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**Territorial bases of Balkan nationalism: The Case of Late Ottoman Macedonia**

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 brand new standards in order to define the Otherness as a requirement to construct the border of groups. While the imperial era, the communities were the ones building the world’s vision through religious systems and servitude as universal criteria, new-fangled conditions of the market economy and citizenship offered the new national country as a sole alternative along with the nationalism as a necessary ideology.

The national project needed necessarily to begin from the religious settlement in the late Ottoman Empire, and generate nowadays Balkan national discourse, which during the clash of the models for building a national ideology were heading 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 Holly Greek Language” becomes the basic motif for the beginning of the search of the medieval empire roots of the Slavic communities.

This refers to the models for national constituting and building the nation alone. Namely, within the context of the Balkan up until now for the current scientific thought dominates the assumption that the nations are based on Ethno-linguistic model of existence of the organic settled nations. The basic substantial national element is the language and culture and the territory according to those aspects bears the second denotation. But as long some deepened substantial theoretical analyses are done, the conclusion is different. Beginning from the assumption of Brubaker according to which the French comprehension for nationalism is state-centered and assimilation- oriented and the German one is Volk-centered and differentiating- oriented; therefore, the first one is based on building universal cultural values and the second one is based on organic, cultural, linguistic or racial communities. Hence, the second comprehension of nation is ethnocentrically considered and not as a political fact. Such interpretation of Brubaker could be implemented in the framework of the Balkan historical- national context while there would be two phase differentiated within the national construction:

1. First phase includes the French model, using the assimilative power placed on political ground;
2. While in the second phase, the sense of ethnicity of the organ nations or ethnos is built, which after the ascertaining will get a tendency to recycle with the next generations

In favor of theoretical framework we are offering examples of the basic models of nation building of Balkan states. The faze of constitution of institutions in early Serbian and Greek example doesn’t offer full integration of all categories of population on physical and projected territories. Great national programs as *Nacrtanie* and *Megali Idea* create preconditions for building vision of organic nation, but in practice this nation(s) had to be created through assimilation, which comprehended French model, and “exchange” of population between young Balkan states which followed German model.

As in the examples of the other Balkan nation- states, nation building in Macedonia is also synthesized by the two basic models – territorial (civic) and ethno-linguistic (cultural). The Macedonian proto- national stage incorporates early inteligencia activities under the influence of Enlightenment. In the late Ottoman period Macedonia was under strong influence of young neighboring Balkan nationalisms. National competition produced new sense of political loyalty under IMRO, and Macedonia as imaginative homeland. This type of nationalism is well described in Misircov’s“For Macedonian affairs” [“ZaMakedonckiteraboti”]. Later projections will developed full Macedonian ethno- national identity.

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However, in order to homogenize the upcoming national entities, there is a necessity to create mutual criteria for ethnicity that would regardless of the territorial bases or the linguistic-cultural distinctions ought to create a unique ethical awareness or expulsion that would be merely based on the one that is so-called mutual collective memory. Therefore, even during the 19th century the proto-national intelligence would accelerate to establish the ethnical boundaries pursuant the myth of the origin and the durability of the discrepancies. All of this would become an eternal task of the social engineering that would hugely become a task to the creators shaped into the framework of the Balkan historiographies.

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This phase continues along with the subsequent transformation while in the middle of the 20th century the Slavic groups begin to construct their own “ethnical boundaries” based on the speech dialect. In addition to that, as long as the Serbian nation creates an institutional frame at first, the Bulgarian proto-nationalism maintains the Pan-Slavic aspect for separation of the Orthodox Greek linguistic ecumenism; hence, the Macedonian example would be equally headed towards the language distinction regarding the Greek at the end of the 19th century while construction 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 firstly strive to construct special churches that would further on 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 conduct the project for 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 it is the example of Family. Nevertheless, in practice the inconstancy of the character in these institutions such as the variable nature equally regarding the physical and ethnical boundaries, will prolong the complete national homogenization up until the first decades on the 20th century.

Nation’s genesis becomes a fundamental element in its strengthening. Even if there is a fictive past, yet it must be real. This is the reason why the culture 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]](#footnote-2) National thinkers attempt to provide an answer of 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 doe not denote one and 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 on the significance of the relativistic position of the historical truth and even not 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, to 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 emerge of the nationalism, the religion was tightly defining each underprivileged as an opposite of the privileged ones especially even in times when the underprivileged haven’t got other mutual positive feature (such as the mutual history) (Gellner, 2008: 107).[[2]](#footnote-3)

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 the societal evolution- are happening less spectacularly into the first and the fourth phase (Geertz, 2007: 329).[[3]](#footnote-4)

1. Nationalism firstly 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 done by the country.
2. The euphoria lasts for a certain period after creating the state but after the establishing of the institutional system again the question arise: “Who are we doing such a thing?”
3. 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 essential approach that refers to the national and ethnical identity as something inherited and not a subject of change (Brunbauer, 2004: 188).[[4]](#footnote-5)

Late Ottoman Macedonian identity as a complex variable develops clearly from the previous stages of Pan- Ortodoxy and Pan- Slavism, to a clear form of advanced proto- nationalism. The stage of evolution toward pure form of nationalism incorporates both political and ethno-linguistic understanding of collective identification, at first of the protonational elites and later and majority of the population. The first stage id development of political utilization of the term Macedonia and Macedonians as adopted categorization which evolved toward selfidentification.

In January 1871 the editor of Constantinople newspaper "Macedonia" P. R. Slavejkov, in one newspaper article in the same name will indicate the emergence of the Macedonian question: "*Finally, the Macedonian question has in reality been shown in the press. We say finally, because this issue is not new. We heard about it twenty years ago by some from Macedonia. At first the words of these young people received as a joke as a complaint in the middle of our not so serious contention. So we thought we until a year or two years, when new talks with some Macedonians showed us that the work is not only bare words, but thought that many would like to put into life ... Many times we heard from* ***Makedonists*** *that they were not Bulgarians but Macedonians, descendants of ancient Macedonians ...* "(Павловски, 2007: 139, 140). Slavejkov clearly locates the emergence of political exploitation of the term Macedonia in the middle of the 19th century. This coincides with the production of maps of Macedonia as a specific area, thus confirming the first and the external recognition of the region and later to its residents by foreign (primarily Western) authors. Localization at the time of such use in relation to the appointment, he rejects the assumption that the name "Macedonia" is imposed by the young Greek state due to the fact that Greek historiography decades later fully incorporated the myth of the "Greek character of the ancient Macedonians."[[5]](#footnote-6) If we know that Western writers intensify presence precisely in the middle of the 19th century, followed by increasing number of Catholic and Protestant missionaries (the perception of Macedonia as a Bible country) and the presence of specific political forces in the Great Powers during the Crimean War, one could assume that the political usage the term "Macedonia" is closely connected and influence derived from the West. Such a conception of space creates the prerequisites of the Macedonian intellectuals and bourgeoisie in the early second half of the 19th century to try to create identity demarcation based on popular speech and dialect, and the main opposition is aimed at accepting the "Eastern Bulgarian dialect" as official language of literacy of "the Bulgarians".

Later the proto- institutional framework of IMRO- s activity will separate this political definition from “Pan- Slavic Bulgarian” toward supra-church and supra-local and finally toward pure form of ethno-lingustic definition of Macedonian nationality presented in the work of Krste Petkov Misirkov. There for “the Macedonian” is not just evolved from “Slav”, but can be seen as a level of opposition to the second one.

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). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
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). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Based on the writings of Slavejkov, Taškovski notes that "non-Slavic" character of ancient Macedonia has contributed to create the impression that the identification of "Slavs of Macedonia" name them self as "Macedonians", which later have supported the Greek propaganda. Taškovski will write: "*So these people start to understand and Europe, so their statements that they are Macedonians do not want to pay special attention, believing, as they stood at the Bulgarian nationalists and Russian Slovenofils and that they are spiritually through the years of Greek influence forgot your Slav "Bulgarian" nationality or geographic accepted Macedonian name, which the then-European world was synonymous with "Greek", especially in the blistering debate over the national character of the Macedonian Slavs, Greek nationalists have taken just that naming themselves as Macedonians strongest "proof" that they are "Greeks"* (Ташковски, 1967: 9). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)