

Political culture and its impact in the state-building process – Kosovo Case

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Abstract: *Political culture is a new and less controversial name in the socio-cultural, political, and academic environment of Kosovo. In the discourse on politics as part of science, in the Kosovo environment in general, have dominated other topics such as nationalism, nation, independence, and state-building, where as a consequence, the nature, content and importance of political culture to explain political activity of the relevant actors, still does not serve as a genuine factor. In this respect, the extent to which the attempts to explain the identity and Kosovo's constitutional assets are often lacking precisely as a result of the failure to treat the aspect of political culture, which serves as a support that gives a real sense to the events and political developments in a country.*

The idea of an independent state of Kosovo is already a measurable reality. But how is the state and politics evaluated in Kosovo? From where does the formation of the state and politics arise, and how authentic are those with the political culture of the country? Are certain segments of the state, simple transplanted models, and can they perform the same according to the expectations and demands of citizens?

The goal of this work is to track the political culture of Kosovoin relation to the state, through its political history, attempting to bring a debate of this nature, based on socio-political characteristics as well as from the close historical retrospective.

Keywords: *Political Culture, State, Political Elite, Independence, State-building*

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I. Introduction

Kosovo is a new state of an old map. Rarely are geographically small countries that have been in the agendas of continental and world politics of a degree and high intensity as in this case of Kosovo. Its story, more than ever, is well known from the global perspective, especially after the 1998-1999 war and the NATO intervention, as well as the declaration of independence in 2008. But for those who have a deeper patience, the conflict, intervention and independence that make Kosovo an "internationally known" notion do not mark the starting point and the end of everything. There is a history of at least over 100 years that chronologically preceded the historical and political developments that brought the date of March 24 1999 and the one of February 17 2008. Without wanting to get into the chronology of history, we want to refer simply to the state of Kosovo and its evolution from a political formation with the state-building demands in a contemporary independent state, by tracing its nature, the political system and the political culture that embodies awareness, reception and participation of its citizens in building state policies. So, we want to present, for a debate, an important question: What is the state of Kosovo, and what is its political tradition?

The concept of political culture in principle and as referred to in this paper represents the entirety of the attitudes, beliefs and values on which the activity of a political system is based (Lean, 2001, p. 283). These attitudes, beliefs and values are just as important as the political events of the national character of the countries, and by not addressing them it is difficult to grasp the very history and its important moments. However, in the case of Kosovo, the tendency to explain political culture is quite complex due to political history and its interconnection with the political formations in which Kosovo was involved. On this discourse, it is necessary to decipher the political culture of Kosovo, seen from today's perspective of an independent and modern state, to be traced in an evolutionary way, precisely within and in relation to the political history of these systems it has been a part of. In line with this, a political system is materialized through a state organization, which in contemporary terms consists of: effective control over the means of violence, territory, population, sovereignty, constitutionality, legitimacy, etc. (Pierson, 2009, 19) The notion of the state for the people of Kosovo has been an early aspiration, although until it was built, it had to reject another state whose legitimacy was contested until the armed struggle and the ultimate demise of faith in it. This trajectory may seem provocative, so to leave room for arguments, in this paper, the notions such as the political system, the state, the nation, etc., are dealt with on the basis of the practical significance of the historical events they are related to (as instruments) and not

necessarily on the ideological and philosophical background through which they could be presented (as attitudes).

It should also be emphasized that political culture should not be seen as a forerunner of the state and political system, but as an additional asset that accompanies the content of the state and the political system, that is, the perception of a state and the relations of its citizens. In this regard, the dilemma whether the Republic of Kosovo is a continuity of historic landownership of the Albanian state, or a new state, of course, represents one of the aspects that bring political culture to the forefront as an opportunity to offer meaningful alternatives. So what is the "state of Kosovo" and what does it represent for the collective consciousness of the mass to which it refers to?

The origine of Institutions and Contemporary State of Kosovo

Kosovo as a geographic name dates from the late Middle Ages and is related to the great battle of Christian peoples against Ottoman penetration in the Balkans. (Lellio, 2009, p.6) After being included under Ottoman sovereignty, Kosovo was part of the Rumelia Eyalet, and later it was organized as Vilayeton its own (Rahimi, 1978). Meanwhile, Kosovo as a political (state) entity is relatively new and is the starting point of the period after World War II, i.e. the beginning of the 1970s. In retrospective, in 1913 Kosovo remained outside the borders of the Albanian autonomous state as a result of the decision of the Ambassadors' Conference in London. After the First World War, it was under the rule of the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom. During World War II, though under conditions of a conquering regime (initially Italian and later German), Kosovo and Albania were included under a single territorial map. However, during the political developments of the time, Albanian nationalists failed to build a powerful political organization (Fischer, 2012, p. 250) that would advance further the agenda of the final union, where, after the end of the war, Kosovo was again found as part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with a legal status that evolved several times. In September 1945, the People's Assembly of Serbia "established" the autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija as a constitutive part of Serbia (Weller, 2009, p. 79). Despite the disputed will which was never considered by Serbia, incorporation of Kosovo as an integral part of it eventually faded away the ideas about a possible "self-determination" as proclaimed by the middle of SWW (Second World War). (Reka, 2003, p. 42-44) These ideas were expunged in two directions: the political one, where Kosovo was inconsiderable by the central Yugoslav and Serbian authorities, and the police-state formation, where Serbia dominated in all public spheres that protected them from "a fictitious enemy" through the state security apparatus led by Alexander Rankovic. (Schmitt, 2012, 176)

The late 1960s showed that the clash of both "isms", namely nationalism and socialism, constituted a threat to Yugoslavia, where the nationalist clashes between Serbs' and Croats' nationalist views forced the federal leadership headed by Tito to create new balances (Dannreuther, 2001, p. 16) by hitting first the Serbian nationalism (elimination of A. Ranković) and then the Croat nationalism (imprisonment of the Croatian nationalist communists gathered in the Mass Movement (Masovni Pokret-MASPOK). The new situation created within this balance raised the need to affirm the position of Kosovo and the majority population within it, which had experienced state terror by the Republic of Serbia through the State Secret Service-SSS(UDB). (Schwartz 2006, p 105)

Until that time, Kosovo society had not yet begun the transition from agrarian to industrial society, and as a result there was not yet a genuine cultural elite that would precede developments that, in the background, had the will of the majority of the people. Until that time, we consider that what constituted the "ideal" of the people of Kosovo for a state was the remembrance and silent reflection on Albania as a national state of all Albanians. The beginning of the 1970s, apparently all over Yugoslavia, in Kosovo as well it was accompanied by a process of constitutional debates and with relevant amendments, which were summed up in the changes to the Constitution of the SFRY (SFRJ) in 1974. This was the first time that the existing elite, of course, under the pressure of the mass, began to use more and more densely the demand for Kosovo to be identified in terms of its legal-constitutional status as a republic. Kosovo as a republic within the Yugoslav federation, as evidenced by history, would never be achieved, but Tito, however, responded to Albanians with an increase in their involvement in the regional government and the governing structures of the party, giving the province of Kosovo a sensible legal subjectivity. Researcher, Stephan Schwartz points out that with the revisions of the 1974 Constitution, the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina enjoyed almost equal status to that of any republic other than the name. Both had their seats in the federal government mechanisms (albeit with smaller numbers), both could write their own constitution, even though they remained within Serbia. (Schwartz, 2006, p 106)

The new constitutional position of Kosovo can be considered as an embryonic stage of the beginning of Kosovo's statehood and as the fundamental origin of contemporary institutions that contained within them the concept of genuine representation of citizens. Reflections of this base were observed in almost every sphere of

economic-social and political life. The establishment of a provincial government consisting of a majority of the Albanian "communists", the determination of the degree of representation in political and party institutions proportionally to the total population, establishment of the University of Pristina, which soon became the third in Yugoslavia by number of students, the beginning of the ASHA's (ASA-Academy of Science and Education) work in the KSAK (SAPK-Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo) and then the Albanological Institute and the Kosovo Institute of History as well as other educational and cultural institutions are the basic premise of creating Albanian political and intellectual elites in Kosovo as an autonomous part of the existing institutional system.

This entire new situation created, gradually started to disunite Kosovo from a mentality of dependence and subordination, thus creating a new, more independent political and identity mentality, even emphasizing the unique state identity with respect to a part that had the remembrance for Albania as a national state of the people of Kosovo still fresh. This stage of Kosovo's development as a semi-autonomous entity within the Yugoslav communist state, with all systemic and ideological restrictions, will serve as the starting point for creating political and institutional culture in the country. For the first time throughout history, the people of Kosovo managed to emerge from the legacy of the clannish political tradition to leave room for creating a new tradition of unification under the public institutions of the state.

Along with developments in the field of education and culture, agrarian society left space for the industrialized society for the first time, and a great economic, infrastructural, media and technological aspect, and consequently, emancipating aspect as well, described Kosovo especially by the end of the seventies. Kosovo society was already aiming for the first time to be represented through its own identity values, not only political but also economic, academic, cultural, sports and other values as well. As Hobsbawm says, similar developments increasingly eradicated the city's cultural advantages with respect to those of the villages (Hobsbawm, 1997, 20), and this was reflected more and more in Kosovo during those years, influencing perceptions about the idea that a united political community comes being strengthened more and more. This developmental dynamics undoubtedly had decisive impact on raising the overall institutional and national awareness and, consequently, of political culture as a sublime value of this advanced consciousness.

When talking about Kosovo's political culture, all the attributes which began to be manifested by academic or cultural political elites in their daily activities, to be raised in their own self-identification values within a system where each federal entity imposed its achievements, of course, considering them as contributions to the common state. However, as it is well known, this emancipating Kosovo process within the federal state was short-lived. The first shock of the system, as Misha Glenny would call it, took place in March 1981, when Albanian students in Pristina demanded better conditions. (Glenny, 2000, 624) This outbreak of Albanian students did not come as a result of Serbian repression, but rather as expression of a national awareness and political culture expressed through the democratic right of protest so that Kosovo would realize its status of a republic within the federation, which was precluded in an institutionalized way.

Demonstrations of the Albanian students of 1981 should be seen as a natural evolution that came first, as a result of increased level of general emancipation and much greater participation of Albanians in the institutional and economic life of the country. Now in Kosovo, where only two or three decades ago the illiteracy rate was high, there was no family, which did not have at least one student or one employee in the public sector. This educational and industrial revolution, according to well known scholar Oliver J. Schmitt, influenced the replacement of an Ottoman elite with a new intellectual elite, which within the Yugoslav system did much to affirm national identity values. (Schmitt, 2012, p. 189-195) Referring to this author, a considerable part of these changes came from the top, as part of the Yugoslav state's policies, for the strengthening of other nations in Yugoslavia. The replacement of the naming "šiptari" in the name "Albanci" (Albanians) according to the 1974 constitutional changes, then the creation of a standard Albanian language, the permissibility of the mobility of university professors from Tirana and Pristina, the permissibility of massive use of texts and books published in Albania are just some indicators of this ascertainment. (Schmitt, 2012, p. 181-182)

However, with regard to the topic discussed in this paper, we consider that the demonstrations of Kosovo Albanian students should be seen from another dimension, as the starting point for an erosive movement for the disintegration of federal Yugoslavia and a nationalist spirit for the creation of independent national states. Or, as the academic Rexhep Qosja would consider as "a preface to the events that will bring about historical changes: the crisis of communist ideology, and ultimately its upheaval, the Yugoslav federalism crisis and, finally, its disintegration, the Balkan crisis and, in the end, its new political and state reconstruction". (Qosja, 1998, 216)

This historical trajectory is the best indicator of how dynamic and complex the process of shaping political culture in Kosovo was during the dramatic years of 1974-1989, when Albanians were no longer satisfied with what the Yugoslav system offered, nor did they ever become devoted followers of that system. Moreover, the new intellectual elite, partly, the political elite as well, acted towards establishing a consolidated

national and political identity (republic) within the Federation, being aware that in the process of its disintegration would have legitimized the right to break away.

The major breaks of the bipolar system influenced the emergence of other nationalisms as well. First of all, Serbian nationalism had already created the pretext of its emergence. The demonstrations of 1981 served as the overture of the very rampant revelation of this nationalism. The instrumentalism of the Kosovo Serb movement, the draconian punishments of the Albanians participating in the 1981 demonstrations, the drafting of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (SASA-ASHAS) Memorandum (1986) and the Serbian Government's project of Milosevic for abrogation of Kosovo's autonomy is an evidence, as M. Glenny points out, in 1989, based on the slogans of a group of Serb protesters in Vushtrri, "Srbija je ustala" ("Serbia is set on the foot"). (Glenny, 2000, p 627)

The epilogue of this re-emergence of the most powerful nationalism in Yugoslavia is already known to us all. It will bring the end of the existence of the federalist socialist state of Yugoslavia and the beginning of a process of creating independent national states. In this process, Kosovo obviously has the most complex and difficult journey. The year of 1989, from this paper's point of view, represents the year of the great turning from where an era of national and political maturity testing of Kosovo, which is witnessed throughout the stages of its state building process, will begin.

Creating an Albanian "parallel society" and peaceful resistance through non-participation in Serbian state institutions along with the organization of several parallel institutions in education, health, culture, etc., through extraordinary social capital, are the first important test for Kosovo Albanians, in their path with more obstacles to independence and state-building. Some authors are right to see this as the first stage of statehood, more virtual and fictitious, but which essentially helped in shaping the idea of the creation of the state of Kosovo. (Schmitt, 2012, p. 248-252); (Clark, 2000, p. 204-205); (Gashi, 2012, p. 12-23); The high degree of national and state-building maturity of the Kosovo Albanian population, expressed through the declaration of constitutional declaration (2 July 1990), the constitutional approval (September 1990), the organization of free elections for the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, the boycott of jobs in state-owned enterprises, whose retaining was conditioned with loyalty to Serbia, as well as the self-financing of Kosovo's fictitious state institutions, are the best evidence of the existence of a sufficiently consolidated political and institutional culture.

Despite the positive evolution of Kosovo society and the emergence of a political society that began to assume the features of proper political organization, the political situation was aggravated by Serbia's systematic state terror, by which the move began to gradually abandon the political infrastructure built in the communist system and demanded a new alternative, thus influencing social peace through a peaceful movement of resistance, being accepted as the best option of the moment. The moment of establishing a peaceful movement is also a turning point for the degree of political maturity of the people of Kosovo, because a new idea was created, that of democracy as a desired political system, although what was meant by "democracy" it was an idea and not a realistic picture of what it would look like in reality. One of the greatest merits of the period of peaceful movement was the fact that through it, Kosovo already had an "autochthonous spokesman" of the political problems faced by society. Of course this was only for a while. The fact that LDK managed to consolidate the idea of citizenship without being involved in the political paths that had followed the other republics of Yugoslavia proved to be not very fruitful in the realization of this idea. This was proved during the Dayton Conference, which was far from the issue of Kosovo Albanians. (Hudson, 2009, 136).

After Dayton, a new phase to overcome Europe's neglect of systematic oppression was introduced through the military alternative, the armed resistance of the Kosovo Liberation Army. The epilogue proved that in the created domestic and international circumstances, war emerged as the most strategic action towards separation from Serbian rule. So war should be seen as the most prominent part of political culture and the vision of a new and completely free Kosovo.

An important aspect related to the armed struggle for political independence is precisely the reflection of the political culture of the people of Kosovo and its tradition that has an impact today in the way of perceiving the independent state. This is because the new situation created after the war brought to the free people of Kosovo and its political elite the necessity to undergo a long and tedious process of state-building, bringing them to a new field, closely monitored by the international presence, in which case the path to full independence had to be made within the imposed standards for which local political culture was not always capable of accepting. In addition, it was soon proved that the abstracted "freedom" during the time of Serbian rule did not automatically solve all social problems and demands, whether political or economic.

The closure of the chapter of political independence and the opening of the state-building chapter is an important aspect that brings political culture back to the focus to enable us to understand what the independent state of Kosovo is today and how can its future look like.

Towards an “idealized democracy”

The political development trajectory referred to above aimed at re-emphasizing the importance of political culture for the proper functioning or not of political systems. As it turned out, in Kosovo's case, such one did not work because it did not include the political will of the mass, putting the latter in search of a new system. But is political culture enough to politically organize a society? If we refer to the Kosovo case, it becomes clear to us that "the idea of the people's will without a genuine constitutional and politically strong state structure such as the 1990-1998 period is not enough to keep it on foot, as much as if we refer to the Weimar Republic, from which it becomes clear that the idea of a state equipped with legal and constitutional assets is not enough to keep it in place while there is no peoples will for such a thing." From this drawn parallel we can understand that political culture is closely related to the idea of the state as the materialization of the will of the mass. Therefore, to understand the current "state" of Kosovo, one should study the aspects of the political culture that preceded the latter. In this regard, as we saw in the short chronology, Kosovo's political society since its gradual formation has never aspired a communist-type political state. Even at the time when demands for a state became inevitable, like other ex-socialist societies, Kosovo society looked to a new political system of capitalist democracy, hoping it would respond to their real needs and that represents the kind of state the mass has always sought after. However, it must be clarified that many people have perceived democracy close to themselves only based on their contemporary positive connotation (Welzel & Inglehart, 2009, p. 129) and not on the ability to judge that the same as a political system represents the ideal consistency of their general interests. Such a fortune has also happened with Kosovo society. Before putting the prospect of democracy before itself, Kosovo society and its experience with the state and political authority has always been bitter. This society has never positively questioned itself, whether it needs the state, and why the same is good. Evolution of political thinking has only come about when a generally educated society and political and cultural elite have emerged from a generally illiterate society.

What characterizes the current state of Kosovo is the confrontation of political culture between the ideals of democracy, the powerful tradition of clannish organization, and the socialist legacy. All three of these elements are present to this day in the way citizens' access to the relationship with the state. Moreover, since the post-war Kosovo is in the so-called "transition phase" which is theoretically known to be continuing even at the moment we are writing, a stage that has been quite difficult in many directions and has brought to the surface these elements of political culture. One of the biggest problems behind independence remains the economy, as Kosovo continues to be a relatively low-income country. (Montanaro, 2009, p. 6) It should be noted that precisely because of the political mentality and political culture that required making of the state, the people of Kosovo were in some way used to legitimize poverty and the difficult economic situation in the name of the national political cause. However, today these reports are more and more invalid today. The period of international administration was the first to break the taboo of ideals. As Schmitt says, "under the rule of the United Nations a fake economic conjuncture was created through new jobs in an inflated administration." (Schmitt, 2012, 278) In the post-independence phase, the new state was rapidly stripped of idealist attributes and became an address for criticism of the overall economic and social situation. The political elite that materialized the independent state was not able to hide for a long time after the state-building attributes and needs in response to growing economic and social demands. The remembrance from the former socialist system on organization of the economy, which, though not efficient, nevertheless provided jobs, (Rexhepi & Ademi, 2012, 618) represented one of the challenges of complementing the mass with the new liberal economy system of free market based primarily on the private sector. It is precisely this political culture that prevents the construction of an optimistic vision of liberal capitalism and as such, it continues to provoke demands in the name of public dependence.

Another important aspect that brings political culture as an influential force to the nature of the current state of Kosovo is the shift from a collective consciousness to a personal consciousness, prone to individual interests. At the stage of forming a political society as a result of the above circumstances, the political culture of Kosovo society was a culture of the mass, directed by the mass oriented towards the aims of the mass. In such a situation, any individual who came up against the will of the mass would easily have been anathematized. This culture was formed in the mixed spirit of the clannish tradition on the one hand, where elite features had to correspond to morality and strength, then under intellectual pressure, aimed at abandoning the old mentality of patriarchal organization to leave room for new progressive ideas as well as socialist views, as Delsol says, aimed to unify the thoughts of individuals in order to make them subject to a macro-social demand. (Millon-Delsol, 2006, 49) However, political evolution also led to social evolution. There is a growing tendency to see the relationship between the public and the private sphere on the narrow base of individual interest. Consequently, the principles by which the political culture of the mass has functioned are now virtually invalid and are being replaced day by day with new principles that in the background have the "identity and personal well-being" of

the Kosovo individual. In these circumstances, the political and identity culture in Kosovo is changing from the abstract idea of "a secure and bright future" in a format that corresponds to Popper's well-known maxim that "the future does not exist yet and that here is our great responsibility: to influence the future and make it better." (Popper, 2001, 196) But how willing are Kosovo people to understand the new roles they are unconsciously contributing to in everyday life? Of course, in democracies, individual and group ambitions are best achieved through active participation in political life, mainly through political parties, who receive, share and exercise state power. In the case of Kosovo, political parties can freely be considered the biggest beneficiaries of democracy because they have, through controlling the levers of power, distributed and redistributed government posts to their supporters by building a political physiognomy of "the state of the parties". This seems to have occurred based on the archaic tradition of the people of Kosovo, where separation into clans and incarnation with the clan as an opposition to other clans has influenced the creation of political parties that operate not on the basis of ideology but on the basis of political pragmatism. The state of the parties as a characteristic structure of democracy, (Schmidt, 2012, pp. 359) in the case of Kosovo, is expected to evolve through the integration processes in the European Union, during which, even political culture itself, will be subordinated to that degree in order to get a new shape.

Generally speaking, Kosovo's political culture has emerged and is stratified at moments of political crises throughout history, crises which, based on the fear of the destruction of political and social forms, have been oriented towards seeking a strong state, which was a characteristic of European pre-industrial societies in the period of absolutism. (Goulemot, 2008, 17) However, being part of a "strong state" like Yugoslavia proved to be a challenge for Kosovo society, which faced a stronger state than it could withstand, was oriented towards raising a private sphere, as a form of resistance.

The debate about the influence of Kosovo's political culture on its format of already independent and democratic state must be done precisely between these two trajectories, on the one hand, the demand for a strong state as it was idealized, and on the other hand, the tendency to limit it, as evidenced by the bitter experience. However, this debate should hold the position as outlined above, that there are still many areas in which Kosovo's political culture should evolve in order to correspond to the democratic tradition as claimed at the beginning of the formation of this culture.

II. Conclusion

Individualism versus collectivism and hierarchy versus equality are two positions that generally divide the nature of nations and states around the world. In the case of Kosovo, there is not yet a proper identification format that would assess whether the country's political culture has collective or individual premise, and whether the same is the elite or mass culture. The idea behind this paper was not intended to present scientific achievements on the topic in question, as it was intended to invite the opening of such a necessary debate. After the March 2004 protests that turned into turmoil, many critics of international community "accused" it of failing to establish a multiethnic society in Kosovo. But these critics had escaped the fact that the 2004 events cannot be summarized in the simple question of whether or not IC (International Community) has failed to manage a multiethnic society. Those, as well as many other political events that characterized these 15 years after the war, are also first of all reflections of the political mentality stratified by the historical and political tradition of the people of Kosovo.

This tradition and this political culture are needed to be further examined in the form of interpreting social relations under the conditions of an already independent state. From this point of view, our initial contribution is the conclusion that Kosovo's political culture is a culture that cannot be explained simply within the typologies of Almond and Verbas, Ljiphart or Elizar, but the same is more complex and as such should be sought within notions such as the tradition, the intellectual cogitation and legacy of the socialist system.

Precisely on this background, the idea of "the Republic of Kosovo" as an independent and democratic state is more of a desirable concept that continues to be challenged by a clannish patriarchal tradition, from a socialist past, and from the intellectual mistrust for its establishment in the right lines. Consequently, many institutional mechanisms that have been transplanted are not expected to function properly without an evolution of political culture, a basis for which, of course, is continuous education with new trends, focusing on building an emancipated society with a clear profile for its political future.

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