

BORGES'S LABYRINTHS, KOSOVO'S ENCLAVES, AND URBAN/CIVIC DESIGNING (II)

Intimations of What Is: Societies and Enclaves

The multiethnic society is one which includes a pluralism (diversity) of ethnic peoples. This is as true of Kosovo as it is for any other Balkan country. Although it is less heterogeneous than many, being populated mostly by Albanians (88%), there are Serbs (8%), as well as other ethnic groups (4%) (including Bosniak, Gorani, Turk, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian)

This demographic fact of pluralism is not the sole determiner of whether there is a multiethnic society, however. Pluralism is only a necessary condition for such a society - the existence of possible interethnic interlocutors. If it were not only a necessary but also a sufficient condition, that is, its presence was simply enough to bring about a multiethnic society, then there would be a significant similarity between the ethnically homogeneous society and the ethnically heterogeneous multiethnic society. That is to say, they would both lack a dialogical (or multilogical) relationship between members of different ethnic nationalist communities. However, it is this relationship that sets the gold standard for true multiethnic societies; it is what makes them so valuable. Hence, there is no such thing as a heterogeneous non-interactive multiethnic society. The best that could be said of this imposter of a multiethnic society would be that it is composed of the co-presence of mutually indifferent ethnic communities. Enter the plural monoethnic society composed of ethnic enclaves.

The Multiethnic Society vs. and the Plural Monoethnic Society and Its Enclaves

An ethnic enclave exhibits an ethnic manifold, the defining feature of which is that any position within the enclave would look and feel like a place of a particular ethnic community. This is because the evocative objects would only be of one kind and would inform members of a particular ethnic nationalist group in ways unique to them. It would have a "smooth space." But at least within the plural monoethnic society the enclave of one ethnic community would be open to the possibility of being "textured" by the intrusion by ethnic Others

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and their objects. Thus, what was originally uniform would now be populated by a diverse array of evocative objects suggesting that the home-worlds of individuals of different ethnic backgrounds would not be segregated from one another, that members of different ethnic communities could break ranks, and integrate and, thus, interact with one another even if it were initially the result of a chance encounter at a marketplace or cafe.



Is Kosovo a multiethnic society?

Again, the interaction resulting from this "butting up against each other" integration is at first a loose dialogical relationship that may incorporate mutual learning and scrutiny. However, dialogue may also lead to increased ethnic integration in housing, employment, education, and so on. And, of course, the more integration there is in employment and schooling, the more opportunities people will have for integration of families through interethnic marriage. Bosnia, in this regard, is far ahead of Kosovo.

The aforementioned integration, however, is not the same as assimilation. Whereas assimilation occurs when members of a group, who are perceived to be a threat and thus are treated as a threat, are "asked" in so many ways to give up their distinct cultural identity and to take on

more of the dominant cultural identity, integration does not tamper with much of a group's cultural identity (like religion and language) within private and public space in its attempt to forge greater understanding and group cohesion and a common identity in terms of citizenship. Consequently, so-called hyphenated identities with an emphasis on national identity become increasingly important, public space being populated with national-ethnic identities like Kosovar Albanians, Kosovar Serbs and so on. Unfortunately, there is a fine line between recognizing hyphenated identities to promote cohesion and accepting any oppositional residue that works against integration which, in turn, would undermine cohesion. Bosnia and Kosovo are prime examples of this phenomenon.

Kosovo

Is Kosovo a multiethnic society? Although many Kosovar Albanians describe Kosovo as the archetype for a multiethnic society, I beg to differ. Granted, there is ethnic pluralism; however, the home-worlds of many individuals of the various ethnic communities lack a great deal of integration, and it is integration which leads to interaction of various forms, some meaningful and some not so meaningful. Those who doubt this need simply ask the following questions: Where do most Albanians and Serbs live, work, and go to school? Who do they befriend?

The fact of the matter is that the majority of Serbs live, work, and go to school in enclaves with little, if any (meaningful) interaction with Albanians. They are found to reside in the Serb majority municipalities such as Zubin Potok, Zvecan, and Strpce; the northern portion of the city of Kosovska Mitrovica; and small

towns that surround Prishtina, such as Gracanica, Laplje Selo, and Caglavica. Interesting enough, Prishtina is perhaps one of the few places in Kosovo where Serbs generally live in mixed neighborhoods like Ulpiana and Bregu i Diellit (Sunny Hill).

Those Serbs who work alongside Albanians do so within a very different setting than most Serbs can envision themselves being in, i.e., being employed by inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) like the UN, EU, and OSCE; non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like SPARK, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, and Nansen Dialogue Centre; a foreign embassy; or an agency within the Kosovo government. Being employed by such entities not only pays well, but they encourage associations that might not otherwise be formed.

When it comes to schools, some Albanian and Serb children still attend a school like Daut Bogujevci. The segregation within higher education is even greater. Although many Albanians stay home to attend university, including the University of Prishtina, a large institution with an enrollment of over 40,000 students (but no Serbs), a larger percentage of Serb students travel to Serbia for their studies. For those who remain in Kosovo, their institution of choice is the Serb-run University of Pristina in Kosovska Mitrovica with an enrollment of over 10,000 students. Apparently, getting an education is realized in much the same setting as their home and work life. Some believe that only Kosovar Serbs dwell in ethnic enclaves. However, the fact of the matter is that integration, or the lack thereof, is a two-way street in Kosovo. The same can be said of Kosovar Albanians. Indeed, how could enclave living with its separation and otherness only apply to the Serb population when for this to occur those defining features require an Other to be separated from and to be Othered by, which in this case means Kosovar Albanians (and members of other ethnic groups)? Perhaps the only significant difference in the various ethnic enclaves is their size, with most of the Albanian population dwelling in a super enclave looking like a piece of Swiss cheese.

Tomorrow:

Borges's Labyrinths, Kosovo's Enclaves, and Urban/Civic Designing (III): Intimations of What Is: Enclaves, Objects, and Kosovo

Macedonia Albanians Mark Ohrid Deal Alone

The ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration, DUI, on Tuesday marked the twelfth anniversary of the Ohrid Accord - without the presence of members of the main ruling party, reports BIRN

Macedonia's Vice Prime Minister in charge of the Ohrid accord, Musa Xhaferi, and the Defense Minister, Talat Xhaferi - both ethnic Albanians - laid flowers at an Albanian war memorial in Slupcane, near Kumanovo, a former insurgent stronghold.

Several other ministers and mayors, all from the ranks of Democratic Union for Integration, DUI, the junior party in government, were also present.

No ethnic Macedonian politicians or international representatives were present, however.

The move may cause political controversy, as did a similar ceremony held last year at the same site, involving then defense minister Fatmir Besimi, also from the DUI.

The gesture angered Macedonia's main ruling VMRO DPMNE party and caused a government crisis.

It remains unclear whether this year's ceremony was agreed in coordination between the government partners or was a solo move by the DUI, a party formed by leaders of the former insurgency.

The DUI otherwise canceled its traditional banquet, to which the country's leaders and diplomatic corps were invited.

The Ohrid deal was signed by Macedonia's then-president, Boris Trajkovski, and the four main parties at that time: the Social Democrats, VMRO-DPMNE, the Democratic Party of Albanians, DPA, and the Party for Democratic Prosperity.

The deal enjoyed the active support of the EU and US and envisaged the disbandment of the Albanian paramilitary National Liberation Army, NLA. The NLA was later transformed into the DUI, which is now a member of the ruling coalition.



Slupcane memorial

Under the accord, the constitution was changed and positive discrimination towards the ethnic Albanian population was introduced in public service, the military and police.

The wider use of the Albanian flag and language were also allowed, alongside other supporting measures.

Twelve years on, most of the deal's provisions have long been implemented but the country still needs to employ more ethnic minority staff in state offices to meet equitable representation targets.

On Tuesday, the Organization of Cooperation and Security in Europe, OSCE, called on all communities to keep the dynamics of the Ohrid Accord alive.

"It is crucial that all sides stay actively involved," the acting head of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, Marianne Berez, said.

Arno van der Pas, co-ordinator for ethnic relations at the OSCE, said the country needs to step up efforts in helping young Macedonians, Albanians and others bridge the ethnic divide.

"If children learn the riches of diversity in mutual respect, the Ohrid Accord achievements will be cemented," he said.

Forty Percent of Montenegrins Support NATO Accession

Montenegro citizens' NATO support rises by the year, show results of an Ipsos survey. If a referendum was scheduled, 40 percent of Montenegro citizens would be in favor of NATO accession, while 39 aga-

inst, with a 60-percent turnout.

"There has been a significant rise in the NATO support compared to 2009, when 31 percent of respondents were in favor of the country's joining the Alliance", said Ipsos.