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States of Victimhood and Irreparable Losses: Serbian Veterans of the Post-Yugoslav Wars

In this article I investigate how Serbian veterans of the post-Yugoslav wars positioned themselves in relation to the state that was largely ignoring their claims for material and symbolic recognition. I show how this impacted veterans' ideas about their place in the Serbian postwar society and argue that the apparent disregard for veterans' predicaments added to their experience of multiple lacks and losses, as well as aided the formation of a particular veterans' political subjectivity. This was occurring against a backdrop of a series of lost wars and a context of ambiguities and unsolved contradictions, in which, two decades after the wars there were still no official records about the exact size of the veteran population or their most immediate needs. In order to expose and investigate what can be learned from this case, I draw on the insights of the anthropology of the state and argue that its limitations may be overcome and complemented with a broadened Foucauldian concept of governmentality.

Key words: governmentality, Serbia, social recognition, the state, victimhood, war veterans.

Статус жртве и непоправљиви губици: српски ветерани постјугословенских ратова

У овом чланку истражујем како су се српски ратни ветерани постјугословенских ратова позиционирали у односу на државу која је у великој мери игнорисала њихове захтеве за материјалним и симболичким признањем. Показујем како је ово стање утицало на положај ветерана у српском послератном друштву и тврдим да је очигледна небрига за њихове неприлике битно утицала на њихово искуство вишеструких губитака и недостатака, као и на стварање посебног ветеранског субјективитета. Ово се дешавало након низа изгубљених ратова и у контексту двосмислености и неразрешених контрадикција, у којем, две деценије након завршетка ратова, још увек нису постојали службени подаци о величини ветеранске популације нити о њиховим основним потребама. Како бих разоткрио и истражио шта се може научити из овог случаја, ослањам се на увиде антропологије државе и тврдим да њена ограничења могу бити превазиђена кориштењем Фукоовог појма управљања (governmentality).).

Кључне речи: друштвено признање, држава, управљање (governmentality), ратни ветерани, статус жртве, Србија.

Introduction

Two decades after losing a series of post-Yugoslav wars,[1] Serbian veterans continue to re-assert their claims for symbolic and material recognition from the state. However, in contrast to their yesterday's foes in Croatia and veterans in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the older generation of Serbian veterans from the Second World War the plight of the 'young' veterans remains largely ignored. As I will show ethnographically, the ways in which they talked about their predicaments, as well as how different state and non-state actors responded to their claims reveals a terrain of social and political ambiguity on which veterans competed with other groups in Serbia's civil society over their respective positions in a hierarchy of victims.

It is in this context that I conducted fieldwork in several veterans' associations (VAs) in Serbia from June 2010 to December 2011. As a person with a Serbian last name, a Croatian and a Canadian passport and personal (although civilian) experience of war in eastern Croatia, I was neither entirely 'native', nor an 'outsider' (cf. Abu-Lughod 2006, see also Bakalaki 1997) which sometimes helped me to access veterans' 'safe zones' and keep a degree of distance from the local power networks. In this way I was relatively free to move in and between VAs, different state agencies and civil society organisations, and talk to persons who were sometimes at odds with each other because of their alliances to divergent political options, or their competition for limited resources from the state. Yet, this also allowed me to observe how those alliances could turn and shift in unpredictable ways. I also visited non-veteran organisations, such as an association of families of killed and missing persons, and took active part in several workshops and public dialogues organised by veterans and members of several civil society organisations, some of which belonged to the opposite side of the ideological spectrum – the so-called antiwar, liberal, pro-EU 'Second Serbia'.[2]

However, here I have to note that gaining access and securing trust was not an easy task, which was especially true at the onset of my fieldwork. Although I contacted numerous VAs most of them never replied, while others appeared suspicious about my intentions. In one case, even after being invited to enter an organisation I was reprimanded for not writing in the official Cyrillic alphabet, for talking about 'wars' instead of using the state-approved terms like 'military actions', and for sounding too Croatian.[3] Therefore although in some cases my personal ties to

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[1] The post-Yugoslav wars include: the war in Slovenia in 1991, Croatia from 1991–95, Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992–95, the Kosovo War from 1998–99, and the NATO bombings of Serbia in 1999.

[2] In Serbian '*Druga Srbija*' is a term coined by a group of intellectuals who wanted to present themselves as the 'cultural others' in relation to the nationalist '*Prva Srbija*' of the 1990s Serbian society.

[3] Some of my friends in Croatia have similar reservations about the way I speak. To them the language I use sounds as an archaic version of Serbo-Croatian which has been, during the time I spent living in Canada and the UK, replaced by the 'new Croatian'.

the context did not guarantee easy access to people and information, at other times, I was viewed as an 'insider' who could relate to and understand veterans' concerns, at least because of my ethnic background and personal experience of war (cf. Simić 2010). This echoes van de Port's observation about the domain of knowledge that his (Serbian) interlocutors regarded as 'impenetrable by "Westerners", [as] it takes a Serb to know a Serb' (1997, 7).

The primary site where I spent most of my time was the association 'Serbian War Veterans'[4] in Rakovica, a town and municipality in Belgrade. During our first meeting, the president of the VA, Mile Milošević,[5] a volunteer of the wars in Croatia and Kosovo, quickly recognised my interest in what he described as the 'living words' (*žive reči*). Shortly after the veterans in Rakovica 'adopted' me as a researcher and a voluntary assistant, and made me into an associate and honorary member. I was even given a new nickname – '*Doktor*', somewhat precociously anticipating my academic achievement. This was also the site where I could immerse myself into learning through engagement about many of the issues pertaining to veteran politics and to extend the reach of my networks to other sites across the country.

Throughout this time, veterans commonly voiced their discontent through what I have observed as narratives of multiple lacks and losses that pointed to particular sites of 'injury' (cf. Brown 2006) which affected their sense of dignity. Related to this were metaphors about fictive wars, fictive accession to the EU, and fictive presence of the Serbian state in Kosovo. Likewise, veterans talked about the non-existent 'veterans' law' and government aid that was distributed through 'phantom' veterans' associations (VAs). At the center of these narratives was the opposition to what they described as the indifferent state and corrupt politicians who denied any responsibility for the wars and the people who fought in them. Paradoxically, in the process of opposing the state, veterans replicated forms of state power to gain recognition. Thus, to understand the experiences of Serbian veterans it is necessary to examine their relationship to the state, as well as their role in the changing modifications of power and responsibility that was dispersed among a whole range of social actors, including various state and non-state agencies and civil society organisations. In the following pages, using the case of Serbian war veterans, I draw on the insights of the anthropology of the state and argue that its limitations may be overcome by engaging and broadening the Foucauldian concept of governmentality.

The state, governmentality, and beyond

When talking about what they viewed as their marginal social position in Serbia, veterans typically referred to the state disregard for their sacrifices in the

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[4] '*Srpski ratni veterani*'.

[5] Some personal and place names have been anonymised, except in cases where the interlocutors allowed for their real identities to be revealed.

wars. They usually positioned themselves as living off the state grid and as being at odds with other groups of Serbia's civil society. Yet, in the attempt to consolidate their status as a privileged group of citizens they replicated and adapted the functions of the state and along the way, often unintentionally, began introducing new modalities of government. The question to pose here is: To what extent can the anthropology of the state and the concept of governmentality be employed to understand the predicaments of the Serbian veterans of the post-Yugoslav wars?

Although the operational and regulatory functions of the (nation-) state may have been compromised by globalisation and the rise of suprastate institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 6), as well as the influence of separatist movements, increased migration, and new demands for entitlements (Blom Hansen and Stepputat 2001, 2), the state has not lost its analytical value and it remains one the core issues for national and international institutions, and individual (political) actors. Earlier definitions of the state focused on its separation from society and economy (Mitchell 1991, 77), however, the attempts to locate those boundaries revealed a terrain in which clear dividing lines remain obscure. By the same token, the focus on the apparent conceptual ambiguity of the state exposed new modes of ethnographic inquiry (Aretxaga 2003, 393; Trouillot 2001, 126). This led to a call for studies of political processes in which those boundaries are created and maintained (Mitchell 1991). Others argued against the treatment of the state as separate from institutions tied in government (Abrams 1998). However, the analytical separation of its institutional existence from the processes of reification, or the 'state effect' (Mitchell 2006, 174), does not account for the ways in which the system of power extends beyond the state.

Anthropologists have traditionally treated the state as an entity with an insistent grip on people's lives. James Scott (1998) provides important insights about some of the reasons for the failure of centrally planned social engineering projects. However he privileges the impact of the grand schemes at the expense of microspaces in which people engage with and 'navigate' (Brković 2014a; 2014b) through everyday reality, and does not recognise how development plans may precipitate the creation of new forms of knowledge and practices (Li 2005, 385).

In order to bring closer the interdependence of social actors and the state, Michael Herzfeld (1995) makes a convincing argument against the polarity in which the interests of the state are at the top and individual actors at the bottom. Instead, he proposes an investigation of the rhetoric of 'cultural intimacy' (Herzfeld 1995, 2), or how both the state and individual actors make use of the shared elements of cultural identity which allows the continuous reinvention of the state in terms if its symbolic value and institutional practice Yet, in order to account for the ways in which social actors such as Serbian war veterans repeatedly call *for* the state, I side with researchers who extend their analyses beyond the culture and identification (see for example Jansen 2014a, and Spencer 2007). This makes it possible to expose the ways in which the state is conceived and experienced as the 'locus of intense emotional investment, and a site of enactment or performance and as an object of hope' (Reeves 2011).

Another important aspect of the state that was particularly important for Serbian veterans is the dynamics of expansion and contraction of its redistributive powers. In her ethnography about the effects of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Adriana Petryna (2002) shows how the Ukrainian welfare state expanded to include the increasing number of 'sufferers' all of which needed some sort of protection. What is more, this situation opened up new forms of solidarity and competition, as well as modes of state regulation and control. However, in Serbia, as I will show, the state showed no attempts to regulate and provide for her veterans. In a similar vein, other researchers exposed overlapping forms of care (Thelen 2007) and how people 'navigate' through shifting state and non-state domains and in the process construct new forms of personalised power relations (Brković 2014a, 2014b). Yet others, analyse how introduction of new social security networks, such as religious charity organisations, may impact the lives of local populations and provoke different responses from competing ethnic and migrant groups (Leutloff-Grandits 2009).

The experiences of Serbian veterans share important similarities to the those analysed in the above studies as they were also conditioned by limited resources and increased reliance on provision of care by non-state organisations. However, they also point to a new kind of political subjectivation in which veterans competed for a particular 'condition of victimhood' (Fassin and Rechtman 2007, 5), not necessarily to claim financial compensation for their psychological or other kinds of injury, but to regain and legitimate their sense of entitlement. In this way, through their interactions with both the imagined and the material state, they pointed to a number of important social and political transformations that Serbia has been facing since the dissolution of former Yugoslavia. One of the most visible changes was the devolution of state responsibility for the social protection and provision of resources to various non-governmental organisations (cf. Ferguson and Gupta 2002) and the emergence of demands for new entitlement hierarchies. In a country that built its legitimacy on its supposed glorious military past this was not received favorably by large numbers of war veterans who fell short of receiving any government support for their losses. In this context their movement between different state and non-state domains reflected the ways in which they perceived the state both as separate from and linked to (civil) society, which also exposed new forms in the exercise of power and social control (Sharma and Gupta 2006; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Mitchell 2006).

In terms of scale, veterans' predicaments were affected by the circulation of transnational forces that impacted the course of 'liberalisation' and 'democratisation' of postwar Serbia, as well as by their participation in different microspaces of (self) governance (Fraser 2003; Jessop 1999; Paley 2001; Sharma and Gupta 2006, 21). In fact, this dispersal of responsibility was crucial to their experience of political subjectivation. What is more, out of the situation in which the Serbian state was incapable (or unwilling) to perform its redistributive function emerged new forms of conduct in which the state was no longer viewed as governing large numbers of people within its territory. This mirrors Jessica Greenberg's (2011) notion of 'post-disciplinary' Serbia in which people could not travel across the border without a vi-

sa and longed for a return to 'normalcy' and 'to be subjects to disciplinary regimes of power – a state that works' (Greenberg 2011, 90; cf. Jansen 2014b). At the same time, different state and non-state actors were effectively using a new collection of transnational discourses, including the discourse on human rights. This dispersal of power and responsibility calls for an analytical shift toward the spaces and processes that exist beyond the state, which may be done by employing the Foucaldian concept of governmentalty.

Michel Foucault defined governmentality in various ways as the 'art of government' and the 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault 1990, 87). As a kind of 'political rationality', it is an assemblage of forces and practices that share the modes of seeing, thinking, representing and acting upon reality in ways that make that reality open to political and other types of intervention (Rose 1996:42). As such, it has a moral character and aims to 'improve' populations through various interventions, such as categorisations, calculations, and corrections. Foucault treats these techniques as a range of interrelated, disciplining norms and processes that govern the conduct of populations through different agencies, institutions, and self-regulating discourses. Therefore, government both transcends the state and conditions different forms of societal and state regulation.

For the purposes this article governmentality is promising in the sense that it can be used to trace and follow different modalities of power as they transverse and cut through multiple domains of government and expose the workings of the state. Yet, analytically, the governmentality paradigm does not tend to capture the role of people's engagements in the appearance of potentially new forms of power and processes of (non-) subjectivation (Ferguson 1990, 18; Fraser 2003). Some researchers argue that the concept of governmentality is valuable mainly for the analyses of already known forms of power (Collier 2009, 99). However, these shortcomings may be overcome by recontextualising Foucault's works and by accounting for new 'patterns of correlation' in which different techniques and technologies of power are (re-)configured and transformed (Collier 2009, 78-80). Hence, governmentality needs to be entextualised away from Foucauldian modernity to account for the postfordist (and postsocialist) processes of deregulation and flexibilisation, i.e. neoliberal globalisation (Fraser 2003).

Let me now outline the qualitative character of veterans' predicaments and some of the more distinctive aspects of social and political rationality in postwar, postsocialist Serbia.

No state for 'young' veterans

Serbian veterans form a large and diverse group of former volunteers, reservists, professional soldiers, police officers and members of paramilitary units, who fought in one or more wars that lasted through the entire decade of the 1990s. Although there are no official records about the exact size of the veteran population according to some estimates there could be anywhere between 400,000 and 800,000

persons (Beara et al. 2004).[6] During the mobilisation of 1991 which caused massive anti-war protests across Serbia (Jansen, 2001) and widespread draft dogging and desertion (Backović et al. 1998), many of the recruits were in fact refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia who escaped the war only to be sent back again.[7]

What is more, at the beginning of the war, the Yugoslav Ministry of Defense stamped reservists' military cards as if they had been sent away for a military exercise. After the Yugoslav People's Army officially withdrew from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, those same individuals now received stamps as volunteers (Rudić 2013, see also Sekulić in Radović 2011). Hence, contrary to the pervasive myth of a fierce Serbian warrior, many of the volunteers in fact did not volunteer, but were mobilised in the regions where they lived and their status changed only once the Yugoslav People's Army withdrew from the territories outside of Serbia.

Upon their return, many veterans found they had lost their jobs, and faced increasing poverty, lack of housing, deteriorating health care, and rising suicide rates.[8] In the meantime, many of the old factories in which they worked before the war went bankrupt or were privatised and drastically reduced the number of employees. A case in point is Rakovica which used to be known as one of the most industrialised towns that was home to some of the largest exporters of metal products and heavy machinery. The factories that were run by more than 17,000 workers were at the time of my fieldwork almost entirely empty. Rakovica also saw many of its residents join mass protests during the 'antibureaucratic revolution' in 1988 to demand better working conditions and subsidies for their factories (Vladisavljević 2008, 155). However, only several years later many of those workers joined the war and soon after returned as disillusioned veterans. Many of my interlocutors said they were encouraged to report for military service while still working and were given guarantees by their managers that they would be able to return to their jobs. However, instead of getting their jobs back, they often found that they had been made 'redundant' (*tehnološki višak*)[9] and were soon labeled as 'losers of transition' (*gubitnici tranzicije*).

Yet, in 1993, while the wars were still raging, they founded their municipal-level VA with a structure that closely resembled those of the associations of veterans of the Second World War. Its initial name was the 'Association of the

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[6] If to these numbers we add members of veterans' families, they get exponentially higher.

[7] It is important to note that except for the Kosovo war, none of the others were ever officially declared as 'wars', but were instead referred to as 'armed actions', or 'military maneuvers,' which allowed the regime of the 1990s to wage wars outside of its territory without the responsibility for their outcomes.

[8] Some researchers suggest that as much as 30 percent of war veterans suffered from some form of war-related trauma, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Beara et al. 2004). However, when compared to Croatia, PTSD was practically non-existent (Dokić 2009).

[9] In Rakovica people were made 'redundant' primarily because the places where they worked could no longer export their products to their traditional markets in former Yugoslavia, nor abroad.

Combatants of the 1990' and was later changed to 'Serbian War Veterans'. As was the case with many other VAs that decided to pin the term veteran to their name, in Rakovica they also believed that this change would help them to internationalise their VA and bring it closer to cognate organisations abroad. As I was told, after they founded their VA, veterans in Rakovica came under increasing pressure from local politicians who demanded their votes in return for funding, which resulted in conflict and the fragmentation of the original membership base.

The challenges at the local level[10] were coupled with those at the polity level and the VA had to adapt to a new system of funding according to which the allocation of funds was based on 'representation', or the size of a VAs membership base and the number of projects it offered to its patrons. Although in principle any VA could apply for funding at the local or national level, this was difficult to achieve as only a small number of VAs had connections to the 'right' people. What is more, many municipalities were too poor while the VAs often lacked basic resources, such as staff who would know how to write project proposals, or even how to use the Internet. In some VAs this caused conflicts which often resulted in competition and shifting alliances. Yet, despite these challenges, Mile Milošević, the president of the VA in Rakovica, proudly claimed that with its 9000 members, his VA was a formidable social actor whose needs the state could not afford to ignore.

However, one of the central issues for the the VA, as well as for many others in Serbia, was how to fulfill its main objective of contributing to the welfare of war veterans and their families while being cut off from the state grid. For this reason, while continually advancing new demands from the state, the VA started flirting with civil society organisations which until then they regarded as their ideological enemies. In this way, veterans made attempts to extend the reach of their networks beyond the state while always keeping an eye on the possibility for what they thought was rightfully theirs – the state and social recognition for their war-time sacrifices. However, at the same time as they called for the state, veterans showed increasing awareness about the need for new modifications of power and responsibility.

Throughout my fieldwork discussions about war veterans invariably led to comparisons of the state recognition and social respect that the old generations of veterans experienced in socialist Yugoslavia with the lack of care for their younger counterparts who fought in the post-Yugoslav wars. However, contrary to the general opinion how veterans were only interested in material rewards, most of the veterans' narratives revolved around the loss of dignity and the lack of any symbolic recognition. What is more, the only persons who could qualify for any compensation were those who could prove they sustained some form of war-related disability. In addition to comparisons with their 'old' compatriots from the Second World

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[10] As practically all of the VAs I have visited, the VA in Rakovica also existed within a three-tiered structure of organisations at the municipal, city, and national level. The VA in Rakovica was a local, municipal-level organisation, although with pretensions to become the central organisation for all veterans in Serbia – an ambition it shared with many other VAs.

War, Serbian veterans regularly made references to the experiences of veterans in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina which, they argued, were far better than theirs.

In fact, Croatian war veterans were officially branded as 'defenders' ('*branitelji*') of the 'Homeland War' ('*Domovinski rat*') and have been much more successful in forging a close link to the state and the wider society than their Serbian counterparts. They were often referred to as Croatian knights (*hrvatski vitezovi*) and heroes (*heroji*)[11] and regarded as the most important actors in the defense of their country. In addition to the social recognition, Croatian veterans enjoyed a preferential citizenship status which was further solidified after the Croatian government passed an amendment which now contains a legal obligation for the social protection of veterans and their families. What is more, their benefits package is more comprehensive than those of veterans in Israel, the US, Russia, Germany and the UK, to name a few (Berdak 2013, 10). On the basis of their disabled status veterans could claim various benefits from pensions, free education and various tax breaks, to reduced interest rates for mortgage loans and free shares in the Croatian privatization fund. Although their exact number had been a source of dispute, presently there are exactly 489,407 persons which are officially recognised as Croatian 'defenders' (Žunec 2006, 24). In Bosnia and Herzegovina the experiences of veterans were markedly different as they were conditioned by the political system that was divided into two entities: the Bosniak-Croat Federation and the Republika Srpska. This system is characterised by various overlapping competencies, so that members of all the three ethnic groups are regarded as both victims and perpetrators, depending on where they fought and where they hoped to get their status recognised, while the benefits were awarded according to their ethnicity. This means that, for example, a Bosnian Croat who fought in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina could be compensated by both states. However, this did not apply to Bosnian Serbs as they could only be compensated by Republika Srpska (Berdak 2006, 15-16).

Although most of the laws and regulations governing veterans' rights and privileges had been inherited from the former state, the situation in postsocialist Serbia was different and veterans of the post-Yugoslav wars argued they were pressed to the margins of the social and political life. This was felt not only by veterans, but also by other members of civil society. 'Veteran is another name for absolute exclusion and invisibility […] as long as veterans' status remains unrecognised, the state will be able to pretend there were no wars', said Branimir Stojanović Trša,[12] a 45-year-old pyschoanalyst, activist and program administrator at the Centre for Cultural Decontamination in Belgrade.[13] On another occasion, during a public commemoration of an important battle of the Second World War that was at-

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[11] In contrast, in Serbia there were no official heroes from the post-Yugoslav wars and in fact many persons who actively participated in the wars refused to be called veterans.

[12] Most personal and place names have been anonymised, except in cases where interlocutors allowed for their real names to be used.

[13] In Serbian *Centar za kulturnu dekontaminaciju – CZKD,* is a well-known activist center and performance venue in Belgrade.

tended by some of the leading members of the Serbian government, a 50-year-old veteran told me about his deep disappointment with the state because it had not officially recognised any heroes from the post-Yugoslav wars. What is more, he added that many of those who were present at that day were probably also veterans of the post-Yugoslav wars, but there was no mention of them in the official programme or in any of the speeches. Instead the only link that was made was between the sacrifices that Serbia had suffered during the Second World War and her inevitable (future) in the family of European nations. Similarly, Dragan, a disabled veteran in his late fifties, admitted during an interview in Rakovica that he was ashamed of being a veteran. 'Here everybody despises us. They consider us to be killers and thieves. They call us "dogs of war" (*psi rata*) Those who were active during 5 October[14] are more respected then former fighters', he said. Another 50-year-old veteran and the president of a VA in Majdanpek in eastern Serbia, complained about the lack of the state and municipal support. He claimed that ever since the change in the government in 2000, the funding for their VA had been gradually reduced to the point where they were now being forced by the local authorities to vacate their only office.

Therefore, although there existed significant disagreements between different groups in their understandings of the reasons for the escalation of the post-Yugoslav wars, or their views about patriotism, there were also important similarities in their critiques of the post-war Serbian political establishment and in their call for an increased presence of the state (see also Mikuš and Dokić 2015). What is more, despite their ideological differences some of them were determined to act together in the process of political (re-)subjectivation.

Conclusion: Toward new forms of power and knowing

In this article I have argued that although the functions of the state appear to be threatened by 'de-etatisation', or a process of devolution of its powers, this does not reflect the imminent disappearance of the state. Instead, as the case of Serbian war veterans shows, this signals the emergence of new modalities of government in which the operation of the state is in different ways taken over and 'reinvented' (Rose 1996, 56) by new, seemingly independent, non-governmental organisations (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Trouillot 2001).

In her study about people living in Turkish Northern Cyprus, a non-state that was internationally recognised only by Turkey, Yael Navaro-Yashin (2012) argues that central to people's experience was a kind of 'phantasmatic' entanglement in a 'make-believe' space. For her this 'make-believe' is both a social form and an analytical category that refers to 'not only space and territory but also to modes of governance and administration and to material practices' (Navaro-Yashin 2012, 5). As I have argued, Serbian war veterans occupied similar spaces in which they both

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[14] This date refers to the series of mass protests that were held in Belgrade and across several major cities in Serbia that culminated in the overthrow of the regime of Slobodan Milošević.

replicated the state, as well as learned how to live without the state support, while at the same developing their own discourse about victimhood and their particular sense of entitlement. At the same time they fought not only for material benefits but, more importantly, to regain and legitimate their sense of entitlement in a state that did not have a developed narrative about its (lost) wars and that showed no intentions to provide for its population of veterans. By staking their claims, even if unintentionally, veterans challenged the established forms of knowing and acting. Hence, a recontextualised and broadened governmentality may indeed allow analytical inclusion of subjectivities such as Serbian veterans who appear to have existed between state and non-state domains in a type of zone of unsolved contradictions in which they started accepting new forms and modalities of government which they found difficult or even impossible to relate to.

Acknowledgments

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