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**Kosovo. The path towards...?
(Part II)**

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Kosovo. The path towards... (Part II)

Abstract:

After the action of the international community in 1999, Kosovo became a de facto international protectorate whose status has been constantly questioned, despite the recognition of about one hundred nations of the world—not of Spain—. After the unilateral declaration of independence in 2008, internal problems have continued and, although an initial agreement with Serbia was signed in 2013 in order to normalize the relations between the two, the situation has not improved substantially.

This reality forms a complex space for economic and social development, and migration is a growing phenomenon facing a prospect of a difficult solution for this reality, a solution that sometimes is intended not to be endogenous.

A journey from 1999 to the present day and a brief analysis of these issues articulate this document.

Keywords:

Kosovo, Serbia, independence, economy, corruption, viability

Introduction

This document is the continuation of the analysis on Kosovo entitled “Kosovo: the path towards...?” Although it can be read as an independent document, it is advisable to do so after reading the first one.

The first document reviews the history of the area, especially looking at the significance of that area for Serbia and the relation with Albania, as well as at the role of Kosovo in Tito’s Yugoslavia and its power as a divisive element of that same nation. Moreover, it briefly analyzes the genesis and development of the war in Kosovo that would end up leading to its de facto segregation from Serbia.

The present document, a continuation of the first one, addresses the action of the international community in the area, the unilateral declaration of independence and the subsequent situation in which Kosovo finds itself, and wonders about the path that this former autonomous Serbian province is walking towards.

Kosovo: international action?

By Security Council resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the United Nations decided (paragraph 5) to deploy civil and security presences in Kosovo. The security presence was assumed by NATO, through the KFOR¹ (Kosovo FORce), and the civil presence was carried out by the UNMIK² (United Nations Mission in Kosovo), by the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and by the European Union, in a complex mission built on those four international pillars.

¹ Official website <http://www.nato.int/KFOR/>. All of the internet links in this document are active as of 26 March 2015.

² Official website <<http://www.unmikonline.org/>>.

However, once the humanitarian problems had been solved in the former Serbian province, the question that arose in all international forums was about the status of Kosovo, a Kosovo that is a de facto international protectorate, while Serbia continued to claim its sovereignty over that territory, as the aforementioned UN resolution 1244 explicitly acknowledged.

During the time of international supervision, an administration capable of fully assuming the governance of that territory was generated, a process not without difficulties or setbacks. However, the structures gradually started to develop, with an enormous economic aid and with the aid of international experts, in such a way that the emergence of that administration in an environment where a Serbian de facto administration was inexistent (with the exception of the north of the territory, north of the Ibar River) enabled the creation of a public apparatus, which was aimed at meeting the standards of a state governed by the rule of law, and whose leading class came largely from the members of the UCK, the terrorist movement that sought the independence of Kosovo.

The situation of tense calm—or of constant insecurity—was accompanied by outbreaks of violence that sometimes reached dimensions so worrying that they threatened the stability of Kosovo and of all the region. One of these outbreaks was the Macedonia crisis in 2001³, which was an authentic attempt of civil war in the areas of Albanian majority, and which motivated an agreed intervention orchestrated by the international community to precisely prevent these areas from following the example of Kosovo. Another example was the Kosovo riots in March 2004⁴, which, with their deadly and destructive consequences, added to the permanent harassment of the Serbian population that still lived in Kosovo—even though about 200,000 people left when the Serbian security forces of the province withdrew from the area—; a situation that, despite the international presence, gradually led to

³ Carlos Taibo, *La crisis de Macedonia*, Política Exterior volume 15 nº 81, May-June 2001, pages 59-70.

⁴ United Nations. UN News Centre, *Varios muertos y por lo menos 200 heridos durante disturbios en Kosovo*. <http://www.un.org/spanish/News/story.asp?NewsID=2026#.VRG0INFMtow>

the depopulation of Serbs in Kosovo,⁵ with the exception of the northern area and some enclaves in the center and the south where they are a majority.

The attempts to reach a negotiation over the status of Kosovo continued, although they were complex and unsuccessful, basically due to the opposing positions between the Serbian and the Kosovar Albanian stances on one key aspect: the Kosovar Albanians did not accept anything but full and total independence, while Serbia contemplated and envisaged the possibility of a high degree of autonomy. Finally, in November 2005, the United Nations Secretary General appointed a mediator, the Finnish Martti Ahtisaari, who, after various rounds of negotiations presented his final proposal,⁶ in which he explicitly stated that the status of Kosovo was to be that of supervised independence by the international community. The mediator arrived at this proposal after assessing that a history of enmity and mistrust had created antagonisms in the relations between the Serbs and Albanians of Kosovo—facts exacerbated by the actions taken by Milosevic in the 90s—, which implied that the reintegration into Serbia was not a viable option. In the same way, he considered that a permanent international administration was not sustainable, because even if some progress had been made—with the activities developed by the UNMIK—in the development of political institutions that assumed the responsibility of managing public affairs, economic development had not been possible under that international administration, which generated a source of instability. Therefore, after this analysis, Ahtisaari concluded that the only viable option was independence with international supervision, because he also stated that Kosovo's own capacity to face the issues arising from the protection of the minorities, the development of

⁵ El País, *Solana se declara "horrorizado" por la persecución de serbios en Kosovo*, 25 March 2004. http://elpais.com/diario/2004/03/25/internacional/1080169214_850215.html

⁶ United Nations, Security Council, Letter dated 26 March from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, *Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo's future status*, document S/2007/168 of 26 March 2007, paragraph 15, page 5 [in the Spanish version] <http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/2007/168>. [A version of the document in English is available at <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Kosovo%20S2007%20168.pdf>, the citation can be found in paragraph 15, page 4].

democracy, the economic growth and social reconciliation was limited, which implied that (temporary) need of international assistance and supervision.

Kosovo increasingly claimed its independence, while the international community used a massive amount of resources in the province, and Serbia reiterated its refusal to recognize a potential independence, alleging, inter alia, United Nations resolution 1244. On 17 November, in the elections held in Kosovo⁷—in which the Serbs living in the province did not participate—won, with 35% of the votes, Hasmin Thaci—a former terrorist of the UCK—, who had announced that he would declare independence in the event of winning.

Kosovo: a disputed area?

In the rest of Serbia, the exhaustion after years of wear and tear was evident. From the start of the conflict in the Balkans, at the beginning of the 90s, the joint effect of international isolation, sanctions and poor economic situation generated a bleak picture for a population that did not see its situation improve over the years: unemployment, low incomes, obsolete infrastructures and investment needs are the day-to-day reality. Therefore, and without renouncing to the proposal “Kosovo is Serbia,” pragmatism started to prevail, to a large extent, as was reflected by the victory of Boris Tadic’s Democratic Party (although with a narrow margin) in 2008,⁸ which opted for a more Europeanist policy and for avoiding explicitly the resort to the use of force in order to regain Kosovo, at the same time that it tried to improve its international relations as a means to induce an improvement in the general situation of Serbia. Therefore, Kosovo, as many other times in history, became a heavy burden for the development of the country, even though it was a very special part of that same country.

⁷ El País, *Hasmin Thaci gana las elecciones generales en Kosovo*, 18 November 2007. http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2007/11/18/actualidad/1195340401_850215.html

⁸ El Mundo.es Internacional, *Serbia mira a la UE y da su apoyo al Partido Democrático del presidente Boris Tadic*, 12 May 2008. <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/05/11/internacional/1210512458.html>

Moreover, Kosovo represented the struggle, in the best Balkan tradition, between foreign powers and interests. Russia, led by Putin and with an increasing strength in the area, and a traditional Serbian ally, signed an agreement of energy cooperation with Serbia that would allow for the development of the South Stream pipeline (whose construction has been recently cancelled as one of the effects of the Ukrainian crisis), and repeatedly expressed the Russian position against Kosovo's independence, pointing out that such an independence "*would mean a serious damage for the whole system of international law and would have negative consequences both for the Balkans and for the stability of other world regions.*"⁹ The EU offered Serbia to sign the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, and a temporary cooperation agreement to improve political, trade and economic cooperation relations,¹⁰ while the United States,¹¹ with the creation of the Bondsteel base in Uroševac—one of the biggest North American military bases in the world outside the US national territory¹²—ensured a powerful point of support in an area of great geopolitical interest.

Kosovo: independence?

On 17 February 2008, after the attempts to reach some sort of agreement between the Serbian and the Kosovar authorities repeatedly failed, including the Serbian refusal—although formulating alternative proposals that maintained the country's

⁹ El Mundo.es Internacional, *Putin, más cerca de Serbia*, 25 January 2008, <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/01/25/internacional/1201291326.html>

¹⁰ El Mundo.es Internacional, *La UE abre sus puertas a Serbia antes de la segunda vuelta de las elecciones*, 30 January 2008. <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/01/28/internacional/1201539225.html>

¹¹ The US position on Kosovo can be found at Congressional Research Service, *Kosovo: Current Issues and U.S. Policy*, 07 May 2013, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21721.pdf>

¹² Globalsecurity.org, *Camp Bondsteel*. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/camp-bondsteel.htm>

territorial integrity¹³ to accept the so-called Plan Ahtisaari¹⁴ and the repeated Kosovar refusal not to accept anything but full independence—, Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed its independence, obtaining the recognition of the United States, of some of the countries of the European Union—the EU declined to present a common position—and of the rest of the world, up to a total of more than a hundred nowadays, although Spain and more than 30 nations have shown their intention not to recognize Kosovo.

The plan drafted by the mediator, the so-called Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement, was implemented. The premises of that plan were taken into account for the drafting of the Kosovar Constitution,¹⁵ which would come into force on 15 June of that same year. Moreover, and to complement the aspects relative to international supervision, a new mission in charge of the European Union would be deployed, the EULEX¹⁶—not exempt of difficulties at the beginning, given the allegations of its possible illegality due to not being contemplated in resolution 1244—. The mediator, Martti Ahtisaari, would be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize that same year.

That “independent” Kosovo has been analyzed in a great number of readings and references. It has been, in the everlasting Balkan laboratory, the testing ground for the so-called and controversial¹⁷ “humanitarian intervention operations.” Kosovo is

¹³ Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Serbia ready to continue negotiations on future status of Kosovo-Metohija* 16 January 2008. <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti/vest.php?id=42398>

¹⁴ United Nations, Security Council, Letter dated 26 March 2007 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, Addendum, *Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement*, document S/2007/168/Add.1 of 26 March 2007, <http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/index.asp?symbol=S/2007/168/Add.1&referer=/spanish/&Lang=E>

¹⁵ *Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo*, <http://kryeministri-ks.net/zck/repository/docs/Constitution.of.the.Republic.of.Kosovo.pdf>

¹⁶ European Union, External action, EULEX European Union Rule of Law Mission Kosovo, <http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/?page=2,16>

¹⁷ Particularly belligerent in this field we can mention Noam Chomsky, and his work Noam Chomsky and Bertha Ruiz de la Concha, *El Nuevo Humanismo Militar: Las Nuevas Lecciones de Kosovo [The new military humanism: lessons from Kosovo is the title of the English edition of the book]*, Siglo XXI

presented as the unavoidable conflict—Daalder and O’Hanlon¹⁸—, Kosovo is given as an example—Mertus¹⁹—of the activation of war by means of resorting to myths and misinformation... or maybe Kosovo is simply important because it is in Europe, in a disputed area by the EU/NATO and Russia or because it is used as a legitimating argument of separatisms all over the world.²⁰

That “independent” Kosovo has led to a new international controversy,²¹ a regional controversy, and it is even a controversy in itself. Apart from—or in addition to—the important questions about its economic viability that arise hand-in-hand with its “independent” path, it is somewhat surprising that the important Albanian newspaper Koha Ditore rallied against the international missions,²² when what there can be no doubt about is the fact that if Kosovo exists nowadays as an independent entity, it is due to that same international community that has generated those missions.

editores, México 2002. From another perspective, we can note the interesting approach presented by Djamchid Momtaz, *La “Intervención Humanitaria de la OTAN” en Kosovo y la Prohibición de Recurrir a la Fuerza*, Revista Internacional de la Cruz Roja, nº 837, 2000, pages 89-102. <https://www.icrc.org/spa/resources/documents/misc/5tdnwn.htm>

¹⁸ “...by 1998: both Serbs and ethnic Albanians wanted political and physical control of the province and were prepared to fight for it” Ivo H. Daalder and Michael O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 2000, page 184.

¹⁹ Julie Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1999.

²⁰ Tim Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford University Press, New York 2008, pages xvi-xviii.

²¹ For an introduction to the topic, Cesáreo Gutiérrez and Romualdo Bermejo, *Kosovo de Nuevo: Apuntes Críticos sobre su Declaración de Independencia, su Constitución y Otras Reflexiones*, Elcano Royal Institute, Working Paper nº 41/2008, 2008; Juan Garrigues, *Kosovo: Más allá de los Titulares*, FRIDE (Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior), Comment article, February 2008 [The article is available in English under the title *The Kosovo debate: beyond the headlines*].

²² Koha Ditore Newspaper, published online by Le Courier des Balkans on 01 July 2008, Kosovo: *L’Incompetence des Missions Internationales*, 23 June 2008. http://balkans.courriers.info/IMG/_article_PDF/article_10778.pdf.

Serbia raised the issue of Kosovo's independence²³ to the International Court of Justice, obtaining on 22 July 2010 a surprising judgement "*the declaration of independence of Kosovo adopted in February 2008 has not violated international law or resolution 1244.*" Therefore, Kosovo is clearly and manifestly a new proof of how through war it is possible to reach the political objectives of at least one of the opposing parties, the one that wins the conflict.

Kosovo: an example of...?

Even though Hall alleges—going back even to the Balkan wars of the 20th century—that nationalist states are not the best means to politically structure the Balkan peninsula,²⁴ the process of balkanization, disintegration and parceling may not have finished, because the ethnic mixture and the geography of the area facilitates the perception that even smaller compartments could secede, especially after the example of Kosovo. Already in 1995, almost prophetically, since the international intervention in Kosovo had not occurred, it was noted²⁵ that "Another ethnic war is still programmed in Kosovo and in the Muslim areas of Serbia," a clear reference to the fact that the cycle of secessions could have not finished.

Sandžak, a Muslim majority area located between Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo is not the only one that presents potential problems of secession²⁶—an argument that has strengthened after the example of Kosovo—. The Presevo Valley,²⁷ the so-called

²³ An analysis in this respect can be found in Vicente Gonzalvo Navarro, *El futuro de Kosovo*, Opinion Paper 30/2011, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, April 2011. http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2011/DIEEEE030_2011FuturoKosovo.pdf

²⁴ Richard C. Hall, *The Balkans Wars. Prelude to the First World War*, Routledge, London, 2000, pages 142-143.

²⁵ DENITCH Bogdan, *Nacionalismo y Etnicidad. La Trágica Muerte de Yugoslavia*, Siglo XXI editores, Madrid, 1995, pages 182.

²⁶ Juan Carlos Antúnez, *Sandzak: Una Inestable Región entre Bosnia y Herzegovina y Kosovo*, Athena Paper Volume 2 nº 23, 2007; International Crisis Group, *Serbian's Sandzak: Still Forgotten*, Europe Report nº 162, 2005.

²⁷ European Forum, *Ethnic Albanians Propose Regionalisation of the Presevo Valley*, 2009, http://www.europeanforum.net/news/701/ethnic_albanian_rsquo_s_propose_regionalisation_of_pre_s

“eastern Kosovo,” in Serbian territory and with an Albanian majority population, presents pro-independence inclinations and even had its own pro-independence terrorist movement, the UÇPMB,²⁸ which played a significant role during the 2001 Macedonian crisis. Even in Kosovo, which is caught up in a complex legal situation due to its unilateral independence, the area north of the Ibar River, where there is a Serbian majority population—in addition to some other enclaves dispersed around the former province—is a territory, largely on the sidelines of Pristina that does not rule out its annexation to Serbia.²⁹ And at certain times, the ancient and controversial Pan-Albanian discourse, the union of Albania, Kosovo and the Macedonian territories populated mainly by Albanians—even though the Kosovar Constitution explicitly rejects that possibility—is, if properly instrumentalized, a powerful measure of pressure towards the international community. Bosnia-Herzegovina could see how the Republic of Srpska demands its union to Serbia, and how the Bosniak-Croat Federation—the other constitutive entity of Bosnia—disappears at the request of Herzeg-Bosnia—the area in the south of the federation and with a Bosnian-Croatian majority—to be part of Croatia. The list in the Balkans and in a large part of the world would probably be endless.

In the light of these whims, whether they are realist options or just a simple means to obtain more benefits from an international community quite unwilling to face

[caron_evo_valley_region](#); International Crisis Group, *Serbia: Maintaining peace in the Presevo Valley*, Europe Report n° 186, 2007; International Crisis Group, *Southern Serbia: In Kosovo's shadow*, Europe Briefing n° 43, 2006; International Crisis Group, *Southern Serbia's fragile peace*, Europe Report n° 152, 2003.

²⁸ Presheva Jone, *CNN: 1600 armed guerrillas from the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medveja and Bujanovac (UCPMB)*, 13 May 2001. <http://www.preshevajone.com/cnn-1600-armed-guerrillas-from-the-liberation-army-of-presevo-medvedja-and-bujanovac-ucpmb/>

²⁹ International Crisis Group, *Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide*, Europe Report n° 165, 2005; International Crisis Group, *Kosovo's Ethnic Dilemma: The Need for a Civic Contract*, Europe Report n° 143, 2003; sometimes it is envisaged as a possibility the exchange of territories, the Presevo Valley for the Gazivoda Lake and the north of Mitrovica, that is to say, the Kosovar territories north of the Ibar river, even if the hydroelectric richness of the aforementioned lake dam and the coal deposits in that northern area—interestingly, in addition to arguments of avoiding separatism—hinder the acceptance of that possibility.

conflicts—although, and at least for the member countries of the OSCE, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe³⁰ are abundantly clear in their chapters concerning borders—, “the Kosovar differential element” is alleged, which is expressed by the mediator appointed for this issue: “*Kosovo is a unique case that demands a unique solution. It does not create a precedent for other unresolved conflicts. In unanimously adopting resolution 1244 (1999), the Security Council responded to Milosevic’s actions³¹ in Kosovo by denying Serbia a role in its governance, placing Kosovo under temporary United Nations administration and envisaging a political process designed to determine Kosovo’s future. The combination of these factors makes Kosovo’s circumstances extraordinary.*”³² However, that claim actually has a short history and is used as another proof of the political instrumentalization of international law, as it has clearly and manifestly been repeated with the Russian annexation of Crimea.³³

³⁰ Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Final Act*, Helsinki 1975 <https://www.osce.org/es/mc/39506?download=true> [Available in English at <http://www.osce.org/mc/39501?download=true>]; *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*, Paris 1990. <http://www.osce.org/es/mc/39521?download=true> [Available in English at <http://www.osce.org/mc/39516?download=true>].

³¹ It is necessary to remember that Milosevic was overthrown by its own people in Belgrade on 05 October 2000.

³² United Nations, Security Council, Letter dated 26 March from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, *Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo’s future status*, Document S/2007/168 of 26 March 2007, paragraph 15, page 5 [in the Spanish version]. <http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/2007/168>. [A version of the document in English is available at <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Kosovo%20S2007%20168.pdf>, the citation can be found in paragraph 15, page 4].

³³ President of Russia, *Address by President of the Russian Federation*, 18 March 2014. <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6889>; RT, *Putin: Crimea similar to Kosovo, West is rewriting its own rule book*, 18 March 2014. <http://rt.com/news/putin-address-parliament-crimea-562/>. The comparison between the international action in Kosovo and Ukraine is very common in certain circles. The argumentation with regards to the intervention of the West on humanitarian grounds in order to prevent the death of Kosovar Albanians by the Serbian security elements is compared to the passivity of those same nations towards the actions of the Ukrainian government against part of its pro-Russian population. Similarly, western support of the UCK, the media coverage of the conflict, the presentation of “conclusive” evidence about the existence of plans to carry out a genocide of Albanians... against the position adopted by the Ukrainian government, underline, for certain currents and spheres of thought, the different attitudes of the West towards issues raised by two sovereign nations (Serbia and Ukraine) as “counter-terrorist operations,” and which received, from the very beginning—even from their own genesis—, a different treatment by the West, in order to, on one side, to end with an

Kosovo: towards “normalization”...?

On 19 April 2013, an agreement was signed in Brussels between Belgrade and Pristina, the so-called “First agreement on principles for normalization of relations”—articulated around 15 points—, that aimed at being the starting point to improve the mutual relation, since this fact—“good neighborly” relations— is one of the previous basic elements necessary to be accepted as a candidate for European Union membership.

One of the most controversial points to reach the candidate status was the situation of the north of Kosovo and of the Serbs who live in the entire province, as well as the need to put an end to the dispute about the potential partition of Kosovo and the segregation of Kosovo from the aforementioned northern area, of Serbian majority, and its annexation by Belgrade. This area, composed of four municipalities (the northern part of Mitrovica, Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić), unifies into a district called the “Association of Serbian Municipalities,” which will be under Kosovo’s legislation—including the judicial and police systems—but which will have a certain degree of autonomy in issues related to the economic development and to the areas of health and education.³⁴

That degree of autonomy materializes, among other things, in the fact that the police chief of the association of municipalities will be a Serb, chosen by Pristina out of a list provided by the municipality; that the police in this area will reflect the ethnic composition of the area—not the ethnic composition of all Kosovo—; and that, similarly, there will be Serbian judges in Pristina’s Court of Appeals to understand the cases of Serbs while applying Kosovo’s laws.

This agreement, which has been greatly welcomed in the international arena, has not

independent Yugoslavia and, on the other, to influence in the step towards the West of an Ukraine handed by a group of oligarchs acting on behalf of western interests, in order to integrate those areas into the Euro-Atlantic space. In this regard Neil Clark, *Kosovo and Ukraine: Compare and Contrast*, RT, 20 August 2014. <http://rt.com/op-edge/181580-kosovo-ukraine-compare-contrast/>

³⁴ Peter Lippman, *Kosovo an Update*, Washington report on Middle East Affairs, December 2013, pages 32-33. <http://www.wrmea.org/2013-december/kosovo—an-update.html>

been embraced to the same extent by the Albanian population—led by the Vetëvendosje movement (independence)—, which argues that this agreement contributes to the “creation of parallel structures” in the few areas of Kosovo where there is a Serbian majority. This would allow education to be made according to the Serbian syllabus, the local police chief to be chosen, and the police force to reflect the ethnic composition of this locality—instead of, as it claims, the composition of the whole “country”—, and also the judiciary and the health systems, hence pointing out that it is a system of apartheid..., paradoxically—or not—only two decades after this system of parallel structures had been used by those who now³⁵ question that others use them.

The so-called “parallel structures” have a double reading, since while the Albanians see them as a “state in the shadow,”³⁶ the Serbs simply see them as schools, hospitals or city halls that provide services to the inhabitants of those areas, services that those people would not be provided otherwise and that are still mostly financed by Serbia. One example is the hospital in the north of Mitrovica (a Serbian majority area), with 1560 employees. Kosovo’s government pays the salaries of 225 people, and the rest is paid by the Serbian government. Although it is pointed out that perhaps it would not be necessary to have so many workers on the payroll—it is estimated that with a 1000 workers the functioning of the hospital would be adequate—. In any case, 225 seems a number somehow low,³⁷ especially in the context of a bloated Kosovar administration.

³⁵ Balkan Witness, *Demonstration in Gjilan*, Newsletter 168 (English version), 16 October 2009. <http://balkanwitness.glypx.com/vetevendosje2009-10-16.htm>

³⁶ It would be interesting to carry out a comparison of the similarities and the differences that exist between the “parallel structures” used by Kosovar Albanians in the 90s and the ones that exist nowadays in the Serbian majority areas in Kosovo.

³⁷ Balkan Investigate Reporting Network Kosovo, *Internews Kosovo, Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability, Report nº 1, Big Deal, Civic oversight of the Kosovo-Serbia Agreement Implementation*, November 2014, page 28. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/file/show/BIG%20DEAL%20FINAL%20ENG.pdf>

Despite the official reasoning, Kosovo's reality is not as multiethnic as sometimes is said. The risk of generating societies articulated around ethnic concepts and quotes of power implies that, in the end, the disputes of each group focus on trying to obtain a greater quota of the total, usually alleging population majorities in the entire territory or in certain areas, articulating these majorities, and always trying to modify the political and administrative compartments according to their sectarian interest. This implies losing sight of the overall picture, as there is not a single space overview. It is necessary to remember one of the Balkan "maxims": "because I must be a minority in your state if you can be a minority in mine." In this struggle the smaller groups fight to survive, because despite the allocation of a quota—being this quota small and of little importance in the total, and not existing a real conscience of a single space—they are gradually relegated and, in many cases, doomed to disappear.

In this sense, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minorities that exist in Kosovo have a parliamentary quota of representatives (of the 120 seats in the Albanian parliament, 20 are reserved for minorities, and from these, 4 to Romas, Ashkalis and Egyptians. However, their situation is still worse than the average situation of the rest of Kosovars. It is necessary to understand that before the war in Kosovo there were more than 150,000 Romas in Kosovo. However, nowadays (2011 census) there are 8824 because, after the war, the Romas were accused by the radical Albanians of having collaborated with the Serbs, and were object of violence and ethnic cleansing by these groups, in such a way that even Ashkalis and Egyptians declared themselves separate groups from the Romas, alleging different historical roots.³⁸

³⁸ A detailed report on these minorities can be found in Kristina Hellqvist, *Report from study visit to Kosovo September 2013*, Church of Sweden, September 2013. http://www.ccme.be/fileadmin/filer/ccme/Members_Info/Sweden/2013-10-28-Report_study_visit_Kosovo.pdf

Overall, although there has been some progress, the degree of implementation of the Brussels Agreement is, at best, questionable.³⁹ The riots that took place on 14 October 2014 during a football match in Belgrade between the Serbian and Albanian (not Kosovar) national teams—during the incidents a drone was flown several times over the stadium with a big Albanian flag depicting “Greater Albania”⁴⁰—replicated in Kosovo, where people from these two different ethnicities fought, as a clear demonstration of the permanent tension that exists in the area.

Kosovo: sustainable...?

As the following headline “Kosovo, a drifting country controlled by predatory elites”⁴¹ cogently shows, the situation in Kosovo is very complex: recurring riots, massive migrations, bloated administration, scarce social mobility, patronage regime... Kosovo, as the same source highlights, is the result of the double failure of both the international community and its own corrupt political elites.

Half of Kosovo’s population is under 25 years old, and half of the population under 30 is unemployed. As a reference figure, each year about 30,000 people reach the age to enter the labor market, and only about 8,000 find a job. For the employment level to be appropriate, the economy would have to grow about 8%,⁴² which clearly seems very hypothetical.

³⁹ Republic of Kosovo, *State of play in implementation of the Brussels Agreements*, 16 January 2014. http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Kosovo_Report_on_implementation_state_of_play_of_the_Brussels_Agreements_160114-signed.pdf; Konrad Adenauer and Stiftung Prishtina Council on Foreign Relations, *Brussels “First agreement” a year after*, Policy Briefs Kosovo, April 2014. http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_37608-1522-1-30.pdf?140429132226

⁴⁰ The Guardian, *Serbia v Albania violence: UEFA opens inquiry into “inexcusable” clashes*, 15 October 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2014/oct/15/serbia-albania-violence-uefa-inquiry-drone>

⁴¹ Le Courier des Balkans, *Kosovo: « Un pays à la dérive, contrôlé par des élites prédatrices »*, 10 February 2015. <http://balkans.courriers.info/article26574.html>

⁴² Radio Free Europa Radio Liberty, *Kosovo’s economy still struggling five years after independence*, 14 February 2013. <http://www.rferl.org/content/kosovo-economy-struggling/24901946.html>

The political instability and the practices of the administration extremely hinder the possibilities of the economic development of the area and, therefore, the possibilities of development and of social stability. Corruption—partly a consequence of the economic problems, and mostly a cause of these same problems—is very widespread in all Kosovo, and the creation of a patronage system—related to classic Albanian customs and strengthened by the instrumentalization of public offices as a means to reward the “services provided” since the 90s to the people that had contributed to the “independence” of Kosovo—creates an absolutely complex situation at the macro level, hampered by the disputes at the micro level and the differences at the global level about the reality of Kosovo.

In this context, and without even raising issues such as the “economy of scales” or “critical economic mass” relative to the viability of an economic entity of such a small size and without a deeply rooted trajectory of development, the economy does not find a favorable breeding ground for its development. The scarce existing companies are closing and leaving Kosovo—if, from 1 January 2001 to 12 January 2015, 674 foreign companies were registered, last year alone, 39 of those have closed⁴³—and the situation is at such a delicate point that even the President of Kosovo participated in a meeting with entrepreneurs of the diaspora on 17 March in Winterthur (Switzerland) with the Minister of Trade and Industry and the Minister of Diaspora, to encourage them to invest in Kosovo,⁴⁴ a diaspora that fully supported “independence” but that is more reluctant to invest capital in Kosovo with strictly business criteria.

The local agricultural capacity—barely supported—cannot cope with the imports of goods from the outside, nor most part of the manufactured products, that come from imports, and the scarcity of domestic production is hindering the creation of an economic fabric and encourages corruption in the negotiation of import contracts.

⁴³ Albinfoch, actualité des albanophones en Suisse, *Les entreprises ferment et quittent le Kosovo*, 02 March 2015, <http://www.albinfo.ch/fr/ikin-dhe-shuhen-bizneset-ne-kosove-2-2/>

⁴⁴ Albinfoch, actualité des albanophones en Suisse, *Le 17 mars, la presidente du Kosovo rencontre les entrepreneurs de la diaspora à Winterthur*, 11 March 2015. <http://www.albinfo.ch/fr/jahjaga-me-17-mars-ne-winterthur-takim-me-ndermarresit-e-diaspores-2/>

The degradation of Kosovo's economy is greatly due to corruption, which even seems to have affected the EULEX mission,⁴⁵ the European Union judicial support mission, which has not been able to significantly improve Kosovo's judicial system, nor finish or decrease to some extent the large existing network of organized crime, very active in drugs, arms and human trafficking.

The University, before Kosovo's pride, is also being questioned, with constant accusations of corruption, falsehood in the qualifications of the professors and the governing body,⁴⁶ primacy of political affinity instead of scientific qualification in the hiring process, absentee faculty members, lack of resources,⁴⁷ etc. The university degrees are not recognized in many countries of the world and the Serbian curriculum is of no use to access positions in Kosovo's administration. This leads the desolation of students and university graduates, who see that their diplomas not only do not give them access to the labor market, but that they are also often not recognized or compete for the scarce job vacancies with diplomas bought with money and influence.

Kosovo is still very different from Serbia in many aspects, given that the creation of a state entity without previous history is a difficult exercise not only of geopolitical engineering but also of issues as basic and essential as the mere property of infrastructures, facilities, etc., of issues that affect the daily lives of its inhabitants. These issues range from the cell phone coverage—and the access to a particular prefix to operate in the phone network—, to the availability of basic resources such as energy, water... The fragmentation/separation of a part from an articulated and an organized whole hinders, to a great extent, the achievement of reasonable levels of

⁴⁵ The Guardian, *EU's biggest foreign mission in turmoil over corruption row*, 05 November 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/05/eu-facing-questions-dismissal-prosecutor-alleged-corruption>

⁴⁶ Le courrier des Balkans, *Kosovo: fraude, corruption et révolte à l'Université de Pristina*, 29 January 2014. <http://balkans.courriers.info/article24131.html>

⁴⁷ Preportr, *Kosovo: la grande miséré de l'Université de Pristina*, 16 December 2013. <http://balkans.courriers.info/article23871.html>

provision of these basic needs, whose shortages or failures could have regional consequences in an increasingly interconnected environment.

In this regard, Serbia has ceded an international telephone number, the -383, that still considers its own, fully operative since 1 January 2015. Consequently, it has pointed out that Telekom Srbija (Serbia) could opt to obtain the third cell telephone license when the licenses are offered in Kosovo. In relation to energy, Serbia has noted that since it made very large investments in the province, the ownership of the facilities—especially the Obilic A and B thermal power plants—belongs to them, facilities that are nowadays out of its control and whose property should be given to the community of Serb municipalities.⁴⁸

With regards to certain resources, the Gazivoda Lake accumulates 60% of Kosovo's water resources and is located in one of the Serbian majority areas—that already threatened to cut off the supply in case of a unilateral declaration of independence⁴⁹—, water not only essential for its direct use, but also because it is the condenser of the thermal power plants of Obilic A and B. The second one produces two thirds of the electricity of the entire Kosovo. These thermal power plants use coal—abundant in this area—with a technology that generates high rates of air pollution. This is leading to disputes with regard to the projects of creation of a new thermal power plant.⁵⁰ And without energy economic progress is very complex.⁵¹

⁴⁸ B92, *Serbia allocated calling code to Kosovo*, 09 September 2013. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2013&mm=09&dd=09&nav_id=87597; even though the argument of confrontation and different messages to different audiences users of various media can be verified by simply contrasting the previous title with the one that follows: Reuters, *Seeking EU talks, Serbia cedes ground on Kosovo phone code*, 09 September 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/09/us-serbia-kosovo-idUSBRE9880NR20130909>

⁴⁹ The Telegraph, *UN cites Serb threat to Kosovo's energy*, 15 December 2007 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1572654/UN-cites-Serb-threat-to-Kosovos-energy.html>

⁵⁰ Balkan Insight, *Kosovo campaign targets proposed new power plant*, 03 February 2013. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-campaign-targets-proposed-new-power-plant>

⁵¹ The World Bank, *Energy in Kosovo*, Brief, 30 July 2013 <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kosovo/brief/energy-in-kosovo>

Kosovo has mineral wealth—it was already noted in the first part of the present analysis that the province was part of the “extractive” area of Tito’s Yugoslavia—and a certain number of basic industries, most of them in the Trepca complex, one of Kosovo’s economic gems, although nearly all of its facilities and infrastructures are obsolete and require significant investments. Most of the complex is situated in the northern area, of Serbian majority, and one part of the Kosovar Albanian majority is asking for it to be “nationalized.” In practice, its ownership cannot be claimed by Serbia, a fact which is generating a new source of political and social unrest.⁵²

Kosovo: towards...?

The situation of economic, social and institutional insecurity, and the despair for the future, has led many of its inhabitants to leave Kosovo, since they felt as though they were living in some sort of ghetto. However, the only countries where Kosovar Albanians can go without a visa are Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey. And if the situation is bad for the Kosovar Albanians, for Kosovar Serbs, in many cases living in surrounded and besieged enclaves, the situation is worse. This has often led them to count only on the support of Belgrade, although Belgrade has also instrumentalized them in certain occasions.⁵³

In this new exodus, the preferential destination countries are those of the European Union and, especially, those that already have groups of Kosovar Albanians among their population. However, the number of applications has increased in such a way that the governments of the host countries are taking measures to avoid new massive arrivals. Germany’s consideration of “safe country,” given the increase of asylum applications from Kosovar Albanian citizens registered in this country, implies the refusal of the majority of asylum requests. In fact, in 2014 only 1.1% of the applications were accepted. Despite this, in the first month and a half of 2015, 18000

⁵³ Pete⁵³ BalkanInsight, *Delay over Trepca ignite protest in Kosovo*, 20 January 2015. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/trepca-mine-controversy-ignites-protest-in-kosovo> Lippman, *Kosovo an Update, Life in Kosovo*, Washington report on Middle East Affairs, December 2013, pages 32-33. <http://www.wrmea.org/2013-december/kosovo—an-update.html>

Kosovar Albanians have made their way into Germany, since, together with Switzerland, Germany is the traditional destination of Kosovar emigration. As a consequence, authorities have decided to reduce the deadline for the completion of the asylum application process from three months to three weeks, so as to reduce the length of stay during the determination of the application.⁵⁴ Something similar has occurred in Belgium, where, as the Secretary of State for Migration and Asylum Policy has pointed out, Kosovar Albanians are not recommended to go, since there are no reasons for them to be granted asylum. The Secretary of State has also noted that all these demands will be subject to a rapid procedure.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the exodus towards these countries continues, but through illicit networks specialized in human trafficking,⁵⁶ and with connections to organized crime.

Kosovo has a complex domestic situation, a situation that in a global world creates a security vacuum that has regional and global implications. One of the concerns is that international terrorism could use Kosovo—Albanians are mostly Muslims, although the Constitution establishes the secularity of the state—as an entrance door to Western Europe.⁵⁷ The relative proximity and permeability with Albania⁵⁸ makes the fight against terrorism and against the jihadist recruiting networks a new threat that adds to the already existing networks. Recently, seven people have been accused of terrorism—among them an imam—, after organizing a recruiting network for the Islamic State. Moreover, it is estimated that about 300 Albanians serve as

⁵⁴ Le Courrier des Balkans, *Kosovo: le flux de migrants inquiète l'Allemagne*, 21 February 2015. <http://balkans.courriers.info/article26642.html>

⁵⁵ Albinfoch, actualité des albanophones en Suisse, *Pas d'asile pour les Kosovars en Belgique*, 03 March 2015, <http://www.albinfo.ch/fr/ska-azil-per-kosovaret-ne-belgijike-2-2/>

⁵⁶ Albinfoch, actualité des albanophones en Suisse, *Rapport sur le trafic organisé de migrants et ses liens avec la Suisse*, 16 December 2014. <http://www.albinfo.ch/fr/rapport-sur-le-traffic-organise-de-migrants-et-ses-liens-avec-la-suisse/>

⁵⁷ In this respect Esmá Kucukalic Ibrahimovic, *El desafío de Kosovo por levantar el "telón de acero" contra el terrorismo internacional*, Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, framework document 07/2015 of 27 February 2015. http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_marco/2015/DIEEEM07-2015_Kosovo_EsmáKucukalic.pdf

⁵⁸ Le Courrier des Balkans, *Guerre en Syrie: la police albanaise démantèle un réseau jihadiste à Tirana*, 13 March 2014. <http://balkans.courriers.info/article24426.html>

terrorists in this organization.⁵⁹

The situation of (in)security in Kosovo is described as the result of a combination of interethnic tensions, economic weakness, crime organized groups and the availability of war weapons, which have led to the outbreak of sporadic acts of violence and have encouraged criminal activity. It is extremely complex to conduct inquiries about the activities related to organ, arms and human trafficking in Kosovo, which is also considered a transit area for Afghan drugs to Europe. Moreover, an increase in Islamic extremism has been noted, the radicalization of certain political movements and the active presence of former member of the UCK as an organized group in protesting acts.⁶⁰

The riots between ethnicities are still recurrent. Worth mentioning, due to their significance, are the riots that took place in 2010, when the holding of municipal elections in the northern area of Kosovo—elections that were considered illegal by the European Union mission— generated strong violent protests, with thousands of people involved on each side, which motivated an intervention of the NATO forces deployed in Kosovo;⁶¹ or the violent riots that took place between July and September 2011, when the Kosovar Serbs of the north refused to accept the dismantlement of the roadblocks in the border posts between Serbia and Albania.⁶²

⁵⁹ Le Courrier des Balkans, *Djihad en Syrie: au Kosovo, sept hommes jugés pour terrorisme*, 04 March 2015. <http://balkans.courriers.info/article26721.html>; Belgzim Kamberi, *Guerre en Syrie et Irak: la police du Kosovo arrête 40 jihadistes supposés*, Le Courrier des Balkans, 13 August 2014. <http://balkans.courriers.info/article25407.html>

⁶⁰ United States Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, *Kosovo 2014 Crime and Safety Report*, 02 July 2014. <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=15108>

⁶¹ El País, *La OTAN interviene ante los disturbios étnicos en Kosovo*, 31 May 2010, http://elpais.com/diario/2010/05/31/internacional/1275256810_850215.html

⁶² El País, *Serbia y Kosovo interrumpen el diálogo tras nuevos disturbios en la frontera*, 28 September 2011. http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2011/09/28/actualidad/1317160808_850215.html

The most recent riots took place in January 2015,⁶³ when a bus carrying Serbs that was travelling to the Dakovica monastery was stoned. The Minister of the current Kosovar coalition government (of Serb origin), Aleksandar Jablanović, labelled as “savage” the Kosovar Albanians who tried to prevent that visit—later on, he issued a public apology for his comment—, a comment that triggered the riots—that increased in dimension and grievances, spurred on by the most radical groups—, given the rioters’ allegations that the Serbs are responsible for war crimes during the 90s... The government of Kosovo condemned these incidents and stated that the protest had not been provoked by the people but by the opposition, and that it had been “an attempt to seize power through violence,”⁶⁴ which clearly reflected the climate of social and political tension of the area.

And despite the “normalization” of the relations with Belgrade, Kosovo still is—and still sees itself—, to a great extent, as an unfinished, mafia and corrupt state, with an “international community complicit with the situation,” and an increasing influence of radical Islam.⁶⁵ Despite the “normalization,” things on the ground continue in a similar way, the parallel structures financed by Belgrade persist, the situation in northern Kosovo is questioned...⁶⁶ Therefore, if from one determined point of view the Brussels Agreement, the great step forward towards... was supposed to induce a substantial change in the future of Kosovo, from the another point of view, it simply implies the continuation of the present situation: a divided Kosovo under international

⁶³ BBC Mundo, *Disturbios en Kosovo durante protesta de albanokosovares contra el gobierno*, 25 January 2015. http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/ultimas_noticias/2015/01/150125_ultnot_disturbios_kosovo_serbia_fp

⁶⁴ La Vanguardia, *Decenas de heridos y detenidos por enfrentamientos con la policía en Kosovo*, 28 January de 2015. <http://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20150127/54424042365/actualizacion-decenas-de-heridos-y-detenidos-por-enfrentamientos-con-la-policia-en-kosovo.html>

⁶⁵ Kota Ditore, *Kosovo; la fausse “normalisation” et les vrais problèmes d’un État à la derive*, 29 September 2013. <http://balkans.courriers.info/article23328.html>

⁶⁶ Radio Slobodna Europa, *Accord “historique” sur le Kosovo : sur le terrain, rien en change...*, 14 August 2013. <http://balkans.courriers.info/article23041.html>

tutelage.⁶⁷

Conclusion?

This complex situation has been reached after almost two decades of massive amounts of economic, human, material and moral resources provided in the area by the international community. And it does not seem to be improving.

The endogenous questions must have endogenous answers. Obviously, it is feasible and useful to provide the necessary support to promote the peace and stability of the societies that demand it, in the framework of an international law that serves as a benchmark to avoid the sudden failure of the progresses made in the context of international relations when faced with an unfortunate or completely interested action or inaction.

The internal differences must be resolved within that framework. And resorting to past options—balkanization?—that perhaps were nothing more than the materialization of foreign interests shows, in most cases, that in the pursuit of a potential solution, a new group of problems is generated, starting with the one that “was supposed” to be resolved.

And sometimes it is argued that the solution to the “minor problems,” if minor problems exist in a global world, consists in their integration in bigger frameworks and scales, in such a way that the micro reality is subordinated and diluted in a greater reality. That is the argument of the integration into the European Union (or in another supranational framework) as the solution to the problems... Also to the endogenous problems?

The integration in supranational frameworks certainly presents advantages. The conformation of an environment of a greater entity enables and facilitates its members options and possibilities that, otherwise, would be more costly or unviable. However, it is necessary to consider and evaluate if integration as a solution to

⁶⁷ Le Courrier des Balkans, *Accord de Bruxelles ; la fin du rêve d'un Kosovo multiethnique*, 01 July 2013, <http://balkans.courriers.info/article22853.html>

prevent endogenous problems from increasing or spreading—option that sometimes is considered almost as a blackmail—is a viable option, or, simply, a way of escaping forward, towards an environment full of resources—especially before the economic crisis—, which is expected to have a capacity of absorption that would enable the endogenous problems to fade or dilute in...

That approach, with due respect to the obvious differences and with the exceptions that one may wish to point out, has been used for thousands of years, and is similar to the one used in the ancient times for the elimination of potentially dangerous elements. Throwing them into the sea, on the understanding that, surrounded by all that water, those products would dilute and disappear, without the need to do anything else; simply by subsuming them in a greater environment, the problems would disappear. Although that argument apparently has some logic, the fact remains that the sea “ends up throwing back everything,” and we end up being victims of all we threw into the sea, us or our children... even though the sea is immense.

Trying to fix endogenous issues and issues generated artificially “by diluting them into the sea,” in an environment of a greater entity, is no more than an attempt to shift the problem to another place or to postpone it for a few years. Because the sea would definitely throw it back to us.

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