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Kosovo from 1999 until today

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*To my family,
for making me who I am today,
with their loving care and support!*

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I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for an academic degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Δηλώνω υπεύθυνα ότι αυτή η διπλωματική εργασία αποτελεί εξ' ολοκλήρου δικό μου συγγραφικό έργο και δεν έχει υποβληθεί εν όλω ή εν μέρει σε προηγούμενο ακαδημαϊκό πρόγραμμα σπουδών. Το έργο που παρουσιάζεται είναι εξ ολοκλήρου δικό μου, εκτός από τα σημεία που σαφώς παραδέχομαι ή παραπέμπω αλλού.

How the issue of Kosovo's independence evolves from 1999 until today

Keywords: Kosovo, Serbia, secession, independence, international administration
recognition, international participation

Abstract

This essay assessed Kosovo's trajectory towards independence from 1999 up-to-date. This issue is worth examination, as it remained a very hot topic for several years and still attracts international attention, with its latest incidents. For this purpose, the author analyzed the actions of both the Serbian and the Kosovar authorities in relation to the country's independence. The talks were proven to be a fiasco, as both sides were unwilling to compromise, in order to reach an agreement and the international organizations didn't implement a common foreign policy in the country. At the same time, the stance of the international community on the matter is meticulously analyzed, especially after the Kosovar (unilateral) declaration of independence from Serbia in February 2008. It could be said that, the countries which refuse Kosovo's independence only come to the defense of their standpoint with one argument in many different ways. The third chapter of the essay studies closely the efforts of Kosovo to participate in international organizations as an independent state, in relation to the Serbian counter-actions and the reactions of the international community. The issue of Kosovo appears to be as a zero-sum situation, in which Prishtina and the countries that recognize its independence stick to the ruling of ICJ, whereas Serbia along with the refuters argue that this act is against international laws. The methodological tool of analysis applied in the paper is the political analysis of primary and secondary sources related to the Kosovar international relations. Finally, special reference is made in questions, possibly raised by the research and the writing of this paper, along with potential subjects for further investigation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
G8	Group of Eight
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICT	International Criminal Tribunal
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KFOR	Kosovo Protection Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KVM	Kosovo Verification Mission
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SRSG	Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNOSEK	United Nations Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Future Status Process for Kosovo
US	United States of America

INTRODUCTION

This essay aims to investigate the way in which Kosovo's independence evolves from 1999 up-to-date. According to the researcher this issue is worth examination, as it remained a very hot topic for several years and still attracts international attention, with its latest incidents. Moreover, the act of (unilateral) declaration of independence of a country from a sovereign state, has become quite a modernity over the past decades, as many countries have followed the same path, after the end of the de-colonization process worldwide. What is interesting though, is that Kosovo's independence was condoned by some countries, recognizing it as independent. Kosovo's independence from Serbia lays right in the center of a greater discussion, lasting from the 1980's until today. The question is whether independence lacks applicability in the post-decolonization era or it remains applicable to communities/minorities, living within sovereign states. For example, Slovenia emerged after the collapse of Former Yugoslavia, but this is not the case of Kosovo, as Kosovars constituted a minority population of the Socialist Republic of Serbia. The paradox of international law, possibly relative to Kosovo, is the following: if a community, even a minority, manages to obtain permanent control over its territories, is this de facto status to be internationally recognized? Can this status be considered as legal, if it resulted from (justified) use of violence from a third party? And even further, can anyone argue beyond doubt that the Serbian Government violated, continuously and harshly, the human rights of the Kosovar Albanians, so they were right to declare their independence, like Bangladesh? (Bredimas A., 1999, p. 113). Evidently, sovereignty cannot become an alibi for state arbitrage and violation of human rights. But who will judge that this is the case, who and how will intervene to stop it? These are reasonable questions still seeking for an answer (Papagiannakis M., 1999, p.132-133).

In this thesis, the author will examine the issue of Kosovar declaration of independence through the lens of three different, but related aspects of the subject. The first chapter goes through the pre-history of the 2008 declaration of independence from Serbia. The second chapter discusses the factors that determined the stance of the international community, in the matter of officially recognizing Kosovo as an independent state, while the third one tries to depict the country's participation in international organizations as an independent state. The

methodological tool of analysis applied in the paper is the content analysis of primary and secondary sources related to Kosovar international relations. Finally, special reference is made in questions, possibly raised by the research and the writing of this paper, along with potential subjects for further investigation.

CHAPTER 1

Kosovo before it's declaration of independence

1.1 Introduction

The conflictual environment in Kosovo dates back to Tito's death (Yugoslav communist revolutionary and Head of State, until his death in 1980), which activated a long period of social unrest in Former Yugoslavia. The first incident of the political instability that occurred in the country, took place in Prishtina, the capital city of Kosovo, when university students protested over minor issues. Later on, the precarious tranquility was always challenged by the tense relations between the indigenous Albanian and the Serbian communities (Bideleux R., 1998).

Then came the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, a document produced by a committee of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts from 1985 to 1986. It immediately attracted public's attention in Yugoslavia, because of it's controversial views on the modern Yugoslavia. The main suggestions of the memorandum was a decentralization process towards the disintegration of Yugoslavia, while it expressed the view that Serbs were discriminated by the constitutional structure of the state. It was officially denounced in 1986 by the government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the government of the Socialist Republic of Serbia as nationalistic. Slobodan Milošević, even though he publicly rejected the memo, he agreed with most of its findings, which helped him climb higher and quicker the ladder of the Yugoslavian political leadership. (Ivić, P., Isaković, A.et al., Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) Memorandum, 1986)

In March 1989, Slobodan Milošević, rose to power after Tito's death and launched an "anti-bureaucratic revolution" in Kosovo and Vojvodina, suspended the country's autonomy and imposed a state of emergency in Kosovo due to civil unrest.. Soon enough, the Kosovar Albanians demonstrated against it in large numbers. The constitutional amendments were

finally passed from the Kosovar Assembly, with the abstention of most of the Albanian delegates (Bideleux R., 1998).

On June 26th, 1990 the Serbian authorities closed the Kosovar Assembly due to special circumstances. On July 2nd, the majority of Kosovar Albanian delegates of the Kosovar Assembly, declared the independence of Kosovo within Yugoslavia. The Serbian Assembly counter-acted, with the dissolution of the Kosovar Assembly, together with the provincial executive council, assuming full control of the country (Bideleux R., 1998).

The Kosovar Albanian policy towards the actions taken by the Serbian Government can be described as passive resistance. However this position dissatisfied the Albanian community, so “Kosovo Liberation Army” emerged, urging the leader of the local ethnic Albanians to ask the United Nations to send a peacekeeping force for Kosovo. As time passed, more and more Kosovar Albanians realized that the only way to stop the repression from Belgrade was the armed resistance. So, it didn't take long before the first attacks, against the Serbian security forces, show up. The attacks continued during the following years and even worsened after the Albanian crisis, because many military weapons were illegally transferred to Kosovo. Soon the Kosovo war was to begin (Bideleux R., 1998).

1.2 March towards the 1999 war

In 1998 the hostilities between Kosovo Liberation Army and the Serbian authorities were almost omnipresent. For a short amount of time, the international public opinion supported the Serbs, because they were considered as unprotected from the unpredictable KLA attacks. This “seasonal” international sympathy was considered by the Serbian government as “clearance” to engage against KLA (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, pp. 11-12; Ker-Lindsay J., 2009b, p. 144).

Soon enough, the international political elite understood that this was turning into a civil war. In March 1998, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States met and demanded that formal negotiations began between the opposing sides, with UN mediation. US launched a peace process between Kosovo and Serbia. The leaders of the opposing groups attended a meeting, which was ended, when Serbian security forces re-attacked KLA. As a result, NATO member states started planning to resolve the crisis with martial means. Russia, as a traditional ally to Yugoslavia, called Slobodan Milošević to Moscow, in order to convince him to stop the hostilities (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009b, pp. 144-145).

After a short period of ceasefire, in August 1998, the Serbian forces responded to some KLA attacks, resulting to 230.000 civilians forced from their homes and urging the UN to propose the establishment of an observation mission for the supervision of the truce in Kosovo. Two weeks later, Kosovo Verification Mission was formed by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; apart from its primary role, the mission had to monitor human rights, facilitate the return of refugees and assist the implementation of a political settlement. Meanwhile, NATO made crystal clear its intention to intervene, in case the situation didn't ameliorate (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, pp. 12-13).

On 23 February 1999, the Contact Group presented a final proposal, based on Kosovo's democratic self-government, which was only accepted by the Kosovar Albanians. On March 18th in Paris, the Contact Group and the Kosovo Albanian delegation, signed the agreement,

while Milošević fiercely rejected it. The last desperate attempt for an agreement was made by the special envoy of United States of America President to Kosovo, who tried to convince the Serbian President to capitulate with the Kosovar Albanians and end the crisis (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, p. 14).

1.3 The international community officially engages in the Kosovo war

Kosovo crisis became an international incident for two reasons. First, Slobodan Milošević was conducting ethnic cleansing in the country, to a greater extent than the early years of 1990's. Second, the huge flows of Kosovar refugees to the neighboring countries, could destabilize the whole southern Balkans, the worst case scenario for the West, especially after the “precious” Dayton Accords¹, signed a few years back (Rozakis Chr., 1999, pp. 166-167). On March 24th, 1999 NATO initiated “Operation Allied Force”, the bombing campaign against strategic targets in Serbia; the attacks created a huge humanitarian crisis, while urging Slobodan Milošević to upgrade the enmities against Kosovo Albanian population. On May 9th in Germany, the leaders of G8 launched a seven point set of principles for the settlement of the Kosovo issue, and on June 2nd the Envoy of the Russian Federation and the President of Finland, acting as representatives of the European Union at that time, visited Milošević. On June 3rd, the principles were ratified by the Yugoslavian parliament. Almost a week later, all Yugoslavian forces were withdrawn from Kosovo (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, pp. 14-15; Ker-Lindsay J., 2009b, p. 147).

During the bombings and the period that followed, the European Union received harsh criticism over the fact that the institution failed to effectively deal with a crisis within it's neighborhood. The Union was pictured as an incompetent international player, which was easily manipulated by US, while NATO has already put the institution aside (Roubatis G., 1999, p. 171; Hatzikonstantonou K., 1999, pp.189-190).

1 Dayton Accords is a peace agreement in 1995, by the presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia, ending the Bosnian war and setting the peace framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The agreement is known as the Dayton Accords because the negotiations took place at a US Air Force Base, outside Dayton, Ohio. (Clinton B., 2013)

1.4 Kosovo under international administration

On June 10th 1999, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1244 (UN Security Council. Resolution 1244, 1999), formally putting Kosovo under international guardianship and authorizing the creation of the UNMIK; it had to form the conditions, ‘*under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and which will provide transitional administration*’ and cultivate the environment for the final settlement of the issue (Narten J., 2008, p. 377; Visoka, G. & Bolton G., 2011, p.190). As time passed, Serbia understood that Kosovo wouldn't be integrated in its sovereignty after the end of the transitional period, while Kosovar Albanians considered this time, as a preparation for the independence of Kosovo (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, pp. 15-16; Meller, S. E., 2012, p. 836).

At the same time, the issue of the prosperous co-existence of the Serbian and Albanian communities in Kosovo was soon proven to be an intractable one. The vast majority of Kosovar Serbs started abandoning the country towards other Serbian provinces and the few remaining ones created enclaves, like Mitrovicë. Above Ibar River, the Kosovar Serbs tried at first to stay within the Serbian sovereignty, and later to establish their own separate institutions (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, pp. 16-17; Narten J. 2008, p. 381).

1.5 The trajectory leading to the 2005-2007 negotiations

The new Serbian leadership, after the 2000 elections, was mostly preoccupied with irrelevant to Kosovo aspects. But, the Kosovar Albanian leadership didn't perceive this change as significant, irrespective of Milošević's withdrawal from Serbian politics. In May 2001, the UN presented the Constitutional Framework for the Provisional Self-government of Kosovo, with no reference either to the future status of the country or to the decision time. In October 2003 in Vienna, Serbia and Kosovo initiated the discussions over the future status of the country (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, pp. 17-20).

Serious civil riots in the country, in March 2004, harmed the esteem of UNMIK and KFOR in the country, as the institutions failed to ensure the preservation of the peaceful co-existence between the communities. The events led to the termination of the negotiations among Serbia and Kosovo, so the Contact Group realized that the 'standards before status policy'² had to be replaced with the 'priority based standards policy'³ (UNMIK & Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo, 2004, pp. 1-16). At the same time, Belgrade presented its proposals for the future status of Kosovo, granting to all local communities high level of self-government (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, pp. 20-22; Ker-Lindsay J., 2009b, pp. 149-150).

In May 23rd, 2005 the UN Secretary-General, appointed a special envoy to review Kosovo's overall progress towards the implementation of standards and determine the future action plan. On October 4th, Eide delivered his review to the UN Secretary-General, pointing out that there is still much to be done from Kosovo (Eide K., 2005). The report also clearly stated that there would never be a convenient time to officially address the issue, so the sooner the talks started the better (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, pp. 22-24; Ker-Lindsay J., 2009b, p. 150; Meller, S. E., 2012, p. 837).

2 The Standards before Status policy for Kosovo (2003) are a set of prerequisites proposed by UN for the establishment of a democratic future for Kosovo. Issues related to democratic institutions, rule of law, rights of communities, returns of displaced persons, economic matters, negotiations with Serbian authorities, property rights and the Kosovo Protection Corps are covered, while there is a special section for the protection of Kosovar non-Albanian communities.

3 The priority-based standards policy is a newer version of standards set for Kosovo (in relation to the Standards before Status policy for Kosovo), based on a prioritization of needs. Kosovar authorities were now able to proceed with the future status talks with Belgrade and the international community quicker than they would with the old framework.

On November 10th, 2005, the Contact Group convened in Washington to set the basic principles for the future talks. To begin with, the final settlement of the Kosovo issue had to be based on democracy, human rights and international law; then, the outcome would have to ensure regional stability and the entire country's integration into European-Atlantic institutions. Finally, its future status should be composed of a peaceful multi-ethnic democratic society. Kosovo could neither return to the prior to 1999 situation, nor could its territory alter; the neighboring countries would have to respect and safeguard the country's borders and the solution ought to be a collective decision. Martti Ahtisaari was appointed as a UN Special Envoy (Narten, J. 2008, p. 383). The next day, the Kosovar Assembly passed a resolution, supporting the initiation of the negotiations, while, on November 15th, 2005 the Serbian Government presented to the Parliament a ten point plan, where Kosovo constituted an integral part of the Serbian sovereignty (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, p. 27; Ker-Lindsay J., 2009b, p. 152).

1.6 Preparations before the official direct talks

Martti Ahtisaari asked both sides to actively engage in the negotiations for the determination of the future status of Kosovo; Serbia had to participate and urge the Kosovar Serbs to follow Belgrade's lead, while Kosovar Albanians were obliged to work harder and materialize the pre-set standards. Direct talks were to begin early in January 2006. At this juncture, the first disagreements within the Contact Group emerged. Russia supported Serbia's arguments for '*more than autonomy but less than independence*' and a solution resulting from the talks between the two interested parts, while the US backed the Kosovar Albanians (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 28-29).

Ahtisaari met with the Contact Group, on January 16th, 2006, in order to formally announce the launch of the first round of direct talks between Belgrade and Prishtina, on the 25th of the month. Furthermore he asked the representatives of the Contact Group to inform Serbia, that Kosovo returning to its previous status was not an option. But the process was postponed, until the election of a new President by the Kosovar Assembly, due to the death of the Kosovar President in January 21st (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, p.30).

On February 14th, the Security Council discussed the latest UN report on Kosovo. Here the different diplomatic approaches of the matter were revealed, as Russia insisted on a solution respectful to the international laws and deriving from the negotiations between Belgrade and Prishtina; likewise, China underscored the great importance of the Serbian integrity and sovereignty. On the contrary, the representatives of UK, France and US highlighted the fact that the country was inhabited by 90% of ethnic Albanian population, whose existence couldn't be overseen (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, p. 31).

1.7 Official direct talks begin

On February 20th, 2006, the official direct talks between Kosovo and Prishtina were initiated in Vienna. Later, Ahtisaari visited the Serbian government for further negotiations. The environment was worsened with the death of Milošević, on March 11th and the announcement of the Montenegrin referendum over independence on May 21st. In the case of a positive result, Kosovo's argument would be strengthened. On March 1st, the Kosovar Prime Minister resigned and Agim Çeku, the commander of the Kosovo Protection Corps, replaced him. He had also served as KLA's chief of staff in 1998–99 and was wanted in Serbia on suspicion of having committed war crimes in the mid-1990s; in spite of the above, the UN Special Representative Søren Jessen-Petersen allowed his nomination (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 33-34).

Several rounds of talks were held within the following months, without any significant achievements. In the Security Council convention, on June 20th, the progress of Kosovo negotiations was discussed, without the adoption of a common standpoint. Later, Ahtisaari announced the first top-level meeting between Kosovo and Serbia since the 1999 war, with the support of the EU ministers and the G8 leaders (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 35-41).

On July 24th, the Presidents and Prime Ministers of Serbia and Kosovo met in Vienna, only to express their intention not to make enough sacrifices for a significant progress of the negotiations. It was followed by negotiations on August 7th, where decentralization and minority rights were over viewed. The Kosovo Serbs requested to obtain full control over education, health care, security and freedom of movement, but Kosovar Albanians interpreted it as a means for ethnic separation. The next day, Kosovo Serbs abstained from the process, strongly complaining for their inferior position in it. The United Nations Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Future Status Process for Kosovo then decided to proceed with unilateral visits to the negotiation groups (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 41-42).

During the next round of negotiations on September 7-8th, 2006, there was some progress made, on the protection of religious sites. At the meeting of the Contact Group in New York, on September 20th, it was obvious that the status discussions were being conducted for seven

months, without a groundbreaking result, so the board authorized Ahtisaari to prepare the proposal for the status settlement (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 42-44).

On September 30th, 2006, the Serbian Parliament approved the new constitution, but the 28-29th October referendum would ratify it first; according to it, Kosovo was an integral part of Serbia. On October 21st, Ahtisaari met with the Contact Group to affirm his intention to follow the pre-set timetable and present his plan by the end of the year. On November 10th the Serbian Parliament officially adopted the new constitution and new parliamentary elections were appointed for January 21st, 2007. Consequently, the Contact Group decided that Kosovo negotiations wouldn't be continued, until after the formation of the new government. This was heavily criticized by Kosovar Albanians (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 45-50).

On January 26th, 2007, Ahtisaari presented his plan to the Contact Group and a week later to the negotiations' teams. He made no reference to the final status, proposing that the document would cultivate the environment for a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo. The negotiation talks were to be replaced by indirect talks; by the end of the process, the plan would be submitted to the Security Council. Again, US and Russia supported different views. The other five members, who agreed on Kosovo's future status, disagreed in the means of it's realization (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 51-54).

After the presentation of the plan to Belgrade and Prishtina, Ahtisaari scheduled another meeting of the opposing sides, having no remarkable results though, so the top-level negotiations of March 10th was the last resort for an agreement. Three days prior to the meeting, the two sides received a revised version of the proposals; both of them rejected it, while the meeting was a failure (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 55-61).

On March 15th 2007, the UN Secretary-General received the final proposal and Ahtisaari's opinion on Kosovo's future status; on the 26th, the President of the Security Council was presented with the final version of the status proposal, accompanied by Ahtisaari's final verdict, stating that '*independence is the only option for a politically stable and economically viable Kosovo.*' Shortly, US, UK, Germany and France countersigned Kosovo's supervised independence, while Russia and Serbia completely opposed to it. On April 3rd, the Security

Council debated on the proposal; the members failed to agree, so the Russian proposal for an investigation mission on-spot was authorized (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 63-70; Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009b, p. 141).

On May 10th, the Council was delivered the representatives' mission final report and on the following day a draft resolution on Kosovo was circulated. Once more, the clear differences within the members' opinions were evident; this deadlock lasted until August 1st, 2007, when the launch of a new round of negotiations was decided until December 10th, under the supervision of the Contact Group, via a Troika (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 70-71, 82).

1.8 Last chance for a settlement

Troika met on August 9th in London to set the margins of the process and by the next day they set forth the negotiations. Serbia and Kosovo clarified from the beginning, that there was no room left for any more sacrifices, a position they never quitted throughout the procedure. On December 3rd, Serbia and Kosovo met with Troika for the last time, before the submission of their final report to the UN Secretary-General, which was filed on December 7th (Ker-Lindsay, J. 2009a, pp. 82-96; Perritt H., 2010, pp. 191-207).

On December 19th, Troika's report was discussed during the Security Council's convention. Russia and China requested the continuation of the negotiations, while EU and US supported the “*supervised independence*” of Kosovo. Finally, after two months of bargaining with the international community, Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia, on February 17th, 2008. (Ker-Lindsay J., 2009a, p. 99; Tzifakis N., 2013, p. 43; Visoka, G. & Bolton G., 2011, p. 191).

1.9 Conclusion

Kosovo served under international guardianship after the civil war of 1999 until its declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008. In 2004, negotiations among Serbia and Kosovo were launched for the settlement of the issue until February 2006. The talks were mediated by the UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. A year later and after several rounds of talks with small progress, United Nations Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Future Status Process for Kosovo presented a draft status settlement proposal, only to be rejected by both sides. Until late summer 2007, the discussions were led to a deadlock. Meanwhile, neither the Security Council could reach an agreement over Kosovo. The negotiations were given another time extension, until December 2007, for the achievement of an agreement; eventually Serbia and Kosovo wouldn't settle, so on February 17th, 2008 Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia.

During the NATO strikes in 1999 and for a long time later on, it was widely discussed whether the situation would have come to the point of the active engagement of the institution against the Serbian forces, if Slobodan Milošević had been prudent enough to settle earlier. It was even claimed that the Serbian leader was proven short-sighted, as in case of early settlement of the Kosovo issue, Serbia would be double-benefited: Kosovo would have remained within Serbian sovereignty and the chaos and loss that the air bombings created would have been avoided. Some argue that the way in which Milošević ordered the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, supports the argument for pre-set decision of the Serbian leader to split the country to ethnic Albanian and ethnic Serbian one, with the last one to be fully integrated to Serbia (Veremis Th., 2000, p. 96). On the contrary, the Serbian authorities continued to be rigid on the future status of Kosovo, even after Milošević withdrew from politics. As a result, both sides were unable to find common ground on the issue of the future status of the country, because none of them was ready to make enough compromises, so as to reach an agreement. Finally, the Ahtisaari plan for Kosovo was criticized as bypassing the principle of previous consent of a sovereign country before part of its territory secedes from it, setting a new and in some cases dangerous way of solving minority issues (Perrakis S., 2008, p. 43).

CHAPTER 2

Official recognition of Kosovo's independence by the international community

2.1 Introduction

Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008 received a mixed reaction from the international community. Some countries recognized the country's independence from Serbia almost immediately, others recognized it between then and now and finally there are some countries which haven't recognized it yet, for various reasons. This chapter tries to analyze, not only the reasoning behind the recognition or refusal of Kosovo's independence, but also the reactions of international organizations and other non-state entities, not necessarily officially recognized, due to their relevance to the issue, as adjacent international examples. The author also includes in the analysis the official representation of Kosovo globally, through embassies and consulates and the official institutions and treaties in which the country participates. The case of Kosovo consists a small part of a greater discussion around international recognition today. According to the debate, some entities have gained -even partial- international recognition as independent states not only relying on traditional diplomatic norms, but also because of the specific timing or international chances at the given time (Newman E. and Visoka G., 2016, pp. 1-3).

2.2 Arguments for and against Kosovo's rightful secession from Serbia, as expressed by the international community

It comes as no surprise, that each state's position on the matter of the independence of Kosovo is based on their perception of whether Kosovar Albanians or Kosovar Serbs were the real victims of the 1999 war. Consequently, there are at least two groups of thought on the matter with different arguments.

2.2.1 Arguments for Kosovo's rightful secession from Serbia

On the one hand, most of the NATO state members argue that the final resolution of the Kosovo issue, through independence, consists a very important step towards the stabilization and the prosperity of the greater Balkan peninsula, given the permanent solution of the Bosnian crisis. They state that, given the ethnic composition of the local population, with approximately 90% of them to be Kosovar Albanians, independence was inevitable, as the previous status quo was unstable. It was even argued that Kosovo constituted a unique case, so the final settlement of the issue would have to be unique as well. Furthermore, some states even argue that secession is in accordance with international law or that the failed negotiations between the interested parts led them to the conclusion that independence was the only viable way. Some states recognized Kosovo's independence due to the shared Muslim faith of the countries' civilians. The US along with other Western countries, like UK and France, almost immediately recognized Kosovo's independence from Serbia, due to their political, economic and geo-strategical interests in the country. It is worth mentioning, that US wanted to further establish and promote their active role in the country, through Camp Bondsteel, one of the largest US military bases. Similarly, the EU member states which recognized Kosovo were trying to “europeanize” the Western Balkans through the solution of the Kosovo issue. An interesting diplomatic argument supporting the recognition of Kosovo's independence is that the West, and especially the US, want to present themselves as the liberators and allies of the Muslim Kosovar Albanians, in order to ameliorate their image in the whole Muslim World. (Allabaksh, n.d., Almqvist, J., 2009)

The Republic of Kosovo has been officially recognized by 115 countries/states/entities
(www.kosovothanksyou.com):

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| ✓ Afghanistan | ✓ Denmark | ✓ Italy | ✓ New Zealand |
| ✓ Albania | ✓ Djibouti | ✓ Japan | ✓ Niger |
| ✓ Andorra | ✓ Dominica | ✓ Jordan | ✓ Nigeria |
| ✓ Antigua and Barbuda | ✓ Dominican Republic | ✓ Kiribati | ✓ Norway |
| ✓ Australia | ✓ Egypt, Arab Rep. | ✓ Korea, Rep. | ✓ Oman |
| ✓ Austria | ✓ El Salvador | ✓ Kuwait | ✓ Pakistan |
| ✓ Bahrain | ✓ Estonia | ✓ Latvia | ✓ Palau |
| ✓ Bangladesh | ✓ F.Y.R. Macedonia | ✓ Lesotho | ✓ Panama |
| ✓ Belgium | ✓ Fiji | ✓ Liberia | ✓ Papua New Guinea |
| ✓ Belize | ✓ Finland | ✓ Libya | ✓ Peru |
| ✓ Benin | ✓ France | ✓ Liechtenstein | ✓ Poland |
| ✓ Brunei Darussalam | ✓ Gabon | ✓ Lithuania | ✓ Portugal |
| ✓ Bulgaria | ✓ Gambia | ✓ Luxembourg | ✓ Qatar |
| ✓ Burkina Faso | ✓ Germany | ✓ Madagascar | ✓ Samoa |
| ✓ Burundi | ✓ Ghana | ✓ Malawi | ✓ San Marino |
| ✓ Canada | ✓ Grenada | ✓ Malaysia | ✓ Sao Tome & Principe |
| ✓ Central African Republic | ✓ Guinea | ✓ Maldives | ✓ Saudi Arabia |
| ✓ Chad | ✓ Guinea-Bissau | ✓ Malta | ✓ Senegal |
| ✓ Colombia | ✓ Guyana | ✓ Marshall Islands | ✓ Sierra Leone |
| ✓ Comoros | ✓ Haiti | ✓ Mauritania | ✓ Singapore |
| ✓ Costa Rica | ✓ Honduras | ✓ Micronesia, Fed. Sts. | ✓ Slovenia |
| ✓ Cote d'Ivoire | ✓ Hungary | ✓ Monaco | ✓ Solomon Islands |
| ✓ Croatia | ✓ Iceland | ✓ Montenegro | ✓ Somalia |
| ✓ Czech Republic | ✓ Ireland | ✓ Nauru | ✓ St. Kitts and |
| | | ✓ Netherlands | |

- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Nevis | ✓ Switzerland | ✓ Tonga | Emirates |
| ✓ St. Lucia | ✓ Tanzania | ✓ Turkey | ✓ United Kingdom |
| ✓ Suriname | ✓ Thailand | ✓ Tuvalu | ✓ United States |
| ✓ Swaziland | ✓ Timor-Leste | ✓ Uganda | ✓ Vanuatu |
| ✓ Sweden | ✓ Togo | ✓ United Arab Emirates | ✓ Yemen, Rep. |

According to the Kosovar Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the website www.embassypages.com, since the declaration of independence in February 2008, Kosovo has established many embassies abroad:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ✓ Albania - Tirana | ✓ Japan - Tokyo |
| ✓ Australia - Canberra | ✓ Macedonia - Skopje |
| ✓ Austria - Vienna | ✓ Montenegro - Podgorica |
| ✓ Belgium - Brussels | ✓ Netherlands - The Hague |
| ✓ Bulgaria - Sofia | ✓ Panama - Panama City |
| ✓ Canada - Ottawa | ✓ Saudi Arabia - Riyadh |
| ✓ Croatia - Zagreb | ✓ Slovenia - Ljubljana |
| ✓ Czech Republic - Prague | ✓ Sweden - Stockholm |
| ✓ France - Paris | ✓ Switzerland - Bern |
| ✓ Germany - Berlin | ✓ Turkey - Ankara |
| ✓ Hungary - Budapest | ✓ United Kingdom - London |
| ✓ Italy - Rome | ✓ United States - Washington, D.C. |

... several consulate missions in:

- ✓ Austria - Salzburg
- ✓ Germany - Frankfurt am Main
- ✓ Germany - Stuttgart
- ✓ Italy - Milan
- ✓ Switzerland - Geneva
- ✓ Switzerland - Zurich

- ✓ Turkey - Istanbul
- ✓ United States - New York

... a diplomatic mission in:

- ✓ Turkey - Ankara

✓ Egypt - Cairo

...and a representative office in:

At the same time, many countries have established their embassies in Kosovo:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ✓ Albania - Prishtina | ✓ Macedonia - Prishtina |
| ✓ Austria - Prishtina | ✓ Montenegro - Prishtina |
| ✓ Bulgaria - Prishtina | ✓ Netherlands - Prishtina |
| ✓ Croatia - Prishtina | ✓ Norway - Prishtina |
| ✓ Czech Republic - Prishtina | ✓ Slovenia - Prishtina |
| ✓ Finland - Prishtina | ✓ Sweden - Prishtina |
| ✓ France - Prishtina | ✓ Switzerland - Prishtina |
| ✓ Germany - Prishtina | ✓ Turkey - Prishtina |
| ✓ Hungary - Prishtina | ✓ United Kingdom - Prishtina |
| ✓ Italy - Prishtina | ✓ United States – Prishtina |
| ✓ Luxembourg - Prishtina | |

There is also the Consulate General of Turkey in Prizren and some countries' representative offices:

- ✓ Belgium - Prishtina
- ✓ China - Prishtina
- ✓ Greece - Prishtina
- ✓ Japan - Prishtina
- ✓ Romania - Prishtina
- ✓ Russia - Prishtina
- ✓ Slovakia - Prishtina

2.2.2 Arguments against Kosovo's secession from Serbia

On the other hand, there are the governments which back Serbia on the issue. They claim that any secession of a country from a country must be in accordance with international laws and norms, which isn't applied in the case of Kosovo. They argue that Kosovo's independence violated the UN Charter and international laws in general. As a result, Kosovo showed some kind of disrespect towards the international community and its rules/norms, which regulate human life from the beginning of it within sovereign states. Some states assert that Kosovo and the countries that recognize its declaration of independence don't respect the decisions of the Security Council, while a dangerous precedent may be set, leading to the destabilization of the country and beyond. Others insist that the UN Resolution 1244 (1999) makes a very clear provision that both sides must agree on the decision over the future status of Kosovo. It is also claimed that Kosovo may not be officially recognized by some countries, as it is a country liberated by the Americans (Flanagin J., 2015; Almqvist J., 2009).

The countries which haven't officially recognized Kosovo as an independent country are categorized according to the following basis:

- ✓ refusal of recognition due to internal liberation movements,
- ✓ refusal of recognition due to alliance with a country facing internal liberation movements,
- ✓ refusal of recognition without specific arguments,
- ✓ refusal of recognition for other reasons.

The countries that refuse to recognize Kosovo's independence from Serbia due to internal liberation movements are:

- ✓ Argentina [Falkland Islands]
- ✓ Armenia [Nagorno – Karabakh]
- ✓ Azerbaijan [Nagorno – Karabakh]
- ✓ Bolivia [four eastern states]
- ✓ China [Tibet]
- ✓ Cyprus [TRNC]
- ✓ India [Kashmir & Punjab]
- ✓ Israel [Palestine]
- ✓ Mali [Azawad]
- ✓ Mauritius [Chagos Islands]
- ✓ Moldova [Transnistria]
- ✓ Nigeria [civil war of 1967-1970]
- ✓ Philippines [Mindanao]
- ✓ Spain [Catalonia & Basque]
- ✓ Sri-Lanka [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]
- ✓ Sudan [Sudan people's liberation army & Blue Nile States]
- ✓ Syria [civil war 2011 – today]
- ✓ Tajikistan [Abkhazia & South Ossetia]
- ✓ Turkmenistan [Abkhazia & South Ossetia]
- ✓ Ukraine [Crimea, Transnistria, Snake Island]
- ✓ Uzbekistan [problematic border delimitation with Kyrgyzstan over enclaves]
- ✓ Venezuela [Julia State]
- ✓ Zambia [Lozi tribe]

The countries that refuse to recognize Kosovo's independence from Serbia due to alliance with a country facing internal liberation movements are:

- ✓ Angola
- ✓ Barbados
- ✓ Belarus
- ✓ Bhutan
- ✓ Botswana
- ✓ Cuba
- ✓ Democratic Republic of Congo
- ✓ Ecuador
- ✓ Equatorial Guinea
- ✓ Eritrea
- ✓ Ethiopia
- ✓ Georgia
- ✓ Greece
- ✓ Guatemala
- ✓ Indonesia
- ✓ Iran
- ✓ Iraq
- ✓ Jamaica
- ✓ Kenya
- ✓ Lebanon
- ✓ Madagascar
- ✓ Mexico
- ✓ Mongolia
- ✓ Morocco
- ✓ Mozambique
- ✓ Myanmar
- ✓ Namibia
- ✓ Nicaragua
- ✓ Paraguay
- ✓ Romania
- ✓ Russia
- ✓ Rwanda
- ✓ Seychelles
- ✓ Slovakia
- ✓ South Africa
- ✓ South Sudan
- ✓ St. Vincent & the Grenadines
- ✓ Trinidad & Tobago
- ✓ Tunisia
- ✓ Uganda
- ✓ Zimbabwe

Most of the countries listed above have long-established bilateral relations with Serbia, some of which date back to the Non-Alignment era in 1950's up to 1980's.

Finally, Bahamas is the only country which hasn't officially recognized Kosovo's independence yet, even though it claims that there is no objection to recognition.

2.3 Other international non-state actors' point of view (official institutions & organizations excluded)

As far as some autonomous regions and secessionist movements are concerned, there was no uniformity towards the declaration of independence of Kosovo. To begin with, Balochistan, the Basque Government, the Central Tibetan Administration (government in exile), the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (government in exile), East Turkestan (government in exile) and Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People (before the country's secession from Ukraine to Russia) praised both the act of self-determination of the Kosovars and the decision of the ICJ. Catalonia, through official authorities, criticized the Spanish Government for not recognizing Kosovo as independent, stating that this act derives from an internal rather than an international issue. Finally, the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front demanded equal treatment and application of the same solution by the EU in Kashmir.

The same lack of consensus over Kosovo also applies to other non officially recognized states or entities. Firstly, Abkhazia, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic Western Sahara and South Ossetia blamed the international community for following a policy of double standards to more or less the same transnational issues, according to the states' interests in the country. (macedoniaonline.eu, 2008). The position of the Holy See, Palestine, Somaliland and Transnistria on Kosovo is unclear, while the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh stated that they would recognize the country as independent if the act is reciprocal. Finally, the Turkish Nation of Northern Cyprus wasn't planning to recognize Kosovo's independence. (Bond P., 2008; www.hri.org, 2008; www.kryeministri-ks.net, 2010; macedoniaonline.eu, 2008; mfa-ks.net, 2012; news.bbc.com, 2008; T.J., 2011; Hsu W., 2008)

2.4 International organizations' point of view

The international governmental organizations also adopted diverse positions on the matter of Kosovo's recognition independence. Most of them, according to their charter, cannot provide recognition or refusal of it as an institution, but they can only make a joint statement. Therefore, the Arab League made no official statement after Kosovo's declaration of independence, while the EU from 2008 has adopted several resolutions, proposing to the EU member states which don't recognize the country's independence from Serbia, to proceed accordingly. There were though many other governmental organizations which issued official joint statements on the issue, but the matter of the actual recognition of Kosovo's independence was to be left to the decision of member states individually. These organizations were the Caribbean Community, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization. At the same time, the International Monetary Fund and the Norwegian Nobel Committee officially recognize the country's independence from Serbia, whereas Interpol, the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security & Co-operation in Europe have neither made an official statement nor has Kosovo applied for membership. Finally, the United Nations and NATO maintain their neutral position on the matter, as far as possible, given their special active role in the country over the past twenty (20) years (Lilyanova V., 2017, p. 1; www.b92.net, 2011; The Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), 2016, p. 8; unpo.org, 2008; www.imf.org, 2009; EWB Archives, 2017).

2.5 Conclusion

The case of recognition of Kosovo's independence is very interesting for many reasons. To begin with, at the present time, Kosovo cannot enter the UN, as it lacks official recognition by several UN member states. I would like to draw the attention of the reader here, because it's not that the UN as an institution doesn't recognize Kosovo as an independent country, but it's members. The UN is incapable of recognizing or refuting entities (www.un.org, 2017). The same applies to the majority of international institutions, at least the governmental ones. Another interesting part of the issue is that, by contrast to the author's preliminary expectations, the non-state entities and secessionist movements that are similar to the Kosovo case, don't align their positions in favor of Kosovo. Someone could expect that this would be the case, as they could very easily argue that Kosovo has set a serious legal precedent and, given their cases' similarities, they would declare rightful independence from their mother-country. It would be reasonable if all secession movements joined forces in order to strengthen their arguments and possibly have better results for their claims. Anyhow, Russia's and China's position on the matter of recognition of Kosovar independence will determine the country's future in international organizations and even wider recognition.

CHAPTER 3

Kosovo's participation in international organizations

3.1 Introduction

As the country isn't a member of the United Nations yet, Kosovo has limited participation in both governmental and non-governmental international organizations. During the first years after the declaration of independence from Serbia, Kosovo seemed to find it hard to integrate into international organizations. The situation was drastically ameliorated in 2013, when Prishtina and Belgrade signed the Brussels Agreement, which aims to facilitate and strengthen the dialogue and cooperation of the two entities. Kosovo has since managed to join several international organizations and continues the efforts to become a member of other organizations.

3.2 International relations of Kosovo from 1999 until today

Until Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008, only UNMIK was authorized to conduct foreign policy, establish diplomatic relations and sign treaties on behalf of Kosovar authorities, due to lack of international recognition. In the post-independence era, all the diplomatic and foreign affairs fall within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diplomatic Service of Kosovo, established in March 2008, while UNMIK is now responsible for liaising with international organizations that refuse to recognize Kosovo's independence.

Kosovo and Serbia have officially agreed in many important (bilateral) issues. The most significant one is the permission of Kosovo to participate as an autonomous entity in regional organizations and meetings, provided that the word 'Kosovo' is followed by an asterisk and a footnote. In return Belgrade wouldn't oppose to Kosovo's membership in international organizations, which is though still used by the Serbian authorities, with the most important

one being the case when Kosovo applied in 2015 for membership at UNESCO (Krasniqi, G., 2016).

Nowadays, the Kosovo issue is dislocated from the top of the international political agenda, as new and rather crucial issues have emerged, such as the Syrian civil war with its massive refugee flows towards Europe and the decision of the UK to exit from EU. As a result, no much progress is made neither in international recognition nor in membership in international organizations. The only exception is the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Kosovo and the European Union and the Apostille Convention in 2015 (Krasniqi, G., 2016).

3.3 The priorities of the Kosovar international diplomacy for boosting the chances for candidacy in international organizations and institutions

Kosovo applies a multi-level process-strategy towards international relations. To begin with, in order for the country to achieve greater recognition and secure support for membership in international organizations, the Kosovar authorities use normative arguments and promote co-ownership for the country's state sovereignty and wider recognition with its strategic partners. At the same time, Prishtina works hard, so as to make all the necessary reforms and become an international country, while the normalization of relations with Belgrade is the top priority. Furthermore, it is very important for the Kosovar government to re-frame the country, from being a very expensive post-conflict place in need for peace-keeping international operations to a modern international state with great chances for foreign investment. Special attention is also paid to public diplomacy. Kosovo, according to the official authorities, aims to become model-setting example of a peaceful, secular and modern country, or as Enver Hoxhaj, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo in 2014, said: "Being a young and small state does not mean you cannot think big and be creative." (www.mfa-ks.net, 2014)

The Kosovar government has set a five-way recognition strategy for the promotion of the cause internationally. First, Kosovar diplomats have understood that their goal can be realized

more easily, if they adjust their approach to the foreign policy that the target-country follows. Then, it is also very important to achieve recognition from states that haven't decided to recognize Kosovo as an independent state, yet they have no reason to object it. Thirdly, Kosovar authorities try to persuade countries with internal secessionist movements for recognition, using the argument that Kosovo is a unique international case, thus cannot create a serious precedent threatening their sovereignty. Another way to increase the number of states recognizing Kosovo as independent is through international organizations and institutions, with which Kosovo has established at least unofficial diplomatic relations. At this point, it is also worth mentioning, that Kosovo has established some alliances with key international players, who help the country promote the quest for recognition worldwide. United Kingdom promotes the issue to Commonwealth countries, France to the Francophone ones and Turkey to the Islamic World. Finally, Prishtina tries to cooperate with distinguished former statesmen and through public and digital diplomacy promotes a positive image for the country (Newman Ed. & Visoka G., 2016, p. 10).

The Kosovar authorities have also grouped the non-recognizing countries according to their location and political, economic and cultural background, in order to adjust their arguments for recognition, according to the international policy values of each group. As a result, in Asia Kosovar diplomats present their country as a stable and sovereign state, in Africa and Latin America draw parallels with the de-colonization process, in the Middle East they emphasize on religious connections and finally in the Pacific they present the argument of mutual support and solidarity among small but sovereign states (Newman Ed. & Visoka G., 2016, p. 13-14).

Taking under consideration the fact that Kosovo originated from secession from Serbia, it is quite obvious, both to the country and to its international allies that its recognition by the mother-country (Serbia) would be a great asset. Belgrade on the other hand, as one could easily expect, regardless of the fact that it has officially agreed to cease blocking Kosovo's membership in international organizations after the 2013 Agreement, doesn't officially recognize the country's independence. To begin with, Serbia has entered into negotiations with the Kosovar political elite, which signifies that the Kosovar representatives are perceived as legitimate and equal counter-partners. Also, the Serbian structures are now

officially integrated to the corresponding Kosovar ones and both sides have signed an agreement on inter-border management. Another very important indicator of the normalization of relations between the two sides is the official exchange of liaison officers in Prishtina and Belgrade (Newman Ed. & Visoka G., 2016, p. 12).

The country has also ameliorated its diplomatic relations with Russia. In the past, Russian Ambassadors would try to obstruct every Kosovar request for recognition. This situation was changed after the secession of Crimea from Ukraine and annexation to Russia, the war between Kremlin and Tbilisi and the Russian official recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Prishtina has still no diplomatic relations with the two rising global superpowers: China and India. These countries still explicitly refuse to recognize Kosovo's independence, while they only communicate with the country through their local representative offices (Newman Ed. & Visoka G., 2016, p. 13).

As mentioned earlier, Kosovo acknowledges the importance of diplomatic relations with countries that haven't recognized it yet as independent, so the authorities have proceeded accordingly, even non-formally. Such countries are Greece, Slovakia and Romania. Through cooperation, Kosovo wants to convince the non-recognizers for the rightfulness of their case and its uniqueness internationally. Prishtina is also interested in establishing bilateral relations with non-recognizers with internal secessionist movements, such as Spain and Cyprus. These countries are a great challenge for Kosovo, as they try to avoid any contact with the country and insist on preventing Kosovo from receiving equal treatment with sovereign states within international institutions. This is the reason why in the EU "Stabilization and Association Agreement with Kosovo" special provision is made for the EU relation with Prishtina not to serve as recognition of independence from Serbia. (Newman Ed. & Visoka G., 2016, p. 13).

3.4 Kosovo's strategy for joining international organizations

It is obvious though that, because Kosovo isn't a member of the UN and lacks international consensus, the country cannot participate, in some major international institutions, like NATO and European Union. As a result, Kosovar authorities have adopted a strange attitude towards diplomatic relations, on the matter of recognition and membership in international organizations. The government tries to become a member of as many international institutions with secondary power as possible, so as later to be able to construct the argument that Kosovo is recognized by a considerable amount of countries and institutions, so it is worth the membership for institutions like NATO. Kosovar diplomats are also sent to major international capitals, where many international organizations have established permanent offices, in order to lobby both for the recognition of Kosovo's independence and possible candidacy for membership. At the same time, they “use” these organizations in order to contact with non-recognizer member-states for the promotion of their interests. Simultaneously, Prishtina tries to establish good diplomatic relations with Belgrade and with other neighboring countries, both directly and indirectly. Moreover, the Kosovar government holds meetings with key international players, like US and EU officials, in order to secure important alliances, that would back Kosovo's future candidacy in global institutions. Concurrently, the local authorities have proven themselves good masters of diplomatic use of soft power, as Kosovars try to promote a favorable image for themselves, through alternative channels, such as sports and culture. They have understood that, if they manage to convince regular citizens for the rightfulness of their case, then the official authorities might recognize Kosovo's independence easier ([www.mfa-ks.net.](http://www.mfa-ks.net), 2014).

3.5 The trammel of the Kosovar effort in international relations

The despair of Kosovo's international relations is the gradual politicization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diplomatic Service of Kosovo and all the foreign services from the ruling parties, in order to maintain the party networks and dominance over the state. Moreover, the improvement of the routine function of these services was proven a difficult task for the Kosovar authorities, not to mention that these institutions are manned with non-specialized personnel. It is argued that Kosovar diplomatic services are a copy of the domestic institutions. Indeed, the authorities in Kosovo were established in parallel to the foreign peace-keeping institutions of the international organizations, but, unlike the foreigners, the Kosovar employees weren't trained professionals. As a result the level of the function of the Kosovar institutions cannot be compared to the one of the foreign missions in the country. It is easily understood that, Kosovar diplomacy and efforts for joining international institutions cannot be as effective as Kosovars would like it to be (Krasniqi G., 2016, www.mfa-ks.net, 2015).

3.6 International organizations and institutions in Kosovo

According to the Kosovar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the following institutions have established permanent offices in Kosovo:

- ✓ Council of Europe
- ✓ Department For International Development UK Government
- ✓ Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Die Internationale Zusammenarbeit (G.I.Z.)
- ✓ EULEX
- ✓ European Union Office in Kosovo
- ✓ Headquarters Kosovo Force (K.FOR.)
- ✓ International Committee Of The Red Cross (I.C.R.C.)
- ✓ International Labor Organization (I.L.O.)
- ✓ International Monetary Fund
- ✓ International Organization For Migration (I.O.M)

- ✓ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- ✓ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (S.I.D.A.)
- ✓ Turkish International Cooperation And Development Agency (T.I.K.A.)
- ✓ United Nations Children's Fund (U.N.I.C.E.F.)
- ✓ United Nations Development Program (U.N.D.P.)
- ✓ United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees (U.N.H.C.R.)
- ✓ United Nations Office For Project Services (U.N.O.P.S)
- ✓ United Nations Population Fund (U.N.F.P.A.)
- ✓ USAID Kosovo
- ✓ World Bank
- ✓ World Health Organization (W.H.O)

According to the official records of the following institutions, Kosovo has managed to participate in several non-governmental international organizations, such as:

- ✓ Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials
- ✓ European Federation of Journalists
- ✓ European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees
- ✓ Fédération Internationale de Basketball Association
- ✓ Fédération Internationale de Football Association
- ✓ Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique
- ✓ International Amateur Radio Union
- ✓ International Association of Athletics Federation
- ✓ International Bar Association
- ✓ International Olympic Committee
- ✓ International Road & Transport Union
- ✓ International Tennis Organization
- ✓ Union of European Football Associations

3.7 Future possible participation of Kosovo in international organizations

The Kosovar authorities prepare now a new application for membership in United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (U.N.E.S.C.O), after the previously failed one, back in 2015 (Morina D., 2017; Agence France-Presse, 2015). Kosovo also wants to be a member-state of NATO before 2022 (www.mfa-ks.net, 2014).

As far as the EU candidacy of Kosovo is concerned, the recent comment of the EU foreign policy chief can be considered as promising news for the country. According to Federica Mogherini, Britain should leave the EU by spring of 2019 and as Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and F.Y.R. Macedonia are now candidates for EU membership, it is very likely for these countries to obtain full membership. Besides, *“the relationship between the EU and the Balkans has helped many countries in the region overcome the consequences of the war that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia”* (www.b92.net, 2017). Given the above, Kosovo must try harder and sooner to obtain international recognition, at least from the EU non-recognizers, in order to have greater chances for candidacy to join the European Union. One cannot forget or underestimate though, that recognition by non-recognizers due to internal secessionist movements, may never recognize Kosovo as an independent state, because this act would be then used by the local liberation groups for independence.

3.8 Conclusion

Kosovo is very active in trying to expand its candidacy/membership in international organizations. There is though the major obstacle of lack of official recognition and membership in the United Nations. As explained above, the Kosovar authorities have very clearly understood the consequent problems and have focused the Kosovar foreign policy towards reversing the situation. At the same time, there has been a major change in international relations, as Russia is now less hostile diplomatically towards the country, which is very positive for Prishtina, as Kosovo may acquire wider international recognition, particularly from small countries. For the time being, and particularly after the Agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, the country has become a member in a series of regional organizations and institutions. The entity has established a very strong presence in international sports associations, in order to promote itself and positively influence regular people in favor of Kosovo's right to self-determination. Besides, Prishtina aims to be fully integrated in the international community within the next decade.

CONCLUSION

This essay assessed Kosovo's trajectory towards independence from 1999 up-to-date. For this purpose, the author analyzed the actions of both the Serbian and the Kosovar authorities in relation to the country's independence. At the same time, the stance of the international community on the matter is meticulously analyzed, especially after the Kosovar (unilateral) declaration of independence from Serbia in February 2008. The third chapter of the essay studies closely the efforts of Kosovo to participate in international organizations as an independent state, in relation to the Serbian counter-actions and the reactions of the international community.

The first chapter covers the events from Tito's death up to the Kosovar (unilateral) declaration of independence from Serbia, through an extensive analysis of the actions taken by both the Kosovar and the Serbian authorities, as well as the stance of the international community on the matter. The events from 1981 until 2008 are very important, because they determined the international stance over the Kosovo issue. The milestone of this period of time is the NATO bombing campaign against Serbia, which changed the course of both the Serbian and the Kosovar actions. The official talks that followed the air-strikes over the future status of Kosovo resulted to it's (unilateral) declaration of independence in February 2008. This Kosovar decision to proceed accordingly is easily explained by the complete failure of the bilateral talks over the country's future status with the mediation of the United Nations. The talks were proven to be a fiasco, as both sides were unwilling to compromise, in order to reach an agreement. One could say that both Serbians and Kosovars delivered an endless monologue over their own interests and goals, while they had no interest in conducting a fruitful dialogue with the other part. Both of them didn't really listen to what the other part was proposing, as they had set their minds on their own rightfulness from the beginning of the process. Moreover, the international organizations engaged in Kosovo must find a common ground and implement a common foreign policy in the country, in order to secure better and long-lasting results in the fields of regional peace and stability.

The second chapter analyzes the positions taken by the country-members of the United Nations as well as other non-state entities with similarities with Kosovo. To begin with, there were some countries which recognized Kosovo's independence. They argued in favor of Kosovo's rightfulness to independence, supported that there was no option for the country to

return to its previous status or that this step promotes the stabilization and prosperity of the greater Balkan peninsula. What is interesting though, is that countries like the United Kingdom took an active part in Kosovo's campaign to independence, while Scottish people have held and continue to hold several referendums in order to succeed from UK. On the other hand, there were also many other countries which refuse to recognize Kosovo as independent. They state that the country's independence consists a violation of the international law or even some kind of disrespect towards the international community and its rules/norms, which regulate human life from the beginning of it within sovereign states. At this point, one can argue that the refuters arguments are more or less one argument verbalized in many different ways, because apart from the typical legality of the Kosovar independence, there are no other, of a different kind, serious objections globally. As far as other international non-state entities is concerned, it is interesting that they didn't adopt a common position in favor of Kosovo, as one could expect. It would be unsurprising if they backed Kosovo's rightfulness to independence, as this would create a legal precedent, which they could easily use to justify their own independence movement. On the contrary, some entities did recognize the country's independence and some others didn't. The same lack of consensus applies to governmental and non-governmental international organizations.

The third chapter discusses the efforts of the official Kosovar authorities to actively participate in the international community and to secure greater international recognition. Prishtina aims to become a member-state of the United Nations and NATO, within the next decade. In order to achieve that Kosovo has obtain greater international recognition. The Kosovar authorities must find more persuasive arguments in order to convince the international community for the country's right to secession from Serbia. The cases of Slovenia and Croatia came after the secessions of FYROM and Bosnia-Herzegovina from the Yugoslav Federation. These countries were independent federal states from the beginning, unlike Kosovo, which has always been part of Serbia. Furthermore, the Kosovo claim to independence in accordance with the international law is tenuous, because according to it, the right to external self-determination is granted to countries which were ruled by colonial powers, foreign occupation or racist authorities, which isn't the case of Kosovo. According to the ICJ Kosovo's (unilateral) declaration of independence from Serbia wasn't against the law, but, at the same time, the law makes no such provision! So, there is a zero-sum situation, in which Kosovo and the countries that recognize its independence stick to the ruling of ICJ,

whereas Serbia and the countries which don't recognize the country's secession argue that this act is against international laws.

Only time will tell whether Kosovo will become a universally recognized sovereign state or remain in limbo of international relations, without persuasive arguments to promote the rightfulness of their case. In the meantime, a very interesting subject for further academic examination would be the way in which Kosovo could persuade the international community for the uniqueness of its case (so that it wouldn't set a precedent) with new arguments, as the ones used until now are not persuasive enough, at least for the non-recognizing countries with internal secessionist movements.

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