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'Quadratic Nexus' and the Process of Democratization and State-Building in Albania and Kosovo

A Comparison

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Abstract

This paper examines the interplay between internal and external actors in the process of democratization and state-building in Albania and Kosovo. It does so by using David J. Smith's "quadratic nexus" that links Brubaker's "triadic nexus" - nationalizing states, national minorities and external national homelands - to the institutions of an ascendant and expansive "Euro-Atlantic space". The main argument of this paper is twofold. First, it argues the nexus remains a useful framework in the study of state- and nation-building provided that it moves beyond the "civic vs. ethnic" dichotomy. Today, many states with a mixture of civic and multi-ethnic elements hold this relational nexus. Second, while comparing Albania and Kosovo, this paper argues that all the four elements of the nexus have a different impact on the process of state- and nation-building and their relationship is more conflictual in Kosovo than in Albania.

Keywords: quadratic nexus, internal actors, external actors, Albania, Greece, Kosovo, Serbia.

Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 triggered a wave of massive political and social transformations in Eastern Europe resulting in new social and political dynamics. On the one side there was the battle for democratization and liberalization of the market, whereas on the other the battle for enhanced rights of nations and minorities. In the latter case, both nations and national minorities saw an opportunity to improve their position within the state – the former seeking to institutionalize their domination, whereas the latter was seeking enhanced cultural rights or even autonomy. Apart from the two main actors – core nation and national minority – in the process of transformation of polities in Europe, however, external kin states as well as other external actors (be it in the form of international organizations or individual states) became heavily involved. Thus, the process of democratization and state-building in Southeast Europe involved a quadratic relationship.

This paper examines the interplay between internal and external actors in the process of democratization and state-building in Albania and Kosovo. It does so by using David J. Smith's "quadratic nexus" that links Brubaker's "triadic nexus" - nationalizing states, national minorities and external national homelands - to the institutions of an ascendant and expansive "Euro-Atlantic space". The main argument of this paper is twofold. First, it argues the nexus remains a useful framework in the study of state- and nation-building provided that it moves beyond the "civic vs. ethnic" dichotomy. Today, many states with a mixture of civic and multi-ethnic elements hold this relational nexus. Second, while comparing Albania and Kosovo,

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this paper argues that all the four elements of the nexus have a different impact on the process of state- and nation-building and their relationship is more conflictual in Kosovo than in Albania.

In terms of the time-frame, in the case of Albania the paper focuses on the developments since the fall of communism until present, whereas in Kosovo it begins with the UN administration in Kosovo established in 1999, although the emphasizes will be put on the period after the declaration of independence in 2008.

"Quadratic nexus": depicting actors and dynamics

More than dozen of new countries appeared in the map of Europe since 1989 and in many of them various groups have been in a constant struggle for either domination or recognition of their status as a national minority. This has indulged external direct or indirect involvement of states and international organizations in those areas. An important theoretical framework used in the context of post-communist transformation and reconstruction of states in Southeast Europe (SEE) is that of the "triadic nexus" developed by Rogers Brubaker (4). Although it focuses primarily on nationalism, it depicts the process of delineating the legal framework, institutions, internal organization and institutional arrangements, legal and constitutional order, and the nature of citizenship. Brubaker's point of departure is the emergence of nationalism in the process of state-building as a progressive nationalization of the political space, which according to him, can be depicted by using a single relational nexus ("triadic nexus") that bounds together three different nationalisms, which are interlocking, interactive and mutually antagonist – "nationalizing" nationalism, "homeland" nationalism and "minority" nationalism (4).

Drawing on Brubaker's theory, David J. Smith has proposed a "quadratic nexus" as a framework of analysis in the study of state-building and reconstruction, thus linking nationalizing states, national minorities and external national homelands to the institutions of an increasing web of international institutions and organizations. Certainly, the adding of the role of external actors complements Brubaker's triadic nexus for it acknowledges the increasing role of international organizations in the power struggles between minorities, kin-states and nationalizing states. In one-way or another, the "quadratic nexus" is applicable in almost every case of state-building and state transformation in the Western Balkans. Due to the fact that state-building and reconstruction in post-1989 Europe was characterized by the nationalization of the political space and attempts to redefine political and national identities, which in many cases led to the eruption of conflict, the quadratic nexus offers a useful framework in the study of the tension between various actors, understood not as static concepts but as arenas of struggle for competing stances, as well as understandings of statehood and nationhood. To begin with, the Balkan region is a *par excellence* case of "mismatched" groups of people who are attached by citizenship to one polity yet by ethnic affinity to another (Brubaker 7). This creates a highly complex mosaic of national and international political actors that have a say or influence processes of state-building.

As regards the use of this framework for the purposes of this analysis, two things need to be pointed out. First, as Brubaker makes it clear, national minority, nationalizing state, and external national homeland are not fixed, static, and analytically irreducible entities but rather dynamic fields of differentiated and competing positions. Thus, as argued by Brubaker, "the triadic relation between these

three "elements" is, therefore, a *relation between relational fields;* and relations *between* the three fields are closely intertwined with relations *internal to,* and *constitutive of,* the fields" (67). Second, I subscribe to Taras Kuzio's (2001) and David J. Smith's (2002) critique of Brubaker's sharp distinction of the "nationalizing state" model from what he terms the civic state ("civic vs. ethnic" divide). In this context, as proposed by Kuzio (135), I use the concept of "nationalizing state" not as a unique experience of the Eastern Europe, but rather in the context of a border process of state and nation building that takes place in polities with a mixture of civic and multi-ethnic elements.

Comparing Albania and Kosovo

Despite differences (the recent history, political tradition, international status etc) Kosovo and Albania have many similarities. Both countries have a majority Albanian population and a minority population that does not exceed 10 per cent of the overall population (although in Albania the percentage is even smaller). In addition, both countries have a core minority group (Greeks and Serbs respectively) that has a more prominent position within the state. Although at different stages, both countries are in a process of transition to democratic consolidation, with external actors such as the EU playing a major role in the process.

But do Albania and Kosovo represent "nationalizing states" in Brubaker's understanding of the concept? The answer is a mixed one. On the one side, both Albania and Kosovo are countries with strong ethnic majorities and many of their policies can be labeled 'nationalizing'. However, both countries' constitutions contain civic and multi-ethnic elements respectively and provide for inclusive citizenship, which are atypical for a classical nationalizing state. Another important element in this regard is perception. As argued by Brubaker, such a state is not one "whose representatives, authors, or agents understand and articulate it as such, but rather one that is perceived as such in the field of the national minority or the external national homeland" (63). Based on this criterion, both countries can be analyzed using the quadratic framework and the concept of nationalizing state.

In what follows, I look at these arenas of struggle and competing stances of minorities and majority first in Albania than in Kosovo.

The case of Albania

In early 1990s, even though it looked like Albania was going to remain outside the dramatic changes of 1989, history would catch up with it very soon, when in 1991 Albania's orthodox Communist system collapsed like a house of cards, leaving behind an economic disaster and a political vacuum of very high proportions (Gasteyger 213). This combined with subsequent political crises that culminated in an armed rebellion against the Berisha government in spring 1997, following the fall of the "pyramid system" - a fraudulent investment scheme. As a result, Albania's integration into the European political structures has been slow; it joined the OSCE in 1991, the CeO in 1995 and signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU in June 2006, while becoming a member of NATO in April 2008, and submitted its application for EU membership on 28 April 2009 (Krasniqi, "Citizenship in an" 15).

As regards minorities in Albania, Greeks, Macedonians and Montenegrins are officially recognized as national minorities, whereas Roma and Vlachs/Aromanians

are recognized as linguistic (sometimes called cultural) minorities (AHRG 2003). Both linguistic and national minorities are recognized under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), which entered into force in Albania in 2000 (Krasniqi, "Citizenship in an" 16). Based on official statistics (CoE, *ACFC/SR/II(2007)004/Annexes*), Albania is one of the most homogenous countries in the region (with an Albanian majority of some 98 per cent), but minority groups often question the official state data. Results of the overall census organized in October 2011, which for the first time enabled everyone to declare (if they wished to do so) their religion and ethnicity, might provide more accurate data.

Although in smaller numbers, Albania's minority population has been historically subject to the state's nationalizing policies. Nonetheless, "[b]ecause most of the minorities were relatively small, and were no worse off and in some cases better off than most of Albanians, inter-ethnic relations did not become a source of violent conflict in Albania" (Miall 142). As regards the legal status in post-communist era, the 1991 provisional constitution, amended in 1992 and 1993 (when the Charter on Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms was added) contained guarantees of the freedoms of speech, religion, conscience, press, and assembly (Biberaj 151). Although minorities welcomed these measures, constitutional changes did not go that far as to satisfy their demands. Moreover, in February 1992, the Albanian government took a controversial decision to ban ethnic or religious parties from standing in future elections (Bugajski 274). After protests by the CSCE, the CoE, the US, Greece and other actors, this decision was reversed (Pettifer 11). Nevertheless, since 1991, minority parties have continuously participated in elections and were part of the local and national institutions of Albania, thus giving a substantial contribution in the process of democratization in their home country.

One of the most contentious issues has been minority education. As with other issues, the Greek minority has been the most persistent and demanding in this direction. After some initial reluctance, the Albanian government has granted permission and supported the opening of Greek primary and secondary language schools outside of the official "Greek minority zone"[1] such as Himara and Korça. Moreover, new departments of Greek studies have opened in the Universities of Tirana and Gjirokastra and the Albanian government has also agreed to cooperate in the building of a Greek language university in Gjirokastra funded by the Greek government (Vickers 8). More minority schools opened in the Prespa region, where a small Macedonian minority lives, as well as a Serbian school in south Albania.

Albania's first post-communist constitution was adopted only on 21 October 1998 (*Constitution of the Republic of Albania*, 22 November 1998) and it reflects the country's attempts to democratize and achieve EU membership. Its preamble and the integral text have strong civic underpinnings – they refer to the "people of Albania" rather than to an Albanian ethnic core. Article 20 of this constitution stipulates that persons belonging to national minorities exercise their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic rights, including the right to study and to be taught in their mother tongue, and to unite in organizations and associations for the protection of their interests and identity, in full equality before the law. Although the pressure on minorities eased substantially after the fall of communism, apart from the Greek minority, which thus far has been the most organized minority, other "minorities are either very small and have confined their activities to cultural and human rights campaigns, or have failed to overcome internal obstacles to collective action (particularly the Roma and, to a lesser extent, the Vlachs" (Pettifer 15). In addition, shifts in the attitude towards

minorities were often conditioned by the shift in power balance between the two main parties – the Democratic Party (PD) and the Socialist Party (PS), where the latter has been usually perceived as more open towards minorities. This has also had a direct bearing on Albania's relations with Greece, which under Beisha's presidency (1992-1997) were "cool and times frosty" (ICG "Albania" 9).

Greek minority in Albania

The Greek minority is the largest minority in Albania. It is concentrated mainly in the south of Albania (along the cost and the border with Greece) as well as in Tirana. Estimated to comprise around 2 per cent of the total population of about 3.2 million, their numbers are often contested. According to the 1981 census, the Greek minority in Albania numbered some 55,000. Following the collapse of the communist regime, a substantial proportion of the Greek minority moved to Greece, and total numbers are now unclear and disputed. Greek sources claim that there are at least 200,000-250,000 Greeks living in Albania. Albanian authorities claim that this is a deliberate exaggeration that includes other categories of people, such as Orthodox Christian Albanians and the Vlach community (Bugajski 681; Vickers 1; Christopoulos 18). In fact, the Greek issue in Albania has waned and resurfaced many times in history since Albania's independence in 1912. As noted by James Pettifer, "southern Albania and its Greek-speaking population have represented a chronic point of contention - continuing to the present - in Albania's post-independence history, manifested mainly as a territorial dispute between Albania and Greece, but also as a struggle to define a distinct Albanian ethnicity and national heritage" (5).

Education in the Greek language has historically been problematic ever since the Albanian royal regime closed down Greek language education institutions in 1933, an action that prompted Greece to take the issue at the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ, *Advisory Opinion No. 26*, 6 April 1935). During communism, although primary schools and some secondary schools existed in the larger minority centers, the content of the curricular was exclusively Albanian (Vickers 8; Pettifer 6). In general, under communism, all the residents of Albania went through the same almost unparalleled hardship due to the "bunker" mentality of the Albanian communist leadership and the unparalleled direct state control of the society, economy and politics.

Politically, the Greek minority in Albania is represented by the Democratic Union of the Greek Minority (OMONIA), which was originally established as a cultural association and later engaged in political activities (Bugajski 278). In the first multi-party elections in Albania in 1991 OMONIA won five seats in the Albanian Parliament. However, in 1992, following the enactment of legislation banning ethnic parties, the Greek community established the Union of Human Rights Party (PBDNJ), which has been part of almost every Albanian government (led by the Democratic Party or the Socialist Party). Until now, PBPNJ has remained the main political party of the Greek minority. PBPNJ has often switched coalition partners during local and national elections and has been in power in some municipalities in the south. In the elections of 2009, they made a coalition with the Socialist Party (which lost the election) thus remaining in opposition[2]. In March 2010, following PBDNJ's poor performance in the 2009 elections and its decision to remain in opposition, some members of OMONIA initiated the creation of a new political party "Greek Ethnic Minority for the Future" (MEGA).

But what are OMONIA's and PBDNJ's political demands? What have they been campaigning for all those years? Indeed, OMONIA and its electoral wing PBDNJ have often gone through serious rifts and internal debates that led to the formal emergence of a moderate and a radical wing (Pettifer 11; Bugajski 297). The predominant demand of the more moderate wing has been the creation of closer economic and cultural links with Greece (seen as the kin-state), as well as more rights in the field of education, language and self-governance for the Greek minority in Albania. However, more radical figures, supported by elements within the Greek Church, state and diaspora, have occasionally played the card of secession or *enosis* with Greece. In fact, they refer to the historical territorial claims on southern Albania by various Greek nationalist groups that claim that part of southern Albania (known to the Greeks as "Northern Epirus") – belongs historically to Greece (Vickers 2). After series of small incidents and political tensions between 1991 and 1994, in April 1994 the first armed violence broke out. An ultra-nationalist ethnic Greek militant group, known the Northern Epirus Liberation Front (MAVI), attacked a small Albanian military post killing two soldiers. As a reaction to that, the Albanian police arrested and trialed five ethnic Greeks belonging to OMONIA who were though to have been involved in the attack (Bideleux and Jeffries 49; ICG "Albania" 9).

More recently, some Greek politicians in Albania, such as the now former mayor of Himara, Vasil Bollano, have occasionally talked about the idea of an autonomous status for the Greeks in south Albania. In April 2007, Bollano made parallels to Kosovo saying that by demanding independence for "North Epirus" the Greek minority was demanding nothing more than what Albania was demanding for Kosovo. However, a constant demand coming from the representatives of the Greek minority in Albania is the one related to the wider use of the Greek language in Albania (some have even called for Greek to become the second official language). Also, they have lobbied a lot with the Albanian government, Greek state and international organizations for inclusion of ethnicity and religion in the questionnaire in the census of October 2011.

In a word, the position and attitude of the Greek minority in Albania since 1991 has been very specific and has largely been conditioned by the overall developments in the home country, political instability, changes in government etc. The transition from a human rights organization to a political party in the case of the Greek minority has been as unpredictable as Albania's transition to democracy. Internal debates have often been strong and various radical groups have surfaced. Yet PBDNJ has managed successfully to be part of the Albanian governments (left and right) for some 18 uninterrupted years. Therefore, with some exception, it can be said that the strategy pursued by PBDNJ has been that of cooperation and participation in the political life and system. However, in their mostly institutionalized battle for enhanced rights, the Greek minority in Albania has continuously relied on Greece and has tried to utilize the latter's direct influence as well as that through international organizations on Albania to make concessions towards the Greek minority in Albania.

External actors

After the fall of communism and Albania's opening to the world, the role of international organizations in the developments in Albania, including the issue of minorities, increased significantly. During a period of high tensions in the Albanian-Greek relations (1993-4) the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities played an important role in calming the dispute and easing tensions (Miall 142). In

particular, the EU had a profound transformative impact in Albania with the goal of accession to the EU serving as a motor for reforms, development and progress in Albania (Bogdani and Loughlin 221) including the adoption of more open policies towards minorities.

The involvement of various international organizations in Albania became more direct in the late 1990s, conditioned first by the collapse of the state in 1997 and then the war in Kosovo 1998-99 and the refugee crisis that followed. In 1997, under a United Nations (UN) mandate, the European Union (EU) deployed an eight-nation force of 5,000 (known as Operation Alba) in Albania to distribute humanitarian aid and help the Albanian authorities restore order (Pond 199). Albania's neighbors – Greece and Italy – played a great part in these help provisions. The fall of communism in Albania provided new opportunities for Greece to establish its political and economic influence in Albania and also re-connect with its ethnic kin.

Greece

Albania's relations with Greece, which encompass the status of Albanian minority and Albanian emigrants in Greece, as well as the status of Greek minority in Albania and its relations to Greece, has been constantly present in the political debates in Albania in the last twenty years (Krasniqi, "Citizenship in an" 15). Greece does not recognize the existence of Albanians in Greece (known as Arvanites and Chams, where most of the latter were deported to Albania after the Second World War). Nonetheless, Greece's keyword in its policy towards Albania has been the position of the Greek minority living there.

When it comes to the position of Greeks in Albania, Greece has been active in raising its voice in various international fora and also using its position as economically stronger state and member of the EU to improve the position of Greeks in Albania. However, since the end of the one-party state in 1991, large number of people from of the minority population, along with other ethnic Albanians, have left Albania to take advantage of economic opportunities in Greece (Miall 142; Vickers 1). Since 1991, Greeks from Albania who move to Greece receive a "Special Identity Card of Homogeneis", which also provides for preferential treatment, in comparison to the rest of the Albanians by both the Greek nationals and the authorities. Thus, Greeks from Albania managed almost immediately and unconditionally to receive permanent residential status in Greece, including access to work permit and special benefits for social security, health and education (Athanasiades et al 8-10). Only in 2006 were the *homogeneis* from Albania allowed by the government to acquire Greek citizenship and in 2007 they started acquiring it in small numbers (Tsitselikis 7-12).

Greece has provided preferential treatment for Albanian immigrants of Greek origin. In fact, evidence shows that Greek authorities also provide the *homogeneis* identity card to a large number of Christian Orthodox Albanians as well as Vlachs who have migrated to Greece. Thus, according to reliable information from the Greek Ministry of Public Order, approximately 200,000 people (which exceeds by far the number of Greeks in Albania), were granted the status of *homogeneis* (Christopoulos 17), and most probably will soon acquire Greek citizenship. As a result of economic pressures, many Vlachs and Albanians, including Muslim Albanians who convert to Orthodoxy, claim to be Greeks to get the status of *homogeneis* and later citizenship (Vickers 1).

Yet another contentious issue in the relations between the two countries is that of the Orthodox Church of Albania, established in 1908 and recognized as

Autocephalous by the Patriarchate in Istanbul in 1937. In 1993, an ethnic Greek, Anastasios Yannulatos, was appointed by the Patriarchate in Istanbul as Albania's archbishop. Fearing an eventual hellenization of Albania's Orthodox Church, the Albanian authorities, citing the Albanian Orthodox Church constitution of 1929, demanded that the head of the Orthodox Church to be of Albanian origin or citizenship (Vickers 4). Though Yannulatos came to Albania on a provisional basis, until a suitable ethnic Albanian replacement could be found, he remains Albania's archbishop (Krasniqi, "Citizenship in an" 16). The presence of Greek priests in Albania became a more contentious issue in 1993 when Albania expelled a Greek Orthodox priest amid allegations that he was involved in stirring up secessionist feelings, a move that prompted Greece to act by expelling some 30,000 Albanian immigrants (Schmid-Neke 544; Miall 142; Bugajski 267).

Moreover, in addition to its role as a cross border advisory and intermediary for the EU's programs in Albania, Greece has used its position as an EU member to pressure Albania in relation to the Greeks in Albania in several occasions. For example, in 1994, when Albania arrested some members of OMONIA for the armed attack on a military post in Albania, Greece responded by vetoing a major European Union loan to Albania (Bideleux and Jeffries 49; Vickers 3). In a more recent case, the Greek state managed to get some important concessions, such as the permission to build monuments of fallen Greek soldiers in Albania during WWII and a maritime boundary agreement (signed in April 2009, but annulled by the Constitutional Court of Albania months later) in return for the support it gave to Albania's EU membership (namely, the ratification of Albania's Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU by the Greek Parliament). Due to Greece's role within the EU, the former has been successful, in several occasions, in making its interests in Albania and those of the Greek minority part of the EU conditionality towards Albania.

Although in Albania the issue of national minorities did not play a major role during the system change in early 1990s, both the state of Albania and the Greek minority mobilized at latter points in face of what they perceived as the threat to national unity and assimilation respectively. Albania's policies towards minorities were closely monitored by Greek elites in Albania and Greece, which proved to be increasingly sensitive to any signs of projects of nationalization. This resulted in an intersection between foreign policy and the issue of national minority which became most clear in the escalation of Greek-Albanian disputes in 1993-1994 (Schmidt-Neke 544). As argued by Brubaker, national minorities' stances are also highly variable with some "favoring full cooperative participation in the institutions of the host state, including participation in coalition governments, others may favour a separatist, noncooperative stance" (60). In the case of Albania, the stance of the Greek minority was mostly cooperative. As a result, the quadratic nexus was marked by tension but not permanent conflict.

The case of Kosovo[3]

Contrary to Albania that became an independent state following the demise of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, Kosovo was part of different state formations until 2008. After decades under Serbian rule and control, in 1999 a new chapter begun for Kosovo. On 10 June 1999, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1244 (*UN Doc S/RES/1244*, 10 June 1999) which obliged the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) to withdraw from Kosovo and mandated the UN to establish an international

civilian presence in Kosovo in order to provide an interim administration under which the people of Kosovo would enjoy substantial autonomy within the FRY (art. 10).

Resolution 1244 vested all legislative and executive powers, including administration of the judiciary, in the hands of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG). The SRSG and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) initiated the process of creating separate Kosovar institutions (Stahn 536), thus embarking on a process of "democratization without state" (Tansey 129). Under UN legislation, inhabitants belonging to the same ethnic or religious or linguistic group were categorized as members of 'communities', whose equality before the law was guaranteed. According to UNMIK legislation, Kosovo's eight communities were Albanians, Serbs, Bosniaks, Turks, Roma, Egyptians, Ashkali and Gorans. The new Kosovar "Provisional Institutions of Self-Government" (PISG) provided for quotas and proportional representation for smaller communities. However, despite the ethnic-neutrality and "multi-cultural" vision of UNMIK, de facto, what happened after 1999 was an "ethnic reversal", with Albanians and Serbs finding themselves in a reversed majority-minority relation.

"Newborn" Kosovo

Kosovo declared its independence on 17 February 2008, after a year and a half of futile negations between delegations of Kosovo and Serbia mediated by the UN Special Envoy for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari. Kosovo's independence derives from the "Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement" (*S/2007/168/Add.1*, 26 March 2007), known as the "Ahtisaari Plan", which proposes a supervised independence for Kosovo. Due to Serbia's refusal and the inability of the Security Council to formally endorse the plan, Kosovo declared its independence in close-coordination with its allies (the U.S. and EU members such as United Kingdom, France and Germany). As a result, its independence remains both externally (by Serbia, Russia, Spain and other countries) and internally (by a part of the Serb population in Kosovo) contested.

As regards the nature of the newly declared state, Kosovo's rather modern legislation reflects the vision of international actors involved in Kosovo to build a state and society that provides for equality of all the people and groups living there. Thus, Kosovo was declared "to be a democratic, secular and multi-ethnic republic, guided by the principles of non-discrimination and protection under the law" (*Kosovo Declaration of Independence*, 17 Feb 2008) Regardless of its ethnic composition and unlike other ex-Yugoslav states, Kosovo is not defined as a national state of its titular nation, but a multi-ethnic state of all citizens, guided by principles of non-discrimination and equal protection under the law of all communities.

Such a definition of the state has important implications for the relationship between the state and various ethnic groups or communities living on its territory. In the case of Kosovo, this means that the state belongs to all its citizens, as members of their respective communities, who are equal before the law, irrespective of their numbers. In practice, this translates into a vast array of rights and protection of its non-dominant communities enshrined in the Ahtisaari Plan (Annex II), the Constitution of Kosovo (Chapter II and III) and other laws. All the constitutionally recognized communities in Kosovo are granted specific group-rights, including reserved seats in the parliament (10 for the Serb community and 10 for the rest), at least two ministerial portfolios in the government, and proportional representation, as well as quotas, on other levels of governance. Moreover, the principle of double-

majority is put in place for these pieces of legislation that are of "vital interests" to communities that are not the majority.

Nonetheless, although the "Kosovar government took pains to incorporate state-of-the-art legislation on human and minority rights, and its state symbols stress the multicultural past of its inhabitants" (King 129), the reality on the ground is rather different. Return and reintegration of refugees or internally displaced people, and the integration of Serbs, especially the ones residing in northern Kosovo, in Kosovar institutions still remain contentious issue.

Kosovo Serbs

Kosovo had changed at large after the NATO intervention in June 1999. This event had multiple consequences on the position of Serbs in Kosovo. To begin with, as the displaced Albanians returned home, many Serbs and non-Albanian residents of Kosovo left the country or were driven out into neighboring countries, or, in the worst case, were killed or went missing. According to the UNHCR, almost 200,000 Serbs and Roma left Kosovo after June 1999 (339). Indeed, many Serbs had to move from one part of Kosovo to another, thus creating various Serbs-inhabited areas (known as "Serbian enclaves") all around the country, with the biggest one being in the north of Kosovo. These events inflicted new wounds and created an even bigger gap in the communication between Kosovo's two main communities – Albanians and Serbs.

In terms of the political participation, it took some time for the local Serb population to become part of the UNMIK-led Kosovar institutions. After having boycotted the first local elections in post-war Kosovo in 2000, all the Serb parties (mostly branches of parties in Serbia) and political groups in Kosovo established a single electoral list called "Coalition Return" (*Povratak*) to run for the country-wide elections in 2001. The Serb coalition polled 11.3 per cent of the vote, winning 12 seats (supplementing the 10 set aside seats reserved for them), thus becoming the third biggest force in the Kosovo Assembly (Tansey 139). Although reluctant to fully integrate in an institutional system whose consolidation was seen as a step towards an independent Kosovo, Kosovo's Serbs nevertheless showed signs of increasing cooperation with UNMIK and within the new Kosovar institutions in the first years after the war in Kosovo. However, the improvements in interethnic relations made, reached a low point in March 2004, when violence erupted in Kosovo. This was triggered by two separate incidents: the first incident was the shooting of a Kosovo Serb youth in a village near Pristina on 15 March, which led to a blockade by Kosovo Serbs of a key road; the second incident, on 16 March, was the death of three Albanian children in the Ibar River (who, according to the Albanian media had been chased into the river by dogs belonging to Kosovo Serbs). In reaction to the latter incident, angry mobs of Albanians directed their attacks towards the UN and the Serbs as well. The impact of the riots was huge; 19 people had been killed (8 Serbs and 11 Albanians) over a thousand injured, some 550 homes had been burned, along with 27 monasteries and churches, and over 4,000 people were displaced (Ker-Lindsay 20).

These events had far-reaching consequences and in many ways alienated Kosovo's Serbs. As a result, most of Kosovo's Serbs would boycott Kosovo's institutions (as well as elections in autumn 2004) and turn to Belgrade, which still kept its presence in Kosovo through "parallel institutions". Despite this political boycott, Serbs kept their representation in other institutions, such as the Kosovo Police Service, Customs etc. Urged by Belgrade, the absolute majority of Kosovo Serbs boycotted the local and national elections in November 2007; instead they

participated in the Serbian municipal elections organized in Kosovo on 11 May 2008 (OSCE 9). Nonetheless, a group of smaller Serb parties from Kosovo, such as the Independent Liberal Party (SLS), the Serbian Democratic Party for Kosovo and Metohija (SDS KiM) and New Democracy, participated in the elections gathering few votes (www.kqz-ks.org) and filled their reserved seats and also joined the government.

The overall political context around and after the declaration of independence of Kosovo raised new question marks and dilemmas as regards the role of Serbs in post-independent Kosovo.[4] Even those Serbs that were represented in the Kosovar parliament and government at the time of the declaration of independence were reluctant to support it. Urged by Belgrade, after 17 February 2008, many Kosovo Serbs withdrew from the Kosovo administration. In northern Kosovo and other Kosovo Serb majority areas, the Serbian Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija promotes the establishment of parallel political structures to provide administrative services to the Kosovo Serb community (OSCE 9).

The new situation created in Kosovo after February 2008 and the issue of decentralization of power and the creation of new Serb-majority municipalities created a new division between Kosovo Serbs living north and south of the river Ibar. Immediately after the independence, the Kosovar authorities initiated the creation of five new municipalities with a Serb majority and the extension of one other, in full compliance with the Ahtisaari Plan. These municipalities had to be established after the local elections of 15 November 2009, the first ones to take place in an independent Kosovo. On 15 November 2009, the Kosovo Serbs living south of Mitrovica, encouraged by Kosovo institutions, the international presence in Kosovo, as well as Serb parties and leaders from central Kosovo, defied Belgrade and turned out in significant numbers in the local elections that were to legitimize the creation of new municipalities (KIPRED, "Decentralization I" 3). The Serbs won in four municipalities, boycotted elections in three in northern Kosovo, and lost in one. In June 2010, elections were organized in another newly created municipality, where a Serb party won as well. Certainly, this was a landmark development in Kosovo.

This positive trend of Serb participation in the Kosovar institutions continued in late 2010 with the first national elections after the declaration of independence. Three Serb political groups – SLS, SDS KiM, and a citizens' initiative named the Joint Serbian List (JSL) managed to enter parliament, gaining a total of 15 seats (www.assembly-kosova.org). The position of Serbs within Kosovar institutions was enhanced further by the fact that these parties joined forces with other minority parties in the parliament to form a coalition with two other Albanian parties. As a result, Serb representatives hold the positions of deputy-chairman of the Kosovo Assembly, deputy prime-minister, and three ministries. In addition, they are represented in the Consultative Council for Communities (with the office of the president of Kosovo), Advisory Office on Community Affairs (within the prime minister's office), Parliamentary Committee on the Rights and Interest of Communities and other institutions.

While Serbs south of Mitrovica have made a significant step towards the integration into the Kosovar society and political system, Serbs north of Mitrovica have cut almost all the ties that bound them to the institutions in Pristina and have strengthened their connections with Serbia. A Kosovo Serb political elite developed there, taking influential positions in state institutions increasingly supported by Serbia, which organized local elections in Kosovo Serb areas for the first time, resulting in the re-election of the mayors of the three pre-existing municipalities of

Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic and the creation of a new Mitrovica municipality (ICG "North Kosovo" 1). Although Kosovar institutions did not recognize these elections, they extended the mandate of the three mayors that were appointed in 2002 and 2004 by UNMIK and they continues to allocate a regular financial amount for the functioning of these municipalities (KIPRED, "Decentralization II" 8).

North Kosovo has in many ways become a hub of Serbs in Kosovo, an intellectual centre. It holds a university (officially called "Pristina University") which is part of Serbia's system of education. Local Serbs, who "see the North as their last stand" (ICG "North Kosovo" i), are gathered around the north Mitrovica Serb National Council, an umbrella group representing Kosovo Serbs. Apart from the continuous boycott of elections, urged by Serbia, local Serbs in the northern part of Kosovo boycotted the first overall census in Kosovo in April 2011. Tensions rose high once more in the summer of 2011 following a decision by the Kosovo government to send the Kosovo Special Police Units to seize control of the border crossings with Serbia (which were attacked and destroyed by local Serbs in February 2008) in the north in order to enforce a ban on Serbian products. This decision was met with opposition from Serbia and resistance from local Serbs who demolished and burned infrastructure there and established road barricades. Although in the EU-facilitated dialogue Kosovo and Serbia reached agreements on Kosovo customs' stamps, border crossings, civil registers and Kosovo's representation in regional meetings, tensions persist in the northern part of Kosovo as local Serbs refuse to dismantle barricades that were erected in opposition to the presence of Kosovo police and customs officers in the border points with Serbia. More recently, they have organized a referendum where the overwhelming majority voted to reject contact with independent Kosovo's institutions with Serbia, Kosovo and the international community dismissing the vote as irrelevant (*Balkan Insight*).

External actors

International actors have been actively involved in Kosovo since 1999. Initially they were present through a civilian structure (UNMIK) and a military structure (KFOR), both of them assuming their mandate from the UNSC Resolution 1244. However, despite many efforts and investment, and despite the fact that UNMIK put in place a legislative framework that was supposed to transform Kosovo into a multiethnic society subject to the rule of law, Kosovo remained an ethnically divided society even after nine years of direct international rule and control (Krasniqi, "The International" 532-534).

The inability of the Security Council to endorse the Ahtisaari Plan and the unilateral character of its declaration of independence has resulted in a limited number of recognitions of Kosovo's sovereignty and independence thus far (89 as of March 2012). Kosovo's obscure legal status has resulted in a highly complex relationship with international organizations and institutions such as the UN and the EU. Neither the UN nor the EU recognizes Kosovo as a sovereign state. Yet, they are both present in Kosovo; the former through UNMIK and the latter through its Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) (www.eulex-kosovo.eu). Although the Ahtisaari Plan foresaw a smooth transfer of power from the UN to the EU, resulting in termination of UNMIK's mandate and an increased role for the EULEX mission and the ICO (International Civilian Office) (www.ico-kos.org) to strengthen its institutions, monitor their performance and implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan, this did not happen (Krasniqi, "Citizenship as a tool" 25). Indeed, Kosovo invited the EU to

deploy a rule of law mission in Kosovo, but because of the lack of consensus in the UN and the EU[5], EULEX was deployed in Kosovo "under the general framework of United Nations Security Resolution 1244," which conditions it to adopt a "status neutral" approach. Indeed, it took months (November 2008) for the members of the UN Security Council to approve the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's six-point plan authorizing the EULEX mission to deploy across the entire territory of Kosovo. This situation of increased legal obscurity has complicated the matters for both the EU and UN presence in Kosovo.

As regards the role of external actors in the consolidation of the Kosovar institutions and the process of democratization, the ICO has played an important role in helping the Kosovo government to enforce minority rights standards, especially in the process of decentralization and the creation of new municipalities. As far as EULEX is concerned, despite many high expectations, during its first three years of the mandate, the EULEX Mission did not produce any significant results in the field of rule of law and fight against corruption and organized crime. Although EULEX has taken over the rule-of-law prerogatives, so far it has failed to establish Kosovo as one single legal and customs zone (Surroi 113). Nonetheless, the EU as such has played and continues to play an important role through its politics of conditionality in establishing communication between Kosovo and Serbia and improve their relations. The ongoing dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia that begun in March 2011 following the adoption of an EU-Serbia resolution at the General Assembly of the UN (*A/RES/64/298,* 9 September 2010), is an example.

Serbia

Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovo was suspended on 10 June 1999 with the adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 1244. Nonetheless, Serbia has never ceased its activities in Kosovo, mostly through its 'parallel institutions'. Serbia does not recognize the independence of Kosovo and has taken various political and legal steps to challenge and even undermine it. In the external level, it has brought the issue of the legality of the declaration of independence of Kosovo before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Internally, it has attempted to maintain and even enhance its control over the local Serbs in Kosovo, most notably in the northern part of Kosovo.

Because Serbia does not recognize Kosovo as an independent state it does not perceive itself as a kin-state of the Serb community in Kosovo. It still treats the whole of Kosovo as part of its territory. However, in practice, it never hided the fact that it wants to speak on behalf of Kosovo's Serbs and be treated as the sole representative of the Kosovo Serbs. For this purpose, the Serbian government had initially established a Serb Coordination Centre for Kosovo and later a Ministry for Kosovo. Through these institutions and other local branches in Kosovo, for years Serbia has been paying the personnel employed in Serbian elementary and secondary schools, health centers, as well as pensioners (many of the people from these categories receive another salary from Kosovar institutions). Other projects in infrastructure were funded as well. However, despite the fact that that two thirds of Kosovo Serbs live south of the Ibar river, most of the money goes to the north of Kosovo. To sustain the Kosovo Serbs' way of life Serbia spends some €200 million annually in the North (ICG "North Kosovo" 4). As observed by KIPRED, "[t]he financial policy of Belgrade in essence shows the policy towards Kosovo Serbs north and south of river, and its aspirations to maintain the north under tight control" ("Kosovo" 5). Many assume that Serbia's goal is to keep north Kosovo in return for the loss of the rest of

the territory. In a recent statement, the Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Ivica Dačić, has defended such a proposal as a solution for the Kosovo issue (*SETimes*).

Despite the wide consensus among parties in Serbia that Kosovo is part of Serbia, Kosovo and, in particular, the north has become a battlefield among the ruling parties and opposition parties in Serbia for control over Kosovo's Serbs. Until mid-2008 the north was dominated by the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), but after the 2008 elections in Serbia and the victory of the Democratic Party (DS), the latter has increased it role and control among Serbs in Kosovo (ICG "North Kosovo" 3). The DS-led government in Belgrade, which aims for a faster EU integration, has also favored a more relaxed policy when it comes to Kosovo. Financially, this has been conditioned by the deterioration of economic situation in Serbia. As a result, money send to Kosovo has decreased substantially.

Serbia's position on the post-1999 developments in Kosovo has mainly gone to the detriment of integration of local Serbs in the Kosovar institutions. Both under UNMIK and after independence, Serbia has urged Serbs to boycott Kosovar institutions, thus affecting the process of democratization. As of 2009, it has actively undermined Kosovo's sovereignty by challenging it internationally as well as by tightening its control in the north. Nonetheless, as normalization of relations with Kosovo is becoming a major condition for Serbia's faster progress towards EU integration, Serbia's space for maneuver in Kosovo seems to have narrowed down substantially.

In sum, due to Kosovo's recent history of violence and ongoing legal dispute regarding its political status, the relationship between the four political fields – Kosovo, Kosovo Serbs, Serbia and international community – has been almost constantly conflictual. In the same vein, all these political fields remain highly contested and divided internally. Although during the status negotiation process the main Albanian parties have been quite united in their stances, the present process of dialogue with Serbia and the prospects of a special status for the north of Kosovo have divided the Albanian political block. As regards, Kosovo's Serbs, their stance has not been uneven, depending on the enclaves, the Serbian leaders in the enclave, as well as power politics with Belgrade. While more and more Serbs favor full cooperative participation in the Kosovar institutions, the ones in the northern part of Kosovo favor a rather separatist and noncooperative stance. The roots of this division are to be found in the violent events of June 1999 as well as 2008, which were to embed a de facto boundary along the river Ibar, effectively separating the area to the north from the rest of Kosovo. In turn, this has prompted thoughts in some quarters about the partition of Kosovo (Gow 249).

Conclusion

In this paper I have shown how minorities, nationalizing states, kin-states and other external actors, both in the case of Kosovo and Albania, have been intertwined in a typical quadratic nexus, where the relationship is essentially relational and often conflictual. Regardless of the fact that neither Kosovo nor Albania can be classified as "ethnic" states where state ownership belongs to the core nation and where minorities are excluded from the political process and deprived of their cultural and political rights, both cases involve a quadratic relationship that can be more or less conflictual. The fact that both these two polities with strong civic (Albania) and multi-ethnic

(Kosovo) underpinnings involve the quadratic nexus reinforces the argument in support of the application of the latter in a larger context of state building that goes beyond the infamous "civic vs. ethnic" divide.

In the case of Albania, the quadratic nexus re-emerged after 1991 in a new context of post-communism and transition to democracy. It was this particular context and an enhanced role of Greece, both in the capacity of the kin-state and EU member that have played a key role in the developments as regards the Greek minority in Albania. Although relations between Albania and Greece have improved significantly since 1991, at times they have deteriorated as a result of the disagreements on and around the Greek minority. However, following Albania's progress towards the EU membership and the already achieved NATO membership, relations between the two countries seem destined to improve. Likewise, in general, the Greek minority in Albania has been mostly cooperative in the process of democratization and state-transformation in Albania. It chose an institutional path to address its grievances and advance its agenda that seeks to improve its position. Despite occasional tensions and clashes, the relationship has been tense but not always conflictual.

In the case of Kosovo, the ongoing debates surrounding Kosovo's legal status and Serbia's refusal to recognize Kosovo create a unique situation where neither Serbia nor Kosovo can be considered to fully embody the concept of kin-state and nationalizing state respectively. However, one can depict a relational quadratic nexus there as well. The declaration of independence of Kosovo and the electoral process in 2009 and 2010 polarized the Serb community in and also cemented the division between Serbs living south of Mitrovica, who have integrated into the Kosovar system, and those living north of Mitrovica, who do not. Many Serbs in Kosovo find themselves caught between the fires in a political battle between Pristina and Belgrade for control over them and the territory of Kosovo. Irrespective of the fact that at present the majority of Serbs in Kosovo have shown an increased intention to integrate within Kosovo, it is too early to speak of a successful process of integration democratization of the Kosovar society. Certainly, much will depend on future developments in regard to Kosovo's sovereignty and statehood and relations between Pristina and Belgrade.

In all these developments, external actors, be it in the form of international organizations or individual states have played a major role. Albania's relations with the EU have been largely influenced and dictated by its neighbors – Italy and Greece – that have various economic and political interests there. The EU has played its role as an anchor for economic and political reforms in Albania, which in turn have improved the position of Albania's minority groups. In the case of Kosovo, international actors, above all, the EU, the UN and the US have been actively involved in state-building, democratization and putting in place a modern system of minority rights protection. However, disagreements on the status issue have prevented the EU and its EULEX Mission from asserting a more active role in Kosovo, especially as regards the integration of the northern part of Kosovo. Still, despite the lack of unanimity, the EU has urged both Kosovo and Serbia to be more cooperative with each other if they (especially Serbia) are to accelerate their integration into the EU. Although the February 2012 agreements paved the way for Serbia to become a candidate member (*The Economist*), it remains to be seen how they are reflected in the internal situation in Kosovo.

The two cases analyzed here, nonetheless, differ in the context of minority integration with the Greek minority in Albania being more integrated than Kosovo's Serb minority. There are two main reasons that explain uneven levels of minority

integration in the two countries. The first one is statehood and sovereignty. Whereas Albania is a sovereign country and has consolidated its statehood for many decades, Kosovo's sovereignty and statehood remain questioned both internally and externally. Internationally recognized and consolidated statehood and sovereignty play an important role in the process of minority integration. Being at different levels of state consolidation, Albania and Kosovo show different levels of minority integration today. Even in the case of Albania, in times of instability and political uncertainty, such as the early volatile years of Albania's statehood (1912-24), as well as the periods of 1991 and 1997, boycott and other alternative and more radical proposals came to surface from the minority representatives.

The second reason has to do with the role of kin-states. In the case of Albania, Greece does not question (at least openly) Albania's borders and has a relatively long history of political cooperation with Albania. As regards Kosovo, Serbia refuses to come to terms with the idea of an independent Kosovo. Knowing, at least hypothetically, that redrawing of borders and division along ethnic lines is still possible does not help dissenting minorities to integrate within a state.

Going back to the issue of the relational reports between various actors in this study, two points should be highlighted. These two case studies have shown how various actors observe the behavior and attitude of the other actors (even on the situations outside the given nexus) and take it into consideration while adopting their response or position. A case in point is the way in which the leaders of Albania's Greeks linked the position of Albania (acting as a kin-state) towards Kosovo to the demands of the Greek minority in Albania. But this is not always the case. For example, Greece is categorical in its denial of the existence of an Albanian non-migrant minority in Greece and on the other hand, when it comes to the Greek minority in Albania, it refers to the international standards of minority rights. Second, as shown in this paper, none of the actors is or should be treated as a monolith. Actors themselves, be it minorities, kin-states, nationalizing states or foreign states or organizations, are arenas of struggle where various political groups fight for dominance and have different perspectives on the relationship within a certain nexus. In a word, all actors have their "moderates" and "radicals".

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[1] Since 1921 Albania's Greek Population has been recognised as a minority living in recognised "minority zone". After the Second World War, the Albanian communists took a decision to limit the "minority zone" in southern Albania to just 99 villages thus excluding other areas with Greek population (ICG "Albania" 10).

[2] Regardless of this, a Greek has been serving as Minister of Health in the Albanian government created in 2009.

[3] International usage of names of towns and places is applied in this paper.

[4] Although Kosovo's Serbs were represented on both sides in the negotiations mediated by Ahtisaari (Weller 2009: 198), the key actors on the process were Pristina, Belgrade and international community.

[5] Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Romania and Slovakia refuse to recognize Kosovo's independence.

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