetuate gender inequalities and gender based violence in its many everyday and structural forms, causing profound levels of human insecurity. My analysis aims to set in motion a debate on how to tackle these continuing gender inequalities and GBV in post-war societies. In so doing, I propose a shift from focusing on the *hierarchy of victimisation* that has characterised much of the feminist analyses, activism and scholarly work in relation to these (and other) conflicts, to a *relational* understanding of the gendered processes of victimisation in war and peace, that is - of both women and men. Such an approach holds a potential to undermine the power systems that engender these varied types of victimisation by ultimately reshaping the notions of masculinity and femininity, which are central to the gender power systems that generate gender unjust peace.

Keywords: gender just peace; feminist peace activism; GBV against women and men; gender, human security, liberal peace.

Introduction

In March 2014, a call was issued to hooligans in Serbia to crack down on feminist activists, members of an antimilitarist peace organization Women in Black (WIB) Belgrade. The call was made by the spokesperson of the anti-terrorist unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in response to the WIBs public and silent commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the war crimes committed by the Serbian forces over Albanian civilians.¹ It was

disseminated via social media. This was just one of many similar threats and open (physical) attacks on feminist antimilitarist peace activists in Serbia in the past years.²

In this paper, I ponder the question of totalising gender power relations that have led to and shaped the wars of the 1990s in Yugoslavia and the emerging ethno-national states on the 'periphery' of Europe. I argue that the same type of gender power relations continue to dominate the region, notably Serbia, and to perpetuate gender inequalities and gender based violence in its many everyday and structural forms, causing profound levels of human insecurity.³ My analysis aims to set in motion a debate on how to tackle these continuing gender inequalities and GBV in post-war societies. In so doing, I propose a shift from focusing on the *hierarchy of victimisation* that has characterised much of the feminist analyses, activism and scholarly work in relation to these (and other) conflicts, to a *relational* understanding of the gendered processes of victimisation in war and peace, that is - of both women and men. Such an approach holds a potential to undermine the power systems that engender these varied types of victimisation by ultimately reshaping the notions of masculinity and femininity, which are central to the 'gender workings of power' (Enloe 1993, 246) that generate gender unjust peace. Central to this transformation, as this discussion will demonstrate, are the links between feminist antimilitarist activism and theoretical reflection manifest in different forms of alternative education for peace. I argue that education for peace needs to address and systematically examine a range of gender power systems linked to inequality and victimisation of both women and men. This, in turn, can facilitate alternative, inclusive ways of conceptualising and understanding gender differences. As such, it has the potential to affect social change and help bring gender just peace.

In the first section of the article, I revisit the role and importance of women's organising in the wars of the 1990s for the security of women and gender just peace. I reflect upon the initial critical engagement of local feminists with the socio-political processes that were shaping the complementary notions of masculinity and femininity, and reasons why it did not develop into a relational approach to the processes of victimisation of both women and men in war. In the second section, I offer a brief overview of the post-war period that has continued the processes of re-patriarchalisation and re-traditionalisation of the society, and is central to continuing feminist peace activism in Serbia. In the last, concluding section, I point to the link between so-called liberal peace embedded in privatisation of social assets, of austerity programmes causing hyper levels of poverty and social insecurity and the continuation of the profound levels of human insecurity for both women and men. In so doing, I entertain the idea of a gender sensitive and relational understanding of these gendered processes of victimisation as a way of transforming the very notions of masculinity and femininity that re-produce patriarchal gender regimes in war and peace.

The years of war

Wars in Yugoslavia were in the limelight throughout the 90s. Much of the attention to war violence was due to unprecedented feminist networking, analyses, activism and lobbying concerning the gender power regimes of the conflict and its patterns of GBV.⁴ This was set in motion by the existing, already well developed links and networks between local, Yugoslav feminists and mostly Western feminists and movements. Already in the early 90s, local feminists had sound analyses of the gender power relations linked to the conflict and war violence in the country. This was because in the late 1970s and early 1980s, most of the first wave feminists in Yugoslavia were intellectuals, highly educated, middle class women,

many of whom were academics themselves.⁵ While feminists had a well established pan-Yugoslav and international feminist networks, they lacked a social grounding among a wide range of groupings of local women (Korac 2006, 516). Throughout the 90s, local feminists were learning from their own, local experiences, and from feminists around the world. Throughout the war, feminist activists kept cross-ethnic lines of communication open through the email link *Za mir* (For Peace), which was for a period almost the only means of communication across the war-torn region. Likewise, the WIB organised annual meetings of women's solidarity against war, nationalism and violence, during 1991-95-2000, attended by anti-war activists from the region and internationally (Korac 2006, 513). Their work with women survivors of war violence, refugee women, and women victims of domestic violence was a way of embedding politics in everyday lives and needs of local women, those victimised the most by war (Korac 1998a). This was also the period during which they have gradually gained links with diverse groupings of women for whom they provided support (Korac 2006). Through their work and activism they were learning, sharing and re-grouping along the way.⁶ This process was far from being problem free as their involvement in transversal political practice (Cockburn & Hunter, 1999) by enacting feminist concept of 'rooting and shifting' (Yuval-Davis 2012) was often causing internal tensions and divisions as the war violence escalated (Benderly 1997; Litricin, Mladjenovic 1997; Kesic, Mladjenovic 2001; Batinica 2001).

The cauldron of violence that spread over the territory of Yugoslavia was highly gendered as well as sexualised.⁷ Pre-conflict brought about re-patriarchalisation of the society resulting in the essentialisation of gender roles as well as of the notions of femininity and masculinity. The intersection of which paved the way for the process of militarisation of the society. It also played a central role in mobilising and preparing for war. Initially local

feminists, including anti-war women activists, engaged in critical analyses of these processes. In doing so, they were pointing out that the notion of 'militant masculinity' (Papic 1994: 14) in the region had to be re-created to invoke the traditional-patriarchal masculine identity,⁸ and to mirror that of a 'real warrior' who is capable of fighting 'sacred' ethno-national wars. The process, as Papic (1994, 14) argued, was not easy and problem free. Fifty years of peace and prosperity induced by rapid industrial and urbanising transformations in Yugoslavia, had changed masculine identity.⁹ It became more complex, tolerant and less eager or not interested to seek revenge and resort to violence (ibid.).

Hence, early feminist analyses acknowledged multiple masculinities and how men have become victimised by the imposition of the warrior like notion of masculinity as hegemonic (Korac, 1993; 1994). The tragic case of Miroslav Milenkovic, a construction worker, born in 1951, is paradigmatic. Milenkovic killed himself after being drafted as a reservist in the army. Standing between two groups of reservists - on the one side were men who refused to take up weapons and thus faced incarceration, and on the other were men who had chosen to take up arms and join the war in Croatia - he shot himself (Korac 2003, 27).

Many local men confronted this type of victimisation by fleeing the country to avoid conscription. In so doing, they found themselves with no rights to international protection, although as deserters they faced up to ten years in prison if deported, according to the law at the time (Aleksov ed. 1994).¹⁰ This recognition that men is a non-unitary category, also informed some of the feminist anti-war campaigns and lobbying. It also impacted upon early mobilisation of women as women around anti-war initiatives. WIB activists, for example, were at the time supportive of and lobbying for the rights of men evading conscription, including their right on asylum in the EU (Zajovic ed. 1994). In explaining the reasons for

women making up the majority in the early peace initiatives in Belgrade and Serbia, Mladjenovic (2003, 41) points out that *one* of the explanations of this is that gender position of women made it *safer* for them to act against the regime. Men were under threat of forced mobilisation, thus, had to keep a low public profile in anti-war protests.

Despite of such analyses and early activism, feminist critique of the processes of forging a militant, violence oriented masculinity and imposing it as hegemonic was for the most part linked to their concern about the shaping of complementary notions of femininity and their consequences for women. Their primary focus was on gendered workings of power that are commonly transformed into violence against women (Enloe 1993), hence, the heightened interest in the security of women. Early on, local feminists were aware of the dangers of the control of their reproductive rights, proposed by the Republics of the Yugoslav Federation in the wake of its violent breakup (Einhorn 1993; Kesic 1995). As the counter-balance to the hegemonic militant masculinity, women come to be seen as a means for renewing the nation. Hence, they became crucial for 'national security', and their bodies were defined by its militarized strategies (Papic 1995).

Indeed, with conflict and proliferation of war violence there were even more pressing reasons to focus on the security of women. Their bodies were soon to be equated with ethno-national 'territories' to be conquered (Seifert 1994). Consequently, they were brutalised by the sexualisation of war violence due to which women have become targets of mass rape and other types of sexual violence, as numerous analyses demonstrate (e.g. Allen 1996 ; Korac 1998b; Stiglmeier ed. 1994). It would be hard to argue that the visibility of sexual violence against women in these conflicts is due to its unprecedented scope and brutality, as historical analyses of wars demonstrate that women are subjected to this type of violence in armed conflict (Brownmiller 2013). Rather, it became politicized due the

activism of local and international feminists.¹¹ The first written accounts and analyses of the rape of women in Bosnia-Herzegovina were disseminated by local feminist groups in 1992-3 (Batinic 2001, 14). They were appealing for material and financial support, but also in search of how to apply political pressure on international institutions to act (ibid.).

The visibility of SGBV against women is also due to its further politicisation by the local nationalistic governments. They were using sexual victimisation of 'their' women to strengthen gendered narratives of 'their endangered nations' and their territories. Local feminist groups were vocal in expressing criticism of their local governments' political manipulation and further victimisation of women survivors of sexual war violence (Batinic 2001). In this sense, the visibility of sexual abuse of women in war was also detrimental, because it was misused by the local nationalistic elites. It was used to foster gender power systems that underpin the processes of militarisation and war violence.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the importance of sexualisation of war violence against women for spreading of the war violence defined local and international feminist anti-war activism and analyses during the years of war. This was due to difficulties of the work with women survivors of war rape. These were ranging from the severity of psychological and physical trauma of women survivors, to the security matters concerning the political context in which they worked, as well as to the lack of a sufficient number of trained women counsellors, the lack of adequate space and funding (Korac 1998a, 39-50). The increasing number of women subjected to domestic violence, which increased as a result of war (Mladjenovic 1993, 54-6; Mrsevic&Hughes 1997, 270), only added to the sense of urgency to focus on the rape of women and to lobby for its recognition as a crime against humanity. This was heightened by the increasing need to protect women survivors of war rape from further abuse not only by the manipulative local governments, but also by irresponsible

attitude of increasing number of local and international journalists and analysts,¹² including some feminist scholars.¹³ The process of political struggle against war and activist work with victimised women has led to the almost exclusive focus on women. The fact that women hardly had any active role in war as combatants has made this focus of work and activism even more meaningful.¹⁴ By the same token, the initial acknowledgement that the notion of militant masculinity victimises men too in order to legitimise war violence, was for the most part lost.

Consequently, during the years of war engagement with a relational gendered investigation of sexual violence in war that would tackle the victimisation of men was absent regardless of the fact that men were also victimised by SGBV.¹⁵ Not sporadically, but systematically, as a way of utmost humiliation of 'the enemy', and a way of boosting the morale and the manliness of the representatives and defenders of 'our' ethno-national collectives and territories. Evidence of this type of war violence against men, committed mostly in detention, has been available since 1994, published in the United Nations Commission of Experts' Final Report.¹⁶ Despite of the evidence of men being deliberate targets of rape and other types of sexualised war violence committed by all warring parties in detention camps,¹⁷ this type of victimisation of men has not been made visible or acknowledged as such, either by the media, men's or women's organising or scholarly analyses.¹⁸

The politicisation of rape of women in this conflict by the local nationalistic governments, as mentioned earlier, facilitated the spreading of war violence by bolstering the reasons for 'our men' to take up arms to 'protect our women' who have been constructed by ethno-national discourse as symbols of 'our culture', 'territory', and 'nation' (Walby 1992). Through this process, victimised women have been transformed into easily

controlled state subjects. Feminist critique of the state (Pateman 1988; Pettman 1996), have long argued that all states constitute the 'state subject' in a gendered way. Because of the gendered (and racialized) obstacles, women have been excluded in different ways from the practice of full citizenship (Coll 2010).¹⁹ Men are, however, as gendered subjects also differently positioned. They are not unanimously mirroring the category of white, middle-class, Western/European men, posing as 'default humanity' (Myrntinen et al. 2014). Indeed, gendered state power systems often violate and manipulate men's rights too. The rape and sexual victimisation of men in this conflict demonstrate this. Men were subjected to rape and sexual violence as a way of proving that they do not belong to the category of men in whose image nationhood and statehood can be constituted. As such, this type of victimisation is profoundly humiliating for the victimised men, their communities, and states. The lack of politicisation of the rape of men in the wars of Yugoslav succession, by both the local nationalistic governments as well as internationally,²⁰ is centrally linked to the processes of shielding and sustaining the type of hegemonic masculinity that informs the dominant notions of nationhood and statehood.²¹

Scholarship on masculinities (e.g. Connell & Messerschmidt 2005) has helped reveal the full, nuanced picture of how hegemonic masculinity is inseparable from power in its many forms: physical power,²² including power to attack and protect, sexual power, economic power, political power, intellectual power, moral power. Depending on a historic and cultural context, some of these aspects of power become more prominent in shaping the hegemonic notion of 'normal/accepted' men. The invisibility of sexual atrocities against men in the Yugoslav wars of succession, and indeed other armed conflicts,²³ both locally/nationally and internationally, demonstrates that the intersection of sexuality, masculinity and ethnicity, is one of the central power dynamics that shape dominant

notions of statehood and its power systems, from local to international. If the patriarchal notions of nationhood and statehood are to prevail, it has to remain untouched. The visibility of raped men would emasculate not only the victims themselves, but also the notion of the nation and the state by eroding the very gender power system it is built upon.²⁴ From this perspective, disengagement of local feminist anti-war activists from the notion of multiple masculinities, from the evidence and conceptualisation of how men are victimised in war and by sexual violence in particular, has denied the opportunity for demanding a more radical challenge of the patriarchal state systems of gender power relations that discriminate against women and many men understood as gendered agents.

My discussion so far has pointed to the processes that have led to the feminist anti-war organising during the wars of Yugoslav succession to focus on the security of women. This work had important positive implications. Firstly, their activism and collaboration, local and international, led to the recognition of rape as a war crime although regrettably, only in cases when it can be determined that it was 'systematic' and 'a conscious tool of war'. Nonetheless, this is, as Copelon (1994, 213) has pointed out, 'a critical step toward understanding rape as violence' that requires sanction. Hence, this was a crucial moment for both feminists and women internationally, as this has opened the opportunity for a feminist re-conceptualisation of sexual violence against women. Secondly, their work with women who were victimised in this conflict was critical for women survivors they worked with (Korac 1998a, 51-6; 2004). However, positive implications of this type of feminist activism and work touched the lives of a relatively small number of women in the region. Reasons for this were multi-fold.²⁵ I shall mention here only that the politics of women's groups were the politics of 'small steps' centrally linked to the politics of everyday life (Korac 1998a; 2006). Such alternative political engagements are not supported and encouraged by the

international players involved in so-called humanitarian interventions in conflict zones aimed at establishing liberal peace. Political and other consequences of this type of intervention for human security and its implications for the continuing feminist peace activism in Serbia after the armed conflict has ended will be briefly discussed in the next section.

The years after war

The new victorious ethno-national states, and those less so, have embarked upon post-war reconstruction, capacity and democracy building that was prompted by various forms of international intervention aimed at establishing liberal, rather than durable peace.²⁶ The process known as 'transitional' justice was hoped to achieve justice and reconciliation. However, the analyses of the EU war crimes policy for the region show that it failed to promote regional reconciliation (e.g. Kasapas 2008; Rangelov 2006). Instead of focusing on integrated transitional justice strategy that supports transformative processes central to building 'positive peace' (Galtung 1990), the policy centred on retributive justice by prosecuting the perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations in an international Tribunal (Kasapas 2008). Consequently, the vital element of local ownership of the process has been disregarded. This in turn has created a space for denial and rejection of Tribunal judgements by the local public (Rangelov 2006). This lack of recognition of the role of local truth-telling as the process that could challenge denial and the lack of responsibility (ibid.), led to the lack of local political will as well as of a wider public acknowledgement of responsibility for atrocities committed in the name of ethno-national collectives and their states.

Beacuse of the complexity of the 'realities of victimisation' in war, in general, and this conflict in particular (Ristanovic 2003), it is difficult to consider the focus on retributive

transitional justice path taken as appropriate and effective in the local context. In the wars of Yugoslav succession the victimization was widespread, it affected the majority of population, it was brutal, multiple, with serious and long-term consequences (Ristanovic 2000). Ristanovic points out that besides immediate, primary victimization, many people are also subjected to the secondary victimization, e.g. as refugees, when they seek political asylum or humanitarian aid, when they testify in front of court. Raped women were additionally victimized due to the abandonment by their families, re-examination about the rape, inappropriate identity protection, when their experience of victimization was exploited by media or when they testify in front of court (2000, 12). Not surprisingly, feminist peace activism has centred on analyses of the courtroom experiences of victimised women. They argued that the masculinised, gendered meta-narrative of war that dominates the official space of the courtroom mutes women's experiences and agency and transforms them into women-as-victim narratives (Ross 2001). In so doing, they further processes of victimisation of women.

Sjoberg (2014) highlights the importance of taking into account 'the question of how war is felt' (ibid. kindle version, loc 5944), and points to the need to approach war simultaneously at individual, state and global levels (ibid.). However, as Richmond (2010, 666) argues, documents and doctrines on which humanitarian interventions in (post)conflict are based 'fail to engage with everyday life other than in basic emergency and narrow security terms'. Consequently, they render invisible and non-important 'the existence and diversity of communities and individuals that constitute political society', although they 'may also have transnational and transversal exposure' (ibid. 667, note 10). Richmond further argues that this is where 'the everyday is at its most powerful as a critical tool' (Richmond 2010, 667, note 10). Indeed, that is the space that feminist peace activism and

politics have been coming from. Instead of acknowledging 'the everyday', the international players have been preoccupied with the construction of liberal states in the region that will support economic and political liberalisation. It was believed at the time that this would lead to conflict resolution, because 'democracy and the market economy were intrinsically peaceful and mutually reinforcing' (Hoffman 2009,11). Thus, they effectively bolstered the power of local nationalists and neglecting alternative voices, such as those of feminist peace activists. One of the grave consequences of this is the fact that those elected in the early 1990, prior to the violent disintegration of the country, remained in power in the Yugoslav successor states until 2000,²⁷ well after the conflict was officially over.

Consequently, ethnic and other types of intolerance in their many forms are still an integral part of these post-war societies. In Serbia, according to two consecutive surveys, ethnic intolerance manifest in ethnic distance towards minority groups and religions originating from the region, 20 years after the end of war-violence (1991-1995/1999) is high.²⁸ According to the 2013 survey, for example, 57 per cent of the respondents are against having an Albanian as a family member, 56 per cent are against having a Roma, 43 per cent are against having a Bosniak, while 39 per cent oppose having a Croat as a family member.²⁹ Consequently, patriarchy, ethno-nationalist, and religious values and norms continue to underpin Serbian and other post-war societies in the region, and to shape a far from gender-just peace.³⁰ As the control of women is critical to such intersection of values, it leaves no space for feminist peace politics, in war and so-called peace. This type of nationalism can take very aggressive forms, and indeed it did, in March 2014 in the form of calls for violent crackdown on WIB activists. The continuing re-patriachalisation of the society is also central to continuing feminist peace activism in Serbia and beyond.

Given this post-war context in Serbia, much of the feminist peace activism is centred on transformative justice mechanisms and processes, focusing on local political responsibility (Lukic 2011; Zajovic 1997). This is centrally linked to their politics of antinationalism and disobedience to all militarists (Zajovic 1997, 43). Importantly, this activism continues to keep and widen cross-border communication and collaboration, which characterised the years of war. One such initiative is the development of a feminist approach to justice (WIB 2014), linked to debates on human security versus state security, specifically, security of women, and on the understanding of violence as structural as well as direct. The first assembly of the Women's Court emerging from this initiative was held in Sarajevo, in May 2015.³¹ This, as other peace activities, has been shaped by the strong link between activism and theoretical reflection, which is one of the prominent characteristics of feminist anti-war and peace activism in Serbia. This is reflected in different forms of alternative education for peace. The centrality of education for peace in WIB's activism has been acknowledged quite early on. As of 1998 it has been pursued systematically in various activities they initiated, such as workshops, lectures, seminars, panel discussions. These focused on topics ranging from women's peace and democracy workshops to women's networking to support empowerment and to facilitate impact.³² Feminist approach to justice has been central to WIB's alternative education activities through which they have been promoting and developing it, empowering women to lobby for it. Alternative, non-formal education, as type of feminist peace activism has long been supported by a vibrant independent publishing activity aiming at production of alternative knowledge, alternative historical accounts based on voices, narratives and experiences of women as gendered agents.³³ Consequently, much of this well-rounded post-war activism and theoretical

reflection continues to be centred on women, peace and security (WPS), rather than on gender, peace and security.

Liberal peace, human security, and gender: Concluding remarks

Feminist engagement with WPS is immensely important, because it continuously challenges the generic male point of view that is embedded in the mainstream (post)conflict and security discourses.³⁴ However, the question of how peace can be inclusive and sustainable if it does not include considerations of both women and men as experiencing negative consequences of war violence and heightened concerns for human security, in both war and post-war situations, remains.

Building sustainable, gender just peace is a process that requires development of an inclusive, gendered notion of social justice. As formal education is a critical component of socialization, which contributes to the creation and development of the value systems among young generation, it is an important area to affect social change. Because of its key role in identity formation, it is potentially either an instrument for peaceful social relations or a means of reinforcing intolerance (Smith 2011). Indeed, studies show that education in many Yugoslav successor states, including Serbia, continues to convey war-time divisions and value systems (Perry, 2015; Stojanovic, 2013). Research also demonstrates that education in post-conflict societies, in general, fails to address critically gender regimes and roles that lead to war-violence (Greenberg and Zuckerman 2006). Consequently, it fails to support transformations from violent to peaceful societies.

The importance of approaching peace and security from an integrated and relational consideration of gender, violence and inequality in its different forms, in formal and non-formal education is paramount. Because of often non-supportive state institutional post-conflict processes, the latter alternative forms of education open up particularly important

spaces for the implementation of social, gender just programmes. They do so, by bringing the meaning and components of gender just peace into the public focus using a range of educational activities centred on inclusive ways of conceptualising and understanding gender differences and related gender regimes of power.

The emphasis on the importance this type of transformation in post-conflict societies, such as Serbia, becomes even more critical when the character of liberal peace building in the region, and beyond, is fully considered. Parallel to the retributive justice course taken, international players have also given priority to economic reform, rather than political development (Krastev 1999). As all economic aid was in support of neoliberal economic reforms, all Yugoslav successor states had to agree to a rapid privatisation, radical cut of public spending, and foreign trade liberalisation (Woodward 2009). Given that the political development was absent, this meant centralization and deeply corrupt insider privatization (ibid.).³⁵ It also meant a near bankruptcy of all of Yugoslav successor states, except Slovenia (Woodward 2009). This ongoing and deepening economic crisis perpetuates social and political tension and malfunction. These changes coupled with the legacy of war that caused distraction and turmoil at every level: human, economic, social, cultural, have continued to affect and shape gender regimes required to support and carry on these radical changes within the society.

By deepening structural and other forms of everyday violence, neoliberal economic reforms have contributed to the persistence, continuation and diversification of the processes of *Othering*. These everyday and structural forms of violence require gender relational and integrated interventions at multiple levels of society: state, community, individual. How else emancipation from patriarchal roles and identities of women and men can be achieved in a society that is structured around a capitalist patriarchy required to

support liberal capitalism? Only by engaging with the gender systems of power that underpin diverse societal realms, ranging from the rule of law, justice, and security to economic development, education for democracy, and reconciliation, and by understanding how they negatively affect both women and men can one begin to tackle the question of a gender just peace. This is not to be understood as giving power (back) to men. Rather, it should be considered as a way of undermining the male centred category of 'default humanity' that shape patriarchal power and masculinised gender hierarchies, which carry considerable costs to men and boys, not only women and girls, as Connell notes (2008). A starting point to this challenge to the existing, totalising gender power relations that continue to perpetuate gender inequalities, while victimising both women and men, are lives on the margin, beyond masculine elite power, of both women and men. Without this shift, there will never be a good time for gender just and positive peace in post-conflict.

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Notes

¹ This protest coincided with the 15th anniversary of NATO bombing of Serbia over the Kosovo conflict, during which many innocent civilians, irrespective of their ethnicity, lost their lives and many more had their livelihoods destroyed. Hence, its sole focus on commemorating the Serbian led atrocities of Kosovo Albanians did not upset only radical nationalist among the civil servants and hooligans. It also disconcerted many non-nationalistic citizens of Belgrade/Serbia. In this article, I refer to this violent incident against the WIB as one among many signs of GBV causing profound levels of human insecurity in Serbia. Consequently, my discussion does not engage in other aspects of this unsettling incident.

² For more information see WIB's website at www.zeneucnom.org

³ For more on human insecurity in the Balkans see Krastev *et al.* (1999).

⁴ Feminist resistance has been well documented, see for example Huges *et al.* (1995), Batinic (2001)

⁵ For the history of Yugoslav feminism see Benderly (1997), Papic (1995), Batinic (2001: 4-11)

⁶ For discussion on differences among local feminist groups see Batinic (2001: 4-11)

⁷ My discussion in this paper refers to the discourses and processes of militarisation primarily in Serbia and Croatia, and the spread of war violence in Croatia and Bosnia. I consider pan-Yugoslav feminist antiwar activism prompted by these processes, and examine specifically feminist peace activism of WIB in Serbia.

⁸ For discussion on traditional/patriarchal masculine identity in the Balkans see Denich (1974)

⁹ One example of the impact of this change is reflected in the public protests against compulsory military service that took place in Slovenia, in the 1980s.

¹⁰ It is estimated that there were hundreds of thousands of young men who fled Serbia and other Yugoslav successor states seeking sanctuary in the EU (Aleksov *ed.* 1994).

¹¹ The centrality of local feminists in this is best appreciated when contrasted with the situation in Congo, where widespread SGBV against women has become visible only in 2009, after a visit of Hillary Clinton and Margot Wallstrom, the UN's special representative on sexual violence in conflict. It entered the international public domain after Wallstrom's reference to eastern Congo as 'the rape capital of the world' or 'the most dangerous place on earth to be a woman' (Autesserre 2012: 204)

¹² For more on this see Belic (1995:33)

¹³ On how all feminist scholars were not equally welcome see Korac (1998a: 50)

¹⁴ Zarkov's research shows that women combatants were very few (2007:229)

¹⁵ Men also suffered other forms of abuse and victimisation. Testimonies of perpetrators reveal that many were forced to rape women. They were ridiculed as not 'real men' and 'true' representatives of their nation, and threatened to be killed if they refuse to do it (Stiglmeier 1995: 147-162).

¹⁶ The United Nations Commission of Experts' Final Report, Annex IX: C; 1994, 28 December <http://www.phdn.org/archives/www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/comexpert/ANX/IX.htm#r21>

¹⁷ As approximately 60 per cent of some 150 detention camps in Bosnia and Croatia were Serb run, in terms of the scale of victimisation, Bosnian Muslim and Croat men were more often victims of rape than Serbian men. All men in these wars were, however, deliberate targets of rape and other brutal forms of sexualised war violence.

¹⁸ The only systematic scholarly account of sexual violence against men in Yugoslav wars of succession, to the best of my knowledge, is Zarkov (2001), published *post festum*.

¹⁹ Feminist scholarship demonstrates that a growing number of historically excluded groups, such as women, no longer perceive formal expressions of citizenship as defined by states as a means of fostering active participation in society and its legal and political structures (e.g. Walby 1994; Coll 2010).

²⁰ Zarkov's analysis of the local media coverage of sexually abused men, demonstrates that there was hardly any news coverage locally and none internationally (2001: 71-73).

²¹ That is why local national papers avoided stating the ethnicity of sexually abused men, if they were

'their' men (Zarkov 2001: 74-5).

²² Cockburn (2009: 270) points out how men have to be visible in their physicality if patriarchal gender relations are to be seen clearly "working" both at work and in the domestic sphere.

²³ See Dolan (2014) and Sivakumaran (2010).

²⁴ Hence, it is not surprising that people providing support for war victims are often so shocked by the testimonies of sexually abused men that they refuse to believe it. For more see Dolan (2011) and Watson (2014). This also explains increased insecurity of LGBT populations in conflict and post-conflict zones, in particular, as they are perceived as 'unwanted others'.

²⁵ For more on this see Korac (2006:514-516)

²⁶ Critique of liberal peace as the aim of international peacebuilding interventions is growing. See, for example, Hoffman (2009) and Richmond (2010).

²⁷ Except for Macedonia where the change took place in 1998.

²⁸ *Citizen's Attitudes on Discrimination and Perception of Discrimination in Serbia*, Commissioner for Protection of Equality (2013; 2012).

²⁹ *Citizen's Attitudes on Discrimination and Perception of Discrimination in Serbia* (2013) Commissioner for Protection of Equality.

³⁰ Cockburn (2013) shows how this has happened in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina

³¹ This initiative has been led by WIB, it involves over 200 NGOs from the region, linking women from over 100 towns and cities, attracting over 4000 participants involved in some way in its organisation, and over 250 activists involved in a more direct way in its realisation (WIB 2014).

³² For more information on a range of alternative education activities see WIB website at www.zeneucnom.org

³³ For more information see websites of WIBs (www.zeneucnom.org) and Women's Studies Centre (www.zenskestudie.edu.rs)

³⁴ Cohn and Ruddick (2004) show how war is a gendered institution, how men and masculinities that perpetuate war are socially constructed as dominant, and how meanings that shape our thinking of war come out of these masculinities (ibid. :410).

³⁵ Data provided by the financial forensics of the Anti-Corruption Council of Serbia show, for example, that approximately one third of estimated US\$10 billion transferred abroad during the years of war, mostly to the bank/s in Cyprus, had been found. However, none of it has yet been returned to the state, but much of it has re-entered the country (i.e. has been laundered) via the process of privatization (Preradovic 2015:18).