



## ORIGINAL PAPER

# Political Parties Ideologies in Kosovo

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the ideological profile of political parties and the party system in Kosovo. The political system in general and the political parties in particular are basic elements and very important for functioning of the state. Political parties, depending on ideological attitudes that they represent, hold certain attitudes to solve social problems. Political parties with *left* orientation are supporters of social equality; they support the social strata with economic problems, and they are in favour of stronger presence of the state. Political parties with *right* orientation have different attitudes from left parties. They support evolutionary changes in society, they are in favour of preservation and cultivation of traditions, there are supporters of the capitalization and are for minimal state intervention in society. Political parties in Kosovo have a new tradition of the formation and profile. They are at an early stage in terms of the ideological division. The party system in Kosovo after 1990 can be divided into two phases. The first phase is until 1999, where political parties have operated under the measures of occupation, and the second phase includes the period from 1999 onwards, initially under the international administration, and after the independence under supervision and co-governance in some areas with the mission of the European Union (EU). In order to be more inclusive, political parties in Kosovo offer ideologically unclear programs. Political parties in Kosovo in regards to some topics such as European integration, economic and social policies in general have same positions, with some exceptions. In this paper, the qualitative methodology was used.

**Keywords:** *political party, international administration, ideology, left-right, program*

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### **Introduction**

Political parties in modern-representative democracies are fundamental for institutional functioning and representation. Without political parties, representative modern democracy cannot work. Individuals through political parties, competing in election, with electoral programmes and ideas aim governing the country. Depending on attitudes and social strata targeting to represent, political parties are positioned and offer solutions for certain and various issues, with interest and debatable in society. Political parties with broad citizen support, typically provide a more comprehensive solution, with all approach differences they may have. All attitudes, beliefs, offers and alternatives that political parties provide for social issues are part of a certain ideological profiling, known in general terms as the right and left spectrum.

This paper makes an analysis of political party ideologies in Kosovo, the level of profiling, their formal and programme approach concerning solving of certain social issues. In this paper, there was used the qualitative research method, narrative analysis and the process tracing method. These methods are used through analysis of literature, programmes and statutes of political parties in Kosovo. Prior to commencing the research, the question was raised: How much are Political Parties in Kosovo profiled? In responding to the above question, the hypothesis was raised: Party system in Kosovo, because of circumstances, first the occupation by Serbia and afterwards the international administration, were more oriented towards state building than ideological profiling. The independent variable in this case is occupation and international administration, whereas dependent variable is the ideological profiling of political parties.

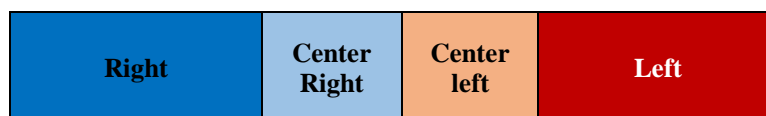
The structure of the paper is composed as follow: In the first part, there is the Theoretical Framework, in which there will be analysed political parties and their ideology in theoretical aspect. In the second part, the ideological and party system in Kosovo are analysed, a brief history of the establishment of the multiparty system in Kosovo and the ideological division. In the end of the paper there are provided some conclusions for party system and ideological division in Kosovo.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Political Parties, their way of functioning, political programs, ideologies and their structure are very much studied by many social and political scientist. Some of the most known but not only are: Giovanni Sartori (1998), Maurice Duverger (1954), Daniel-Louis Seiler (2012), Gunther and Diamond (2003), Kitschelt (1995). Also Dommet (2014), Millard (2004), Web and White (2007), Lewis (2001) for political parties after the fall of the communist regimes as part of new democracies. Despite other groups, political parties based on programs offered to the electorate, maintain consistent approach to the social and economic problems, foreign policy and other topics. Articulation of attitudes, beliefs, approaches towards phenomena and the way of resolving some issues or governance orientation comprise the ideology of a political party.

Furthermore, more it can be argued that “ideology is a system of belief, not private, represented by a certain group of social actors. Ideology can be changed to certain persons, depending on the belief and vision regarding certain attitudes” (Van Dijk, 2006: 115-140). Political Parties based on their programs and ideologies are divided into three general groups: Right, Left, and Centrist, having either right or left elements.

**Figure 1. Ideological spectrum of Political Parties**



Source: Author's own compilation

Political Parties of the Right Spectrum proclaim the protection of tradition and the memory of the past, are in favour of small governments, free economy market, less taxes, greater role of the individual, against abortion, against marriages of same gender, complete privatization... Left parties are opposite of the Right parties. They are for greater role of governance, an economy more controlled by the state, more powerful role of the society, are for more solidarity by paying taxes and distribute them to social programs, they are pro abortion, equal rights for women, minorities (Wiesehomeier, Doyle, 2012: 4-8). The foundation of the Left and Right Division was encountered in voting of the Assembly in France in 1789. However “according to the historian Marcel Gauchet, the creation process of the Left and Right topography symbolically appeared during the voting of the Assembly in 1789. Those who would not agree with the situation, and who did not share the same opinions, where noticed of liking the left side of the hall and they always gathered there” (Seiler-Luis, 2012: 39). Moreover, it can be considered that “while the term ideology was used and still continues to be used mostly by leftists, communists and socialist parties in order to emphasise their view and political position. However, also other opinions that are referred to as rightist are called ideologies, such as: liberalisation, conservatism, nationalism or also fascism” (Hofmeister, Grabow, 2011: 24).

Despite this classic Left-Right separation, today the political parties in order to be more attractive, and to win the trust of more voters, often broaden their offers, as well as attitudes towards problems, holding attitudes that they may be contrary to their ideological classic profiling. Political parties emerged from communist countries, including Kosovo with its specifications, vary from Political Parties with a long tradition of pluralism including their ideological profiling, as well as programs providing to voters. The more the Political Parties are profiled and with tangible programs, the more advanced they are. But this does not mean that guarantees more votes for parties. Because of these reasons, political parties today are more comprehensive, pragmatic and try to be acceptable for a larger number of voters. The Quietism of Political Party Ideologies was recently studied by Dommet (2014) in the case of Great Britain. “According to her "the parties are more pragmatic and above ideology their goal is to get much support”. Great Britain has a long tradition for Ideological division of the Political Parties and recently has a quitisem among them (Dommet, 2014:1-19).

While in countries with lack of ideological tradition and with many political, economic and social problems and instability, like Kosovo, expectation for ideological division of Political Parties are smaller. At the time of globalization, the parties are trying to be comprehensive, often known for combinations of left and right elements of spectrum, following so-called 'third Way'. Such example is the Labour Party of Britain, led by Tony Blair, and the Democratic Party in the US, led by Bill Clinton who in order to be more pragmatic and provide the best solution for problems, followed the third way in their

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governance. According to Blair and Clinton, “Their third way is a social democratic response of globalization, increasing of investment and public finance” (Romano, 2009: 79-94).

Remarkable contribution in studying Political Parties is given by Gunther and Diamond, who in their analysis: *Species of Political Parties*, the new typology, they categorise political parties in three typologies: The first has to do with the formal organization of political parties. The second includes the nature of programmatic commitment of Political Parties. Some parties hold good articulated ideological positions, based on philosophy, religious beliefs or national feelings. Some are pragmatic and have no clear ideological or programmatic commitments. While some others are directed in particular towards certain ethnic groups, religious, social or economic, or defined geographical constituencies, despite the parties that are heterogeneous, if not discriminatory and comprehensive (Eclectic) in their electoral appeals in society. The third deals with strategies and behaviour norms of Political Parties (Gunther, Diamond, 2003: 167-199). Second typology of political parties in terms of programmatic organization is challenging in the countries emerged from communism like in Kosovo. Kitschelt, made the categorisation of Political parties based on: “Charisma, Clientelism, and Programs.

Due to the competition of political parties based on their programs, it is costly and hardly feasible, a number of authors claim that: (1) post-communist democracies will not be based on programs in the near future, but much more in leadership and patronage and (2) post-communist democracies will remain unconsolidated for a certain period of time” (Kitschelt, 1995: 450-451).

By later developments, in many countries and in Kosovo, analysis of Kitschelt continues to be still present. The above mentioned category includes in principle almost all types of political parties. Each party is part of one or more of these categories, depending on the level of democracy development, the context of their establishment, act circumstances, and profiling. In consolidated democracies, political parties are profiled and structured, comparing to new democracies in process of consolidating.

This also applies to countries emerged from communism, which, from a one-party system, have been transferred into the multiparty system. While parties which were closer to the communist system or that were direct successor of this system, they had Left positions though in new democratic circumstances. Whereas, parties that emerged by the students movements, workers or intellectual movements, who were in favour of changing the mono party system, who opposed it in various ways. With the permission of the multiparty system, and creation of new parties, arising from the opponents of the communist system, they were classified as right-wing party.

According to Millard (2004) ideological parties in the former communist countries were not always coherent, as well as their concerns and priorities of the program differed substantially from the Western European parties. Most of the Parliamentary Parties proved poor ability to establish clear and touchable policies. Political Parties in Central and East Europe were of two types: They were similar in the competition for power, had weaknesses in their ideological profiling and lack of sustainability. The first type came as a result of challenging the ruling communist party.

The second were strong Political Parties in power in the powerful presidential systems like in Russia (de jure) and in Ukraine (de facto). These parties formed the parties with weak ideological elite, through comprehensive electoral offers with the only aim to remain in power (Millard, 2004: 263-267).

### **Party system and ideologies in Kosovo**

Political and Party system in Kosovo has its own specifications. While during 90's, the former communist countries started to act under democratic and pluralist party system, Kosovo was placed under the Serbian occupation. During this time in Kosovo, there were allowed to act some political parties like LDK, which was more like Kosovo Albanians movement against Serbian occupation than it was political party in a classic way. "It means that we have to do with a specific case, either in terms of governance or in profiling, because following the fall of communism, Kosovo as part of the former Federal Yugoslavia, not that it was able to win its freedom, moreover it was restricted having been put under the Serbian regime" (Peci, Malazogu, Dugolli: 4).

Kosovo, during 1989-1999, continued its resistance against Serbian regime, by not accepting that system through developing of parallel institutional life in all fields. "During the period of time 1990-1999, in Kosovo there were active more than one political parties like-Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Social Democrat Party of Kosovo, Parliamentary Party of Kosovo, Demo Christian party, Liberal Party. However, these parties did not operate in normal circumstances where would be allowed development of normal political life and democracy" (Krasniqi, Shala, 2012: 8-9).

In this period of time we could not talk about ideological profiling or about determination or some development and orientation. The only and main orientation was freedom and independence of Kosovo from Serbia. "After the NATO's intervention against Serbian regime in Kosovo and Serbia, Kosovo was placed under international administration, where legal basis was resolution 1244/99 of the Security Council of UN" (Caplan, 2005: 138-139). Since the Kosovo placement under international administration until current days, political parties are acting more in pragmatic way, by providing solutions to problems in a more comprehensive manner than they are targeting certain groups of society based on ideological profile. Despite, political parties in Kosovo formally are declared as follow: -two main political parties Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) in their statute have been declared as centre right parties. Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) has been declared as well centre right. (Statute of PDK, LDK, AAK); - New Kosova Alliance (AKR) has been declared as liberal-democrat orientation. (Statute of AKR). Self-Determination (VV) has been declared as centre left party (Statute of VV).

### **Political Parties in Kosovo during the international administration**

Initially after the war in Kosovo in 1999, Political Parties were divided into parties emerged from the war (PDK and AAK) and the parties that had followed a peaceful path(LDK) with the same aim to liberate Kosovo but using different way (ICG report, 1999: 1-9, Hofmeister, Grabov, 2013: 96-99 ) "United Nation Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was in favour of good relations with LDK and the leader Rugova, initiating efforts for Rugova's return from exile (Rome-Italy), in order to avoid the impact of the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) successor party" (Tansey, 2009: 118-120). This happened because they wanted firstly to establish social balances, afterwards it would be easier to govern the country with parties considered as modern ones. "In the same ways as with East Timor, in Kosovo, one of the ways of international administration impact in political transition occurred through intermediation of elites access in power. Before and after election, the UNMIK had intervened in competitions between political parties and elite aiming to shape election results, avoiding the impact of any single party or ethnicity

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and promoting of modern politics in Kosovo. The UNMIK had shaped Kosovan politics through selection of local interlocutors and international involvement in formation of post-election coalitions (Tansey, 2009:117). During the first parliamentary election under UNMIK administration in 2001-2004, ruling coalition was composed by main political parties in Kosovo (LDK, PDK and AAK) and minorities who were an integral part of all governments, guaranteed by legal acts. This composition had comprehensive social involvement, but without ideological or programmatic division.

Meanwhile there weren't any opposition political parties with broad support. This was not common for a democratic country. This tells us that above all, the international administration was interested for stability and inclusiveness, specifically for a country (territory) without any strong democratic tradition like it was Kosovo after the war. 2004-2007 government marks for the first time the position of political parties according to participation in governance, the position under the collation (LDK/AAK) and a strong opposition with PDK.

During the International Administration in Kosovo, the role of UNMIK was very important and powerful in deciding, making, and implementing of laws and politics in all fields. Moreover, it was also involved in party and political system, including election organization, election system, the time of election, certification and the announcement of election results. The UNMIK appointed Serbian minorities in some cases because of their opposition to take part in election for political reasons.

**Figure 2. Political Parties in Government since 2001**

<b>Electoral Years</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Ruling Coalitions- Main Albanian Political parties</b>	<b>LDK, PDK, AAK</b>	<b>LDK, AAK</b>	<b>PDK, LDK</b>	<b>PDK, AKR</b>	<b>PDK, LDK</b>

Source: Author's own compilation

### Political Parties after Independence of Kosovo

On February 17, 2008, the date of declaration of Kosovo independence there were PDK and LDK in power, which were the main parties in the sense of citizens support and history representation. The period after independence was characterized with establishing new state institutions, which in earlier phases did not exist or were under international administration. "Post-independence phase was characterized by the establishment of other state institutions that previously had not existed or had been administered by international missions. This step of democratic and institutional consolidation at the same time appears as a major challenge for the Kosovo society. It can be expected that with the economic and social development, political parties can start the articulation of the programmatic orientations and thus the political scene in Kosovo will be consolidated" (Krasniqi, Shala, 2012: 9).

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During the PDK and LDK government 2007-2010, ruling parties were more oriented towards state-building and staying in power than concern with any clear program based on ideological determination. This was proven also by the Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, according to whom "the PDK-LDK coalition concerned with the declaration of independence of Kosovo and state building than it had to do with any conceptual or ideological connection" (Dudushi, 2014). This was confirmed as well after the decision of the Constitutional Court in 2010 on violation of the Constitution following the issue of two positions held by the President of Kosovo and the President of LDK (Case nr KI 47/10). After the Constitutional Court's decision, LDK left the ruling coalition whereby the country entered in institutional crisis and which derived holding of new parliamentary elections in February 2011 (Ejupi, Qavdarbasha, 2011: 5-6). As of March 2011 until June 2014, Kosovo was governed by PDK and AKR. This ruling coalition was based more in numbers in order to create a majority in the Assembly rather than in ideological and programmatic ties. At the same time it was a strong opposition in numbers, but there was a lack of unity and ideological program.

Concerning future possible coalitions, after the elections of June 2014, Prime Minister Thaci declared that: "We will not exclude any Political Party to establish a new Government. Firstly we will look forward to establish a coalition with parties that have closer ideas with ours, but however this will be decided after the election results" (Dudushi, 2014). This really happened after the elections of June 2014. The lack of political party ideological profiling, before the election as well as the creation of coalitions and then the government, has a negative impact on the governance outputs. It means that the impact is in political system and governance quality, with specific emphasis in social and economic development.

While in countries with clear ideological profiling of right and left or centre (with any of proportional election system), it is known in advance which party enters into coalition with which party, In Kosovo case, all parties go into election campaign with certain election offers and programs, but without being able to say and determine the coalition partner after election results. The short history of Kosovo (after international administration) testified that firstly during 2001-2007 under international administration and as of the independence of Kosovo in 2007 until 2014, ruling coalition's were based more in numbers of members of parliament than in principles, programs or ideological profiling. This has affected the quality of governance, initially because of the co-governance with the UNMIK during 1999-2008, which had a clarity and lack of outcomes and then due to lack of ideological spectrum and profiling of parties. As a result of above shortcomings after the elections of June 2014 (CEC, 2014), the country entered into crisis because none of political party had a parliamentary majority to create majority in the parliament. In a party scheme, with PDK on one side as the winner of the election, and LDK, VV, AAK and NISMA on the other side, known as LVAN block, created obstacles in creating the institutions after the elections, because none of them (LDK, VV, AAK and NISMA) wanted to be in coalition with PDK as the winner of the election in 2014. During this time the minorities represented in the parliament were neutral. This separation of Political Parties was not based in any programme, ideology or coherent plan. After six months blockade, the opinion of the Constitutional Court on the right of the largest party to elect the Speaker of the Parliament and government cabinet proposal and after pressure of the embassies in Kosovo, specifically the USA's Embassy to create a new government, PDK and LDK signed the agreement for the ruling coalition.

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The previous government with PDK and AKR was the same, like the others in Kosovo, without any ideological or programmatic roadmap. The only reason of the block LVAN to be together was to leave PDK out of the ruling coalition, but there was not any programmatic or ideological vision. The current coalition between the PDK and the LDK was established in December 2014 after 6-month blockade. Coalition was stable concerning numbers in parliament despite some MPs of LDK did not vote pro, because they were against the government with PDK. Also, opposition parties consisting of VV, AAK and NISMA (from the people who were previously as senior leaders in PDK) are acting strongly against the government as of the beginning of coalition, especially they are strongly objecting the demarcation agreement with Montenegro and the Association of Serb Municipalities, agreed by Kosovo-Serbia talks facilitated by the EU. Thus, as a result of non-acceptance and rejection of the agreement, the opposition parties have blocked holding of Assembly sessions by launching tear gas and organising street protests.

After the Constitutional Court decision that the agreement is not fully in compliance with Constitution of Kosovo, the objection by opposition parties is getting much stronger. Still party system in Kosovo is dialectic and not stable. Like the Governing coalition (PDK-LDK), opposition parties (VV, AAK and NISMA) are not consistent in sense of their past, current ideology and programs. Almost the main role in establishing of governing coalitions in Kosovo, since 1999 until 2014 was played by the Internationals (UNMIK) and embassies (specifically the USA, the UK and German).

### **Political Parties and voting in Kosovo**

Kosovo has continuously organized regular and periodic elections since the establishment of international administration in 1999. Through elections,-- citizens freely decide on their representatives. A very important role in the success of a party is played by a leader with his charisma. Leadership and charisma of the leader is very important for all political parties in Kosovo. This proves the case with the former President Rugova. LDK still continues to have Rugova's leadership as the main ideology and the main program.

Also in PDK, President Hashim Thaci is the key and leading figure of the party, in the elections, their positive outcomes since 2007 and the governing processes. This is noted in the last elections where the leader of party was almost the only and main person during election campaign (Misioni i ri, 2014). The role of the leader is key in VV (Albin Kurti) and AAK (Ramush Haradinaj) as well. "Looking at the trend of political developments in Kosovo, there will be no progress until the leaders are the focal point of political parties and are not programmes.

This is best illustrated when citizens do not refer to party but to the leader. While party programmes have not primary relevance. The lack of an ideological anchoring of parties in Kosovo continues to be a challenge in their development. Concerned with the independence of Kosovo, the political parties in Kosovo have neglected their ideological positioning, being called only as the centre of the right or left" (Ante, 2010: 174-175). Also second categorisation of political parties as Clientelism made by Kitschelt, in Kosovo case it continues to have an important role for keeping and broadening of the support of citizens specifically for the Parties in power in local and central level.

This is valuable for the other parliamentary parties in Kosovo, who are not in power but govern in some municipalities. We may conclude that Clientelism appears in two ways. The first one through employment and the second one via granting tenders for certain businesses, which are then paid back by financing them. Corruption and the way



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of tendering are criticised by many international and local reports. This has negative impact in developments of the country and in creation of proper environment for foreign investments.

This happens in developing countries in the process of internal stabilisation and democratic consolidation where economy is weak, and unemployment rate is high. Clientelism and Leadership do not mean that it works in every case, like in Kosovo. AKR and its leader Behxhet Pacolli did not pass the threshold of 5 percent in last election (2014) held in Kosovo. While in 2007, he won considerable votes, later and specifically during the 2010-2014 governance, where AKR was part of government in election was not evaluated well and did not become parliamentary party (CEC, 2014). During this time AKR was left overshadowed by the main party in governing coalition. While third categorization made by Kitschelt is that parties are based on and win the elections on offers and programs, in the case of Kosovo it can be said that is still weaker comparing with the two first Kitschelt categorization.

The way of voting and election campaign depends on the specific political developments in Kosovo, in terms of the exercise of sovereignty by the locals and international administration. Until 2008, for all political parties the main topic during electoral campaign was the independence, while for the other topics as economy and unemployment were some general offers but nothing touchable. For these set back the UNMIK was blamed.

After 2008, the Parties were more specific with economic offers but it is still general. Whereas by 2014, it can be said that there was some progress in the parties offer, but without any clear ideological division. All offers were to address the issues that bring more votes. Election offer was more specific comparing with the previous elections, providing solutions for some issues like: employment, economic development, taxes, privatization, energy, agriculture, social policy, EU integration, etc.

The whole electoral offer was comprehensive in sense of voters targeting. While regarding ideological profiling, it was mixed and without any clear ideological division. European Integration, strategic partnership with the US, the free market economy, open society, the fight against negative phenomena and social policy are some of the points that Parties in Kosovo are closer. Exception is VV, which has different approaches to some economic themes, privatization, (against the privatization of some enterprises important for the country, such as Trepça, Post Office, Airport and KEK), foreign policy or international presence in Kosovo. All Political Parties, with some minor changes in access, declare their commitment to help people who live in poor economic conditions. "PDK with its program of governance is committed to: continue and increase support for the families of martyrs; veterans; war invalids; Indexation of basic pension to inflation; Provision of adequate health support for social categories, in public health institutions; Indexation of social schemes with inflation, etc. LDK, with its program foresees: "social assistance provided by the state to the poor families. As far as possible, social assistance will be conditioned with the active work in different jobs, as well as participation in various trainings.

This is the best way to alleviate poverty and reduce dependency on social assistance (Government Program, 2014). VV Movement is committed to support poor strata with public systems of social assistance, financed by a progressive tax system. Regarding, Social policy and pensions: VV is for the care of the state for each citizen (Movements Manifesto). AAK also promote social inclusion and support for the strata in need (Drejtimi i RI, 2014). Based on this, the parties in Kosovo act based on the context

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of the level of development and needs of the citizens in Kosovo. Formally, this also shows that economic circumstances in Kosovo, above the left-right division, requires addressing the basic needs of citizens. Also it can be concluded that all political parties, with minor changes, support providing opportunities for creation of new jobs. At the same time political parties are for social support of the state for the strata in need.

### Conclusions

As final conclusions, we can consider the following approaches: establishment of Political Parties in Kosovo was influenced by political and historical circumstances, excluding the ideological model of the parties establishment; international administration, failure to define the status and relations with Serbia, has determined quite a lot the running of political parties in Kosovo; political parties in Kosovo are in the process of consolidation and profiling.

This appears during the debates, electoral offers and their programs. During the period 1999 to 2008, it can be said that the purpose of political parties was initially oriented to build institutions with the support of UNMIK, economic and social development, but without any clear guidance on how to approach the ideological and institutional development.

This was imposed by the context in which political parties operated under international administration until the elections and then with some governmental powers, but still limited. During the time of the international administration, the only program and 'ideology' of all Albanian parties in Kosovo was independence and economic prosperity. While the ideological divisions right, left, centre, were concepts discussed formally, the party system in Kosovo is formally more positioned as centre right. (PDK, LDK and AAK) (while in content they have more centre left policies for social and economic issues, specifically in the fields of social welfare and supporting for some social strata). Political parties and the society in Kosovo has unique attitudes towards certain developments, such as: European integration, the future army of Kosovo (not applied to Kosovo Serbs), the fight against negative phenomena, foreign policy, except VV with some different approaches. PDK, LDK, AAK are politically more comprehensive and less profiled, while VV is more profiled as centre left towards economic issues and as right regarding political issues. -Party System in Kosovo remains not defined in terms of prior determination of political parties for the coalition partner.

This creates uncertainty during the election campaign and as a result even in the government. Political parties in Kosovo are mono-ethnic (Albanians, Serbs, Turks, Bosnian), despite the fact that the aim of international administration was to create a multi ethnic society. Political Parties in Kosovo are primarily more Charismatic and Clientlist, and less based in programs and ideology.

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