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Non-Dominant Groups in Kosovo: A Marginalised View on (De)Securitisation of Minorities After Conflict

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Abstract

Drawing on case studies and in-depth analysis of ethnic minorities in Kosovo against the backdrop of statebuilding since 1999, this article discusses how the securitisation and desecuritisation of minorities after conflict is particularly problematic when seen from the marginalised perspective of non-dominant groups. I therefore argue that the adoption of a multi-ethnic statebuilding model of governance, including consociational power-sharing arrangements, has triggered unintended consequences for the (de)securitisation[1] of minorities in Kosovo.[2] Among such consequences is the risk of perceiving all minorities as potential threats and approaching minority issues merely through the lenses of security. By exploring various social, economic, legal, political, and identity characteristics of non-dominant communities in Kosovo and drawing on personal interviews with key stakeholders, representatives, and members of minority communities, this article shows the need for a more inclusive understanding of security which stretches beyond the threat of physical violence. This would permit, among other things, a more effective approach to dealing with the different layers of securitisation of minorities identified here. Otherwise, minority rights and concerns cannot escape the straitjacket of emergency politics. In conclusion, the long-term risk of managing multi-ethnicity through one-size-fits-all approaches is that statebuilding[3] in plural societies will always struggle to desecuritise minority rights and develop 'normal' politics of diversity.

Keywords: Kosovo; securitisation; desecuritisation; EAI dilemma; multi-ethnic; minority rights; power-sharing; statebuilding; diversity; identity;

This article considers securitisation and desecuritisation (Balzacq, 2005, 2011; Floyd, 2011; Hansen, 2012; Jutila, 2006; Nancheva, 2017; Roe, 2004; Skleparis, 2008; Wæver, 1998) of non-dominant minorities in Kosovo in the context of far-reaching post-war and post-independence provisions and legislation on minority rights protection. Inspired by recent work addressing the position of non-dominant groups in divided societies and the 'exclusion amid inclusion' dilemma (EAI) (Agarin et al., 2018; Juon, 2020; Mikhael, 2021; Wise, 2018), this article contributes to research on (de)securitisation of minorities following ethnic conflicts through a focused case study and qualitative analysis of the impact of peacebuilding measures such as power-sharing on non-dominant minority communities in Kosovo. Overall, by employing previous qualitative research consisting of document analysis and primary data (interviews), this article explores the unintended consequences of implementing a multi-ethnic framework of governance, and the extent to which non-dominant groups in Kosovo have been overlooked by efforts towards reconciliation and desecuritisation of minority-majority relations.

More precisely, this paper examines the impact of the international and domestic focus on relations between Albanians and Serbs in post-conflict Kosovo on the de jure and de facto situation of Bosniak, Turkish, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani, Montenegrin and Croat communities (exemplifying the EAI dilemma). By 'situation' I mean different layers of securitisation, as well as frameworks in place to accommodate the presence of minority groups including integration, accommodation, or marginalisation, depending on the security, socio-economic, political, cultural, and territorial characteristics of each group. The article therefore connects the concepts of securitisation and desecuritisation with the EAI dilemma, according to which "for power-sharing to create stability and pacify the dominant groups, it must marginalise non-dominant groups" (Agarin et al., 2020, p. 3).

Even though non-dominant communities have also been affected by minority politics, peacebuilding interventions and post-independence legislation (Calu, 2020; Cocozzelli, 2008; Landau, 2017), most literature looking at minority rights in Kosovo has almost exclusively focused on Serbs as the dominant minority (Baliqi, 2018; Beha, 2014; Lončar, 2015; Musaj, 2015; Perritt, 2009; Stevens; 2009). Therefore, academic research on Kosovo has mainly followed the same narrative developed by international and domestic actors leading post-conflict statebuilding, which equates multi-ethnicity with the Serb-Albanian relationship, while excluding the "insignificant 'others'" (Musliu & Orbie, 2015, p. 188).

Furthermore, the role of non-dominant groups during the conflict has been unclear and, as a result, it has affected their position in the reconciliation and statebuilding processes. This lack of clarity, coupled with the lack of scholarly, policy, and political attention, means that such groups have been, by default, included in the securitised discourse that portrays minorities as a threat to society and social order. Equally, then, my aim is to show how securitisation discourses and practices have the power to turn even the most vulnerable minority groups into perceived security threats. The marginalised perspective of non-dominant minorities employed here highlights the need for a more inclusive understanding of security which goes beyond physical violence and can recognise the intricacies of each group's own threat perceptions.

This article reveals the risks of creating a social, political, security, and citizenship hierarchy (Krasniqi, 2015) among minority groups and, in line with the EAI dilemmas, how this may derive from generalised frameworks and constitutional design for divided societies (Kymlicka, 2008). Formal provisions for minorities and specific post-conflict measures such as consociational power-sharing (Beha, 2019) cannot fully guarantee desecuritisation (Krasteva et al., 2017). Nor can they ensure positive and negative peace (Galtung et al., 2002), social cohesion, or the legitimisation of the state by all its constituent ethnic groups. Contrariwise, generic legislation and measures can become tools for permanent securitisation (Adamides, 2019), segregation, and marginalisation, even if done unintentionally (Calu, 2018). In this sense, more research is needed to analyse statebuilding arrangements and securitisation discourses and practices to understand why they often disregard the various roles and agency of minorities during and after conflict and portray them merely as security threats.

In the following section, this article puts forward a discussion of securitisation and desecuritisation of minorities in plural societies such as Kosovo. This is followed by an analysis of post-war securitisation in Kosovo emerging from continued social and political tensions. The third section builds on this by analysing the (de)securitisation of minority politics and rights within the context of multi-ethnic governance and consociational power-sharing. The fourth and last section examines different layers of (de)securitisation in Kosovo by addressing the situation and perspectives of each non-dominant minority in Kosovo, starting with the Bosniaks and ending with the Montenegrin and the Croat communities. The paper concludes by outlining the pitfalls of a one-size-fits-all approach to and understanding of de(securitisation) and the negative consequences of the lack of inclusivity for non-dominant minority communities and post-conflict societies at large.

1. Securitisation of Minorities in Plural Societies

Securitisation has been broadly defined as a succession of top-down assumptions or statements that successfully present social, political, economic, or environmental issues as existential threats to a referent object, which consequently requires emergency measures for protection outside normal politics (Buzan et al., 1998; Waever, 1995). On the other hand, the much less researched concept of desecuritisation refers to the process through which issues can change their security character "out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere" (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 4). This conceptualisation of desecuritisation is not flawless as it ignores political and ethical implications (Aradau, 2004; Roe, 2004); however, it will still be instrumental in discussing Kosovo's struggle to remove barriers to normal minority politics and sustainable integration of all ethnic groups (Al & Byrd., 2018).

Beyond the dominant International Relations (IR) approach developed by the 'Copenhagen School', this article understands securitisation as a multifaceted process involving more than a speech act, and it is thus more closely aligned with the practice-oriented securitisation scholarship mostly associated with the sociological approach of the 'Paris School' (Balzacq, 2005; Bigo 2002; Huysmans, 2011). Furthermore, in relation to the specific application of securitisation to minority issues, scholars have tended to focus on how minorities have been securitised and on the role of securitising agents in ethnic conflict (Carlà, 2021; Olesker, 2014; van Willigen, 2010). Accordingly, this article reflects primarily on the role of legislation (Basaran, 2010), key instruments, and political practices that have affected Kosovo minorities in securitising processes, as well as their impact on the feasibility of desecuritisation. Besides the role of *discursive* elements (Grainca, 2013) and broader legitimising speech acts (Neumann, 2002), the analysis of post-war *practices* of multi-ethnic governance helps to better understand the making and breaking of identity as an existential threat outside 'normal politics' in Kosovo (Aradau, 2006; Balzacq, 2011; Behnke, 2006; Floyd, 2011, Williams, 2003).

Given the focus of this article, it is important to say that groups, communities, and people can be defined as 'non-dominant' for different reasons, including their very small size, their formal status (or lack thereof), their socio-economic vulnerability, or simply because of their side-lined position in relation to majorities and minorities who are dominant in a given state, polity, or society. Regarding Kosovo, it is crucial to explore the dynamics of securitising discourses and practices vis-à-vis the non-dominant minorities who are defined as ethnic groups and are not regarded "as relevant agents of political participation" (Agarin & McCulloch, 2020, p. 17).

In the post-Cold War context, the human security paradigm and agenda[4] has incorporated non-military issues (poverty, health, the environment, migration, identity) by raising awareness about the importance of addressing neglected global challenges and developing new forms of protection for individuals and groups. In this sense, the international focus of vulnerable people and groups, despite being at risk of being securitised can be considered a positive development, as it brings their interests to light and, potentially, causes real policy change as part of the "utility of human security" (Thomas & Tow, 2002). Among the newly exposed security challenges was also the threat of discrimination, hostility, and violence motivated by bias against ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, and national identity (Keller & Rothchild, 1996). By asking for new forms of protection (including human rights norms and mechanisms), the human security framework has also challenged the basic conditions required for states to maintain their authority and enhance both internal and external security to avoid state failure or civil wars.

The human security framework has also been criticised for perpetuating the perception of states as security providers even though they remain tied to structures of deprivation and insecurity (Newman, 2016). Unlike the positive perspective on human security discussed above, critical scholars (Bellamy & McDonald, 2002; Chandler, 2008; Hampson, 2004; Paris, 2001) highlight that this type of securitisation has dangerously moved issues from the realm of normal politics to the realm of exceptional or emergency politics, thereby "justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure" (Buzan, et al., 1998, pp. 23–24). It is thus valuable and necessary to discuss this issue in the context of securitisation of non-dominant groups in Kosovo and reflect on the need for a "robust conception of the human good of security" (Loader & Walker 2006, p. 166) that can manage the potential excesses of security in a democratic society (Newman, 2016).

On a broader level, transitional societies challenged by their multi-ethnic/multinational character have often been at risk of developing politics and practices of segregation. This is not an unfamiliar issue in societies divided by conflict; from Bosnia to South Africa and Northern Ireland to Afghanistan, the reproduction of a security dilemma can make it very difficult to build sustainable governance (Guelke, 2012). However, such dynamics also appear within peaceful negotiations (such as parliamentary debates) between majority and minorities over institutional frameworks for coexistence. Another problem facing diverse and divided post-conflict societies like Kosovo is therefore the applicability of solutions offered by internationally driven peacebuilding and statebuilding missions. Solutions formulated by the

international community may involve the adoption of multicultural policies or integrative institutional arrangements designed to accommodate the interests of different groups. However, the objectives of such solutions may be accepted by the groups involved in negotiating arrangements for coexistence within the same political community, but they often exclude groups that did not have a seat at the negotiations table (O'Halloran, 2005). From this perspective, securitisation represents "a sustained strategic practice aimed at convincing a target audience to accept, based on what it knows about the world, the claim that a specific development (oral threat or event) is threatening enough to deserve an immediate policy to alleviate it" (Balzacq, 2005, p. 173).

In the context of unintended consequences of securitisation of minorities after conflict, the irreconcilable character of interests and repeated failures to make compromises in similar scenarios have demonstrated over time that international recommendations are not necessarily effective and appropriate. For example, in Kosovo, because of the initial focus of the international mandate on state institutions and inter-group conflict (Serbs vs. Albanians), it has become more difficult to differentiate between inter- and intra-group conflict, and between securitisation and desecuritisation of ethnic groups:

> [T]he initial focus on very specific threat constructions shaped the political process in powerful terms, because it inscribed exactly these threats in the discourses and practices of statebuilding and resulted in other threats of violence being "overlooked" as politically significant in public communication. (Bonacker et al., 2018, p. 489)

Furthermore, while most well-established Western states have desecuritised ethnic politics by transferring relations between the state and minorities out of the security box and into "the democratic politics box" (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 107), new states in post-conflict, post-communist, or post-colonial contexts focused on consolidating national legitimacy have been particularly prone to accentuating boundaries of exclusion. In relation to this, complex risks like asymmetrical integration, upholding of segregation, or fostering of inequality between different ethnic groups have shaped the "threat perceptions of potential violence" and, consequently, the entire statebuilding process in Kosovo (Bonacker et al., 2018, p. 489).

When there is a high level of ethnic-based structural social division, the state may be perceived as representing the interests of a particular group or, in the case of a multi-ethnic state, specific ethnic groups. By portraying minority groups as potential existential threats, the political mobilisation of minorities may be prohibited "and even if minority demands can be

voiced, they will be rejected by the larger society and the state. After all, how can groups that are disloyal have legitimate claims against the state?" (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 106). In Kosovo, after the end of war in 1999 and following the 2008 unilateral declaration of independence, its official pledge to multi-ethnicity has faced many challenges. Such challenges are clearly visible through issues in commitment to fostering the integration and implementation of minority rights, as well in the level of understanding and acceptance of the new context by both majority Albanians and Serbs as the dominant minority (Calu, 2018; Landau, 2017).

While Kosovo authorities have been collaborating for the protection of minority rights as a one of the key conditions for independence (Perritt, 2009), minority Serbs have been highly divided on this matter and, even though they have shown some commitment to integrate into Kosovo society, they have not dropped their non-constitutional ties with Serbia. Therefore, I identify this as a first principal layer of securitisation of minorities in Kosovo, in which the situation of the Serb community is not seen by Kosovo institutions or Serb political leaders "as a matter of normal democratic debate and negotiation, but as a matter of state security" (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 106). This can also be understood from the perspective of securitisation within the political sector:

> Threats towards the internal legitimacy of the political unit revolve around issues of ideologies and ideas that define the state. Threats regarding the external recognition of states revolve around the issue of sovereignty and the state's external legitimacy. (Adamides, 2019, p. 10)

Statebuilding in Kosovo has, thus, also consisted of dealing with major political threats, which have not been eased by the fact that one of the conditions for Kosovo's partially recognised independence has been to show real and full commitment to respect and include its minority communities in the governance of the new state (Dahlman & Williams, 2010). Consequently, while achieving full international recognition (legal, external sovereignty) remains a very difficult task for Kosovo, so does managing and desecuritising inter-ethnic relations (domestic sovereignty). The discourses and practices that securitise non-dominant minorities need to also be understood in the context where the legitimacy of Kosovo as a new polity depends on the integration and accommodation of its communities. In the long term, it is paramount to assess whether Kosovo can develop the will and capacity to move beyond managing diversity as a permanent exercise of securitisation that portrays minorities as a threat to society, stability, and social order.

2. Post-war Securitisation in Kosovo: A Complex Story

After 1999, Kosovo was under the administration of the UN in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1244, which established a status of autonomy. The Resolution established the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) with the role to administer the province "while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo" (UNSCR, Res. 1244, 1999). Moreover, the Kosovo Force (KFOR); the NATO-led international peacekeeping force in Kosovo, was responsible for the transition to peace in Kosovo while also guaranteeing the safe return of refugees from all communities.

In addition, even though policy and legislation were developed and approximated in line with European standards, the implementation process was slow and inefficient. As in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, internationally driven governance hurried to elaborate rules, laws, guiding principles, and measures in the absence of legitimacy, capacity, and the means to make all these functional (Lemay-Hébert, 2009). A decade later, and in the context of the European Union's engagement with the countries of the Western Balkans through the Stabilisation and Association Process, there was little progress on the topic of human rights and the protection of minorities, particularly concerning religious freedom, women's rights, children's rights, and property rights, while minority rights were "guaranteed by law but restricted in practice because of security concerns" (European Commission, 2007, p. 52).

After five years without any major incidents, ethnic clashes occurred again in March 2004 after unfounded rumours about the drowning of three Albanian children provoked major riots across Kosovo, particularly in Caglavica and Kosovska Mitrovica, involving more than 50,000 Albanians (The Economist, 2004). The three days of rampage left 19 people dead, nearly 900 injured, and over 4,000 people displaced, while also damaging or destroying over 700 Serb, Ashkali, and Roma homes, 30 Serbian churches, and some public buildings (ICG, 2004). The revolt only stopped after NATO transferred a further 3,000 soldiers into the province and the Albanian leadership managed to calm things down. Nonetheless, the spontaneous and quick escalation of violence confirmed the fragility of the post-war situation. Kosovo thus continued to have a troubled society with weak institutions and leadership and risked continuing to push out minority groups and "ultimately consume its own wafer-thin layer of liberal intelligentsia" (ICG, 2004, p. i).

Post-conflict Kosovo was thus marked by the perpetuation of ethnic divisions and tensions, and statebuilding efforts focused on addressing the situation of the Kosovo Serb

community, now representing a decreasing minority in the polity that was no longer under the authority of Belgrade. Minority groups, particularly Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (R.A.E.) communities, who were trapped in the middle of the Serb-Albanian conflict, were also at risk. After 1999 these communities were generally perceived by the majority Albanians as having collaborated with Serbian and Yugoslav forces during the conflict (Sula-Raxhimi, 2019) and, thus, became targets of discrimination and marginalisation.[5]

Consequently, the different layers of securitisation and desecuritisation of ethnic groups discussed in the next section of the article have complicated Kosovo's twofold task (Calu, 2020) of promoting multi-ethnicity and integrating all its people and constituent groups as part of a unitary polity with a cohesive society.

3. Multi-ethnic Governance and (De)securitisation through power-sharing

> Desecuritization of minority rights involves the telling of the stories of the majority and minorities in such a way that those groups do not exclude each other from the political community. The state is presented as a state of and for two or more nationally or ethnically defined groups. To change the story and obtain support for that new narrative can be hard—even practically impossible in the foreseeable future—but it is never logically impossible. (Jutila, 2006, p. 181)

As previously indicated, one of the key dilemmas explored by this article is whether securitisation discourses and practices targeting minorities in Kosovo could ever be reversed to allow for the sustainable development of normal minority politics and inter-ethnic relations. Therefore, the article will now discuss Kosovo's legal and institutional framework and the impact of consociational power-sharing tools on the desecuritisation of minorities from a non-dominant perspective. On the one hand, Roe has argued that is never possible because the rights and identity of minorities are grounded "on an inherent condition of securitization" (2004, p. 280), which necessarily positions minority groups as simultaneously under threat by and as existential threat to the majority.

However, following Jutila's line of thought as quoted above, it could be argued that Kosovo's multi-ethnic policies and practices (power-sharing tools and arrangements, political/administrative/cultural/linguistic rights) do not rule out desecuritisation. In this sense, it is possible in Kosovo to tell stories of ethnically defined collective identities in such a way that they do not exclude other such identities. Nonetheless, Jutila also recognises that even though logically possible, the desecuritisation of minorities may be practically impossible. As

the analysis of non-dominant groups will show, in the case of Kosovo, the possibility of desecuritisation is further complicated by old and new divisions beyond majority-minority relations (Calu, 2020), mutual perception, ethnic hierarchisation, and competing narratives of the self and other (Rumelili, 2015).

Kosovo's institutional capacity to deal with the integration and accommodation of minorities has played a fundamental role in incentivising minorities to exercise their rights and integrate as equal political partners. However, it has been particularly difficult for Kosovo to uphold its constitutional commitments to diversity and plural governance in the context of external dependency on international administrators (Hehir, 2010), endogenous socio-economic challenges, and state weakness (Kostovicova, 2007). In addition, Kosovo's path to independence and self-governance has required stability and the construction of social cohesion, but in a divided and unstable environment, trying to construct and secure unity has been a monumental task:

> [S]mall ethnic and religious minorities do not fit into the neat system of the dominant Serbian-Albanian opposition, for example the Croats, Turks, Gypsies, Circassians and Slavic Muslims (Goranci), as well as the Catholic Albanians, the Turkophone Albanians (particularly in Prizren) and the Slavophone Albanians (in Rahvec). Their identity can be considered as 'neithernor' or 'both-and.' They are 'betwixt and between' and tend to mess up any neat system of contrast in ethnic classification. (Duijzings, 2000, p. 24)

After the declaration of independence in February 2008, the Constitution was promulgated and defined the Republic of Kosovo an independent, sovereign, democratic, unique, and indivisible state, and as a "multi-ethnic society consisting of Albanian and other Communities, governed democratically with full respect for the rule of law through its legislative, executive and judicial institutions" (Kosovo Constitution, Article 3.1). What should also be observed here is the particular use of the term "communities"[6] (majority and non-majority) with the clear aim to avoid naming any group as "minority" (Calu, 2020), as well as the "othering" of non-Serb groups. In addition, this terminology and understanding of minorities means that Kosovo Albanians could potentially also be perceived and recognised as a non-majority community at the local level, in municipalities where they are not the dominant population (Serb-majority municipalities, for example). Moreover, both the Constitution and the original Law on Communities mentioned only seven minorities in Kosovo by omitting Montenegrins and Croats. Therefore, these very small non-dominant minorities have lacked legal protection, have not been

awarded guaranteed seats in the Assembly, and were not included in the 2011 Census[7] as separate ethnic groups.

Kosovo is a parliamentary democracy and, as outlined in its Constitution and the Law on General Elections, its unicameral Assembly has 120 deputies. Thus, as regards the political participation of minorities at the national level, the most visible and important feature is the right to guaranteed seats in the Kosovo Assembly. More precisely, out of the 120 seats in the Kosovo parliaments, 20 are guaranteed for the 'non-majority' communities. Kosovo Serbs hold 10 of these seats, while the remaining 10 are divided among the other minorities included in the Constitution.[8] Moreover, during the first two electoral mandates following the adoption of the Constitution, minorities in Kosovo had the additional advantage of also participating in the distribution of the 100 seats which were not guaranteed.[9]

While the multi-ethnic constitutional and institutional framework[10] adopted by Kosovo had as its main objective the protection and integration of the Serb community, minority rights and provisions have also had a range of outcomes for non-dominant minorities. In terms of representation and participation of minorities, as well as the protection of their identities, the legislation[11] was developed for both the central and local levels of governance and deals with political rights, decentralisation, socio-economic benefits, education, language, and cultural rights. Moreover, these measures have been largely designed in line with the consociational principles of democratic governance, similar to the power-sharing arrangements in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Macedonia, East-Timor, Burundi, and Afghanistan. As outlined by Baliqi (2018), Kosovo has developed government coalition (minorities have been part of all post-2008 executives in Kosovo), segmental autonomy (best symbolised by ethnic decentralisation of Kosovo), a proportional electoral system (guaranteed seats and representation in public employment), and veto rights (veto powers for Kosovo minority MPs over constitutional amendments).

These developments have automatically also impacted the situation of non-dominant minorities. The veto power, for instance, has made the participation of Kosovo minorities in decision-making very strong and could impact present and future efforts to desecuritise minorities through power-sharing practices (Agarin & McCulloch, 2020; Al & Byrd, 2017; Hama, 2020; Krasteva & Vladisavljević, 2017). To pass proposed laws affecting minorities' vital interests like language and education, concurrent majorities are necessary: not only of the parliament, but also of minority representatives, while repeal of any relevant laws also requires concurrent-majority consent. In theory, by having to be present and vote, minority MPs are

prevented from boycotting the adoption of legislation. Furthermore, according to the constitution, the amendment or adoption of laws must be validated by both a majority of the Assembly (two-thirds) and a majority of the parliamentary members representing minority communities present and voting (two-thirds).[12] Therefore, the inclusion of two supermajorities in the constitution made subsequent constitutional changes very difficult and unlikely.

Among other problems faced by power-sharing arrangements is the portrayal of ethnic communities as homogenous groups with fixed identities. This disregards their particularities and intra-ethnic divisions while, in terms of securitisation, it also neglects the possibility of the existence of diverse or multiple audiences rather than a single unitary one (Huysmans, 2011 Roe, 2006). Such misrepresentations can undermine efforts to desecuritise inter-ethnic relations, as for the power-sharing toolbox employed in post-conflicts societies (Al & Byrd, 2017) to be effective, "it must complement its political and social environment" (O'Halloran, 2005, p. 116).

A similar point has been put forward by Pildes (2008), who argues that democratic institutions and tools can be designed to accommodate ethnic differences for practical reasons but "the aim should be to do this while also building in as much flexibility as possible to enable democratic institutions to be responsive to changes in ethnic identifications over time" (Pildes, 2008, p. 208). As the example of R.A.E. communities will show, securitisation of minorities in Kosovo has been very much affected by the interlinkage between fluid self-identification and the instrumentalisation of identity. As Williams puts it, "[t]hat a society has a multiplicity of identities is neither here nor there: A situation in which identity is being securitized is one in which this reality is being denied and seeking to be transformed" (2003, p. 519).

Moreover, the key role of political elites, who can be securitising agents too, is often problematic, as majority leaders may resist institutional constraints and decide to dissolve or reduce special collective rights of minorities when the opportunity to do so arises (Selway & Templeman, 2012, p. 1552). In Kosovo, besides the exogenous pressures of international statebuilding, desecuritisation through power-sharing tools has also depended on the goodwill of the ethnic groups, the agency of political leaders, and the volatility of their socio-economic, cultural and demographic characteristics (endogenous factors). In this sense, the analysis of non-dominant minorities in Kosovo should also be understood from the perspective of political security agenda and the "organizational stability of social order" (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 141).

Furthermore, the primary purpose of developing a multi-ethnic institutional and legal framework has been to address the integration of Kosovo Serbs as the largest and dominant

community, in contrast with "non-dominant 'others', that is, citizens who find themselves in a position of political irrelevance" (Agarin & McCulloch, 2020, p. 20). In relation to this, Musliu and Orbie (2015, p. 11) argue that Kosovo has tried to become multi-ethnic through a narrative that presents Serbs as a "marked category" while side-lining non-dominant communities or, as they describe them, "the insignificant 'others'". Next, the article looks at the situation of specific non-dominant minorities and consider post-conflict measures in Kosovo that may have triggered the securitisation of minorities through far-reaching legislation, provisions, and consociational features that place minority issues in the sphere of emergency politics.

4. Non-dominant minorities in Kosovo and different layers of de(securitisation)

The last section of the article examines the different characteristics and concerns of each non-dominant minority in Kosovo and highlights the gap between formal status and actual implementation of minority rights and provisions, and Kosovo's own exclusion-amid-inclusion (EAI) dilemma:

> By explicitly accommodating the interests of some groups, power-sharing systems
> – at best – implicitly marginalise non-dominant groups or – at worst – entirely
> restrict their representation and participation. The decision to expressly include
> some groups will result in the exclusion of others; it is also likely to limit the ability
> of new identity groups to emerge and find representation in power-sharing
> structures in the future. (Agarin & McCulloch, 2020, p. 4)

While non-dominant minorities in Kosovo have equal legal collective rights with the Serb minority and could potentially benefit from this unanticipated status, on the ground their situation varies from case to case. As illustrated by the unintended consequences and different layers of de(securitisation) exposed here, formal provisions and post-conflict specific measures like power-sharing cannot guarantee social cohesion and the legitimisation of the state by all its constituent ethnic groups. The inconsistencies in the protection of the rights of non-dominant communities evident in the case studies presented here indicate a potential discrepancy between positive results and impractical measures that obstruct desecuritisation and foster division instead of integration (Sasse, 2005).

Table 1

Kosovo 2011 Official Census Results by Ethnicity

(The 2011 census did not include North Kosovo and was largely boycotted by Kosovo Serbs, thus the low figure for the community in this table)

	Figures	%
Albanian	1.616.869	92.9%
Serbs	25.532	1.5%
Bosniaks	27.533	1.6%
Turks	18.738	1.1%
Roma	8.824	0.5%
Ashkali	15.436	0.9%
Egyptian	11.524	0.7%
Gorani	10.265	0.6%
Other	2.352	0.1%
Total population	1.739.825	100%

Source: Musaj, 2015, p.89.

4.1 The Bosniak Community

According to the results of the 2011 Census (Table 1), there were 27,533 (1.6%) members of the Bosniak community living in Kosovo, which confirmed them as the second largest minority group after Serbs. Most Bosniaks in Kosovo live in the municipality of Prizren, in southern Kosovo. Bosniaks were first allowed to declare themselves as belonging to a distinct ethnic group in 1961 by a Yugoslav census that included them as "Muslims in the ethnic sense" (Stevens, 2009, p. 8). During the 1990s, in the context of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the 1992 outbreak of the Bosnian war, many Muslims and other people with cultural ties to Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the term 'Bosniak' and started to advance the Bosnian language as distinct from Serbo-Croatian (Baldwin, 2006). For Bosniaks, speaking the Bosnian language plays a defining role in their positioning within Kosovo and is a source of great cultural pride which distinguishes this community from other minorities. However, it also hinders their integration in Kosovo due, among other things, to the community's limited knowledge of Albanian (the majority language). This remains "a determinant factor for the sense of insecurity and the level of freedom of movement exercised by the community" (OSCE, 2011a).

Concerning the security and freedom of movement of Bosniaks—the community has not had significant problems in any of the five regions of Kosovo where they reside. However, in the post-war and post-independence contexts, the socio-economic situation of the Bosniak community in Kosovo has been difficult and is affected by the same issue of unemployment

affecting all other communities. An important issue for the Bosniak minority has been the situation of returns and reintegration, as a high number of Kosovo Bosniaks were forced to leave Kosovo during and after the conflict due to concerns for their own safety, lack of economic opportunities, and the difficulty in finding jobs (OSCE, 2011a; Stevens, 2009)

Nonetheless, Kosovo Bosniaks have generally managed to live peacefully alongside both the majority of Albanians (religious ties) and the Kosovo Serb community (linguistic ties) and thus can be considered among the better-integrated minorities in Kosovo. In the words of a Bosniak representative: "We are for integration but not for assimilation. But at the same time, this discussion is problematic because we are already integrated, we have co-existed peacefully with the Albanians for a long time" (Personal Interviews, 2013). The context of the war, the post-conflict developments, and the more recent post-independence social, political and security processes have all required the Bosniak community to reassess their position within Kosovo's society. Bosniaks have thus generally understood the need for institutional and social integration as a problem and as a partial threat to their historical status within Kosovo (Calu, 2020; Cocozzelli, 2008).

As regards political representation, the Bosniak community has been fairly well-represented in Kosovo's public life compared to other non-dominant communities. At the central level, as part of the power-sharing provisions, the community has three guaranteed seats in the Assembly of Kosovo and four positions for deputy ministers within Kosovo Government. After 2008, the results of the main Bosniak parties in the 2010 and 2014 national elections were slightly higher than the result of the Turkish KDTP party, yet approximately half of the votes gained by Serb parties. However, Bosniak participation in public affairs could be even stronger if there were more unity among its political representatives, as is the case within the Turkish community, which had only one main political party representing its interests prior to 2013.

In addition, as demonstrated by the 2021 parliamentary elections in Kosovo, serious problems can sometimes arise when using of power-sharing tools (ethnic quotas/guaranteed seats) to safeguard minority rights. These elections raised serious concerns about the legitimacy of votes for the newly founded Bosniak (United Community) and Roma (Romani Initiative) parties, which were allegedly backed by the dominant Serb party Srpska Lista (SL) (Mullatahiri, 2021). More exactly, the results of the elections confirmed the fears of some of the established Bosniak and Roma representatives and CSOs that SL "planned to arrange votes for particular MPs candidates of Other Communities […] in order to be able to elect up to 7 MPs guaranteed for Other Communities" (Mullatahiri, 2021, p. 4). If these allegations are correct, the 2021

elections have demonstrated that it is possible for a dominant minority to utilise ethnic quotas to prevent the re-election of incumbents from non-dominant groups.

In the context of securitisation through institutionalised consociational arrangements for minority representation (Beha, 2019), Kosovo Bosniaks have been proactive in trying to maximise their rights. However, I argue that the increasingly important role of institutions (parliament, as well as relevant committees and working groups) and community representatives as securitising agents has also had unintended consequences (Calu, 2020). Among these, I identify intra-community rivalry, instrumentalisation of political rights, and further politicisation of ethnic identity. Paradoxically, attempts to empower non-dominant minorities like the Bosniaks, might have indirectly securitised them in exchange for exercising their rights.

At the local level of governance, ethnic-based decentralisation has been another key feature of statebuilding consociational efforts implemented in Kosovo after 2008. Although it has been primarily used to (de)securitise Serbs[13] through the artificial creation of new Serb-majority municipalities, it has also sparked the interest of other communities to gain their own municipalities. While Kosovo Turks have been granted this with the establishment of Mamusa, despite constant lobbying by the Bosniak community, no Bosniak-majority municipalities have been established. As a result, there has been an increasing sense among Bosniaks that legislation needs to be backed up by more comprehensive de facto provisions and benefits.

Meanwhile, community leaders have remained sceptical because "we actually have an important role at the local level and we have a big say on the political outcomes in places like Prizren, thus they do not allow us to get more power (Personal Interviews, 2013). In a context where the practical benefits (non-security issues) of decentralisation are highly disputable for such small minorities, the Bosniaks' desire to establish their own municipality reflects yet another consequence of securitisation of non-dominant minority politics, and the risks of "entrenching ethnic divisions through geographical, social, political and economic segregation" (Calu, 2020, p. 152). The 'voice' of the Bosniak community is a good symbol for the marginalisation of the non-dominant minorities in Kosovo and of the obstacles to desecuritisation resulting from a top-down statebuilding process: "The idea of integration itself is controversial given that we are already part of the Kosovo society. It is one thing to ask migrants for instance to integrate in a society that they emigrate to and another thing to ask communities that are already a substantial part of the society" (Personal Interview, Ministry of European Integration, 2013).

This represents a powerful perspective on the meaning of integration and indicates a potential incompatibility between the rationale and political design of de jure measures for integration and de facto reality on the ground. Moreover, the endogenous perspective above resonates with the discrepancy between groups and individual security, and between minorities and migrants as perceived security problem (Huysmans, 1995) given that it may be impossible to desecuritise minority rights. As because Roe (2004, p. 290) argued, "the necessity on the part of the minority (and indeed also the majority) for group distinctiveness necessarily blocks this same way out: the language of the individual is subordinated to the language of the collective."

Therefore, even though Kosovo Bosniaks have been among the well-integrated minorities, the post-conflict and post-independence measures and legislation consolidate group differences by reconstructing minority identities, not as part of the political community of the state, but rather as "its constitutive Other" (Nancheva, 2017). For instance, the incentives for political participation and mobilisation have created much division among Bosniak elites as securitising agents and have fragmented the Bosniak political community. In this context, the reconstruction of collective identities in Kosovo is not inclusive and is likely to stimulate securitisation rather than desecuritisation of minorities. The case of Bosniaks is, then, also indicative of the risks of framing minority rights in terms of security, instead of in terms of justice (Roe, 2006)—an issue which also lies at the heart of the 'security-rights' nexus developed by Sasse (2005, p. 679), who claimed that "[a] lack of integration gives rise to security concerns, but, in turn, the call for integration has developed into a policy panacea." From the Bosniak perspective on statebuilding, the community has not been advantaged by the new political and social context. In addition, the Serb-centred narrative and practices used by Kosovo politicians, institutions, and key international actors (Calu, 2020) to securitise and desecuritise minority issues can also re-position Bosniaks from a 'rights-based' towards a 'security-based' view of their position in Kosovo.

4.2 *The Turkish Community*

> Integration is a very, very wrong word. Nobody explains what it means to be integrated. I don't need to be integrated. I am here, I have always been here. To whom do I have to be integrated? (Personal Interview, Turkish community, 2013)

This bottom-up understanding of integration is shared by most minorities in Kosovo and illustrates the discrepancy between legislation and the de facto situation within a complex post-conflict context where not all minorities have shared the same security concerns. The Turkish community represents the third largest minority in Kosovo with a population of 18,738 (1.1%)

and is mainly concentrated in the municipalities of Prizren, Mamusa and Pristina. Turks have had a significant presence in Kosovo since the Ottoman conquest in the 14th century and they are descendants of the Ottoman Empire and the indigenous population that converted to Islam and adopted the Turkish language and culture (Cocozzelli, 2016; Office for Community Affairs). Turks have become well-integrated as part of the Kosovo society, helped by their special status during the Ottoman Empire, the fact that they share the Muslim faith and many cultural traits with majority Albanians, and the view of Turkish as an elite language among many people in Kosovo (Cocozzelli, 2008; ECMI, 2013; Mandacı, 2004). In the context of the 1998–99 war and its aftermath, Kosovo Turks were less exposed to securitising narratives targeting non-dominant groups than, for instance, the Roma community. This was partly because "they did not openly 'favour' any particular side during the war but were nonetheless seen as allies of the Albanians" (Musliu & Orbie, 2015, p. 11).

Despite this, the international statebuilding mission under UNMIK developed and institutionalised an approach that subordinated "the political problems of the Turkish minority, along with other marginal groups, to the political struggle between the majority Albanians and Serbian minority" (Mandacı, 2004, p. 65). Even more so, UNMIK began securitising minority politics by prioritising a 'security-based' approach over 'rights-based' policies (Sasse, 2005) and strategies for managing diversity. For example, the post-conflict UNMIK administration did not preserve the status of Turkish as one of the official languages in Kosovo, alongside Serbian and Albanian, which it had been granted by the 1974 Constitution of Yugoslavia. This has been a major concern for Kosovo Turks ever since (Personal Interviews, Turkish community, 2013), and it has complicated their integration in Kosovo in the post-war and post-independence context.

Framing minority issues in terms of security only (Roe, 2006) can obstruct the legitimate concerns of minorities about issues outside 'politics of emergency' (cultural, language, education), and hinder the desecuritisation of inter-ethnic relations. Like the other non-dominant minorities, Kosovo Turks therefore also face the EAI dilemma (Agarin et al., 2018) of ethnic groups marginalised by the dominant position of Albanian and Serb communities. As during the late 1990s, post-independence Kosovo continues to place "[t]he Turks and other minorities in the middle of the conflict between Serb and Albanian politics, which has nonetheless been in the detriment of our rights and has reduced the rights we had before the war" (Personal Interview, Turkish minority, 2013). However, unlike other minorities in Kosovo, the Turkish community has not been very concerned about the returns and

reintegration of its displaced members, mainly because the war did not cause significant migration among Turks (Cocozzelli, 2008). Therefore, this represents another positive feature of the Turkish minority as it absolves the community from dealing with a complex challenge which significantly affects most other Kosovo communities (ECMI, 2013).

In the area of political representation and participation, the Turkish community in Kosovo has been almost exclusively represented by the Turkish Democratic Party of Kosovo (KDTP). The 2010 elections made KDTP the second minority party in Kosovo and the non-dominant minority party with the highest electoral score. Indeed, one of the main strengths of the Turkish community was its initial political unity as reflected by its political gains at both central and local levels of governance in the 2009 and 2010 elections. Nevertheless, the subsequent fractions within the political leadership of the community and the creation of a new main party have destabilised Turkish representation (Calu, 2020). However, the precarity of the political representation of Turks can also be linked to the institutionalised securitisation within minority politics of peacebuilding (e.g., ethnic quotas and continuous political bargaining with the majority and other minorities).

At the local level of governance, the municipality of Prizren, where most Kosovo Turks reside, has had strong political representation for the community. However, as previously mentioned, the most important gain for the Turkish community in the post-independence context has been the creation of the Turkish-majority municipality of Mamusa, located in the south-eastern region of Kosovo. Turks are thus the only non-Serb minority in Kosovo to have been awarded a municipality where they are in the majority. In the previous section on the Bosniak community I referred to the issue of ethnic decentralisation as a securitising consociational instrument in Kosovo. Mamusa represents, though, an example of how powerful non-dominant minorities can also profit from securitising instruments of power-sharing. Granting the Turkish community their own municipality had no connection to the post-conflict rationale of pacifying ethnic relations in Kosovo through territorial devolution of power. Instead, unlike the Bosniak community, the Turks' better economic situation and solid political representation, in combination with the support and role of Turkey, have facilitated the successful establishment of Mamusa (Cocozzelli, 2008).

The analysis of the Turkish community confirms the benefits of being supported by a strong kin-state, historical legacy, territorial concentration of the population, economic capacity, political unity, and elite level political participation. These are all key factors allowing minority groups to secure a stronger position within a diverse society, as well as to exercise

effective agency in response to norms and practices of (de)securitisation. As previously mentioned, the rationale behind the protection and promotion of minority rights in Kosovo has not taken into consideration all cultural, social, and regional particularities of each community. This has also complicated the interplay between the securitisation and desecuritisation of the Turkish community's rights and politics, be that in relation to the narrative in which they were allied with the majority Albanians, or to the pragmatic approach to ethnic decentralisation.

Overall, the Turkish community's unique position in Kosovo has shaped differently its securitisation by institutions and leaders through peacebuilding instruments, minority legislation, and political discourse. By contrast, the next section will show how the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities in Kosovo have been much more susceptible to post-war and post-independence securitising narratives and practices.

4.3 *R.A.E. Communities: Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians*

After 1999 it has been very important to identify and treat these minorities as three different ethnic groups instead of including them all as one single group under the notion of 'R.A.E. community' (OSCE, 2011a, p. 3). While the grouping of these three communities together by both international and domestic actors has been motivated by positive intentions like creating stronger social and political representation, "the perceived attempt for the creation of a new identity" (KIPRED, 2006) has, in practice, complicated the social, economic, political, and security situation of these communities. Nonetheless, the institutionalisation of this generalising perception and approach towards these communities is interlinked with the broader European narratives about the Roma as being 'vulnerable' and 'poor' (Voiculescu, 2017) and representing a 'security problem' (van Baar & Vermeersch, 2017). This section aims to show some of the ways in which the R.A.E. communities in Kosovo have been securitised through legal, policy, and political instruments, practical measures targeting minorities within a mixed framework of human and social development (Ivanov et al., 2015; Voiculescu, 2017), and post-conflict peacebuilding approaches (Al & Byrd, 2018; Krasteva & Vladisavljević, 2017).

The emergence of formal provisions and far-reaching minority rights in Kosovo since 1999 has had a significant meaning for the R.A.E. communities given that, historically, the members of these minorities have either not been recognised as belonging to three different groups or have not declared or expressed their identity clearly (ERRC, 2011). No other community exemplifies better the "fluidity of self-identification" (Cocozzelli, 2008, p. 301) and the risks of securitising identity, which "involves precisely the capacity to decide on the limits of a given identity, to oppose it to what it is not, to cast this as a relationship of threat and

even enmity and to have this decision and declaration accepted by a relevant group" (Williams, 2003, p. 519).

For instance, while Kosovo Roma have traditionally lived in Serb-populated areas and besides their mother tongue, Romani, they can generally also speak Serbian, a fundamental distinctive feature of the Ashkali and Egyptians communities has been the fact that they are native Albanian speakers (ECMI, 2013). Therefore, in what I consider to be an example of attempting to desecuritise, speaking the (new) majority language has, in some cases, facilitated the (voluntary) assimilation of Ashkali and Egyptians as Albanians and their (self-)differentiation from the Roma group (the security threat). The common perception among Roma and majority Albanians that Ashkali and Egyptians are "Albanian-speaking Roma who do not want to acknowledge their origins and are looking for new identities" (Council of Europe, 2010), complicates further the securitisation of their identity (Williams, 2003). Moreover, according to narratives about their role in the war:

> After the return of refugees in the summer of 1999, and still today, urban myth has it that 'the Roma were collaborators with the Serbs [against the Albanians].' Consequently, it has been important for many individuals to distance themselves from the undesired community for safety purposes. (NHC, 2007, p. 7)

This discussion about the strategic fluidity of identity illustrates the permanent risk for non-dominant minorities like R.A.E. to be framed as security threats, depending on their relationship with the majority group and intra-group dynamics, among other factors. In Kosovo, the securitisation of R.A.E. has been eased by the emergence of their own "voices and narratives about the violent past are not part of the dominant and official discourse; they are counter-memories, telling a story that is silenced and unrecognized by the majority" (Sula-Raxhimi, 2019, p. 1).

The transition out of emergency and into normal politics (desecuritisation) for the R.A.E. communities since 1999 is far from being completed. Besides the fact that these complex issues of ethnic identity and recognition have obstructed their integration, they remain the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and discriminated communities in Kosovo, as illustrated by their limited access to education and their extremely high unemployment rate. As previously discussed, both generic and specific power-sharing legislation and formal instruments for minority rights have continued to securitise ethnic groups in Kosovo after the declaration of independence. Here we can apply the developmentalisation-securitisation nexus put forward by van Baar and Vermeersch (2017), to observe how the R.A.E. in Kosovo have been portrayed

both as "at risk of underdevelopment, precariousness, vulnerability and poverty" and as "threats to the security of others, including other Roma" (van Baar & Vermeersch, 2017, p. 132).

On the one hand, an example of such practices comes from the Law on Communities (2008). This law stipulates that regarding the employment of minority members, Kosovo must develop anti-discrimination initiatives like public employment programs and specially targeted measures with the aim of overcoming direct and indirect forms of discrimination, with special consideration "to improving the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities". At the inter-group level, a large proportion of the Roma community lives in extreme poverty and faces fundamental problems like discrimination, unemployment, and lack of education and professional skills placing them in an even more precarious position than Ashkali and Egyptians (Dika, 2020). Consequently, Kosovo institutions have, since 2008, developed formal strategies and plans[14] to tackle the situation of R.A.E. communities within four priority fields: education, employment and social warfare, health, and housing. In this context, it is quite clear that the framing of the communities as a European problem within developmentalisation is carried on by Kosovo institutions, given their affirmation that:

> Roma and communities that are considered part of this community face a similar problem in all European countries, and that is social exclusion. Usually, this kind of exclusion manifests itself in the form of life in poverty, segregation, difficult access to social services, discrimination etc. (Kosovo Government, 2017, p. 14)

On the other hand, in relation to political representation as part of the power-sharing arrangements in Kosovo, one of the most visible de jure consequences for R.A.E. is the distribution of parliamentary seats in the Kosovo Assembly. In addition to the one seat guaranteed for each of the three ethnic groups, one additional seat is offered to either the Roma, the Ashkali, or the Egyptian community with the highest overall votes. In practice, however, the formal inclusion of R.A.E. as part of peacebuilding securitising instruments has been less straightforward. For instance, there was initially only one Roma party in Kosovo, the United Roma Party of Kosovo (PREBK), and the community has generally been underrepresented at both central and local levels of governance (ECMI, 2013). The 2014 elections results confirmed the ascendance of the newly created party New Kosovo Roma Party (KNPR), which secured the Roma seat in the Assembly by winning only three more votes than PRBEK. However, as previously discussed in relation to the 2021 electoral scandal surrounding newly elected Roma and Bosniak MPs, the community's representation is also at risk of being captured by the interests of the dominant Kosovo Serb party.

Likewise, the Ashkali and Egyptian communities have been poorly represented in public affairs[15] because of the lack of professional and educational credentials of their representatives, the disinterest in local politics, and the lack of initiatives by institutions to support and promote their participation (Dika, 2020). In addition, there has been much frustration among this community that Kosovo has created a hierarchy (Calu, 2020) among its ethnic groups: "minorities are not equally respected. Putting Serbs first and the others after that is not fair. This is a major obstacle in the attempt to implement the constitution" (Personal Interviews, Ashkali CSO representative, 2013). Therefore, the views expressed by from within this community provide a further illustration of the EAI dilemma and its impact on political representation and actual implementation of multi-ethnic governance.

The gap between central and municipal level representation of R.A.E. minorities has also widened, and their weak voice in the public affairs of Kosovo represents both a cause and a consequence of their marginalisation. Moreover, "the lack of professional and educational credentials that undermine the self-confidence of community representatives to actively engage in municipal politics" (OSCE, 2011b) has also been a critical factor diminishing their political participation. Low turnout in elections has further deprived these communities of representation, even where they represent a significant part of the local population, which also confirms that size is not a sufficient condition to become a dominant group.

Equally important is the role of Kosovo institutions, including the government and municipal offices, as (de)securitising agents who have not been proactive enough in reaching out to R.A.E. to increase voter registration and participation in the electoral process (Dika, 2020; OSCE, 2011b), despite their repeated commitment to enhance their competencies and participatory rights (Palushi, 2020). In this sense, the formal and informal obstacles to the involvement of R.A.E. communities in 'normal' politics have further limited their political participation to the securitised space of power-sharing instruments and practices. The Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities remain the most vulnerable and discriminated communities in Kosovo, while also being securitised as non-dominant minorities with a secondary, unclear role during and after the conflict. This has happened partly because of securitising practices and policies of Kosovo institutions and, as illustrated before, R.A.E. have been particularly susceptible to the interplay between 'normal' and 'emergency' politics (Jutila, 2006). Their "systematic exclusion" (Dika, 2020, p. 19) and their continuous marginalisation by the majority and other minority communities in Kosovo is also very concerning.

Therefore, the R.A.E. communities have been affected by a distinct form of securitisation through which non-dominant groups with a marginal role in the (past) conflict are associated with one of the main warring groups and risk being included, by default, in post-conflict discourses and practices that securitise minorities. Next, the article looks at some of the smallest and perhaps more difficult non-dominant ethnic groups to be analysed from the perspective of securitisation and desecuritisation of minority politics after conflict.

4.4 *The Gorani Community*

The Gorani are another non-dominant community in Kosovo that, similarly to Bosniaks, can be analysed within the rights vs. security-based approach (Sasse, 2005) to minority politics and issues. In addition, this community can also be discussed from the perspective of the gradual transition to securitisation of identity (Williams, 2003) as an extreme form of politicisation through which "[i]n theory, any public issue can be located on the spectrum ranging from nonpoliticised … through politicised … to securitised (meaning the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures)" (Buzan et al. 1998, p.23).

The Gorani minority has 10,265 residents in Kosovo and is mainly concentrated in the municipality of Dragash. In the past it was difficult to estimate the numbers of Gorani accurately because they have traditionally been migrant workers and because, in the pre-1999 censuses, Gorani (together with Bosniaks and Torbesh) had been generally categorised as 'Muslim Slavs' (Duijzings, 2000). The Gorani are closely related to Bosniaks, they reside primarily in the mountainous southern municipality of Dragash (Prizren region), and they speak a Slavic language referred to as Našuski (ECMI, 2013). Gorani is similar to the language spoken in the western part of Macedonia but different from other Slav dialects spoken in Kosovo, such as Bosniak (ECMI, 2013). The language has not been standardised and no descriptive scholarly work on the Gorani dialect is available. This, together with continuous fights between two political factions, one supporting the usage of Serbian and the other the usage of Bosnian, prevents the Gorani community from advancing a coherent demand for language rights (KIPRED, 2006; Office for Community Affairs, n.d.).

Therefore, within the community there are those who identify themselves as Gorani and a smaller number who identify themselves as Bosniaks (Personal Interviews, 2013; ECMI, 2013). Given that this intra-community fraction is mainly driven by different political affiliations, this represents an example of how ethnic identity in Kosovo has been politicised (Calu, 2020; Landau, 2017) in congruence with the securitising effects of statebuilding. In relation to this, in post-conflict Kosovo the Gorani minority educated in Serbian was caught in

the middle of the political stand-off between Kosovo Serbs and Albanians, which included the creation of two education systems (Calu, 2020; KIPRED, 2006). Education in Serbian has been available in regions mainly populated by Serbs, Gorani, and Roma, and managed by the Serbian Ministry of Education following a Serbian curriculum that differs from that in other Kosovo schools (ECMI, 2013). This illustrates how identity and minority characteristics can be instrumentalised for pragmatic reasons. Most Gorani in the Dragash municipality, for example, "prefer to enrol their children in Serbia-run schools where instruction is in the Serbian language, which in turn affords greater opportunities for enrolment in Serbian Universities" (OSCE, 2011a). The pragmatism of some Gorani people is thus aligned with a rights-based approach to minority issues, but also susceptible to being increasingly perceived through the lenses of securitisation.

As regards political participation, the Gorani community has been mainly represented by the Gora Citizen's Initiative (GIG) created as a citizens' association that took part in the 2000 municipal elections. In 2002, GIG became a political party based in the municipality of Dragash with the main purpose of advancing the rights and interests of the Gorani minority in Kosovo and held the Gorani guaranteed seat in the Kosovo Assembly after the 2010 elections. However, the Gorani representative subsequently joined the Serb parliamentary group in the Assembly, which indicated the party's and the community's close links with the Serbs. In accordance with the EAI dilemma for governing non-dominant communities in Kosovo, "the political representation of Goranis is fragile as a lot of issues that happen at the top level of governance influence the smaller communities significantly" (Personal Interview, The Ombudsperson Institutions of Kosovo, 2013).

In addition, the poor access to employment and livelihoods and the challenges in relation to the choice of an educational system represent the main obstacles for the sustainable return and reintegration of Gorani displaced persons (ECMI, 2013). In this context, marginalisation is a challenge for Gorani people too, especially as a large part of the community complains about discrimination due to their ethnicity, which pushes them to declare themselves as Albanians and take advantage of their proficiency in the Albanian language (ECMI, 2013). These issues are also representative of the EAI dilemma and of the side-lining of non-security minority concerns in the context of a securitised multi-ethnic framework of governance mainly concerned with the dominant Albanian-Serb relationship.

The case of the Gorani community therefore reveals more obstacles for the integration of minority groups, who have not only common non-security concerns and interests but must

also struggle to preserve and promote a generally accepted notion of their identity. Furthermore, the focus on political representation and participation can undermine desecuritisation and the development of measures addressing the preservation and promotion of cultural identity as well as the basic needs of a small minority. Like the other minorities discussed in this article, the political mobilisation stimulated by extensive provisions offered by minority legislation and the blurry lines between their cultural and political identities have been counter-productive and intensified divisions within the community. In the absence of 'normal' minority politics, the Gorani community has been at risk of being permanently affected by both intra-community and inter-community securitising discourses and practices.

4.5 *The Montenegrin and Croat Communities*

> We are part of the Kosovo society as we have always been here. But we do not feel
> as part of the society. (Personal Interview, Montenegrin Community, 2013)

Kosovo Montenegrins and Croats were not included in the 2008 Constitution of Kosovo or the initial Law on Communities (2008) and both minorities were officially recognised only in December 2011. As a result, they have been generally excluded from most legal provisions regarding the promotion and protection of minority rights in Kosovo and therefore they are not represented politically and have not been yet granted the right to guaranteed seats in the Assembly. Moreover, Montenegrins and Croats were not included as ethnic categories in the 2011 Census, meaning there is still no accurate data on the population of these two minorities (ECMI, 2013).

The formal and practical marginalisation of these two 'micro-minorities' (Juon, 2020) places them at the very bottom, if not outside, of Kosovo's hierarchical multi-ethnic social and legal structure (Calu, 2020; Krasniqi, 2015). From this perspective, Croats and Montenegrins are *the most* 'insignificant others' (Musliu & Orbie, 2015) among the non-dominant minorities in Kosovo. Consequently, it is much less straightforward to unravel the securitising effects of Kosovo's instruments and discourses around multi-ethnic governance on these communities.

On the one hand, developing a framework to accommodate the concerns of Serbs as the dominant minority, combined with the inconsistent understanding and application of the notion of 'community' have undermined the equal and equitable inclusion of all minorities. In the cases of Montenegrins and Croats, this has translated into their exclusion through non-recognition. On the other hand, the development of a far-reaching system of minority rights

protection has stimulated the very small communities to ask for recognition and meaningful participation in the public life of Kosovo, including via the securitising pathway of peacebuilding and statebuilding emergency politics. However, in the absence of formal rights, Croats and Montenegrins are an example of a direct and impromptu transition to a security-focused approach to the management of diversity.

In the past, the Montenegrin population was included in censuses completed by former Yugoslavia and over time the figures varied between 20,000 and 30,000 persons (ECMI, 2013). However, since the last official estimate (1991) there has been a dramatic fall in the numbers of Montenegrins living in Kosovo because of the war and massive economic migration. In addition, Kosovo Montenegrins are known to have mainly lived in the Pejë and Prishtinë regions but, because they are culturally closely related to the Serb community (ECMI, 2013) and have lived alongside Serbs, "no specific settlements/neighbourhoods have been identified due to difficulties in distinguishing the two communities" (OSCE, 2011a). Their association with Serbs and the risk of assimilation has thus been amplified in the context of post-war Serb-centred securitisation of minority issues and identity:

> We are an old and traditional community in Kosovo. But after the war, it was a big mistake to be associated with the Serb community. This was not true. We are our own community, this is our country too, and we are diaspora of Montenegro. (Personal Interview, Montenegrin Community, 2013)

Therefore, even though some Kosovo Montenegrin leaders strongly advocate for disassociation from the Serbs, "many are still reluctant to publicly self-identify as Kosovo Montenegrins, particularly in areas where they are integrated into the Kosovo Serb community, and benefit from institutions financed by the Republic of Serbia" (OSCE, 2011a). Montenegrins also face a precarious socio-economic situation given the limited employment opportunities, the limited freedom of movement, and the poor knowledge of Albanian—the language spoken by the majority, dominant group in Kosovo. Moreover, the community's reliance on the Serbian education system and welfare assistance and employment (ECMI, 2013) has also influenced the integration of the Montenegrins in post-war and post-independence Kosovo.

The Kosovo Croat minority was also not included as a separate community in the 2011 census and represents by far the smallest ethnic group in Kosovo with an estimated population of only 259 residents, who live in small villages located in the Gjilan and in the Prishtinë regions (ECMI, 2013). In the past, several thousand Croats lived in these two regions, but most Croats left Kosovo in the 1990s and especially during the 1998–1999 conflict because of the lack of

security and economic opportunities in combination with the support for relocation offered by Croatia (OSCE, 2011c). Kosovo Croats are Catholic Slavs thought to originate from 14th century traders that came to Kosovo from Dubrovnik and who speak Croatian as their mother tongue (OSCE, 2011c). In general, Kosovo Croats make free use of their mother tongue in most public spaces, but the community does not feel completely at ease to do so in all public spaces and use Serbian to interact with public authorities (Personal Interviews, 2013). Moreover, similarly to the situation of many Montenegrins, the very few Croat children attend the Serbian-supported educational system and follow its curriculum (ECMI, 2013).

The socio-economic situation of the Croat minority is extremely worrying, especially as most of the population is old and, as reported by OSCE (2011c, p. 4), they remain a "vulnerable and isolated community [that] lives in extreme poverty and inadequate housing conditions." Additional problems like the lack of public transportation, access to healthcare, and the lack of property titles (ECMI, 2013) are all contributing to a marked sense of isolation amongst the community. Lastly, there is no participation of Croats in public affairs mainly because of the small size of their community, the late official recognition of their status as one of the Kosovo communities, and the absence of a guaranteed seat in the Assembly. Therefore, Croats can be considered as both the insignificant invisible 'Other' and the referent object facing an existential threat.

Altogether, Croats and Montenegrins exemplify most challenges and securitisation consequences derived from the design and implementation of the multi-ethnic institutional and legal framework in Kosovo. This section has exposed how they were excluded from the list of official non-majority communities, while being unprotected but de facto securitised. Moreover, their marginalisation within the EAI dilemma in Kosovo confirm the ineffectiveness of a top-down far-reaching minority rights framework. Such small and vulnerable communities should have been a priority of the system for safeguarding minority rights and desecuritisation. By contrast, they were not recognised initially in post-independence Kosovo, and they have been side-lined by the politicisation and securitisation of minority rights and identity.

Conclusion

This article draws on in-depth empirical analysis of Kosovo minorities and shows that to better understand the securitisation and desecuritisation of minorities it is indispensable to also include the perspective of non-dominant groups. For this reason, I looked at how dilemmas of securitisation and desecuritisation of minorities are deeply connected to legal, political, social, and economic factors as well as to their identity, historical, and cultural characteristics.

Moreover, whilst most peacebuilding and statebuilding measures address the security concerns of the main groups involved in a conflict, the securitisation of other minorities (sometimes not necessarily involved in the conflict) can lead to unintended consequences "creating very resilient conflict-perpetuating routines that limit the prospects for desecuritisation and conflict resolution" (Adamides, 2019, p. 19).

In post-conflict and post-independence Kosovo, I identified several layers of (de)securitisation. The principal one addresses the securitisation of Serbs as the dominant minority in relation to majority Albanians. Although not the focus of this article, this was instrumental for unpacking the spill-over effects of peacebuilding arrangements designed for the Serb-Albanian relationship. Then there is the securitisation of non-dominant minority groups and their distancing from 'normal' minority politics, which has occurred by default through the inclusion in Ahtisaari and independence arrangements around the management of diversity after conflict. Another layer involves the mixed securitisation of the R.A.E. communities as part of both the development and security frameworks discussed here. Within this double layer, the Roma hold a particularly difficult position because they were considered to have taken the side of Serbs during the 1998–1999 war. In addition, the securitisation of non-dominant minorities with closer ties to one larger group or another minority is visible in the volatile situations of Bosniaks, Gorani, Montenegrins and Croats. Lastly, a less impactful process of securitisation of minorities could be observed in the example of the Turkish community mainly because of its stronger position and agency.

Therefore, securitisation and desecuritisation of minority groups and their rights in Kosovo through post-conflict statebuilding tools, and practices (including power-sharing and extensive minority rights) is co-dependent on various factors. The impact of securitising non-dominant minorities in Kosovo has been either limited or enhanced by their size, location, language, history, religion, economy, legal status, relationship with the majority, and political power or the presence of kin-states for ethnic minorities. As a result of these multiple layers of securitisation, almost all minority groups in Kosovo, including the most vulnerable, can become perceived as threats. While it is important to underline the benefits of promoting diversity and far-reaching minority rights, this article has shown why instead of integrating or accommodating communities, the focus on multi-ethnicity, group differentiation and "security-based" approaches to minority issues and politics may foster instead new layers of division and securitisation. Contrary to its purpose, integrationist policies that institutionalise securitisation can trigger segregation and perpetual security concerns (Sasse, 2005).

The aim to build sustainable peace and desecuritise inter-ethnic relations (take them out of emergency politics) through instruments that mainly target the dominant minority (Serbs) and the majority (Albanians), has had unintended consequences for non-dominant minorities. In this sense, the internationally led post-conflict statebuilding in Kosovo has not carefully assessed the appropriateness of desecuritising narratives and practices. The dilemmas of what kind of identity is promoted (cultural or political), or whether identity is linked to perceived security threats, explains how multi-ethnicity permits actors to reinterpret, misunderstand, or securitise the concept when it reaches areas beyond its real scope. Implementing top-down provisions that aim to securitise or desecuritise inter-ethnic relations can therefore falsely portray minority groups as having concerns that go beyond "rights-based policies" (Sasse, 2005, p. 675). To be desecuritised, some minorities will firstly have to be securitised.

Protection of minorities should address the issues that make such communities vulnerable in plural societies. Contrariwise, the legal provisions for minorities in Kosovo have become attributes for those considered a security and political priority (Serbs) and for those with more agency to employ their rights. As Musliu and Orbie explain, "[t]he concept of 'multi-ethnicity' and 'home of all communities' implies importance, relevance and equality. Yet certain groups appear to be more important and more relevant for the multi-ethnic picture" (2015, p.11). By failing to address the exclusion-amid-inclusion (EAI) dilemma (Agarin et al., 2018), Kosovo has created and institutionalised a hierarchy of communities in relation to their social, legal, political, economic, and, ultimately, their securitisation. By treating minority rights and issues merely as questions of life and death (Adamides, 2019; Balzacq, 2005; van Baar & Vermeersch, 2017; Jutila, 2006; Sasse, 2005), non-inclusive statebuilding processes in divided and diverse societies will always struggle to desecuritise minorities and accommodate 'normal' politics of diversity.

Notes

1 Hereafter the article will use de(securitisation) when referring to the two concepts at the same time.

2 Kosovo Serbs are understood as the dominant minority, whilst non-dominant minorities are the Bosniak, Turkish, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani, Montenegrin, and Croat communities.

3 The article uses the terms 'statebuilding' and 'peacebuilding' as distinct yet complimentary and, sometimes, inter-changeable. As outline by Haider & Strachan (2014, p. 4): "Peacebuilding, as defined by the United Nations, involves 'a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, to strengthen national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development'. Statebuilding, as defined by the OECD, is 'an endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations.'"

4 The concept human security became a key focus of international discussion in the 1990s in response to the broadening of the security field. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1994 Human Development Report defined human security as both "safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression" and "protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life" (UNDP, 1994, p. 23). Subsequently, General Assembly resolution 66/290 called for "people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people".

5 For more information see the report by European Roma Rights Centre (2011), which specifies: "According to some sources, more than 100,000 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians left the province prior to the conflict, during the conflict and after the NATO intervention" (ERRC, 2011, p. 21).

6 The Law on Communities (Article 1(4)) in Kosovo also provides a general definition of communities as: "national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious groups traditionally present in the Republic of Kosovo that are not in the majority. These groups are Serb, Turkish, Bosnian, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani and other communities. Members of the community in the majority in the Republic of Kosovo as a whole who are not in the majority in a given municipality shall also be entitled to enjoy the rights listed in this law".

7 Kosovo Population and Housing Census 2011. Quality Report. Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Retrieved July 30, 2021, from https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3198/qa_raporti_eng.pdf

8 "[T]he Roma community, one (1) seat; the Ashkali community, one (1) seat; the Egyptian community, one (1) seat; and one (1) additional seat will be awarded to either the Roma, the Ashkali or the Egyptian community with the highest overall votes; the Bosnian community, three (3) seats; the Turkish community, two (2) seats; and the Gorani community, one (1) seat if the number of seats won by each community is less than the number guaranteed" (Chapter IV, Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Art. 64 (2)).

9 Constitution of Kosovo, Article 148 [Transitional Provisions for the Assembly of Kosovo]: "Any seats gained through elections shall be in addition to the ten (10) reserved seats allocated to the Kosovo Serb Community and other Communities respectively."

10 In 2005 the UNSG named Martti Ahtisaari as the UN Special Envoy at the Kosovo status process negotiations. In February 2007 Ahtisaari presented at the UN his plan for the status of Kosovo, which was designed to supersede UNSC Resolution 1244 (1999). According to the Ahtisaari Plan, formally the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (CSP), the EU and the US were going to be invested with the leading role in setting-up Kosovo's future, which was supposed to become independent under the supervision of an International Civilian Representative with superior powers to the Kosovar government. The plan was seeking for a compromise offering Kosovo Albanians the prospect of independence, and Kosovo Serbs security, extensive rights, and privileged relations with Serbia. After the declaration of independence on the 17 February 2008, the Constitution was promulgated and defined the Republic of Kosovo an independent, sovereign, democratic, unique and indivisible state and, under the influence of the Ahtisaari Plan, as a "multi-ethnic society consisting of Albanian and other Communities, governed democratically with full respect for the rule of law through its legislative, executive and judicial institutions" (Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 3(1)).

11 Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo (2008) follows the recommendations and responsibilities included in the Ahtisaari package, which emphasises the rights and freedoms granted to minority communities living in Kosovo. In addition, four more laws have been adopted on the protection of the rights of all communities living in Kosovo:
- Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in Kosovo

- Law on the Use of Languages

- Law on Anti-Discrimination

- Law on Local Self-Government

12 Constitution of Kosovo, Article 144: "Any amendment shall require for its adoption the approval of two thirds (2/3) of all deputies of the Assembly including two thirds (2/3) of all deputies of the Assembly holding reserved or guaranteed seats for representatives of communities that are not in the majority in the Republic of Kosovo".

13 After the 2008 declaration of independence the process of decentralization created new municipalities throughout Kosovo, raising the number of Serb-majority municipalities to nine. The new Serb-majority municipalities were Ranilug/Ranillug, Klokot/Kllokot and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë (enlarged) in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region, Gračanica/Graçanicë in the Prishtinë/Priština region and since June 2010 the new municipality of Parteš/Partesh was established in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region as well. In addition, Turks are the only non-Serb minority in Kosovo to have been awarded a municipality where they are in majority—Mamushë (Mamuşa in Turkish), located in the southeastern region of Kosovo.

14 For example, 'The Strategy and Action Plan for Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities 2009–2015' and the follow-up "Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovo Society 2017–2021"

15 The Ashkali community has been represented by two political parties, and two Ashkali deputies in the Kosovo Assembly. The Egyptians have been mainly represented politically by one party, the New Democratic Initiative for Kosovo (IRDK). The 2014 elections confirmed the position of the newly founded Liberal Egyptian Party (PLE) as the main Egyptian minority by taking over the one guaranteed seat from IRDK.

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