

## Albanian Nationalism and the State of Kosovo

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### Abstract

This article deals with the conceptual, ideological and historical relationships that have existed between Albanian nationalism and the state of Kosovo, created in 2008. These relationships are subject to different theoretical and ideological views. A group of views regard the state of Kosovo as a historical and political finalization of the nation-building project initiated by Albanian nationalism in the second half of the 19th century. While another set of views sees this state as a project motivated by contemporary views of multiethnicity and multiculturalism. The contradiction between these two views today constitutes a contradiction within the constitutional and symbolic format of the state of Kosovo. The first part of the article presents the main theories of nationalism. In the second part, these theories are contextualized in the breakdown of the main features of Albanian nationalism, while the third part analyzes the relations between this nationalism and the state of Kosovo, especially from the standpoint of its basic laws

**Keywords:** Conceptual relationships, Albanian nationalism, the state of Kosovo, the nation-building project, multiethnicity, the contradiction of the constitutional and symbolic format of the state of Kosovo.

### Introduction

#### Theories on nation and nationalism

One of the most highly debated issues in the social sciences, especially during the twentieth century, is the issue of nationalism and nations. This can be explained by the fact that nationalism as a political ideology occupies a very important place in the political history of the last two centuries, in addition to other ideologies such as socialism, liberalism, conservatism, and so on.

Nationalism has always been linked to the concept of the nation, because in its essence nationalism is a narrative about "the life of the nation". The nation as a political principle, discursive practice and social community emerged after the great revolutions of modernity that completely transformed the societies of Western Europe. We are speaking here of the Industrial Revolution in England and the political one in France, both in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

Subsequently, the nineteenth century was also known as the spring of nations, as this period was characterized by the spread of the nation's idea throughout Europe.

As Anthony D. Smith notes, the concept of nationalism, whether in political discourse or scientific research has been used with five different meanings.

Firstly, the term nationalism referred to the entirety of the process of formation and protection of nations.

Secondly, by nationalism was understood the awareness of belonging to a nation.

Thirdly, nationalism was taken as an entirety of the language and symbolism of the nation.

Fourthly, nationalism includes the ideology of the nation,

And fifthly, by nationalism was understood the social and political movement whose purpose was to fulfill the goals of the nation and the national will (Ozkirimli, 2010, p. 154).

From the fusion of these different meanings of the term nationalism derives what Smith calls "the fundamental doctrine of nationalism," which consists of four propositions.

The first proposition of nationalistic doctrine is that the world is divided into nations, where each of them has a character, history, and special destiny.

The second proposition is that the nation is the source of all political and social power and loyalty to the nation takes priority over all other alliances.

The third nationalist proposition is that human beings should be identified by a single nation if they want to be free and fulfill themselves, and finally the fourth proposition states that the nations themselves must be free and safe if they want peace to prevail in the world (Ozkirimli, 2010, p. 154).

Regarding the origins of nations, debates and controversies in social sciences have produced many approaches and views, but what can be noticed from these debates is the dominance of the three most influential theories. The first of them is the primordialist theory, the second is the modernist theory, and the third the ethno-symbolic theory<sup>1</sup>.

Primordialism is the view that the nation as a social community has existed since the beginnings of human history and will continue to exist in the future as well. A theoretical consequence of this view is what is known as perennialism, having the idea that the nation is a sustainable and permanent structure of human society (Smith, 2009, pp. 1-21).

The primordialist view is commonly encountered in the romantic literature and in the imagination of the nationalist ideologues themselves, who consider their nation to be rooted in the beginnings of human history. Starting from this, a large part of the conflicts between nationalisms is consumed precisely in the competition for the "authentication" of the ancient nations.

The second view is the modernist view, which has developed as a direct criticism of primordialism.

Modernists consider that the nation is not an omnipresent phenomenon in the linear course of human history, but a social phenomenon that is created in the context of modernity. The radical economic, political and cultural transformations of modernity are the ones that have created the conditions for the creation of the nation, either as a concept and political principle, or as a way of imagining the human community.

The most prominent theoreticians of this view are Benedict Anderson, who develops the theory of the nation as an imaginary community deriving from the fall of the universalist principle of Christianity (Anderson, 2006), Eric Hobsbawm, who presumed that the economic transformations of modernity brought about the emergence of nation that functions on the invention of tradition (Hobsbawm, 2012) and Ernst Gellner, who develops the view of nationalism as a modern ideology which aspires to bring the cultural unit into the line with the political unit (Gellner, 2009). This means that the nation is a culture transformed into a state.

The third view is the ethno-symbolic view developed by one of the most productive authors in the field of studies on nationalism, the British sociologist Anthony D. Smith.

Ethnosymbolism is based on the criticism of two previous views, in particular the criticism of the modernist view (Smith, 2009, pp. 1-21).

Ethnosymbolists criticize modernists for emphasizing the completely modern genesis of the nation, leaving behind the fact that in the origins of the nations we find cultural and political pre-modern content linked to the social units known as ethnic groups. According to Smith, the role of ethnicities in forming nations has been fundamental. The "founders of nations" have used the framework of ethnic symbolism to give life to modern nationalist projections, such as ethnic myths of origin, myths of founding heroes and ancestors, myths of blood origin and those of the territory. "If nations are modern, at least as phenomena of legitimized measures from the nationalist ideology, they force upon their current form and character to the prior ethnic ties that originated from the earliest ethnicities in the respective areas. Of course, many early ethnicities have become extinct, merged with other ethnicities or split into different parts; examples include Phoenicians, Assyrians in antiquity, and Burgundians in the medieval era. However, some ethnic ties have survived from the pre-modern periods, at

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<sup>1</sup>. Another division of theories on nation and nationalism, also present in social sciences, is the one that differentiates between the instrumentalist and primordialist theory. While instrumentalism views nationalism as a product of mass manipulation by elites and the nation as an invention or fabrication, primordialism sees nationalism as a spontaneous process of articulating the natural sense of nationality. See: *Ethnonationalism in the contemporary world: Walker Connor and the study of nationalism* (Conversi, 2004).

least among segments of certain populations and have often served as a basis for the formation of later nations and nationalist movements" (Smith, 2006, p. 69).

In the debate on the nature of the nation, various perspectives have emerged, beginning with the essentialist views, which insist on the idea that there is an essence of the same nation in all historical and social circumstances, to the views that consider that the nations do not have a common essence which can be captured through a definition.

According to the second view, we can not provide a precise definition for the nation, but a family of definitions as the only way to understand the great plurality in the emergence of nationalist phenomena.

One of the earliest theories is the one that makes the distinction between political nations and ethnic (cultural) nations.

In the concept of the political nation, there is no distinction between the state and the nation, they constitute an identical community, while as to the ethnic (cultural) nation, the nation had had an existence before the state and it represents an ethnic group which transforms its cultural hegemony into a political hegemony, namely into a state. The United States of America could be taken as an example of political nation, while Germany as cultural nation.

This distinction appears to be rooted in the views of Hans Kohn, one of the founders of studies on nationalism, who considers that in the West, nationalism started as a political movement over an existing state reality, without any relation to the past, while in the central and eastern Europe as a cultural movement, as the hope and dream of educated people and poets (Altermat, 2002, p. 30).

Post-essentialism in social sciences has had a role in shifting the focus of studies of nationalism and the nation from finding the enduring essence of these phenomena onto the analysis of discursive practices on national identity. National identity is no longer seen as a homogeneous stable structure in time, but as a fluid structure that is constantly transformed.

In this context we can talk about the nation and national identity within a community that possesses a historic territory, a homeland, possesses myths and common remembrance for its members, a massive common public culture, the common legal rights and duties and a jointly owned economy with territorial mobility for its members (Smith, 1993, p. 14).

So, what we can see is that "the national identity and the nation are complex constructs of a number of ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic, legal-political components interrelated with each other" (Smith, 1993, p. 15).

### **Albanian nationalism, its features**

Albanian nationalism is part of the group of South-Eastern European nationalisms which began to develop rapidly from the second half of the 19th century.

This came about as a consequence of two important historical factors of the time: the Ottoman Empire crisis, which was no longer able to effectively control the Balkan territories conquered in the Middle Ages and the spread of the political and cultural ideas of the Western world to these territories, among which the most attractive idea was the idea of the nation.

Among the first Albanians to come into contact with these ideas were Diaspora intellectuals who began gathering in groups and associations that promoted nationalist ideas about the language, culture and history of Albanians<sup>1</sup>. The movement of these associations is now known as the "Albanian National Renaissance"<sup>2</sup>, the basic program of which was the formation

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1. The development of Albanian nationalism seems to confirm the thesis of the Czech scholar Miroslav Hroch, known for studying the nationalisms of the young nations. According to Hroch, nationalism goes through three stages during its development. During the first stage the national issue is limited only to the interests of intellectuals, the educated. The second stage is the stage when intellectual interest becomes an organized activity of patriotic agitation and during the third stage the national issue becomes a massive national movement. See: (Hroch, 2000: 23).

2. In addition to the term "National Renaissance", the term "National Awakening" was also used. For the semantic context of these terms in the history of Balkan nationalisms, see: "*Rilindja Bullgare*" si një periudhë e veçantë historike, shqyrtuar në kontekstin e "*Rilindjeve kombëtare*" ("*Bulgarian Renaissance*" as a distinct historical period, explored in the context of "*National Renaissances*") (Vezenkov, 2013).

of national consciousness of the Albanian population, namely the consciousness that this population constitutes a nation with distinct identity, clear goals and values.

However, unlike their neighbors, the Albanian Renaissance nationalists, in creating the common national identity of Albanians, were beset with a fundamental problem: religious diversity. The Albanian ethnicity was divided into different religions, thus religion could not be considered as a criterion for the formation of collective community consciousness. Another element of community was to be found, and the Albanian nationalists found this in the Albanian language. It was the Albanian language that made Albanians so and united them despite the religious and provincial differences (Hobsbawm, 1999, p. 53). In order for this element of community to function, the Albanian language had to gain sacrality supremacy in relation to religious sacrality. In order to understand this purpose, we need to look at the poetry of Naim Frashëri, one of the most renowned Renaissance ideologues. There we find moments when the Albanian language is deified to the extent that it is proclaimed as a language of gods. In the poetry "Albanians," he writes:

*Language spoken by gods*

it was spoken by the Pelasgians (Kocaqi, 2018)

The sanctification of the Albanian language naturally leads to the sanctification of the Albanian population as an identity, and this is evident in the paradigmatic poem of Pashko Vasa "My Dear Albania", which points out that "*Albanians' religion is Albania*". We find this formula somewhat similar to Naim Frashëri in his poem "Parajsa" (English: Paradise) where he writes:

"Leave	religion	behind,
Let us behold our homeland"		

Establishing the superiority of language on religious affiliations creates another feature of Albanian nationalism which is *the secular feature*. This means that none of the religions are identified with Albanian nationalism, but each one gains legitimacy by fulfilling its function.

The importance of religion was diminishing during Zogu's reign<sup>1</sup>, while under Enver Hoxha's regime, the policy of marginalization of religion was taken to extremes following its total ban in 1967, a ban which was justified not only on the basis of Marxist arguments, but also of nationalist ones.

However, the marginalization of religion in the nation-building efforts of Albanian nationalists did not only intend to create a sense of community and national unity, but this was linked to an equally important reason which had to do with the future of Albanians within the European continent. Being a majority Muslim population, this posed a danger that with the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, the Albanians would be identified as Turks who had no place in Europe, so they would have to leave together with Ottoman power. Nathalie Clayer in this regard writes that "Albanian nationalists had to defend the idea that a nation mostly composed of Muslims had the right to stay in Europe, establish their own state and not try to emigrate to Anatolia as many Muslims had done before. Various methods were used to legitimize such a demand. On the one hand, Albanian nationalists have often highlighted the Pelasgian origins of Albanians, making them "the oldest nation in Europe". On the other hand, they tried to create a clear distinction between Albanians and Turks, coupled with all kinds of objections: European/Asian, civilized/barbarian, oppressed/oppressor. If the departure of Turks would have been "legitimized", according to their argumentation, the Albanians themselves could not have been expelled from the land of Europe, considered as the oldest inhabitants before the coming of Greeks, Slavs and Western nations" (Clayer, 2012, p. 641).

In addition to the agitation that sought to establish these clear distinctions between Albanians and Turks, the other purpose was to relativize the fact of being Muslim majority by "building the image of a superficial Islam or a specific Islam of Albanians to oppose the Turkish "fanatic" and "despotic" Islam as the Eurocentric vision demanded.

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1. The Albanian Renaissance secularism for the first time was institutionally codified by the Congress of Lushnja in 1920, a convention which adopted the constitution of the Albanian state, which in its Article 93 states: "The Albanian State has no official religion. All religions and religious beliefs are respected and their free practice is guaranteed. "Religion and religious beliefs can not be used in any way for the realization of political purposes." (Delvina, n.d.)

Albanian Muslims systematically appeared to be Islamized only superficially, such as crypto-Christians and Bektashi” (Clayer, 2012, p. 641). The phenomenon of Albanian crypto-Christianity was used to justify the theory that the Islamization of Albanians by Ottoman rulers had been done violently while Bektashism rather performed the role of religious syncretism as a source of inter-religious tolerance as within its dogmas it merged the elements of both Islam and Christianity (Clayer, 2012, p. 641).

Being part of the group of central and eastern European nationalisms influenced by the ethno-cultural model, Albanian nationalism is built according to Gellner’s principle on congruence of the ethnic unit with the political unit (Gellner, 2009, p. 1).

On the basis of this principle, Albanian nationalism, as its major goal has had the unification of all ethnic Albanians in a common state. At the end of the national Renaissance this goal could not be achieved as the Albanian state proclaimed in 1912 and internationally recognized in 1913 did not include within its borders the entire ethnic Albania. Kosovo and other territories inhabited by ethnic Albanian majority remained outside of this state and this event would go on to open up other deep divisions within Albanian nationalism by dividing it into the Albanian state nationalism and the nationalism of territories left outside Albanian state. The first remained committed to preserving the existing state within the recognized borders, without any realistic intentions of territorial expansion, while the latter continually cherished the hope and effort of uniting Kosovo and other territories with Albania.

### **The state of Kosovo, Albanian nationalism and the Kosovan nation**

On February 17, 2008, the Kosovo Assembly declared Kosovo an independent and sovereign state. From the point of view of Albanian nationalism, this state constitutes the fulfillment of the goals of the nationalist movement developed in Kosovo since 1912. In this context, this state is seen as the second Albanian state in the Balkans as a culminating moment in the historical narrative of national liberation that begins with the Kosovar uprisings at the beginning of the XX century<sup>1</sup> and ends with the "KLA episode".

This culmination, however, is not thought to be final because, as an Albanian nationalist and intellectual says, "The aspirations of Kosovo Albanians for freedom and independence, along with the derivatives that these two basic concepts bring, have historically had a strong foundation: the creation of a common Albanian state. The new world political circumstances affected Kosovo’s state-forming consciousness making them strive for the creation of only a state of Kosovo, whose basis, however, has always been on centuries-old goals of Albanians for freedom, independence and unity, always because of new circumstances, alongside regional and European integration tendencies (Andersen, 2007, p. 168).

From the international (western) point of view, the state of Kosovo is not an Albanian state, but a multiethnic state, which reflects the diverse communities that make up the Kosovo population. Here the narrative is different: Kosovo was not liberated in the name of the goals of Albanian nationalism, but for the sake of the abuse of human rights and the brutal persecution of the Albanian community by the Serbian regime<sup>2</sup>.

Since Western states have had the real power in Kosovo after its liberation, they have also run the process of its independence declaration, and this has determined that the Western view be reflected in the constitutional order of the state of Kosovo and its formal symbolic order. This is also noted in the Declaration of Independence which refers to the state of Kosovo as a "multiethnic republic" as well as in the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo where we find the term "multiethnic society" (KOSOVO, 2008).

This contradiction of views has resulted in a serious political contradiction, which is at the core of the state of Kosovo, and this is *the contradiction between the formal-judicial multiethnicity of the state, which is supported by the international community and its informal ethno-nationalist symbolism, the narrative of which is developed by Albanian nationalism*. This

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1. For the relation of these uprisings with Albanian nationalism, see: (Clayer, Edhe një herë mbi "kryengritjet shqiptare" të pas vitit 1908 (Once more on the "Albanian uprisings" after 1908), 2013, pp. 85-122).

2. For the moral justification of NATO’s intervention against Yugoslavia in 1999 see: NATO’s "humanitarian war" over Kosovo. (Roberts, 1999).

empirically can be seen in remembrance places and monuments of heroes such as Prekazi, where the only symbols are those of Albanian nationalism, while Kosovo's multiethnic symbols are completely absent.

The fall of the Jashari family in 1998, in Albanian national mythology, is perceived as the founding event on which Kosovo's freedom and independence stands, but the official symbols of this independence, such as the blue background flag and the yellow map of Kosovo in the middle, are not present in the Jashari memorial. There is only the red and black flag, which is the state symbol of Albania.

Until now, the solution of this contradiction has not been addressed through political channels and mechanisms, but it has been proved through the public intellectual debate, which has brought about the issue of Kosovar identity and the idea of the Kosovan nation.

The basic question in this case is whether the birth of the state of Kosovo implies the birth of a new nation in the Balkans?

Those who respond affirmatively to this question usually operate with the nation's political concept in which, according to Kohn's opinion, the nation is born on an existing political-territorial reality without any significant historical reference, while those who respond negatively to this question seem to emanate from the cultural concept of the nation, which implies that the nation has existed before the state and it politically reflects the hegemony of a certain cultural (ethnic) group, which carries on its own references and "historical arguments". According to the logic of this view, there may exist two Albanian states, but there can be no two Albanian nations.

We find the first view concisely summarized in the text "The Kosovar Identity and Citizenship" of Aasmund Andersen, where he concludes: "*The construction of the state of Kosovo is an unusual case in the history of European states. The state of Kosovo was born only through the strong military, political and economic support of the international community and against the will of the state it had belonged. In order for the state of Kosovo to become successful, it should serve its citizens impartially regardless of ethnic origin and family ties. The state should also have high-culture followers who have the courage to emphasize non-ethnic and citizen-based notions of national identity and promote concepts that constructively support the state. The growing notion of the term 'Kosovar' is an expression of how state institutions promote the notion of high collective and common culture that represents the values of its citizens. If the state of Kosovo is successful and provides a solid framework where its citizens can hope for the realization of their dreams and aspirations, the identity of the state and its citizens 'Kosovars' will continue strengthening and over time will be considered as a national identity*" (Andersen, 2007, p. 104). The basic idea of this view is that a successful state formation process can naturally be followed by a nation-building process.

The second view on the idea of Kosovo's national identity can be found in the text "The Kosovar Identity, a horrendous invention" by the author Merxhan Avdyli.

Among other things, the text says: *Kosovar identity is a horrendous invention for the following reasons:*

- *Historical: the creation of the ethnic vagueness of the origin of Kosovo Albanians, respectively the rejection of the Albanian eminence of Kosovo;*
- *Geographical: the tendency to empower Pan-Slavic ideas*
- *Religious: The vagueness about the frequent conversions of Albanians*
- *Political: The Slavic occupation of Kosovo is the most referring point of the tendencies to create the invented Kosovar identity, especially the Yugoslav tendency to create the Yugoslav nation, which has unfortunately been accepted by a part of Kosovo Albanians, is the cornerstone of the deformation of this Yugoslav communist invention, which still has its epigones in different circles in Kosovo (the tendencies of the Yugo-nostalgic groups to Ghegify the Albanian language, the tendencies for violent division into "us" and "them", the frustrations of different Kosovars, the negative Prishtinaizing and Tiranaizing of the Albanian culture and other similar deformations).*

Further, the author speaks with discourse of normativist hues: "*Strengthening the idea of "Kosovar identity", even if it is allegedly based on the creation of a state made up of the Albanian nation, is unacceptable because:*

- *Kosovo Albanians have a strong Albanian identity, including all the distinctive and common hallmarks of the modern Albanian nation: history, tradition, culture, customs, territory, economy, language, mentality.*

• *At the time of numerous international tendencies for political, economic and regional integration (Balkan integration) or continental (European integrations) it seems incredibly absurd to strengthen an invention that in essence is not only contradictory to the integration tendencies but is in opposition to the Albanian goals for the creation of a happy political, national and above all human future" (Avdyli, 2007, p. 169).*

### **The concept of ethnicity and multiethnicity**

Multiethnicity is one of the most highly debated issues along with the contemporary social sciences debates. The actualization of this issue is contextually related to the reemergence of new forms of nationalization, especially after the collapse of the communist system.

The end of ideological loyalties was followed by the emergence of various forms of identity loyalty. In this context, the concept of multiethnicity has been developed in parallel as a theoretical and practical challenge to ethnic nationalism and its tendencies of mono-ethnic homogenization of state territories. It expresses the aspiration to build social cohesion on the ethno-cultural diversity and social groups that make up a society.

This aspiration is best seen in the Kosovar society itself, which by the Constitution is defined as "multiethnic society".

In order to understand the reality of this aspiration we initially need to break down the concept of ethnicity itself.

The term "ethnicity" is a very recent term. It appears in literature only in the second half of the 20th century (Malesevic, 2004, p1), while the determiner "ethnic" is a much earlier term. We find it in the vocabulary of medieval social discourse and it is an adaptation of the old Greek term "ethnos". For the ancient Greeks this term depicted different types of groups, not only human, but also from the animal world. The basic idea is that "ethnos" includes a set of entities that share common cultural or biological characteristics. This element of community has been constantly present in constant efforts attempting to define what is called "ethnic community".

One of the most famous scholars of ethnicity and nationalism, the British sociologist Anthony D. Smith considers that in almost all of the different approaches that have been trying to define ethnicity, we can identify a few elements whose synthesis enables us to understand the phenomenon of ethnicity. In his analysis he lists six elements (Smith, 1991,p21).

Firstly, an ethnic community, according to Smith, is associated with a collective name or emblem by which the community is identified.

Secondly, the ethnic community is associated with a myth of the common origin of its members. In the context of this myth these members believe that their community originates from an ancient blood relation that goes to a primordial family of the community. In fact, the myth of the common origin of ethnicity often causes the confusion of not being able to differentiate between ethnicity, tribe and family community. Considering this, ethnicity in many cases has been referred to as "extended tribe", hence an extended blood relation.

This element is extremely important as it is inherited later by ethnic nationalism, in whose discourse the "ethno-tribal brotherhood" becomes a "national brotherhood": all members of the nation are brothers of one another. This also explains other myths of nationalism such as the "myth of pure blood" or "the myth of uninterrupted historical continuity from the origins to the present day".

If we read the texts of our national Renaissance poets, we can easily identify these myths. For example, Naim Frasheri in his texts repeatedly reiterates the idea of the uninterrupted historical continuity of Albanian identity that passed down from prehistoric Pelasgians to ancient Illyrians, medieval arbers to modern Albanians.

A third element, which according to Smith, defines ethnicity as a social community, is the common historical traditions and memory. Ethnicity is a group that is constituted when its members succeed in developing common traditions and in parallel with this the historical memory of their group. The traditions in this case include the community of values and social norms of the group, while memory includes collective perceptions upon the preceding fate of the ethnic group.

All this is related to the fourth element that differentiates an ethnic group from other social groups, which comprise the elements of a common culture. Ethnicity, above all is a cultural group, in the anthropological sense of the word "culture".

This element is particularly important for understanding contemporary phenomena related to nationalism, especially ethnic nationalism. As Ernest Gellner (2009) points out, nationalism is precisely that ideology that seeks to blend state institutions and culture into one unity. Its basic principle is the congruence between the political unit and the cultural unit: the cultural boundaries of the community (ethnicity) must also be its political boundaries. As we know, this principle in real politics has led to many tragic consequences. In many cases, the intended state-culture congruence has ended up in genocide, ethnic cleansing, or assimilation policies organized by the state.

The fifth element, according to Smith, through which we define an ethnicity, is the relation of its members to a certain territory, which is commonly referred to as the "homeland" and is considered to be the historic territory of an ethnic group. In fact, the term "homeland" has ethno-tribal connotations because it presupposes the identification of a territory "the birthplace of the ancestors". Even the term "patriotism" is related precisely to this connotation as it comes from the Greek word "patria" meaning "father", the land pertaining to a father. In this context, patriotism is the love or worship of our homeland, which is also the birthplace of our ancestors. Ethnicities are always identified with a certain kind of homeland. All their memory and tradition is in function of the idealization and glorification of the territory that holds the attribute of the homeland.

As regards the sixth element of the ethnic community's anatomy, Smith illustrates the degree of social solidarity among its members. The lowest degree of this solidarity is when it exists only within the elites of the community, while the highest is when the sense of this solidarity is widespread within the community.

As we can notice, in Smith's elements of ethnic community we do not find the element of language. This is explained by the fact that there are many cases when several ethnicities speak the same language.

Such identity designations of ethnic communities during modernity through their politicization from nationalist ideology turn into ethnic conflicts. In this context, the idea of multiethnic society was born as an alternative to the nationalist solution to these conflicts. It implies the idea of building a social coexistence between different ethnicities populating a politically defined territory. This coexistence is ensured by a network of civic institutions which treat equally the ethnic traditions of the citizens.

***In its essence, the concept of multiethnicity is an attempt to depoliticize ethnicity, that is, an attempt that goes in the opposite direction to that of nationalism.***

If we analyze the symbolic order of the state of Kosovo we easily notice this de-politicization of ethnicity. The flag of this state does not contain any element of ethnicities that constitute Kosovo society; the state anthem is a textless melody and this is done to avoid any possibility, even implicit, of inclusion of ethnic elements within the anthem. This is also done on the official holiday calendar. There, ethno-national holidays do not appear at all, only the holidays related to the founding events of the state of Kosovo, such as the Day of Independence or the Day of the Constitution, as well as the universal religious, Islamic and Christian holidays (Holidays, 2017).

Ethnic de-politicization has also affected the most important holiday of Albanians, 28 November, the Day of the Albanian Declaration of Independence. In the official holiday calendar, this holiday is not an official holiday; it has been downplayed to a remembrance day. This designation itself reflects the de-politicising connotation. De-politicization has also affected the day of Kosovo Liberation from Serbia, June 12th. This is no longer the day of liberation, but the day of peace (Holidays, 2017).

It can be said that the success of the project of the state of Kosovo, in the present constitutional format, is essentially dependent on the success of the process of depoliticizing the ethnicities of Kosovo society.

This process is not without risks because it carries within itself the risk of an identity crisis and from this crisis could benefit other identity markers such as religious markers. Perhaps the rise of religious radicalism in Kosovo in recent years can somehow be explained by the derivations of the process of ethnic de-politicization that are fueled by Kosovo's institutions and international supporters of this state. This is because nationalism has always been a modern substitute for religion, or secular religion, as many scholars call it, and if it is marginalized, it could lead to the reintegration of religion into the epicenter of social life.



### **Ethnic Depoliticization in the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo**

In the normative hierarchy of the state of Kosovo, the Declaration of Independence is the most important document for the reason that it marks the founding of the state in the modern sense of the word.

Like any other declaration of independence, it reflects the material report of the forces after the act of secession of a territory from a previous state or as a result of its collapse.

This is the principle of political realization, which says that the norm is the legalization of power.

In this respect, the "Declaration of Independence of Kosovo" firstly reflects the dominance of the International Community in Kosovo and secondly the fact that the majority of Kosovo's population is comprised of Albanians, but the subordination of the second factor to the first is very clear in the text of the declaration.

In the description of the motives justifying the Declaration, we see the politics of ethnic de-politicization of the founding act of the state of Kosovo.

The second sentence of the declaration text of the motives says: "*Answering* the call of the people to build a society that honors human dignity and affirms the pride and purpose of its citizens" (Independence, 2008).

Here, the category of people appears to be an undefined category, as it lacks ethnic attributes. The text here does not clarify which people we are talking about.

The third sentence says: "*Committed* to confronting the painful legacy of the recent past in a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness" (Independence, 2008).

Again we have the same discursive continuation, it is spoken about "painful inheritance of the near past" without concretizing it and immediately passes to the idea of reconciliation and forgiveness, yet reconciliation and forgiveness remain undefined terms as it is not defined who should seek reconciliation and who should be forgiven and for what reasons.

While the fourth sentence of the text of the motives says: "*Committed* to protecting, promoting and respecting the diversity of our people", the category of people is ascribed the concept of diversity, but this also remains undefined.

Through this discursive tactic, the category of people has shifted even more from the tendency of ethno-nationalist discourse, where people are identical to ethnic homogeneity.

The text references of the motives for the past have also preserved the abstract character. It is about the years of violence and conflict, without elaborating them further. The "*sacrifices of men and women*" are also mentioned, but they are contextualized into the goals for a better future. The valorization of the future follows the goal for the marginalization of the past.

Referring to the "years of violence and conflict", the nationalist categories such as "liberation war" or "national freedom" as the attributes of this conflict are nowhere to be seen, as they are replaced by "the concern of the conscience of all civilized peoples".

Although the concept of "civilized peoples" remains undefined, on the basis of deconstructive reading, the term can be seen as a descriptive term for the Western states, who justified their intervention in Kosovo in 1999 with the concepts of human rights.

The text of the motives is followed by the text announcing the establishment of the state of Kosovo as "a democratic, secular and multiethnic republic, guided by the principles of non-discrimination and equal protection under the law. We shall protect and promote the rights of all communities in Kosovo and create the conditions necessary for their effective participation in political and decision-making processes".

Here the main emphasis is placed on the multiethnic character of the newly created state and the rights of communities. What we can see is a discursive shift from the category of people, as the constitutive element of the state, to the category of communities. Now, communities are the ones that constitute the society and the state. Internal relations between communities are based on the principle of non-discrimination. The goal here is the normative avoidance of the ethnic majorization of the society.

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