Echoes of Conflict

Memories of oppression and conflict in Kosovo-Albanian Families in Denmark

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Abstract

This thesis explores how memories of the Kosovo Conflict are transmitted across generations in Kosovo-Albanian families living in Denmark. Through qualitative interviews and participant observation, the study analyses the experiences of the parent generation and the children's indirect recollections shaped by familial narratives. By drawing on theories of postmemory, cultural identity, and ruination, the thesis sheds light on the complex processes through which the trauma of conflict and war continues to shape intergenerational identity formation.

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1. Introduction

In the late 1990s, the Kosovo conflict forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes due to violence, repression, and war. Among them were families who sought refuge in Western Europe, including Denmark where many Kosovo-Albanian families began to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of displacement. For the parent generation, the war is a lived experience marked by fear and survival. For their children, who are born in or raised in Denmark, the conflict is not remembered firsthand, but exists as a family legacy carried through stories and cultural practices.

This thesis focuses on the intergenerational transmission of memory, more specifically how memories of the Kosovo conflict are communicated from parents to children within the context of the Kosovo-Albanian diaspora in Denmark. It seeks to examine the channels through which these memories are passed on, whether it is verbal, material, or symbolic, and how the presence of the past continues to shape the families and their lives long after displacement. This leads to the central research question of the thesis:

How are memories of the Kosovo conflict transmitted across generations in Kosovo-Albanian families living in Denmark?

I aim to answer this question through qualitative fieldwork consisting of in-depth interviews and participant observation in selected families, supported by a multi-layered theoretical framework drawing on postmemory, ruination, and diaspora studies.

These questions are not only relevant within the field of memory studies but also hold wider societal significance. In the current European context, shaped by histories of war and displacement, among other things, the ways in which families remember and relate to conflict across generations are central to understanding processes of identity and belonging. Studying intergenerational memory in diaspora families sheds light on how the legacies of violence are not confined to the past but continue to live on in everyday life, in silences, in symbols and in the subtle practices of remembering and forgetting.

By focusing on the Kosovo-Albanian community in Denmark, this thesis contributes to a relatively underexplored area of research. While much attention has been given to the political and humanitarian aspects of the Kosovo conflict, less is known about how its emotional and cultural afterlives unfold within families over time. This study aims to offer a nuanced and grounded account of how memory is transmitted not as fixed narratives but as lived and negotiated experiences. Through this, it becomes possible to understand not only what is remembered, but also how and why certain memories are preserved, silenced or transformed as they move from one generation to the next.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This thesis is based on a qualitative, interpretive research design aimed at understanding how memories of the Kosovo conflict are experienced and transmitted across generations within Kosovo-Albanian families living in Denmark. It is combined by several complementary methodological approaches, these being participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations.

In addition to the data collection, it is mentioned that informal conversations occurred during the course of fieldwork. These interactions contributed valuable insights into how memory and identity are implemented in everyday life and allowed me to observe subtle forms of intergenerational transmission that do not always appear during formal interviews.

2.2 Data collection

The thesis employed three primary methods of qualitative data collection: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and informal conversations.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in the family homes of the participants and typically lasted between one and two hours. The interview guide covered a range of themes including experiences of conflict, migration histories, family narratives, and intergenerational communication, among others. However, interviews frequently evolved into more fluid and emotionally guided conversations, with participants often moving between direct responses and

spontaneous storytelling, encouraged by memories, objects, or even the presence of family members. This openness allowed for the collection of nuanced and layered data.

Participant observation played an equally central role in the research. As the researcher, I was invited into participants' homes, where it became possible to observe everyday practices of memory and identity work. Shared meals, conversations, the presence of cultural symbols around their homes, and embodied rituals provided insight into non-verbal and implicit forms of memory transmission. Observational notes were made after each visit, in which my focus was on physical spaces and symbolic objects, among other things.

In addition, informal conversations proved to be an important source of insight. Over the course of the project, many participants engaged in ongoing contact with me for example via social media or informal gatherings. In these settings, family members sometimes disclosed experiences or reflections they had not shared in the formal interview context. These exchanges offered further understanding of how memories of the Kosovo conflict circulate within families, and how they shape identity and belonging across generations.

2.3 Selection of Participants

Participants were found using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling strategies, with the aim of including families in which intergenerational memory transmission could be explored. The thesis sought to include both parents who had direct experience of the conflict and younger family members, preferably their children, who had not themselves witnessed it. Importantly, the focus of the study is not limited to experiences of the war period alone. Rather, it incorporates memories of the broader conflict in Kosovo, including the years of oppression under Yugoslav rule, the 1980s student demonstrations, and the escalations of the 1990s. Some of the parent participants had not directly experienced the war but were deeply affected by the earlier phases of the conflict and by structural forms of ethnic discrimination.

Participants were recruited through multiple networks. Initial contacts were established through an event organized by the Kosovo Consulate in Copenhagen in connection with the visit of the Minister of Justice from Kosovo, as part of a cooperation project between Denmark and Kosovo concerning prison capacity. Further recruitment was conducted through outreach to the Albanian community via a Facebook group called *'You know you are Albanian…'*. Through this, I was able to

get into contact with a large number of potential participants. During the recruitment process, careful ethical considerations were made. Several individuals who expressed interest in participating mentioned that they or their families were living with severe war-related trauma and wished to avoid involving their children in any discussion of the conflict. Out of respect for these wishes, and in order to avoid introducing a psychological dynamic that would exceed the scope of this project, I chose not to include such families in the study.

Additionally, several younger individuals expressed interest in participating, though their parents declined to take part. In these cases, I likewise chose not to include them, as the aim of the project was to understand how memories circulate within family contexts, and it was essential to avoid situations in which younger participants would risk speaking about parental experiences in ways that might cause tension or distress.

2.4 Interviewees

The thesis includes four families, each representing different generational configurations and experiences of the Kosovo conflict. The families are presented with their pseudonyms and the towns of origin:

- Family residing in Snejbjerg: Father (Shaban), Mother (Resmije), Daughter (Dilara).
- Family residing in Nørrebro: Mother (Ganimete), Daughters (Alba and Elvana).
- Family residing in Hedehusene: Father (Fadil), Mother (Naile), Daughters (Sara, Dita, and Aya).
- Family residing in Greve: Father (Bedri), Mother (Emine), Son (Albin).

Each family brings a unique perspective to the study, shaped by differences in migration histories, degrees of war experience, and generational positioning.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The sensitive aspect of this research topic required careful and continuous ethical reflection. From the beginning, I was aware that I am not a trained psychologist, and that engaging with personal and

family memories of conflict, displacement, and loss, among other topics, entails risks. The primary ethical principle guiding the project was to ensure that no harm was caused to participants.

An ethical principle throughout this study was the imperative to *do no harm*. This ethic is widely recognized across qualitative research as a core responsibility of researchers (Tracy, 2020). In this context, harm is understood not only in physical terms, but also in relation to psychological, emotional, and social well-being (British Sociological Association, 2017). I was therefore fully aware that engaging participants in conversations about conflict and loss might evoke painful memories or unintended emotional effects. This awareness informed both the design of the research process and my interactions with all participants.

Prior to each interview or period of participant observation, I engaged in preparative conversations with the participants. I explained the nature of the research, the kinds of questions that might follow, and the ways in which the material could be used. These conversations were intended to create a space in which participants could make an informed decision about whether they wished to take part. At the same time, I remain fully aware that it is impossible for participants to know in advance how the process of recalling and speaking about the past might affect them. Even with clear prior explanation, it is not always possible to predict which memories may be activated, or how these may resonate emotionally. I, therefore, approached all interviews and interactions with great caution, paying close attention to participants' verbal and non-verbal cues, and prioritizing their well-being above data collection at all times. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. A written consent form was provided and discussed in detail with each family. The form outlined the aims of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and the participants' right to withdraw at any time.

However, I also acknowledge that informed consent in itself cannot fully address the ethical complexities of research on such topics. Participants cannot be expected to know fully what they are consenting to in terms of emotional impact. It is therefore my responsibility as a researcher to remain cautious throughout the entire process. This responsibility also informed decisions regarding the presentation of the data. Although all participants explicitly gave permission to use their real names and identities, I have chosen to anonymize all in this thesis. This decision reflects an understanding that the narratives shared here are deeply personal. Anonymization serves to protect participants from any future unintended consequences of their participation.

Throughout the research process, I remained concerned about the possibility that my questions and presence might involuntarily initiate difficult processes for participants. I am conscious that inviting individuals to speak about family memories of conflict involves a degree of intervention

in their personal and collective memory work. I have reflected continuously on this dynamic, and I take full responsibility for the ethical implications of my research practice.

These reflections also shaped my decisions about participant selection. During the recruitment, several individuals indicated that they or their family members were living with unresolved trauma and did not wish to discuss the past. In such cases, I respected their wishes fully and chose not to include them in the study. Similarly, when younger family members expressed interest in participating without their parents' consent, I opted not to proceed, as this would risk undermining family dynamics.

Overall, I approached the research with a strong awareness of the emotional and ethical risks involved and sought to conduct all stages of the project with care, sensitivity, and respect for the individuals and families who so generously shared their experiences.

2.6 Language and Transcription

The interviews were conducted in both Albanian and Danish, depending on the preferences of the participants and the conversations. Parents mainly spoke Albanian, while younger family members often switched between Albanian and Danish. This switching between languages was itself a meaningful part of the data, reflecting processes of identity negotiation, linguistic hybridity, and emotional expression within diasporic families.

All interviews were transcribed manually. Manual transcription was necessary due to the multilingual recordings, which combined dialectal Albanian and Danish. Automatic transcription tools were not suitable for capturing the nuances of the conversations, especially as participants frequently moved between languages. The transcription process also required careful attention to tone, pauses, and shifts in emotional intensity.

Three of the four interviews were fully transcribed and translated into English for analysis. A technical error during the handling of the fourth interview resulted in the compression and partial loss of approximately thirty pages of transcription. The original audio recording remained accessible and was listened to repeatedly during the analytical phase of the project. However, the interview was not fully transcribed again due to time constraints. The insights from this interview were still integrated into the overall analysis. Moreover, it should be noted that I have chosen not to include full interview transcriptions as references in the main body of the thesis. This decision was

made following the advice of my supervisor. However, the transcriptions are provided in the appendix for documentation purposes.

2.7 Limitations

Liminality has been a central concept in this project, not only as a theoretical lens for understanding how memory is transmitted across generations, but also as a condition of the research process itself. The project unfolded within multiple spaces of transition and uncertainty, both for the participants and for me as a researcher.

A central dimension of this liminality stems from my own position in the field. As a researcher of Kosovo-Albanian origin, I moved between the role of insider and outsider throughout the research process. My background enabled me to establish trust and rapport with participants, and to understand nuances that may not have been visible to an external observer. At the same time, this closeness required constant reflexivity. I was aware that my own experiences and emotional attachments to the topic could influence the way I conducted and interpreted interviews and shaped the analysis. The position of being both a member of the wider Kosovo-Albanian diaspora and a researcher studying this community placed me in a liminal space.

This methodological liminality was further mirrored in the practical aspects of data collection and analysis. The multilingual nature of the interviews required me to navigate between languages in the process of transcription and interpretation, constantly moving between spoken Albanian, spoken Danish, and written English. The work of translation involved not only the transfer of meaning across languages, but also a negotiation of cultural and emotional registers that are not always directly translatable. This translational space was itself a form of liminality, where meanings shifted and became unstable.

The technical loss of part of one interview further underscored the fragmented and contingent nature of the research process. The absence of a complete transcript forced me to engage with the material in a different way, relying on repeated listening and interpretive reconstruction. This loss became a concrete example of how absence, fragmentation, and partiality are not only features of memory work within the families I studied, but also of the research process itself.

Finally, the interactions with participants often revealed their own experiences of liminality. Many spoke about living between past and present, between Kosovo and Denmark, between Albanian and Danish identities, and between silence and narrative. As a researcher, I was constantly aware that my questions and presence could intervene in these fragile processes. While I

took great care to approach the field with sensitivity and ethical awareness, I also recognized that the act of asking about the past inevitably shaped the ways in which it was remembered and articulated. This awareness reinforced the sense that the entire research process was embedded in liminal spaces: between languages, between generations, between memory and forgetting, and between the ethical imperative to do no harm and the unavoidable impact of the research itself.

3. Background: Historical Trajectories of Conflict and Displacement

Understanding how memories of the Kosovo conflict circulate and are transmitted across generations requires an engagement with the broader historical and political context from which these memories originate. The trajectory of structural violence and ethnic discrimination, armed conflict that shaped Kosovo in the late twentieth century continues to inform the lived experiences of families in the diaspora today. This chapter offers a historical overview of these processes, situating them within the longer patterns of state repression, community resistance, and transnational migration.

3.1 The Collapse of Yugoslavia and Rising Ethnic Tensions

The death of Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito in 1980 marked a turning point for the fragile balance that had sustained the multi-ethnic federation. Tito's centralized governance had suppressed nationalist movements, but his death opened the political space for competing ethnic claims to resurface (Judah, 2008). Kosovo, an autonomous province within the Socialist Republic of Serbia, was home to a predominantly ethnic Albanian population that had long experienced marginalization and political subordination.

Following the 1981 student protests in Pristina, which called for greater autonomy and socio-economic reforms, the Yugoslav state launched a harsh campaign of repression (Clark, 2000). The protests were framed as separatist threats, leading to mass arrests and intensified discrimination against ethnic Albanians. These developments sowed deep mistrust and polarization between the Albanian majority and the Serbian dominated state.

3.2 The Erosion of Autonomy and Institutionalized Discrimination

Throughout the 1980s, Kosovo's already limited autonomy was systematically demolished. The rise of Slobodan Milošević in Serbia enhanced this process, as he mobilized Serbian nationalist sentiment to consolidate his power (Ramet, 2006). The 1989 constitutional changes effectively revoked Kosovo's autonomous status, bringing its institutions under direct Serbian control.

During the early 1990s, the Serbian regime implemented wide-ranging policies of exclusion. Albanian language media outlets were shut down, Albanian staff were expelled from schools and public institutions, and economic marginalization deepened as Albanians were systematically removed from employment (Malcolm, 1998). Public life became heavily surveilled and militarized, creating an atmosphere of fear. As Clark (2000) notes, for many Albanians, this

period was marked not only by material deprivation but also by the systematic erasure of cultural and linguistic identity.

3.3 Parallel Structures and Nonviolent Resistance

In response to this exclusion, Kosovo Albanians developed extensive parallel structures in civil society. Under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), a nonviolent resistance movement sought to sustain community life and maintain cultural continuity in the face of repression (Di Lellio & Schwandner-Sievers, 2006).

Underground schools operated in private homes, while informal networks provided healthcare and social support. This strategy of peaceful resistance, while morally powerful, came at great personal and collective cost. Families endured economic hardship and psychological strain, and the pervasive atmosphere of surveillance and uncertainty fostered a quiet but enduring form of trauma (Clark, 2000).

3.4 Armed Conflict and the Kosovo War

By the mid-1990s, frustration with the limitations of nonviolent resistance and the escalation of Serbian repression led to the emergence of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA/UÇK), which advocated armed struggle for independence. The outbreak of open conflict in 1998 triggered a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing by Serbian forces. Documented atrocities included mass executions, sexual violence, and the systematic destruction of homes and cultural heritage (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

The conflict resulted in the displacement of approximately 800,000 Kosovo Albanians (UNHCR, 2000). Families were fragmented, communities destroyed, and survivors forced into exile. The trauma of forced migration and loss became central to the collective memory of the Kosovo Albanian population, shaping both personal identities and communal narratives.

3.5 NATO Intervention and Post-War Reconstruction

In response to the scale of violence and the failure of diplomatic efforts, NATO launched a bombing campaign in 1999, which ultimately forced Serbian withdrawal from Kosovo. The post-war period was marked by a complex reconstruction process under the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Although open hostilities ceased, the legacies of violence and displacement remained unresolved (Kostovicova, 2005).

Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008 represented a symbolic milestone, yet the political and social landscape remained fragile. Ethnic divisions persisted, economic recovery was uneven, and many displaced persons remained unable or unwilling to return to their pre-war homes (Valenta & Strabac, 2013). The debris of violence, both material and psychological, continues to shape the everyday lives of individuals and communities (Stoler, 2008).

3.6 Diaspora Formation and the Afterlife of Conflict

The Kosovo-Albanian diaspora in Western Europe emerged in multiple waves, shaped by the evolving dynamics of conflict and repression. Initial migration in the early 1990s was driven by political persecution and economic exclusion, while the mass displacement of the late 1990s produced a larger, more diverse diaspora (Valenta & Strabac, 2013).

In Denmark, Kosovo Albanian families arrived through a range of legal pathways, including temporary asylum, family reunification, and humanitarian resettlement. Their experiences of migration, exile, and adaptation are highly diverse. Yet across this diversity, certain patterns of memory and identity transmission recur. For the first generation, those who experienced repression, war, and flight, memories of violence and loss are deeply embodied. Many parents negotiate complex decisions about how and when to communicate these memories to their children. Silence, selective narration, and symbolic practices often shape the contours of intergenerational transmission (Hirsch, 2012). For the second generation, children born in Denmark or who arrived as young children, the conflict is not a direct memory but a mediated presence. It is encountered through family stories and emotional atmospheres, among other things. The dynamics of postmemory and the ongoing negotiation of diasporic identity remain central to how these younger generations relate to their familial past (Hirsch, 2012; Stoler, 2008).

This thesis explores these processes of memory transmission and transformation within Kosovo Albanian families in Denmark. It approaches the Kosovo conflict not merely as a historical event but as an active force in the emotional, cultural, and intergenerational life of the diaspora.

This historical context provides a foundation for understanding the dynamics of memory transmission examined in this study. The next chapter reviews key theoretical perspectives that inform this study of intergenerational memory and diaspora life.

4. State of the Art

Wars and conflicts rarely leave their mark solely within the time frame in which they take place. On the contrary, an expanding body of interdisciplinary research shows that their psychological, social, and cultural consequences often extend far beyond the generation that directly experiences them. This insight has led to growing scholarly interest in the concept of intergenerational transmission of trauma, that is, how experiences of violence, flight, and loss are passed on to children and youth who did not themselves live through the war, but who nonetheless carry its imprint through their parents' stories, silences, and emotional lives. In the context of the Kosovo War and the Kosovo-Albanian diaspora in Denmark, it becomes crucial to understand how memories of war are transmitted and shaped within the family, and how these memories affect identity formation and emotional orientation among the children of refugees.

A key theoretical and empirical approach to this topic is found in studies of *postmemory*, a concept developed by Marianne Hirsch with reference to children of Holocaust survivors. Hirsch (2012) describes postmemory as a form of remembrance that is not based on direct experience but nonetheless feels deeply personal and emotionally real because it has been transmitted through strong narrative and affective ties. According to Hirsch, many children of traumatized parents "inherit" an emotional relationship to an event they have never witnessed. This memory lives on through photographs, stories, gestures, silences, and symbol, and is often integrated into the children's identity as a kind of psychic landscape they navigate, without always knowing its origin.

While Hirsch's work initially focused on Holocaust memory, the concept of postmemory has since been applied to migration (Bond, 2014), slavery (Sharpe, 2016), colonialism (Walkowitz, 2018), and war. Recent studies have emphasized that children in refugee families often carry a special form of affective witnessing, where they are not only told about their parents' experiences but also feel their emotional charge, often without receiving a clear verbal narrative. This is especially relevant in cases where parents deliberately avoid sharing painful memories in an effort to protect their children, yet where the silence itself becomes a powerful form of memory transmission.

This silence has been a recurring theme in trauma and migration studies. Scholars such as Volkan (2001) have shown how trauma can be "transmitted" through what he calls undeclared mourning, unresolved grief and invisible losses that manifest in the next generation through anxiety,

identity conflict, or ambiguous loyalty to the homeland. Both therapeutic and sociocultural studies have shown that children in diasporic contexts often internalize a sense of responsibility or sorrow for something they neither experienced nor fully understand. This supports Hirsch's and Danieli's research, which highlights how silence, emotion, and fragmented stories may constitute some of the most powerful forms of memory transmission.

In relation to the Kosovo War, however, there is still relatively limited research specifically addressing intergenerational memory among Kosovo-Albanian families in diaspora. Much of the existing literature has concentrated on the war's political and humanitarian dimensions, for example, in the work of Žarkov (2007), who analyzes gendered war narratives, or Pupavac (2002), who examines humanitarian intervention and victim discourse. While these contributions are valuable, they rarely engage with family dynamics or the intimate memory spaces within exile communities. This leaves a significant gap in the scholarship, particularly regarding how young people in the Kosovo-Albanian diaspora relate to their parents' trauma as part of their own identity framework.

To understand how the aftermath of war continues to manifest in everyday life, even decades after the end of conflict, Ann Laura Stoler's concept of ruination offers a useful supplement to postmemory. While Hirsch focuses on emotional and narrative forms of memory, Stoler (2008; 2013) zooms in on the material and symbolic remains of violence. Ruination refers to how grand and violent structures, what she calls imperial debris, continue to shape lives long after the incidents themselves. These "debris" can include not only destroyed buildings or war remnants, but also administrative restrictions and embodied trauma, among others. In this context of a diaspora, they appear in the form of photographs and inheritances, among others. These serve as memory triggers that affect how individuals relate to both their past and their present.

This intersection between postmemory and ruination, the emotional and the material, enables an understanding of how memories in exile are not only transmitted through words, but also through objects, language, spaces, and bodily practices. When children of Kosovo-Albanian refugees in Denmark grow up surrounded by objects, language, and symbols from Kosovo, the war and the experience of displacement are integrated into their identity, often without being explicitly explained. These material remains form a kind of infrastructure of memory that supports and deepens the effects of postmemory.

Another key body of research relevant to this study concerns identity in diaspora. Stuart Hall (1990) has been one of the most influential scholars in this field. He argues that cultural identity is not a fixed essence but rather a process of becoming, shaped by history, memory, and representation. For diasporic subjects, such as children of migrants and refugees, identity is therefore often marked by hybridity: the experience of living between two or more cultural worlds, without fully belonging to either. In such a state, memories of war and displacement are not just background events but active elements in ongoing identity negotiation. Hall emphasizes that identity is shaped through tension, between remembering and forgetting, belonging and alienation, and that these tensions are intensified in diasporic contexts.

Homi Bhabha's notion of the third space (1994) extends this idea by conceptualizing a cultural and psychological space in which diasporic subjects negotiate meaning, language, and belonging. This "in-between" space may be filled with contradiction and discomfort but also with creativity and resilience. Children of refugees are often both carriers of cultural legacy and active participants in a new cultural reality. In this space, memory becomes both a resource and a burden, something to understand, honor, and at times, struggle to move beyond.

Lastly, the work of Karl Mannheim (1952) and Paul Connerton (1989) provides important tools for understanding generational differences in how memory functions. Mannheim argued that generations are shaped by shared historical experiences, rather than simply by age. In the Kosovo-Albanian context, the parent generation lived through war, displacement, and loss, while their children came of age in peace and relative stability in Denmark. This results in distinct worldviews, emotions, and relationships to cultural identity and memory. Connerton furthers this analysis by distinguishing between communicative memory, these being informal, conversational memory shared within a few generations, and cultural memory, being institutionalized through rituals, symbols, and traditions. In diaspora families, both forms coexist and often conflict: silence at the dinner table may carry as much memory as a flag on the wall or a national holiday celebration.

To sum it up, the existing literature makes it clear that memory in migration is not a straightforward transfer of facts or stories. Rather, it is a dynamic process marked by affect, silence, materiality, and contestation. Yet despite the richness of these theoretical frameworks, there remains a significant gap in ethnographic research specifically addressing Kosovo-Albanian families in Denmark and their modes of remembering war across generations. This thesis aims to contribute to

that gap by offering a grounded, nuanced account of how the legacy of the Kosovo War is transmitted, negotiated, and transformed within the intimate, emotional, and cultural spaces of diaspora family life.

5. Theoretical Framework

This thesis draws on selected theoretical concepts that have proven helpful in understanding how memories of the Kosovo conflict are transmitted, embodied, and negotiated across generations within families living in Denmark. The concepts are used as analytical lenses that open up different dimensions of the material, rather than as a single unified framework.

5.1 Ruination and Imperial Debris

Ann Laura Stoler's concept of ruination has helped me to understand how traces of past violence continue to shape the present. Ruination refers to the ongoing presence of material and symbolic debris from violent histories. In the families I studied, such traces appear in everyday objects, photographs, and domestic spaces. These objects are not neutral but carry emotional and symbolic weight. Ruination thus offers a way to analyze how the conflict remains present in family life, not only through words but also through things and spaces.

5.2 Forgetting

Paul Connerton's work on forgetting has been used to analyze how certain aspects of the conflict are actively or passively forgotten within families. Connerton distinguishes between different forms of forgetting, some of which are linked to shame, trauma, or the need to protect future generations. In my analysis, this perspective helps to understand why certain memories remain unspoken, and how acts of forgetting themselves become part of intergenerational memory transmission.

5.3 Liminality and Symbols

Victor Turner's concept of liminality is used to explore how family members move between different states of remembering and forgetting, and between different cultural positions. Liminality captures the experience of being in-between: between Kosovo and Denmark, between personal and collective narratives, between silence and articulation. Turner's work on symbols has also been useful in analyzing how certain objects or gestures take on symbolic meaning within this space of transition.

In the families I studied, symbols such as the Albanian flag, traditional foods, or commemorative objects often serve as focal points for memory and identity.

5.4 Power and Objects

Finally, the work of Peter Pels on power and objects, and Mikkel Bille's work on materialization, have been important for understanding how objects do more than simply represent the past. Objects participate in shaping memory and identity through their presence, arrangement, and emotional charge. In the families I studied, material objects carry traces of the conflict and play an active role in how memories are transmitted and negotiated. These perspectives help to foreground the agency of things in memory practices, and to show how materiality and affect are closely intertwined.

5.5 Postmemory

The concept of postmemory, developed by Marianne Hirsch, is central to this thesis. Postmemory describes how children of those who have experienced collective trauma often inherit an emotional connection to these events. This connection is shaped through family practices, emotions, silences, and embodied experiences, rather than through direct memory. In my material, younger family members often describe the Kosovo conflict as something they feel, even though they did not live through it. Postmemory provides a useful way of understanding how this type of affective inheritance operates across generations.

Together, these perspectives have provided a flexible analytical framework that allowed me to explore how the Kosovo conflict continues to shape family life across generations. Rather than offering a fixed model, they have served as tools for tracing the subtle and often fragmented ways in which the past is remembered, negotiated, and sometimes deliberately forgotten in the present.

6. Data Presentation and Ethnographic Context

Following an ethnographic approach, this chapter presents the empirical material in a descriptive manner prior to the theoretical analysis. Each participating family is introduced through an ethnographic vignette and key interview scenes. This presentation aims to foreground the material and emotional textures of the families' experiences, allowing the subsequent analysis to build upon a grounded and transparent engagement with the data. The vignettes highlight the diverse yet connected ways in which the Kosovo War and its aftermath continue to shape family life within the Kosovo-Albanian diaspora in Denmark.

6.1 Greve

In Greve, the family residing in the home consists of Bedri (65) and Emine (60), originally from Sllatinë (Kosovo Polje), and their son Albin (35), who was born in Kosovo and raised in Denmark. The family arrived in Denmark in 1992 as political refugees. Bedri had been persecuted for his participation in the 1981 demonstrations and for his family's involvement in the resistance. His brother endured severe torture and imprisonment in Dubravë prison, a story that remained largely hidden from the family until recent years. Emine's uncle faced similar persecution. Their two other children, Vjollca (36) and Endrit (32), also live and work in Denmark. Bedri works in a warehouse, and Emine has been employed as a teaching assistant in a kindergarten since 1999. Their children are highly educated: both sons are accountants, and their daughter is a nurse with advanced qualifications.

During my visit to the family's home in Greve, I was welcomed with warmth and openness. Bedri has a calm and humorous presence, often making light jokes to ease the conversation, while Emine exudes warmth and care, eager to share the family's story and historical documents. The living room was adorned with Albanian cultural symbols, and Emine proudly showed me documents and newspaper articles related to their family's persecution. A particularly poignant moment occurred when Albin reflected on how the full extent of his uncle's torture had only recently come to light, stating: "As detailed as my dad explains today is actually the first time I hear it." This moment illustrated the fragile dynamics of protective silence and its gradual rupture within the family.

6.2 Nørrebro

Ganimete (approximately 60) is originally from Podujevë, and her daughters Alba (29) and Elvana (32), both born and raised in Denmark. The family arrived in Denmark in 1992 to avoid forced

conscription into the Yugoslav army during the Bosnian War. They received asylum after a prolonged process. The father, who owns and operates a local pizzeria, and the two older sons, both of whom are married and have families of their own, were not present during the interview.

Ganimete was a student activist during the 1981 demonstrations and remains deeply committed to Albanian cultural identity and history. Both daughters are highly educated and professionally successful: Alba holds a degree in nanoscience and technology and works at HOFOR (Greater Copenhagen Utility), while Elvana holds a degree in biochemistry and is employed at Novo Nordisk.

The family's home in Nørrebro is a vibrant space, blending Danish and Albanian cultural elements. The Albanian flag is displayed near the television, and the atmosphere during our conversation was open, warm, and intellectually engaging. Ganimete's presence is both strong and caring, deeply invested in passing on her values to her children. During the interview, the daughters spoke with evident pride about their Albanian identity, while also reflecting on the challenges of navigating dual cultural belonging. Alba remarked: "I can't identify myself with a flag that's younger than me… it makes no sense for me." The daughters' alignment with their mother's values highlighted the subtle yet powerful ways in which national identity and historical memory are transmitted within the family.

6.3 Snejbjerg

The family in Snejbjerg consists of Shaban (51), originally from Mitrovicë, Resmije (46), originally from Klinë, and their two daughters, Dafina (20) and Vera (18), both born and raised in Denmark. Shaban arrived in Denmark in 1998, and Resmije followed in 1999 after spending time in the Stenkovec refugee camp in Macedonia. Shaban works as a bus driver, and Resmije is employed as a social worker.

The family resides in Snejbjerg, Herning. During my visit, the home reflected a harmonious blend of Danish modernity and Albanian tradition, with subtle cultural markers and a welcoming atmosphere. Both parents were candid and warm, with Shaban contributing humorous remarks throughout the conversation, while Resmije conveyed deep emotional strength and care. Their daughter Dafina was actively involved in the interview, while Vera was present briefly due to school commitments.

A particularly emotional moment unfolded when Resmije, for the first time in detail, recounted the murder of her uncle during the war. Dafina was hearing this story in its entirety for the first time, visibly moved to tears. She later reflected: “It’s really hard hearing your mom tell these stories… because it’s your family.” This moment underscored the complex dynamics of protective silence and its rupture, as well as the profound emotional impact of intergenerational memory transmission.

6.4 Hedehusene

The family in Hedehusene consists of Fadil (approximately 50), originally from Mitrovicë, Naile (late 40s), and their children: Sara, Dita, Aya, and a son whose name was not specified. The family fled Kosovo during the war and has lived in Denmark since the late 1990s. Fadil works in construction, and Naile manages the household.

During my visit, Sara was in Kosovo, but we engaged in a phone conversation. Dita, a university student studying economics and technology, and Aya, a high school student, were present and actively participated in the interview. The family also has a son who was busy during the period of my visit.

The home reflected a thoughtful integration of Danish and Albanian cultural elements. Both Dita and Aya wore necklaces featuring the double-headed Albanian eagle, symbolising their strong connection to their heritage. The atmosphere was relaxed and engaging, with Fadil sharing stories about the family’s experiences and Naile contributing thoughtful reflections on identity and belonging. A key moment involved Fadil recounting an incident where his eldest daughter Sara inadvertently crossed into the northern part of Mitrovicë, highlighting the enduring relevance of the conflict’s legacy. The daughters expressed a nuanced understanding of their identity, navigating the complexities of living between Danish and Albanian cultures.

The families presented here embody a spectrum of experiences and responses to the Kosovo War and its aftermath. Across generations, material objects, domestic rituals, emotional dynamics, and narrative practices function as key sites of memory transmission and identity negotiation. The subsequent chapters will build upon this ethnographic foundation, using theoretical perspectives to analyze how these processes unfold within the Kosovo-Albanian diaspora in Denmark.

7. Analysis

7.1 Cultural Production: Materializing Identity and Memory in the Albanian Diaspora

7.1.1 Introduction: Everyday Practices and the Afterlife of Conflict

When I set out to investigate how the conflict in Kosovo has affected different generations within families from Kosovo now residing in Denmark, I understood that this was a subject that could not be fully grasped through words alone. Narratives, memories, and silences are, of course, central, yet it soon became apparent to me that culture, understood as the ways in which identity, belonging, and pride are expressed in everyday life, also plays a significant role in the experiences of the families.

During my visits to four families with whom I conducted interviews and spent extended periods of time observing, this theme emerged on multiple levels. It was present not only in conversations around the dining table, but also in what I saw, heard, smelled, and sensed over the many hours I spent in their living rooms and kitchens, sharing meals and listening to their stories. In each household, it became clear that cultural production is not confined to conscious or explicit acts, rather, it is intertwined into everyday life through objects and sensory atmospheres. At the same time, this cultural production is deeply attached in the traces left by the conflict and the experience of migration, traces that continue to be processed not only through storytelling, but also through the ways in which homes are arranged, how families come together, and which traditions and symbols are maintained or reinterpreted.

In this section, I therefore turn my attention to these material and sensory expressions of cultural production, which I observed across the four families, and which constitute an essential part of understanding how the conflict in Kosovo and the migration to Denmark have been processed, remembered, and reimagined, in the everyday lives of these families.

Throughout the analysis, when referring to concepts such as pride, belonging, or identity, I draw directly on the participants' own expressions and ways of speaking. Rather than imposing external analytical categories, I aim to stay close to how the participants themselves articulate their relationships to national identity and memory. For instance, when using the term pride, I base this on explicit statements such as "I proudly say I am Albanian" or "We used the Albanian flag because that is who we are," which make clear that pride is not an inferred quality but a consciously voiced and performed part of their lived experience.

7.1.2 Objects, Atmospheres, and the Embodied Transmission of Memory

In what follows, I will therefore turn to concrete scenes and sensory impressions from my fieldwork. These are not to be seen as isolated anecdotes, but rather as glimpses into how memories of the Kosovo conflict are subtly and powerfully transmitted across generations through cultural production in everyday life. What I observed, smelled, heard, and touched during my time in the four households made it clear that objects, atmospheres, and routines form an important part of this transmission, often more so than explicit verbal narratives. The following vignettes seek to illustrate how such everyday practices materialize the presence of an absent past, and how they participate in shaping a sense of belonging, identity, and historical continuity across generations.

As I walk into the living room in Hedehusene, I am met with a friendly smell of what reminds me of family gatherings with friends of the community as well. The smell of Albanian *qaj* served with the classical double teapot fills the room with feeling of home. The upper pot holds the concentrated brewed tea, while the lower pot contains the boiling water. How this reminds me of the summer nights in Kosovo during vacation. While the mother of the family, Naile, pours the tea into the small tulip-formed glasses, I observe the details around the house. Minimalistic taste, but always symbols of Albania here and there. The light color on the couch reminds me of the one my mother picked out for our living room too, and the coffee table, almost identical to the other three families I have visited. Suddenly, I am met by two young girls, Dita (20) and Aya (16), the youngest daughters of the family. They meet me with a smile before they sit down next to me on the couch. From the moment they entered the living room, their necklaces catch my eye, the classical double-headed eagle representing Albania and is also found on the flag. I am wearing the same necklace and have been doing so since I was born. I wear it proudly. As do they. I do not pay attention to anything else in that moment, other than their necklaces. I am not surprised that they are wearing them, as it is rather normal, especially for Albanian girls. However, since moving to Copenhagen, I have not encountered the patriotism related to Albania as I have during the period in which I have conducted data for my research. I keep smiling, and they notice. That is when I mention it:

Aroma: "Sorry, I'm just thinking- or, I have noticed your necklaces; It just makes me happy to see"
Dita: "Yeah, oh I see you have one too! I really love wearing it, and honestly, I only mix and match with this."

Aya: "Yeah, I don't take mine off either to be honest, or even if I have, I don't remember the last time I did so"

The conversation goes on about the necklaces for a while, and the fact that both Albanian women and men are wearing it in modern day, as a symbol to both themselves and others.
The father of the family, Fadil, came to Denmark in 1999, shortly after the war had ended in Kosovo. He arrived as a refugee with his parents and younger sister. The mother explains during her storytelling that she came to Denmark for the first time in 2002, when she married Fadil and sought family reunification. Both parents experienced the war, and in different settings, being from two different cities. Fadil is from Mitrovicë, where the northern area of the city is inhabited by Serbs, and Naile, the mother, is from a suburban area outside of Pristina, the capitol city of Kosovo.

Their eldest daughter, Sara, was born not long after, and unfortunately, she was the only family member I did not meet in person, as she was travelling in Kosovo during my stay with the family. The father explained to me that during her trip, Sara had an incident in which she and her friend, who was accompanying her in Kosovo, inadvertently crossed to the northern side of the Ibar Bridge, which divides the northern and southern parts of Mitrovicë. In other words, the bridge functions as a physical and symbolic boundary separating the Albanian and Serbian communities. Sara had contacted her father, Fadil, to inform him of their location and to ask for advice on what to do. When Fadil recounted the story to me, it was evident how stressful the situation had been for him. He instructed Sara to leave the area as quickly and inconspicuously as possible, ensuring that no one would suspect her Albanian identity. He firmly advised her, "No matter what you do, do not speak Albanian. You girls must only speak Danish to each other."

Later, during a phone call, I was fortunate to reach Sara via FaceTime. She explained that this experience profoundly shaped her understanding of the tensions between Albanians and Serbs. Although she had previously conducted research and heard family accounts regarding the conflict, the gravity of the situation did not fully resonate with her until she found herself on what she perceived as hostile territory. It was only then that Fadil elaborated on prior incidents in which Albanians had inadvertently entered the northern part and faced severe consequences. While there may not be active checkpoints at the bridge, the local Serb population remains wary of Albanian presence, and any perceived intrusion is met with hostility and an implicit expectation to leave.

My conversation with Sara was both insightful and engaging. She is currently pursuing her bachelor's thesis. She mentioned that her younger sisters often appear reserved when it comes to

discussing the Kosovo conflict, the trauma it engendered, and its ongoing repercussions. However, she encouraged me to break the ice with them, assuring me that their initial shyness would dissipate and that they would eventually express their perspectives. During our conversation, her sisters, who were sitting nearby, laughed at her remarks, subtly indicating a readiness to engage more openly.

The family recently relocated to Hedehusene, where they now reside in a modern and well-appointed terraced housing development. Yet, throughout my visit, one persistent thought occupied my mind, although I was physically in Hedehusene, within the home, the cultural presence of Kosovo was palpable. I associate this sentiment in particular with the necklaces worn by the daughters. This symbolism became especially apparent during a private and profound conversation I later had with them. Aya articulated the significance and emotional resonance of wearing her necklace. She shared that at times she feels distinctly Danish within her high school class, where she is the only student with a different ethnic background. Smiling, she added, "Even though we are relatively light-skinned and do not necessarily appear to have an ethnic background different from the majority. We blend in quite well." In her circle of friends, she is particularly close to two young women from the Middle East, one of whom wears a hijab. Within this group, Aya perceives herself as the most "Danish," given that her friends display a more visibly marked ethnic identity. Nevertheless, her necklace and her distinctive curls serve as daily reminders of her heritage, reinforcing her sense of belonging to a cultural lineage that extends beyond Denmark to Southeastern Europe.

Stopping briefly in Nørrebro, we encounter the family, consisting of the mother, Ganimete, and her daughters, Alba and Elvana. The sons have long since moved out and established families of their own, while the father is busy running his own pizzeria in the heart of Nørrebro.

As I enter their home for the first time, I am once again met with great hospitality, though this comes as no surprise. Having been born and raised within Albanian culture, I know this to be customary. Upon entering the apartment, I notice the many details of the beautifully decorated space. It is a spacious apartment. The furniture is largely in neutral tones, while the decorative elements provide vibrant bursts of color.

"Hello, Aroma, welcome! How are you? How are your mother and father? Are your brothers well? How is school, is it going well?"

This is the typical greeting. When I say typical, I mean that this is how all hostesses receive their guests. It is always the hostess who asks first, after which the guest reciprocates. This is the way the

host extends a welcome and shows genuine interest in the guest's life and well-being before anything else. In more contemporary times, this has become a customary practice. In response, I, as the guest in this instance, reply:

"Hello! I am well! Thank you for having me! How are you, are you well? How is your husband? The boys? And the girls, are they well? Is work going well?"

If one knows the family and its members, etiquette dictates that one always inquires first about the spouse. The eldest children are asked about next, and so forth. Finally, one asks about work or studies. I greet the daughters, then notice the familiar white coffee table that is identical to those in countless other Albanian homes. The table is laden with snacks and beverages, and I find myself thinking this is the very definition of Albanian hospitality, and I love it. Always present the finest offerings, reserved especially for guests.

I first met the family at an event hosted by the Kosovo Consulate in Copenhagen. Following a brief internship at the consulate during the spring of 2024, I built a professional network with the consul and the remaining staff, who subsequently introduced me to the family from Nørrebro. During the event, I struck up a conversation with the daughters. We introduced ourselves, shared where in Kosovo our families came from, and soon the conversation turned to education and, in turn, my thesis. The daughters expressed immediate interest, as did their mother, Ganimete. The living room in their Nørrebro home is large. White leather sofas are adorned with beautiful throws and surrounded by colorful curtains, numerous figurines, and framed photographs. Throughout our conversation about culture, history, and Kosovo, before, during, and after the war, I do not pay much attention to the area around the television, other than to note that it is on. Unsurprisingly, it is tuned to an Albanian news channel, providing a constant background hum. It is only after several hours that I notice something else: the red and black Albanian flag displayed nearby. Its presence immediately prompts a deeper discussion about the symbolism of ethnic Albanian identity, and about what it means to have an entirely new mode of being and history imposed upon oneself.

Aroma: "I have observed your Albanian flag [the flag of Albania] close to the TV. Now you are mentioning you don't want anyone calling you Kosovar but Albanian-"

Ganimete: "-correct! For me, the flag of Kosovo- I understand your mom! Tell her I said hi! A little air kiss too."

Everyone laughs

Ganimete: "Now I'll tell you the reason… the United Nations… or the world in general have taken care of the Serbs more than was necessary… and tolerated them more than necessary. So, for us, as Albanians… when you go to the northern Macedonia, you meet cities and villages only filled with Albanians, Kosovo… of course, there are Albanians as well, what are we talking about here hehe… When you leave Albania to go to Montenegro- you know leaving northern Albania and entering the south of Montenegro, there are Albanians too… we are a nation split into smaller pieces against our will… Every time they split us up, we became smaller and less… So… didn't you hurt us and take enough? Now you want to create a whole other nation called Kosovo as if we don't belong to Greater Albania… as if we don't have our story. Today… I am 60 years old… let me explain it in a way… if a man 30 years old comes to me, speaking to me as if the is older and not respecting me and my age, saying 'come to uncle'… isn't that humiliating and condescending? That's how it feels… it's condescending. I find it condescending… creating another nation for us? We don't need that… and we don't want it.

So, to answer your question… that's why I keep that flag there. That's the flag I grew up with, and that's the flag Skanderbeg fought with! Skanderbeg is known and exhibited as a sculpture in so many countries… That's the flag I love! The other one… hm… it's like a ladder. In the given situation when we got our country and the Serbs left, I accepted it… but I saw it as something temporary… walking up a ladder. I will never- the flag of Kosovo doesn't really mean anything to me…"

Aroma: "Yeah, it's not your identity…"

Ganimete: "Yeah… even when I watch football games… when Kosovo play and they play the national anthem… it seems artificial to me. They can't make this up… we know who we are, we are ancient people. We have existed for so many years, as well as our culture."

Aroma: "But this is interesting to me because you grew up with this flag in Kosovo… And you grew up only with the national anthem of Albania… Ethnic or Greater Albania Dardania…"

Ganimete: "Correct, yes."

Aroma: "But you two [talking to the daughters] … being born here, you also grew up with the Albanian flag?"

Ganimete: "Oh, they don't accept the Kosovo flag either… Because of what I have taught them or told… the rest of the family too!"

Alba: "I can't identify myself with a flag that's younger than me… it makes no sense for me…"

Aroma: "Well said!"

Alba: "What was I up until Kosovo declared independence… in 2008? I had lived more than ten years then. And… the flag, is not one we wanted ourselves, but it's a flag that was forces upon us. The stars on the flag symbolize each ethnicity in Kosovo, making Albanians and Serbs the same or puts them on the same wavelength."

It becomes clear rather quickly how much significance the flag holds for the family. It is displayed in the living room not merely as decoration but as a daily testament to something deeply embedded in their identity and sense of self. Ganimete expresses both pride and frustration regarding developments in Kosovo, articulating that her national belonging cannot be represented by the Kosovo flag. It is particularly interesting to observe how this sentiment is also expressed by her daughters, Alba and Elvana, who were both born and raised in Denmark. For them, it seems almost inconceivable to identify with a flag that, as Alba remarks, is younger than they are. Within this family, it is not only the older generation but also the younger one that collectively upholds a notion of national identity rooted in the past and consciously distinguishes between historical and political narratives. On this occasion, the flag is not simply mentioned but becomes an integral part of the conversation, serving as a living component of the family's collective memory and a tangible means of defining the boundaries of their self-identification. It also becomes apparent that these attitudes are not merely private sentiments but are openly shared, discussed, and passed on. There is no doubt that Ganimete has made a deliberate effort to communicate these stories and this perspective to her children. When she speaks about Skanderbeg and the Albanian flag as the only authentic national symbol, her passion is evident, and it is clear that her daughters both share and can articulate this view.

After several hours in their family's living room, I leave with a sense of having been welcomed into a home where history is not only present in words but permeates the entire atmosphere. Throughout the visit, it becomes clear that the relationship between us has developed into something more profound. Ganimete, who had already shown great warmth when we first met at the Kosovo Consulate in Copenhagen, repeatedly tells me that I am welcome anytime. This gesture touches me deeply. Ganimete also shares that she writes poetry. She has written poems on themes such as nationhood, faith, women's lives, and the experience of being an Albanian in exile. She has not yet published them, although several people have encouraged her to do so. She reads a few lines aloud, and it becomes immediately apparent how deeply her personal story is interwoven with the words she writes. Through her poetry, she processes and expresses experiences that neither images nor ordinary speech can fully convey. As I say goodbye later that day, it is made clear that this is not a formal farewell. Quite the opposite. "You are always welcome here," says Ganimete with a smile, as her daughters eagerly nod. I feel a genuine warmth in this connection, which, though newly formed, already feels both comfortable and natural.

As I leave the apartment, the image of the flag lingers in my mind. The conversation about the Albanian flag, so central to their living space, continues to resonate with me. This topic remains present in my thoughts as I visit the family in Snejbjerg a few days later.

I know the family through my own family friends. My father and Shaban, the father of the family, have known each other for many years, and it was through this connection that I was invited to visit them. This prior relationship provides a special sense of comfort that is felt from the moment I enter their home. The family consists of the parents, Shaban and Resmije, and their two daughters, Dafina and Vera. Shaban arrived in Denmark in 1998 during the war, while Resmije followed with her family the following year. Resmije recounts a long and arduous struggle for residency that lasted seven years, during which she lived in a state of limbo without access to education or employment. Today, she works as a social worker, and Shaban is a bus driver. Dafina, who was born in Denmark, has recently completed her upper secondary education, and is taking a gap year. The younger daughter, Vera, who is also born in Denmark, only participates briefly in the conversation as she has other commitments.

Upon entering the home, I am greeted by the aroma of coffee and freshly baked goods. The atmosphere is warm and informal. Resmije welcomes me with open arms, and the conversation

flows easily. During our discussion, as was the case with the family from Nørrebro, the topic of flags naturally arises. Like many families, they actively use the Albanian flag during celebrations and special occasions. Dafina tells me about her graduation party, where it was the red and black flag that adorned the wall. In her words, it is both a way of expressing who they are and a means of honoring the history her parents carry with them. As the visit progresses, it becomes evident that although the family leads a very Danish everyday life, their connection to Kosovo and the broader Albanian community remains vibrant in many aspects of their daily practices. They speak openly about both cherished memories and difficult experiences from the war, and about how these have shaped their lives in Denmark.

I leave Snejbjerg with a strong impression of a family that carries its history with awareness and pride, where Albanian identity remains an integral part of everyday life.

Shortly thereafter, I visit the family in Greve. This meeting arises somewhat spontaneously but very meaningfully. In a large Facebook group, "You know you are Albanian when...," created years ago by the son, Albin, I posted a message seeking participants for my research. Albin responded quickly and kindly, and soon the entire family offered to participate. When I arrive at their home, I am immediately struck by a familiar warmth. The television is on, playing Albanian folk music, which creates a homely atmosphere that greets me as I step inside. I am welcomed with smiles and hugs, and Albanian coffee, brewed in a traditional gjezve, is promptly served. The strong aroma and taste evoke memories of countless coffee gatherings in Kosovo.

Emine and Bedri, the parents of the family, greet me warmly. They arrived in Denmark in 1992 as political refugees. Their two eldest children, Albin and Vjollca, were born in Kosovo, while their youngest son, Endrit, was born in Denmark. During the visit, Emine and Bedri provide a detailed account of the circumstances that led to their flight. Both Bedri's brother and Emine's uncle were active officers in the Albanian resistance against the Serbian regime, and both were arrested, tortured, and imprisoned in the Dubravë prison. During the visit, Emine shows me a folder containing newspaper clippings and official documents that confirm the arrests and their involvement in the defense forces under Ibrahim Rugova.

What is particularly striking is how these experiences remained shrouded in silence for many years. Bedri shares that his brother had never previously wanted to speak about what he endured. It was only a few years ago, during a family visit to Kosovo, that he first recounted the

details of the torture, including attempted drowning, electric shocks, and violent abuse. Similarly, it was only shortly before his death that Emine's uncle spoke about his experiences. Emine emphasizes repeatedly that these are stories parents consciously choose not to share with their children. She does not wish for them to carry this heavy legacy. Albin confirms this, explaining that he only recently grasped the full extent of what his uncle and great-uncle experienced. These narratives and the many years of silence reveal how traumatic experiences from the war continue to live within the family, often in ways that are not directly expressed. In this manner, memories become part of the family's shared experiential space, shaped by both what is said and what remains unspoken.

The hospitality is palpable. Before I can even sit down properly, the coffee table is already covered with cakes, snacks, and drinks. Albin proudly gives me a tour of the home, during which I notice a particularly striking piece of embroidery in the bedroom. On the wall hangs a large, embroidered image in which the Albanian flag is beautifully interwoven with the image of Skanderbeg. The piece radiates both pride and love for national heritage, and it becomes clear to me how important it is for the family to maintain a connection to their history and identity. What surprises me even more is when Emine tells me that she embroidered the piece herself. I am truly impressed and offer her many compliments, sincerely telling her that it gave me chills due to its beauty. The visit concludes, as has become customary in these encounters, not with a simple farewell. As I prepare to leave, I am generously offered several small gifts. I am given cakes to take home, beauty products from Bedri's work at the L'Oréal Paris warehouse, and, to top it all off, they insist on driving me all the way home to Herlev. It is precisely this kind of hospitality that has impressed me during all my visits: a generosity and warmth that far exceeds the formal.

Through these visits, it becomes clear how differently, yet how strongly, each family engages with their history, identity, and national symbols. At the same time, it is evident that these elements are not confined to the past but are actively lived and transmitted in everyday life. In what follows, I will therefore explore more closely how such cultural expressions and practices are created, shared, and passed on across generations within the families I have met.

Across these four households, it became evident that cultural production is central to the way memories of the Kosovo conflict are transmitted across generations. Through material objects such as flags, jewelry, and textiles; through sensory experiences such as the smell of traditional food or the sound of Albanian music; and through everyday practices of hospitality and ritual, an absent

past is made present. In line with Bille et al. (2010: 9), these elements can be understood as materializations of absence, they give form and substance to what is no longer physically here yet continues to shape the families' lived realities. Through cultural production, the memories of the conflict are thus not only preserved but also continuously negotiated and reimagined in the Danish context.

7.1.3 The Role of Objects and Ritual in the Intergenerational Transmission of War Memory

To better understand the mechanisms at play in these cultural expressions, it is necessary to explore how objects, rituals, and sensory practices contribute to the transmission of memory and identity across generations. In the following section, I draw on the work of Bille, Pels, and Turner to analyze the material and embodied dimensions of this cultural production.

Bille, Hastrup, and Sørensen (2010: 9) introduce the concept of materializations of absence to describe how material forms and sensory experiences can lend presence to that which is no longer physically there. In their words, "absence is often the very medium through which presence is made tangible and meaningful" (Bille et al. 2010: 9). This perspective proved particularly useful when considering how the families I met relate to their absent homeland and to the traumatic past of the Kosovo conflict. Across all four households, I observed how everyday practices, objects, and atmospheres helped sustain a sense of connection to what is no longer present.

For example, the Albanian tea served in the double teapot in Hedehusene was more than a culinary tradition. The aroma of the tea seemed to bridge the physical distance between Denmark and Kosovo, filling the living room with memories of summers spent in the homeland. Similarly, in Nørrebro, the Albanian flag placed near the television was more than a decorative item. It acted as a visible anchor of identity and historical continuity. As Ganimete explained, "That's the flag I grew up with, and that's the flag Skanderbeg fought with!" Her words show how the flag brings the past into the present, refusing to accept the rupture introduced by more recent political developments. Such practices repeat Bille's argument that materializations of absence do not simply evoke nostalgia, they actively shape the spaces people inhabit and the emotional meanings these spaces carry (Bille et al. 2010: 18). In these families, the homeland is continually brought into the Danish home through objects, sounds, and smells, all of which keep the past close at hand. Peter Pels (1998: 92) argues that objects are far from neutral. They hold a particular kind of power because they can mediate between different temporalities and social worlds. Objects, Pels writes, "condense and mobilize social

relations" (Pels 1998: 107), allowing people to engage with histories and identities that otherwise risk becoming abstract.

The necklaces worn by the daughters in Hedehusene illustrate this point well. These are not simply pieces of jewelry. They are objects that allow the wearers to carry a visible sign of Albanian identity into their everyday Danish lives. As Aya told me, "My necklace reminds me that I also belong somewhere else, not just in Denmark." Here, the necklace acts as an embodied link to a larger cultural narrative, one that is reinforced by the very act of wearing it.

In the family in Greve, the large embroidered image of the Albanian flag fused with Skanderbeg serves a similar purpose. Created by Emine herself, the embroidery represents a deep personal investment in the history it depicts. Its prominent place in the bedroom shows that it is not simply a token of pride, but an object that allows the family to maintain an intimate relationship with a history that remains central to how they understand themselves. In this sense, Pels' idea of the "spirit of matter" (Pels 1998: 91) seems particularly fitting. The embroidery is not just a representation of identity; it is a medium through which identity is continuously lived and felt. Victor Turner's concept of dominant symbols (Turner 1967: 50) offers another useful way of understanding how objects and practices can help sustain memory and identity. Dominant symbols, Turner explains, are "multivocal" and "condense many meanings into a single form" (Turner 1967: 51). They bring together ideological, sensory, and emotional layers of meaning, often becoming central to collective identity and ritual practice.

The Albanian flag, which appeared in every household I visited, clearly functions in this way. It is not simply a national symbol, but a condensed expression of ethnic identity, historical experience, and contemporary belonging. Across the interviews, this use of the flag was consistently linked to feelings of pride. In Snejbjerg, Dafina emphasized, "We used the Albanian flag because that is who we are," expressing a clear sense of pride in her family's identity. Similarly, in Nørrebro, Alba stated, "I proudly say I am Albanian," while Elvana explained that their parents' stories had instilled in them "this patriotic feeling in us. Making us proud to be Albanian." In these expressions, pride emerges not only as an emotion but as a consciously cultivated aspect of identity that is publicly performed through material and ritual practices. The necklaces worn by the daughters in Hedehusene similarly expressed a visible and proud connection to Albanian identity. Aya remarked, "My necklace reminds me that I also belong somewhere else, not just in Denmark," a statement imbued with both

personal attachment and pride in cultural heritage. Turner also highlights the importance of *ritual process* in helping communities navigate change and reaffirm social bonds (Turner 1969: 94). The use of the Albanian flag during key life events, whether at Dafina's graduation or when Sara carefully navigated ethnic boundaries in Mitrovicë, serves as just such a ritual practice. Through these acts, young people are positioned within a shared emotional and historical landscape. These are not simply expressions of inherited tradition, but dynamic performances that help construct and maintain a sense of identity in the present.

The sharing of difficult family histories also follows a kind of ritual logic. Stories such as Bedri's brother's long-silenced account of torture are not shared casually. When such narratives are told, their timing and framing reflect an awareness of their emotional weight and significance within the family. Through such careful acts of narration, a form of protective but resilient collective memory is constructed, shaped as much by what is said as by what is left unsaid.

Taken together, the perspectives of Bille, Pels, and Turner shed light on how cultural production in these families is an ongoing, materially grounded process. Through objects, rituals, and sensory practices, the memory of the Kosovo conflict is not simply preserved, but actively woven into the texture of daily life. These practices allow families to maintain connections with a disrupted history, while also shaping how identity is performed and experienced across generations.

The families I met do not simply remember the Kosovo conflict. They continue to live with it, in ways that are material, embodied, and deeply integrated into the rhythms of home and family life. Cultural production, in this sense, is not about reproducing the past in static form, but about creating living connections between past and present, and, in doing so, shaping how identities are carried forward into the future.

7.2 Forgetting as Transmission: Silence, Protection, and the Limits of Memory

7.2.1 Introduction: Memory Travels Through Silence

In studying how memories of the Kosovo conflict travel across generations, one must also attend to what is not said. Stories are transmitted not only through words and objects, but also through silences. Silence itself becomes a mode of transmission, especially when parents wish to shield their children from the full weight of a traumatic past. This emerged as a clear pattern across the families I met.

During fieldwork, I witnessed how moments of silence were carefully maintained, but also how they were at times ruptured, often unintentionally. The decision not to speak about certain events is rarely arbitrary. Rather, it reflects deep emotional and moral considerations. Parents sought to protect their children, to preserve a sense of normality in their lives, and to avoid passing on the full burden of their own experiences. Yet, as children matured, or as conversations unfolded in new contexts, these silences would sometimes break, bringing the past into the present in powerful ways.

This chapter explores how such protective silences shaped intergenerational memory. I show how the limits of what could be spoken were actively negotiated in the families, and how children experienced the surfacing of stories that had long remained hidden. In these moments, forgetting and remembering appeared not as opposites, but as intertwined processes.

7.2.2 Silences and Disclosure in Snejbjerg

One of the clearest examples of this dynamic arose during my interview with the family in Snejbjerg. As Resmije recounted her experiences during the war, she began to speak in harrowing detail about the murder of her uncle and the violence inflicted on her family. It soon became evident that her daughter Dafina was hearing parts of this story for the first time. I asked Dafina whether she had known these details before. She answered openly: "Not everything. I didn't know the part about her uncle. It's the first time I'm hearing about this." As the conversation continued, the emotional impact on Dafina became clear. She remarked, "It's really hard hearing your mom tell these stories than hearing a stranger on the internet, because... you know they have had a hard time, and it hurts because we often take things for granted." When I asked Resmije whether she had deliberately chosen not to share these stories, she explained: "We didn't want to hurt them in a way or make them sad by telling them all the horrible things and trauma we went through. I wanted to protect them from it... It isn't good stories to tell."

This exchange revealed a form of protective silence. The decision to withhold certain memories was grounded in care, an effort to preserve the emotional well-being of the children. At the same time, the moment of rupture during our conversation demonstrated that such silences cannot always be maintained indefinitely.

7.2.3 Managing the Past in Greve

A similar pattern unfolded during my conversations with the family in Greve. Bedri told the story of his brother's imprisonment and torture, revealing details that had only recently come to light within the family. His son Albin later reflected on this process: "We have talked about it now, but for many years we didn't know much about it." Emine explained how the family had learned of the torture only two years prior, when Bedri's brother began to speak about it for the first time. "They had ripped his nails off, he was electrocuted, his head was thrown under water in an attempt to drown him," Bedri recounted. This disclosure came as a shock even to Bedri, who said, "I was crying so much. I couldn't believe what I heard." Albin added that he had not known the full extent of these experiences until very recently: "I knew they had been in prison, and that they had been tortured in some way, but not these details." The family had long maintained a deliberate silence around this trauma. As Emine put it, "It's hard to mention these things in front of your kids. Especially with what they have been through."

Again, we see a pattern where parents sought to protect their children from the most painful parts of the family's history. The timing and manner of eventual disclosure reflected a careful negotiation of when and how such memories could be shared.

7.2.4 Silences in Everyday Life: The Nørrebro Family

In the family I met in Nørrebro, silences operated in more diffuse but equally powerful ways. Ganimete spoke openly about her activism during the 1980s, the experience of fleeing Kosovo, and the emotional burden of watching the war unfold from afar. Yet, as the conversation deepened, it became clear that her daughters had also grown up in an environment where certain aspects of the past were not fully discussed. Alba explained that she had pieced together much of her understanding of the conflict through stories heard over time, rather than through structured conversations. "I got these stories told as I got older," she said. "We could feel in the family that everything wasn't happy days, but I didn't know much then."

Both daughters spoke of how the emotional atmosphere in the family during the war years had shaped their understanding of the past. "Our bodies were here, while our hearts and thoughts constantly would be in Kosovo," Ganimete reflected. "Our kids, they felt these things. They missed a happy childhood, in a way... where they didn't have to worry about their family members in war."

Here, silence was not the absence of memory, but a form of emotional management. The children were shielded from direct exposure to certain details, but they nonetheless absorbed the affective residues of the past through the family's emotional life.

7.2.5 The Social Production of Forgetting and the Afterlife of the Past

The patterns of silence and selective storytelling observed across the families reflect that forgetting, in this context, is not a simple lack of memory. It is an active social practice, carefully negotiated and deeply embedded in family life. The insights of Paul Connerton, Marianne Hirsch, and Ann Laura Stoler help clarify how forgetting operates as part of intergenerational memory transmission, not in opposition to remembering but as an integral aspect of it.

Connerton's work is particularly useful in understanding the deliberate nature of these silences. In *How Modernity Forgets*, he writes that forgetting is often produced through concrete social practices that aim to "draw a veil over" parts of the past in order to protect or stabilise the present (Connerton 2009, p. 59). He calls this prescriptive forgetting. In the families I met, this practice was evident in the conscious choices parents made about what not to share with their children. As Resmije explained when speaking about the murder of her uncle, "I wanted to protect them from it. It isn't good stories to tell." Likewise, Emine described how the full extent of the torture experienced by Bedri's brother only came to light many years later, and that even now "it's hard to mention these things in front of your kids." Connerton also stresses that such practices of forgetting are fragile and always at risk of disruption. This was clearly seen in Snejbjerg, when Resmije's protective silence was suddenly broken during our conversation, leaving Dafina visibly moved by the new knowledge she had received. Similarly, in Greve, Albin reflected on how only recently had he begun to understand the gravity of what his uncle had endured. Forgetting in these cases was never absolute. It was a managed process, one that shifted over time as children matured and as the emotional readiness of the family changed.

Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory helps us understand the position of the children in this dynamic. Postmemory describes how the experiences of a previous generation are transmitted to the next not as direct memory but as deeply felt, mediated knowledge (Hirsch 2012, p. 5). In the families I spoke with, the children inhabited such a space of postmemory. Even when their parents sought to protect them from the most traumatic details, the emotional atmosphere of the home, the fragments of stories they overheard, and the visible emotions of their parents conveyed the

presence of a difficult past. Albin's reflection that as a child he was afraid Milosevic would "kill him" shows how powerfully postmemory had shaped his early emotional world, despite his parents' efforts to shield him.

In Nørrebro, a similar pattern emerged. Alba explained that although she and her sister were young during the war, they could sense that "everything wasn't happy days" in the household, and that they later pieced together their understanding of the conflict through stories shared gradually as they grew older. At the same time, both daughters spoke of how these experiences had shaped their own self-understanding in a positive way. Alba explained, "I proudly say I am Albanian," and Elvana reflected that the stories had given them "this patriotic feeling in us." Here, the protective silences maintained by their parents did not prevent the transmission of a strong and proud sense of belonging. On the contrary, pride in Albanian identity was actively reinforced even through what remained unsaid, becoming a central part of how the daughters positioned themselves in relation to both family history and public identity.

Ann Laura Stoler's concept of imperial debris offers a further perspective on these dynamics. In her view, the legacies of violence persist not only through physical ruins but also as "the aftershocks of empire that shape the spaces of the present" (Stoler 2008, p. 194). In the families I met, the Kosovo conflict has left such debris in the form of emotional residues and family silences. The hesitations, omissions, and moments of disclosure observed in these households are not random. They reflect the ongoing presence of a violent past that continues to structure emotional and relational life. This was particularly evident in the family in Greve, where even after many years, the emotional impact of Bedri's brother's testimony remained profound. Emine noted that Bedri still struggled to visit his brother, because "when I see him, I just see the tortures he has been through." The past, though partially silenced, remained vividly present in the relationships within the family. Likewise, in Snejbjerg, the emotional force of the stories that emerged during our conversation underscored how the past continued to shape the inner lives of both parents and children.

The concept of debris also helps explain why forgetting in these contexts is never a simple act of erasure. The past leaves traces that cannot be fully controlled. As Stoler writes, "some debris are inert, others are agentive, animate and acting" (Stoler 2008, p. 195). In the families I observed, the unspoken dimensions of the past remained active, shaping the transmission of identity and the emotional bonds between generations.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives show that forgetting, in these families, was not a passive lapse of memory. It was a protective, relational, and emotionally charged practice. It was also unstable and permeable, allowing the past to resurface in unexpected ways. In this sense, forgetting and remembering appeared not as opposites, but as interwoven threads in the complex process of how memory travels across generations in the aftermath of war and displacement.

8. Discussion

In this chapter, I reflect on the main findings of the study and explore how they relate to the existing literature. The focus is on understanding how memories of the war are transmitted across generations, and how this transmission affects identity and everyday life in families from the Kosovo Albanian diaspora in Denmark. Drawing on the concepts of protective silence, postmemory, and prescriptive forgetting, I discuss both the intentions behind parental silence and its effects on the younger generation. I also consider how the children negotiate their cultural identity in the diaspora context, and the ways in which memory continues to shape family life today.

8.1 Protective Silence: A Strategy That Both Succeeds and Fails

One of the patterns that became clear across the families in this study was the use of protective silence by parents. In different ways, parents explained how they had tried to shield their children from the most painful parts of their experiences during and after the war. They wanted to give their children the chance to grow up without fear and without carrying the trauma of what had happened. For many, this silence was also a way to protect themselves from having to relive the most difficult memories.

In some ways, this choice did seem to work. In both Snejbjerg and Greve, the children said that they were grateful that their parents had protected them from the full truth. Some explained that they had only recently learned about certain events and felt it had been good that they had not heard these things as children. The parents' silence had helped create a sense of safety and distance from the past.

But the interviews also showed that silence has limits. Trauma and memory do not disappear simply because they are not talked about. Even when events are not described, feelings and impressions are still passed on through the way parents speak, their gestures, the mood in the home, and the objects that carry memory. The idea of postmemory helps to explain this. Children can feel the weight of

what is not said. They grow up sensing that there are parts of the family's story that remain unspoken, and this shapes how they understand both their parents and them.

In Snejbjerg, this became very clear. During the interview, the mother began to speak in detail about the murder of her uncle, while her daughter was present. This was the first time the daughter heard this full story, and it had a strong emotional effect on her. The scene showed how fragile silence can be. When it breaks suddenly, it can bring strong emotions that may be difficult to handle. It raises the question of whether gradual sharing of such stories might be easier for the younger generation to process. A similar experience appeared in Greve. The son described how, after many years, he learned about the torture that his uncle had suffered. This knowledge changed how he understood his family's history and his own identity. One might wonder if learning about such events later in life sometimes makes them harder to deal with, because they challenge the version of the family story the children had grown up with.

In Nørrebro, silence worked in a different way. Here, it was not a full absence of stories but a careful decision about when and how to tell them. The daughters described how they slowly put together the story of their family, long before they were given the full facts. They sensed the feelings in the home and understood that not everything was spoken aloud. It is worth asking whether this more open and flexible way of managing silence allows for a healthier way of passing on memories, or whether it still leaves some parts of the past too difficult to face. Taken together, these examples show that protective silence is both understandable and complicated. It may help protect children in the short term, but it cannot stop the past from influencing the present. Through emotions, objects, and everyday life, the experiences of war continue to affect family life across generations. This connects with what Connerton has written about deliberate forgetting. Silence may seem to work for a time, but it is always fragile. The past does not simply go away. In addition, as Stoler reminds us, the remains of violence, both material and emotional, stay with us. Silence is a kind and loving gesture from parents, but it is also an imperfect form of protection. It cannot fully stop memory from returning, sometimes at moments when no one is prepared for it.

Looking at these families, I wonder whether silence can ever fully protect the next generation, or whether it mainly delays the work of remembering and understanding. It seems that in all cases, silence is not simply successful or unsuccessful. It is a complex and changing practice, and it continues to shape how these families live with their past.

8.2 Postmemory and Emotional Atmosphere

Another important pattern that emerged across the families is how memories of the war are transmitted, even when they are not told in full. In all families, the children spoke about sensing the emotions of their parents, or noticing certain moods and silences, long before they knew the concrete facts about what had happened. In this way, the emotional atmosphere in the home became a channel for memory transmission. This is closely connected to the idea of postmemory. Children do not need detailed stories in order to understand that their parents carry the weight of the past. They absorb this through many small everyday experiences: the way their parents speak about certain topics, the way they react to news, the presence of certain objects in the home, or the mood during family rituals.

In Nørrebro, the daughters explained how they had always sensed that their family had a deep connection to their national identity, and that there were difficult memories beneath the surface. They gradually pieced together the history over time, through conversations and through their mother's strong feelings about Albanian identity and history. Similarly, in Snejbjerg, the daughter reflected on how her parents' emotions and silences had shaped her understanding of their experiences, even though many details had not been shared. It seems that memory is not only transmitted through words, but also through feelings. The atmosphere in the home becomes a kind of emotional memory space, where the unspoken is still felt. This raises the question of whether such emotional transmission may in some ways be more powerful than explicit storytelling because it shapes the child's sense of self at a deeper, often unconscious level.

8.3 Negotiating Identity in Diaspora

Another theme that became clear was how the children in these families negotiate their identity between different cultural contexts. Living in Denmark, but with strong family connections to Kosovo and Albania, the younger generation often faces questions about who they are and where they belong. Across the families, it was clear that national identity was very important to both parents and children. In all families, the Albanian flag played a central role in the home, and many of the children spoke with pride about their Albanian heritage. However, they also reflected on the challenges of living with this identity in Denmark.

In Nørrebro, the daughters explained how they had learned to be proud of being Albanian, but also valued certain aspects of Danish culture, such as gender equality and education.

They described taking the best of both cultures. In Hedehusene, the daughters similarly expressed a strong attachment to Albanian identity, shown through symbols such as jewelry, but also talked about the importance of being able to move easily between Danish and Albanian contexts. This negotiation of identity is not always easy. In Greve, the son recalled being told not to speak openly about returning to Kosovo, for fear of affecting the family's residence status. In Snejbjerg, the daughter spoke about experiencing racism in school. These examples show that identity is shaped not only within the family, but also through the way society responds to these young people.

It seems that growing up in diaspora involves an ongoing negotiation, where young people build identities that are rooted in their family's past, but also shaped by their experiences in the present. This is a complex and dynamic process, and one that deserves more attention in future research.

8.4 Limits and Fragility of Forgetting

Finally, the findings of this study suggest that forgetting is never fully stable or complete. Connerton's idea of prescriptive forgetting where silence is deliberately maintained helps to explain the parents' choices. They hoped to protect their children, and perhaps also themselves, from the full weight of the past. However, as the examples from all families show, this forgetting is fragile. Objects in the home, emotional atmospheres, unexpected conversations, and social media all serve to bring the past back into the present. In several families, the younger generation actively sought out information online, or asked questions that disrupted the silence. This suggests that forgetting is not something that can be fully controlled. The debris of violence, as Stoler puts it, remains present in everyday life. Even the choice to remain silent is not a guarantee that the past will not surface.

In reflecting on this, one might wonder whether there is a way to balance protection and openness. The question is not whether parents should tell everything or nothing, but how they can help their children understand the past in a way that supports their emotional well-being and sense of identity.

Across the families in this study, protective silence emerges as a deeply human and understandable strategy, but also as an imperfect one. The past cannot be fully hidden, and memory works through many channels beyond language. The children of these families live with the legacies of war, whether through stories, emotions, or symbols. At the same time, they show remarkable strength in building

identities that are both rooted in their heritage and open to their lives in Denmark. The negotiation of memory and identity is an ongoing process, one that continues to evolve across generations. It is not a simple story of success or failure, but of constant adaptation and resilience.

This study raises important questions about how we understand memory in diaspora settings, and about how families can navigate the tension between protecting and remembering. There is no single answer to these questions, but it is clear that silence alone cannot resolve them. Instead, a more open and reflective dialogue across generations may offer a way forward.

9. Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore how memories of the Kosovo conflict are transmitted across generations in Kosovo-Albanian families living in Denmark. Through ethnographic fieldwork, including in-depth interviews and participant observation with four families, the study has demonstrated that the transmission of memory is a complex, dynamic, and often fragmented process. The parent generation, who experienced the war and the preceding oppression firsthand, carry embodied memories marked by trauma and survival. However, these memories are not always openly communicated. Instead, they are often transmitted through silence, emotional atmospheres, and material practices within the family space, among other things. Everyday objects, symbols such as the Albanian flag and domestic rituals play a significant role in conveying a sense of identity and historical continuity. The younger generation, born or raised in Denmark, do not remember the conflict directly but inherit a strong emotional connection to it. They encounter these memories through both explicit family narratives and through the unspoken presence of the past in the home and community. The concept of postmemory is central to understanding this process, as the children often develop an affective relationship to events, they did not experience themselves. At the same time, experiences of migration, integration in Denmark and the need to navigate dual cultural identities shape how these younger individuals relate to the family's history. Many of them express pride in their Albanian identity, which is strongly tied to the legacy of the conflict and resistance, while also negotiating their place within Danish society. The study has also shown that silence, both intentional and unintentional, is a powerful mechanism of transmission. Parents often refrain from telling their children the full extent of their traumatic experiences, either to protect them or because these experiences remain too painful to articulate. Nevertheless, these silences do not prevent transmission, rather they create a space in which the younger generation senses the weight of the past and seeks to understand it through other means, including their own research and community narratives. In conclusion, the transmission of memories of the Kosovo conflict across generations in the diaspora is not a linear or uniform process. It is mediated through a combination of words, silences, emotions, material culture and social practices, all of which are influenced by the broader context of life in Denmark. The memories continue to shape family dynamics, cultural identity, and intergenerational relationships, ensuring that the legacy of the conflict remains an active and formative part of diaspora life.

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