Journal of Liberty and International Affairs | Volume 9 · Number 1 · 2023 | eISSN 1857-9760
Published online by the Institute for Research and European Studies at www.e-jlia.com

Copyright © 2023 The author/s
This work is licensed under a CC-BY 4.0 license
(*) Corresponding author
Peer review method: Double-blind
Review article
DOI: https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2391358i
Received: 20.12.2022 · Revised: 08.01.2023 · Accepted: 11.01.2023 · Published: 25.03.2023

STRUCTURAL AND NON-STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES IN THE PROCESS OF RECOGNITION OF INDEPENDENCE OF KOSOVO: 2008-2021

Dorajet Imeri[1], Abdula Azizi[2*]

[1]University of Pristina, Republic of Kosovo https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7903-2931 ✉ dorajet.imeri@uni-pr.edu
[2]South East European University, Republic of North Macedonia https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7444-6230 ✉ a.azizi@seeu.edu.mk

Abstract: *The process of recognition of Kosovo has continuously declined since the Declaration of Independence until 2021, the period covered in this paper. This process is characterized by external structural obstacles, as well as internal non-structural ones. Applying the content analysis method and semi-structured interviews, the paper emphasized that the main structural obstacle was the inability to accept the Ahtisaari Plan from the UN as a compromise choice. On the other hand, the non-recognition of the state of Kosovo by Serbia (supported by Russia) resulted in the division of the states into two large groups: "pro" and "contra" recognition. Meanwhile, due to these extreme divisions, a third group of states sees the recognition of Kosovo as an opportunity to solve the previous obstacles. Thus, Serbia has established clear schemes to hinder the development of the process, first by sending the case of Kosovo to the ICJ and later by presenting the Kosovo-Serbia negotiation as status negotiations. Meanwhile, the internal political instability in Kosovo and the wrong political approach towards potentially recognizing states are evident as non-structural obstacles in achieving new recognition.*

Keywords: *Independence; Recognition; Political Processes; Obstacles; Negotiations*

INTRODUCTION

International recognition of states is very important, especially in their consolidation. However, this process is quite complex, as "doctrinal controversies" (Wheatley 2016) make it difficult to know when a new state has appeared in the international arena. Recent studies find that recognition has no normative content or is considered a legal tool for political choices (Worster 2009, 116). The creation of the state has continuously presented a great challenge to the international order because the ambiguous nature of the doctrine of recognition in international law has influenced the development of this academic debate (Morrison 1967, 857).

Newly created states, like Kosovo, strive to complete recognition for external political consolidation as soon as possible because the process of creating a state has always received significant opposition because it impacts the territory but can also impact the international system (Newman and Visoka 2021, 1). Several disagreements have been started when discussing the state's founding and recognition, particularly due to the "multitude of types of state creation" (Finck 2016, 52), but also because of the need to ensure recognition, which remains one of their main objectives.

It can be demonstrated that even in the case of Kosovo, which is covered in this paper and tries to address the research question of what challenges Kosovo faced during the recognition process - the recognition of independence was seen as one of the main priorities that Kosovo's foreign policy has had" (Hypothesis I), meanwhile, "recognition by most of the neighboring countries, recognition by most of the EU Member States and most of the Western countries, has already strengthened this goal" (Hypothesis II).

There has been a steady deterioration in recognition of Kosovo's independence. The states who had not yet recognized Kosovo during its development remained caught in many major conundrums or were dependent on the events that followed the Declaration of Independence, while the justifications for "legitimizing the non-recognition" varied, especially because of the sovereignty and integrity of Serbia and the precedent that could be created (Bolton and Visoka 2010).

The states that did not recognize Kosovo took advantage of this moment to start supporting the separatist movement in some countries. On the other hand, the justification for the non-recognition was precisely the fact of creating a precedent. At the same time, through them, it controls the (de)stability of those countries (Riegl and Doboš 2018, 58), as Russia had done to some regions close to it, which it would push towards recognition, using the Declaration of Kosovo's independence as a justification for its actions.

THE RECOGNITION AS "A POLITICS" AND THEORETICAL CONFLICTS

Constitutive Theory

Malcolm Show, James Crawford, etc., have paid increased attention to this topic. This theory starts from the fact that "a state becomes an international person and a subject of international law only through recognition" (Andrew 2012, 150). State recognition has political and legal meaning, with internal and external consequences (Morrison 1967, 857), while the state is and becomes an international person only and exclusively through recognition; therefore, states that intend to exist must ensure recognition (Oppenheim 1905, 109).

The constitutive theory closely links the state's recognition with its *de jure* confirmation as an international legal entity (Slomanson 2007, 76). Be that as it may, this theory is not acceptable (Shaw 2017, 206-207), but be that as it may, it pays primary attention to the act of recognition rather than the political process through which recognition is intended.

The recognition of the new state depends on other states, which determine who can be subject to this order, through individual or collective actions, as "the final legal effect" (Crawford 2006, 20). According to this theory, the existence of the state depends on its recognition that comes from the precursor state actors, which confirm the actual fulfillment of the statehood criteria, causing them to act in accordance with their political will (Högger 2015, 25), but the fulfillment of these criteria are not sufficient for the constitutive theory, which considers that only recognition perfects statehood (Grant 1999, 2), even the process is more related to other criteria than those mentioned above (Visoka 2022, 143).

Brownlie (1973) finds that a state does not even exist legally without formal recognition, saying that the personality of a state, in the sense of existence, depends on the political attitude

that other states will have towards the political entity that claims statehood, even regardless of whether the claiming state has managed to meet these criteria (pp. 89-108).

Declarative Theory

The recognition of the state depends more on international relations and that the state is not a product of law but of circumstances outside it (Bokor-Szegő 1998, 268), while the recognition of a state declared as independent (according to the declarative theory) is a political act, which represents the confirmation of a new international subject (Crawford 2006, 22). This has led to a great, perhaps even outdated, debate between declarative and constitutive theory regarding its recognition and effect. This debate will be equally important because the Declaration of recognition of independence brings different legal consequences (Talmon 2004, 101).

Theories of recognition will continue to exist as attempts to frame the aspirations and expectations of states within a single model seem too ambitious, as states, like humans, act inconsistently (Schoiswohl 2004, 32), while states here are the missing main authority of the international order and the effective executors of the main subject in international law (Lauterpacht 1944, 385).

Kosovo's experience consists of the declarative and constitutive theories of recognition, where at the same time, the political leadership promotes the existence of the state of Kosovo regardless of recognition and works on the constitution of international legitimacy and membership in international society through diplomatic recognition and membership in regional and international organizations (Newman and Visoka 2018, 371).

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF KOSOVO AND IMPACT ON THE PROCESS OF RECOGNITION

The historical dispute over the Declaration of Kosovo's independence is related to the internationalization of its problem. At the same time, the solution to the international status of Kosovo was seen as its product (Pippan and Karl 2012). This long and historical process has created a unique set of facts and relations between the two countries, making Kosovo distinct from other separatist cases (Reynolds 2008; Fierstein 2009). Thus, the problem of Kosovo is difficult to pinpoint as a case that begins with an exclusive event. However, in any case, the creation of the state of Kosovo is primarily connected with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. This process is seen as the end of its dissolution (Warbrick 2008, 675).

Thus, Kosovo is concluding a political process that began almost 20 years before it declared independence, but seen from a historical perspective, the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo came as a result of the failure to reach an agreement in the Vienna negotiation process due to the contradictory attitude of the parties (Weller 2008, 659).

(cc) BY

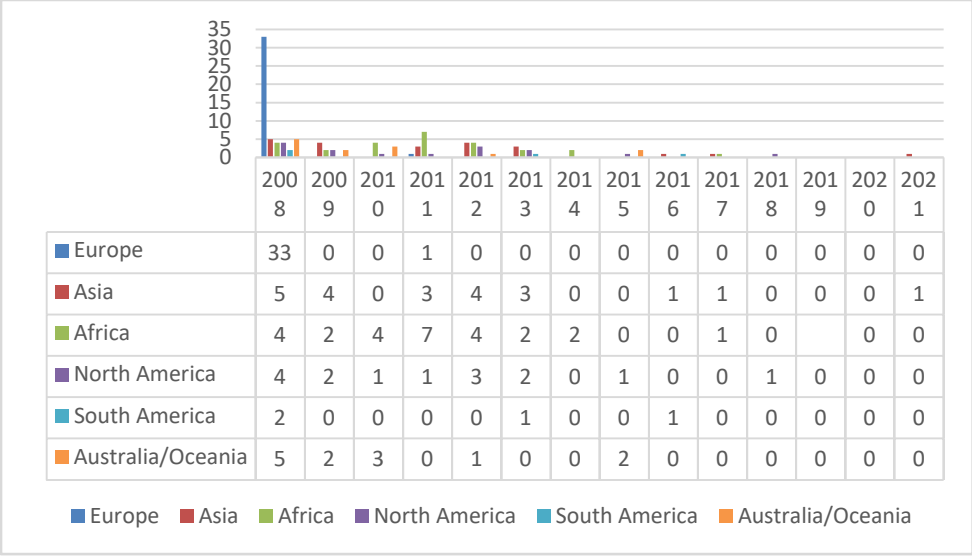
SECURING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

At the beginning of recognizing the state of Kosovo, the main political battles would take place in the legality of the Declaration of Independence, as the Serbs/Russians claimed in Resolution 1244. However, in the dangerous precedent that could be used in cases other countries tried to stop or question the legality of the Declaration of Independence; therefore, recognition, in this case, would have political effects as far as the new international order is concerned. At the same time, the confirmation of statehood would confirm the basis of secession as part of international law, says Daniel Fierstein (2009), who continues the argument: "Recognizing Kosovo's Declaration of Independence as legal would bring a significant measure of finality to a previously turbulent and uncertain situation in the Balkans" (p. 442).

The United States and most EU Member States were in favor of recognizing the state of Kosovo; for the USA, since the humanitarian intervention, the state of Kosovo is related to its national security (Murphy 2003, 387), while related with it; the EU also gave a legal opinion, where, among other things, it is said that Resolution 1244 has in its spirit the political status of Kosovo, while this resolution does not define or limit the status, not stopping it, since the claims for retention of *status quo* are a violation of this resolution itself (Reynolds 2008).

Structural and non-structural obstacles to recognizing Kosovo's independence were encountered throughout the political process until the Declaration of Independence, where local and international actors, the most important international institutions, were involved, which had positive and negative positions throughout the process. These attitudes have been carried over from one stage to the next, making the new state the arena of clashes of great powers continuously, while the recognition process is equally difficult with these differences (Rrahmani 2014, 249).

Table 1: Trend of Recognition of Kosovo Independence: 2008-2021 (Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo 2022)



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Europe	33	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asia	5	4	0	3	4	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Africa	4	2	4	7	4	2	2	0	0	1	0		0	0
North America	4	2	1	1	3	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
South America	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Australia/Oceania	5	2	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

Between the marked differences between the supporters of the Kosovo state (USA, EU) and the opponents of this process (Russia, China, South Africa), a good part of the world's states would find themselves in a middle position without declared regarding their position on the state of Kosovo, waiting for its effects (Newman and Visoka 2018, 368).

Serbia has supporters in several international political structures such as the UN (Russia and China), the Council of Europe (Russia, Spain, Greece, Slovakia, Cyprus, Romania); The EU and NATO (Spain, Greece, Romania), had prevented recognition as a collective action, had also prevented membership in these organizations and many others in the following years, Serbia wanted to slow down the recognition process (Ker-Lindsay 2015, 1).

Researchers, politicians, and other political actors connect the process of recognition precisely with the persuasive ability of Kosovar diplomacy, from international support, but also from the internal dynamics of the states that could recognize the state of Kosovo. Scholars consider Kosovar diplomacy decisive in mobilizing international support for its recognition (Newman and Visoka 2018, 368).

The head of Kosovar diplomacy considers that Kosovar diplomacy has identified every potential state that can recognize the state of Kosovo, following political development within the structures of those states and seeking support from allied states with influence in those areas (Hoxhaj, personal communication 2021), but toward recognition are dependent on political developments in Kosovo and Serbia (Lama, personal communication, 2021; Hoxhaj personal communication 2021; Gashi, personal communication 2022; Ahmeti, personal communication 2022).

As a result of the application of this doctrine and intending to destabilize the region, the Serbian state, found before an act committed, although expected, expressed its incompatibility with the act of Declaration. Thus, most foreign embassies accredited in Belgrade were closed, and the protests were numerous and frequent. At the same time, the UN Security Council, in the discussion about Kosovo, in the meeting held immediately after the Declaration of Kosovo's independence, did not issue any resolution but reaffirmed the great division that it had happened among the great powers regarding the status of Kosovo (BBC 2008). It treats these actions of Serbia as a strategy for slowing down recognition: "[Serbia's] immediate political objective was to soften Serbian public opinion, gain time and slow down the process of international recognition of Kosovo" (Bebler 2015, 162).

In its recognition process, Kosovo faced again with old challenges, structural at first but also non-structural later. States worldwide, having similar cases in their territories or near them, did not rush to recognize the new state, waiting to see how things would go. Their quick ignorance allowed the opponents of the Kosovo state to react individually to them through the most unconventional forms possible (Bislimi 2020).

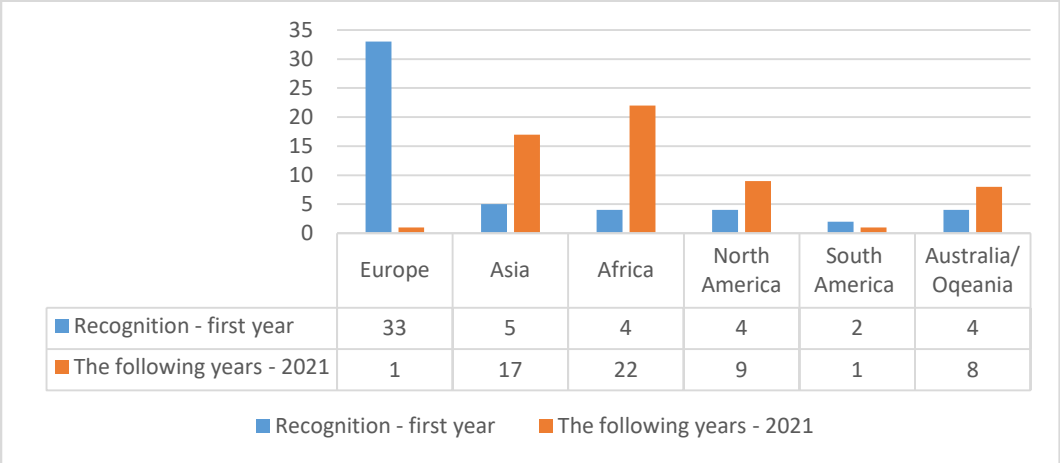
Russia has intended to use the recognition of Kosovo by Western countries to increase its advantages in the area that it considers as part of its influence, but in any case, those political entities have not had wide international recognition since states are very careful about the act of recognition, despite the fact that such entities claim legitimacy (Seymour 2017, 817).

Serbia has always intended to contextualize the recognition of Kosovo's independence, initially by sending the case of Kosovo's Declaration of Independence to the International Court

of Justice, which had effects on the strategic redefinition of Kosovo, as far as the achievements of recognition and the preservation of the legality of its announcement (Konushevci 2008).

The decision to handle Kosovo's case in the ICJ naturally had negative effects on recognition, even though Kosovo declared that this was just a futile effort and the next one by Serbia, which intended to use it to slow down recognition, or even of the blocking of Kosovo in the process of membership in international organizations (Sejdiu 2008).

Table 2: First Recognitions and Recognitions in the Following 13 years (Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo 2022)



It was understandable that Serbia wanted to bring the Kosovo case back into the discussion, calling it unfinished and prompting skeptical states to delay recognition, even though the ICJ decision was only advisory (Gashi 2008). The treatment of Kosovo at the ICJ was read as a diplomatic victory for Serbia over the political process of recognition of the new state. Marc Weller had this assessment, arguing that Serbia is not interested in seeing a priori the legality of the Declaration of Independence but the creation of doubts in the act of recognition and its delay (Peci 2009). As the time approached when the court would decide on the case of Kosovo, there were increased estimates that Serbia after it, regardless of the court's decision, would start recontesting the political status of Kosovo, looking for other forms or modalities for negotiation, while Kosovo will try to use the decision to start a new phase of recognition (Bislimi and Konushevci 2009). The ICJ's advisory opinion was:

> more ambiguous than the parties saw it, it offered the EU an opportunity to pressure Serbia to engage in dialogue if it wanted to continue with EU integration and let the Serbian government with few alternative strategies. The advisory opinion, therefore, inadvertently paved the way for EU mediation between Serbia and Kosovo (Bieber 2015, 297)

While waiting for the decision, the beginning of technical negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia gradually appeared on the political scene as a discussion, which Serbian policy saw as necessary, but also independent of the ICJ decision. This can also be seen as a clear indication of Serbia's approach to Kosovo, particularly its recognition (Bislimi 2010).

Political Negotiations as a Barrier to Recognition

The decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), despite being classified as capital, Serbia wanted to avoid the effect that its acceptance by the UN would have; therefore, it was important to find an avoidance, intensifying the calls for the start of negotiations on the things that had remained open with Kosovo, which according to their point of view are talks that were left in half, after the action of one side of Pristina (Goebel and Lowen 2010).

After receiving the ICJ's decision, Kosovo's foreign policy tried to build one more argument in the lobbying process by intensifying the lobbying of the states that had given indications that they could recognize Kosovo. Since the decision was written and did not allow ambiguity, Kosovo could secure some recognition or start a new wave of recognition (Peci 2010).

Serbia wanted to develop a new strategy for obstructing recognition; perhaps starting the negotiations would be a good approach to stop the achievement of new recognitions, as it was clear that the intensity of the recognitions had diminished. An important aspect that is very little noticed, especially in the last period (before the announcement of the ICJ decision), is that the decision, in any case, had an impact on creating the belief that the issue of Kosovo as a political status is resolved, while it is noticed that tensions had decreased, and talks as the possibility of finding political solutions for other issues, were seen as useful (Tatjana 2015, 240).

The main focus of Serbia after Kosovo had declared its independence was to identify the factors that would affect the blocking of the recognition process while aiming to open a new political battle, using the treatment of the legislation of the Declaration of Kosovo's independence in the ICJ (Bancroft 2010, 2-6).

Serbia was interested in using the dialogue to present the case of Kosovo as not closed, starting new lobbying, with the arguments that the negotiations are continuing, inviting the states not to hurry with the decision on recognition until a new epilogue that would result from the agreement between the parties (Gashi, personal communication 2022). Since then, Serbia has also started a new lobbying campaign for de-recognition, which had mainly applied very unconventional, blackmailing, and corrupting forms (Zymberaj, personal communication 2022), while it has continued these actions in the following years, identifying at least 30 states to which the request for de-recognition has been submitted (Ahmeti, personal communication 2022).

CONCLUSION

Immediately after the Declaration of Independence, Kosovo was recognized by 53 countries in the first year. This accelerated pace of recognition was hindered only six months after gaining statehood when Serbia contested Kosovo's Declaration of independence at the ICJ. In principle, when Serbia questioned the legality of the Declaration of Independence, it intended to prolong the recognition process while being supported by Russia in world decision-making forums. The Ahtisaari Plan rejection was the second blow to the recognition process, which transformed it into a clear political and strategic plan for the states.

Afterward, the ICJ decision favoring Kosovo was considered political capital, but Kosovo had not issued an action strategy after the decision. Against this, Serbia had prepared the ground for a new wave of political talks with Kosovo, aiming to diminish the ICJ's decision.

This new situation, imposed by Serbia's demands and the reversal of the fate of recognitions from the new relationship that Kosovo will build with Serbia, affected the complete stagnation of new recognitions. From 2011 to 2021, Kosovo has continued to score some small achievements in recognition. Nevertheless, it has faced opposition, particularly regarding its participation in international organizations, which will also rely on how the Kosovo-Serbia negotiations turn out. Since numerous processes now depend on the successful conclusion of political negotiations, Kosovo is no longer in an advantageous position.

(cc) BY

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Acknowledgments:
Not applicable.

Funding:
Not applicable.

Statement of Human Rights:
This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any authors.

Statement on the Welfare of Animals:
This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any authors.

Informed Consent:
Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Publisher's Note:
The Institute for Research and European Studies remains neutral concerning jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

REFERENCES

1. Anthony, Murphy., Vlad, Stancescu. 2017. "State formation and recognition in international law". *Tribuna Juridica*, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Law Department, vol. 7(1): 6-14.
2. Bancroft, Ian. 2010. "The International Position of Kosovo After the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice". Med: *Panorama*.
3. Bassiouni, Cherif. 2017. "Background on the Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia" in Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992-1994: The UN Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992). Available at:https://doi.org/10.1017/9781780687551.002 (December 20, 2022)
4. Bebler, Anton. 2015. "The Serbia-Kosovo conflict". In A. Bebler (Ed.), "Frozen conflicts" in Europe, 1st ed. Verlag Barbara Budrich, 151–170.
5. Bieber, Florian. 2015. "The Serbia-Kosovo Agreements: An EU Success Story?". *Review of Central and East European Law*, 285-319.
6. Bislimi, Bekim. 2010. Bisedimet teknike, para apo pas vendimit të GJND-së? *Radio evropa e Lirë*. Available at: https://www.evropaelire.org/a/2044182.html (December 11, 2022)
7. Bislimi, Bekim. 2020. Vendnumërimi diplomatik i Kosovës për ç'njohjet. *Radio evropa e lirë.* Available at: https://www.evropaelire.org/a/30352639.html (December 12, 2022)
8. Bislimi, Bekim., Konushevci, Arton. 2009. GJND - zbutjetensionesh. *Radio Evropa e Lirë*. Available at: https://www.evropaelire.org/a/1893362.html (December 13, 2022)
9. Bokor-Szegő, Hanna. 1998. "Creation and cessation of states and contemporary international law" *Társadalom És GazdaságKözép- És Kelet-Európában / Society and Economy in Central and Eastern Europe* 20, no. 2: 268–83.
10. Bolton, Grace.,Visoka, Gëzim. 2010. "Recognizing Kosovo's independence: Remedial secession or earned sovereignty? *Occasion Paper*. Oxford University, UK. 1-26.
11. Brown, Marshall. 2017. "The Legal Effects of Recognition" *American Journal of International Law*, 44(4) (1950): 617-640. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/2194983 (December 10, 2022)
12. Brownlie, Ian. 1973. "A survey of international customary rules of environmental protection" N*at. Resources J.* 136: 179.
13. Crawford, James. 2006. "The Creation of States in International Law". United Kingdom: *Clarendon Press.*
14. Clapham Andrew. 2012. Brierly's Law of Nations: An Introduction to the Role of International Law in International Relations. UK: *Oxford*. ISBN 978–0–19–965793–3.
15. Fierstein, Daniel. 2009. "Kosovo's declaration of independence: an incident analysis of legality, policy, and future implications". University School of Law. *Boston University International Law Journal,* 417-442.
16. Finck, François. 2016. "The State between Fact and Law: The Role of Recognition and the Conditions under which it is …". *Polish Yearbook of International Law* 36: 51-81. Available at:https://doi.org/10.7420/pyil2016d (December 13, 2022)
17. Gashi, Zijadin. 2009. Pritjetpërshtimnjohjesh. *Radio Evropa e Lirë*. Available at: https://www.evropaelire.org/a/1893386.html (December 12, 2022)

18. Goebel, Nicolo.,Lowen, Mark. Deutsche Welle. 21.07.2010
19. Grant, Thomas. 1999. "The Recognition of States: Law and Practice in Debate and Evolution". United Kingdom: *Praeger*.
20. Högger, Daniel. 2015. "The Recognition of States: A Study on the Historical Development in Doctrine and Practice with a Special Focus on the Requirements". Austria: *Lit*.
21. Ker-Lindsay, James. 2015. "Explaining Serbia's decision to go to the ICJ" in Milanovic, Marko and Wood, Michael (eds.) "The Law and Politics of the Kosovo Advisory Opinion". *Oxford University Press,* Oxford, UK
22. Konushevci, Arton. 2008. "Gruda: Kosova ka më shumë fakte në GJND, sesa Serbia". *Radio Evropa e Lirë*. Available at: https://www.evropaelire.org/a/1330885.html (December 17, 2022)
23. Lauterpacht, Hersch. 1944. "The Law of Nations and the Punishment of War Crimes" *Brit. yB Int'l L.* 21:58.
24. Lauterpacht, Hersch. 2012. "Recognition in international law". Vol. 3 *Cambridge University Press*.
25. Morrison, Fred. 1961. "Recognition in International Law: A Functional Reappraisal". *The University of Chicago Law Review*, vol.34, no.4: 857–883. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/1598995 (November 12, 2022)
26. Newman, Edward., Visoka, Gëzim. 2018. ''The Foreign Policy of State Recognition: Kosovo's Diplomatic Strategy to Join International Society'', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Volume 14, Issue 3: 367–387. Available at:https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orw042 (November 19, 2022)
27. Newman, Edward., Visoka, Gëzim. 2018. "The European Union's practice of state recognition: Between norms and interests". *Review of International Studies, 44 (4)* 760-786. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210518000104 (November 17, 2022)
28. Newman, Edward., Visoka, Gëzim. 2021. "The Geopolitics of State Recognition in a Transitional International Order". *Geopolitics*, 1-28.
29. Oppenheim, Lassa. 1905. "International Law: A Treatise". Switzerland: *Longmans, Green*.
30. Papic, Tatjana. 2015. "Political Aftermath of the ICJ AO on Kosovo" (October 31, 2013); M. Milanović, M. 2015. "The Law and Politics of Kosovo Advisory Opinion", *Oxford University Press,* 240-267.
31. Peci, Edona. 2009. Argumentetnë GJND – tëshumta. *Radio Evropa e Lirë*. Available at: https://www.evropaelire.org/a/1605031.html (December 19, 2022)
32. Peci, Edona., Sejdiu, Thaçi. 2010. Pas GJND-së, njohjetëreja. *Radio Evropa e Lirë*. Available at: https://www.evropaelire.org/a/2077232.html (December 21, 2022)
33. Pippan, Christian., Karl, Wolfram. 2008. "Self-determination, secession, and recognition: International law aspects of Kosovo's independence (Parts I and II)". *Europäisches Journal für Minderheitenfragen.*
34. Prishtina region ndajvendimittë OKB-së. 2008. *Radio Evropa e Lirë*. Available at: https://www.evropaelire.org/a/1328213.html (December 20, 2022)
35. Reynolds, Paul. 2008. *"Kosovo: To recognize or not to recognize*?". BBC, London. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7250764.stm (November 11, 2022)

36. Riegl, Martin., Bohumil, Doboš. 2018. "Post-Soviet De Facto States and Russian Geopolitical Strategy". *Central European Journal of International & Security Studies* 12, no.1: 59-89.
37. Rrahmani, Bashkim. 2014. "Kosova and the challenges of recognition". *European Scientific Journal.* Special ed. vol.2 ISSN: 1857–7881.
38. Schoiswohl, Michael. 2004. "Statehood and Recognition—Constitutive or Declaratory?" In *Status and (Human Rights) Obligations of Non-Recognized De Facto Regimes in International Law: The Case of 'Somaliland'*, Brill Nijhoff, 32-39
39. Seymour, Lee. 2017. "Legitimacy and the Politics of Recognition in Kosovo". Small Wars & Insurgencies. Volume 28, (4-5): *Rebels & Legitimacy*, 817-838.
40. Shaw, Malcolm. 2017. "International Law" India: *Cambridge University Press*.
41. Slomanson, William. 2007. "Fundamental Perspectives on International Law" United States: *Thomson/Wadsworth*.
42. Talmon, Stefan. 2004. "The constitutive Versus the Declaratory Theory of Recognition…". *British Yearbook of International Law*, Volume 75, Issue 1: 101–181.
43. Visoka, Gëzim. 2022. "Statehood and recognition in world politics: Towards a critical research agenda". *Cooperation and Conflict*, 57(2): 133–151.
44. Warbrick, Colin. 2008. "Kosovo: the declaration of independence".*International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 57(3): 675-690.
45. Weller, Marc. 2008. "The Vienna Negotiations on the Final Status for Kosovo: International Affairs". *Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944*, 84(4): 659–681.
46. Weller, Marc. 2009. "*Contested Statehood: Kosovo's Struggle for Independence*". Oxford University Press.

Interviews with:

1. Dr. Enver Hoxhaj, 2021
2. Kreshnik Ahmeti, 2022
3. Drilon Gashi, 2022
4. Alma Lama, 2021
5. Jetlir Zymberaj, 2022