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## The Kosovo War: On Religion and Representation

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## **THE KOSOVO WAR: ON RELIGION AND REPRESENTATION**

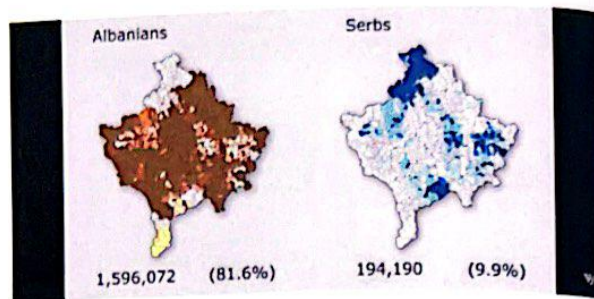
By: George Davis

Concluding World War II Yugoslavia was a socialist republic under one rule. The area was ruled largely in part by Serbia, and the individual countries below are a result of the last 80 years of declared independence. Kosovo is the dotted area north of Macedonia, located in the south of Serbia.



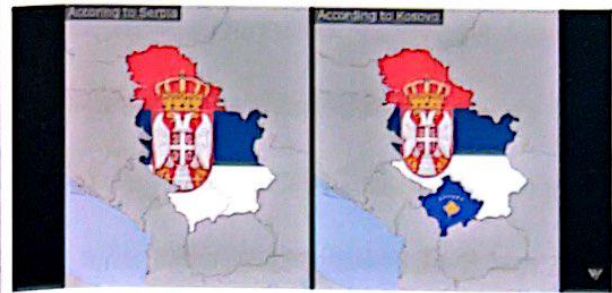
<https://youtu.be/oiSgAiM0d8A>

Kosovo is largely populated with Muslim Albanian individuals as the ruling majority, and ethnic orthodox Christian Serbians as the minority.



<https://youtu.be/oiSgAiM0d8A>

The conflict arises in exactly that. The ruling sovereign of Kosovo is currently under Serbian government. Serbia refuses to recognize Kosovo's independence as country, and rather only as a territory within Serbia. Serbia's lack of recognition within the self-proclaimed independent territory, is similar to that of Vladimir Putin, the current leader of Russia, refusing to allow Ukraine to join the European Union. A greed for power and land across the Balkan region is a large goal of Serbia's and is one of the main reasons for denying Kosovo's independence as it would result in a loss of Serbian land.



<https://youtu.be/oiSgAiM0d8A>

Another reason Serbia refuses to recognize Kosovo's Independence is that there are sacred areas of Kosovo dating far back into the nation's history.

"Many of the greatest examples of Serbian religious architecture are found in Kosovo, including the Vysok Dečani monastery and its counterpart in Gračanica" – (Bills, John William).

<https://tinyurl.com/3p3e86e8>



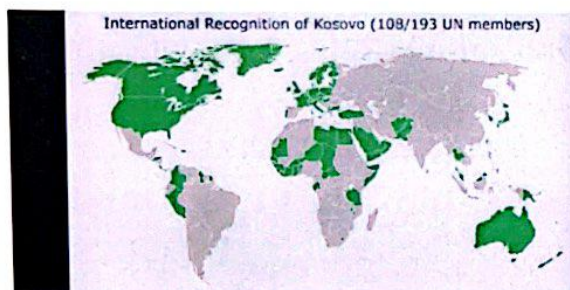
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These sites are both orthodox Christian monasteries. However, an overwhelmingly large portion of the surrounding population consists of Albanian Muslim individuals.



There is a prevalent disconnect between these groups. Upon investigating this matter further, with a friend of mine who goes to Pace, and lives in Belgrade, Serbia, and Montenegro each summer, she stated that being Serbian in Kosovo is dangerous given her experiences. She has no desire to visit Kosovo, amidst identifying as an eastern Orthodox Christian, and still feels that her safety would be threatened need she visit.

It is important to look at which countries recognize the area of Kosovo as an independent nation rather than as a territory within Serbia.



<https://youtu.be/oiSgAiM0d8A>

Many of these countries are westernized countries, governed by democracy, are a part of the European union, or are majority

populated Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Oman, and Yemen.

The countries that boast large Muslim populations are notably supporting the representation of Muslims within Kosovo to operate independently of Serbia. Most importantly, Albania aims to recognize Kosovo's independence as many individuals in the territory are Albanian Muslims.

Kosovo being recognized as a country by Serbia would also mirror rhetoric of the west, as they would no longer be under the historically socialist rule of Serbian leadership. The recognition and support of the country's independence from democratic countries stems from the opposition to Serbia's governmental structure. There is not a particular affinity towards the independence of the country, other than it means less individuals under socialist rule.



### **Alliance**

Serbia's close allyship with Russia remains a key factor in forbidding Kosovo's Independence. Western stability and security pose a threat to both countries. Given Kosovo was to become their own nation, a new opportunity for joining the European Union may arise. This is similar to the negotiations in Ukraine, and Russia's disapproval of Ukraine joining the European Union. Joining notably means promised protection by other NATO countries, including the U.S.A. which is discomforting to both Russian and Serbian leaders. Kosovo's independence is a widespread issue across the region, one of democracy versus socialism, Christianity versus Islam, and arguably an indirect conflict of the superpowers of the U.S. and Russia. Finally, it is important to note that Albania is a part of NATO according to the figure on the previous page. If Kosovo were to gain independence, its likely they would become

members of NATO as well, to avoid humanitarian crises they've been exposed to in the past, under Serbian leadership.

### **Conclusion**

The outcome of the war in Ukraine, and whether they join the European Union, will heavily influence Kosovo's Independence status. The fighter Jet on the cover of this Zine is telling of why this conflict extends beyond the Balkan region. Serbian leaders vividly remember NATO attacks on their land to cease fighting in Kosovo carried out by the Clinton Administration.

"Clinton described the objective of the bombing in stark terms: 'If President Milosevic is not willing to make peace, we will limit his ability to make war'"

- Kempster, Norman LA Times Writer

Clinton's response arguably set precedent for leaders like Putin to launch unprovoked attacks with little to no explanation, leaving the superpowers ultimately at conflict over countries like Ukraine and Kosovo.



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