



Heroes of the Imagined Communities, Soldiers, and the Military: The Case of Montenegro, the Ottoman Empire, and Serbia before the Balkan Wars (1912–13)

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The article illustrates the policy of wielding the hero as a symbolic political and nationalizing instrument in the Montenegrin, Ottoman, and Serbian armies before the Balkan Wars. The heroic became an integral part of other social disciplines (such as schools). Besides standing in a clear interdependent relationship, these social disciplines represented a necessary result of various centralizing processes of the governing elites. The primary efforts for the nationalization of the population were undertaken in the pre-/post-military life, in which the role of different state agents was equally important. Hence, the grid of the social disciplines became ever denser, which led to the uniformity of the heroic. This process enabled the legitimization of the ruling elites, subsequent actions in war, and heroization among recruits. The article argues that uniformity of the heroic is lacking in the Ottoman context. Given the ideological context and intellectual background of the preachers of nationalism, the consistency of the Ottoman heroic narrative before, during, and after military service is missing. The article shows that the so-called medievalism closely linked to the heroic offered a framework for constructing continuity between the immediate and distant past, providing meaning to someone's death. A link between the past, the present, and the future was established, which constructed the nation's primordial character and the feeling of ancient hatred towards an imaginary enemy.

Keywords: heroic, military, Montenegro, Ottoman Empire, Serbia, soldiers

Introduction

I am (...) convinced that (...) just as each of you would give your life for your parents, other close relatives, your house and your property, just as you would do for yourself, if there were any danger, so too

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would you die and sacrifice your life for our exalted commander of the army, the King Petar I, because I know that among you, Serb sons, there is no such coward who would leave his loved ones, his house, and property, and shamefully flee just to save his life. No, no... Such renegades are no longer born to Serb mothers! (...) As our great-grandfathers, grandfathers, and fathers did, so should and must the descendants of Miloš Obilić, Kraljević Marko, Hajduk-Veljko, Tanasko Rajić, Stevan Sindelić, Kurusla, and many other proud and undead Serb heroes should and must do.

A Serbian Officer Petar Bojović (1907)¹

Petar Bojović was one of the many officers in the tumultuous first decade of the twentieth century who believed that the military could forge an ideal and conscious soldier and compatriot from what his peers in the Ottoman army called an ignorant or illiterate peasant (*cahil köylü*).² Since the officers thought that the military played a crucial role in secondary socialization, they adhered to instrumental archetypes and metaphors, which were vital (albeit not adequate) to maintain the inner cohesion, control, and the recruits' motivation.³ The military tried various strategies to stage and schedule the members' daily activities and was also utterly imaginative when it came to formulating messages of purpose.⁴ One of these strategies was to fashion images of the ideal hero. Heroes are understood here as historical or fictional characters presented as having or are ascribed certain heroic qualities. The process of attributing heroes with particular virtues creates a sense of interaction between these heroes and their followers, followed by imitation and appropriation of heroic deeds.⁵

In this essay, I focus on the non-commissioned, junior, and high officers who defined and transmitted heroic norms in the military and negotiated them in military manuals and articles. To a certain degree, these sources serve as a genre of the ego-documents since the state actors relied on their personal experiences with recruits when conveyed their messages. Given the low literacy rates and poor infrastructure, oral propaganda methods in encouraging military

1 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 54–55.

2 Ömer Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 1, 2–3; Vasfi, *Efrad-ı Cedide Talim ve Terbiyesine Mahsus Hafta Cedvelleri*, 8.

3 Arkin and Dobrofsky, "Military Socialization and Masculinity"; Stefanović, "Nation und Geschlecht," 241–52.

4 Feld, *The Structure of Violence*; Bröckling, *Disziplin*, 45; Kühl, *Organisationen*.

5 von den Hoff et al., "Helden-Heroisierungen-Heroismen," 7–11.

mobilization played an important role.⁶ I adopt a comparative approach to explain similarities, differences, convergences, and divergences, and I also relate notions of heroism to specific institutions and actors.⁷ I analyze these sources by adhering to historical discourse analysis and seeing them as part of a system of “symbolic violence.” The military manuals and articles had to simplify the recruits’ complex social situations. Through these means of education, the officers tried to ascribe symbolic positive and negative symbolic meanings to specific processes.⁸

Examining the heroic allows one to look at the structures and discourses of nationalism, domination, subjecthood, and gender from a different angle. Soldiers had to possess the necessary masculine military virtues, which were supposed to become an integral part of their bodies and souls.⁹ The “stigmatized” and the “normal” are two sides of the same coin, and they were not persons but rather perspectives. The military wanted to create deviant behaviors and a black-and-white picture through which conformity could be quickly praised.¹⁰ Venerating the heroic facilitated the furthering of nation-building projects, cultivating solidarity among the recruits, and preparing them to lay down their lives, since the notion of heroism gave meaning to someone’s death. Soldiers were the recipients in this case; yet, connecting to the ideal hero is always selective and does not indicate the totality of the heroes’ features. Employing the ideal heroic enabled the legitimization of the ruling elites and subsequent actions in war among the recruits. But the notions of the heroic also became alive in the present.¹¹ The existence these notions facilitated control over subjects, whereby the heroes functioned as “a double crowd.” The actions of the common men are measured and evaluated in relationship to these idealized heroes.¹² The policy of wielding the hero as a symbolic political instrument and the nationalization

6 Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 2, 28–41; Schlögl, “Kommunikation und Vergesellschaftung”; Beşikçi, “Domestic Aspects.”

7 Kocka and Haupt, “Comparison and Beyond,” 18–21; Bourdieu, *Die verborgenen Mechanismen der Macht*, 83; Noiriel, *Introduction à la socio-histoire*, 30–58.

8 On the notion of active immunization, see Jahr, *Gewöhnliche Soldaten*, 181; Geißler, *Erziehungsmittel*, 182–287; Berger and Luckmann, *Die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit*, 85.

9 *Pravila službe*, vol. 1, 14–15; Jokić, *Vojnički bukevar*, 43–46; Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneriyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 2, 5–40; Refik, “Vazife-i Askeriye,” 80.

10 Jahr, *Gewöhnliche Soldaten*, 37.

11 Asch, “The Hero in the Early Modern Period and Beyond,” 5–7, 11; Von den Hoff et al., “Imitation heroica,” 9–32.

12 On the double crowd, see Canetti, *Masse und Macht*, 66–71.

of this heroic figures started in revolutionary France.¹³ Where did this discourse come from in Montenegro, the Ottoman Empire, and Serbia? What were the functions of these invented heroes? And how were they significant?

Heroes, Recruits, and Their Superiors

The discourse about the heroic in Serbia and Montenegro stemmed from several areas: the “golden age” of the medieval Serbian state under the Nemanjić dynasty, the myth and epic songs that revolved about the Battle of Kosovo (1389), the epic songs about the Serbian Uprisings (1804–1815) and the 1876–78 Ottoman-Serbian wars, and oral folklore about kinship heroes in certain parts of Montenegro.¹⁴ By instrumentalizing folklore as a legitimizing claim, the preachers of nationalism tended to constitute and encode certain societal norms as ethnonational.¹⁵ As new studies on the construction of the Kosovo epic have already illustrated, nationally minded actors from Serbia and Montenegro selected certain epic songs which had not been widespread among the people, disregarding others in the process, and they based their decision on their personal preferences. In doing so, they were inventing tradition.¹⁶

Folklore, however, did not constitute a foundation on which the nascent nation-states rested. Rather, the construction of the national narrative erected a foundation which in turn rested on studies and appropriation of oral traditions.¹⁷ Medievalism was closely linked to this process, which offered a framework for constructing continuity between the recent past and the distant past. By viewing the present through the prism of the medieval past (the continuing process of creating the Middle Ages), the elites sought to link the past, the present, and the future.¹⁸ This primordial character is palpable in the myth of Kosovo. It included historical and fictional characters and a whole cycle of epic poems in which the imagined Serbian community was presented as having been enslaved ever since they had lost the battle to the Ottomans. Three characters dominate the narrative: Prince Lazar (who died during the struggle, thus passing into eternal

13 Vovelle, “Heldenverehrung und Revolution; Schröner, “Helden im Dienst der Revolution.”

14 On the myth of Kosovo, see Zirojević, “Kosovo in the Collective Memory”; Čolović, *Smrt na Kosovu polju*.

15 Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 17.

16 See Pavlović, *Epika i politika*; Pavlović and Atanasovski, “From Myth to Territory”; Pavlović, *Imaginarni Albanac*. On the notion of inventing tradition, see Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions.”

17 Baycroft, “Introduction,” 1–4, 6–8; Joep Leerssen, “Oral Epic,” 11, 17–18; Anttonen, “Oral Traditions and the Making of the Finnish Nation,” 50; Sundhaussen, *Geschichte Serbiens*.

18 Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*.

life by sacrificing his life for the imagined community); Miloš Obilić (a knight who killed the Ottoman Sultan, thereby displaying his courage and loyalty to his prince and nation), and Vuk Branković (who allegedly betrayed the prince, his father-in-law, and left the battle, thus deserting the army). The poems that referred to the myth and other subsequent events contained messages of moral principles, loyalties, bravery, infidelity, camaraderie, and an eternal fight between the imagined Christian/Serb and Muslim/Turk.

By surrendering life as a Christian martyr, one became a national martyr, meaning that the elites tended to blur the boundaries between state-fostered and local cultures.¹⁹ The canon of martyrs was weaponized against the Ottoman Empire. A newly constructed site of the invented tradition was located: the cradle of Serb-hood, Kosovo, which functioned as something between the place of mourning, memory, and mobilization.²⁰ Binary opposition revolved around the myth, which inspired revenge and the nation's rebirth.²¹ After making the 500th anniversary of the battle a state holiday in Serbia in 1889, the governing elites organized annual services on the day of the battle, which falls on the day of St. Vitus, hence Vidovdan. On the same day, they prepared the "memorial to Serbian fighters who died for their faith and homeland," which raised the eyebrows among the Ottoman Hamidian elites.²²

In Montenegro, the ecclesiastical powers also prepared a memorial service. Yet, the Montenegrin government did not publicize the memorial service by nurturing good relations with the Ottoman Empire. As a result, the imagined Muslim Albanian began to occupy the first place in the public discourse.²³ In Montenegro, the myth claimed that its inhabitants were the direct offspring of the Serbs who had fled from Kosovo after 1389, finding refuge in the nearly inaccessible mountains, the unconquered fortress of the imagined Serb-hood and the Orthodoxy. Montenegrin soldiers were identified as sons of Miloš Obilić, so the highest military decoration carried his name. While discussing

19 Čolović, *Smrt na Kosovu polju*, 41–48; Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 12; Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe*, 192–197.

20 Nora, "Between Memory and History"; Sundhaussen, *Geschichte Serbiens*; Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 3–5; Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*.

21 Koljević, *The Epic in the Making*; Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha*; Dundes, "Binary Opposition in Myth."

22 "Naredba od 15.16.1889," *Službeni vojni list*, god. IX, 15.07.1889, br. 28, 833–834; "Red svetkovine kosovske petstogodišnjice," *Službeni vojni list*, god. IX, 12.05.1889, br. 19 i 20, 581–592; Ünlü, "Sirpların I. Kosova Zaferi'nin 500."

23 *Stenografske bilješke o radu crnogorske Narodne Skupštine sazivane u redovan saziv 15. januara 1914. god.*, II prethodni sastanak, 27.01.1914, 34; Andrijašević, *Crnogorska ideologija*, 512–14, 598, 694–700.

colonization measures in post-Ottoman areas after the Balkans Wars (1912–13), the Montenegrin Minister of the Interior used the same expressions that invoked the primordial narrative by referring to “the centuries-old silenced Serb hearths,” implying that they should be reawakened.²⁴ Thus, this myth might take varying forms within the Montenegrin and Serbian public discourses, because Montenegro and Serbia “did not share the idea of liberating the oppressed Serbs, nor do we now share it,” as a Montenegrin official writes.²⁵

The Montenegrin cap, which most of the soldiers wore, allegedly symbolized this narrative. This small and circular headgear consisting of a black part on the sides conveyed the message of mourning for the overthrown medieval homeland. In contrast, the red part on the top signified the blood. In addition to the king’s initials or cross on the top, five gold semicircles of a rising sun symbolized the five centuries since the Battle of Kosovo. A child would wear the cap as soon as (s)he stopped spending time in the cradle. A Norwegian officer noticed that this cap reminded a Montenegrin sailor of his homeland and people, and it was as vital to the Montenegrin as a national flag.²⁶ But this myth in the Serbian context was also introduced in elementary and high schools, where children learned how to become honest, hardworking subjects like their national heroes.²⁷ As outsider accounts and ego-documents illustrate, a Montenegrin or Serbian peasant or boy heard about the heroes before entering the barracks or participating in drills. While witnessing military training in Montenegro (1903), a contemporary made the claim that heroism filled a prominent place in the mind of the average Montenegrin. Montenegrins conceptualized these figures like celebrities, and these celebrities became a constituent part of their communicative and social memories.²⁸

Thus, military discipline stood in a clear interdependent relationship with other social disciplines due to the elites’ various centralization processes. In Serbia, certain military buildings or units were named after these national heroes.

24 *Stenografske bilješke o radu crnogorske Narodne Skupštine sazzyane u redovan saziv 15. januara 1914. god*, XV redovna sjednica, 21.02.1914, 434 (citation); Rakočević, “Kosovski kult u Crnoj Gori tokom 19. i na početku 20. vijeka.”

25 VA/Belgrade, P2, K18, F1, 8/2, #215, 24.11.1912, Rožaje, District Chief to a Serbian Commander.

26 Ippen, *Novibazar und Kosovo*, 16–17; Cozens-Hardy, “Montenegro und Ist Borderlands,” 389; Jovičević, *Domaće i vaspitanje djece u Crnoj Gori*, 36; Rovinski, *Crna Gora u prošlosti i sadašnjosti*, vol. 2, 347, footnote 3; Angell, *Herojski narod: priče iz Crne Gore*, 13, 19, 65.

27 Ilić, *Udžbenici i nacionalno vaspitanje u Srbiji*, 73, 75, 111–12, 123–25.

28 Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity,” 849–50; Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, 273; Tomašević, *Life and Death in the Balkans*, 212–328.

The regiments celebrated the days on which the heroes died their heroic deaths, which then became their Patron Saint Days, or they participated in ceremonies surrounding the erection of monuments of these heroes.²⁹ This ensured the performance and staging of the past, which were manners of reexperiencing it or inventing it for contemporaries.³⁰ Since all people are mortal and all heroes are people, heroes must die, but a soldier would be admired after death. Death was one form of the heroic deed, and the average soldier could become either a heroic fallen figure or the person who paid tribute to the fallen hero by honoring his sacrifice. On the Patron Saints Day, he had to hear about and remember his unit's fallen heroes/brothers.³¹

In the Ottoman context, heroes were used as figures in the constructing of a linear historical narrative (from the thirteenth century to the twentieth). Army recruits, for instance, were supposed to be able to name a few famous heroes. The public discourse linked the national tradition with the oral tradition. This reached its peak in Republican Turkey.³² One nevertheless notices a rigid hierarchy among these heroes, which emphasized masculine values. For instance, the rank and file would hear about Bayezid I (1389–1402) and his achievements at the height of the Battle of Kosovo, when the charge he led against the stronger enemy decided the outcome of the battle. Then, they might listen to the story of Adil the Corporal, who “was always looking for opportunities to serve his army.” Ottoman forces could easily maintain their hold on the castle due to his self-sacrifice during the siege of Nagykanizsa (1601). Of course, Adil stood under the command of another hero, Tiryaki Hasan Pasha, who “showed the whole world the greatness of the Ottomans in persistence and courage, loyalty and obedience to their superiors.”³³ Thus, by learning about the military successes of these figures, the soldiers were supposed to learn the importance of sacrifice, endurance, discipline, intelligence, morale, loyalty, and courage.³⁴

29 “Rešenje #5333 i 5334 od 15/16.06.1889,” *Službeni vojni list*, god. 9, 15.07.1889, br. 28, 835–836; “Govor...,” *Službeni vojni list*, god. 24, 29.06.1904, br. 21, 459–462; “Naredba od 06.04.1888,” 178–82; “Izveštaji i referati,” *Službeni vojni list*, god. 12, 08.08.1892, br. 31 i 32, 927–930; “Na znanje,” *Službeni vojni list*, god. 19, 08.05.1899, br. 18, 529–530; “Saopštenje od 30.10.1903,” *Službeni vojni list*, god. 23, 30.10.1903, br. 42 and 44, 809–814; “Na znanje,” *Službeni vojni list KSHS*, god. 39, 15.06.1920, br. 24, 961–962; Miličević, “Imena srpskih pukova.”

30 Bucur and Wingfield, “Introduction”; Winter, “Introduction. The Performance of the Past: Memory, History, Identity”; Burke, “Co-memorations. Performing the Past.”

31 Brink and Falkenhayner, “Einleitung”; Bojović, *Vaspitanje vojnika*, 67–127.

32 Öztürkmen, *Türkiye’de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik*.

33 Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Manevîyat-ı Askerîye Dersleri*, vol. 1, 39–48.

34 Tolga Cora, “Asker-Vatandaşlar ve Kahraman Erkekler,” 53–54.

However, in contrast to the other cases, some Ottoman officers put particular emphasis on the deeds of heroines such as Kara Fatma. Kara Fatma was depicted as a lioness (*dışı arslan*), and in the officers' narrative she was presented as a defender of the homeland and nation and as a mother of children who defended the homeland and nation. She encompassed both masculinity and femininity. During the siege of Erzurum (1877), Kara Fatma took care of Ottoman soldiers, brought water and food, carried the wounded on her shoulders, bandaged their wounds, and took part in the fight. The underlining message is that only lions could bear from such women and that the martyr cemeteries also had graves where women lay buried.³⁵ One should not, however, that this image of Kara Fatma was only one of many. Various (non-patriotic) versions of a Kara Fatma emerged in the Ottoman discourse fields beginning in the early nineteenth century.³⁶ Still, the extent to which Ottoman officers used songs to encourage soldiers to emulate images of physical and emotional strength remains unknown. Some officers indeed complained after 1908 that the soldiers lacked physical and emotional strength.³⁷ Scholars have already stressed that Ottoman soldiers also sang non-patriotic ballads (*türküler*). Erik Jan Zürcher assumes that perhaps the relatively high morale among the Ottoman soldiers during World War I might have been rooted in these ballads, in the sense of having nothing to lose.³⁸

It was necessary to create this “social choreography” by crafting rousing narratives of heroic deeds because these narratives, it was hoped, would help suppress undesirable responses to the negative outcomes of military service. The officers sought to hail the draft as a rite of passage through which the imagined youth became a real man. The masculinizing effect of the draft was supposed to instill in the recruits virtues such as courage.³⁹ However, many recruits entered the Serbian and Ottoman barracks with specific fears brought from home. They were told that excessive austerity reigned in the barracks and that the soldiers were severely punished when they made minor mistakes. As Serbian officers noted, this fear initially sprouted confusion. It then interfered with successful basic training, since the recruits were beset with feelings of sadness and longings for their kin.⁴⁰

35 Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 1, 50–53.

36 Kutluata, “Geç Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet.”

37 Kenan, *Zamanımızda Zabı u Rabı ve Terbiye-i Askeriye*, 16.

38 Zürcher, “Ölümlü Firar Arasında,” 96–97; Hartmann, *Die Reichweite des Staates*, 187–88.

39 Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 2, 10–44; Martinović, *Upustva vojničkom*, 15–16, 18–21, 29–31; Hewitt, *Social Choreography*. On propositional emotions, see Taylor, *Pride, Shame, and Guilt*.

40 B. “Nekoliko napomena o izvodenju regrutske škole u pešadiji,” 454–55; Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 46–48.

Some recruits chose to flee the army before they were ever actually called on to serve in the field, as many archival examples illustrate, not least because former soldiers and their neighbors told them how recruits were being treated in the Ottoman army. They would also leave after discovering that they might end up in Ottoman Anatolia, Hijaz, or Yemen, far from their loved ones. The regions were well-known for their hot climate, stormy conditions in the barracks, distance, and rebellions.⁴¹ By using images and narratives of heroic deeds and martyrs, the governments tried to underline positive notions about military service in order to nationalize and sacralize it.⁴² Singing, for instance, was a tested strategy in the Serbian case, since the officers noticed how singing helped calm fears and other unwelcome emotions among the recruits, and they combined it with marching. Some officers deliberately chose soldiers who could sing folk tunes or songs about heroes and had them mix with the newer recruits.⁴³

Images and narratives about heroic deeds also paved the way for the establishment of a “primary group” in the military. The primary group had two principal functions to maintain morale for combat: (i) “It enforced group standards of behavior, and it supported and sustained the individual [faced with] stress[es] he would otherwise not have been able to withstand” and (ii) “the group enforced its standards principally by offering or withholding recognition, respect, and approval [...], while the subjective reward for following an internalized group code enhanced an individual’s resources for dealing with the situation.”⁴⁴ Here, the trope of camaraderie (*druželjublje* or *kardeslik*, *uhuvvet*, *alay arkadaşlığı*) emerged, which was supposed to further socialization within the ranks of the military and to last even after military service had ended.⁴⁵ Not only could this include other soldiers from different military branches, but it also embraced (for instance in the post-1908 Ottoman setting) all those who were not

41 See, for instance, CDA/Istanbul, DH.MKT, 2168/1, 09 Şevval 1899 [20/02/1899], MoI to the MoW. ABH/Sarajevo, ZVS 1912, 20–47, #14189, 19.12.1911, Višegrad, Protocol compiled at the Višegrad County Office, dated 20.12.1911. Subject: An Ottoman military deserter Savo Minić; ABH/Sarajevo, ZVS 1912, 20–47, #4617, Višegrad, Protocol compiled at the Višegrad County Office, dated 20.05.1912. Subject: An Ottoman military deserter Ranko Kojadinović from Uvac in the Ottoman Empire.; DAS/Belgrade, MID–PP 1911, #18, 05.02.1911, Javor, Customs Office to the MoFA; DACG/Cetinje, PPKŽ, F7, #50, br. 165, 17.03.1911, Žabljak, Knežević to the MoFA.

42 Forrest, “Conscription as Ideology.”

43 B. “Nekoliko napomena o izvođenju regrutske škole u pešadiji,” 455–56, 487–90; Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 52; McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time*, 2–66.

44 Smith, “Combat Motivations among Ground Troops,” 130–31.

45 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 158–65; Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja za vojnika*, 59–61; Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneriyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 1, 4; Arif, *Piyade Neferi*, 22–23.

part of the military regardless of their national or confessional belonging.⁴⁶ To aptly illustrate “the most beautiful image of loyalty and fidelity,” Serbian officers drew on epic songs and the image of Miloš Obilić, the epitome of all that was desirable in the military. Together with his two blood-brothers (Ivan Kosančić and Milan Toplica), Obilić had allegedly slaughtered the Ottoman sultan in the battle of Kosovo (1389), thereby killing many enemies before being “gloriously” dying in the process.⁴⁷ Songs that ignited the military spirit and kindled a sense of camaraderie were part of the repertoire, and the Serbian NCOs often reminded soldier of these heroes when teaching them how to use weapons.⁴⁸

Further research would be necessary to determine the extent to which the establishment of the primary group was successful, but sources indicate that this was a challenging process for myriad reasons.⁴⁹ The sense of camaraderie between the rank and file and their superiors, however, fostered a rigid hierarchization and the assigned patriarchal roles among them, which subdued the masculinizing effect of the draft. Military units were viewed as a new family (*yeni bir aile gibi* or *keo porodica*), in which the commander was considered one of many soldiers’ fathers. At the same time, their peers were seen as younger brothers.⁵⁰ The NCOs, who in the Ottoman army were referred to as the soldiers’ “godfathers” (*büyüik baba*), were supposed to “complete the education my father lacked” and teach the recruits how to become the true men. One of their most essential duties consisted of keeping their “children” healthy, which some soldiers expected them to do, and thus the soldiers also cared about their “fathers.”⁵¹ Older soldiers played the role of fathers who accepted the newcomers as their children, although only if the soldiers would dutifully act like brothers. In the Montenegrin and Serbian cases, the insistence of the importance of obeying one’s superiors was justified with the reference to the notion that disobedience and treason had ruined the medieval Serbian empire and “thrown Serbs into

46 Ali, *Acemi Neferin Terbiye-i Askeriye Muallimi*, 13; Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 1, 17–18; Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 2, 56–58.

47 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 71–72, 158, 60–65. See also Jovičević, *Domaće negovanje i vaspitanje djece u Crnoj Gori*, 55.

48 B., “Nekoliko napomena o izvođenju regrutske škole u pešadiji,” 455–56, 487–90; Jokić, *Kaplar*, 65; Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 55 (footnote #1), 96, 105, 171. See also Geißler, *Erziehungsmittel*, 106–124.

49 Beşikçi, *Cihan Harbi’ni Yaşamak ve Hatırlamak*, 12.

50 Jokić, *Vojnički bukvar*, 68; Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja za vojnika*, 59; Arif, *Pijade Neferi*, 22; Arif, *Orduda Terbiye*, 76–77.

51 VA/Belgrade, P6, K509, F2, 6/21, 25.11.1915, Commander to the of the 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Regiment of 2nd Levy; Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 1, 8–9 (citation); Vranješević, “O časti u opšte i vojničkoj časti osobeno,” 41; Radojević and Milenković, *Propast srpskih regruta*, 194–97.

powerlessness and slavery [which lasted for] 500 years.”⁵² Unity was crucial in times of war, when a tremendous psychological mobilization was necessary, and when the NCOs and junior officers played a vital role in maintaining their units as parts of an effective fighting force, as studies have shown in the context of the Western Front during World War I.⁵³

But in the Montenegrin and Serbian contexts, there were historical figures who, in the narratives, embodied the vices of treason and desertion, whereas in the Ottoman case, the figure of the deserter was faceless. Drawing on the lore, Serbian and Montenegrin officers depicted deserters, embodied in Vuk Branković, as the most despised persons. They sought to establish this image in the minds of the soldiers, too, since Serbian mothers, like their Ottoman counterparts, only gave birth to future heroes and lions. Vuk Branković was ideal for this role, because he allegedly left at the most crucial moment of the battle with his knights, betraying their brothers in arms. That is why this “cursed” Vuk was labeled as an infidel and oath breaker.⁵⁴ The message was that it was better to die gloriously, like other heroes, than to betray everyone and live shamefully like the “damned” Vuk, whom the Ottomans soon killed him anyway. Not only was the soldiers’ masculinity but also his honor was at stake.⁵⁵ An Ottoman officer sought to convey that those who absconded had neither a place among the people nor any honor. They were ungrateful cowards (*nankör alçak*) and a burden on the imagined homeland (*vatanın yükü*).⁵⁶

The Serbian officers also sought to transmit desired values and certain functions by describing the deaths of these people or by citing the epic songs which made mention of their fates, such as that of Boško Jugović, one of nine brothers who died in the Battle of Kosovo while defending the greatest military shrine, the flag. Losing the flag also meant losing military honor, like in the Ottoman case in which the story of the standard-bearer Ali was supposed to illustrate the importance of the flag.⁵⁷ Yet, if a regiment was distinguished by

52 Martinović, *Uputstva vojničkom*, 3, 65 (citation); Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja za vojnika*, 59, 65; and Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 69–162.

53 Watson, *Enduring the Great War*.

54 Stenografske bilješke o radu crnogorske Narodne Skupštine sazvane u redovan saziv 15. januara 1914. god. (I i II prethodni sastanak i I–XXX redov. sjednica), VI redovna sjednica, 10.02.1914, 176; Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 46–78.

55 Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja za vojnika*, 59, 65; Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*.

56 Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Derleri*, vol. 1, 15, 27.

57 Jokić, *Vojnički bukvar*, 48; Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 176–79; Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Derleri*, vol. 2, 37–38, 48.

heroism or managed to steal the enemy's flag, their chief father decorated either their regimental flag with an order or a medal for bravery or decorated their soldiers personally. This decoration was supposed to make the latter proud of serving in a particular regiment.⁵⁸ Sometimes this was a calculated policy since the elites and officers realized that the passion for decorations in the Montenegrin setting could be used to pit certain kinship fraternities against each other. If a soldier was honored for heroism, he wore a medal for bravery every day, even if he was plowing or mowing the fields.⁵⁹

Uses of images and narratives of heroism differed in the Serbian and the Montenegrin context due to the military organization of these countries. While the modernization of the Serbian military generally drew on the Prussian model, serving in the militia became the rule in Montenegro.⁶⁰ Officers and the NCOs, who might know the people being drafted, directed the military exercises, which varied depending on the season. The role of the Montenegrin military fathers could be limited, since they had to negotiate often with their soldiers (who could turn violent if their superiors struck them) more often than their peers in the Serbian army.⁶¹ Moreover, the Montenegrin military relied on the state-led tribalization policies, since its organization revolved around the family and village structure. Depending on the context, this situation could both facilitate and repress the feeling of military superiority and subordination. The rank and file and the officers would instead “[agree] on something, whereby a very exact compliance with such agreements may not be expected,” as a Habsburg military attaché wrote during the Balkan Wars.⁶²

Through images of heroic, a soldier in the Serbian and Ottoman armies was told that if he were to die, ecclesiastical authorities would pray for his soul, and his family and the whole imagined community would praise his heroic death

58 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 167–71, 179–82.

59 Vukotić, “Nekoliko reči o Crnogorcu kao vojniku,” 863–64; Vešović, *Pleme Vasojevići*, 324–25, 342; Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 61–62.

60 ÖStA/KA/Vienna, AhOB GSt Militärattachés Cetinje 60 G-Akten Geheime Berichte, *Eindrücke und Erfahrungen auf dem montenegrinisch-türkischen Kriegsschauplatze 1912–13* vom k.u.k. Militärattaché in Cetinje, Hauptmann des Generalstabskorps Gustav Hubka, 1–4; Batrićević, “Crnogorska vojska uoči,” 31–35; Martinović, *Crnogorska vojska*, 53–60. See also Ratković-Kostić, *Evropeizacija srpske vojske*.

61 Martinović, *Upustva vojničkom*, 37–38, 40, 56–57; DACG/Cetinje, MV–VS, 1913/F9, #74, 25.09.1913, Peć, Fifth Platoon to the Royal Inquiring Commission and *ibid*, 1915/F14, #50, The guilty of Miloš, Dragiša and Milan Bakić for making a mess, etc.

62 ÖStA/KA/Vienna, AhOB GSt Militärattachés Cetinje 60 G-Akten Geheime Berichte, *Eindrücke und Erfahrungen auf dem montenegrinisch-türkischen Kriegsschauplatze 1912–13* vom k.u.k. Militärattaché in Cetinje, Hauptmann des Generalstabskorps Gustav Hubka, 19.

and merits. Both king and sultan would take care of the soldier's family, which would have God's blessing, and thus they would prosper. A similar narrative was given for those who did not betray their military oath. They were assured that they would be respected and rewarded here on earth. Thus, by sacrificing their lives, the rank and file became members of the pantheon of heroes whose deeds would never be forgotten.⁶³ Yet upholding this social contract lay at the heart of relations between the state and the soldiers. Hence, the state had to care for the soldiers' families while their male relatives were at the front. Failure to fulfill this duty threw everything into question, as examples from World War I in the context of Montenegro amply illustrate.⁶⁴ In some cases, this part of the contract came first, and only then came the tacitly signed agreement between the soldiers and the state, the foundation of which was the state's obligation to provide food, equipment, and lodging and to ensure that superiors treated their inferiors with due respect. Were this contract broken, this could create serious problems for the state, since soldiers could flee or become unmotivated to fight.⁶⁵

The heroes' death offered the soldier and his family a chance to accommodate the human cost of the war in a vision of historical continuity, similar to British or German contexts amid and after World War I.⁶⁶ In this regard, the combination of the locals and state-driven cultural norms is evident, because in certain parts of Montenegro, for instance, a detailed oral tradition among the kinship fabrics preserved the memory of the local heroes. It functioned as a memory bank, the canon of which the state authorities sought to control. Moreover, the local norms enculturated young males into their roles as warriors.⁶⁷ It is doubtful whether this narrative motivated the soldiers during the war. For instance, German soldiers made jokes about the idea of the *Heldentod* after seeing the front during World War I. Yet some Serbian ego-documents show that some soldiers had used this

63 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 55, 61–63, 75; *Stenografske bilješke o radu crnogorske Narodne Skupštine sazzyane u redonan saziv 15. januara 1914. god. (I i II prethodni sastanak i I–XXX redon. sjednica)*, II prethodni sastanak, 27.01.1914, 34; Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradna Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 2, 29–31.

64 DAS/Belgrade, MID–PO 1915, R458, F12, D5, 12/311, 12/312, #475, 09.09.1915, Cetinje, Serbian Legation to the MoFA and ibid, MID–PO 1914, R431, F15, D4, 15/249, telegram #619, 29.11.1914, Nikšić, Delegate of the Serbian Government to the MoW.

65 Tročki, *Balkan Savaşları*, 285–86; Beşikçi, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Osmanlı Seferberliği*, 267–68; Minasidis, "Mobilization (Ottoman Empire/Middle East)," 1–5.

66 Šarenac, *Top, vojnik i sećanje*, 83; Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 42.

67 Vukotić, "Nekoliko reči o Crnogorcu kao vojniku," 65–66; Boehm, *Montenegrin Social Organization and Values*; Boehm, *Blood Revenge*, 47, 79.

idea to come to the terms with the deaths of their comrades or to comfort the soldiers' mothers.⁶⁸

Keeping in mind the period under examination, officers did not start from anything. Ideally, they only extended and added new meanings to the previously established social view of the population, meaning the population's education only continued in the barracks.⁶⁹ The primary efforts were undertaken in the pre-military and post-military life, in which the roles of birth parents, civil officials, paramilitary leaders, teachers, and clergymen were equally important.⁷⁰ Indeed, not every Serbian peasant (the peasantry made up around 80 percent of the rank and file) found it amusing to spend several months in the barracks and swap his freedom for strict discipline. Even before 1912, national belonging in Serbia had not yet penetrated the broader layers of the population. Not everyone knew of or identified with the elites' ambitious and imperialistic plans.⁷¹

Yet the state had succeeded by 1912 in one thing: by launching systematic public mobilization, it convinced its subjects that military service was one of their many assigned duties. Thus, "everything has been called up from the 17th to the 50th year of life" for the Balkan Wars, and in doing so, the authorities did not face any significant challenges. However, during the first weeks, both military service and the war itself were not enthusiastically praised by everyone, implying that this consensus of the peasantry cannot be interpreted as a national consensus.⁷²

Nevertheless, one notices the uniformity of the image of the heroic among the Serbian social disciplines, a uniformity which was lacking in the pre-1913 Ottoman context—hinging on the ideological context and intellectual background of various actors, the consistency of the Ottoman heroic narrative before, during, and after military service is missing. While officers spoke about the soldiers, viziers, and sultan who had expended and defended the political borders of or laid down

68 Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 155; Milenković, *Propasat sprskih regruta*, 200;

69 Oestreich, "Strukturprobleme des europäischen Absolutismus," 44–47; Schulze, "Gerhard Oestreichs Begriff 'Sozialdisziplinierung in der frühen Neuzeit,'" 270; and Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History*, 140–43.

70 Jovičević, *Domaće negovanje i vaspitanje djece u Crnoj Gori*, 40, 73, 80–81, 83–84; Martinović, *Upustva vojničkom*, 8–9; Bojović, *Vaspitanje vojnika*, 23–24, 26–28, 34–35; Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 402–3, 441; Doğan, *İlk ve Orta Dereceli Okul Ders Kitapları ve Sosyalleşme*, Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 6, 137–39, 151; Üstel, "Makbul Vatandaş"ın Peşinde," 17–21, 28.

71 VA/Belgrade, P14, K11, F1, 41/1, *Godišnji izveštaj o poslovima Đenerałštabnog odeljenja Komande Timočke divizijske oblasti u 1899. godini*, 1–4, 27–28; *Die serbische und montenegrinische Armee*, 15.

72 PA AA/Berlin, RZ 201, R 14218, #65, 10.10.1912, Belgrade, Ambassador to the Reichskanzler; Denda, "Završni izveštaji austrougarskog vojnog," 30–31; Höpken, "'Modern Wars' and 'Backward Societies,'" 44.

their lives for the imagined community, others (such as pan-Turkish intellectuals) would focus on the pre-Islamic pagan Turkic world.⁷³ For example, in some parts of the Ottoman province of Kosovo, Muslim subjects had a distinct understanding of local heroes, whose self-sacrifice was praised. Still, their inner essence was not a national essence but rather was essentially confessional.⁷⁴ In the Serbian and Montenegrin cases, the school and the military inculcated in the subjects of the state a deeply national sense of memory. The mental images became icons, stories, and myths the most significant feature of which was their persuasiveness.⁷⁵ In the barracks, the officers and NCOs adhered to the medievalism of the past together as priests. However, not everyone was moved by this narrative since not everyone was interested in listening to the epic songs in school.⁷⁶

As the 1900 and 1901 infantry curriculum openly advises, “when the soldiers are together, and when the weather is poor, heroic folk songs are to be read to them more often.” The more they were subjected to the latter, the more they absorbed this narrative as being natural.⁷⁷ This “tradition,” as an officer calls it, excited and motivated the soldier. It “aroused courage and the desire for revenge and the return of the glory and greatness of the Serbs,” thereby uplifting and filling their chests, souls, and hearts with Serbian history, Serbian lands, pleasure, and the aspiration to be celebrated in the heroic struggle.⁷⁸ By singing songs and reading about heroic ancestors, the officers tended to remodel a soldier’s perception of revenge and honor along the ethnonational line since the goal was to awaken the soldier’s desire for glory. Thus, a local’s sense of honor was entangled with the military, the imagined homeland, and his birth family. In this regard, any material gain was supposed to lose its value.⁷⁹

73 Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Manevîyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 1, 38–52; Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Manevîyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 2, 45–48; Kurt, *Türk’ün Büyük, Biçare Irkı*; Kurt and Gulpinar, “The Young Turk Historical Imagination.”

74 AJ/Belgrade, 14–181–672, #14, 22.01.1920, Novi Pazar, District Chief to the MoI-DPS; Mihailović, *Raonička buna*, 63.

75 Asman, *Duga senka prošlosti: kultura sećanja i politika povesti*, 19–28, 31–32, 35–36, 39–45; Doğan, *İlk ve Orta Dereceli okul Ders Kitapları ve Sosyallşeme (1876–1918)*, 14.

76 Tročki, *Balkan Savaşları*, 172.

77 Martinović, *Uputstva vojniciškom*, 21, 29–30; “Nastavni plan za pešadiju stalnog kadra u godini 1900. i 1901. od 15.11.1900,” *Službeni vojni list*, god. 20, 25.11.1900, br. 45, p. 1120 (citation); “Nastavni plan za pešadiju od 16.04.1910,” *Službeni vojni list*, god. 30, 18.04.1910, br. 14, p. 356 (citation).

78 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 28–29.

79 DACG/Cetinje, MID, 1908/F158a, #3045, br. 1176, 16.08.1908, Žabljak, PPK to the MoFA; Vranješević, “O časti u opšte i vojničkoj časti osobeno,” 2–6; Dörner, “Die symbolische Politik der Ehre”; Beşikçi, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Osmanlı Seferberliği*.

The military fathers sought to control the soldiers' emotions by constructing a narrative of collective trauma fueled by experiences of the pain and suffering of the imagined community. They acted as symbolic or cultural creators in the symbolic-*cum*-emotional representation of social suffering.⁸⁰ As they heard this same narrative before, during, and after the military service/drill, Montenegrin or Serbian soldiers were expected to be eager seek revenge and reclaim the lost glory of the imagined medieval Serbian homeland. They were taught to look through the primordial perspective at the constructed past, which resonated on the eve of and during the Balkan Wars.⁸¹ This narrative represented the testament of Kosovo, and the soldiers would obtain eternal glory by being addressed as the avengers of Kosovo, like those who fell on the battlefield in 1389. This notion was also passed on during the literacy classes in the military. The narrative was embodied in the phrase concerning “our” five-century-old oppressor or enemy, which various Slavic-speaking Christians (both male and female) appropriated when filing petitions to the government.⁸² Since 1389, the imagined Turk had been killing, robbing, and demolishing the personal property of the imagined brethren. This “oppressor” committed an array of outrages acts, including desecrating places of worship, burning and mocking God, and selling Serbian brethren as slaves.⁸³

Thus, through the heroic, the purpose of the military was to reify the construction of “the political enemy” since acting politically meant distinguishing friend from foe. A state exists as a political entity if it can make this distinction and fight the enemy in an emergency.⁸⁴ Although the construction of an enemy in the Ottoman case is apparent, the enemies of the Empire remained rather faceless. The overarching message was to be ready to protect the imagined

80 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 33–151. On the process of symbolic-*cum*-emotional representation of social suffering, see Eyerman et al., “Introduction: On Social Suffering and its Cultural Construction”; Spasić, “The Trauma of Kosovo in Serbian National Narratives.”

81 “Crnogorci od 26.09.1912,” *GC*, god. XLI, 26.09.1912, br. 42, 1; “Srpskom narodu od 05.10.1912,” *JN*, god. LXXIX, 06.10.1912, br. 226, p. 1; Tročki, *Balkan Savaşları*, 172; Šarenac, “The Final Push Against the Eternal Enemy.”

82 DACG/Cetinje, MID, 1908/F163, #4231, 141/1908, 20.04.1908, Cetinje, Mara Popović from Brezovica to the MoFA; *ibid*, MID, 1912/F207, #21, 18.01.1911, Cetinje, Radun Kuč from Gornja Ržanica to the MoFA; *ibid*, MUD-UO, 1911/F120, #4862/(2), 29.08.1911, Cetinje, Luka Bjelanović from Velika to the MoW; “Naredba od 15.06.1904,” *Službeni vojni list*, god. 24, 29.06.1904, br. 21, 457–458; “Govor...” *ibid*, 461–62; Martinović, *Upustva vojničkom*, 22; Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 29, 76.

83 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 76–77; Pejović, *Vojnička čitanica za svakog vojnika*; Jovičević, *Domaće negovanje i vaspitanje djece u Crnoj Gori*, 2.

84 Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*.

homeland (*vatanı beklemek*), which was intertwined with one's honor and confessional loyalty.⁸⁵

A soldier in Serbia also learned about how lucky he and his birth family were to live in this golden freedom. This narrative was essential in the domestic context (as it provided a tool with which to legitimize the rule of the elites, much as similar narratives had done earlier in France and the Habsburg Monarchy), and the later “international” context (as it provided motivation to restore freedom for and protect the imagined brethren).⁸⁶ In the case of the larger international context, the narrative helped nurture the belief in the necessity of a “defensive” war against the Ottoman Empire within its territories.⁸⁷ This narrative of an imperialistic war affected some Serbian and Montenegrin subjects. Like many British soldiers who fought in France during World War I, so too did Montenegrin soldiers during the Balkan Wars travel from the USA to fight “for the liberation of our oppressed brothers from a five-century-old enemy” in the first months of the Balkan Wars.⁸⁸ Thus, educating the rank and file, mapping the imagined national territory, and fostering national loyalty were intertwined. In the Ottoman context, this involved references to battles in which heroes died or became famous.⁸⁹

Depending on a soldier's place of birth, Serbian officers would deliberately emphasize in their narratives a hero who had hailed from the same area as the soldiers. Hajduk Veljko was used as a figure in narratives intended to remodel recruits from the eastern provinces. Having died fighting against the Ottoman army in the First Serbian Uprising (1804–1813), he was similar to Miloš Obilić and other Kosovo heroes.⁹⁰ The same strategy was utilized after the “liberated Serbian” brethren from the Prilep region (post-Ottoman Macedonia) began to serve under the banner in early 1914. In their case, Marko Kraljević was a hero, a historical person from the Middle Ages whose palace was in Prilep.⁹¹

85 Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 1, 2–16; Ali, *Küçük Zabıtlere Nasihat*, 55; Arif, *Piyade Neferi*, 214–15.

86 Bojović, *Vaspitanje vojnika*, 75–77; Martinović, *Uputstva vojničkom*, 27; Jezernik, “Uvod: stereotipizacija ‘Turčina,’” 16, 22; Muršić, “O simboličkom drugojačenju.”

87 Bojović, *Vaspitanje vojnika*, 69, 132, 45; Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja za vojnika*, 65–66.

88 DACG/Cetinje, MUD-UO, 1913/F140, #3431, 20.11.1913, Crmnica, Milo Mitrov Živanović to the MoI; Watson and Porter, “Bereaved and Aggrieved.”

89 Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 1, 39–54; Fevzi, *Osmanlı Efradına Maneviyat-ı Askeriye Dersleri*, vol. 2, 45–48.

90 Geißler, *Erziehungsmittel*, 106–16, 124; Bojović, *Vaspitanje vojnika*, 55 (footnote #1), 96, 105, 171; Jokić, *Kaplar*, 65.

91 Mišković, “O razvijanju vrlina u našem narodu,” 15–16, 20; Bojović, *Vaspitanje vojnika*, 11–12.

Officers were so determined in their role as so-called educators that one of these recruits wrote in a censored letter, “we are dead sick when they tell us about Kraljević Marko.”⁹² Still, others identified themselves with the latter. While passing through some populated areas in late 1914, the Macedonian recruits boasted publicly that they were descendants of Marko Kraljević and were going to “liberate” Habsburg Bosnia.⁹³

The practice of disparaging those who did not follow this narrative as lower men and expecting the soldiers to become heroes implies that the military distinguished this type of masculinity from other forms. All other men had to position themselves to the heroes. Hence, one could speak about hegemonic masculinity, whereby hegemony signifies the displacement of other forms of masculinity by this form, which was praised in the military as the norm. The idealized view of masculinity was used to construct the perfect self-image of the nation.⁹⁴ Having been “the healthiest, strongest and youngest—the most capable of all the other people in our nation,” the masculine men’s bodies, which now embodied the heroic values, served as weapons to defeat the imagined enemy.⁹⁵ The calling of the soldiers was difficult in peace times, and much more so in times of war. Soldiers had to endure harsh conditions, because they had to be in good health, have sturdy body, “male” strength, and a strong will.⁹⁶ This notion of endurance also applied to those who fell into enemy hands, as they were expected to remain loyal. If they had complied or surrendered themselves, they were regarded as traitors and perjurers, meaning their national obligation did not cease after capture or defeat.⁹⁷

But the hegemonic military masculinity, which played a role in the war, did not always correspond to actual worlds of the locals. It was not fixed but was embedded in specific environments. Locally seen, it was metaphorically represented through the interplay of specific masculine practices that had local significance.⁹⁸ Thus, alternative masculinities were critical and could be defined

92 DAS/Belgrade, MID–PPO 1914, R469, #272, 16.05.1914, Valjevo, Commander of Bitolj Infantry Regiment to the Commander of Drina Division District.

93 VA/Belgrade, P3, K73, F1, 2/37, #3164, 18.12.1914, Skopje, KTNO to the MoW.

94 Tosh, “Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender,” 42–43, 46–49, 51; Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa*, 152–53, 174–90, 195–200.

95 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 141–42 (citation); Messner, “When Bodies are Weapons,” 28–31.

96 Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 64, 169–71; Vešović, *Memoari*, 36.

97 *Pravila službe*, 1, 24–25; Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika*, 169–71; Walzer, *Obligations*, 146–47, 156–57.

98 Connel and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” 836–39, 849–51; Hearn, “Introduction,” 61; Hutečka, *Men under Fire*.

as anti-types of the hegemonic model, including with respect to non-core groups.⁹⁹ However, the reading of masculinities among the Ottoman subjects did not overlap with the reading of masculinities among the ruling elites. For instance, in the Lower Vasojevići, an area located in the Montenegrin-Ottoman borderland in the province of Kosovo, the Slavic-speaking Christians of the Vasojevići brotherhoods at certain times despised other Christians who did not belong to their kin. They viewed them as less worthy. They labeled them as *Srblji*, *Srbljaci*, or (H)Ašani (Tr. *aşağı*, meaning inferior) since they were regarded as not sufficiently manly. This term possessed a derogatory and subordinating reading like *Arnautash*, *Grecoman*, or *Bulgarofil*.¹⁰⁰

One finds a similar narrative concerning the imagined Serbian (*Srbijanac*) from Serbia, who, given the state policy, could not carry a weapon publicly, which in the eyes of a Vasojević conveyed the message that they were also less worthy.¹⁰¹ This narrative was evident when a Montenegrin officer saw the official headgear (*šajkača*) of the Serbian army in Peć/Peja, a town which during the Balkans Wars (1912–13) was occupied by the Montenegrin army. After noticing that a certain number of the new rank and file consisted of the local Slavic-speaking Christians wearing the *šajkača*, the officer instructed them to buy the fez, “because you are not a soldier under that hat.”¹⁰² The authorities dubbed the headgear as a hat for scum (*fukarska kapa*), ordering even the locals not to display it on threat of arrest. Wearing the latter was interwoven with the notion of (hegemonic) masculinity or honor, and offending this notion could easily incite dispute or physical violence and could even push one to become a brigand.¹⁰³

Sources do not reveal the extent to which these locally grounded hegemonic masculinities hampered the nationalization attempts of these polities; however, the case of the Romani population aptly shows that this could be possible. The word “Gypsy” in Montenegro had offensive connotations, and one could be prosecuted for using the term. Still, this did not stop the authorities from using it during World War I when they compared infectious diseases with this hidden

99 Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa*, 227.

100 Lalević and Protić, “Vasojevići u crnogorskoj granici,” 564; *Ibid.*, 3; Vešović, *Pleme Vasojevići*, 344–45.

101 VA/Belgrade, P2, K18, F1, 8/2, #215, 24.11.1912, Rožaje, Sima Kastratović to a Serbian Commander.

102 DACG/Cetinje, MV-VS, 1913/F9, #74, 25.09.1913, Peć, Fifth Platoon to the Royal Inquiring Commission.

103 VA/Belgrade, P2, K54, F1, 16/8, #23, 29.03.1913, Istok, County Chief to the District Chief; Đilas, *Besudna zemlja*, 115; Babić, *Politika Crne Gore*, chapter 3.

non-core grouping.¹⁰⁴ Allegedly, in the Montenegrin-Ottoman borderlands, only the Romani wanted to become blacksmiths, since the vocation was considered a disgrace, and those who practiced this trade were labeled the lowest people. In Serbia, most peasants did not want to make a sink or become trumpet players. That is why the Romani were generally appointed in the military as buglers.¹⁰⁵ In the Serbian army, some soldiers did not want to eat together with the Romani soldiers, since the Romani were equated with the notion of filthiness and illness, as an officer recalls.¹⁰⁶ In short, this means that pre-military prejudices were becoming embedded into the military, though the ruling elites made efforts minimize this.

Conclusion

By paying heed to the soldiers' performance in the barracks and on the battlefield, and their voice fragments in sources during the Balkan Wars and World War I, one realizes that while some rejected the notions of heroism presented in the narratives offered by the state and the surround cultural milieu, others embraced these notions. Why this was the case and whether these narratives had long-term consequences are questions that can only be addressed with further research. In Montenegro, the Ottoman Empire, and Serbia, the heroic narratives shared many features with other heroic narratives in other parts of Eurasia. One could consider the Prussian context, where the ideal of the hero was intended to “put [men] in a frame to mind to fight, to kill and die willingly ‘for the fatherland.’” In addition to using notions of heroism to justify war, the Prussian elites presented imagined heroes “as role models for ‘average men.’” Hence, these visions occupied a special place in the collective commemoration of national warrior heroes.¹⁰⁷ The was true to some extent in the French and Russian settings, where officers also used the medieval past, the heroic epics, national flags, and the military oaths as tools with which to foster the homogenization of recruits.¹⁰⁸

104 Angell, *Herojski narod: priče iz Crne Gore*, 62; DACG/Cetinje, MUD–UO, 1915/F162, #2004(20), br. 3278, 29.03.1915, Cetinje, Vuletić to the MoW and ibid, OuBP, F5, #19, br. 1087, 06.05.1915, Bijelo Polje, OuBP to all district and municipality authorities.

105 Jovičević, “Plavsko-gusinjska oblast, Polimlje, Velika i Šekular,” 480; Vukotić, *Uspomene iz tri rata*, 95–98; Vukosavljević, *Istorija seljačkog društva: sociologija seljačkih radova*, 395, 398; Šarenac, “A View of the Disaster and Victory from below,” 79.

106 Pećinar, *Od Srbije do Jugoslavije*, 112–13.

107 Hagemann, “German Heroes,” 16–19, 24 (citation).

108 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 298; Benecke, *Militär, Reform and Gesellschaft im Zarenreich*, 189, 193, 197.

These policies were supposed to enhance what George Moose calls “the Myth of the War Experience,” which presented the war as a meaningful and even secret event and included the people as active participants in the national quest through rites, festivals, myths, and symbols.¹⁰⁹ The processes by which notions of heroism were adapted to new settings and the transformations of the narratives in which these notions found expression in these settings are also interesting. One could consider the Yugoslav case, where the officers used the same imagined heroes of the Serbian army in the contemporary context because they remained the “heads” of specific military units in the early 1920s.¹¹⁰ The national feature of the “Serb lands,” the boundaries of which the heroes had to reify before 1912, simply changed after 1918, becoming the new boundaries of the Yugoslav state, or “all the lands where our nation lives.”¹¹¹ This change aptly illustrates that “the national-patriotic discourse simply manipulated, transposed and modelled itself on an existing set of symbols, metaphors and rituals.”¹¹² The extent the heroic mitigated or furthered the development of a unified Yugoslav military culture in the interwar period remains to be answered.

But the success of the tropes concerning heroism as tools with which to foster loyalty and devotion to the military and the state also depended on what David M. Edelstein calls “the strategies of inducement,” which were intended to buy and maintain the population’s loyalty (i.e., tax exemptions, agrarian reform, welfare policies, financial and food assistance). It was essential for the elites to improve and support the wellbeing of the subjects if they sought to legitimize their rule or engagement in a conflict and ensure that their subjects did not lose heart.¹¹³ Soldiers and their families were looking for something tangible in return for shedding their blood (or losing their fathers, sons, and brothers) for the imagined community. Emphasis on the ideological essence of a given political push (for instance, emphasis on the importance of the national cause as a justification for a military campaign) is not enough to ensure the loyalty of the wider population or of the rank-and-file members of the army if material benefits are not provided. Through these strategies and the interdependence of the political and the material, the governments attracted locals to their armies.

109 Moose, *The Nationalization of the Masses*, chapters 1 and 4; Moose, *Fallen Soldiers*, 7 and chapter 5.

110 Jokić, *Vojnički bukvar*, 33, 48–49.

111 Bojović, *Vaspitanje vojnika*, 66, 151–54; Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja za vojnika*, 20–21; Jokić, *Vojnički bukvar*, 72–74.

112 Riall, *Garibaldi*, 23.

113 Edelstein, *Occupational Hazards*, 14, 51–52; Reinkowski and Karateke, “Introduction,” 1, 3–4; Obinger, “Vorsorgende Wohlfahrtsarbeit am Volkskörper.”

Hence, the latter knew how to win something for themselves and their families in exchange for their support for the war.¹¹⁴

Conceptualized as part of government practice, these strategies must be seen as a form of activity with which ruling elites sought to shape, lead, and influence their subjects.¹¹⁵ When one combines the strategies of inducement and the ideological techniques introduced above during and after military service and the coercive methods used with the subjects' consent, it becomes clear that the state's mobilization efforts never revolved around one strategy. In other words, they did not rely exclusively on national or confessional fervors. Instead, it was the interdependent use of an array of mobilization tools that yielded results. These factors worked together in complex interplay, and they had a powerful effect on the population, although varying success in varying contexts. Methodologically, it is not feasible to gauge which particular strategy counted more than the others.¹¹⁶ Thus, the elites had to approach and adjust to the subjects' expectations and ways of acting.

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116 Koselleck, "Der Einfluß der beiden Weltkriege auf das soziale Bewußtsein," 28–29.

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