

Macedonian Question Reframed: Politics, Identity and Culture in Republic of Macedonia

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Abstract

Macedonian question has opened twentieth century Balkan political scene. Historical framework offered broad definitions including political, cultural and identity aspects. The population mix in Macedonia in the late Ottoman Empire created preconditions of a variety in political affiliations in which regional confronted great power interests. In this context, an autochthonous independent Macedonian revolutionary movement was created in the face of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO), which later crystalize its goals into the idea of a unified independent Macedonian state. Although in the turmoil of the Balkan Wars and First World War Macedonia was divided by its neighbors, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, after World War Two Macedonian statehood was created in part of the original ethno- geographic territory.

After the dissolution of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), in 1991, the Republic of Macedonia gained full independence. But during the period of international recognition, generated by the original cultural, political and identity aspects a "New Macedonian question" arise. The complexity of this reframed Macedonian question can be summarized in few salient points: The name issue problem with Greece, Unwillingness of Bulgaria to recognize independent

Macedonian language and national identity, the Serbian pretensions towards the Macedonian Orthodox Church, Complex inner multiethnic context and Macedonian-Albanian relations, and finally, the geostrategic position influenced by the blockade for integration into the EU and NATO and new positioning of regional and world powers related with the latest Syrian and Ukrainian crisis.

Keywords: *Macedonia, Balkan, Macedonian question, identity, Name issue*

The Bases of Balkan Nationalism

Arousing of the nation and promoting the national ideology would come up as the key role in redefining the Balkan identities. The new era of modernity is actually offering new standards in order to define the Otherness as a requirement to construct the border between groups. While the imperial era, the communities were the ones building the world's vision through religious systems and servitude as universal criteria, new conditions of the market economy and citizenship offered the new national country as a sole alternative along with the nationalism as a necessary ideology.

But in order to homogenize the newly formed national entities, it is a necessary to create mutual criteria for ethnicity that regardless of the territorial bases or the linguistic-cultural distinctions ought to create a unique ethnical awareness or expulsion that would be based only on the idea that can be termed mutual collective memory. Therefore, even during the 19th century the proto-national intelligence would accelerate to establish the ethnical boundaries pursuant to the myth of the origin and the durability of the discrepancies. All of this would become an eternal task of the social engineering that and to the creators who shaped the framework of the Balkan historiographies.

The national project needed necessarily to begin from the religious settlement in the late Ottoman Empire, and generate the current Balkan national discourse, which during the clash of the models for building a national ideology came from Western Europe. Since the original national

ideology under the veil of the liberalism, humanism and the Enlightenment would establish itself into the framework of the Christian communities, therefore the ethnicity towards the Orthodox Church would become a basic criterion for building the national originality. In the early 19th century Pan-Orthodoxy would start its evolution towards the promoting of the Pan-Slavism. The opposition towards the executing of the service of “The Holy Greek Language” becomes the basic motif for the beginning of the search of the medieval empire roots of the Slavic communities.

This phase continues along with the subsequent national identity transformation while in the middle of the 19th century the Slavic groups begin to construct their own “ethnic boundaries” based on distinctive speech dialects. In addition, as long as the Serbian nation creates an institutional framework at first, the Bulgarian proto-nationalism maintains the Pan-Slavic aspect of separation of the Orthodox Greek linguistic ecumenism; hence, by the end of the 19th century, Macedonian example would be equally headed towards the language distinction regarding the Greek, while construction of the boundaries of the Otherness, but seemingly in terms of the political distinction regarding the Bulgarian and Serbian factor.

Proto-national elites generated by the citizenships would first strive to construct special churches that would further establish the basic paradigms of the presence of the nation, while representing the secular modern system within the mass education. Hence, at least one generation would be needed to go through the educational institutions in order to solidify the project of creating a homogeneous nation. The myth of the national unity in the forthcoming phase could be sermonized in terms of the primary societal institutions of socialization, as for example the family. Nevertheless, in practice the inconstancy of the character in these institutions such as the variable nature equally regarding the physical and ethnic boundaries, will prolong the whole national homogenization up until the first decades on the 20th century.

The nation’s genesis becomes a fundamental element in its strengthening. Even if there is a fictive past, it must be real. This is the reason why the culturale continuity is contingent and inessential (Gellner, 1999: 34). Hence, the historical continuity needs to be invented, by creating an antique past that would overcome the effective historical continuity or through semi-

fiction or falsification (Smith, 2000: 53).¹ National thinkers attempt to provide an answer to the following questions: what is the nation's origin, what are the nation's diacritical features, who belongs and who does not and what is the future of the nation (Brunnbauer, 2004: 165).

“Critical markers” such as religion, language and mutual territory do not denote one and the same identity. Therefore there must be a so-called “invention of the tradition”, there must be a creation of “imaginative communities “and there must be “a basic invented myth”. The group needs to own a mutual famous past, divine ancestors, and hard times in the past, etc. Smith does not argue for the significance of the relativistic position of the historical truth and not even about it being irrelevant for the national phenomenon. Clearly, the ability of the national historians to document fables and exploding unsatisfactory fictions is an important element within the sustainable relations amongst past, present and future, on which the national community is being based on (Smith, 2000: 55). As for Gellner, the high cultures strive to become the basis of the new nationality when right before the emergence of the nationalism, the religion was tightly defining each underprivileged as an opposite of the privileged especially even in times when the underprivileged do not have any other mutually positive feature (such as the mutual history) (Gellner, 2008: 107).²

Geertz locates the most obvious changes that appear along the process of national constituting within the second and the third phase but the largest part of the far-reaching changes – the ones that change the general direction of

¹ According to Rousseau: “ the first role that we need to follow is the one for the national character. Every population has or should have one, character; if it is lacking we need to start stimulating it.

The politics for Renan is not enough. The country as such cannot function solely as a social cemented nor can the relation among their citizens. It could be provided solely through the “history” or even more through the historical comprehension and “the cult of the ancestors” (Smith, 2000:8, 11).

² Each high culture needs a country, an own one, if possible. Not every wild culture can become a high culture and those without a serious perspective to become high culture have a tendency to obey without a fight; they do not give birth to a nationalism (Gellner, 2008: 75).

the societal evolution- are happening less spectacularly in the first and the fourth phase (Geertz, 2007: 329).³

I- Nationalism first appears as an expression of resistance towards the foreign (foreign culture, language, religion etc). This resistance within the industrial society along with the sense for collective destiny with others; creates the collective awareness and contributes to the generating of groups on intellectuals – the ones that consecutively are the first bearers of the nationalism. They strive towards creating political unit and further on towards creating a nation.

II- The euphoria lasts for a certain period after creating the state but after the establishing of the institutional system again the question arises: “Who are we that we are doing such a thing?”

III- creating the artificial “ we” while there is a defining of the language as an issue during the defining of the nation itself (Ibidem, 330-333)

Within the context of the Balkan nationalism and the building of the collective national awareness, the key role goes to the educational institutions, which through their own curricula are reconstructing the vision for mutual past. In addition to that, the primordial aspect for the organic origin of the nation predominates almost universally, which is primarily based on ethno-linguistic traits of the group. Speaking of the Macedonian historiography, as for Brunbauer, the national discourse is determined by the primordial and

³ Geertz differentiates four phases within the development of the nationalism:

First phase- the one in which the nations are being formed and crystallized

Second phase-when nations triumph

Third phase- when they are being organized into states

Fourth phase - when after being organized into states become obliged to confirm and stabilize their relations as all the other states therefore regarding the unregulated societies where the origin from (Geertz, 2007: 329-333).

essential approach that refers to the national and ethnical identity as something inherited and not a subject of change (Brunbauer, 2004: 188).⁴

The Origin of Macedonian question

In 19-th century Macedonia represents a geographic unity that includes most of the lands included in the three Ottoman administrative units- the Vilaets of Kosovo (Skopje), Monastir (Bitola) and Salonica (Adanar, 1998: 241; Brown, 2003: 37). The real issue of the Macedonian question originates from the clash of the Ottoman traditionalism represented through administrative organization and the imported idea of nationalism. The last one produces the idea of the nature and character of the population of Macedonia, and its boundaries, no matter if they are a geographically- functional, ethnic or historical product. The definition of the Christian population of Macedonia is a subject of nationalistic contestation of the young Balkan nation- states, and the very idea of definition generates the Macedonian question (or questions).

In Ottoman Macedonia there is a lack of a unified idea for definition of ethnicity, often presented a *Sallade Macedoin*. The Slavs from Macedonia did not have a clearly developed feeling of national identity and their models of self-identification were shaped from the neighboring Churches (The Patriarchy of Constantinople and the Bulgarian Exarchate). In other cases the ethnic categories were hidden behind social status, for example the general notion that the “Greeks” being the urban population, the “Bulgarians” - peasants, and the “Vlahs” - nomadic shepards” (Marinov, 2009: 108).

The theses of racial nationalism present in most of the memoirs of European travelers often did not correspond to the Ottoman social context, not presenting the real self- identificational character of the population. Most of Christian peasants with Slavic origin from the villages near Salonika probably did not defined them-selves as Greeks, or as Bulgarians. Some of them may have even had strong feelings of loyalty toward Greece or Bulgaria, when

⁴ “ Facts” are organized and the sources interpreted in a manner that would serve as an evidence of the existing of the Macedonian nation. The question about nation and nationalism in the Macedonian Historiography lacks with theoretical basis (Brunnbauer, 2004: 189).

were asked who they are, many insisted on that they always were-“Christians” (Mazover, 2004: 219).

This basically religious identification was characteristic for all future Balkan nations in the beginning of 19-th century. The national myths of Serbs, Bulgarians or Greeks were constructed with the nation building process projected by state institutions. For example, in 1830 Jacob Fallmeraijer attacked the national stance that the modern Hellenic people are the descendants of the Antiques and claimed that mostly they are Slavs and Albanians. In response to this statement Paparigopoulou claimed that the Hellenic identity has been linguistic and cultural but not racial. He strengthened the position of the Byzantism as a positive part of that continuity whose civil code was adopted by Kapodistria in 1928 and King Otto in 1835 (Karas, 2004: 318). This aspect of the fundamentalists of the Greek historiography justifies the assimilation that is transforming the significance of the “Holy” language with the framework of the Church service into a more contemporary interpretation of power of “the high culture”, which in the case of the Greek nation is represented through language and culture.⁵

Macedonian late identity can be simply explained by lack of institutions, or presence of other national institutional agencies. The differentiating identity on the parts of part of the Slav population in Macedonia, starts its development in the mid of 19-th century, through:

- Increased manifestation of local feelings;
- The popularity of the Uniat Churches;
- The publications of schoolbooks in local dialects; and
- Later, the separatism is generated after the establishment of the Exarchate, codification of eastern dialects as the official Bulgarian language, and formation of Bulgarian state in 1878 (Brooks, 2005: 130, 131).

⁵Thus, Paschalis Kitromilides refers to the cultural continuity through which “the forms of cultural expression, related to the Christian kingdoms and Orthodox service are being inherited”. The other argument that is used is the opposition of the Palaeologists equally towards the western Catholicism and the Ottoman-Turks, which is interpreted as an issue for expressing the Greek nationalism. Therefore the question arises: Is this Byzantine (Romaic) sentiment merely a confessional loyalty or is it ethno-religious nationalism? (Smith. 2000: 43).

In December 1884, William Gladstone presented the parole "Macedonia of the Macedonians". Also Edith Durham noted: "*I met people who believed that they are a separate race, which they called "Macedonian"..."*" (Ibidem, 160-169). In 1871 Bulgarian Petko Raco Slaveikov wrote that one decade previously the Macedonians declared themselves as separate nation (Minovski, 2008: 78). In 1890 K. Hron in "Das Volksthum der slaven Makedoniens, Ein Beitrag zur klärung der Orientfrage" publicized in Vienna, noticed: "*...in any case it may be proven, as in their history, so and in their language that the Macedonians are not Serbs, nor Bulgarians, but a separate people..."*" (Ristevski, 1999: 45, 46). And in the beginning of 20-th century, Brailsford noted: "*the Slavs in European Turkey yet do not have a highly developed national conscience, and the one they own is recent. They do not have passion for their nationality, but for their land. They are peoples rooted to the land, in their ancient villages, with imitated feelings religiously orientated to their mountains, rivers and ancient churches. The nation of those conservative peasants in a short time will be developed to a real local patriotism". And this happened- "their ballads for rebellion, in which they talk about "Macedonia" are in every lyrics, proving that they already have their own fatherland"*" (Brailsford, 1906: 184).

The last notion shows the importance of the idea of fatherland in the Macedonian proto-national intelligencia. This was the moving force of the autonomy program of IMRO in late 19-th century. The necessity for statehood was more important than the promotion of an ethno- linguistic character of the Macedonians. The intelligencia was aware that there was a need for a territorial model as a first stage, and that ethnical model can be developed afterwards. The transfer of national ideology in the beginning of 20th century did not come from Paris or Vienna. Simply the Macedonian revolutionaries were following the patterns of national constitution of their neighbors- primarily the Serbs and Bulgarians and their histories.

The Macedonian proto-nationalism, even to late state constitution, develops its self together with the other Balkan nations. The first stage includes the Enlightenment related to the church institutions and without explicit national character. In the mid 19th century, the Otherness is build through political mobilization related to Church educational communities in Macedonia and the initiatives of the resurrection of the Ohrid Archbishopric. To the end of 19th, and the beginning of 20th century in the face of IMRO is created proto-institutional and proto-national framework. In this period the national Macedonian identity is still just the privilege of intellectuals and national romanticists. But the Macedonian proto-nation is developing with

potential for growing in fully defined nation. This process is developing parallel to strong outside influences from the neighboring states, which pretend to Macedonian territory, the monopoly of creations of historical visions, and national affiliation of its population. In this sense we have to mention that as a result of the Millet system of the Ottoman Empire, and Christian character of Balkan nation-states, the Muslims initially were excluded from national pretensions.

The second national stage in the building of Macedonian nation incorporates the period of the second half of 20-th century. There are three sub stages; the first from the foundation of the state and "ASNOM"⁶ until 1970's. The second sub stage is from the 1970's till the 1990's, when the national sovereignty is formally transferred from the previous centralized Yugoslavia to the federal republics, and in a sense the national model of SR Macedonia is openly promoted as the ethnic character of the nation. And the third stage includes independence and post 2001 conflict period, when Macedonia's constitution is shifted toward clear civil model, but in practice the reality shows binational (Macedonian-Albanian) statehood.

New Macedonian Question Rises

With the end of the Cold War period, national questions became prominent in the Balkans, under which the last decade of twentieth century was marked with rise of collective emotions and growth of nationalisms. The first question is the Serbian, related with the space in the ex SFR Yugoslavia, where the Serbian communities were used for launching of the Great Serbian idea. The same question today is related to the political status of the Serbian entity the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the status of the Serbian population in the enclaves in Kosovo. We should point that the priority which has been given to this question in 1990-s in the territory of Croatia, after the forced migration on the Serbians from Kninska Kraina, is today divorced from reality; The second question which led to the waking of nationalism is the Albanian question, connected with the final solution of the status of Kosovo and the status of Albanians in Macedonia, together united with the radical idea of creation a Great Albania; and the third question is the Macedonian question. The last one is significant by the basic differences from

⁶Antifashistichko Sobranie na Narodnoto Osloboduvanje na Makedonija – Anti-Fascist Assembly of Peoples Liberation of Macedonia

the previous two in the fact that it is not connected with the great national idea of Great Macedonia, but is manifested by cultural and historical clash with Greece, connected with the differences concerning the name Macedonia and the recognition of Macedonian minority in Greek Macedonia, non-recognition of the Macedonian Orthodox Church by the Serbian Orthodox Church and the differences in the reading of history as far as Bulgaria is concerned. Altogether, the problems are united around not recognizing the Macedonian national identity as separate and independent (Stojanovski Strasko, Jovan Ananiev and Jadranka Denkova. 2014: 74).

In 1990's with the big changes in Eastern Europe, SFR Yugoslavia had transformed its political and economic system into pluralistic democracy and free market economy. But the instability in federation produced further changes, which resulted with disintegration and the formation on new nation-states. Macedonian independence was traced in 8th of September, when on referendum independence was established. New challenges were numerous. Economic and political stability, together with international recognition were of primary importance.⁷

In the next twenty years Macedonia encountered problems in securing its stability- economic and political, integration challenges and sustaining its unitary character. In middle of the last decade of twenty century the Republic of Macedonia positioned its status in the international community as a novel country, facing economy sanctions toward FR Yugoslavia and blockade from Greece. With recognition from USA, and start of the bilateral negotiations with Greece for "the name issue", the focus was shifting toward Euro-Atlantic integrations (EU and NATO). But in 1999 this stability was challenged with the Kosovo crises, and later, in 2001, the conflict within its own borders. The last ten years have been characterized with the process of stabilization, inner reforms, and the start of integration processes toward EU and NATO. In the next part will present the three aspects of Macedonian

⁷ First multi partial elections for Macedonian parliament were on 24 September 1990. In January 1991, Kiro Gligorov was elected for first president of the republic. Previously, on 25 of January 1991 was adopted "The Declaration for independence of SR Macedonia". On the base of this Declaration, on 8-Th of September on referendum was proclaimed the independence, and on 17 November the first constitution was proclaimed. On 8-th of April 1993 Republic of Macedonia (under the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) was accepted as a member of United Nations, becoming 181 member country.

question: Macedonian- Bulgarian relations, Macedonian-Greek relations and the name issue conflict and contemporary relations between the ethnic Macedonian and Albanian communities with the focus on Ohrid Framework Agreement.

Macedonian-Bulgarian relations

After Macedonia's proclamation of independence, Bulgaria was the first country that decided to recognize its independence⁸. This move was of paramount importance for Macedonia and a great ground for building the future Macedonian-Bulgarian relations. The recognition was not without controversies though. Namely, the leadership of Bulgaria often explained that the recognition of Macedonia as an independent state did not mean recognition of the existence of a distinct Macedonian nation. According to Gligorov (Gligorov, 2001) the Bulgarian President Zheljy Zheljev pointed out that Bulgaria would not interfere in the internal affairs of Macedonia. However, it does seem that the denial of determination of the majority population in Macedonia was nothing else, but interfering in its internal affairs. The reactions in Macedonia to such recognition of Macedonia were divided. While President Gligorov was skeptical about the intentions of Bulgaria, the Vice President Ljupco Georgievski considered that the most important element in the whole thing was just the recognition of Macedonia. According to Gligorov (Gligorov, 2001: 408), Georgievski said "(...) *it is important Bulgaria to recognize Macedonia, and about the Macedonian nation let the historians speak.*". In reality, in the international relations, states are recognized or not, and no one requires recognition of language or nation, because it is a fact that they exist. It is possible that the position of Bulgaria's recognition of Macedonia, but not of the Macedonian nation, was intended for internal use in Bulgaria. It must not be forgotten that many years ago the Bulgarians were imbued with the idea of Greater Bulgaria as ethnical Bulgaria and such a created opinion could not change overnight. At the same time, recognition of a distinct Macedonian nation would have meant opening the process for recognition of a Macedonian minority living in the region of Blagoevgrad but also across whole of Bulgaria. Concerning this issue in particularly interesting talks took place between the presidents of Macedonia and Bulgaria where the Bulgarian President Zhelev said: "*You are not taking in to consideration that in Bulgaria, for several generations, there are two*

⁸Together with recognition of independent Slovenia, Croatia, B&H

million Macedonians, but they feel like they are Bulgarians and they seem to be greater Bulgarians than us. This influence we cannot reject" (Gligorov, 2001: 411).

The existence of a policy that recognized the state but not the nation directly burdened the relations between the two countries but also affected politics within the countries. For example, the organization of the Macedonians in Bulgaria "OMO Ilinden" was prohibited from public action. Even the celebration the life of ant the laying flowers on the grave of Yane Sandanski was questioned. It took nearly a decade after the fall of communism in Bulgaria to allow the registration of the political party "OMO Ilinden"⁹ which finally won five local officials and several in the region of Pirin Macedonia. However, a year later the Bulgarian Constitutional Court declared the action of the party unconstitutional, after which it ceased to exist. This behavior of Bulgarian institutions was a clear violation of the Convention on Human Rights (Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights) which Bulgaria had ratified and which guaranteed the right of free association. The European Court of Human Rights reacted adequately to that.

Overcoming of the language dispute with Bulgaria deserves special attention. This problem stems from Bulgaria's denial of the existence of distinctly different Macedonian language. Eventually a mutually acceptable technical formulation as solution of a political-historical problem was found. The solution of the dispute came as a result of the Joint declaration of 1999, signed by the Heads of Governments of the Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Bulgaria¹⁰. The technical solution to the political language problem has been found in the following formulation: The agreement was "*signed on 22 February 1999 in Sofia, in two originals, each in the official languages of the two countries -Bulgarian language, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria and in Macedonian language, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, both texts being equally authentic.*"¹¹. Exactly this formulation allowed signing of this declaration and of all subsequent agreements between Macedonia and Bulgaria. The language problem, which meant actually denying the existence of Macedonian language by Bulgaria, was overcome through technical formulation under which the agreement was signed in the two official

⁹ In 1999

¹⁰ Ivan Kostov and Ljubco Georgievski

¹¹See Joint Declaration full text in (Georgievski, S. and Dodevski, S., 2008: 907-909).

languages in both countries, according to their constitutions. In this way, Bulgaria only recognized the reality of existence of the Macedonian Constitution which states that the official language in R. Macedonia is Macedonian, which does not necessarily mean that it recognizes the existence of the language.

The Joint Declaration of 1999 has other important elements as well. So, in it the two neighbors commit to the promotion mutual relations and their further cooperation, such as cooperation in the process of uniting Europe, holding regular meetings, improving conditions for economic cooperation, cooperation in the field of tourism, infrastructural connectivity under the regional projects cooperation in the field of culture, education, health, sport, enabling free flow of information, protection of intellectual property, cooperation in legal sphere in particular in civil, criminal and administrative matters till the two states declared that: "*neither of the two countries shall undertake, instigate or support any actions of a hostile nature directed against the other country*"¹². This last one phrase is very interesting and deserves some attention. What exactly do the words "not taking, not encouraging and not supporting of hostile actions by any of the two countries" means? The answer, is explained in details at the edge of the Declaration. The phrase means four things. First, none of the states will allow its territory to be used for attack over the other. This principle later grew into a general attitude of the Republic of Macedonia, which applies to all its neighbors. Secondly, none of the neighbors will raise territorial pretensions against the other. This is also a kind of attitude of Macedonia to all its neighbors, and is even included in the Macedonian Constitution, where it is clearly said that Macedonia has no territorial pretensions to its neighbors (article 3 paragraph 4 from the Constitution of Republic of Macedonia).Third and very important is the following: "*The Republic of Macedonia hereby declares that nothing in its Constitution can or should be interpreted as constituting, now or whenever in the future, a basis for interfering in the internal affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria for the purpose of defending the status and the rights of persons who are not citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.*" (Ibidem). This formulation can be completely right, but surprises the fact and remains questionable why the Joint Declaration has no such reciprocal obligation for the Republic of Bulgaria. Fourth and finally, both sides will take measures to prevent any non benevolent propaganda that might harm the common relationships, whether it comes from institutions or from private persons.

¹²Ibidem

Macedonian-Greek relations and The Name issue

If an analysis is done, it will be found out that Greece used three main methods of pressure on Macedonia. First economic, second political and third military pressure. As economic pressure Greece used the economic embargo¹³, which virtually meant closing the port of Salonica¹⁴ to Macedonia. This decision on the part of the Greek government had a terrible impact on the Macedonian economy, which was already somewhat unstable being in a period of transition. With this embargo Macedonia was left without oil and other crucial energy resources. In such conditions Macedonian exporters and importers had to seek alternative routes through Albania and Bulgaria, which automatically increased their costs. Also, the embargo against Serbia by the UN complicated the situation in Macedonia.¹⁵ These conditions underpinned the growth of smuggling and the poor economic situation underpinned inter-ethnic tensions and growth of nationalism in Macedonia. This situation was also a direct influence coming of foreign investments decisions not to come to Macedonia. So it created a circle which did not allow improvement of the economy.

Besides economic pressure, the political pressure by Greece was also incredibly strong. This was primarily enabled by the membership of Greece in EU and NATO, also by its strong lobby abroad. The political pressure on Macedonia began with the application for recognition. Greece clearly conditioned the recognition of Macedonia on changing its name. Using its membership in the EU, despite the opinion of the Badinter Commission, Greece managed to impose its position as position of EU. So, at the Lisbon summit it was clearly told to Macedonia, that it will not be recognized until as its name does not use the word "Macedonia". Greece also did extensive lobbying in the UN, Macedonia not to be accepted as member under its constitutional name. The result of this Greek pressure was Macedonia's entering in the UN under the reference "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". Characteristic of this form of pressure was that Greece applied it in parallel in different international organizations and in various countries. Thus, while the Greek lobby in the USA managed to delay the USA recognition of Macedonia, the Greek lobby in Australia managed to obtain official decision from the Australian government for naming the Macedonians

¹³ On February 16, 1994.

¹⁴ The Greek name of the city is Thessaloniki, and Macedonian name is Solun.

¹⁵ The Embargo was imposed on Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, i.e. Serbia and Montenegro, for her role in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

as “Slavomacedonians”. The Greek political - diplomatic pressure still exists. Greece blocked in 2008 Macedonia's accession to the NATO. A similar scenario occurs in connection with the integration of Macedonia in the EU, where due to opposition of Greece, Macedonia still cannot start the membership negotiations.¹⁶

Finally, Greece used military-psychological methods as means of intimidation and pressure. Demonstration on its military power could be seen through repeated military exercises on the border with Macedonia and flyovers and violating the Macedonia airspace at the beginning of 1990s. The last incident connected with the Greek army occurred on the official parade on the occasion of Greece's independence in 2010. In this event, Greek soldiers marched and shouted, “*They are Skopjenians, they are Albanians and we will make clothing from their skins*”.¹⁷ It can be concluded that although Greece has never really used military force against the Republic of Macedonia, it used and is still using the military power as means of intimidation and pressure.

But there were other considerations in Greece too. Some politicians thought that the various methods of pressure should be replaced. The alternative policy to trade blockades, political vetoes and military parading, consisted in a more rational policy of economic expansion. The idea was, in accordance with this policy, Greece would be able to achieve much greater impact on Macedonia. In fact, direct Greek investments should make the Macedonian economy dependent on Greece and Macedonia a kind of satellite of Greece. In this way Greece would avoid embarrassment in its international reputation for all those things it has done with all those blocks and vetoes to Macedonia, and would be simultaneously promoted as an engine of pro-European values as well as of European unifying process in the Balkans, because it was the only member of the Union in the Balkans. That kind of Greek policy appeared with arrival of Simitis in 1996, who made a change in the previous approach to Macedonia. Unlike his predecessor Papandreou, Simitis was more pro-European oriented and saw Greece as holder of the European process in the Balkans. “Instead of embargoes and pressures Simitis promoted the idea that Greece should not use such methods against

¹⁶ Although for six consecutive years it has had candidate status and also has got positive opinion from the Commission about getting a date for starting negotiations

¹⁷ “Greek soldiers chant anti-Turkish-Albanian slogans at military parade”, *EU Timesnewspaper*, 29 March 2010 (<http://www.eutimes.net/2010/03/greek-soldiers-chant-anti-turkish-albanian-slogans-at-military-parade/>).

Macedonia, but should enter into Macedonia, be a economic factor, invest, trade or even start a cultural exchange ... in the economy to develop to such and so high degree that it is already talking about expansion of Greece into Macedonia (Gligorov, 2001). This changed of course of the Greek policy began only a year after signing the interim agreement and obtained intensity with the change of government in Macedonia in 1998. In such a manner, relations between the two neighbors for the first time since the independence of Macedonia could be characterized as relatively normal. The changed Greek policy influenced the improvement of the overall relations in all spheres. Thus, while the Greeks were buying companies in Macedonia¹⁸, even more Macedonian citizens have started again (after almost a decade) to return to the Greek resorts, and to renew some old to some new economic connections.

Nevertheless, this situation did not last forever. Although Greece has never waived the economic presence in Macedonia, there was again a change in the course of Greek policy toward Macedonia. A definite change occurred at the time of Prime Minister Kosta Karamanlis and Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, specifically, at the NATO summit held in Bucharest in April 2008, where Greece blocked Macedonia's membership in NATO, which definitely signals a return to the policy of sanctions and vetoes as a form of pressure on Macedonia. This created enormous difficulties for Macedonia. Such case was present also with the request for recognition of its independence, with joining the UN, or any other organization where Greece is already a member. Last and most challenging examples are the membership of Macedonia in NATO and its integration to the EU. Macedonian diplomacy directed its energy primarily to obtaining recognition of Macedonia under its constitutional name as much as possible.¹⁹Nearly two decades of work on behalf of Macedonian diplomacy resulted in securing recognition from 132 countries, including the United States, Russia, China, Canada, Turkey ... But, this Macedonian argument is not sufficient to overcome the dispute, and because of the decision-making mechanisms in NATO and the EU, the dispute cannot be ignored. The name dispute continues to cause inconveniences to both parties. This name issue is the only obstacle Macedonia faces in the attempt to gain integration into the Euro-Atlantic associations and because of this dispute imposed by Greece, the Macedonian diplomacy has spent much of money and energy. The games about this dispute were the reason Greece, even

¹⁸ Like Stopanska Banka, Marble combine, Prilep, Octa and so on.

¹⁹“Drzavata Tavulu ja prizna Republika Makedonija pod ustavnoto ime”, *Dnevnik*, 30 June, 2011.

before 1990s started renaming airports, streets and building expensive monuments in the spirit of ancient Macedonia. Macedonia itself accepted a similar game 18 years later²⁰. This process later will be called the “antiquation process” by some Macedonian politicians. Such dispute, which is often characterized as bizarre, annoying the international community and quite incomprehensible, continues to exist. Its solution is difficult to assume. The nearest point to which both sides could come, was the signing of an interim agreement in 1995²¹. This was mostly under auspices of the United States. The agreement itself does contain fore decision based on mutual compromise, regarding the way of naming of Macedonia, to be able to be concluded. This compromise was enabled through the formulation “second side” for the Republic of Macedonia, while Greece was named as “first side”. Several significant elements can be extracted from this agreement (Interim Accord from 1995). In Article 1 of the Agreement, Greece recognizes the independence of Macedonia. This is an important moment for RM which finally gets recognition of its sovereignty by Greece. Article 2 (Ibidem) guarantees the infringement of the common border. This was not a special deviation on the part of Macedonia, because it had a similar formulation in its Constitution. In Article 5, paragraph one, the parties were obliged to further negotiations under auspices of the UN about the differences described in Resolution 817 of the Security Council (Ibidem). In other words, the parties agree to continue the negotiations about the different attitudes regarding the name of Macedonia. Particularly significant is the second paragraph of the same article, according to which the parties will not allow the name issue to affect the normal trade and exchange of documents. Practically it is this paragraph that enables further normal economic communication between the two neighbors. Furthermore, with Article 6, paragraph 1, Macedonia confirms that nothing in its Constitution can be interpreted as pretensions outside its borders (Ibidem). The paragraph two of the same article stresses that Macedonia will not interfere in internal affairs and particularly will not interpret Article 49 of its Constitution in that way. So, according to this Macedonia can only care for its citizens on the territory of Greece, but not of the ethnic Macedonian minority there, because it would be considered as interference in internal affairs. These provisions caused some debate in Macedonia, as Macedonians saw it as the rights waiving the ethnic Macedonian minority in Greece, by the Macedonian state. In the same article,

²⁰ Especially after the Greek veto on NATO summit in Bucharest 2008.

²¹ September 13.

paragraph three, Macedonia declares that it would not interpret its constitution otherwise. This is really questionable, because it raises the question whether the Constitution of Macedonia could be interpreted with a bilateral agreement, and moreover, whether another interpretation of the Constitution of RM could be prohibited with the bilateral agreement. With Article 7, paragraph two, Macedonia is obliged to change its national flag (Ibidem). This is considered as one of the biggest compromises on the part of Macedonia. With Article 11 Greece is obliged not to oppose the membership of Macedonia in international organizations, if Macedonia becomes a member under the reference adopted by the UN (Ibidem). In this way Macedonia's path to participation in the international organizations was unblocked. Article 23 provides in case of a dispute the competent court will be the International Court of Justice. Article 23 provides that the agreement is valid until it is superceded by a definitive one (because the name of this agreement is the interim agreement) or if after seven years either party withdraws from it. The agreement was signed in English and later translated into the languages of the "first and the second party" (Ibidem).

The interim agreement had its good and bad points. The agreement brought normalization of the relations with Greece and began the process of Greek investments in R. Macedonia, which was positive for Macedonia. At the same time, it meant the unblocking to Macedonia's integration into Euro-Atlantic community. Thus, Macedonia came closer to NATO membership, and in relation to the EU, it reached an official candidate status. However, in 2008 at the NATO summit in Bucharest, Greece clearly violated the Interim Agreement, in particular Article 11, and declared that the Macedonian membership in NATO must be conditional on Macedonia changing its constitutional name. The Foreign Minister of Greece Dora Bakoyannis made this very clear in her interview.²² The response from Macedonia was to bring the case before the competent International Court of Justice, whose verdict clearly stated that Greece had violated the Interim Agreement. So, the existence of adequate provision in the agreement did not prevent Greece from acting contrary to what it had signed. On the other hand, Macedonia kept its obligations and changed its national flag. However, the Interim Agreement was a document which allowed normalization of relations, but it seems that its time has passed. The only way to keep it alive is through pressure from the major powers, but for now this is absent. One other possible solution would be signing a new interim agreement that would enable unblocking of the process

²²“Vo NATO i vo EU ke ve prifatime koga ke se resi imeto”, *Dnevnik*, 27. October 2006.

of Euro-Atlantic integration of Macedonia. A finite solution to the dispute seems quite difficult, especially because the Greek side disputes the language and the nationality, too. The process continues within the UN. Greece's arguments are that they have made a concession with agreeing the new name of the country to contain the word "Macedonia". According to the Greek position a possible solution could contain the word Macedonia, but with compulsory additional geographical determinant. Greece also insists that this new name should be "erga omnes", i.e. one name to be applied to everyone and everywhere. This means in any official communication even with countries that already have recognized R. Macedonia under its constitutional name. Otherwise, the Macedonian position, at least officially, is to keep the dual formula under which Greece would address according to a common agreement, and everyone else would address under the name Republic of Macedonia. UN mediator Matthew Nimetz has repeatedly come up with concrete proposals but these were not accepted. From what we could hear in the publicity, there were proposals such as "Northern Macedonia" or "Upper Macedonia" etc. In our view, the name and the identity are linked. Accordingly, any change of the name by adding a geographical prefix before the name of Macedonia (unless it is placed in parentheses) will automatically cause a change in the name of the nationality. For example, the name Northern Macedonia would imply that the people living here are Northern Macedonians. The only change of name with a geographical determinant before the name of Macedonia would be "European Macedonia". This determinant as any other would affect the identity and would create simultaneous dual identity - European and Macedonian. But this would not be a problem because it is already a case in the EU member states whose citizens have double identity. For example the citizens of Germany are Europeans and Germans.

In a situation where Greece is an economic burden for whole EU, it still manages to dictate its politics regarding the name issue over whole EU and make obstacles for Macedonian integration into EU, and also the integration of Turkey and Northern Cyprus. Although Macedonia received sympathy from the international community, the reality is just as it is. In addition in an interview of the former US Secretary of State Eagleburger stated²³ "The country that is now called Macedonia was also so called during its existence as a republic within the former Yugoslavia. Did this fact lead to serious problems between Greece and Yugoslavia, or between Greece and the

²³ Greece has no historical right to dispute the name of Macedonia", *MIA*, 23 September 2010.

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia? There were misunderstandings that were sparking occasionally, but they never reached the point of threat to peace in the region. And why would they escalate to such point? Is there something more immature and more foolish than ‘blackmailing’ of a nation through denying of its membership in an international organizations, whose goal is to keep peace and to protect its members from aggression by other members?’”.

Basic Principles of OFA(Ohrid Framework Agreement)

The basic principles of the OFA are stated in Point 1 of the agreement.

The second subpoint is as follows “*Macedonia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the unitary character of the State are inviolable and must be preserved. There are no territorial solutions to ethnic issues*”. There are two crucial elements to this statement. First, Macedonia keeps its unitary character; and second, there are no territorial solutions to ethnic issues, a statement which complements the first element. It is at keeping the unitary character of the country where the Macedonian negotiators drew the line.²⁴ The non-existence of territorial solutions implies non-creation of autonomous territories, cantons, federal units, and the like. In this way, the creation of an autonomous territory, which could seek independence, and in turn cause the collapse of the country, is avoided. One lesson that can be learned by studying the breakup of socialist Yugoslavia is that the attainment of autonomous status, whether as a republic or as an autonomous province, proved to be both a necessary and a sufficient condition for becoming an independent state. This is why the Macedonian negotiators insisted on a unitary character, rather than territorial solutions. However, in reality, prior to and following the OFA, the functioning of Macedonia was based on territorial solutions, i.e. division into zones of influence. Indeed, in almost all governments, the zone of influence of the Albanian coalition partner was the western part of Macedonia (mainly populated by Albanians); whereas, the zone of influence of the Macedonian coalition partner was the rest of the country. This is so mainly on account of the creation of ethnically homogenous political parties. For instance, DPA (Democratic Party of Albanians) clearly proclaimed itself as an Albanian party. The other Albanian party, PDP (Party for Democratic Prosperity) is based in the largest town in West Macedonia, Tetovo; the same is true for

²⁴ See more at ETH Zurich (15 June 2004).

DPA, as well.²⁵ These two parties hardly have a presence in the eastern parts of Macedonia, and the target territories of their political campaigns are the ones mainly populated by Albanians. They have conducted almost all of their activities in the name of all Macedonian citizens of Albanian ethnicity. Following the OFA, there were no significant changes in this situation. Moreover, the new Prime Minister of the new post-conflict government, Crvenkovski, publicly promoted the principle of having a coalition government formed by merging the winning Macedonian political party and the winning Albanian political party. Introducing this principle could have been simply an attempt to alleviate the anger of Macedonians for having DUI (the party with the majority of Albanian votes) enter government at all; however, this principle is now well-established.²⁶ By accepting this unwritten principle a federal principle is imposed, which is contrary to the promoted principle of preserving the unitary character. Having in mind that by using the territorial principle one can easily determine which territories vote for which the Albanian or the Macedonian parties. It is safe to say that the principles of preserving the unitary character and the non-existence of territorial solutions have, in a way, been betrayed.

The third subpoint is as follows “*The multi-ethnic character of Macedonia's society must be preserved and reflected in public life.*” It is a matter of fact that the population of Macedonia is multiethnic.

However, one may wonder why instead of promoting the contemporary concept of civil society, multiethnicity is promoted, which in the context of Macedonia is reduced to binationalism and a binational state? This can be supported by the example given above, regarding the principle publicly promoted by Crvenkovski which was used during the formation of the post-conflict government in 2001. In fact, this principle emerged from an older unwritten principle, used in Macedonia even before the OFA, according to which all Macedonian governments were to include an Albanian party in the coalition. Hence, Macedonia was among the first countries and perhaps the first in Eastern Europe, to set a positive example, by including a party of an ethnic minority group in the government. And this happened long before signing the OFA. Another example of reducing multiethnicity to biethnicity is the establishment of the OFA *Inter-Community Relations Committee*.²⁷ The

²⁵ Unlike almost all Macedonian political parties which are based in Skopje

²⁶ A fact confirmed with the unsuccessful and short-lived attempt of the new Prime Minister Gruevski to form a coalition government with DPA (Democratic Party of the Albanians), which won fewer votes than DUI (Democratic Union for Integration) at the elections.

²⁷ According to the changes foreseen in Annex A- Ohrid Framework Agreement.

Committee is to consist of seven members each from the ranks of the Macedonians and Albanians within the Assembly, and five members from the other communities. The composition of the Committee has rather a biethnic character as it does not proportionally reflect the composition of the population of Macedonia, but focuses mainly on Albanians and Macedonians. The last subpoint is as follows “*The development of local self-government is essential for encouraging the participation of citizens in democratic life, and for promoting respect for the identity of communities.*” This subpoint of the agreement quite nicely and subtly compensates for and softens the statement in subpoint 2, according to which there are no territorial solutions. The local self-government becomes essential for the process of promoting respect for the identity of the communities living in a certain local self-government. It is logical to assume that this process would be possible if the self-government had real and great authority. In this way, the citizens, i.e. the ethnic community prevalent in a certain unit of self-government, would be empowered and they would feel more respect for their identity. The fact that these units of local self-government would later become and be regarded as a form of ‘territorial solutions’ could be seen from the subsequent events during adopting procedure of the *Law on Territorial Organization of the Local Self-Government in Macedonia*.²⁸

- ***Equitable Representation in Public Bodies and Authorities***

Point 4 of OFA is titled “*Nondiscrimination and Equitable Representation*” . Two elements are mentioned in the title, the first one is nondiscrimination and the second one is equitable representation. Nondiscrimination was a characteristic of the Macedonian legislature even before the OFA. On the other hand, the term ‘equitable representation’ is new to the Macedonian law. The concept of equitable representation foreseen in the OFA was to secure adequate representation (representation proportional to the total population) of the ethnic groups employed in the public bodies and authorities. Unfortunately, in conditions of high rate of unemployment in Macedonia, this concept is reduced primarily to opportunities of employment in public administration.

According to the first subpoint “*The principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment of all under the law will be respected completely. This principle will be applied in particular with respect to employment in public*

²⁸ Dnevnik (Skopje), 10 August 2011 at www.dnevnik.com.mk (accessed on 14 September 2011)

administration and public enterprises, and access to public financing for business development.” The second sentence clarifies that this subpoint refers to employment in public administration and public enterprises. Albeit theoretically correct, the concept of equitable representation did not function well in practice. Albanian political parties used it as an excuse to criticize one another and compete in terms of who employed more Albanians while in power. Employing citizens in the overcrowded public administration on the basis of ethnicity, without considering real needs, had a negative impact on the budget, as well as on the quality of the public administration itself which grew more cumbersome. Moreover, some of the media reported payroll employment of citizens who were not obliged to show up at work due to lack of office space.¹ This does not necessarily mean that the principle of equitable representation is wrong. On the contrary, if appropriately applied, equitable representation could yield many positive results in any multiethnic society. In the case of Macedonia, appropriate application of this principle should not be reduced to employments motivated by existential factors, when there is no real need for that; instead, this should be done systematically and throughout a longer period of time.

Point 5 of the Agreement is titled “*Special Parliamentary Procedures.*” The title refers to introducing special parliamentary procedures, i.e. special legislative procedures. The first subpoint clarifies that “*On the central level, the Constitutional amendments and the Law on Local Self-Government cannot be approved without a qualified majority of two-thirds of votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia.*” In this way, a two-chamber parliamentary system is subtly introduced in the Macedonian parliament. Consequently, Constitutional amendments and the *Law on Local Self-Government* cannot be approved without a qualified majority of two-thirds of votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population (the minorities). This means that members of the Albanian community can veto certain Constitutional amendments, as well as the *Law on Local Self-Government*, which only affirms the importance attributed to this Law.

The second subpoint of point 5 only gives additional information to the previous subpoint by listing the cases in which apart from majority of votes, there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia. Such changes favor collectivism as opposed to individual civil rights, and are not compliant with the unitary character of Macedonia, i.e. they transform it in to a sort of a limited federation.

- ***Regulating the Placing of Flags Next to the Flag of the Republic of Macedonia***

Point 7 of the Agreement is titled “*Expression of Identity.*” The title suggests that the point deals with issues related to the expression of identity. Nowhere in point 7 is the concept of identity defined. Regardless of the definition of the concept of identity, this is nevertheless a personal matter; naturally, expression of identity is one of the basic human rights. This issue is of a delicate nature, particularly for the Macedonians living in the neighboring countries of Macedonia, where they are deprived of the right to freely express their identity.

An analysis of this point reveals the negotiators’ views on the issue of expressing identity. The first, and only, subpoint states “*With respect to emblems, next to the emblem of the Republic of Macedonia, local authorities will be free to place on front of local public buildings emblems marking the identity of the community in the majority in the municipality, respecting international rules and usage.*” We can conclude that point 7, which deals with issues related to expression of identity, is narrowed down to regulation of placing of the emblem of the community in the majority in a particular municipality. On municipal level, only the Albanian community is in the majority of the municipalities in which the Macedonian community is not in the majority, with rare exceptions.²⁹ Consequently, only Macedonian (state)³⁰ and Albanian (ethnic) emblems are placed in front of local public buildings, i.e. a biethnic expression of identity is promoted as opposed to promoting multiethnicity. It is unfortunate that the point dealing with the issue of expression of identity, a matter of personal nature and even a philosophical

²⁹ The municipality of Shuto Orizari has a majority of Romany population.

³⁰ In fact, the Macedonian community is not, in reality, realizing its right to freely place emblems on front of buildings, i.e. the flag with a sixteen-ray sun, considered an ethnic Macedonian emblem, is not placed in any municipality, albeit this right is guaranteed with the OFA. This is because, with time, Macedonians have accepted the state flag as their own national symbol; moreover, hardly anyone has analyzed the OFA and has concluded that the OFA has benefited the Macedonian community, as opposed to the view that the OFA mainly met the demand of the Albanian community; moreover, it might also be considered as violation of the 1995 temporary agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece, which is rather debatable.

concept, is reduced to simple regulation of the rules for placing certain flags. Nevertheless, this solution was in a way triggered by the events of 9 July 1997 in Gostivar.³¹ In general, with these solutions, the Albanian flag, which is identical to that of neighboring Albania, can freely be placed next to the Macedonian national flag. Unfortunately, the provisions of the OFA did not settle all issues related to placing flags. This continues to be a topic for political agreements and negotiations whenever a new coalition government is formed.

Conclusion

The Macedonian question has opened and closed 20th Century. In the last few decades its significance is mainly related with the name issue and the Greece's institutional blockade of the integration of Republic of Macedonia into EU and NATO. The main argument of Greece limits every national building myth on today's territory of Republic Macedonia. In this way Greece gains monopoly over not only the Ancient Macedonian heritage of Alexander the Great, but also and on Macedonian Slavic originated values as the Cyril's and Methodius origin from Salonika. The problem of Republic of Macedonia is that the most prominent forefathers of the nation as Goce Deltcev or Krste Misircov, have also their origin in today's "Greek Macedonia". At the same time the Greek nation building process creates the vision of so called "Slavofonic" population (people who speak Slavic language, but are Greeks by nationality), which is basically racist idea, based on the power of assimilation of 19-th century "Greek high culture", which in recent history created situations of practicing methods of genocide toward Macedonian minority, including the last case in the Greek Civil War when more than 25 thousand Macedonian children had to leave their homes. Finally the Greek argument of monopolization of the name from Macedonian side is not product of the desire of Macedonian state or institutions, but the international status of the Republic of Macedonia as independent state, which is not the case with the Greek province of Macedonia.

³¹ The Albanian flag was placed in front of the municipal building in Gostivar, thereby violating the law and the Constitution. Accordingly, the flag was taken down by the Macedonian police, an act which caused demonstrations in Gostivar erupting in violence and conflict with the police..

Furthermore, general wider regional instability produced by the Ukrainian and Syrian crisis, and integrational vacuum created by the Greek blockade can generate future instability, not just in Macedonia, but in the all of the Western Balkans. The Macedonian question in the future can play a key role in creating international regional politics and its solution might offer framework for future peace, the lack of solution presents great potential for destabilization.

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