Macedonia
Ethno-Religious Conflict
(1991-2016)

Tome Vangelovski
January 2017

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University

Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies
Australian National University

© Copyright by Tome Vangelovski 2017
All Rights Reserved
Authorship Declaration

I hereby declare and confirm that this thesis is entirely the result of my own work except where otherwise indicated and has not been submitted, either in part or in whole, for a higher degree or qualification at this or any other university or institute. This thesis totals 90,485 words (excluding footnotes and appendices).

Tome Vangelovski
January 2017
Acknowledgements

I am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to undertake my PhD studies at the Australian National University. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Professor Amin Saikal and Dr Kirill Nourzhanov for enabling this. Dr Nourzhanov has been an exceptional supervisor. His honesty, sincerity and, most importantly, his patience have allowed me to complete this work while balancing employment and raising a young family. Dr Nourzhanov’s guidance and intellectual rigour has provided me with immeasurable support.

Professor Peter Hill and Dr Robert Miller, also on my supervisory panel, have been a great source of knowledge. Their understanding of the topic and their detailed advice has been invaluable.

Thank you to all of those who provided me with extensive support and friendship during my fieldwork in Macedonia, including the interviewees who generously provided their time and knowledge.

My thanks also goes to Carol Laslett, Leila Kouatly, Lissette Geronimo, Pamela Lourandos, Dr. Anita Mack, Kerry Pert and Penny Brew whose assistance has been crucial during my time studying at the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies and the Australian National University. They have done a wonderful job and ensured that everything has run smoothly for me.

I would like to thank my family who have always been there for me and have sacrificed so much – sacrifices that I am yet to learn of and experience for myself. My mother Vesa and my father Slobodan; my grandfather Ilija and my late grandmother Kostadinka; my sister Mary and my brother Michael – Thank you.

Finally, to my greatest treasures – my wife Gordana and my two boys Gabriel and Emmanuel – I love you with all my heart. You three have been the greatest
blessings that God has given to me. I pray that He will guide me in being the husband and father that He wants me to be and to fulfil the role that He has set out for me. Thank you for all of your support and understanding. Thank you for your love and patience. I will love you, care for you and protect you to my last breath.
Abstract

Since its independence 25 years ago, Macedonia has been besieged by considerable inter-ethnic tensions and sporadic violence. In addition, a short armed conflict took place in 2001. The conflict between its majority Orthodox Christian Macedonians and minority Sunni Muslim Albanians in many ways dates back to at least the late 19th century. Over time, the nature and intensity of this conflict has shifted from peaceful, yet strained, coexistence to open warfare. This thesis focuses on Macedonian-Albanian relations since independence in 1991 and contends that conflict is the result of three overarching factors: incompatible worldviews; competing constitutional rights claims; and an anocratic state that lacks democratic institutions to manage conflict.

The thesis analyses the worldviews, informed largely by nationalist doctrines and religious belief systems, of the two communities. While these worldviews are not universal across both ethnic groups, they do form the basis from which many currently perceive reality. These worldviews shape the way in which individuals from both groups understand themselves and their collective interests, and how they perceive ethno-religious ‘others’. Because of their worldviews, the two groups understand contemporary problems differently and their opposing visions for the future result in widely conflicting solutions.

Competing rights claims between the two groups are a struggle to assert dominance over the state by the Macedonians, and exercise greater self-governance by the Albanians. These competing rights claims – constitutional status of ethnic Albanians, local self-government, proportional public employment, parliamentary veto powers, and the use of minority languages – principally stem from the incompatible worldviews of the two communities and their respective visions for the state.

Macedonia’s anocratic state and weak institutions are unable to provide an effective bargaining mechanism to negotiate conflicting rights claims. Nor is
either community able to provide credible guarantees that it is committed to a peaceful resolution of the issues or a long-term rapprochement. In addition, a culture of ethnic outbidding by political elites, within both communities, has grown over the past two and a half decades resulting in the ethnicisation of many political issues.

The larger political parties, under international auspices, attempted to resolve some of these issues through significant constitutional and legislative amendments agreed to under the Framework Agreement. Rather than addressing these issues the Framework Agreement has exacerbated the causes of conflict, while becoming a contentious matter in and of itself. The thesis contends that there cannot be peaceful cohabitation or successful national integration between the two communities under the status quo.
# Contents

List of Tables .................................................................................. VIII  
List of Figures ................................................................................ IX  

**INTRODUCTION** ........................................................................... 1  

**PART I** ......................................................................................... 47  
- Chapter One: Ethnonationalism .................................................. 50  
- Chapter Two: Religious Conflict .................................................. 82  
- Chapter Three: Ethno-Religious Social Distance and Conflict .... 105  

**PART II** ......................................................................................... 129  
- Chapter Four: Constitutional Status: The Preamble ................ 136  
- Chapter Five: Local Self-Government ....................................... 145  
- Chapter Six: Proportional Employment in Public Entities ....... 164  
- Chapter Seven: Parliamentary Veto Powers ............................ 189  
- Chapter Eight: Minority Languages ........................................... 201  

**PART III** ......................................................................................... 219  
- Chapter Nine: Credible Commitments ...................................... 225  
- Chapter Ten: Ethnic Outbidding ............................................... 285  

**CONCLUSION** ................................................................................ 320  

**APPENDICES** ............................................................................... 332  
- Appendix One: Map of Macedonia ........................................... 333  
- Appendix Two: Albanian Language Map ................................... 334  
- Appendix Three: Nation-Building .............................................. 335  
- Appendix Four: Chronology of Key Events ......................... 338  
- Appendix Five: The Preamble .................................................... 354  
- Appendix Six: Key Flash Points ............................................... 357  
- Appendix Seven: Ethno-Historic Macedonia ......................... 358  
- Appendix Eight: Nevzat Halili’s Proposed Federal State ........ 359  
- Appendix Nine: Ethnic Map of Struga Municipality ............... 360  
- Appendix Ten: Paramilitaries ................................................... 361  
- Appendix Eleven: Crosses and Mosques ................................. 365  
- Appendix Twelve: Protests ....................................................... 368  
- Appendix Thirteen: Weapons Cache—Brodec ....................... 370  
- Appendix Fourteen: Field Interviews ..................................... 371  

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** ............................................................................ 372
List of Tables

TABLE 1. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF MACEDONIA (PERCENTAGE), 1948-2002 ............... 1
TABLE 2. KEY CITIES AND THEIR MAJORITY COMMUNITY ................................. 2
TABLE 3. ISO 9:1995 MACEDONIAN CYRILLIC TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM ........... 15
TABLE 4. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF MACEDONIANS AND ALBANIANS ............... 82
TABLE 5. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES ...................... 153
TABLE 6. RURAL/URBAN POPULATION AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT .......... 165
TABLE 7. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES ..................... 179
TABLE 8. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE MACEDONIAN ARMED FORCES ............ 186
TABLE 9. PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVES BY ETHNICITY, 2014-18 .............. 192
TABLE 10. SCHOOLS BY LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION, 2014-15 ....................... 209
TABLE 11. ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT .................... 235
TABLE 12. MACEDONIAN NATIONALIST PARAMILITARIES ............................... 264
TABLE 13. NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (NLA) STRUCTURE .......................... 267
TABLE 14. ALBANIAN NATIONALIST PARAMILITARIES .................................. 278
TABLE 15. FOOTBALL ULTRAS IN MACEDONIA ........................................... 283
TABLE 16. PARLIAMENTARY SEATS, 1990-2014 ........................................ 287
List of Figures

FIGURE 1. MUNICIPAL ETHNIC MAJORITIES ................................................................. 149
FIGURE 2. MACEDONIAN GDP PER CAPITA ($US CURRENT PRICES), 1991-2016........ 169
Introduction

Since its independence 25 years ago, Macedonia has been besieged by considerable inter-ethnic tensions and sporadic violence. In addition, a short armed conflict took place in 2001. The conflict between its majority Orthodox Christian Macedonians and minority Sunni Muslim Albanians in many ways dates back to at least the late 19th century. Over time, the nature and intensity of this conflict has shifted from peaceful, yet strained, coexistence to open warfare. This thesis focuses on Macedonian-Albanian relations since independence in 1991 and contends that conflict is the result of three overarching factors: incompatible worldviews; competing constitutional rights claims; and an anocratic state that lacks democratic institutions to manage conflict.

Macedonia is located in the central Balkans and shares common borders with Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Kosovo. The country covers an area of 25,713 square kilometres and its terrain is mostly mountainous and traversed by the Vardar River (Appendix One). It has a population of two million.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romani</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Macedonians constitute the majority (64 per cent) of the population with Albanians comprising a further 25 per cent. Albanians are concentrated in the

northern and western regions of Macedonia, and represent the majority of inhabitants in thirteen municipalities and a significant proportion in a number of others. Officially, 57.1 per cent of the population lives in urban areas; however, many of Macedonia’s cities are small towns by international standards. Only one, Skopje, has more than 100,000 inhabitants and only four others have more than 50,000 inhabitants. In the largest 10 cities Macedonians are a majority in eight and Christianity is the dominant religion in these cities. Albanians and followers of Islam are in the majority in only two of the 10 largest cities.

Table 2. Key Cities and their Majority Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Majority Community</th>
<th>Majority Community (percentage)</th>
<th>Dominant Religion</th>
<th>Dominant Religion (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skopje</td>
<td>467,257</td>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitola</td>
<td>74,550</td>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumanovo</td>
<td>70,842</td>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prilep</td>
<td>66,246</td>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetovo</td>
<td>52,915</td>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veles</td>
<td>43,716</td>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stip</td>
<td>43,652</td>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>89.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohrid</td>
<td>42,033</td>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>80.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gostivar</td>
<td>35,847</td>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strumica</td>
<td>35,311</td>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Figures are for the towns themselves and not the larger municipalities that are named after the towns.

Macedonia’s earliest inhabitants arrived in the early Neolithic era (6,000 BC). By the late Neolithic period (4,000-2,800 BC) central and western Macedonia had sizable populations. The ancient Macedonian clans most probably have their origins in the early Iron Age (1,050 BC). By the end of the 9th century BC the Macedonians had established a kingdom with Caranus (808-778 BC) ruling over it. Philip II (359-336 BC) and his son Alexander the Great (336-323 BC), whose empire extended from the Balkans to Egypt and India, are ancient Macedonia’s most notable figures. In the second century BC Macedonia was annexed by the

---

4 ibid., p. 11.
Roman Empire. Following the East-West split in 395 AD, Macedonia became a territory within the Eastern Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire. During the Middle Ages it was intermittently under the control of Serb and Bulgarian kingdoms, with short periods of self-rule.

Subsequently, Macedonian territory fell under Ottoman rule which lasted until the early 20th century. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the two Balkan Wars (1912-1913) Macedonia was partitioned between Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Albania under the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest (1913). Under the Treaty of Versailles (1919) the portion of Macedonia under Serb occupation became a part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which in turn became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. During the Second World War Yugoslavia was partitioned by the Axis powers, resulting in the occupation of Macedonia by the German, Italian, and Bulgarian armies. The Macedonian Partisan Army, allied with the All-Yugoslav Partisan Army led by Josip Broz Tito, fought occupying forces from 1941 to 1944. By 1944 the Macedonian partisans had liberated Macedonia from foreign occupying forces without the direct assistance of Tito’s Yugoslav partisans.

The first session of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) was held in August 1944. It was attended by elected delegates from across the country and proclaimed the liberation and establishment of the People’s Republic of Macedonia.\(^6\) ASNOM declared itself the constituent assembly of the republic and assumed full legislative and executive powers.\(^7\) However, the government was divided between those who sought independence for Macedonia and those that supported unification with Yugoslavia. By the end of the war Macedonian independence was subverted by Yugoslav intervention and it became a republic within the People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, later the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Its key pro-independence leaders, including ASNOM President Metodija Andonov Čento,


\(^7\) Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians*, pp. 195-197.
were imprisoned or executed. Under Yugoslav rule, Macedonia underwent large-scale economic development and industrialisation. Large parts of society moved from traditional subsistence agriculture to working in factories and the state administration. Many Macedonians and Albanians also left the country to escape economic hardship and Tito’s totalitarian regime.

After a referendum on its sovereignty Macedonia declared independence on 8 September 1991. The wars of independence and the subsequent economic sanctions, due to the break-up of Yugoslavia, devastated the region. Greece refused (and continues to do so) to accept the terms *Macedonia* and *Macedonian* in an attempt to deny the existence of a large Macedonian minority within its current borders, Bulgaria claims that Macedonians and their language are actually Bulgarian (a position with clear territorial pretensions), and the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) refuses to recognise the independence of the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC). These factors inevitably affected the Macedonian economy, Macedonia’s internal inter-ethnic relations, and its political stability. The war in Kosovo (1999) contributed to an influx of an estimated 350,000 Albanian refugees into Macedonia, which further weakened the Macedonian economy and put more pressure on its volatile inter-ethnic relations. The refugee crisis breached the limits of Macedonia’s capacity and the country spiralled into its own political crisis.

Long-standing ethnic tensions exploded when war erupted in February 2001, led by the National Liberation Army (NLA) in predominately Albanian-populated areas. The war was short but brutal and resulted in the deaths of up to 250 combatants and 70 civilians. A further 1,000 were wounded and up to 186,000 people were displaced internally, mostly Macedonians who fled Albanian-populated areas in the war zone. The war also caused considerable damage to both private property and public infrastructure. On 13 August 2001 the United States and the European Union pressured Macedonian and Albanian representatives to sign a peace accord known as the Framework Agreement. In November 2001 the Macedonian Parliament approved a series of constitutional
amendments based on this agreement. Implementation of the Framework Agreement through legislative amendments and policy initiatives has been ongoing.

Constitutionally, Macedonia is a republic with three branches of government: executive; legislative; and judicial. In theory, the principle of the separation of powers exists and each branch is independent of the other. Executive power is vested in the government, headed by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is generally the leader of the ruling political party or the largest political party in a ruling coalition. Ministers cannot be Members of Parliament or hold any other public office, and are elected by majority vote in the Parliament. The parliament, known as the Sobranie, is unicameral with 123 members elected for four-year terms by proportional representation from six electoral districts, each contributing 20 members and three reserved seats for the Macedonian diaspora. Judicial power is exercised by the courts, with the court system headed by the Judicial Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, and the Republican Judicial Council.

In practice, Macedonian politics and government are mired in corruption, clientelism, and authoritarian governance. Georgievski has argued that in a transitional state like Macedonia the constitutionally inaugurated model of governance largely depends on the behaviour of the country’s political actors. In Macedonia the transition process created a “distorted model of practicing democracy by the local political elite…[where there is a] strong tendency of the leaders of the affiliated parties to dictate the functioning of state institutions and overall social and political life”. Macedonia has been governed through anocratic means with the narrow interests of political elites in mind. In practice, there is little separation of powers. The ruling party controls the executive, the

---

parliament (through its majority), and the judiciary (through corruption and the threat of its security services). Media freedom is low and civil society is virtually non-existent. To the extent that it has reach, the ruling party controls almost absolutely. However, the state itself is weak and the reach of its institutions and security services are limited, particularly in rural areas. Clientelism, corruption, and a lack of commitment among public personnel, in combination with close clan ties at the local level, creates weak state structures and an absence of the rule of law. In some instances, there is a complete absence of the state. While a semblance of democracy exists, such as regular elections, these are generally tainted with vote buying, ballot stuffing, and pressure on citizens to vote for a particular candidate. For example, a 2015 International Republican Institute (IRI) survey found that 29 per cent of respondents were either personally subjected to pressure to vote a particular way or knew of somebody else that was.11

Macedonians and Albanians (for the most part) live in ethnically segregated areas. Villages are generally mono-ethnic and the two communities generally live in separate neighbourhoods within cities and towns. Where there are ethnically mixed towns and villages the two groups generally live in parallel worlds. There are few social or business contacts between them. They patronise businesses owned by their ethnic kin, frequent beaches and parks visited by their own community, and rarely socialise with the ‘other’ beyond casual conversation in the street. Intermarriage between the two communities is rare and strongly discouraged. However, it is not uncommon for Albanians to intermarry with other Muslim groups (such as Turks and Roma) or for Macedonians to intermarry with other Christian groups (such as Vlachs). There are deep ethnic, social, and religious divisions between the two communities. Both are highly suspicious of each other and are quick to lay blame on the other when incidents arise. Koppa has noted that:

> In multi-ethnic states and in Macedonia in particular, the citizen tends to identify with members of his own nation, since ethnic identity dominates

---

all other. Under these circumstances, all social problems are expressed as interethnic. We have been witnessing a gradual but persistent ethnicisation of every aspect of everyday life in the country, which was at the expense of democratization and the creation of a civic state.\textsuperscript{12}

**The Framework Agreement: A Summary**

The Framework Agreement was signed on 13 August 2001. It was a peace accord that ended the 2001 war between Macedonian Government forces (supported by Macedonian paramilitaries) and an Albanian paramilitary group calling itself the National Liberation Army (NLA). The signatories of the Framework Agreement were President Boris Trajkovski, Prime Minister Ljubčo Georgievski, leader of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) Branko Crvenkovski, leader of the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) Arben Xhaferi, and leader of the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) Imer Imeri. European Union (EU) and United States (US) envoys also signed the agreement as witnesses. While it was not a party to the agreement, the NLA pledged its support.

The authors of the Framework Agreement assumed two underlying presuppositions; firstly, that the conflict was the result of a denial of group political and cultural rights for the Albanian community; and secondly, that enshrining these rights in the Macedonian Constitution and legislative framework would resolve ongoing conflict between the two groups. The stated overriding objective was to ensure the territorial integrity of the Macedonian state, while integrating the Albanians into the Macedonian political community and guaranteeing the minority rights enumerated in the accord.

The Framework Agreement covers five issues, all pertaining to group rights for minority communities that account for 20 per cent or more of the total national population or the municipal population. In practice, only the Albanian community meets this threshold nationally and in a number of municipalities,

while the Turkish community does so only in two municipalities. The Framework Agreement includes agreement on the following contentious issues:

- Local self-government and the revision of municipal boundaries;
- Proportional employment of minority communities in all central and local public entities and at all levels of employment within such entities;
- Parliamentary veto powers, whereby minority communities were provided with veto powers in relation to specified constitutional provisions and legislative acts. This veto power, known as the Badinter Principle, is effected through a double majority system:
  a) At the central level specified constitutional amendments cannot be approved without a qualified majority of two-thirds of all votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of representatives from minority communities. This also applies to legislation with regard to local self-government and national symbols.
  b) At the central and municipal levels legislation affecting culture, language, education, personal documents, the use of minority symbols, local finances, local elections, the City of Skopje, and the boundaries of municipalities must receive a majority of votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of representatives from minority groups.
- Minority group languages are official in addition to the Macedonian language at both national and municipal level if they are spoken by

---

13 Centar Župa and Plasnica in western Macedonia.
14 The Badinter Principle in this case applies to constitutional provisions dealing with the Preamble, language, religion, use of minority symbols, ethnonational identity, culture, the Public Attorney, the Committee for Inter-Community Relations, the Security Council, the Republican Judicial Council, the Constitutional Court, local self-government, and the provisions dealing with constitutional amendments themselves, see Framework Agreement, s5.1 and annex A.
15 Law on the Committee for Inter-Community Relations, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 150/2007, c11(1) and (2).
16 Framework Agreement, s5. The Law on the Committee for Inter-Community Relations identifies 44 legislative acts to which the Badinter Principle applies, see Law on the Committee for Inter-Community Relations, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 150/2007, c11 (1), (2), and (3). These were agreed by the ruling Macedonian and Albanian parties at the time.
17 Framework Agreement, s5.2.
20 per cent of residents at their respective levels of government. In addition, local authorities may decide to make a minority language official even if the 20 per cent threshold is not met. The Framework Agreement also stipulates that primary and secondary education will be provided in the students’ own language, while state funding will be provided for tertiary education in the languages spoken by at least 20 per cent of the national population.

- Expression of ethnonational identity by the various communities, particularly the display of symbols that represent the community in the majority within the municipality.

Notes

Terminology

This section briefly defines some of the concepts and principles used in this thesis. While many of the concepts and principles included here are contested, they have been selected and developed on the basis that they best apply to the specific circumstances under examination.

In Smith’s analysis nationalism as a doctrine can be broadly summarised in a number of key principles:

- the world is divided into nations, each possessing a distinctive identity, history, and destiny;
- the nation is the sole source of political power;
- loyalty to the nation overrides all other loyalties;
- real freedom for individuals can only be realised in and through the nation; and
- global peace and justice can only be based on free nations.

---

18 Macedonian remains the only official language for international relations and use in the armed forces, see Framework Agreement, s6.
Smith argues that these principles (or ‘propositions’ as he refers to them) form the “core doctrine of nationalism everywhere, at all times” and that other nationalist ideas and motifs are specific to particular movements and communities, and are secondary to the central propositions of the nationalist doctrine.20

**Ethnonationalism**, or ethnic nationalism, is a form of nationalism that is fuelled primarily by a keen sense of ethnic distinctiveness and the desire to preserve it.21 Connor made a distinction between the state and the nation, and between what he defined as patriotism (the love of the territorial state) and nationalism (the love of the ethnic nation). The nation itself is a heavily contested concept and has no universally accepted definition. Many scholars and commentators refer to ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic’ conceptions of the nation. The ethnic conception of a nation can be understood as a group of people sharing a common descent, language, religion, and culture. On the other hand, a civic nation is understood as one where individuals are bound by rights and obligations to the state, along with other members of the nation, and are identified as members of a nation by their legal citizenship, regardless of their ethnicity, language, religion, or culture. Within the Macedonian and Albanian contexts, Connor’s definition of the nation as “a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related [emphasis in original]” is most suitable.22 For Connor, ethnonationalism underlines the ethnic and kinship basis of the nation (real or imagined), which is (in the minds of its members) one large extended family.23 Further, Connor argues that to identify with the nation means not only to identify with that particular group of people of today, but with that people and its saga throughout time.24

---

The idea of anocracy attempts to conceptualise political systems that span from those in which elements of democratic institutions exist but are too weak to accommodate an effective democracy, to countries with primarily autocratic characteristics, albeit with some institutional openness (anocracy will be further defined below). However, very few substantive definitions of anocracy exist. Fearon and Laitin describe it as a “regime that mixes democratic and autocratic features”. Others define it as a regime that permits some participation through opposition groups, but that has undeveloped mechanisms to redress grievances. Marshall and Gurr define anocracies as regimes with institutions and political elites that are unable to maintain central authority, control the policy agenda, or manage political dynamics.

Regan and Bell have argued that anocracies encompass many variants of possible institutional arrangements; however, at their core they have the institutional capacity for some broader participation in the governing process, are able to facilitate candidate recruitment beyond the selection of a small cadre of anointed leaders, and exhibit some political behaviour consistent with a budding civil society. They argue that an anocracy should meet three critical conditions: weak institutions for moderating political debate; a modicum of opportunity to make demands on these weak institutions; and politics that gravitate toward zero sum outcomes.

29 Regan and Bell, “Changing Lanes or Stuck in the Middle”, p. 748.
30 ibid., p. 749.
Ilievski and Wolff define **consociationalism** as “government by elite cartel designed to turn democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy” and provide Lijphart’s four key characteristics crucial to consociationalist democracy:

a) grand coalition;  
b) segmental autonomy;  
c) proportionality; and  
d) mutual veto.\(^{31}\)

The central argument of consociationalists is that elite cooperation can overcome conflict that arises when minorities are sidelined through majoritarian political systems by compromise or amicable agreement. The literature on consociationalism distinguishes between corporate and liberal consociationalist power sharing. Ilievski and Wolff identify the main difference between the two as “corporate consociationalism [accommodating] groups according to ascriptive criteria, and [resting] on the assumption that group identities are fixed, and that groups are both internally homogeneous and externally bounded, while liberal…consociation… rewards whatever salient political identities emerge in democratic elections, whether these are based on ethnic groups, or on sub-group or trans-group identities”.\(^{32}\)

**National self-determination** is the idea that a nation has an inherent and inalienable right to govern itself. This principle can, and usually is, advocated on the basis of natural law where all individuals are equal and possess both a conscious and free will. As free individuals governing themselves they can legitimately join a group, which in turn governs itself and is free from domination by non-members and other groups. Appeals to the United Nations (UN) Charter are also made with regard to national self-determination. In addition, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the

---

32 ibid., p. 36.
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are also viewed as sources of legitimacy for the idea of national self-determination.

**Nation-building** refers to a process, through conscious effort, of constructing a ‘national’ identity by instilling a sense of solidarity and loyalty amongst citizens of a given state through the use of a variety of means, including ‘national’ mythology (or an official history), ‘national’ symbols, a standardised language etc., with the aim of creating a socially, economically, and politically stable state.\(^{33}\) It is envisioned that through nation-building, national identity will come to override other local, tribal, or religious identities as the primary focus of an individual’s allegiance. Once this project is achieved, or is perceived to have been achieved, some states continue to use similar strategies to ensure the ‘maintenance’ of the nation and its continual reproduction with every consecutive generation so that its members do not fall back to pre-national cleavages or identities, i.e. **nation-maintenance**.\(^{34}\)

**Macedonism** (*Makedonizam*) is a term that generally encompasses the Macedonian nationalist ideal. This includes securing Macedonia as an independent and democratically-governed state in which sovereignty lies with the ethnic Macedonian people. As the nation-state of the Macedonian people it should protect their culture, language, and identity. It generally conceptualises Macedonia within its ethno-historic borders, prior to its partition during the Balkan Wars (1912-13). Largely in response to the attack on its right to exist by neighbouring states, some adherents seek international acknowledgement of the existence of the following as self-evident and irrefutable:

- the indigenous ethnic Macedonian people, language, and identity;
- Macedonia as the homeland and nation-state of the Macedonian people;
- Macedonian culture, symbols, and folklore;


• the Macedonian heritage and history in its entirety; and
• the Macedonian Orthodox Church.

Ethnic or ethnonational groups will be referred to by their self-identified ethnonyms without the use of any further descriptive terminology such as ‘ethnic’, unless it is necessary for clarity. For example, ethnic Macedonians will be referred to as Macedonians, ethnic Albanians as Albanians and so on. When referring to all citizens of the republic, the terms Macedonian citizens or citizens of Macedonia will be used, depending on the context.
Notes on Transliteration

ISO 9:1995 has been used to transliterate Macedonian Cyrillic characters into Latin characters. This system is univocal – one character is represented by one equivalent character (by the use of diacritics), which represents the original spelling and allows for reverse transliteration.

The Albanian language uses the Latin alphabet (with the addition of the letters ë, ç, and nine digraphs – Dh, Gj, Ll, Nj, Rr, Sh, Th, Xh, and Zh) and does not require transliteration. Where the names of Albanian individuals, organisations or places are well recognised in English without the use of the letter ë and ç, these will be used to avoid confusion.

Table 3. ISO 9:1995 Macedonian Cyrillic Transliteration System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>А а</td>
<td>A a</td>
<td>Н н</td>
<td>N n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Б б</td>
<td>B b</td>
<td>Њ ъ</td>
<td>Њ ъ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>В в</td>
<td>V v</td>
<td>О о</td>
<td>О o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Г г</td>
<td>G g</td>
<td>П п</td>
<td>P p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Д д</td>
<td>D d</td>
<td>Р р</td>
<td>R r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ѓ у</td>
<td>Ģ ģ</td>
<td>С с</td>
<td>S s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Е е</td>
<td>E e</td>
<td>Т т</td>
<td>T t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ж ж</td>
<td>Ž ž</td>
<td>К к</td>
<td>К к</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>З з</td>
<td>Z z</td>
<td>У у</td>
<td>U u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ s</td>
<td>Ž ž</td>
<td>Ф ф</td>
<td>F f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>И и</td>
<td>І і</td>
<td>Х х</td>
<td>H h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ј ј</td>
<td>Ј ј</td>
<td>Ц ц</td>
<td>С с</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>К к</td>
<td>K k</td>
<td>Ч ч</td>
<td>Č č</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Л л</td>
<td>L l</td>
<td>Ц ц</td>
<td>Đ đ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Љ љ</td>
<td>Љ љ</td>
<td>Ш ш</td>
<td>Š š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>М м</td>
<td>M m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abbreviations

The acronyms used in this thesis are generally those used in the Macedonian language as these are also used and recognised in the vast majority of English language media and scholarly works.

VMRO-DPMNE (Внатрешна Македонска Revolucionerna Organizacija–Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo) Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity

SDSM (Социјалдемократски Sojuz na Makedonija) Social Democratic Union of Macedonia

DUI (Bashkimi Demokratik për Integrimit) Democratic Union for Integration

NDR (Rilindja Demokratike Kombëtare) National Democratic Revival

ARM (Armija na Republika Makedonija) Army of the Republic of Macedonia

NLA (Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare) National Liberation Army

DPA (Partia Demokratike Shqiptare) Democratic Party of Albanians

MOC (Makedonska Pravoslavna Crkva) Macedonian Orthodox Church

IRC (Bashkësia Fetare Islame e Maqedonisë) Islamic Religious Community

PDP (Partia e Prosperiteti Demokratike) Party for Democratic Prosperity
Methodology

Hypothesis

This thesis contends that:

1. Violent and non-violent conflict between Orthodox Christian Macedonians and Sunni Muslim Albanians in Macedonia are the result of:
   a) incompatible worldviews (ethnonationalist and religious); b) competing rights claims, namely self-determination (Albanians) and state sovereignty (Macedonians); and c) an anocratic regime that lacks democratic institutions to manage conflict, coupled with a dysfunctional political culture;

2. There was an attempt to resolve some of these issues through significant constitutional and legislative amendments agreed under the Framework Agreement. However, rather than addressing these issues the Framework Agreement has exacerbated the causes of conflict noted above, while becoming a contentious issue in and of itself; and

3. There cannot be peaceful cohabitation or successful national integration between the two communities under the status quo.

Scope of the Research

The period under investigation focuses on relations between the Macedonian community and the Albanian community in the Republic of Macedonia between 1991 and 2016. Conflict between these two groups has existed at least since the beginnings of their respective nationalist movements in the late 19th century. The period since Macedonian independence in 1991 has been selected for investigation because during this time the conflict has been isolated within a local context without direct influence or interference from external actors such as the Serb or Yugoslav authorities. This enables the exclusion of arbitrary influences on relations between the two groups and clearer focus on the issues directly affecting them.

Secondly, this thesis excludes any detailed consideration of Kosovo and Albania except for where it is directly related to the conflict between the Macedonians
and the Albanians in Macedonia. For example, while Kosovo’s independence has an indirect influence on Albanian political thinking in Macedonia (and where appropriate this is evaluated), the situation in Kosovo alone does not constitute a primary cause of conflict and over the past eight years since its independence Kosovo has not produced any significant impact on Macedonian-Albanian relations. Similarly, neighbouring states such as Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece (which have historically played a significant role in Macedonian wars and internal Macedonian politics) have been excluded from this study (except where their policies or actions explain some Macedonian reactions to Albanian rights demands) as their influence on the Macedonian-Albanian conflict has become minimal.

Finally, the thesis focuses solely on Macedonians and Albanians and excludes all other ethnic groups except for a few examples which are directly relevant to the main research hypothesis. While Macedonia has a large number of ethnic groups residing within its territory, Macedonians and Albanians jointly constitute approximately 90 per cent of the total population. The remainder of the population is distributed among dozens of small ethnic minorities that are largely ignored and incapable of influencing Macedonian-Albanian relations or politics more broadly.

**Document Research and Interviews**

The vast majority of the research was obtained through published sources such as books, academic journals, academic papers, conference proceedings, government and non-government reports, statistical collections, news reports, and comments publicly available from relevant actors.

Interviews were also conducted across Macedonia during July and August 2013. These included interviews with stakeholders and participants involved in Macedonian politics (officials from key political parties), relevant state institutions (such as the police, military, and educational institutions), religious organisations (Orthodox Christian and Sunni Islam), and civil society
organisations (pro-democracy movements, think tanks, research centres, and community associations). Interviews took place in both ethnically homogenous and heterogeneous towns across Macedonia. These included Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Struga, Ohrid, and Bitola.

The aim of the interviews was to use interviewee experiences and knowledge to test the findings of the published research and to put the hypotheses of the thesis under direct scrutiny from those who play, or have played, a role in the area under investigation.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical literature on ethnonational and religious conflict is quite cluttered and contradictory, crossing over a number of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, and political science. As Atanasova has noted, it may well be the case that no ‘single-factor’ approach is capable of presenting an accurate explanation of the whole problem for all conflicts.\(^{35}\) This thesis will take a multi-disciplinary approach, to the extent that it is relevant, in examining the complex political, institutional, social, religious, and economic circumstances contributing to conflict in Macedonia.

Specifically, this thesis will argue that there are three primary sources of conflict in Macedonia. These include incompatible worldviews, claims to competing rights, and a weak state with a dysfunctional political culture as primary contributory factors. It should be noted, however, that because many of these issues are so entangled it is sometimes difficult to clearly delineate them as incompatible worldviews, competing rights, or those related to weak states and political culture.

**Conflict as Incompatible Worldviews**

A worldview refers to the framework of ideas, values and beliefs through which individuals and groups understand, interpret, and interact with the world.

Worldviews are influenced by various factors, including political ideologies and religious belief systems. Incompatible worldviews, informed by nationalist doctrines and religious belief systems, are a primary source of conflict in Macedonia. Although some of the incompatibilities may be imagined, all have the potential to translate into real conflict. For example, Macedonians and Albanians have incompatible ‘original peoples’ myths in relation to the Albanian-majority populated region of northwest Macedonia. These myths are intricately tied to the notion of ‘national territory’ (i.e., which of the two groups own this ‘homeland’) and, by extension, claims to the competing rights of national self-determination (Albanians) and state sovereignty over territory (Macedonians).

**Ethnonationalism**

Cordell and Wolff have concurred that such incompatibility is a central theme in nationalist conflict. “Often, incompatible nationalist doctrines are at the centre of the relationship between minority and host state”, 36 and it is within this context that threats and opportunities are assessed and interpreted as either being positively or negatively related to the preservation, expression and development of the group’s ethnic identity and the ability of the host state/nation to maintain the integrity of the state. 37

Smith has made a crucial point about the power of nationalism to influence the worldview of countless individuals. He has argued that national identity is pervasive, in that it permeates the “lives of individuals and communities in most spheres of activity”. 38

In the cultural sphere national identity is revealed in a whole range of assumptions and myths, values and memories, as well as in language, law, institutions and ceremonies. Socially, the national bond provides the most inclusive community, the generally accepted boundary within which

---

37 ibid.
social intercourse normally takes place, and the limit for distinguishing the ‘outsider’. 39

Similarly, Keating has discussed national culture and its impact on the worldviews of individuals. He has provided a definition of culture as the “customs, habits, traditions, values, beliefs, ways of life, manner of thinking and behaviour in a community”. 40 Keating has argued that national culture provides a framework for the interpretation of social reality and sustains a set of “social values which may promote consensus and set the limits of debate and political division and serve as a mechanism of social integration”. 41 Keating has also contended that although cultural activities may or may not be explicitly political or make reference to identity and nationalism, they continue to shape national identity by framing the issues and interpreting daily life. 42

Connor’s assertion that “it is not what is but what people perceive as is which influences attitudes and behaviour”, 43 is important to understanding the ability of incompatibilities in worldviews to mobilise groups into conflict. Even democratic political systems and the public policies they produce are not immune to the influence of individual and collective worldviews:

In some multicultural societies the differences in worldview between cultural groups may be so great that it is highly improbable that mutual understanding can be reached. In such situations, ethno-cultural minorities are likely to be constantly on the losing end of democratic deliberations. When this occurs, ethno-cultural minorities will suffer serious political inequalities and lose the capacity to effectively influence political decision making. 44

39 ibid, pp. 143-144.
41 ibid.
42 ibid, p. 11.
43 Connor, Ethnonationalism, p. 197.
On a related issue, Azzi has discussed what he refers to as goal incompatibility as a source of inter-group conflict. His work considers the achievement of incompatible goals a zero-sum game in which the goals of one group can only be achieved at the expense of the others.\textsuperscript{45} Azzi has argued that the psychological effects of goal incompatibility manifest themselves in the form of an increase in:

- the perception of threat to the in-group;
- the feelings of hostility toward the out-group which is perceived to be the source of threat;
- in-group solidarity;
- the salience of in-group identity;
- the tightening of group boundaries;
- negative stereotyping of the out-group; and
- ethno-centric behaviour.\textsuperscript{46}

Territoriality is also a component of incompatible worldviews. “Territory is very often a crucial component of the identity of ethnic groups...[and can be] conceptualised more appropriately as [a] place bearing significance in relation to the group’s history, collective memories and character”, or in other words, a central component of a nation’s ‘national historiography’.\textsuperscript{47} Cordell and Wolff believe that the deep emotional attachment to territory that ethnic groups can develop and maintain often leads to intense conflict when it is challenged by others.\textsuperscript{48} Further, control of territory provides a power base from which minorities can challenge the status quo and can determine whether a group feels it is in a position to do so.\textsuperscript{49}

Smith has argued that within a given territory certain areas of land come to possess a special symbolic and mythical meaning, and that some ‘ethnoscapes’

\textsuperscript{46} ibid, p. 77. Azzi notes that the definition of group goals does not automatically ensure the cooperation of every individual.
\textsuperscript{47} Cordell and Wolff, \textit{Ethnic Conflict}, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{48} ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} ibid.
are endowed with sacred and extraordinary qualities that generate powerful feelings of reverence and belonging. Smith has argued that because these lands are considered sacred to the nation large numbers of people can and have been “mobilised and martyred in the defence or annexation of lands” deemed to belong to the nation by ‘right’:

Where these lands are by tradition sanctified, the site of sacred acts and memories, even greater fervour and attachments can be evoked, and even larger numbers of people can be mobilised for battle and death. The fraternity of the nation is then lived in and through the sacrifice of its citizens in defence of the fatherland or motherland, seen as the permanent and unchanging bedrock of the nation, and the sacred soil which nourishes its historic culture.

Cordell and Wolff have provided a more utilitarian explanation and reason why territory possesses certain values in and of itself for both states and minority groups. These include national resources, goods and services produced by the population, the tax revenue generated from residents, and possibly military or strategic advantages resulting from natural boundaries, access to the open sea, and control over transport routes and waterways. Beyond the emotional attachments and the resources available to the group, territory affects individuals very personally. Territory includes the homes, businesses, livelihoods and families of the individuals that live there and few would be prepared to abandon them to anyone.

Another important component of incompatible nationalist doctrines is the national myth. This is essentially an ‘official’ or ‘national’ historiography, supported by an assortment of traditions, rituals, and symbols that are deemed to have originated with, belong to, or epitomise a particular nation. It can include myths of origin, development, and destiny, which define, legitimise, and inspire

---

50 According to Anthony Smith, an ethnoscape is territory that, over time, has provided a unique and indispensable setting for the events that shaped the group in question. This land becomes eternally linked to the national psychology of the group, see A. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, pp. 150-152.
51 ibid, p. 156.
52 ibid.
53 Cordell and Wolff, *Ethnic Conflict*, p. 82.
the nation. Coakley has argued that this nationalist historiography serves one or more of the following five functions:

- definition of conceptual boundaries of the nation;
- reinforcement of a sense of pride in national achievements;
- commiseration over unjust suffering that justifies compensation;
- legitimisation of the current national struggle by reference to its roots in the past; and
- inspiration regarding the bright future of the nation.

This nationalist historiography is further compounded by a number of key features that help reinforce its message. According to Coakley, these features typically consist of:

- **national culture**: literature, theatre, music and folklore;
- **rituals**: processions, parades, marches, commemorations, inaugurations and ceremonies; and
- **symbols**: flags, anthems, emblems, public monuments and buildings, national currency, postage stamps, passports, place names, and military uniforms.

“National history exists in a symbiotic relationship with other national symbols…all which serve to bolster the image of the nation rooted in a deep history”, culturally and politically separated from ‘others’. These myths and symbols are able to act as mechanisms for mobilising individuals to defend collective interests.

**Religious Belief Systems**

Religion can have a significant impact on conflict (violent and non-violent). This results from the values that different belief systems hold, which in turn inform public policy and decision-making. Religious belief systems influence many
diverse issues in the public domain, and conflict can occur when these belief systems are incompatible on given issues.

Some scholars have made the claim that Albanians are a secular nation and a number of points need to be made in relation to this.\(^{58}\) Firstly, this may or may not be the case among Albanians in Albania; however, Albanians in Macedonia differ markedly in this respect (Chapter Two). Secondly, it is important to note the point made by Marsh:

Even those who think they are unaffected by religion do not realise how much a particular religious tradition is part of their culture until a different religious tradition begins to make inroads into their societies.\(^{59}\)

This is particularly evident in much of Europe, North America and Australia where large numbers of nominal Christians that generally regard themselves as secular have suddenly found themselves opposed to Islam and the Muslim community due to large-scale refugee movements resulting from the Syrian war and a number of tragic terrorist attacks in the West. Iveković has argued that religious activists and church officials (Christian and Islamic) in Southeast Europe, including Macedonia, are engaged in a battle for the de-secularisation of society in an attempt to regain the social space that was denied to them by the previous atheist regime.\(^{60}\)

It is useful to consider the theory put forward by Fox who has argued that religious belief systems can significantly contribute to conflict even if they were not the initial cause of that conflict.\(^{61}\) Fox has put forward six largely sequential hypotheses, which he maintains can explain the role of religion in conflict:

---


**Hypothesis 1**: Religious discrimination, whatever its cause, is likely to result in the formation of religious grievances within the ethnic group suffering from this religious discrimination;

**Hypothesis 2**: Religious grievances are likely to result in the mobilisation for protest and rebellion as well as directly causing protest and rebellion among the ethnic group which has formed these grievances;

**Hypothesis 3**: Provocative actions by a minority religious ethnic group are likely to provoke a negative reaction from the dominant ethnic group. This negative action can include religious, social, political and/or economic discrimination as well as other forms of oppression;

**Hypothesis 4**: The presence of established religious institutions in some circumstances can facilitate mobilisation for protest and rebellion regardless of the more basic causes of that mobilisation unless the elites in control of these institutions have an interest in supporting the status quo;

**Hypothesis 5**: The use of religious legitimacy can facilitate the growth of economic, political and social grievances as well as mobilisation, regardless of the basic causes of that mobilisation; and

**Hypothesis 6**: The presence of religious discrimination and disadvantages is likely to cause an increase in the levels of group identity and cohesion among the group which suffers from these disadvantages and discrimination.\(^{62}\)

Considering that individual and collective worldviews are in part informed by religious belief systems and that these worldviews in turn inform public policy, it is conceivable that titular nations with a different religion to the minority group can create the conditions that would set Fox’s theory into effect. Even if the titular nation consciously undertook not to discriminate against the minority

\(^{62}\) ibid.
group in any official capacity, it is quite possible that a minority can perceive itself as being discriminated against through the actions of non-state actors who belong to the titular nation. It is also possible that in its attempts not to be perceived as discriminating against a minority a government can create a negative outcome among the majority community, which may consider itself as being unfairly treated.

**Conflict as Competing Rights**

The next primary source of conflict in Macedonia is claims to competing rights, which broadly translate into the right to national self-determination (claimed by the Albanians as a minority) versus the right for a state to maintain sovereignty over its existing territory (claimed by Macedonians as a titular nation). These particular rights claims are strongly influenced by the fundamentally opposing worldviews of the two communities.

Connor’s theory of **relative political deprivation** offers a good foundation for explaining this hypothesis and how it relates to Macedonia.\(^63\) Connor argues that the idea of national self-determination – that the “destiny of the nation must be in the hands of the members of the nation” – is the main driver behind nationalist conflict.\(^64\) He argues that nations seek self-determination, or the freedom to determine their own affairs, because this is perceived to be the method through which they can achieve various political, economic, and/or social goals, which are of themselves vital interests to the particular group.\(^65\) These goals are “ultimately a matter of political control...protection of the nation’s culture, the homeland’s resources, the ethnic purity of the homeland, the physical safety of the nation and the like all rest upon political power”\(^66\), effectively, self-determination.

---


\(^{64}\) ibid, p. 122.

\(^{65}\) ibid.

\(^{66}\) ibid.
Connor, however, has noted that self-determination does not necessarily mean independent statehood; rather, he argues that the essence of national self-determination is *choice, not result*.\(^{67}\) For example, Connor has claimed that meaningful autonomy within an existing state may satisfy the desire for national self-determination:

> Decentralisation of political decision-making has the potential for elevating a national group to the status of masters in their own home. And this may be quite enough. Ethno-national aspirations, by their very nature, are more obsessed by the dream of *freedom from* domination by outsiders than by *freedom to* conduct relations with states. Ethnocracy need not presume independence, but it must presume *meaningful* autonomy at the minimum [emphasis in original].\(^{68}\)

Connor’s theory that nationalist conflict stems from the desire for self-determination of a minority group (and resistance from the host state and/or nation) has been supported by Cordell and Wolff. They have provided an examination of ethnic conflict and conclude that at its core it is driven by the desire to “establish or preserve conditions that are conducive to the preservation, expression and development of individual and group identities”,\(^{69}\) which can only be achieved through “secession, autonomy, power sharing, more extensive cultural rights, etc”.\(^{70}\) Cordell and Wolff have maintained that:

> Any ethnic group that is conscious of its uniqueness, and wishes to preserve it, is involved in a struggle for political power. It seeks either to retain a measure of political power it already possesses, or it strives to acquire the amount of power that it deems necessary in order to preserve its identity as a distinct ethnic group.\(^{71}\)

Like Connor, Cordell and Wolff have also maintained that self-determination (or self-government as they refer to it) need not translate into independent statehood;

\(^{67}\) ibid.

\(^{68}\) ibid, p. 124.

\(^{69}\) Cordell and Wolff, *Ethnic Conflict*, p. 81.

\(^{70}\) ibid, p. 82.

\(^{71}\) ibid, p. 84.
rather, it could be meaningfully obtained through local, regional or federal frameworks within the host state.\textsuperscript{72}

Valadez has contended that the “core rationale underlying autonomist and secessionist claims is that they constitute a distinctive people or nation with a right to autonomously determine their sociocultural, political, and economic affairs” [emphasis added].\textsuperscript{73} Valadez adds that perceived injustices towards minority groups can best be avoided in future by obtaining powers of self-governance, as this would be the most effective method to prevent discrimination and empower the members of the group to determine their own affairs.\textsuperscript{74} Conversely, majority groups or host nations will seek to “preserve the state in its existing form, with its territorial boundaries intact”.\textsuperscript{75} The rationale is that “this is their land, the land they have cultivated and defended...[and that] living in this land should be done on their terms and in a way that respects their cultural traditions and way of life. Any group living within the territorial boundaries of their country should take whatever steps are necessary for them to adapt to living in their political community”.\textsuperscript{76}

Berg and Ben-Porat have also noted that the conflicting rights of self-determination and state sovereignty are the “material from which protracted ethnic conflicts are made”, particularly when the demands of the weaker group are perceived as threatening or illegitimate by the dominant group.\textsuperscript{77} In addition, Berg and Ben-Porat have argued that conflicts between two groups within the same state are often triggered and sustained by a disputed territory (in terms of rights over territory and the implications that stem from this) and/or an

\textsuperscript{72} ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} J. Valadez, \textit{Deliberative Democracy, Political Legitimacy, and Self-determination in Multicultural Societies}, p. 211.
\textsuperscript{74} ibid, pp. 219 and 234.
\textsuperscript{75} ibid, p. 216.
\textsuperscript{76} ibid, pp. 216-217.
“asymmetrical relation within it, where one ethnic group dominates over the other” thus denying the minority group a meaningful level of autonomy.78

**Anocratic State and a Dysfunctional Political Culture**

Many researchers have suggested that **anocratic regimes** are more prone to internal conflicts and civil war compared with democratic or autocratic regimes. Regan and Bell have argued that because of their weak institutions anocracies are unable to meet the expectations of their citizens and when challenged they lack the ability to effectively suppress civil conflict either through the use of repression (as in the case of autocracies) or by engaging in peaceful accommodation (as in the case of democracies).79 Fearon and Laitin have also asserted that anocracies cannot control challenges to their authority because of state incapacity,80 while others maintain that anocracies combine the possibility of demands being made without the ability to meet those demands – breeding expectations that cannot be met and generating greater levels of protest.81

Hegre has examined the transitional phases of regimes from autocracies, through anocracies, to democracies and vice versa. He has argued that changes in political institutions are accompanied by heightened risks of civil war.82 Hegre has contended that changes in a democratic direction are likely to be accompanied by reduced repression (allowing for group mobilisation); however, it takes time to construct new institutions that can accommodate deep social conflicts.83 Groups which increase their political influence through the process of liberalisation may raise their expectations of improvement but these can be slow to materialise, inciting frustration and conflict.84

In his analysis of what he termed ‘illiberal democracies’, Zakaria made a further distinction between democracy and liberalism, arguing that they are theoretically

---

78 ibid.
81 Regan and Bell, “Changing Lanes or Stuck in the Middle”, p. 749.
83 ibid.
84 ibid.
different and historically distinct. He noted that a liberal democracy is a “political system marked not only by free and fair elections, but also the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties such as speech, assembly, religion and property”\(^85\). Zakaria has argued that open, free and fair elections are essential for democracy, but they will not necessarily produce governments that are committed to liberalism and the limitations on state power that it provide – this, however, does not make them undemocratic.\(^86\) He has noted that liberalism may have coincided with the rise of democracy, but it has never been immutably or unambiguously linked to its practice.\(^87\) Zakaria has maintained that many post-Cold War states are in fact democracies that provide legitimacy to autocratic rulers.\(^88\) He has also argued that far from being a transitional stage, illiberal democracy (or anocracy) may prove to be a form of government for which many countries choose to settle.\(^89\)

The theory of credible commitments (or a lack thereof) suggests that nationalist conflict can be a result a national minority not trusting the host state to honour its rights.\(^90\) The problems of credible commitments arise in newly independent states that contain one dominant group and at least one powerful minority group. The state (controlled by the dominant group) is unable to credibly commit (i.e., provide convincing guarantees) to the protection of the rights and property of the minority group(s). As a result, it is argued, minority groups have an incentive to establish their own self-governing state rather than rely on the dominant group to honour their commitments. Further, settlement of any violent conflict which may have taken place is also difficult as neither side trusts the other to disarm or comply with peace agreements. Weingast maintains that armed conflict can emerge from commitment problems even if only vague suggestions of repression


\(^{86}\) ibid.

\(^{87}\) ibid.

\(^{88}\) ibid.

\(^{89}\) ibid.

exist, as individuals who are convinced by their group leaders that they are targets of repression, extermination or forced removal would rationally take up arms even if their leaders’ assessment is not credible.\textsuperscript{91}

In addition, Hegre has contended that the lack of effective democratic institutions in anocratic states further facilitates conflict because they are unable to provide mechanisms for effective bargaining to produce credible commitments.\textsuperscript{92} He maintains that while groups may have some de facto power and are able to obtain policy concessions from governing elites, it is uncertain that this power or the concessions they acquired will be maintained in the longer term.\textsuperscript{93} Therefore, groups may demand that de facto power be transformed into de jure power and back this with the threat of war.\textsuperscript{94}

**Ethnic outbidding** theories posit that “politicians create platforms and programs to ‘outbid’ their opponents on the anti-minority stance adopted”.\textsuperscript{95} The key motivation of politicians outbidding their rivals, according to this theory, is to gain and/or maintain power. It is argued that ethnic outbidding marginalises minority communities and exacerbates tensions leading to minorities losing confidence in state institutions and the majority and that this would promote reactive nationalism leading to ethnic rivalry and conflict.\textsuperscript{96} DeVotta has argued that the political structure of a state is the most important factor in encouraging, or discouraging, ethnic outbidding. He has held the view that multi-ethnic political coalitions elicit ethnic coexistence, while encouraged competition between ethnic parties engenders ethnic outbidding.\textsuperscript{97} This is not necessarily the case in Macedonia where the ruling Macedonian party has always formed a coalition government with an Albanian party. In the Macedonian context, ethnic

\textsuperscript{91} Weingast, “Constructing Trust”, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{92} H. Hegre, “Democracy and armed conflict”, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{93} ibid, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{94} ibid.
\textsuperscript{95} N. DeVotta, “From ethnic outbidding to ethnic conflict: the institutional base for Sri Lanka’s separatist war”, *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 11, Iss. 1, 2005, pp. 141-159.
\textsuperscript{96} ibid, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{97} ibid, p. 144.
outbidding not only occurs among Macedonian politicians but Albanian ones as well, and is a common feature of the political landscape.

**Thesis Outline**

This thesis consists of three parts covering the three broad areas under examination – incompatible worldviews, competing rights claims, and the anocratic state coupled with a dysfunctional political culture. Each part is divided into chapters that consider the specific issues within those broader areas of research.

Part I (*Chapters One to Three*) of this thesis analyses the worldviews, informed largely by nationalist doctrines and religious belief systems, of the two communities. While these worldviews are not universal across both ethnic groups, they do form the basis from which many currently perceive reality. These worldviews shape the way in which individuals from both groups understand themselves and their collective interests and how they perceive ethno-religious ‘others’. Because of their worldviews, the two groups understand contemporary problems differently and their opposing visions for the future result in widely conflicting solutions.

Chapter One examines how ethnonational identity among Macedonians and Albanians impacts on their worldview. Since the establishment of a Macedonian republic 1944 (under Yugoslav rule), and even more so since Macedonian independence in 1991, successive Macedonian Governments have (either through apathy or neglect) created the conditions for an absent state and ignored most minorities outright (Romani, Vlachs, Turks, Serbs), while providing passive approval for others (Albanians) to undertake their own processes of identity formation and nation-building. No effort, beyond lip-service, has been exerted to integrate ethnic and religious minorities into a wider national community. Rather, their focus has been on consolidating the ethnonational identity of the Macedonians and securing Macedonia as their nation-state. This has led to minority groups, particularly the Albanians, pursuing their own nation-building
exercise in competition with the Macedonian ethnonational conception of both nationhood and the state. The result has been the solidification of competing ethnonationalist identities based on rival historiographies, claims to territory, and loyalty.

Chapter Two investigates the religious differences between Orthodox Christian Macedonians and Sunni Muslim Albanians. These differences have created more spheres of difference and potential for conflict than cooperation. While there are similarities in the moral teachings contained in the Bible and the Qur’an, there are also fundamental theological differences. These differences are reflected in the worldviews of Christians and Muslims in general, and among Macedonians and Albanians in particular. Religion has also become politicised and both communities have incorporated their respective faiths into their ethnonational identities, using them to mobilise their communities for political action and violence. While it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether religion is simply used to mobilise members of the two communities and advance ethnonationalist objectives (or vice versa), it is clear that religion itself has become embedded into the Macedonian-Albanian conflict as a cause, a means and an end in and of itself. Radical Islamism is not widespread across Macedonia but its adherents have demonstrated that they are persistent and patient. It remains to be seen how influential they will ultimately become within the Muslim community but their presence is dangerous. Their influence has already caused conflict within the Muslim community and between the Macedonian and Albanian communities.

Chapter Three assesses the results of these incompatible worldviews and details examples of how they have impacted and influenced violent conflict between the two groups. Since the collapse of Yugoslavia and Macedonian independence, sporadic violence has been persistent. While much of this violence has been insignificant and generally remains unreported in western media, it is a daily reality for Macedonian citizens and from time to time escalates into violent actions and reactions. The two communities live parallel lives with interaction being rare and tense. While segregation has been culturally and socially
embedded over the past six to seven decades, in many cases it has now moved into the political sphere and become institutionalised through the implementation of the Framework Agreement.

Part II (Chapters Four to eight) contends that competing rights claims between the two groups are a struggle to assert dominance over the state by the Macedonians and exercise greater self-governance by the Albanians. These competing rights claims – constitutional status of ethnic Albanians, local self-government, proportional public employment, parliamentary veto powers, and the use of minority languages – principally stem from the incompatible worldviews of the two communities and their respective visions for the state.

Chapter Four examines the constitutional status of the two communities within the Preamble of the Constitution. While largely symbolic, constitutive status within the Preamble is used by the Albanian community to further its claims for political power, meaningful decision-making, access to state resources, and cultural rights. On the other hand, Macedonians seek to minimise Albanian claims to ensure the dominance of the Macedonian community and the re-establishment of the country as a Macedonian nation-state. The Preamble has been very contentious since its first iteration under the 1946 Constitution (within the framework of Yugoslavia) but particularly so since independence and the promulgation of its first independent constitution in 1991. The inclusion of provisions from the Framework Agreement into the Constitution has seen the Preamble amended to accommodate Albanian demands. As a result, Macedonia is de jure a state of the various nations (as each ethnonational group is defined) that live within its borders, while in practice it has become a de facto bi-national state of the Macedonians and Albanians. The thesis finds that the resolutions from the Framework Agreement are unlikely create a lasting settlement because many within both communities are dissatisfied with the outcome and have called for change.
Chapter Five analyses the results of decentralisation and the revision of municipal boundaries over the past 12 years. Broadly, decentralisation and local self-government are seen as positive in principle. However, the circumstances in which the reforms undertaken (as part of the Framework Agreement) and the ethnicisation of most of the issues relating to the devolution of powers has resulted in largely negative outcomes and perceptions. Macedonians generally view decentralisation and the corresponding exercise in revising municipal boundaries as an exercise in carving out territory where Albanians would comprise a majority. Macedonians fear that this will eventually lead to a Kosovo-style scenario where Albanians will have a defined territorial unit with administrative and institutional structures that they can use to effect secession from the Macedonian state. On the other hand, some Albanians hold the view that the decentralisation process did not go far enough and that further power needs to be devolved to the local level. Under the Framework Agreement, decentralisation has become a zero-sum game on two levels. Firstly, over local political power and public resources and secondly, over the ethno-religious character of the municipalities – are they Macedonian or Albanian? Christian or Islamic?

Chapter Six will assesses the Framework Agreements requirement for proportional employment within public entities. The issues surrounding proportional employment in the public sector are threefold: firstly, they act as a mechanism to control state institutions and influence decision-making, thereby creating conflict between the two communities; secondly, they act as an arena through which both ethnic groups compete over limited public resources; and thirdly, political elites misuse state employment as patronage for their support base in order to consolidate their own political power. In implementing proportional employment in public entities through a non-transparent and fiscally unsustainable manner both Macedonian and Albanian political elites have introduced a further element of zero-sum game.
Chapter Seven considers the special parliamentary veto powers (Badinter Principle) that have been mandated under the Framework Agreement and the effect they have had on Macedonian-Albanian relations, particularly at the elite level. The Badinter Principle seeks to provide a veto over a range of laws at both the national and local levels so that minorities are able to protect their cultural and religious interests, along with other issues of importance to them. In practice, it mostly applies to the Albanian community as they vastly outnumber other minorities that do not have enough representatives at the national level and most municipalities to utilise it. Albanians see it as a partial equaliser to the Macedonian majority, not only helping to ensure that their interests are protected but increasing their power and influence over the state. However, disagreement over the scope of the Badinter Principle continues to plague political debates among the Macedonian and Albanian elites and the misuse of the veto power has also caused intra-Albanian conflict between the supporters of the major Albanian parties, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). The power struggle over which of the two is the legitimate representative of the Albanian community often turns violent.

On the other side, Macedonians see the Badinter Principle as an undemocratic mechanism designed to undermine the Macedonian nation and its natural position as the owner of the state. The fact that it has not only been used to block legislation related to fundamental cultural issues for Macedonians but also to force through legislation which is largely seen as anti-Macedonian has many Macedonians claiming that it is fundamentally undemocratic. At the local level, the Macedonian experience has been mixed. There are cases in which Macedonians (as a municipal minority) have successfully used the veto power to protect their interests. However, there are many more instances where the Badinter Principle has been ignored by Albanian-dominated municipal councils.

Chapter Eight explores language conflict in Macedonia. Macedonians have broadly argued that Albanians should be able to maintain their language as part of their cultural rights so long as it is consigned to the private domain. They
maintain that minorities should accept Macedonian as the national language that unifies all citizens and acts as the language of administration. On the other hand, Albanians maintain that the Albanian language needs to be a second official language, alongside Macedonian. To them, Macedonian and Albanian should be equal working languages of the state. Language has become highly politicised with many refusing to learn the language of the ‘other’. Language is also being used as a political tool to dominate or demonstrate power. Macedonians see Albanian demands surrounding language as an attempt to ‘Albanianise’ the state. Albanians, given their co-constitutive nation status since the Framework Agreement, consider it a natural extension of their position and status within the state. With the establishment of two Albanian-language universities and the segregation within primary and secondary schools, it is now becoming possible for Macedonians and Albanians to mature into adulthood without ever having spent any considerable amount of time with members of the other community. These trends will have serious negative effects for Albanian integration and their social, economic and political participation in wider Macedonian society.

Part III (Chapters Nine and Ten) contends that Macedonia’s anocratic regime and weak state institutions are unable to provide an effective bargaining mechanism to negotiate conflicting rights claims. Nor is either community able to provide credible guarantees that it is committed to a peaceful resolution of the issues or a long-term rapprochement. In addition, a culture of ethnic outbidding by political elites, within both communities, has grown over the past two and a half decades resulting in the ethnicisation of many political issues.

Chapter Nine analyses the lack of credible commitments in Macedonia. These are evident through three ongoing issues: political elites who incite violence and seek the revision of international borders; widespread grassroots opposition to the Framework Agreement; and the existence of armed paramilitary groups and militias within both communities. These factors are chiefly present because of Macedonia’s weak institutions and anocratic rule by both Macedonian and Albanian political elites. Over the past two and a half decades prominent
individuals from both communities have expressed the desire (and promoted specific proposals) to partition the country along ethnic lines. While it is difficult to ascertain support for such proposals among the general public, it is clear that there is widespread opposition to the Framework Agreement. In addition, the existence of local militias in both communities, particularly in rural areas, has been a permanent feature of Macedonian and Albanian kinship networks for at least a century and a half, and demonstrates that the two communities neither trust each other nor the state to negotiate a long-term rapprochement or provide security. More recently, since the independence of Macedonia and the tense security environment internally and across the region, numerous ethnically based paramilitary groups have also been established, particularly during the 2001 war.

Chapter Ten examines the ethnic party political system in Macedonia and its tendency to resort to radical rhetoric against other ethnic groups in order to win votes from within their own ethnic constituency. Political parties in Macedonia have been highly ethnicised since independence in 1991. The largest Macedonian parties are generally made up of Macedonian members, with some coming from other ethnic communities such as Turks, Roma, and Vlachs. This is the same for the main Albanian political parties and those of the Turkish, Serb, and Roma communities. Albanian and Macedonian political parties compete over the votes of their respective ethnic groups and cases of cross-community voting in both the municipal and national legislative elections are extremely rare. Generally, the two largest Macedonian political parties, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, have followed a strategy of attempting to ethnically outbid each other, while at the same time co-opting Albanian political elites by inviting them into coalition governments and providing them with ministerial posts. Albanian elites, on the other hand, have tried to work within government as this is the easiest way to obtain resources for their own goals but disrupt it when in opposition. Albanian elites also propose radical solutions for their demands in order to outbid their intra-ethnic rivals.
Literature Review

There have been some academic studies on the ‘Albanian Question’ in Macedonia and the conflict between the Macedonians and Albanians. These have been limited in scope and primarily focused on two or three specific issues related to the conflict. However, there has been no monograph, to the author’s knowledge, that has provided a complete and detailed study of the sources of conflict between the two communities, an analysis of the efforts to remedy these issues and whether the status quo is a sustainable option.

Risteska and Daskalovski have edited a monograph from various experts in the field that examines the Framework Agreement on its 10th anniversary. The authors covered various challenges in implementing the Framework Agreement and how the 2001 war affected inter-ethnic relations. Key exclusions include the anocratic state and the role of religion in the Macedonian-Albanian conflict.

Ramet, Listhaug, and Simkus have edited a very good volume that analyses culture and values (including religious values), nationalism, the political system, and education and language use. The work does not cover all aspects of competing rights claims or the anocratic regime.

Vankovska has produced a large body of work on specific issues related to the Macedonian-Albanian conflict. In particular, her papers on constitutional and security matters have contributed a great deal to the understanding of inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia.

Liotta and Jebb have provided an examination of post-independence Macedonia and, in particular, the competing nationalisms of Macedonians and Albanians.

---

98 M. Risteska and Z. Daskalovski (eds.), One Decade after the Ohrid Framework Agreement: Lessons (to be) Learned from the Macedonian Experience, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Skopje, 2011.
along with the competing factions and visions within them.\textsuperscript{101} Liotta and Jebb have also analysed the armed conflict of 2001 and its aftermath, and provided two interesting interviews with the first two presidents of independent Macedonia – Kiro Gligorov and Boris Trajkovski. The key omissions in this study are in-depth examinations of the weak state and the political culture of Macedonia, which have led to commitment problems and ethnic outbidding. In addition, the contribution of religion to the conflict is not covered.

Tasevska Remenski has provided a fairly in-depth study of inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia.\textsuperscript{102} She focused on the post-independence period and specifically on the 2001 armed conflict. In doing so she put forward a number of theories to explain inter-ethnic tensions generally and the 2001 armed conflict specifically. Some omissions include the anocratic regime and credible commitments.

Ripiloski has examined some of the factors that led to the 2001 war and draws on those to provide recommendations on conflict prevention.\textsuperscript{103} He focused on economic and structural factors and the war itself. The broader longer-term non-violent conflict and its causes were outside of his scope.

Shea has provided a wealth of information on inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia, which he had pieced together from a range of primary and secondary sources.\textsuperscript{104} Shea, however, treated his work as a book of facts and did not necessarily identify causes of conflict or provide analyses of the questions of how and why the troubled inter-ethnic relations led to violent and non-violent conflict in Macedonia.

Roudometof, while writing on Macedonian nationalism and its conflicting aspects with Bulgarian and Greek nationalisms, did dedicate some space to the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{104} J. Shea, \textit{Macedonia and Greece}.
\end{flushleft}
Macedonian-Albanian conflict. Roudometof touched on some constitutional and demographic issues and provided a short discussion of Macedonian and Albanian political parties and their influence on inter-ethnic relations. He also briefly discussed education and language use. Roudometof did not provide any interpretation or analysis of the causes he listed and did not have a discussion on the effects of the Framework Agreement, economic competition, or weak state institutions.

Poulton provided some discussion of what he called the ‘Albanian Question’ in his book. Poulton provided some general observations about Macedonian-Albanian inter-ethnic relations, particularly around demographic, constitutional, language, religious, and educational issues. He also briefly discussed Albanian irredentism. Although Poulton provided some good information, it is brief and descriptive, and does not provide much analysis.

Pettifer included a chapter in his book, The New Macedonian Question, on inter-ethnic relations. He provided a brief analysis on foreign interference, cultural and educational issues, minority symbols as part of Albanian nationalism, the Kosovo war, Islamic life in the Albanian context, and some limited constitutional issues. His analysis was based mainly on the post-independence period, though he did provide some insights into the roots of these issues in the Yugoslav era.

Letschert undertook a systematic analysis of three minority rights mechanisms (the Copenhagen Document, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities) and examined to what extent they have been able to influence the implementation of minority rights provisions in related legislation or policies in two case studies, including Macedonia. In doing so Letschert examined a number of areas (from a minority

rights perspective) including education, political participation, the census, and national symbols.

Arsovski, Kuzev and Damjanovski have written one of the most detailed accounts of the 2001 war to date. However, it only discussed the causes of the conflict in less than 10 pages. This is similar to the work of Petrovski, a serving general of the Macedonian army during the war. In his book, Petrovski included copies of numerous government letters, memorandums, and emails that shed much light on the Macedonian Government’s political strategies during the conflict.

Mitevski examined the immediate causes of the 2001 war, such as regional events in Kosovo and the general lack of law and order in Macedonia. Mitevski also provided some insight to the constitutional issues facing the country and an analysis of the Framework Agreement and its impact on Macedonian-Albanian relations.

Gaber, the former Macedonian Ambassador to Australia, has published a book titled *Kolateralna šteta* (*Collateral Damage*), which amongst other side issues investigates the role of the international community in the 2001 armed conflict and how he claims the conflict was influenced by global geopolitics.

Phillips attempted to explain how and why armed conflict broke out in 2001. He provided a brief historical overview before beginning his examination of the war in Kosovo and its linkages to the Macedonian conflict. Although Phillips touched on some longer-term causes of the 2001 armed conflict, such as the status of the Albanians within the Macedonian constitution, he mainly focused on the immediate causes of the war, the war itself, and its aftermath. Phillips

---

underpinned his research on discussions with various politicians, observers (some more relevant than others), and local eyewitnesses in the war zone. Although his monograph contains some good research, it largely lacks an in-depth discussion of the sources of conflict and some of the immediate catalysts for the 2001 armed conflict itself.

Koppa provided an overview of inter-ethnic relations primarily focusing on the dilemmas of identity, political participation and representation, and education.113 Her analysis is limited and excludes other important factors such as opposing nationalist aims and economic competition.

Koinova, having examined a number of case studies in south-eastern Europe (including Macedonia), concluded that relative changes in minority rights compared to the communist period rather than the absolute scope of minority rights granted by the new constitutions created political thresholds in the early period of transition that led to different degrees of ethno-national/ethno-religious conflict. She argued that this change in status, combined with state strategies of co-optation/coercion, prompted minorities in the region to pursue their demands either through the institutions of the state, clandestine activities, or a combination of both.114

Adamson and Jović examined what they referred to as the rearticulation of national identity in Macedonia.115 They claimed that both Macedonian and Albanian identities had been influenced by the Marxist paradigm as officially interpreted by the Yugoslav state. Adamson and Jović argued that since independence new liberal-democratic concepts have been introduced into national identity transforming the Macedonians from a ‘constitutive nation’ status to a ‘majority’ status and the Albanians from a ‘nationality’ to a

114 Koinova argues that Macedonia is an example of both, see M. Koinova, “Why Ethnonational Conflicts Reach Different Degrees of Violence? Insights from Kosovo, Macedonia and Bulgaria during the 1990s”, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, Vol. 15, Iss. 1, 2009, pp. 84-108.
‘minority’. Adamson and Jović maintained that this has been a key cause of the tension between the two communities.

Karajkov attempted to analyse some of the causes leading specifically to the 2001 armed conflict in a broader study looking at the implementation of the Framework Agreement, which ended the fighting. Karajkov provided some basic analysis on issues such as education, the use of national symbols, language, state employment, and the constitution.

Brunnbauer has written numerous important articles on this topic. He has analysed the Framework Agreement and is one of the few scholars to provide a critical examination of its implications for both Macedonians and Albanians, and the stability of the state. However, Brunnbauer has not provided (to the author’s knowledge) a detailed study of the causes of conflict, either long-term or those immediately leading up to the 2001 war. Brunnbauer has also looked at demographic and economic differences between Macedonians and Albanians, arguing that the Macedonian state’s lack of understanding and insensitivity to those differences politicised them and made them contentious. Ragaru has also analysed the Framework Agreement, though mainly assessed its post-conflict implementation.

Engström has investigated inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia from a threat perception vis-à-vis the Macedonian identity. In other words, she examined how the Greek, Bulgarian, and Serb challenges to the existence of Macedonian identity influence relations between Macedonians and Albanians in Macedonia. For example, she has claimed that the more pressure Macedonians face from

---

116 R. Karajkov, “Macedonia’s 2001 ethnic war: Offsetting conflict. What could have been done but was not?”, Conflict, Security and Development, Vol. 8, Iss. 4, 2008, pp. 451-490.
external enemies negating their identity, the less likely they are to accommodate Albanian demands internally.

Daskalovski has analysed the potential dangers emanating from an independent Kosovo towards ethnic relations in Macedonia. He has investigated some of the factors that contributed to the 2001 armed conflict and concluded that they have largely been ameliorated and that the situation in Kosovo should not present any strong challenges for Macedonia.

The literature on the issues in focus is sparse and no one work covers the completeness or complexity of Macedonian-Albanian relations. In particular, painstaking research and fieldwork was required to carefully examine the questions related to the weak state and political culture, many elements surrounding the incompatible worldviews and the largely under-analysed competing rights claims.

---

Part I

Incompatible Worldviews:
Ethno-Religious Incongruity and Violence
A worldview refers to a comprehensive conception of the world from a specific standpoint. It is the framework of ideas, values and beliefs through which individuals and groups understand, interpret, and interact with the world. It affects every area of life, from money to morality, from politics to art. Incompatible worldviews informed by nationalist doctrines and religious belief systems are a primary source of conflict in Macedonia. Although some of the incompatibilities may be imagined, all have the potential to translate into real conflict. Smith has made a crucial point about the power of nationalism to influence the worldview of countless individuals. He argues that national identity is pervasive, in that it permeates the “lives of individuals and communities in most spheres of activity”.\(^1\) He also argues that in the “cultural sphere national identity is revealed in a whole range of assumptions and myths, values and memories, as well as in language, law, institutions and ceremonies.”\(^2\)

Similarly, Keating has discussed national culture and its impact on the worldviews of individuals. Keating has argued that national culture provides a framework for the interpretation of social reality and sustains a set of “social values which may promote consensus and set the limits of debate and political division and serve as a mechanism of social integration”.\(^3\) Keating has also contended that cultural activities shape national identity by framing the issues and interpreting daily life.\(^4\) Azzi’s theory on goal incompatibility as a source of inter-group conflict is also relevant. He considers the achievement of incompatible goals a zero-sum game in which the goals of one group can only be achieved at the expense of the other’s goals.\(^5\)

Religion can have a significant impact on conflict (violent and non-violent). This results from the values that different belief systems hold, which in turn inform public policy and decision-making. Religious belief systems influence many

---

2 ibid, pp. 143-144.
3 ibid.
4 ibid, p. 11.
diverse issues in the public domain, and conflict can occur when these belief systems are incompatible on given issues. Considering that individual and collective worldviews are in part informed by religious belief systems, and these worldviews in turn inform public policy, it is conceivable that titular nations with a different religion to the minority group can create the conditions for conflict between the two.

Religious differences between Orthodox Christian Macedonians and Sunni Muslim Albanians have created more spheres of difference and potential for conflict rather than cooperation. While there are similarities in the moral teachings contained in the Bible and the Qur’an, there are also fundamental theological differences. These differences are reflected in the worldviews of Macedonians and Albanians. In addition, religion has become politicised and both communities have incorporated their respective faiths into their ethnonational identities and used them to mobilise their communities for political action and violence. Religion has become a cause of conflict, a means through which to mobilise followers for ethnonational goals (and vice versa) and an end in and of itself.

All of these underlying beliefs form the basis of incompatible worldviews. Since the collapse of Yugoslavia and Macedonian independence sporadic violence has been persistent. The competing rights claims (*Part II*) of the Macedonians and Albanians that the Framework Agreement attempted to accommodate principally stem from their divergent ethno-religious views
Chapter One
Ethnonationalism

The concept of a civic Macedonian identity, for all practical purposes, is virtually non-existent in Macedonia. The idea does not even receive lip-service among political elites. The ethnic conception of nationhood is deeply entrenched in society and the idea that an Albanian could be a ‘Macedonian’ (even in the civic sense) seems foreign to Macedonians and appears offensive to Albanians. Connor’s definition of the nation and his concept of ethnonationalism are important in understanding the Macedonian and Albanian conceptualisation of identity and the nation. Connor has made a distinction between the state and the nation and between what he defined as patriotism (the love of the territorial state) and nationalism (the love of the ethnic nation). Within the Macedonian and Albanian contexts Connor’s definition of the nation as “a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related [emphasis in original]” is most suitable.¹ For Connor, ethnonationalism underlines the ethnic and kinship basis of the nation (real or imagined), which is (in the minds of its members) one large extended family.² Further, Connor argues that to identify with the nation means not only to identify with that particular group of people of today but with that people and its saga throughout time.³

It is clear that the processes of nation-building and nation-maintenance in Macedonia have been inconsistent and incoherent since their beginnings in 1944 and more importantly since independence in 1991.⁴ Rather than attempting to integrate ethno-religious minorities into a wider national community, nation-building efforts focused on Macedonian ethnonationalism. Political elites may have believed that this was a necessary strategy due to a weak Macedonian

¹ Connor, Ethnonationalism, p. 212.
² Smith, Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World, p. 56.
identity in the early 1990s among a significant proportion of the Macedonian people. Clearly there were many whose primary national identity could only be described as ‘Yugoslav’, along with some obvious examples of Serbophilia and Bulgarophilia. Even today some of these tendencies continue to exist among some sections of the Macedonian community, although perhaps to a lesser degree.

The failure of Macedonian Governments since 1944 to integrate its minority communities, particularly Albanians, into a wider national community and encourage them to accept a Macedonian civic identity (i.e., primary loyalty to the Macedonian state based on their Macedonian citizenship, while retaining their cultural and linguistic heritage) has led to innumerable problems at present. In any case, the persistent nationalism of the Albanian community certainly would not have made integration an easy task. Since the Albanian community had remained largely segregated, extremists within the community were able to promote the idea that the Albanians are not a part of Macedonian society and that the political structures of the state and its institutions should reflect that reality. Ordinary Albanians identified with such views because they felt excluded from both the national community and the state-building process. Nor should it be ignored that the same logic has enabled Macedonian extremists to promote the idea of an ethnically pure Macedonian state that could involve exchanges of population and territory with Albania, or worse, genocide (Chapter Nine).

While the Macedonian Government focused on an ethnonational Macedonian nation-building project, it left the Albanian community to undertake its own nation-building exercise. Albanian political and cultural elites did this informally until 2001 when their efforts were institutionalised through the Framework Agreement and the subsequent constitutional amendments. These overriding legal documents have fundamentally changed the character of the Macedonian state from a nation-state of the Macedonian people to a multi-national state in which separate, co-equal nations (Macedonian, Albanian, and ‘others’) are regarded as co-founders and provided with the right to foster their own
ethnonational identity regardless of how much it competes with the idea of Macedonia as a unitary state or all Macedonian citizens belonging to the one national community. In practice, the smaller ethnic minorities do not have the political power or financial resources to exercise their status as a co-constitutive nations and Macedonia has become a de facto bi-national state of the Macedonians and Albanians. The outcome for nation-building in Macedonia has become schizophrenic, with the two communities promoting opposing ethnonational ideologies and worldviews that have resulted in sustained segregation and conflict.

**Ethnonationalist Identity**

It is not possible to conclusively answer questions such as ‘what is a Macedonian (or an Albanian)’ and ‘who can be a Macedonian (or an Albanian)’. Nevertheless, they require some discussion. Responses to these questions are necessarily vague and inconsistent. A Macedonian might answer that one needs to be of Macedonian blood, but will concede there is no such thing as a Macedonian gene. An Albanian may assert that one needs to be born on Albanian land but accepts his kinsmen born in the diaspora. A Macedonian may note that one needs to speak Macedonian, but he will include kinsmen from the diaspora who cannot understand the language as part of the nation. An Albanian may claim that culture defines them, but will accept a fellow Muslim as his own regardless of the latter’s Macedonian ethnicity. As noted in the introductory chapter, Connor argues that when it comes to ethnonational identity, what is real is not as important as what people perceive to be real.\(^5\)

Exact definitions aside, some key identity markers of Macedonian and Albanian identity can be ascertained.\(^6\) Firstly, Macedonians believe they are blood-related and that they belong to one large extended family that is made up of inter-related familial clans who have a shared ancestry.\(^7\) Secondly, language and culture are

---


\(^6\) These key identity markers have been developed through literature research and fieldwork.

\(^7\) Considering the very small population and the complex clan networks, the notion is not as far-fetched as it sounds for either community. One need only look at the example of the Macedonian Mijaci clan, who number approximately 30,000.
important markers of identity. The fact that the Macedonian language and culture are disputed as ‘artificial’ by hostile neighbours makes these markers of identity much more sensitive than would be usual among other groups. For example, the use of Serb or Bulgarian words or listening to Serb or Bulgarian music can be met with hostility and accusations of treason in some quarters. Thirdly, shared history is a common marker of Macedonian identity. Fourthly, Orthodox Christianity is inextricably tied to Macedonian identity. Even the late President Boris Trajkovski could not escape this fact. Trajkovski was a Methodist, from a small community near Strumica in south-eastern Macedonia that was proselytised at the turn of the 20th century. The Macedonian view of President Trajkovski was a paradox: he was both accepted as a Macedonian and criticised for not being fully Macedonian because of his faith. Finally, the state – which is perceived as an ethnic Macedonian nation-state – is almost synonymous with Macedonian ethnic identity. Like Macedonians, Albanians also believe their nation is one large extended family that spans Albania, Kosovo, western Macedonia, south-eastern Montenegro and Epirus in Greece. Their kinship networks are perhaps even stronger than their equivalent within the Macedonian community. Language and traditions are also key markers of Albanian identity. Language in particular has been used to differentiate Albanians from their neighbours and has become a highly politicised issue ever since the end of the Second World War and a key component of the Framework Agreement. Contrary to the general experience in Albania itself and to a lesser degree Kosovo, religion among the Albanian community in Macedonia is a key marker of identity. The conflict between the Albanian and Macedonian communities has largely been shaped as one between Christian Macedonians and Muslim Albanians, and religion has played a significant role (Chapter Two). It should be noted that, unlike Macedonians, the state does not play a key role in the identification or loyalty of Albanians in

---

8 Research conducted by Petar Atanasov found that most Macedonians see the state as an inseparable part of their identity, see P. Atanasov, Macedonian National Identity: Quantitative Differences Between Unitary and Subaltern National Myths and Narratives, The Centre for the Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 2004.
general. Rufi Osmani, leader of the National Democratic Revival (NDR) and former Mayor of Gostivar, notes that “given their bad experience with the Macedonian Government since 1945, Albanians are primarily loyal to their nation and only partially loyal to the state”.\(^9\) He makes it clear that Albanians will continue to identify themselves as Albanians, and because of their co-constitutive status within the Constitution, can now identify as Albanians from Macedonia but never as Macedonians (in either an ethnonationalist or civic sense).\(^10\) The term Albanian Macedonians also seems unacceptable within the Albanian community. In fact, any terminology that could be perceived as implying a connection between Albanians and a Macedonian identity is controversial.

It is important to note that both Macedonians and Albanians generally consider ethnonational identity as determined at birth by one’s ancestral lineage, as would be expected from groups that consider ‘blood’ as a key marker of identity. While there are exceptions to this within other ethnic groups in Macedonia, the ability to exit from one identity and enter into another is virtually impossible, particularly between the Macedonian and Albanian communities. Exceptions that do exist include the relatively fluid identity of (Orthodox Christian) Vlachs for whom it is not uncommon to weave between identifying themselves as Vlachs, Macedonians, Macedonian citizens, or various combinations of the three. However, Macedonians generally consider them outsiders and they are not accepted as part of the Macedonian ethnonational family.\(^11\) Other examples of exit and entry include the Macedonian-speaking Muslims and the Turks,\(^12\) many of whom have readily assimilated into the Albanian community (and have been encouraged to do so by Albanian elites) through their common Islamic faith.

---

9 Rufi Osmani, Leader of the NDR, Interview with Author, 10 August 2013.
10 ibid.
11 Conversations with Macedonians during fieldwork revealed a common perception among them that no matter how much a Vlach identifies as a Macedonian or proclaims loyalty to Macedonia they [Vlachs] could never love Macedonia or the Macedonian people as much as a Macedonian does.
12 Macedonian-speaking Muslims are generally considered to be ethnic Macedonians who follow Islam but have largely been ostracised from the Macedonian nation due to their ancestors’ conversion to Islam under Ottoman rule.
Nation-Building: Macedonian-Style

Ethnonationalist Doctrine and Historiography

Within the context of the Macedonian-Albanian conflict, the respective ethnonationalist doctrines of both communities have competing claims to territory and indigenous status on those territories, particularly north-west and western Macedonia. The narratives of their respective ethnonational historiographies seek to demonstrate these claims and establish the moral authority to govern these territories.

Macedonian and Albanian ethnonationalist historiographies are a complex and tortuous subject, not only because of their incompatibility, but also because they have: a) variations within their own broader national narratives; and b) alternate versions of the other community’s national narratives. For example, not only does the Albanian community have varying narratives for the origins of the Albanian people, their victories and defeats, and their future goals, but they have developed alternate versions of Macedonian national narratives that allow them to make better sense of their own. The same is true for the Macedonian community. In addition, the dominant ethnonational narratives do not necessarily align with the officially sponsored narratives that tend to change depending on the government of the day. Rather, they are popular narratives driven both at the grassroots level and by ethnonationalist academics.

The dominant ethnonational historiographic narrative within the Macedonian community (with some variations) generally maintains that the history of the Macedonian people stretches from the ancient past up to the present. This narrative does not necessarily align with the official narratives promoted by VMRO-DPMNE and (even less so) by the Social Democratic Union of

Macedonia (SDSM) but it commands popular support among the general public and many Macedonian historians.

The narrative sees Macedonian history and identity beginning in the ancient past, arguing that Macedonians are a unique ethnic group with their own culture, language, and identity that is indigenous to ethno-historic Macedonia. Further, they were one of the first people to establish a state, the ancient Macedonian kingdom, culminating in Alexander the Great’s conquest of the known world. It rejects the Slavic migration theory and questions this theory’s academic rigour, suggesting that it was a political idea of the 19th century pan-Slavic movement. The narrative includes the medieval states of Czar Samoil and King Marko as Macedonian states, and the Macedonian dynasty of the Byzantine Empire as a line of ethnic Macedonian emperors. Centuries of oppressive Ottoman rule are portrayed in terms of the Macedonian people resisting Islamic invaders and protecting Christendom on its eastern frontiers.

Nineteenth- and 20th-century revolutionaries from the legendary Macedonian revolutionary organisation (VMRO) are an important aspect of the modern narrative, particularly the 1903 Ilinden rebellion against the Ottomans that resulted in the liberation of vast amounts of territory populated by Macedonians across ethno-historic Macedonia. While this rebellion was quashed within a few months, it is celebrated as a ‘glorious defeat’ and was used by the Macedonian partisans in 1944 who claimed to have initiated a second Ilinden as a basis on which to establish their legitimacy. In contrast, the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), which ended the Second Balkan War, is considered a national catastrophe in modern Macedonian history responsible for the partition of ethno-historic Macedonia among its four neighbours, the genocide of Macedonians that fell under Greek occupation, and (to this day) the continued human rights abuses and forced assimilatory policies towards Macedonians who find themselves within the new borders of Greece and Bulgaria.

---

14 For example, see Gandeto, *Ancient Macedonians.*
15 For example, see Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians,* pp. 28-32.
16 Ibid, p. 196.
By and large, this narrative tends to gloss over the period of Yugoslav rule, which its adherents perceive to be tainted by socialism and pro-Yugoslav attitudes, save the occasional pro-Macedonian partisans and activists such as Metodija Andonov Čento who resisted Tito and attempted to persuade the Macedonian partisan authorities to split from Yugoslavia and liberate what was lost to Greece in 1913. Macedonian independence in 1991 is seen as a historic event.

Albanian historiography in Macedonia disputes the Macedonian narrative on a number of counts. Albanians disparagingly refer to Macedonians as ‘Slavs’, with the implication that they are really Serbs and/or Bulgarians and hence an artificial nation. The purpose is primarily to bolster their claims to territory by portraying Macedonians as newcomers who settled on indigenous Albanian territory. But it is also related to the wider Albanian perception of being surrounded and threatened by their neighbours whom they see as indistinguishable ‘Slavic hordes’. Iso Rusi puts these views bluntly, stating that “the unfortunate but truthful fact is that Albanophobia is what unites the Slavs, the Orthodox people”. Balalovska argues that these perceptions began with Serbian expansionist policies into Macedonia and Kosovo during the 1840’s. According to her, these perceptions escalated after the Serbian occupation of Macedonia and Kosovo during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, which resulted in legally sanctioned persecution, resettlements, colonisation, and deportation (though this was also true for Macedonians under Serbian occupation). These policies continued up to the end of the Second World War and to a lesser extent during the Yugoslav period. However, by the end of the Second World War, and

---

17 For example, Pavlovski and Pavlovski begin their history of Macedonia in 800 BC and end it in 1944, dedicating a mere four and a half pages to the Macedonian partisan movement, see Pavlovski and Pavlovski, *Macedonia*. Another example is Pandovski who begins his history of Macedonia from around 7,000 BC to 6,000 BC and ends it prior to the beginning of the Second World War, see Pandovski, *Makedonija*.


19 Balalovska, “A Historical Background to the Macedonian-Albanian Inter-Ethnic Conflict”.
the establishment of a Macedonian republic within the framework of Yugoslavia, Macedonians took on the role of oppressors within Macedonia. As the Albanians see it, “although this [chauvinism] is a Serbian product, its best consumers were among the Macedonian political elites”. Albanians also see themselves as an Islamic bulwark against a sea of Orthodox Christians. They use the religious slur Kauri, meaning ‘non-believers’ but specifically aimed at Christians, to refer to Macedonians.

While the Albanian narrative has many similarities with those of Albania and Kosovo, there are also key differences, particularly in modern history. The narrative identifies the ancient Illyrians as their ancestors and there are some who claim that Alexander the Great was an Albanian. The Illyrians (and therefore the Albanians) are claimed to be the oldest indigenous peoples in the western Balkans (including the territories in which modern Albanians live). Bideleux and Jeffries note that:

[Albanians have] been brought up to believe that their nation is the oldest in the Balkans, directly descended from the ancient Dardanians (Dardanae), a branch of the ‘Illyrian peoples’ who had allegedly inhabited most of the western Balkans (including Kosovo) for many centuries before the arrival of the Slavic ‘interlopers’.

The narrative claims that the Albanians take their national name from an Illyrian tribe, the Albanoi, and that the Albanian language is directly descended from the ancient Illyrian language. Albanian historiography asserts that during the

---

20 K. Mehmeti, “Parade of Democracy Leads Nowhere”, Refugees in Macedonia, Makedonija Denes, Skopje, 1999, cited in Balalovska, A Historical Background to the Macedonian-Albanian Inter-Ethnic Conflict”.
21 This is similar to the Arabic term Kafir.
24 ibid, p. 513.
middle ages the Illyrians were forced to withdraw from large sections of the Balkans because of various migrations into the region. The Koman Culture and Skanderbeg are also considered Albanian.\textsuperscript{27} The narrative celebrates Albanian revolutionaries from the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Rilindja movement that sought to create an independent Albanian state (and the various congresses it held, including the Prizren Leagues, the Pejë League, and the Greater Albanian Kosovo Committee).\textsuperscript{28} Albanian historiography also sees the Balkan Wars as a national disaster in which the Albanian people were divided among various Balkan states.\textsuperscript{29} The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the National Liberation Army (NLA) in Macedonia are seen as modern-day revolutionaries who liberated their kinsmen from oppression. In fact, the vast majority of contemporary nation-building projects within the Albanian community relate to the 2001 war and the ‘heroes’ of the NLA, while largely ignoring most other periods of history (though this is in part driven by intra-ethnic competition among the key Albanian political parties, see Chapter Ten).

In Macedonian historiography Albanians are generally seen as enemies even though both communities have experienced the same oppressive conditions under both Serbian and Yugoslav occupation for nearly a century. While Albanian historiography is not disputed in official textbooks, it is vigorously challenged in Macedonian academic circles and popular historiography.\textsuperscript{30} In particular, the theory that Albanians are descended from the Illyrians is ridiculed. Macedonian historiography generally supports theories that the ancestors of the modern Albanians settled in Albania much later and probably originated in northern Serbia or Romania. Albanians are seen as traitors to Christendom for converting to Islam during Ottoman rule, which Macedonian historiography claims was

solely for financial gain and social status. They are considered by Macedonians to be a nation of janissaries who colluded with the Ottomans in oppressing Christians. Even in contemporary Macedonian society, Albanians are regularly referred to as ‘Janissaries’ and ‘Turks’ in a derogatory fashion, signifying a betrayal of Christianity and Europe in general. While Macedonian historians accept there has been an Albanian minority in western Macedonia for centuries, they generally argue that most Albanians settled in the region during the 18th and 19th centuries and are relative newcomers.

In modern history, Albanians are portrayed as fascists (for collaborating with the Axis powers in World War Two through the Balli i Kombëtar movement) and extremists (for the National Liberation Army’s ideology and use of violence to achieve political aims). The idea of the Albanians as fascists and extremists serves to portray the average Albanian as largely unreasonable and uncivilised, and is related to the Macedonian fear of a greater Albanian state that would inevitably result in a loss of Macedonian territory – compounding the catastrophe of 1913. Like the Albanian perceptions of Macedonians being oppressors, Balalovska argues that Macedonian perceptions of Albanians in this regard can also be explained by history.\(^\text{31}\) She argues that Macedonian fears surrounding an Albanian desire (real or imagined) to create a greater Albanian state can be traced back to the Prizren League of 1878 and continual reference by Albanians to the ideas promoted by the League.\(^\text{32}\) She also contends that the creation of a greater Albanian state during the Second World War under German and Italian tutelage (which included western Macedonia and Kosovo) along with continued activism during the Yugoslav period and resistance to the Macedonian state (including the declaration of an autonomous ‘Republic of Ilirida’ in 1992 and the 2001 war) has “firmly imprinted in the Macedonian consciousness…the image of an Albanian ambition to create such an entity as a ‘Greater Albania’.”\(^\text{33}\)

---

\(^\text{31}\) Balalovska, “A Historical Background to the Macedonian-Albanian Inter-Ethnic Conflict”.

\(^\text{32}\) ibid. The Prizren League sought to unite four Ottoman vilayets that it considered Albanian land, which included much of today’s Macedonian state.

\(^\text{33}\) ibid.
The radically different views of each other are further evident in their understanding of recent history, particularly the 2001 war. To a great extent, Macedonians see the conflict as a combination of Albanian criminal gangs provoking violence for their own illicit interests, the influence of Kosovo Albanian fighters, foreign interests including the United States and Albanians outside of Macedonia,\textsuperscript{34} and terrorists who sought to achieve extremist political goals through the use of violence. Albanians, on the other hand, are much more likely to see the NLA leaders as local and national heroes fighting for equality, fair treatment for Albanians, and local autonomy and representation.\textsuperscript{35} Albanians see the NLA as a liberation movement that struggled against Macedonian oppression. A 2011 survey found that 53 per cent of Albanian respondents believed that the 2001 war was a justified war for human rights, while only 2.5 per cent of Macedonian respondents agreed with that view.\textsuperscript{36} Macedonian respondents (37 per cent) believed that the same concessions could have been made through peaceful means, while a further 20 per cent believed that the 2001 war was an international conspiracy against Macedonia.\textsuperscript{37} A large proportion of Macedonian respondents (31 per cent) and Albanian respondents (36 per cent) believed that forgiveness for what happened in 2001 was not possible and that revenge should be sought.\textsuperscript{38}

The two communities also clash in their respective visions for the future. Although both share a desire to obtain membership of the European Union (EU) and NATO, unlike the Albanian community, Macedonian support for these organisations is not unconditional. Ali Ahmeti, President of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and leader of the National Liberation Army (NLA) summaries the Albanian vision as follows:

\[
\text{I believe that one day Albanians will unite. Not only Kosovo with Albania, but us too, Albanians from Macedonia, we will unite with our brothers by }\]

\textsuperscript{35}ibid.
\textsuperscript{37}ibid.
\textsuperscript{38}ibid. p. 14.
blood and language… One day, not too far away, all three of [our] countries, Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia will be part of NATO and [the] EU. I think this will be the fulfilment of the dream of all those who served the idea for unification.\textsuperscript{39}

While evidence suggests that many within the Albanian community support the idea of a ‘greater Albanian state’ or some form of pan-Albanian political unity,\textsuperscript{40} it seems possible that this political idea could be fulfilled through: a) the provision of co-constitutive nation status for the Albanian community in the Macedonian Constitution; and b) membership of the EU and NATO, which would provide them with de-facto ‘unification’ with other Albanians in the region (assuming Albania and Kosovo also obtain membership of these institutions). Albanian political elites certainly view EU and NATO membership, and the perceived nationalist benefits, as a priority. The Macedonian community, however, see EU and NATO membership through the prism of Greece’s attacks on its identity. Membership of these organisations would mean violating their inalienable rights by forcing them to change their name. Macedonians view their historic national identity and their inalienable rights as more important than membership in multilateral organisations, which they generally consider are unable to deliver the economic and security benefits that they promise. For example, a 2015 survey found that 60 per cent of respondents that did not support EU membership believed that it would have no economic benefit.\textsuperscript{41} In another survey from 2014, 33 percent of respondents noted that they believed EU membership would worsen the standard of living, while only 29 per cent believed it would improve the standard of living in Macedonia.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{40} For example, in 2010 the Gallup polling found that 53 per cent of Albanians in Macedonia would support the creation of a ‘Greater Albania’, see Gallup, \textit{Balkan Monitor: Insights and Perceptions – Voices of the Balkans}, 2010, p. 48, \url{www.balkan-monitor.eu} (accessed 15 June 2012).
\textsuperscript{41} International Republican Institute, \textit{Survey of Macedonian Public Opinion}, 2015, p. 49, \url{www.iri.org} (accessed 3 September 2016).
In terms of EU membership and Macedonian identity, a 2014 study of public opinion revealed that 78 per cent of Macedonian respondents would only accept EU membership if it did not affect Macedonia’s name or the ethnonational identity of the Macedonian people.\(^{43}\) Conversely, 75 per cent of Albanian respondents viewed EU membership as more important than the name of the country and would accept membership even if it were conditional on changing Macedonia’s name and the identity of their Macedonian neighbours.\(^{44}\) Reconciling these two opposing objectives would be virtually impossible and is likely to lead to more direct conflict in the future.

**Ethnonationalism in the Public Domain**

The Framework Agreement provides for the expression of ethnonational identity by the various communities, particularly the display of symbols that represent the community in the majority at the local level. This has had a significant impact on nation-building and nation-maintenance, which are almost exclusively undertaken at the local level where the various communities control municipal councils and their budgets. The exception to this norm is the education system (to the extent that the national government controls the curriculum) and what is known as Skopje 2014, a project to redevelop the city centre of the capital. These are the features identified by Coakley (national culture, rituals and symbols) that complement and consolidate national historiography.

In Macedonia, the national curriculum is used to promote competing ethnonationalist narratives of the ruling parties from both communities. While Macedonian school children learn about Macedonian ethnonational history, Albanian school children learn about the history of Albania and the Albanian people living in Kosovo and Macedonia as a version of their own ethnonational historiography. The latest curriculum provides two disconnected versions of ancient history in separate chapters of the same textbook.\(^{45}\) Ancient Macedonian history is explored through a chapter on the Ancient Macedonians, culminating

\(^{43}\) ibid, p. 40.
\(^{44}\) ibid.
in the conquests of Alexander the Great. Ancient Albanian history is explored in another chapter on the Illyrians, who are claimed to be closely related to the Dardanians, with the implication that both are ancestors of the modern Albanians. Both the ancient Macedonians and the Illyrians/Dardanians are defined as indigenous to the same territory within Macedonia. Neither chapter attempts to address or reconcile the inconsistencies between them. The one textbook offers both communities a historical narrative that is used as a basis for their competing claims to indigenous status, which is a core element in the argument over the ownership of territory, and a necessary element in demonstrating that the other community is a settler nation whose claims are illegitimate.

Another example includes Macedonian-language textbooks that teach the history and dispersion of the Macedonian language, while Albanian-language textbooks do the same for the Albanian language. Here we see competing accounts as to the geographical dispersion of their respective speakers and in the Albanian language textbook a map showing the supposed geographic dispersion of Albanian dialects that virtually coincides with what Albanians consider to be ‘Greater Albania’ (Appendix Two). In addition to containing a survey of Albanian literature and the history of famous Albanian writers, this textbook also provides information about important historical Albanian heroes and events, and includes (as a learning exercise) the national anthem of Albania.

Successive Macedonian governments (which have always included a Macedonian and an Albanian party) have viewed the national curriculum as too politically difficult to confront. One attempt to reverse this trend was undertaken by the VMRO-DPMNE Government with a strategy known as Steps towards Integrated Education. The initiative sought to revise all existing history, geography, and language textbooks and allow Albanian students to choose when

46 Various territories that this map identifies as containing Albanian-language speakers bear little resemblance to historical or contemporary reality, see A. Hamiti and I. Hamiti, Gjuha Shqipe: Per Klasën VI, Ministerstvo za obrazovanje i nauka na Republika Makedonija, Skopje, 2011, p. 5.
they would begin learning Macedonian (if at all).\textsuperscript{48} The strategy itself aims to bridge the ethno-religious and linguistic divide between students in primary and secondary schools but such an exercise will be difficult as there are too many laws and government policies that fundamentally contradict the purpose of this project. Nor is either community committed to the idea. It is also difficult to see how linguistic divides would be bridged if Albanian students never obtain fluency in the national language. Conversely, few Macedonians are prepared to learn Albanian and no progress has been achieved on this initiative to date.

Outside of the education system various grandiose building projects are underway, including two competing city squares within the capital Skopje. The first is a complete redesign of the city centre, known as Macedonia Square, by providing it with a baroque facelift and erecting a large number of statues of historical Macedonians such as revolutionaries from the 19th and 20th centuries.\textsuperscript{49} Various ‘triumphal arches’ named after historical battles and places have also been built and it is envisaged that a large Orthodox cathedral will be constructed. To rival this project, the Albanian populated municipality of Čair, located within the City of Skopje, has embarked on its own reconstruction project. The Čair authorities plan to extend Skanderbeg Square,\textsuperscript{50} making it the largest in the capital. The inclusion of a statue of Skanderbeg on horseback, which travelled through Albanian populated towns in Macedonia on its way from Tirana to Skopje, has become a centrepiece of the square. Ragaru has noted the symbolism in the statue, located a few dozen metres from the banks of the Vardar River, which itself has become a symbolic demarcation between the mostly Albanian-inhabited northern Skopje suburbs and the Macedonian suburbs in the south. The seven-metre-high bronze Skanderbeg is depicted as sitting on his horse with his sword sheathed and his right hand raised. In Macedonian culture

\textsuperscript{48} The government undertook significant consultations with civil society groups and gained the support of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, see International Crisis Group, \textit{Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict}, 2011, p. 17, www.crisisgroup.org (accessed 7 June 2012).

\textsuperscript{49} VMRO-DPMNE also included statues of a number of questionable personalities from neighbouring states and certain unnamed statues used for quasi patriotic purposes.

\textsuperscript{50} Albanians consider Skanderbeg a national hero.
this gesture could be interpreted as a salute or a greeting. “Among common Albanian people, ‘Stop’ is the message read into it. Your territory ends here”.  

Nevertheless, the Macedonian narrative in the city’s centre is timid and many have opposed it. Opponents have claimed that it is too costly, that its mono-ethnic narrative will exacerbate ethnic tensions, that it is unnecessarily antagonising Greece, that there was no public consultation and that it will compromise the unique character of the city. It has also been opposed because of some of the oddities surrounding it. For example, while wanting to appear to lay claim to the ancient Macedonian past for domestic political purposes, VMRO-DPMNE clearly seeks to avoid controversy with Greece. A case in point is the comically named statues – Warrior and Warrior on Horse. The implication is that these are Philip II and Alexander the Great, but the reality is a juvenile attempt to appear to be protecting Macedonia’s ancient heritage from a chauvinistic Greece, when in reality Macedonian elites have done everything to avoid insult. Macedonian nationalists have labelled it as an example of plastic patriotism. In addition, there are some questionable personalities and events that have been included in the VMRO-DPMNE narrative. One example is a statue of Tsar Dušan. The Serbian Tsar was crowned in Skopje in 1346. Skopje was chosen for Dušan’s coronation, in part, so he could claim Macedonia as an integral part of the Serbian Kingdom. Serb extremists still lay claim to Macedonia based on the boundaries of Dušan’s kingdom. Why the ruling party chose to include a statue of Tsar Dušan remains a mystery and no official explanation has been provided. The Albanian community has been particularly incensed by the presence of his statue. The statue has already been damaged and legal action against the state threatened. Given Dušan’s symbolism, it remains an enigma why the Macedonian community has not joined its Albanian neighbours in this instance, though perhaps it is yet another example of Balkan complexities where groups can be both friends and enemies.

31 Ragaru, Macedonia, p. 27.
32 ibid.
Both the Macedonian and Albanian communities are undertaking nation-building projects based on contested national historiographies with the aim of consolidating ethnonational identity. However, it needs to be noted that a section of scholarship, particularly in the west, has misunderstood and misrepresented these undertakings. Some scholars and commentators have seen these endeavours from a purely constructivist perspective, led by manipulating political elites with malevolent agendas. However, the elites cannot be separated from the societies that produce them or the people who support them at the grassroots. Nor is the public an amorphous and mindless mass that awoke one morning to find itself with no memory of the past and an uncritical acceptance of the newest government directive.

For example, some claim that the construction of Skopje 2014 is explained by Greece’s xenophobic stance towards Macedonia in denying the existence of Macedonian ethnicity and identity and that this is a way to anchor the Macedonian identity and national distinctiveness to the ancient past. However, these analyses miss the point. They fail to understand that popular Macedonian nationalist historiography has, at least within living memory, typically anchored its identity in the ancient past. In the 19th century the Song of Alexander was popular with peasants in Macedonia who saw it as part of their history. This is not to say that it was or is universally accepted by all Macedonians, but that its existence is much older than acknowledged. Countless testimonies from the generation born prior to the Second World War attest to the longevity of the view that the Macedonians have an ancient past. Testimonies from these people demonstrate their belief that the Macedonians are descended from the ancient Macedonians, and that their parents and grandparents held those same views,

55 For example, the Rules of the Macedonian Rebel Committee from the Kresna Uprising of 1878 itself as a successor to the ‘Macedonian army of Alexander of Macedon’, see H. Andonov-Poljanski, Dokumenti za borbata na Makedonskiot narod za samostojnost i za nacionalni država, Vol. 1, Kultura, Skopje, 1985, pp. 267-284.
56 Peter Hill, Written Communication with Author, 22 October 2016.
which were taught to them through oral histories and tradition. These people have also attested to the fact that this version of Macedonian history was strongly discouraged under communist Yugoslavia, but now that Macedonia is independent they argue that they have the right and the ability to express their version of history as they understand it. Whether their interpretation of Macedonian history is accurate or not is irrelevant. The claim of some constructivist scholars who seek theoretical constructivist purity that this narrative is a new invention (post-1991) or a response to Greek chauvinism both misrepresents the longevity of this understanding of Macedonian historiography and dismisses those that subscribe to it as mindless masses uncritically following the latest tendencies of their political (and supposedly intellectual) masters. The nation-building projects of both communities are not simply elite-inspired projects to mould ethnonational identity in their own image (though they are partly that) – they also represent a genuine effort (with wider community support) at expressing a version of their history and identity that they believe in and subscribe to.

A survey of public opinion conducted in September 2013 by the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities (Skopje) revealed that among Macedonian respondents 30 per cent viewed ancient and medieval Macedonian history as the most important periods for the formation of the Macedonian identity, while 38 per cent chose people from the ancient and medieval period as the most important historic personalities. This is supported by research conducted by Atanasov who found that 37 per cent of those surveyed believed that either ancient Macedonia or Tsar Samoil’s medieval kingdom was the historical root of the modern Macedonian state. For those with a tertiary education, support for that view rose to 43 per cent of respondents. Atanasov asserted that that “in the case of Macedonian identity there are competing differences between unitary and

57 The author has personally encountered these testimonies from Macedonians of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds across Macedonia and the Macedonian diaspora in Australia, Europe and North America.
59 Atanasov, Macedonian National Identity.
60 ibid.
subaltern national myths and narratives [and that] the governing myth coexists with and is constantly contested by subaltern myths, which are capable of generating their own traditions and stories”.

Further evidence of this is the fact that these nation-building projects are not limited to the capital, they extend across the country where they are mostly local initiatives funded through private donations, diaspora funds, and local government grants. Bitola, Prilep, Ohrid, Tetovo, Gostivar, and Struga all have notable undertakings. In these areas, nation-building and maintenance are also accompanied by the practice of marking out ‘national territory’. The use of flags, monuments, and religious buildings and objects, along with the use of ethnonationalist nomenclature for public spaces such as streets, squares, and villages are a key mechanism for both. Some, examples include the statue of Alexander the Great in Prilep and Philip II in Bitola. These monuments have been built without fear of foreign objections and in line with popular ethnonationalist historiography, but have not been very controversial due to the fact that very few Albanians live in these towns.

While erected in a predominantly Albanian-populated region in the village of Raduša, near the Kosovo border between Tetovo and Skopje, one highly controversial monument has been a statue of Adem Jashari, a KLA fighter killed in Kosovo. While Jashari never fought in the Macedonian war of 2001, Macedonians find the monument particularly unpleasant because they consider Jashari a terrorist and the insult is further compounded by the statue having been placed on the turret of a tank that once belonged to the Macedonian Army but was captured by the NLA during the 2001 war (Appendix Three). Construction has also begun on a vast memorial complex, near the village of Zajas, dedicated to about 500 Albanians allegedly executed by Serbian troops in 1913. The complex will cover over 3,000 square metres and incorporate an Albanian flag on

---

61 ibid.
a 30-metre-tall pole, a five-metre-tall bronze monument called the ‘Albanian Mother’ and some 500 surrounding cylindrical tombstones.\textsuperscript{63}

Names of various public spaces across the country have not been spared the process of ethnonationalisation. The proliferation of renaming streets, schools, parks, and other public spaces has taken on bizarre proportions. In Skopje alone, it has been reported that nearly 1,000 streets have either been renamed or are in the process of being renamed.\textsuperscript{64} The most popular choices for Macedonian neighbourhoods have been notable figures from antiquity, and 19\textsuperscript{th}- and 20\textsuperscript{th}-century revolutionaries. The primary aim of the community’s elites has been to replace names associated with Tito’s partisans and the Yugoslav era. Within Albanian neighbourhoods the trend has been to replace Macedonian names with those of much more modern Albanian heroes from the Balli i Kombëtar movement, the KLA from Kosovo, and their very own NLA.

One final matter in relation to this subject is that of flags. Flags adorn Macedonian streets, public buildings, private homes, and village and town entrances. For all practical purposes, flags mark out territory. It is virtually impossible not to come across some sort of flag in any given location. A visitor to Macedonia would be at no pains to ascertain which community dominates any given neighbourhood simply by taking note of which flag is on display. Within Macedonian communities, it is even possible to determine which particular ideological outlook a given neighbourhood identifies with. For example, it is common for those who adhere to socially progressive political ideologies to fly the current flag used by the Macedonian Government. As background, this flag was forced on to Macedonia by Greece in 1995 through the Interim Accord as part of the ongoing name negotiations. On the other hand, those who see that flag as a violation of their national sovereignty and fundamental human rights relating to freedom of expression will typically fly the original Macedonian flag adopted

\textsuperscript{63} Zajas is the birthplace of Ali Ahmeti, former leader of the NLA and current president of DUI. It is expected to cost up to 200,000 euros, largely donated by local businessmen, see ibid.

after independence in 1991 and used throughout the diaspora for a number of decades prior to that.

Regardless of their own intra-community disagreements on Macedonian symbols, Macedonians generally oppose the use of the flag of Albania (Skanderbeg’s double-headed black eagle on a red background) by the Albanian community. They see it as further evidence of disloyalty to the state and a desire to secede and establish a ‘greater Albanian state’. Statements by Albanian leaders such as Ali Ahmeti have not helped dispel those perceptions. In 2012, for example, he commented at a flag-raising ceremony that “this is Albanian territory…these flags will fly throughout the ages”. Albanians argue that the flag is not the flag of the Albanian state, but rather a national flag of the Albanian people that belongs to all Albanians and reserve the right to use it as their community symbol.

Albanian Flag Day, celebrated annually on 28 November, reignites the same tensions every year. As part of these celebrations Albanian communities saturate the streets (even more so than usual) with enormous Albanian flags that cover entire buildings and flag poles reaching heights of up to 35 meters. Albanians have continued attempts to have this celebration legislated as a national public holiday, alongside the Day of the Albanian Alphabet, which is available as a public holiday for those that identify as Albanians. Macedonian-led governments have resisted these proposals as they are too controversial with their own constituents.

**Demographics and Citizenship**

**Demographics**

The issue of demographics is especially important because it affects most political discussions and disagreements between Macedonians and Albanians.66

---

Many Albanians argue that if they constitute a large minority then they should be provided with constitutional recognition as a state-forming nation (*Part II*). Further, many Albanians like to demonstrate that they are a majority in what they consider to be traditionally Albanian territory. Macedonians, while maintaining that the size of each ethnic community is irrelevant in a civic society, continue to dispute both the exaggerated Albanian claims with regard to their proportion of the total population and the official census results.\(^{67}\) In essence, demographics in the Macedonian context are about political rights and ownership of territory.

During the 1980s the Macedonian leadership identified Albanian ‘demographic expansion’ as a key threat that needed attention and the government implemented increasingly harsh measures to curb Albanian population growth, which was seen as intrinsically linked to Albanian nationalist demands.\(^{68}\) Population policies targeting the high Albanian birth rate were developed both at the Yugoslav federal level and the Macedonian republican level. They hoped to curb Albanian birth rates in Kosovo and Macedonia, while stimulating Serb and Macedonian birth rates respectively.\(^{69}\) Macedonian authorities also implemented policies such as prohibiting the sale of properties in Albanian-dominated areas in order to prevent a further concentration of Albanians in the region.\(^{70}\) Ultimately, Macedonian authorities feared that the Albanian population would continue to grow faster than the majority and demand more political power. The 1987 Macedonian Parliamentary *Resolution on Population Policy* promoted the four-member family as ideal and announced fundamental changes in a wide range of socio-economic and religious policies.\(^{71}\) In addition, Macedonian authorities established Republican Centres for Human Reproduction to carry out family planning activities, including the provision of education, counselling and information, collecting medical information, carrying out research, and testing.

---

\(^{67}\) Large irregularities in Albanian populated regions during the past census and the one cancelled in 2011 do provide some credibility to Macedonian claims that the Albanian proportion of the total population is inflated. These irregularities are discussed below.

\(^{68}\) Brunnbauer, “Fertility, families and ethnic conflict”, p. 575.

\(^{69}\) ibid.


new methods of contraception.\textsuperscript{72}

In 1988, alongside propaganda efforts that claimed lower birth rates were needed to secure economic development and social services, Macedonian authorities attempted to reduce birth rates by abolishing welfare benefits to families with many children. This measure affected mostly Albanians and relatively few Macedonians due to their smaller families, resulting in reproduction becoming politicised and turning it into yet another ethnic battleground.\textsuperscript{73} After independence Macedonian population policies had collapsed, but the fear that the majority would be out-grown by the Albanian community persists. These are not necessarily baseless either. Projections by the Pew Research Centre, for example, suggest that the Muslim population in Macedonia will increase to 40.3 per cent of the total by 2030.\textsuperscript{74} Many Macedonians see Albanian population growth as a deliberate political strategy. Albanians consider this form of criticism as an attack on one of the most salient features of their social and cultural reproduction,\textsuperscript{75} and is in fact an attack on their fundamental human right to procreate.

These issues inevitably politicised what are normally mundane administrative activities such as the national census. During the 1990s Albanian leaders claimed that their community constituted approximately 40 per cent of the total population. This figure was highly exaggerated and was used to pursue co-constitutive nation status.\textsuperscript{76} Consequently, census results have been highly contested in part because of exaggerated claims but also because of large irregularities during census counts. One of the key reasons that the 1994 census became controversial was because Albanians claimed that long-term residents with long-standing connections to Macedonia were not counted as they did not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{72} Brunnbauer, “Fertility, families and ethnic conflict”, p. 575.
\item \textsuperscript{73} ibid, p. 576.
\item \textsuperscript{75} Brunnbauer, “Fertility, families and ethnic conflict”, p. 576.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Based on population censuses stemming from 1948 (and some from the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century), migration patterns and fertility/mortality rates, the figure of 40 per cent is not possible, see Y. Courbage, “Censuses, Elections and Population: the Case of Macedonia”, Population, 2003, Vol. 58, No. 4/5, pp. 429-450 and Brunnbauer, “Fertility, families and ethnic conflict”, pp. 565-598.
\end{itemize}
hold Macedonian citizenship. It is claimed that they did not hold citizenship because the requirements that needed to be met were too stringent. However, these accusations fail on closer inspection. The Law on Census of Population, Households and Dwellings (1994) prescribed that a broad category of people could be counted.\footnote{This included: Individuals who had an official place of residence in Macedonia and were present in Macedonia at the time of the census; Individuals who had been legally residing in Macedonia for at least one year but did not have an official place of residence in Macedonia; Individuals who had an official place of residence in Macedonia but had been residing in another country (for no longer than one year) at the time of the census; Humanitarian refugees in Macedonia at the time of the census; Macedonian citizens residing outside of Macedonia (regardless of length of time); and Any other individual who was in Macedonia at the time of the census except for foreign citizens on official state business or foreign citizens who were in Macedonia for the purposes of tourism, recreation, holiday or medical treatment, see Law on the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 25/1994.} At a minimum, if an individual was legally residing in Macedonia or had an officially registered place of residence in the country at the time of the census there was nothing to preclude them from being counted simply because they did not hold Macedonian citizenship.

The 2002 census was also highly controversial, though in this instance members of the Macedonian community claimed that the Albanian community was purposely over-counted in order for the provisions of the Framework Agreement to take effect. The 2002 census found that the Albanian community numbered 25 per cent of the total population, surpassing the 20 per cent threshold required under the Framework Agreement. The census was completed a year after the signing of the accord and its completion was mandated by the Agreement itself.\footnote{Framework Agreement, s3.2.}

Much speculation, political game-playing, and rumour preceded the announcement of the 2002 census results on 1 December 2003, over one year after its completion.\footnote{N. Gaber and A. Joveska, “Macedonian Census Results – Controversy or Reality?”, South-East Europe Review, Iss.1, 2004, p. 108.} Gaber and Joveska note that the “process of conducting the census was not sufficiently transparent so as to remove any possible doubts about its objectivity” and that “publishing the final data was unnecessarily prolonged, again provoking doubt as to the final results and adding even more speculation
[from] various political sides from both the Macedonian and Albanian ethnic communities”.  

Additionally, almost all opposition parties publicly cast doubt on the census results. The then Macedonian opposition (VMRO-DPMNE) claimed that the census counted 500,000 people (mainly Albanians) without personal identification numbers. The implication was that many of these people may not have existed. These claims may not have been entirely unfounded. A number of examples have been cited, including the case of an 87-year-old Albanian man living alone who reportedly listed 17 members of his extended family living in Switzerland and Austria. Some argued that many Albanians who had migrated to Macedonia as refugees after the Kosovo war should not have been included. There were even disagreements between statisticians, with a number of Macedonian statisticians claiming that the Albanian community could not have numbered more than 19 per cent of the total population and may have been even lower. On the other hand, some Albanian statisticians claimed that the real size of the Albanian community was closer to 28 per cent.

Most recently, the 2011 census was cancelled indefinitely because of government fears relating to widespread fraud in Albanian-populated municipalities. Initially, Macedonian representatives argued that the census should be conducted during the autumn (October) of 2011. This would have excluded significant numbers of Albanians seasonal workers in Western Europe. Albanian opposition parties led by DPA (excluding DUI, which was part of the ruling coalition) wanted the census conducted during the summer (July) of 2011 when most Albanian workers return to Macedonia to ensure a maximal count for the Albanian

---

80 ibid, p. 109.
81 ibid, p. 110.
84 Gaber and Joveska, “Macedonian Census Results”, p. 110.
85 ibid, p. 110.
community. Additionally, DPA claimed to have conducted its own statistical analysis that would be used to confirm the accuracy of the final results. However, throughout the process of seeking a postponement of the census DPA focussed its attacks on DUI, providing the impression that their opposition to an autumn census was more about intra-Albanian political posturing than any real concern for the implications for the result. Nevertheless, the DPA initiative failed and the census began in October 2011.

Disputes over methodological issues and evidentiary regulations arose immediately. These became more controversial than necessary because of the implications that the final results would have in relation to the Framework Agreement and the wider conflict between the two communities. The first issue revolved around whether Macedonian citizens who had been living in other countries for more than 12 months should be counted. Albanian and Turkish members of the census commission argued that they should. The head of the census commission, Vesna Janevska (Macedonian), disagreed citing the rules of the European Statistical Agency (EUROSTAT) which state that these people should be counted in their countries of residence. There was also disagreement on census workers. Albanians wanted Albanian census workers in Albanian-dominated municipalities, while Macedonians were concerned that they would be unaccountable and artificially inflate their numbers.

After several days of talks the commission failed to resolve the issue and the deputy head, Abdulmenaf Bexheti (Albanian), resigned without stating his reasons. Others that resigned from the Commission complained that the Macedonian mentality reflected their distrust towards the Albanians, referring to

---

89 Visoka and Gjevori, “Census politics and ethnicity in the Western Balkans”, p. 491.
Macedonian refusals to have Albanian-only census workers in Albanian-dominated municipalities.\(^91\) The following day Janevska resigned citing suspicions that a “big census forgery is being prepared”.\(^92\) Janevska also raised concerns that Albanian census workers were accepting photocopies of identification,\(^93\) further implying that mass census fraud was being undertaken. Within a week the Prime Minister announced that the census would be cancelled citing widespread fraud.\(^94\) The Census Commission announced that it had undertaken inspections in Albanian-populated towns, which revealed that over 18,000 residents had been counted whose existence could not be verified and that these residents had been registered within the first five days of the census count.\(^95\) The Census Commission estimated that over 100,000 non-existent people could have been registered if the trend continued for the entire census period, significantly distorting already controversial demographic data.\(^96\)

Further evidence later emerged that census workers in Albanian-populated regions were pressured, and in some cases threatened, to record residents even if they could not verify their identity or their very existence. Turkish and Roma census workers in these regions complained that eight days after the census had begun their Albanian superiors would not allow them to begin work, sending out only all-Albanian census teams into the field.\(^97\) The ruling VMRO-DPMNE reiterated their accusations from 2002 when they claimed that the then government of Branko Crvenkovski (SDSM) had falsified the census by adding 120,000 non-existent Albanians solely so that they could meet the 20 per cent threshold required by the Framework Agreement and take advantage of its

---

\(^91\) Visoka and Gjevori, “Census politics and ethnicity in the Western Balkans”, p. 491.

\(^92\) Marušić, “Resignations Mar Start to Macedonia Census”.

\(^93\) Under Macedonian law, the census is conducted through census workers going door-to-door and collecting census information from each household. Although an individual does not have to be present at the time, identification must be presented as proof the individual exists, see *Law on the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings*, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 25/1994.


\(^95\) ibid.

\(^96\) ibid.

\(^97\) ibid.
provisions. They claimed that they would not allow the same to happen under their charge.

Two events followed that are somewhat perplexing and create doubts as to the accuracy of the Government’s version of events. The first is in relation to the community response to Gruevski’s decision to cancel the census. Macedonian commentary around the cancellation was highly supportive of the Prime Minister’s decision, while Albanian politicians and political analysts largely remained silent. For a very proactive community it is highly unusual that virtually nothing was heard from Albanian leaders. The second was in relation to a dispute that erupted a week after the cancellation regarding the destruction of collected data. The governing coalition announced that all data would be destroyed, but a number of non-government organisations (mainly Macedonian) argued that doing so was simply an exercise in destroying evidence that would make it impossible to prosecute those guilty of fraud (if fraud had indeed occurred). Since the government cancelled the census on the basis of fraud, the question remains why no investigation was conducted and the data destroyed.

There has been little public discussion on the census and it is unclear when a new one will be held. Even after a further census is conducted it is highly likely that the results will be disputed and that some level of fraud will have occurred. It may be some time yet before the ethno-religious composition of Macedonia is more accurately determined. The demographic structure of society will continue to divide the Macedonian and Albanian communities as they both attempt to use numbers to advance their respective nationalist causes.

**Citizenship**

During the 1990s Albanians protested against the stringent citizenship laws in Macedonia. Under the Law on Citizenship (1992), citizenship could be acquired through one of four methods: ethnic origin, birth within Macedonian territory,
naturalisation or international agreement.99 The vast majority of Albanians that did not hold citizenship needed to go through the process of naturalisation because they had immigrated from Kosovo or other parts of the former Yugoslavia, and in many cases illegally.

Under the 1992 Law, naturalisation was difficult to obtain, particularly due to the requirement to have resided in Macedonia continuously for at least 15 years.100 On the other hand, Macedonians were considered as ‘Macedonian by origin’ and eligible for automatic citizenship regardless of where they were born or lived.101 Albanians argued that the 1992 Law did not adequately take into account the rights they previously enjoyed under Yugoslav law. They argued that as Yugoslav citizens prior to independence (regardless of which republic they were born in or maintained residency) they enjoyed the rights of citizenship in Macedonia. However, since independence they had been arbitrarily deprived of rights previously held because they were not ethnic Macedonians and were not born in Macedonia.102 In addition, Albanians (along with other minorities) argued that it was unfair that an ethnic Macedonian born and raised in a foreign country and with no ties to Macedonia could automatically obtain Macedonian citizenship whereas Albanians, Turks, Serbs or other minority group members who had lived in Macedonia for years needed to go through a stringent process of naturalisation.103

In 1994 Arben Xhaferi, then leader of DPA, claimed that there were approximately 125,000 Albanians in Macedonia without citizenship.104 The Macedonian Ministry of Interior confirmed this by stating that 143,000 residents

101 Law on Citizenship, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija No. 67/1992. This was partially the result of the idea that most minority communities have a ‘kin’ or ‘home’ state and that Macedonia was the ‘home’ state of all ethnic Macedonians.
103 ibid, p. 40.
104 ibid.
did not have citizenship. In a 1995 interview with Human Rights Watch the then Minister of the Interior, Ljubomir Frčkovski (SDSM), argued that people needed to adjust to the new political realities:

This is not just a problem for the Albanians. It is a problem for everyone. They must accept the new international borders...we cannot absorb everyone, especially from Kosovo.

Frčkovski made a reasonable point. The Macedonian republic needed to control who entered the state and could not simply provide citizenship to an unlimited number of people, many who had arrived illegally. The porous Macedonian-Kosovo border is virtually impossible to control and it is still unknown how many Kosovo Albanians crossed into Macedonia during the reign of Serbian President Slobodan Milošević. Even to this day Macedonian police are unable to control the border zone, which acts as a transit for drugs, weapons, and illegal immigrants.

The problems surrounding citizenship remained largely unresolved until 2004 when amendments were made including extending citizenship to children of existing citizens (regardless of where these children were born or the ethnicity of their parents), and reducing the residency requirement from 15 years to eight years for the purposes of naturalisation. While these changes brought about some criticism from diaspora Macedonians that they would lose access to citizenship and that it should have been extended to the grandchildren of existing citizens (based on the Irish model), relatively few were affected. In the light of the demographic debate, many within the Macedonian community felt that this provided citizenship to Albanians that should not have been eligible and is

---

105 ibid, p. 41.
106 ibid.
108 Law on Citizenship, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija No. 45/2004. However, it only applies if the parents of these children did not resettle in what would be considered their ‘kin’ state. For example, the Turks who left Macedonia during the 1950’s and resettled in Turkey are considered to have moved to their ‘kin’ state and therefore their children would not be eligible for Macedonian citizenship even though their parents would hold Macedonian citizenship.
perceived as dangerous for the survival of the state as a Macedonian state. For Albanians this has been a positive move and a satisfactory outcome to a core interest for their community.
Chapter Two
Religious Conflict

Christianity and Islam: Similarities and Differences

The overwhelming majority of Macedonians (97 per cent) identify as Christians, while a similar majority (98 per cent) of Albanians identify as Muslims. There is also a small Macedonian-speaking Muslim community. The vast majority of Muslims in Macedonia are Sunnis with small pockets of Bektashis and Sufis.\(^1\) The Sunni Muslims in Macedonia generally belong to the Hanafi School of jurisprudence. Recent years, however, have seen the rise of radical Salafi and Wahhabi groups. The vast majority of Christians are Orthodox with small communities of Catholics, Protestants, and Evangelical Christians. There is also a small Jewish community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Christians (Number)</th>
<th>Christians (%)</th>
<th>Muslims (Number)</th>
<th>Muslims (%)</th>
<th>Total (Number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>1,261,476</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>15,139</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1,295,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>1,876</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>425,376</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>433,013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The two largest religious organisations in Macedonia are the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) and the Islamic Religious Community (IRC). The MOC administers approximately 1,950 churches across 12 dioceses (including four in the diaspora).\(^2\) The MOC is presently headed by the Archbishop of Ohrid and Macedonia, Stefan. Due to a dispute with the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), the MOC’s autocephaly remains unrecognised by other Orthodox Churches. The IRC administers approximately 580 mosques across 13 muftiships. It is headed by the Reis-ul-ulema, Suleyman Rexhepi. The Reis-ul-ulema is the Chief of the Islamic Scholars or the Grand Mufti of the Muslims in

---


Prior to Macedonian independence the Muslims of Macedonia fell under the jurisdiction of the Islamic Community of the Yugoslav Federation (Rijaset) with headquarters in Sarajevo.

Christianity and Islam have many similarities, though these are fairly superficial. Both the Bible and the Qur’an provide similar accounts of creation, the prophets, and heavenly beings. They also include similar moral teachings on which Christians and Muslims can agree and uphold as universal moral values. For example, both teach that one is to serve no other gods, to refrain from making idols and worshipping them, not to covet, not to murder, and to honour one’s father and mother.

However, there are significant theological differences that affect the worldviews of Christians and Muslims. Muslims regard the Bible as corrupted and the Qur’an as the final authority and the last revelation of Allah. However, the Qur’an affirms that Allah sent revelation in the Torah and the Gospels. Muslims regard the Bible as corrupted and the Qur’an as the final authority and the last revelation of Allah. However, the Qur’an affirms that Allah sent revelation in the Torah and the Gospels. Furthermore, the Qur’an says that Jesus’ words should be believed, and even commands the Muslims to listen to those who had the Torah/Gospels before the Qur’an calling it a ‘Truth come to thee from Thy Lord’. As far as Christians are concerned the Bible was completed in the first century with the Book of Revelation and with it God’s message. The Bible warns against anyone adding to or subtracting from God’s Word. Christians also refute Muslim claims that the Bible has been corrupted and the vast amount of Biblical research and scroll findings certainly attest to the reliability of its transmission.

Christians believe in the triune God (the Trinity) – God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit – one God in three persons. Muslims reject the

---

4 Qur’an 5:46, 67, 69 and 71.
5 Qur’an 4:171; 5:78.
6 Qur’an 10:94.
7 Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Galatians 1:6-12; Revelation 22:18 (ESV).
Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Islam teaches the doctrine of *tawhid*, which is the oneness of God. With regards to Jesus Muslims believe that He was a prophet heralding the way for the coming of Muhammad. Many commentators make claims that Christians and Muslims worship the same God; however, this claim fails because Jesus either is God (the Bible) or is not God (the Qur’an) and both claims cannot be true. This is a key point of disagreement between the two, which has ramifications for other essential theological points such as salvation.

As Muslims do not accept the Christian doctrine of original sin or of a subsequent sinful nature, there is no need for redemption. Many Muslims maintain that whoever believes in the oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad will be saved from the fire of judgement and enter Paradise. Other Muslims insist on the submission to Allah through adherence to the five pillars of Islam. The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that Adam and Eve rebelled against God and because of this all people died spiritually and the entire world was affected. In addition, the Bible teaches that all people sin individually against God in their own lives. The Bible teaches that people are born morally fallen and are naturally turned away from God and towards sin in every area of life – people may not be as bad as they could be, but they will never meet the holy and righteous standards of God. Therefore, people are under just condemnation to eternity in hell, and that is what they need to be saved from. The Bible teaches that salvation is only through faith in Jesus Christ, who is God and who died a substitutionary death on the cross to pay for our sins. Those who repent of their sin, and believe and trust Jesus with their salvation will be forgiven and spend eternity with God.

Unlike Protestantism, Orthodox Christian theology strays from the Bible as the sole source of God’s teaching, and uses extra-Biblical sources in shaping its doctrine. These additional sources include what is referred to as sacred tradition (claimed to be the faith which Jesus Christ taught to the apostles and which they gave to their disciples without any development or deepening in understanding of the faith), the writings of the early church fathers, decisions of the canonical
synods, and the discourses written at the time of disputes and schisms. In addition to the Qur’an, the Hanafi School also derives Islamic law from the hadiths (containing the words, actions, and customs of the Muhammad, narrated in six hadith collections), the consensus of the companions of Muhammad, the individual's opinion from the companions, Qiyas (analogy), Istihsan (juristic preference), and local Urf (local custom of the people).

Islamic Scholars are divided over the extent to which the Qur’an permits or even advocates violence. The concept of jihad is important to understand within its correct context as it has often been used to endorse violence, both justifiably and unjustifiably. Jihad literally means struggle, effort, and exertion. There are two basic types of jihad: the greater jihad (personal spiritual struggle) and the lesser jihad (warfare). The Qur’an repeatedly reminds Muslims of the former, while also providing for the use of the latter under various circumstances. Most moderate Muslims conceive the lesser jihad as a form of defensive warfare or just war to defend their religion or way of life and independence when they are threatened or under attack.

Joel Hayward contends that like Christianity, Islam has a similar concept to just war and that three conditions need to be met: just cause; proportionality; and last resort. Hayward uses Sura 22:38-40 to argue that self-defence would be a just cause asserting that it provides “permission to undertake armed combat not for offensive war, but for self-defence and self-preservation when attacked or oppressed”. Further he notes that Muhammad acknowledged that “warfare was something that seemed very wrong, indeed a ‘disliked’ activity, yet it was morally necessary and thus morally right and obligatory under some

---

10 ibid.
11 ibid.
13 ibid, p. 30. Qur’an 22:38-40 states “Verily Allah will defend (from ill) those who believe: verily, Allah loveth not any that is a traitor to faith, or shows ingratitude. To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged – and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid. (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defence of right (for no cause) except that they say, “Our lord is Allah”.

circumstances”. Hayward argues that proportionality is a fundamental principle in the Qur’anic guidance on war, contending that the concept of ‘not transgressing limits’ is repeatedly stressed in the Qur’an. Finally, Hayward argues that the Qur’an teaches that war should be a last resort. He contends that the Qur’an teaches Muslims to respond to provocations with patience and efforts to facilitate conciliation.

Historically, various Islamic caliphates have afforded protection to the adherents of other monotheistic religions and prohibited violence against them as long as they paid a special tax (jizya). The Qur’an clearly states that “there is no compulsion in religion”, and contains passages that encourage Muslims to engage unbelievers with grace and persuasion. However, we also read the Qur’an stating:

\[
\text{fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, [even if they are] of the People of the Book, until they pay the jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.}
\]

In addition to the Qur’an, Muslims refer to hadith, which are a collection of statements or actions of Muhammad or of his tacit approval or criticism of something said or done in his presence. A hadith from Sahih Muslim explains how Muhammad instructed his commander when sent out on an expedition:

\[
\text{When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action. If they respond to any one of these, you also accept it and withhold yourself from doing them any harm. Invite them to [accept] Islam; if they respond to you, accept it from them and desist from fighting against}
\]

---

15 ibid, p. 37.
16 ibid, pp. 37-38.
17 Qur’an 2:256.
18 Qur’an 16:125.
19 Qur’an 9:29.
20 Different branches of Islam refer to different collections of hadith. In the Sunni branch of Islam (of which the majority of Albanians belong to) the canonical collections are *the six books*, including Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawood, Jami’ at-Tirmidhi, Al-Sunan al-Sughra and Sunan ibn Majah.
them…If they refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the jizya. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and hold off your hands. If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah’s help and fight them.” 21

While the Qur’an generally instructs Muslims to extend the Islamic community peacefully through preaching, education, example, and writing,22 the above cited verses certainly raise questions (whether valid or not) among many Christians about the use of violence for the purpose of forced conversions and enforcing what would amount to a discriminatory tax (jizya) on non-Muslims, infringing their religious freedom.

The Bible generally condones violence in two instances – self-defence (individual and collective) and by the state for the purpose of protecting citizens and punishing evil (for example, murder). The Bible teaches that war, and therefore violence, is necessary at times.23 While war is terrible, in a fallen world it is inevitable.24 However, the Bible does not condone war indiscriminately. The Bible makes a clear distinction between a holy war and a just war. According to the Bible a true holy war is one specifically commanded by God to Old Testament Israel. The commands to do battle in the Old Testament were for a specific group of people, for a specific time, and for a specific purpose.25 That purpose has been accomplished and no one can claim a holy war today, nor could the crusades be justified as a holy war.

Like the Muslim, the Christian’s battle is spiritual,26 meaning (among other things) that God’s people do not use physical means to coerce people into God’s Kingdom, nor is it possible to truly change one’s inner-most beliefs by force (as

---

21 Sahih Muslim 19: 4294.
23 Ecclesiastes 3:8 (ESV).
26 Ephesians 6:12; Corinthians 10:4 (ESV).
opposed to one’s outward profession of faith). However, the Bible does allow for just (or justified) wars, which are wars that are waged on behalf of justice. The goal of a just war is peace. The Bible outlines the God-ordained role of government in society to:

- govern with authority from God;
- praise the good in society;
- punish the evildoer in society; and
- bear the sword and execute wrath against wrongdoers.

Christians generally agree that a just war must adhere to the following guidelines:

1) There must be a just cause (Revelation 19:11);
2) War must be declared by a competent authority (Romans 13:1);
3) The motives for war must be just (Romans 13:3);
4) The purpose of war must be just (Proverbs 21:2);
5) War must be a last resort (Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18);
6) There should be a reasonable expectation that the war can be won (Luke 14:31);
7) The outcomes of war should be greater than the cost of going to war (Romans 12:21, 13:4); and
8) The war should be undertaken with great reluctance and sorrow at the harm that will come from war (Psalms 68:30).

In addition, some moral restrictions on how a just war should be fought should also be considered. These include the proportional use of force (Deuteronomy 20:10-12), discrimination between combatants and non-combatants (Deuteronomy 20:13-14, 19:20), avoidance of evil means (Psalms 34:14), and good faith – the desire to restore peace and live in harmony (Matthew 5:43-44; Isaiah 1:13-23 (ESV).

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that God required genuine faith, not faithless rituals, for example, see Isaiah 1:13-23 (ESV).

Romans 13:1-5 (ESV).

Romans 12:18). Obviously, the Christian understanding of a just war is rarely met by governments that claim to represent Christians, though it is also rare that those governing nominally Christian nations are Christians themselves (as opposed to nominal or ‘cultural’ Christians).

While there are significant differences between Christians and Muslims within the Macedonian context and more broadly, there are also considerable misunderstandings between the followers of the two faiths and much can be learned about each other that will contribute to a deeper appreciation for the views of the other.

Religiosity and Religious Values and Attitudes

Social values and norms are considerably different between the two communities, and influenced by their respective religious beliefs. While care should be taken when analysing surveys on religiosity, particularly given that respondents may not necessarily hold religious beliefs but still identify with particular faiths because they are a marker of ethnic identity, there is considerable evidence that religiosity is high and influential on moral values and societal attitudes.

A study on social distance by Jashari and Simkus concluded that Macedonians and Albanians are separated by very significant social distances involving most spheres of life. In particular, they found that Albanians “report much higher frequencies of prayer, more conservative religious beliefs, and higher self-evaluated religiosity than do Macedonians…indeed, by most measures they are perhaps the most religious ethnic group in the Western Balkans” and that value differences between Macedonians and Albanians “involve serious differences in moral issues, in addition to less emotional norms of behaviour and preferred economic policies”.

---

30 Grudem, Politics According to the Bible, p. 390 and Dennis et al, ESV Study Bible, p. 2,555.
32 ibid. pp. 59-60.
Work undertaken by Bianchini agrees with these findings. He goes further and concludes that inter-ethnic relations are strongly influenced by the official positions of the two respective religious organisations, the MOC and the IRC, which dramatically contribute to the strengthening of Macedonia’s socially conservative attitudes.33 Bianchini also notes that:

the social profile of the individual who feels closest to religious values and prescriptions is represented by an Albanian female, Muslim by religion, with a primary education, living in the countryside and voting for the DUI. At the opposite end, the more secular individual can be symbolised by a male, Macedonian, Christian Orthodox by belief, with a high level of education, living in Skopje and voting for the Social Democrats.34

Other studies conducted on religion and religiosity in Macedonia also confirm the findings by Bianchini, and Jashari and Simkus. For example, an Institute for Democracy: Societas Civilis report collected some interesting data in relation to religiosity, and religious values and attitudes among Muslim Albanians and Christian Macedonians. According to this research, Albanian respondents (91 per cent) more readily identify themselves as ‘believers’ than Macedonian respondents (67 per cent).35 More Albanians (92 per cent) considered religion to be of great importance to their lives than Macedonians (54 per cent).36 Albanians (63 per cent) were more likely to practise their religion than Macedonians (53 per cent),37 and do so more often (once per week for Albanians compared to a few times per year or for the major holidays for Macedonians).38 The vast majority of Albanians (96 per cent) and Macedonians (94 per cent) noted that they had never changed their religion.39 This is very similar to the virtual impossibility of exit

34 ibid.
36 ibid, p. 26.
37 ibid, p. 22.
38 ibid, p. 23.
39 ibid, p. 25.
and entry from one ethnic group to another as discussed above. A lack of proselytization between the two is partially linked to the fact that Islam and Christianity have become embedded into ethnonational identity.

A plurality in both communities (45 per cent of Macedonians and 48 per cent of Albanians) identified very strongly with their faith. Although the Albanian respondents were mixed on the question of the separation of religion from the state, a plurality of them (33 per cent) considered it as bad, while a majority of Macedonians (64 per cent) considered it as good. On a related issue, Bianchini found that 84 per cent of Albanians support the idea of religious values being instilled in public schools, while Macedonians (39 per cent) appeared more reluctant about the idea. The vast majority of Albanian (95 per cent) and Macedonian (92 per cent) respondents claimed to know someone from another religion.

Research conducted by Taševska Remenski found that there was a significant perception among Macedonians (59 per cent) and Albanians (46 per cent) that the core interests of Christians and Muslims were diametrically opposed. However, a considerable number of Albanians (40 per cent) believed that while the core interests of Christians and Muslims were different, they were not diametrically opposed. Her data suggests that Muslim Albanians were more tolerant of Christianity than Macedonians were of Islam. One more important attitude to note is that relating to the use of violence in political matters. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has found that 43 per cent of Albanians do not consider violence as justifiable in any case, compared to 78 per cent of Macedonians and 82 per cent of other ethnicities in the country.

---

40 ibid, p. 39.
41 ibid, p. 47.
42 Bianchini, Civic and Uncivic Values in Macedonia, p. 72.
44 Taševska Remenski, Albancite i Makedoncite, p. 299.
45 ibid.
46 ibid.
the UNDP found that Albanian attitudes towards the use of violence have been high historically, the percentage of those that justify it has declined since 2001.48

Another study on political, social, and religious views in Macedonia found that 43 per cent of all participants supported revolutionary means for social changes.49 The same study found that 60 per cent of Albanian respondents supported revolutionary methods, while support for the same was at 38 per cent among Macedonians. Additionally, 42 per cent of all participants were of the view that it is acceptable to protest violently when there was dissatisfaction with the political situation.50

**Politicismation of Religion**

The demise of Tito’s regime led to an immense political, social, and cultural transformation in Macedonia where religion re-emerged as a valuable instrument in restructuring society. Since ethnicity and religion coincide in Macedonia, religion has become highly politicised and a very effective method of mobilisation in both communities. For example, Koppa has argued that:

> Nationalism uses religion as a criterion of cultural differentiation…religion becomes politicized, being used for the identification of a new cultural and political entity: the nation. In this context, religion loses its autonomous role, as it is manipulated by nationalism. In Macedonia we have witnessed the identification of Macedonians with Christianity and of Albanians with Islam. Ethnic conflict has thus been translated in terms of a continuous fight between Christianity and Islam, as a struggle between Good and Evil.51

Fox’s hypotheses on the role of religion on ethnic conflict cast some light on the situation in Macedonia and the way in which the two communities have consolidated religion into their respective identities. Particularly relevant to the Albanians are arguments that religious discrimination is likely to result in the

---

50 ibid, p. 15.
51 Koppa, “Ethnic Albanians in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia”, p. 45.
formation of religious grievances (hypothesis one) and that the presence of
religious discrimination and disadvantages is likely to cause an increase in the
levels of group identity and cohesion among the group which suffers from these
disadvantages (hypothesis six).\textsuperscript{52}

During the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries Albanian ethnonationalism was
relatively secular and its elites traditionally avoided politicising religion because
of the need to prevent internal divisions in the process of nation-building among
Muslim, Catholic, and Orthodox Albanians.\textsuperscript{53} However, after the Albanians of
Kosovo and Macedonia fell under Serbian (and then Yugoslav) rule, authorities
in Belgrade began to encourage its Albanian population to emphasise Islam over
their ethnicity in order to eradicate Albanian nationalism,\textsuperscript{54} which was
incompatible with their own vision of Serb dominance across the Balkan
peninsula. In addition, Serb and Yugoslav authorities promoted the imams and
religious schools from Sarajevo (dominated by Muslim Serbs and Croats) over
Albanian religious authorities, particularly the Sufi orders, missionaries, and
lodges (tekkes), which were widespread in Kosovo and Macedonia and served as
hubs of Albanian nationalism.\textsuperscript{55} Many of these groups were banned and
persecuted. Yugoslav and Macedonian (after the Second World War) policy
toward Albanians and their attempt to eradicate religious groups that served as
conduits for nationalist claims had a detrimental impact on their religious
diversity. By the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century Albanians in Macedonia were religiously
homogenised and Sunni Muslims accounted for the vast majority of the Albanian
community. Catholic Albanians largely emigrated and Orthodox Albanians were
assimilated into the Macedonian community.\textsuperscript{56} This homogenisation among
Albanians opened the way for religion to become a marker of identity,
particularly in opposition to the majority Christian Macedonians. Some scholars
have also suggested that because Macedonian authorities (under Yugoslavia)

\textsuperscript{52} Fox, “Towards a Dynamic Theory of Ethno-Religious Conflict”, pp. 456-458.
\textsuperscript{53} G. Krasniqi, “The forbidden fruit: Islam and politics of identity in Kosovo and Macedonia”, After the
Wahhabi Mirage: Islam, politics and international networks in the Balkans, European Studies Centre,
\textsuperscript{54} ibid, 193-194.
\textsuperscript{55} ibid, p. 193.
\textsuperscript{56} ibid, p. 194.
suppressed Albanian ethnic identity Albanians used Islam as a way of preserving their cultural identity and that has been an additional factor in merging religion into the Albanian ethnonational identity.\textsuperscript{57}

The Reis-ul-ulema of Muslims in Macedonia, Suleyman Rexhepi, has discussed considerable persecution of Muslims by the Macedonian authorities under Yugoslav rule, which further consolidated religion as part of the Albanian identity. For example, he notes that mosques and other religious structures were destroyed and permission for constructing new ones withheld, the walls surrounding Albanian homes were pulled down, setting up courses to study the Qur’an in small schools attached to the mosques was hindered, the Islamic call to prayer from speakers in the minarets was not permitted, and religious officials were routinely interrogated by State Security.\textsuperscript{58}

Orthodox Christianity is intertwined with Macedonian ethnonational identity, and within the Macedonian ethnonationalist narrative there is little conceptual separation between the nation, the state, and the church. The MOC is seen in many regards as a national institution rather than simply a religious one. Many Macedonians view the church, or at least the Macedonian priests and laity prior to the establishment of an independent church organisation, as an informal structure that functioned to cultivate and promote \textit{Macedonism} (the Macedonian national idea) among the people and functioned as a state within a state. The church and the state are considered to be (to borrow President Lincolns famous phrase) of the people, by the people, and for the people and, therefore, inseparable from the people. While Macedonia does not have an official state religion (the Constitution does formally acknowledge the MOC and the IRC, among other religious institutions), in practice Macedonian political elites and MOC Bishops (along with lower ranking priests) are very closely aligned.

\textsuperscript{57} Koppa, “Ethnic Albanians in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia”, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{58} Rexhepi, “Organising Muslim Religious Life in Macedonia”.
The MOC is to Macedonians the same as the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) is to Serbs, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (BOC) is to Bulgarians, and the Greek Orthodox Church (GOC) is to Greeks – it is used to establish Macedonian uniqueness. As part of their negation of Macedonian identity, neighbouring Orthodox Churches (in collaboration with their respective governments) refuse to recognise the independence of the MOC. Among Macedonians, protecting the MOC from hostile neighbours is seen as equivalent to protecting Macedonian identity itself. Due to this, Orthodox Christianity and the MOC have been frontline instruments in the Macedonian nation-building process since the 1950s and even more so since 1991. The Macedonian Government, for example, has taken significant measures to defend the interests of the MOC in its disputes with other Orthodox Churches, viewing it as integral to the Macedonian identity, and the Church has worked closely with political elites in promoting nationalist discourse.

Macedonians view both Albanian identity and Islam as incompatible with the idea of an Orthodox Christian Macedonian state and this in turn has frustrated the Albanian community.\textsuperscript{59} It is within this context that Islam has become a marker of identity for the Albanians of Macedonia; a reaction of the Muslim Albanian minority against the Christian Macedonian majority.\textsuperscript{60}

Within this context, one of the key grievances of the Albanian community was that the Constitution (1991) did not explicitly mention Islam and the IRC. Albanians claimed that this was further evidence of their ‘second-class’ status and continued religious discrimination from the Yugoslav era. Article 19 of the Constitution (1991) explicitly referred to only the MOC, though it guaranteed equality under the law for all ‘other religious communities’. As per the amendments agreed to in the Framework Agreement, Article 19 of the Constitution now explicitly names the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the Islamic Religious Community, the Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Jewish

\textsuperscript{59} Krasniqi, “The forbidden fruit”, p. 201.
\textsuperscript{60} ibid.
Community, and ‘other religious communities and groups’. The MOC was outraged at the constitutional amendments and the late President Boris Trajkovski bore the brunt of its frustration, many believe, because of his Protestant faith. Bishop Agatangel directly attacked Trajkovski in an article for *Nova Makedonija* claiming that the late President had allowed the position of the Orthodox Church to be weakened by the constitutional changes. Bishop Agatangel went further and accused Trajkovski of being involved in a Protestant conspiracy to undermine Macedonia and Macedonian Orthodox believers.

**Religious Extremism**

While the vast majority of Albanians in Macedonia follow traditional Sunni teachings, radical Islamists from Salafi and Wahhabi backgrounds are making slow but steady inroads into both the Albanian and the Macedonian-speaking Muslim communities. This trend has accelerated since the 2001 war. In particular, radical Wahhabis from Saudi Arabia have infiltrated the Albanian community both at the grassroots level and within the official hierarchy of the IRC. The IRC, as the officially registered organisation representing Muslims in Macedonia, holds the title deeds to the vast majority of Islamic religious buildings and property. Wahhabis and other Salafi groups have set up small but committed networks of followers, particularly among younger Albanians and Macedonian-speaking Muslims across western Macedonia and the capital Skopje. They have also taken control of up to five key mosques in Skopje (some by force) and possibly control others in rural areas of the country, particularly those built with Saudi funds. Some have claimed that rather than destroying the existing Islamic institutions their strategy has been to take control of the IRC and redirect its official activities and teachings in a more radical direction.

---


62 ibid.


Suleyman Rexhepi and his followers have resisted what they see as illegitimate foreign influence in the past (becoming victims of physical attacks and anonymous death threats). However, reports indicate that Rexhepi has made peace with them and allowed them to maintain their positions within the official hierarchy of the IRC. Nevertheless, tensions continue and have erupted into violent confrontations between the traditional Balkan Sunnis on the one hand, and Salafis and Wahhabis on the other. Many of the IRC’s imams continue to call on Rexhepi to confront key Wahhabi leaders such as Zenun Berisha and Ramadan Ramadani and remove them from the mosques they have taken. Rexhepi, seemingly powerless, has at various stages appealed to the Macedonian Government, the Albanian political parties, and foreign diplomats to assist the IRC against the Islamists; however, none have provided any assistance.

Islamists have readily undertaken violent action in the country. In May 2015 the Skopje Mufti Ibrahim Shabani ordered an armed group of 50 followers to capture IRC headquarters in Skopje in an attempt to take the leadership from Suleyman Rexhepi. A small gun battle took place but Shabani’s group quickly took control of the building. Shabani had previously been removed by Rexhepi as Mufti of Skopje a month prior due to earlier conflicts, which had allegedly led to a fist fight between the two in the parking lot of the Macedonian Opera and Ballet. Shabani claimed that Rexhepi had misappropriated IRC funds and acted unconstitutionally and that his key objective in taking control of the IRC through the occupation of its headquarters was to restore order to the IRC. Shabani’s followers left the IRC headquarters two weeks later when Rexhepi had secured the support of the 13 other Muftis in the country. Shabani left peacefully citing

---

67 ibid.
69 Anonymous, “Macedonia: The Islamic Community blocked, Reis allegedly taken hostage”.
the beginning of the month of Ramadan and is yet to answer for the violent occupation of the IRC building. Nevertheless, there have been numerous accusations of corruption, sultanistic rule, and indecent behaviour directed at Rexhepi.

Macedonian-speaking Muslims have also been targeted by extremist groups for recruitment. Historically, this small community has identified itself as ethnically Macedonian and supported the Macedonian majority over their co-religionists in the Albanian community. However, since the early 1970’s, and particularly after Macedonian independence in 1991, the community has come under increasing assimilatory pressures from the Albanians. Albanian political, cultural, and religious leaders have promoted the idea that this community is really Albanian, which was ‘Macedonianised’ under Yugoslavia. As evidence they offer their shared Islamic faith claiming that if one is a Muslim one cannot be a Macedonian and, therefore, must be Albanian – a form of ethnic proselytising through religious affiliation.

Since the decentralisation of various political and budgetary responsibilities in 2004, Albanian elites (who control local governments) have been able to offer political and financial incentives to ethnic ‘converts’. The assimilatory pressure may be working as those identifying as Macedonian-speaking Muslims have dropped from 39,500 in the 1981 census to only 2,500 in the 2002 census. Of those that have resisted ‘Albanianisation’, many are beginning to shed their Macedonian identity and identify simply as ‘Muslims’. It is among this group, particularly in the villages of Labuništa, Podgorci, and Oktisi (all within the Struga municipality), that young men are being targeted by a number of groups, including Wahhabis and the Tablighi Jamaat (which some believe is now being used wittingly or unwittingly by extremists to attract new recruits).

---

71 ibid.
73 See Deliso, “In Macedonia, New Concerns about Rural Fundamentalism” and Deliso, “After Macedonia’s Islamist Protests”.

There are also increasing reports of young Macedonian-speaking Muslims from these villages receiving scholarships to study in madrassas in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and identify new recruits from among their family and friends. Locals report that these men are then funded to act and dress in accordance with Wahhabi tradition and to ensure their wives do the same.74 Indeed, long beards and Wahhabi-style dress were unknown in Macedonia prior to 2001 but are becoming increasingly visible not only among the Macedonian-speaking Muslim community in Struga, but also among Albanians in Gostivar, Tetovo, and Skopje.75 Reports claim that these men receive between €200 and €500 per month, with those involved in distributing Islamist literature, DVD’s, and other promotional material receiving up to three times that amount.76 It should be noted that the average net monthly salary in Macedonia is approximately €360.77 It is quite common to find Islamist material promoting violent jihad, suicide bombings, and the killing of ‘non-believers’ openly sold at market stalls in the streets of Struga, Gostivar, Tetovo, and Skopje. Much of the material appears to have been translated and published in Albanian, with some literature on offer in Arabic and Macedonian.78 One observer notes that it is becoming more and more common to see:

- Physical attacks against clerics deemed to be in the way of Islamists and their goals;
- Pressure for females to wear conservative religious dress;
- Orders for moderate Muslims not to associate with Christians;
- Injunctions against shopkeepers selling alcohol;
- Perpetuation of the archaic custom of arranging marriages for teenage girls;
- Threats against young Muslims seen to be engaging in Western ‘hedonism’;
- Violence against Muslim journalists seeking to report on any such issues, and so on.79

75 Zadrožna, “I am a Muslim but I am the European One”, pp. 35-52.
78 Market stalls selling Islamist literature were seen during field work. See also Pančevski, “Saudis fund Balkan Muslims spreading hate in the West”.
There have also been frequent reports of Islamic terrorist cells in Macedonia, though many of them are difficult to corroborate. For example, in 2005 a PROXIMA (EU police mission to Macedonia) officer revealed that an Islamist cell with approximately 100 foreigners was taking refuge in the remote Jablanica mountain range on the Macedonian-Albanian border, near the mainly Macedonian-speaking Muslim villages of Oktisi and Labuništa.\textsuperscript{80} The officer noted that they were being assisted by the local villagers.\textsuperscript{81} Macedonian security officials have also claimed that jihadist training camps once operated near the villages of Lešnica (Kičevo), Šipkovica (Tetovo), and Tri Vodi (Strumica).\textsuperscript{82} The same sources claim that there is an existing camp that acts as a staging post for recruits off to Syria located between Jažnice (on the border with Kosovo) and Kačani in Kosovo. Other reports have alleged that a militarised faction known as ‘the Protectors of Islam’ has been formed to protect extremist elements within the country,\textsuperscript{83} however it is difficult to determine the accuracy of these. Nevertheless, given the large number of small arms readily available across the country and the militarised nature of both Christian and Muslim communities it is highly likely that some armed units exist (\textit{Chapter Nine}).

The Macedonian Government has certainly taken advantage of these reports in an attempt to link such extremists with local Albanian radicals in order to portray the Macedonian-Albanian conflict as a struggle against international terrorism to which the Albanian community is supposedly connected. At least in one instance the Macedonian Government has orchestrated such a scenario. In March 2002 seven illegal Pakistani immigrants were lured to Macedonia with promises that they would be taken to western Europe.\textsuperscript{84} Once there police arrested them, transported them to Raštanski Lozja about 5km north of Skopje, and executed

\textsuperscript{80} Deliso, “Europe’s New Terror Profile and the State of Play in the Balkans”.
\textsuperscript{81} Deliso, “Europe’s New Terror Profile and the State of Play in the Balkans”.
\textsuperscript{82} Anonymous, “Experts on guard against Islamic extremism in Macedonia”. Locals from Strumica have confirmed rumours of the existence of a militant training camp in the region but were unsure about the location. While the area is very remote and mountainous, it is interesting in that the area is located in eastern Macedonia and populated by Christian Macedonians.
\textsuperscript{83} Morrison, \textit{Wahhabism in the Balkans}, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{84} Anonymous, “Macedonia faked militant raid”, \textit{BBC}, 30 April 2004, \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk} (accessed 12 September 2014).
them. The then Interior Minister, Ljube Boškovski (VMRO-DPMNE), claimed that the men had been killed after opening fire on a police patrol with machine guns and that the Pakistani immigrants had been planning attacks on “vital installations and embassies”. In 2004 the new Government led by the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) revealed that it was a staged murder to impress on the international community that Macedonia was serious about participating in the war on terror, and another attempt to link the local Albanian community to radical Islamism.

There is enough evidence, however, to demonstrate that radical Islamists have made inroads into the country without staging false incidents. Recruitment of fighters among the Albanian and Macedonian-speaking Muslim communities for foreign conflicts is an ongoing issue. In 2010 Macedonian security officials claimed that up to 50 volunteers had been recruited to fight in Afghanistan over the previous decade. This trend appears to be increasing. While it is difficult to ascertain accurate numbers and diverging estimates have been presented, reports suggest that up to 300 Albanians and Macedonian-speaking Muslims from Macedonia have joined opposition groups in Syria, mainly the Islamic State and the al-Nusra Front, with up to 20 having been killed. The most concerning case is perhaps that of Sami Abdulahu who died in the summer of 2013 participating in an attempt to seize the prison in Aleppo, Syria. Abdulahu was an imam who received his degree from the madrassa in Kondovo near Skopje. There have long being suspicions that the Kondovo madrassa is linked to radical Islamists. This raises questions as to whether his training at the Kondovo madrassa influenced his radicalisation. Interestingly, Kondovo has twice been

---

85 ibid.
86 ibid.
87 ibid.
88 Pančevski, “Saudis fund Balkan Muslims spreading hate in the West”.
occupied by the Krasniqi Group, a small Albanian paramilitary group whose ties with the madrassa are unclear (*Chapter Nine*).

Fighters returning from the Syrian conflict are also of particular concern for Macedonian authorities. It has been reported that up to 80 radical Islamists are now under surveillance across the country.\(^92\) In August 2015 Macedonian police raided 24 houses, the Yaya Pasha and Tutunsuz mosques in Skopje, and two Islamist NGOs in search of 36 suspected ISIS fighters (nine were found and detained).\(^93\) This included a self-proclaimed Imam, Rexhep Memishi (who is also in conflict with the IRC), who was sentenced to five and a half years in prison in March 2016 for organising and preparing volunteers for the Syrian war.\(^94\) The others were charged with taking part in the fighting in Syria and Iraq through participation in foreign armed forces, police, paramilitary, or para-police formations.\(^95\)

Reported motives for entering the Syrian conflict vary and it is difficult to determine their accuracy. According to Serbian police sources not all fighters are motivated by jihadist beliefs. Some appear to be motivated by simple adventurism or purely financial reasons.\(^96\) Albanians that have been arrested and questioned by Kosovo police claimed their agreed salaries were $65 per day, while some suggested that jihadists receive up to €5,000 per month.\(^97\) Many of these jihadists were also involved in the Balkan wars, particularly with the KLA in Kosovo and the NLA in Macedonia. Ivan Babamovski, former chief of the Macedonian State Security Agency, claims that “foreign militants who join the

---


95 Marušič, “Macedonia ISIS Suspects Ready for Plea Bargain”.


97 Anonymous, “Albanians Fighting for ISIS Earn $65/day, Come From Middle Class Families”. Other reports have cited figures of between €3,000 and €5,000 per month, see Anonymous, “Se zgolemuva brojot na makedonski državjani koi odat na pečalba vo Sirija”, *MKD.MK*, 30 May 2013, [www.mkd.mk](http://www.mkd.mk) (accessed 30 May 2013).
rebels [in Syria] are Wahhabis, veterans and members of paramilitary organisations’.98 According to media reports, at least some of those that have gone to Syria have been identified as former members of the NLA who participated in the 2001 war.99 Some analysts have pointed out that the NLA Imre Elezi Brigade consisted of foreign and local Islamists.100 Babamovski has claimed that “there are 3,000 Wahhabis, mainly among the ethnic Albanian minority and Bosniaks in the region of Skopje, Tetovo, Struga and Kumanovo” funded by donations from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, and Iran.101

Many Albanians in Macedonia also see the presence of foreign Islamic influences as a threat to their own traditional version of Balkan or Ottoman Islam. For their part, Suleyman Rexhepi and the IRC have strongly and publicly denounced Muslims from Macedonia fighting in foreign wars. They have called on their followers to support the IRC, its traditional form of Islam, and interfaith tolerance. Arben Xhaferi, former leader of the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), considers the influences of foreign Islamists as an attempt to ‘Arabise’ the faith of the Albanians:

> It is absurd that Wahhabis should come here and demand, in the name of Islam, that we live and dress like them...Albanians will not allow foreigners of any kind to tell us our customs must be abandoned and our behaviour determined by Islamic totalitarians. We have our own history, our own culture, and our own Albanian model of Islam”.102

Those with clear Middle Eastern influences are seen as strange, improper, and even dangerous by many within the local Muslim community.103 In particular, the beards grown by the men and the burqas worn by the women are seen as challenges to the local Islamic traditions and have “become a subject of critique

---

99 Marušić, “Another Macedonian Albanian Reported Killed in Syria”.
103 Zadrožna, “I am a Muslim but I am the European One”, p. 40.
among [some local] Muslims, who see it as a symbol of backwardness and intolerance, or subject it to jokes, even calling the black-covered women ninjas”\(^{104}\)

Even though they are still in their infancy in Macedonia, religious doctrines coming from the Arab world are certainly challenging the former monopoly of the Hanafi School as well as the religious legitimacy of the practices of Balkan Islam.\(^{105}\) Reports of a generational divide among Albanians exist whereby young Islamists who have studied in various the Arab world tend to depict the older leaders of Macedonia’s Islamic community as ‘communists’ who do not understand Islam correctly due to their indoctrination by the former Yugoslav authorities.\(^{106}\) Zadrožna concurs with this assessment and provides examples of young imams, who have returned after studying in Saudi Arabia, criticising the older locally trained imams on their doctrinal understanding and even the methods of prayer.\(^{107}\) The new generation of foreign trained imams plays an increasingly important role in local religious life through their preaching in mosques and the teaching they provide in the madrasas funded by Gulf States.\(^{108}\)

While there are doctrinal divisions across the Muslim communities, these are never publicly debated and little effort is invested by the IRC to counter the claims of radical Islamists. Neither is the Macedonian Government interested in supporting the local Islamic community in contending with the increasing influence from the Middle East. For the most part, the Macedonian political elites see it as an Albanian problem and something that the IRC needs to deal with. They are seemingly content to arrest radicalised Muslims as events transpire but not to deal with the causes of radicalisation in the first place.

\(^{104}\) ibid.
\(^{106}\) Deliso, World Almanac of Islamism, p. 10.
\(^{107}\) Zadrožna, “I am a Muslim but I am the European One”, p. 36.
Chapter Three
Ethno-Religious Social Distance and Conflict

Ethnonational and religious polarisation is a defining feature of contemporary Macedonia. Macedonians and Albanians are separated by language, religion, employment patterns, and traditions, which are cultural and economic fault lines that affect all spheres of socio-economic life and political interaction.¹ Segregation between Macedonians and Albanians is particularly visible in mixed municipalities such as Struga and Skopje. Generally, Macedonians and Albanians live in separate villages or neighbourhoods within municipalities and towns, attend separate schools (or separate class shifts within the same schools, see Chapter Five), largely work in workplaces that are ethnically homogeneous (though there are greater levels of heterogeneity within the public sector), frequent separate nightclubs, cafes, restaurants, and shops (and even beach/holiday resorts along lake Ohrid), rarely intermarry (95 per cent of Macedonians and 96 per cent of Albanians marry within their own ethnic group),² and seldom develop close personal relationships between themselves. While Albanians generally learn Macedonian (though this is changing, see Chapter Eight), learning Albanian is seen as unnecessary at best and treasonous at worst among Macedonians.

Brunnbauer has identified even more considerable distance between the two groups based on place of residence (rural versus urban), occupation (state-employed versus self-employed), political allegiances (state-centred versus ethnic-centred), and social values (traditional versus modern).³ He has argued that “these differences are politicised and expressed mainly in cultural terms

³ For example, Albanians are seen as largely rural, self-employed, with kin-centred allegiances and viewed as ‘traditional’, whereas Macedonians are seen as largely the opposite, see Brunnbauer, “Fertility, families and ethnic conflict”, p. 590.
because ethnicity has proved to be a powerful tool for mass mobilisation and creating emotional bonds between members of the concerned ethnic group”.\textsuperscript{4} Brunnbauer has noted that many social and economic policies have ethnically divisive effects because even though they are not directly concerned with issues of identity they become ethnicised due to the different social and economic circumstances and interests of both groups.\textsuperscript{5} For example, a lack of state investment in rural areas affects Albanians more than Macedonians and rather than becoming a rural-urban divide, it becomes an Albanian-Macedonian divide.\textsuperscript{6}

There are some examples of inter-ethnic solidarity, though they have usually arisen from tragedy. One of these includes the 2011 murder of a young Albanian, Muhamed Ali Jashari, who died while defending his Macedonian friend during a violent clash among students at the Zdravko Cvetkovski High School in Skopje. According to police reports, Jashari (Albanian) rushed to help his friend Darko Jančev (Macedonian) who was being attacked in the school yard by three other Macedonians.\textsuperscript{7} The attackers knocked both Jashari and Jančev unconscious and Jashari later died in hospital.\textsuperscript{8} In a rare moment of inter-ethnic solidarity, the media emphasised the heroism of the pupil rather than stressing the fact that an Albanian was killed by a Macedonian.\textsuperscript{9} Both Macedonians and Albanians later petitioned the government demanding a memorial be built in remembrance of Muhamed Ali Jashari.\textsuperscript{10}

**First Decade of Independence**

Within months of independence, on 11 January 1992, Albanian leaders organised a referendum with the intention of declaring an autonomous Republic of Ilirida.\textsuperscript{11}

Of the 92 per cent of eligible voters that reportedly participated, 74 per cent

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{4} ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{5} ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{6} ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{7} S. Marušić, “Macedonians Demand Memorial for Teenage Albanian Hero”, *Balkan Insight*, 4 April 2013, www.balkaninsight.com (accessed 4 August 2016).
  \item \textsuperscript{8} ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{9} Bianchini, *Civic and Uncivic Values in Macedonia*, p. 71.
  \item \textsuperscript{10} Marušić, “Macedonians Demand Memorial for Teenage Albanian Hero”.
  \item \textsuperscript{11} The name ‘Ilirida’ is a combination of ‘Illyria’ and ‘Dardania’, both of which Albanians claim as ancient Albanian lands and which cross over in North-western Macedonia.
\end{itemize}
voted in favour of autonomy.\textsuperscript{12} Using the referendum as a basis, Albanian leaders appealed to the United Nations (UN), the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and the Council of Europe to withhold recognition of Macedonia’s independence until Albanian demands for constitutional change were met.\textsuperscript{13} The Macedonian Government responded by declaring the referendum illegal and sentenced five Albanian members of the ruling coalition to prison for conspiring to create a secessionist state as a base for a greater Albania.

During the 1990s Albanian leaders continued to resist the establishment of Macedonia as a Macedonian nation-state. This contributed to Macedonian suspicions about Albanian loyalties and the view that any constitutional changes in favour of minority rights for the Albanians was as a zero-sum game. The referendum noted above and the events listed below persist in shaping Macedonian perceptions of Albanian intentions:

- boycotting the Macedonian referendum on independence;
- demanding the Albanian community be recognised as an equal co-constitutive nation of the state and voting against the new (1991) constitution;
- boycotting the 1992 census; and
- establishing a paramilitary group known as the All Albanian Army (AAA) with the involvement of Albanian ministers in the Macedonian Government.

Marko has argued that actions such as these have fuelled suspicion that the Albanian community “wanted more: namely the breakup of Macedonia and the formation of a Greater Albania. Thus Albanian Macedonians were seen as a permanent threat for the stability or even territorial integrity of the country”.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} Roudometof, Collective Memory, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict, p. 172.
Equally, Macedonian elites never undertook a genuine attempt to integrate the Albanian community into the existing social, political, and economic structures.

There have also been high levels of activism and violence at the grassroots level in Macedonia. One definitive moment (particularly for the Albanian community) were the flag protests in July 1997 where the newly elected Mayor of Gostivar, Rufi Osmani, ordered that the Albanian and Turkish flags be raised over the town hall alongside the state flag. The matter was taken to the Constitutional Court, which ruled that the Albanian flag could be raised over public buildings only on holidays and only alongside the state flag. Osmani ignored the ruling and continued his standoff with the Macedonian Government. As the issue dragged on without resolution, both communities became increasingly radicalised. On the night of 8 July 1997 thousands of Albanians gathered in front of Gostivar’s town hall to prevent police from entering the building in response to Osmani’s call to “protect their flag with their blood”. Macedonian special police removed the flag by force, while demonstrators clashed with riot police resulting in three protesters being killed and more than 400 injured. Osmani was arrested and sentenced to 13 years and eight months (later reduced to seven years) in prison. Large crowds gathered in Skopje, Gostivar, Tetovo, and Debar when Osmani began serving his sentence in April 1998 resulting in further violent clashes. However, Osmani was amnestied in 1999 after serving nearly two years in prison.

**The 2001 War**

The 2001 war was fought between Macedonian Government security forces, supported by at least one paramilitary formation (plus a number of others outside of state control), and the National Liberation Army (NLA) – an Albanian

---

17 ibid, p. 14.
18 The Mayor of Tetovo and two city councillors were also arrested and sentenced to two-and-a-half years, see International Crisis Group, *The Albanian Question in Macedonia*, p. 8.
paramilitary force claiming to represent the Albanian community. At first the NLA was unable to articulate any clear demands with a variety of objectives being announced by various local commanders, including ‘liberating Albanian lands’, union with Kosovo, and the establishment of a greater Albania. It was only months after the war began and lines of communication with the then two key Albanian political parties (Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) and Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP)) were opened that the NLA focused its objectives and cited a number of constitutional, political, and cultural demands that eventually found their way into the Framework Agreement.

During the first few months of the war both Albanian political parties denounced the NLA and rejected violence as a means to political ends. In fact, DPA and PDP released a joint declaration condemning the use of violence for political purposes and appealed to the NLA to disarm. However, the NLA grew in popularity among the Albanian public, particularly with its victories against the ill-trained and ill-equipped Macedonian army and police. Albanians began to see the NLA as heroes and DPA and PDP politicians as corrupt collaborators who had vested interests in the status quo. To regain public support both DPA and PDP aligned themselves with the NLA, even though they had formed a government of national unity with VMRO-DPMNE and the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM). Albanian political parties began calling on Macedonian political parties to open up negotiations with the NLA and resolve the conflict peacefully. The Macedonians refused to negotiate with what they considered to be terrorists and the war continued until the Battle of Aračinovo at the end of June 2001 when the US and the EU pressured Macedonia into withdrawing its forces and allowing American soldiers to escort up to 500 NLA fighters (along with their weapons) to NLA controlled territory. This was a turning point in the war after which the negotiations on the Framework

19 It is believed that the Albanian National Army (ANA) also engaged in the conflict but its participation cannot be verified, see Chapter Nine.
20 Ripiloski, Conflict in Macedonia, p. 104.
Agreement began and concluded within the space of six weeks (though significant battles took place during the negotiations in an attempt to shore up bargaining strength).

The 2001 war itself began on 22 January 2001, when a group of armed Albanians claiming to be NLA fighters attacked the police station in the village of Tearce (near Tetovo) killing a police officer and injuring three others. The war ended after eight months when the Framework Agreement was signed in August 2001. Up to 250 combatants and 70 civilians were killed and a further 186,000 civilians were displaced or forced to leave their homes. During the war NLA rebels were able to gain control over large amounts of Albanian-populated territory in northern and north-western Macedonia, particularly in villages around Tetovo, Skopje, and Kumanovo. Some estimate that around 120 villages (or 17 per cent of the entire territory of Macedonia) fell to the NLA. While the war was relatively brief, it caused considerable damage to property, the economy, and the relationship between Macedonians and Albanians. In fact, there are still many internally displaced refugees who are yet to return to their villages. Most of these are Macedonians who fled from Albanian-dominated villages such as Aračinovo, Matejče, and Raduša. The key reason residents are reluctant to return is fear for their safety. Witnesses have testified that when they attempted to return and rebuild their homes local Albanian residents continued to cause damage, and harassed and threatened them until they left. Reintegration of these internally displaced refugees will be virtually impossible, particularly in Albanian-dominated villages, as their security cannot be guaranteed.

In addition, the war resulted in a number of serious war crimes, crimes against humanity, and terrorist acts. It is alleged that the NLA was responsible for many of these. The most serious of these include four cases for which the NLA is suspected of being responsible caught the attention of the International Criminal

---

23 ibid, p. 100.
25 ibid, pp. 42-46.
Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). These included the NLA Leadership case, the Lipkovo Water Reserve case, the Mavrovo Road Workers case, and the Neproštano case. At least 56 suspects were under investigation by Macedonian authorities in relation to these four cases. These suspects include a number of Albanian political leaders, including current members of the government and parliament.

In the NLA leadership case it is alleged that 10 senior leaders of the NLA, including Ali Ahmeti, were responsible for abduction, inhumane and degrading treatment of civilians in Matejče and Lipkovo, destruction of religious and historic monuments, and murder as a war crime. The Lipkovo Water Reserve case concerns an individual who is suspected of having twice ordered the blocking of the water supply from Lake Lipkovo resulting in 100,000 residents of the Kumanovo region being left without drinking water for several weeks. The Mavrovo Road Workers case involves 23 suspects who allegedly abducted five road workers near the village of Grupčin and then detained them in the surrounding forest beating and torturing them for several hours. The torture involved the use of knives to carve letters into the victim’s backs. The Neproštano case involves a mass grave of 12 Macedonian civilians located near the village of Neproštano. This is by far the most serious case of the four.26

While Macedonian authorities undertook the initial investigations into these cases, in 2002 the ICTY requested that these four cases be deferred to its jurisdiction. Macedonian authorities agreed to this request along with the Ljuboten case, which involved Ljube Boškovski and Johan Tarčulovski. However, by 2008 little progress had been made and due to time constraints the ICTY referred the four NLA cases back to Macedonia for prosecution. In 2009 Macedonian authorities reported that an indictment was issued in one of the four returned cases, one case was in the investigative stage, and the other two were at

26 In total, the Council of Europe notes that there were 23 reported cases of enforced disappearances during the 2001 conflict, of which the remains of nine have been identified and 14 remain unaccounted for, see N. Mužnieks, “Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Report on Macedonia”, Council of Europe, 2013, p. 13, www.coe.int (accessed 20 May 2014).
the preliminary stage of criminal investigation. Since then, however, these cases have progressed little and in July 2011 the Macedonian Parliament adopted a decision stipulating that the Amnesty Law (2002) applies to all cases relating to the 2001 conflict, including the four returned to Macedonia by the ICTY. In October 2012 the Constitutional Court rejected a challenge to the constitutionality of the parliamentary decision.

Since the Parliament’s decision to amnesty these four cases the Government has come under strong pressure from the families of the victims, non-government organisations, and the Council of Europe. In September 2011 Amnesty International criticised the parliamentary decision as inconsistent with international law and accused it of leaving the victims and their families without access to justice, creating a climate of impunity for persons suspected of violations of international humanitarian law. The Council of Europe also criticised Macedonian authorities for the continued lack of accountability in relation to these serious human rights violations. The Council of Europe noted that amnestying the four cases was a serious impediment to the process of achieving justice and lasting reconciliation between the two communities. It further urged Macedonian authorities to implement the Committee of Ministers Guidelines on eradicating impunity for serious human rights violations, which state that amnesties should not be applied to gross human rights violations.

Considering that numerous high-profile Albanian leaders have been implicated in these four cases it is unlikely that the Macedonian Government will reverse its decision to amnesty them. Leaked cables from the US Embassy in Skopje suggest that Prime Minister Gruevski was under considerable pressure from his coalition partners in the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and DPA to end

---

27 Ibid.
29 Decision 158/2011-0-0, Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia.
32 Ibid. 
33 Ibid.
all legal proceedings. Albanian opposition to prosecuting these cases was so strong that both Menduh Thaçi and Ali Ahmeti were quoted as willing to ignore the cases of the six Albanians still missing from the 2001 conflict so as to not “increase problems and open Pandora’s Box” and ensure amnesty for the four cases returned from the ICTY.

In these cables, US Ambassador Philip Reeker details that the Macedonian Chief Prosecutor was of the view that the *Amnesty Law (2002)* was not applicable to these four cases and that he intended to prosecute them. However, Reeker notes that the Chief Prosecutor admitted that he was obligated to report to the Prime Minister before taking any action “in order to avoid ethnic destabilisation”. According to the leaked cables, the Chief Prosecutor admitted to Reeker that his office was intentionally stalling its investigation of the Neprošteno case in order to avoid ethnic tensions but did not indicate whether this was due to instructions from Gruevski. These cables also report the Chief Prosecutor as claiming that in many instances there is insufficient evidence to prosecute, though this is very likely due to the fact that little investigation has actually been undertaken.

Macedonian authorities were accused of murdering 10 Albanian civilians and beating and torturing more than 100 others during a two-day operation on 10-12 August 2001 in the village of Ljuboten, north of Skopje near the border with Kosovo. The then Macedonian Interior Minister, Ljube Boškovski, and

---


36 ibid.

37 ibid.

38 ibid.

39 ibid and US Embassy Skopje, “Macedonia: Returned ICTY Cases Threaten Both Ruling Coalition and Interethnic Relations [08SKOPJE607]”.

Johan Tarčulovski, a presidential security officer who led the special police unit of approximately 100 men during the Ljuboten operation, were tried at the ICTY. According to the Macedonian Government, there was an NLA presence in the village; however, the ICTY found no evidence to support this claim. Boškovski was acquitted, while Tarčulovski was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment. Many Macedonians, regardless of the evidence, believe Tarčulovski was unjustly imprisoned and that it was a conspiracy on the part of the international community, which is perceived to be allied to the Albanians. Many Macedonians are also incensed by the fact that only Macedonians were indicted by the ICTY and Albanian perpetrators of war crimes have never been brought to justice. In fact, the fate of 20 missing civilians (13 Macedonians, six Albanians and one Bulgarian citizen) remains unknown.

Numerous religious sites were also intentionally damaged during the war; however, the perpetrators of most of the actions still remain unknown. For example, the 13th century monastery of St. Athanasius in the village of Lešok, near Tetovo, was bombed and largely destroyed. The Macedonian side blamed the NLA, while local NLA commanders placed the blame on Macedonian Special Forces claiming it was an attempt to derail the peace talks that were ongoing at the time. On the other hand, Macedonian forces destroyed a mosque in the village of Neprošteno. Up to 46 mosques were demolished during the war, mostly by angry mobs. Other religious sites that were attacked include the monastery at Matejče, near Kumanovo, and the church of St. Hodegetria, which was vandalised by NLA insurgents who spray-painted and carved anti-Christian and Albanian-nationalist symbols into the church's 14th century frescoes.

Ethnic cleansing and what could be considered as pogroms were also carried out during the war. Reports noted that up to 30,000 Macedonians had been forced from their homes by the NLA primarily from Tetovo and its surrounding

---

Most of these people were forced out of the Polog region (along the Macedonian-Kosovo border) and the villages along the Tetovo-Jažnice highway (R1203). Lešok, on the R1203 highway, was bitterly fought over between NLA units and armed Macedonian militias, who had been abandoned by Macedonian security forces. Once the Lešok militia had exhausted its supplies, it was forced to flee to Skopje.

Considerable anger was also directed towards the government, particularly by those forced from their homes. Macedonians forced out of Aračinovo (an Albanian-dominated village outside Skopje) organised a protest outside of Parliament in Skopje on the night of 25 June 2001, which escalated into a mass revolt after they were joined by members of the security forces, paramilitaries, and thousands of residents. Protesters included hundreds of special police and army personnel that took part in the infamous Battle of Aračinovo over the preceding number of days, where the Macedonian Government ordered security forces to stand aside while NLA rebels were escorted out of Aračinovo, fully armed, by a convoy of American soldiers. Servicemen came armed and demanded an answer to why the operations were halted and the insurgents allowed to be evacuated.

The protesters forced their way into Parliament, smashed windows and doors, damaged the interior of the building, and beat the then Interior Minister Ljube Boškovski. Protesters demanded to talk to the then President, the late Boris Trajkovski, and the then Prime Minister, Ljubčo Georgievski, deriding their decision to allow the rebels not only to be evacuated but to take their weapons as they retreated. This was perhaps the closest that Macedonians had come to overthrowing their government, which was a possibility during a number of

---

43 ibid.
45 ibid.
46 ibid.
incidents throughout the war. Rioting also erupted in other towns such as Bitola, Prilep, and Veles. These towns have relatively small Albanian populations and had not experienced any direct conflict. However, because a large number of the soldiers that had been killed originated from those towns violent protests erupted on numerous occasions. Macedonians destroyed Albanian homes and businesses and set fire to mosques demanding the government destroy the NLA and avenge the deaths of Macedonian soldiers.\textsuperscript{47} It was reported that after the April 2001 Bitola riots up to 10,000 Albanians left the city.\textsuperscript{48}

The Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) and the Islamic Religious Community (IRC) also became involved. While both organisations had initially attempted to calm tensions, they eventually entered the public debate on the side of their respective ethno-religious communities. In an open letter, Archbishop Stefan (head of the MOC) wrote that “when the freedom and defence of our people cannot be achieved with other means then we should get rid of those who endanger our lives and who are trying to split our homeland”, referring to the NLA.\textsuperscript{49} Only a week earlier the MOC and IRC had signed a joint declaration stating that the “common elements in different religions should serve as a basis for understanding and joint actions for peace”.\textsuperscript{50} Disagreements over the constitutional status of the MOC and the IRC were partially responsible for the divisions. Ultimately, both institutions function as an outgrowth of their respective communities and it was inevitable that they would defend the interests of their own people.

The roles played by both Church and Mosque during the war extended beyond assisting refugees. In some cases, both religious institutions were responsible for inciting violence. Many Macedonian protest leaders during the war rallied


\textsuperscript{50} ibid.
crowds through the Church. One particular protest called for the MOC leadership to take a strong stand: "we have no strong leaders...only the Church will enforce justice in Macedonia".51 During the war, many mosques and churches registered sharply increased attendance and both priests and imams openly encouraged their congregations to take up arms.52 While the NLA claimed not to have any special affinity for Islam, it often held positions, headquarters, and snipers' nests in village mosques.53 This would not have been possible without the support of local villagers and their imams. At the funeral of six soldiers from Bitola, Bishop Petar called for revenge against Muslims. This led to one of the riots discussed above and resulted in the destruction of up to 100 Muslim homes and shops across Bitola and the burning down of a 14th century mosque in Prilep.54 Ironically, both Bitola and Prilep have relatively few Albanian inhabitants and the victims of the attacks were mainly Macedonian-speaking Muslims.

Ongoing Conflict

Relations between the two communities since the 2001 war have experienced a high level of tension and sporadic outbreaks of violence. At the elite level this is evidenced through ongoing political tensions and regular parliamentary boycotts by Albanian opposition parties. At the grassroots violence is commonplace and includes: violent protests and clashes between civilians; terrorist actions such as politically motivated bombings; attacks on police and military patrols (which are now ethnically mixed); politically and religiously motivated kidnappings; the ethnicisation and politicisation of criminal matters; and random acts of inter-community violence (Appendix Four).

Ethno-religious tension and violence have increased significantly, particularly since the Wahhabi infiltration of the IRC leadership in 2010. In 2011 the Macedonian Government announced that it was building a museum in the architectural style of an Orthodox Church within the grounds of the Kale fortress in Skopje. The museum was to be built on the foundations of a 13th century

51 Farnam, “In Macedonia, religion a weapon”.
52 ibid.
53 ibid.
54 ibid.
church. Albanians opposed the construction of the structure claiming it was going to be a place of worship and not a museum. If it was to proceed they demanded that a mosque be built as well. Macedonian archaeologists opposed the idea of a mosque arguing that there was never a mosque at the fortress. A group of 100 Albanians led by two DUI government ministers clashed with Macedonian construction workers in their attempt to demolish the structure once construction began. Over the next few days hundreds of Macedonians and Albanians (mostly football ultras) clashed violently across the fortress. Albanians attempted to destroy the structure and Macedonians tried to protect it. A compromise was later reached where both church and mosque Museums would be built and would serve to display archaeological finds from the fortress.

This was soon followed by confrontations in Struga. On the eve of the Orthodox Christian New Year (13 January 2012) the Macedonian-populated village of Vevčani celebrated with its traditional Vasilica carnival. As part of the carnival residents normally dress up and satirise political and social events that have occurred during the past year. During the 2012 celebrations a group of Macedonian men dressed as burqa-clad women and reportedly performed simulated sex acts. This caused outrage amongst the local Muslim community, particularly in the neighbouring municipality of Struga. Albanian and Macedonian-speaking Muslims in Struga reacted by organising protests (where they chanted ‘death to Christians’), attacked a number of buses carrying Macedonians, and raised a green flag representing Islam in front of the municipal building (though some reports suggested that it was actually a Saudi flag). This was followed by a number of attacks on local Churches, two of which were burned down.

Muslim leaders across the country called for restraint from their followers but they also accused the national government of promoting ‘Islamophobia’ because it traditionally funds the Vevčani carnival. Albanian religious and political leaders also called for an official apology from the Mayor of Vevčani and demanded that criminal charges be brought against those involved.

Sporadic violence has persisted, including an off-duty ethnic Macedonian police officer killing two ethnic Albanians who were part of a group that threatened him and his daughter in the majority Albanian-populated town of Gostivar. Other violence has involved armed gangs of youth (mainly football ultras linked to various paramilitaries and political parties) from the two communities in open street battles across the capital Skopje and the April 2012 (during Orthodox Easter) execution of five Macedonian fishermen on Lake Smilkovci (Skopje). While little information is publicly available about the murders, many Macedonians blame Albanian militants and consider these murders as part of the continuing violence that began in Vevčani and possibly as retribution for the police officer’s killing of the two Albanians in Gostivar.

In response, thousands of Macedonians held protests against the government for not protecting them and stamping out Albanian extremism. At the time, the authorities arrested a dozen suspects claiming they were a part of a radical Islamist cell whose aim was to ultimately spark another war between the Macedonian and Albanian communities and spread their own brand of extremism in the ensuing chaos. Thousands of Albanians protested in the streets of Skopje chanting a mixture of Islamist and nationalist slogans (waving Albanian flags and so-called ‘black flags of jihad’ with the shahada) and clashed with police in support of those arrested. After six months of investigations charges were

---

58 Anonymous, “Macedonia Muslims urge restraint over carnival”.
59 ibid.
finally laid against seven men in October 2012. In mid-2014 six of the accused were given life sentences (two were convicted in absentia as they are serving prison sentences in Kosovo) and one was acquitted. However, reports indicate that evidence was lacking and the case against the accused remained weak. In response to the guilty verdicts, thousands of Albanians returned to the streets of Skopje demanding a retrial clashing with police (up to 20 police officers were injured) and throwing stones and bricks at the Criminal Court building.

It is suspected that the protests were organised by Islamist groups who urged people to gather in front of the Yaya Pasha Mosque in Skopje’s Albanian-dominated municipality of Čair (one of the mosques in the hands of Wahhabi groups). Numerous protests have been organised through the Yaya Pasha Mosque and undoubtedly it is used to pursue potential converts are enticed through the use of seemingly nationalist causes. At first DUI supported the convicted men, as did the War Veterans Association of Kosovo, which threatened to help its ‘brothers’ in Macedonia and end ‘Macedonian oppression once and for all’. Suleyman Rexhepi was cautious in his response to both the convictions and the riots that followed and focused his attack on Islamist participants, stating that he would prefer to “beat the manipulators who waved Arab and Islamic flags”.

The 2012 Smilkovci executions and the violent protests that they provoked were followed by the Talat Xhaferi incidents a few months later (Chapter Six). Talat Xhaferi, a former commander of the NLA, was appointed as the new Macedonian Defence Minister on 18 February 2013. Violent protests erupted in Skopje soon after the announcement of Xhaferi’s appointment. Macedonians

65 Marušić and Peci, “Retrial Demanded in Macedonia Mass Murder Case”.
clashed with riot police, while Albanians responded with counter-protests the following day also clashing with riot police, damaging police cars and private vehicles, and burning buses. Sporadic clashes between Macedonians and Albanians ensued throughout the city for weeks with 22 people injured (including 13 police officers) and 19 arrested.

The large number of new mosques being built in Albanian-populated municipalities and the construction of churches and the erection of large crosses in Macedonian-populated areas is also important to note. Although they have genuine religious significance, they also send a strong political message – ‘this town belongs to us’. Macedonia now boasts approximately 1,950 Orthodox churches and 580 mosques. This would equate to one church for every 671 Orthodox Christians and one mosque for every 1,162 Muslims. It has been reported, for example, that since the year 2000 over 300 new mosques have been built in the country at a cost of €600 million, largely funded by foreign donors. Church construction has experienced similar proportions.

Both the MOC and the IRC insist that the number of religious facilities is not enough to meet their needs, while accusing each other of aggression and disrespect for the laws surrounding the construction of religious buildings. This is disputed by survey results that show 74 per cent of Orthodox Christian respondents believe there are enough churches in the country and a further 20 per cent stating there are too many. Among the Muslims surveyed 45 per cent believed there are enough mosques, while a further 43 per cent believed there are too many. An example is that of Aerodrom municipality (Skopje) where eight churches are now located in the central district of the municipality, most built within the past five years. Locals attest that only one of them, St. Elijah, is visited

---

67 It has been claimed that the majority of these funds have come from Saudi Arabia, with significant donations also coming from Turkey, Kuwait, Qatar, Malaysia, Libya and Egypt, see Zarevska, “Milijarda evra investirani vo radikalniot Islam”.
68 The survey was conducted in 2012 by the Konrad Adenauer foundation, see A. Pisarev, “Cross and Crescent Divide up Macedonia”, Balkan Insight, 1 October 2014, www.balkaninsight.com (accessed 9 August 2015).
69 ibid.
70 ibid.
regularly and that the rest remain permanently locked.\textsuperscript{71} Regardless, a new church is now being built with finance from the Russian businessman, Sergei Samsonenko (who has also purchased HC Vardar, a handball team, and has financed the construction of the new Jane Sandanski Sports Complex and Hotel Russia, both within the vicinity of the new church).

Professor Cane Mojanoski, former Chairman of the Commission for Relations with Religious Communities and Religious Groups, contends that there are too many churches and mosques in the country for the real number of believers who attend them regularly.\textsuperscript{72} In effect, the MOC admits that churches are markers of territory. Father Boban Mitevski, Professor at the Theological Faculty and Chief of Staff to the head of the MOC, sees the construction of churches as a way of repelling the “invading tendencies of the Muslims”:

> Muslims conquer territory and mark it with religious objects even when in reality there are no people or believers living on that territory. In response, we build churches, place crosses and defend our territory from invaders.\textsuperscript{73}

Todor Petrov, President of the World Macedonian Congress (WMC), placed his support behind Aerodrom municipal council which decided to erect a 51 metre cross next to the Cevahir Towers, a mixed-use development consisting of four high-rise towers (40 floors each) with luxury residential apartments and a high-end retail shopping mall, built by a Turkish company (rumours abounded that the apartments were being offered mainly to Albanians) and explained his reasons as:

> Macedonians, Christians, recognise their ethnic space and need to mark it with a symbol in which they believe. The cross is an identification of Macedonians and they are entitled to mark their ethnic territory with it.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{71} ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} ibid.
While largely symbolic in the ethno-religious struggle between Macedonians and Albanians, these religious objects have at times led to actual conflict. A typical example are the events of September 2013 in the village of Oktisi, with a population of 4,500 (predominantly Macedonian-speaking Muslims) located in Struga Municipality. This particular incident involved a dilapidated church (St. Nicholas) in the centre of the village, for which the MOC had obtained municipal approval to demolish and rebuild. Work had been progressing for a number of months without any controversy until rumours began to circulate the day before Bishop Timotej was due to bless the new church’s foundations that Albanians and Macedonian-speaking Muslims were planning to disrupt the event.\(^75\) Macedonians from the region organised fairly quickly through social media, kinship networks, and the local chapter of the United Macedonian Forces (MOS). The next day an estimated 400 Macedonians from Mislešo, Moroišta, and Vevčani marched into Oktisi with the Bishop. They were met by close to 800 Albanians and local Macedonian-speaking Muslims who had already surrounded the church to block the Macedonian procession. Reports suggested that the majority of Muslim demonstrators were Albanians who had also been bussed in from surrounding villages,\(^76\) though the imam called from the minaret of a nearby mosque for local Muslims to come and assist during the confrontation.

Police managed to push back the Macedonian group, while allowing the Albanians to block access to the construction site; however, the tense standoff lasted several hours. Many protesters from both sides were clearly armed with pistols and batons, while some had brought automatic rifles (though these were kept in vehicles away from the main confrontation). The situation could have easily escalated into a violent clash but the Bishop convinced the Macedonian procession to withdraw and engage in discussions on resuming construction at a future date. Currently, there are no signs that construction will restart in the near future with Albanians and Macedonian-speaking Muslims firmly opposed. Some speculated that the sudden opposition to renewing the church after months of

---

\(^75\) The author was undertaking fieldwork in Struga at the time and witnessed these events.

\(^76\) Eyewitness accounts from locals.
work was the result of radical Islamists who are known to have influence and followers both within Oktisi and the neighbouring villages of Labuništa and Podgorci.\textsuperscript{77} While extremists may have influenced this particular confrontation, the general trend is certainly leading to more of these incidents between Christian Macedonians and Muslim Albanians.

It should be noted, however, that the MOC and the IRC do at times cooperate in areas they believe will benefit their own interests. For example, both institutions support religious curriculum in public schools and have jointly lobbied the government over this issue. They were successful in having religious classes established for children whose parents want their children to attend from the 5th grade.\textsuperscript{78} Students are now taught by theology professors from the country’s main religions.\textsuperscript{79} In addition, both were successful in placing their religious secondary schools (Orthodox theological high schools and Islamic high schools) under the jurisdiction of the public education system. Students from these theological secondary schools now have the option of enrolling in secular courses at university rather than just the theological faculties.\textsuperscript{80} Part of the reasoning from the IRC was that state regulation would make it easier to control which teachers are used in the madrassas and ensure radical elements do not infiltrate them.\textsuperscript{81} On the other hand, conflict has arisen between the two religious institutions when the IRC has lobbied for its followers to have access to prayer rooms in military barracks, hospitals, and prisons or when Suleyman Rexhepi called for Muslims to have more children in order to increase their proportion of the population.\textsuperscript{82}

In early 2014 further violent protests and riots exploded in Skopje when it was reported that an Albanian had murdered a Macedonian. The Albanian had stolen a bicycle from the victim and was later confronted by him. During the

\textsuperscript{77} Conversations with locals, July and August 2013.
\textsuperscript{79} ibid.
\textsuperscript{81} ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Rexhepi, “Organising Muslim Religious Life in Macedonia”.

confrontation the Albanian stabbed the victim to death. Macedonians marched to
the victim’s home to pay homage and then attempted to move into the mainly
Albanian suburb of Saraj (rumours circulated that the accused resided there) but
were intercepted by riot police. Macedonian protesters then damaged and set
alight a number of Albanian-owned stores and restaurants.

Tensions between the two communities are also known to assume non-violent
forms where disagreements are managed through the judicial system or other
non-violent methods. For example, in 2012 the Albanian-dominated Čair
municipality (run by DUI) renamed four schools. Cvetan Dimov became Hasan
Prishtina, Rajko Žinzifov became Ismail Kemali, Nikola Vapčarov became Imri
Elezi, and Jane Sandanski became Jashar Bey. Macedonian residents lodged
complaints and the Ministry of Education refused to authorise the renaming of
the schools in question. The State Inspectorate for Local Government annulled
the renaming but the municipality lodged a successful appeal to the Ministry of
Local Government, which was run by a DUI Minister at the time. A motion has
since been filed with the Constitutional Court, which is currently deliberating
on the matter. While both communities will see any outcome as a zero-sum result
and tensions will continue to exist over the matter, it is encouraging that the
situation has not turned violent nor have boycotts been implemented as has been
the case in many similar circumstances across the country.

The most recent large-scale armed violence occurred on the weekend of
9-10 May 2015 in the Kumanovo district of Diva Naselba. A two-day battle
erupted between Macedonian anti-terror police and Albanian militants
numbering between 40 and 50 men. This ended with eight dead and 37 injured

86 ibid.
87 ibid.
policemen, and 10 dead militants. The fighting began when Macedonian special police units entered the neighbourhood and launched a counter-terrorist raid. Prime Minister Gruevski claimed that the militants were preparing for terrorist attacks on government and civilian targets in order to ‘destabilise’ the country and that some of the militants had previously fought in other conflicts (in the Middle East), while police spokesman Ivo Kotevski noted that the groups’ founders were former NLA members.

Inter-ethnic tensions have continued unabated and with the current political crisis Albanians and Macedonians have firmed their respective nationalist positions (Chapter Ten). It is noteworthy that a 2015 national survey found that 61 per cent of participants believed that the political situation in Macedonia was ‘intense and uncertain’ and 58 per cent thought that it was less stable than the previous year.

* * *

Since the establishment of the Macedonian republic within the Yugoslav framework in 1944, and even more so since Macedonian independence in 1991, successive Macedonian Governments have never seriously attempted to integrate their ethnic and religious minorities. Rather, their focus was on consolidating Macedonian ethnonational identity and Macedonia as a nation-state of the Macedonian people. This led to minority groups, particularly the Albanians, strengthening their own ethnonational identity independently of the state and in competition with a national civic identity. The result has been the consolidation of competing ethnonationalist identities and loyalties (Albanian loyalty to the ethnic group and Macedonian loyalty to the ethnic group and the ethnic nation-state).

89 ibid.
90 International Republican Institute, Survey of Macedonian Public Opinion.
Religious differences between Macedonians and Albanians have created more spheres of difference and potential for conflict than cooperation. While there are similarities in the moral teachings contained in the Bible and the Qur’an, there are also fundamental theological differences. These differences are reflected in the worldviews of Orthodox Christian Macedonians and Sunni Muslim Albanians. Religion has also become politicised and both communities have incorporated their respective faiths into their ethnonational identities. Religion has been used to mobilise their communities for political action and violence. It has become embedded in the Macedonian-Albanian conflict as a cause, a means and an end in and of itself. Radical Islamism is not widespread across Macedonia but its adherents have demonstrated that they are persistent and patient. While political and religious elites within the Muslim communities dismiss radical Islamist theology and practices as foreign and unacceptable to local Muslims, a generational divide has already appeared with younger Muslims more accepting of influences from the Middle East and radical interpretations of the Qur’an. Radical Islamists have gained followers from both the Albanian and Macedonian-speaking Muslim communities; however, it remains to be seen how influential they will ultimately become. Nevertheless, their presence is dangerous and their influence has already caused conflict within the Muslim community and between the Macedonian and Albanian communities.

All of these underlying beliefs form the basis of incompatible worldviews. This is the foundation on which both communities see their place in the world, the place of the ‘other’, and how they are mobilised into action. Since the collapse of Yugoslavia and Macedonian independence sporadic violence has been persistent. While much of it is low-level and generally remains unreported in western media, it is a daily reality for Macedonian citizens. The two communities live parallel lives with interaction being rare and tense. Segregation has been culturally and socially embedded and it has now also become institutionalised through the implementation of the Framework Agreement (Part II). The competing rights claims of the Macedonians and Albanians that the Framework Agreement attempted to accommodate stem principally from their ethno-
religious views – different perceptions of contemporary problems and visions for the future resulting in widely opposing solutions.
Part II

Competing Rights Claims:

To Whom Does the State Belong?
Part II contends that conflict between Macedonians and Albanians is partially explained by competing rights claims. In essence it is a struggle to assert dominance over the state by the Macedonians and exercise greater self-governance through joint control of the state by the Albanians. These competing claims over rights, in large part, stem from the incompatible worldviews of the two communities. Their competing ethnonationalist narratives and diverse religious experiences inform their views of the world. Their worldviews frame and underpin their understanding of the past, their perception of the present, and their vision for the future. It is these conflicting perceptions that result in conflict and competition between the two groups rather than cooperation. When rights are identified they are based on their divergent worldviews and what each group perceives as necessary to protect and further its own interests. Unsurprisingly, each groups claimed rights conflict with those of the other.

This thesis identifies the following five competing rights claims through which the overarching claims of Albanian self-determination and Macedonian power are being fought: constitutive national status; local self-government; proportional employment in state entities; parliamentary veto powers; and minority languages.

Albanians maintain that they have a right to self-determination, or in other words a right to govern their own affairs. While some see self-determination as something which can only be exercised through an independent state, many maintain that it can be achieved through ethnic autonomy (territorial and institutional) within the existing state at both national and local levels. The position that is supported by the majority of the Albanian elite is that the Albanian people should be a co-constitutive nation of the Macedonian state, making it a bi-national state of two peoples who would control it through group-based consensual decision-making. For example, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) supports the Framework Agreement that has made the Albanians a co-constitutive nation (along with others), while the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) is calling for a new political agreement in which Macedonia would be re-constituted as a bi-national state of Macedonians and
Albanians only. Under the Framework Agreement Macedonia has been reconstituted as a ‘multi-national’ state in which numerous nations, plus the undefined ‘other’ nations, are listed as co-constitutive. However, in practice only the Macedonians and Albanians hold real political power and Macedonia is effectively governed as a bi-national state through an informal consociationalist system comprising of the two ethnic groups.

While individual freedom as a political idea within the Albanian community is important, the idea that the individual (as the smallest autonomous unit) is the foundation of democratic governance is secondary to group affiliation with regards to political participation and the distribution of political power and state resources. In particular, the leadership of DUI and DPA are of the view that the constitutional structure of Macedonia and the distribution of political power should be (ethnic) group-based. This is certainly how Macedonia was reconstituted through the Framework Agreement. Most Albanian political elites agree, including leaders of smaller Albanian parties such as Rufi Osmani. These leaders take a nationalist view, similar to the type described by Anthony Smith, in that individuals can only truly participate in and contribute to society, and experience personal freedom, through the prism of the nation – in this case an ethnonational group.¹ For example, Adamson and Jović observed that during the early years of independence from Yugoslavia the Albanians feared that “free elections and the introduction of liberal concepts would inevitably lead to ‘majoritisation’, a term they [Albanians] used to describe permanent domination of the numerically larger group”.² Arben Xhaferi, former leader of DPA (and informally considered one of the ‘fathers’ of the Albanian movement in Macedonia), went as far as to claim that liberal democratic principles such as individual equality were nothing more than ‘tools of oppression’:

The ‘one man, one vote’ concept was used to impose the will of one people over another during the secession and also in the course of

---

¹ Smith, The Nation in History.
establishing parliamentary procedures and the creation of the Constitution
and the laws that define national rights.³

For many Albanians the importance of the group is a priority over classical
liberal ideas of individual freedom and individual rights. For example, Albanian
elites regularly appeal to human rights mechanisms such as the UN Universal
However, these rights are conceived of as group rights and not individual rights.
Even when allegations of human rights abuses are raised they are generally
articulated as an infringement on the rights of the group and not specific
individuals. According to Adamson and Jović, Albanian discourse argues that
majority rule was established by the Macedonians in order to dominate the state
and maintain the political, social, and economic subordination of the Albanians.⁴
The Albanian elites therefore constructed a link between the lack of an
appropriate collective status, and subordination and discrimination.⁵

Macedonians, on the other hand, consider the state as their nation-state in which
they are the sole constitutive nation. They assert that they can protect their
identity, culture, rights, and freedoms only through the ownership of their own
state. Their view is that the state should be an ethnonational Macedonian state, it
should maintain absolute sovereignty over the entire territory of the state, and
that minorities should be afforded their full individual human and civil rights
within this framework. It is argued that under such a political community
Macedonia would resemble other Western democracies such as Australia, the
United Kingdom, and the United States where individuals would: have their
rights and liberties respected; fulfil civic duties; and learn the dominant language
and culture (Macedonian), which would form the basis of public life and act as
unifying elements for society as a whole.

³ A. Xhaferi, “Challenges to Democracy in Multiethnic States”, Albanian American Civic League, 1998,
⁵ ibid.
Constitutional law Professor Karakamiševa-Jovanovska argues that the implementation of the Framework Agreement caused tectonic changes to the 1991 Constitution, as well as some fundamental challenges to human rights norms.\(^6\) She contends that Macedonia has become an “experimental country in which the members of the ethnic communities win the majority of their rights not by being citizens, but by being numbers, i.e., [a] percentage…(at least 20 per cent of the total population), which made Macedonia the only country in constitutional practice where collective rights are realised based on a mathematical model, and not on civil grounds”\(^7\).

No community is directly linked to any of the group rights provided for under the Framework Agreement; rather these rights are linked to fulfilling numerical criteria. For example, the Albanian language has not been explicitly named within the Constitution. The Framework Agreement, and the Constitution, establish Macedonian as the official language and provide for the official use of any other language spoken by at least 20 per cent of the population. The parliamentary veto, or double majority voting system, has not been explicitly linked to any community either. Rather, applicable laws are required to be passed by a qualified majority of two-thirds of all votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of representatives from minority communities as a whole.

These formulations were largely a concession to the Macedonian side that did not want explicitly to assure these provisions to the Albanian community. A number of Albanians have argued that if their proportion of the population were to drop below 20 per cent they would automatically lose their powers under the Framework Agreement. They have called on the government to amend the constitution so that it explicitly links the Albanian people and the Albanian language to these provisions.

---


\(^7\) ibid.
Karakamiševa-Jovanovska makes another interesting observation. She notes that the generally accepted terminology for non-majority groups is “national minority”\(^8\). In some cases similar derivatives that include the term minority are used. The Framework Agreement and the Constitution use a convoluted formulation that generally reads along the lines of: “members who belong to communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia”.\(^9\) This was a concession to the Albanian community. Many Albanians oppose being categorised as a minority because of: 1) their claim that they constitute a larger proportion of the population than successive censuses reveal; and 2) their demand for co-constitutive nation status. In the Albanian reckoning being classified as a minority undermines their ‘rightful’ place within the state. Albanian elites have disputed official census results (Part I) as part of their claim to constitute a plurality. In this narrative neither the Macedonians nor Albanians constitute a majority but are simply the two largest ethnic groups in the country. This is one of the justifications for which they claim to be a co-constitutive nation and should therefore establish a bi-national state in which they would exercise equal (to the Macedonians) power and control.\(^10\)

Both communities seek to define the state according to their own ideas and both see the inherent benefits for themselves in their respective views. For example, Macedonians prefer a political community in which one vote is accorded to each individual citizen and that this is replicated in Parliament (majority rule through one representative, one vote, and without any special veto powers conferred to any group). While they are much more in favour of liberal democratic values, as the majority in conflict with a large minority the fact that this type of political system ensures their continued dominance does not escape them. Albanians, on the other hand, see such arrangements as a tyranny of the majority and therefore seek a political community in which one vote is accorded to each ethnic group

\(^{8}\) ibid.
\(^{9}\) ibid.
\(^{10}\) Victor Friedman provides a good discussion on this issue as it relates to language policy, see V. Friedman, “Language in Macedonia as an Identity Construction Site”, in B. Joseph et al (eds.), When Languages Collide: Perspectives on Language Conflict, Language Competition, and Language Coexistence, The Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 2003, pp. 273-274.
and decisions are made through group-based consensus in which either group can veto the other. This type of political system would project their power beyond their numbers. It may be likely that Albanian social and religious norms, which are much more collective than those of the Macedonians, also influence their political preferences.
Chapter Four

Constitutional Status: The Preamble

The development of the 1991 Constitution was undertaken relatively quickly. The Macedonian Government conducted a referendum on independence on 8 September 1991 and parliament enacted the Declaration of Independence on 17 September 1991.¹ Under orders from President Kiro Gligorov, constitutional drafting had already begun as early as May 1991.² A draft was accepted by the Parliament on 23 August 1991 and then went out to public debate until 15 September 1991.³ This version of the Constitution was enacted on 17 November 1991.⁴ Biljana Vankovska notes some concerns in relation to both the Constitution and the process that was undertaken:

The Albanians objected that they were not represented in the expert team. The period for crafting as well as for deliberation was too short. The drafts were of dubious quality: the first one, put together by the appointed experts, was a good starting point despite some shortcomings; the second draft, discussed by a wider audience that included a few constitutionalists, had some improvements, but during the process of political bargaining many solutions remained half-resolved. The constitutionalists agreed that the proposal promoted a majoritarian model while the Albanians insisted on consensual democracy. Not many of the proposals raised during the public debate were accepted.⁵

Regardless of the issues noted above, in 1992 the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia (Badinter Commission), led by Robert Badinter, found in its opinion (no. 6) on the recognition of Macedonia by the European Community (EC) and its member states that the Macedonian Constitution

¹ The turnout was 76 per cent of eligible voters, of whom 95 per cent voted affirmatively (or 72 per cent) of the entire electorate, see B. Vankovska, “Constitutional Engineering and Institution-Building in the Republic of Macedonia (1991-2011) in S. Ramet, O. Listhaug and A. Simkus, Civic and Uncivic Values in Macedonia, p. 91.
² ibid.
³ ibid.
⁴ ibid.
⁵ ibid.
embodied the “democratic structures and the guarantees for human rights which are in operation in Europe”. Consequently, the Badinter Commission formed the view that “Macedonia satisfies the tests in the Guidelines on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union and the Declaration on Yugoslavia adopted by the Council of the European Communities on 16 December 1991”.

Nevertheless, Albanian political parties contested the legitimacy of the Macedonian state from the very beginning. The Albanian community largely boycotted the referendum on independence in September 1991. This was the result of elite dissatisfaction with the proposed Constitution and their inability to attain the status of an equal constitutive nation alongside the Macedonians. Although the body of the Constitution was relatively civic in its language and intent, Albanian political leaders claimed that the Preamble established Macedonia as an ethnic Macedonian nation-state and relegated the Albanians to ‘second-class’ status. In addition, they argued that the Constitution should guarantee higher education in the Albanian language and the use of the Albanian language in parliament before they could provide their support. Nevertheless, the fact that the boycott of the independence referendum was successful demonstrates that Albanian political leaders at the time were able to convince their constituents that the newly established state was fundamentally anti-Albanian.

Koinova has argued that conflict in Macedonia is partially a result of “relative changes in minority rights compared to the communist period, rather than the absolute scope of minority rights granted by the new constitution”. She has further argued that the decrease of ethnic status is of particular importance for the escalation of violence. But the loss of symbolic status or concrete minority rights is not necessarily the case with regard to the Albanian community in

---

7 ibid, p. 1,511.
8 Koinova, “Why do Ethnonational Conflicts Reach Different Degrees of Violence?”, p. 84.
9 ibid, p. 90.
Macedonia, even though a number of researchers have made this claim. Under the 1974 Constitution Macedonia was considered the “national state of the Macedonian people [narod] and a state of the Albanian and Turkish nationalities [narodnost] residing within her”. It explicitly stated that the Macedonian nation was equal with the Albanian and Turkish nationalities.

Under the Yugoslav constitutional model the term narod (literally translated as people) equated with the concept of nation and in particular a titular/constitutive nation of one of the republics within the former Yugoslav federation (such as the Macedonians or the Croats). The term narodnost meant nationality and specifically a larger ethnic group that had a kin or home state outside of the then Yugoslavia but not a constituent republic within the federation (such as the Hungarians). A third category, etnička zaednica (ethnic community), was reserved for small ethnic groups such as the Roma. Albanians fell into the category of ‘narodnost’ because they had an external kin state (Albania) but not a constitutive republic within Yugoslavia.

Under the 1991 Macedonian Constitution there was no relative loss of status. Macedonia was still considered a nation-state of the Macedonian people (narod) and the Albanians an ‘equal’ and ‘co-existent’ nationality (nacionalnost). The only change that had occurred was a change in lexicon from narodnost to nacionalnost. The concept of nationality was retained and the Albanians were still considered as such (a minority with a kin/home state elsewhere), though now they not only shared that status with the Turks but with a host of other minorities mentioned in the Preamble. Even so, it would be accurate to state that many Albanians perceived the Preamble as giving preferential status to the Macedonian community and relegating the Albanian community to some form of lower

---

10 See also Marko, “The Referendum on Decentralization in Macedonia in 2004”, pp. 695-721.
12 ibid.
status. In support of their allegations, Albanians note that the 1991 Constitution legally codified only Macedonian as an official language and acknowledged only the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC). Albanians claim this supports their view that the Constitution relegated them to ‘second-class’ status. While it is true that Macedonian was the only official language at the national level, even the 1991 Constitution provided for the use of minority languages at the municipal level. In addition, although the 1991 Constitution explicitly acknowledged only the MOC it also indirectly acknowledged “other religious communities and groups” and guaranteed them equal treatment under law.

The circumstances in which the Albanians found themselves after Macedonian independence may also partially explain this perception of a loss of status. During the 1980s Albanians began a movement seeking recognition as a narod within Yugoslavia. Recognition as a narod implied creation of a separate Albanian republic (Kosovo) within the federation where they would be the titular nation. With the breakup of Yugoslavia the idea of a separate Albanian republic became unachievable and Albanians in Macedonia found themselves in a state undertaking a nation-building project hostile to their own ethnonationalist demands.

During the 1990s Albanian elite thinking coalesced within two diverging models. One sought a federated Macedonia consisting of two constituent republics – one Macedonian and the other Albanian (for example, Nevzat Halili). The other sought a bi-national state with both Macedonians and Albanians comprising equal co-constitutive nations whereby decision-making would be made on a consensual basis (for example, Abdurahman Aliti). The latter dominates Albanian political thought today.

The idea of the Albanian community being an equal co-constitutive nation alongside the Macedonians is a significant one. It is more than just a matter of symbolic status because through it Albanian elites seek practical benefits for their community. These include an equal level of power, equal distribution of state resources, the elevation of the Albanian language as an official language of administration, and the right to use the flag of Albania as an official symbol of the Albanian community, among other demands.\textsuperscript{18}

These proposals are unacceptable to most Macedonians. Macedonians generally consider Macedonia as their own nation-state and themselves as indigenous to that territory. Many argue that they have no other homeland and that neighbouring states persecute their own Macedonian minorities. Therefore, Macedonia must remain a Macedonian state as it is the only home in which they are able to determine their own affairs and protect their inalienable rights (the implication is that minorities such as the Albanians and Turks are able to ‘return’ to their ‘home states’). Macedonians also point out that what the Albanians seek (equal political power and access to state resources) is undemocratic and absurd because a minority group constituting 25 per cent should not wield political power equivalent to the remaining 75 per cent of the population or have access to 50 per cent of the state’s resources. In addition, recognising the Albanian community as a constituent people “would be a tacit agreement to give them the option to secede in the future, providing fuel for further nationalistic disruptions”.\textsuperscript{19}

Valadez has noted that majority groups or host nations will in most instances seek to “preserve the state in its existing form, with its territorial boundaries in tact”.\textsuperscript{20} The rationale is that “this is their land, the land they have cultivated and defended...[and that] living in this land should be done on their terms and in a way that respects their cultural traditions and way of life. Any group living

\textsuperscript{18} Marko, “The Referendum on Decentralization in Macedonia in 2004”, pp. 695-721.
\textsuperscript{20} Valadez, \textit{Deliberative Democracy}, p. 216.
within the territorial boundaries of their country should take whatever steps are necessary for them to adapt to living in their political community”.  

Nevertheless, the Framework Agreement radically redefined the Macedonian state. Originally the Agreement called for a purely civic state without mention of any ethnic groups. Under the agreed Preamble there was to be no reference to any ethnic groups, rather “the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia” were to be the sole constitutive group. This was too controversial with both the Macedonian and Albanian publics and, after short parliamentary debate, all the key ethnonational groups residing in Macedonia were included in the Preamble as equal co-constitutive nations, including the infamous open-ended reference to ‘others’. The Preamble now reads:

The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people, along with the citizens who live within her borders and are a part of the Albanian people, Turkish people, Vlach people, Serbian people, Romany people, Bosnian people and others...have decided to establish the Republic of Macedonia as an independent, sovereign state…

Although some may argue that the Macedonian community has received a ‘place of prominence’ because it has been listed apart from the others, it is clear from both the wording and the intent of the amended Preamble that it is an equal co-founder of what has disparagingly become known as the multinational Ramkovna Država (Framework State) among Macedonian intellectuals and diaspora communities. The previous terminology dividing narod (people or nation) and nacionalnost (nationality) is no longer used and now all communities are considered narodi (nations). According to Marko, both “citizens and ethnic

---

21 ibid, pp. 216-217.  
22 Framework Agreement, annex A.  
23 Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia 1991, Amendment IV. Note that the use of ‘people’ here equates to ‘nation’ or in Macedonian, ‘narod’.  
24 All the peoples listed in the Preamble are listed as nations and as equals. The specific terminology used to equate them includes, ‘along with’, ‘their fatherland’, ‘their forefathers’, ‘equal in rights and responsibilities towards the common good’, jointly ‘determined to establish the Republic of Macedonia’, and to ‘secure peace and co-existence’. In addition, many Macedonian intellectuals sarcastically refer to the Macedonian state as the ‘Ramkovna Država’ due to its infinite number of co-constitutive nations, beginning with those that are listed and continuing with ‘others’. See Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia 1991, Amendment IV.
groups, all of them called peoples, are declared ‘constituent’ forces in the process of state formation...first, all members of all the peoples are (equal) citizens, and secondly, all ethnic groups including the majority population are recognised as (equal) communities by designating them as peoples”. Further, the statement in the 1991 Preamble that declared “Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people” has been removed.

The terminology used to include non-Macedonian communities in the Preamble deserves mention. The text states that “citizens who live within her borders and are a part of the Albanian people” has dual implications in the Macedonian wording. Firstly, they are a constitutive narod (people, but in this context a nation). Secondly, they are not merely a nation for the purposes of constitutionally defining the Macedonian state – the language used implies that those groups are a part of a wider nation extending beyond the borders of Macedonia.

The motivations and original intent behind this are difficult to determine; however, some observations can be made. Firstly, the Albanians see themselves as part of the wider Albanian nation whose members span Albania, Kosovo, and western Macedonia. They perceive themselves (and are perceived to be by the Macedonians) as a separate nation to the Macedonians but partnered with them in the formation of the state. This conceptualisation underpins their demands for a bi-national state, governed under a system of group consensus. Secondly, the Macedonians themselves are uninterested in the idea of a civic nation in which nationhood is determined by citizenship, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or language. Their primary mode of identification is ethnonational and therefore the Macedonian nation is an ethnic nation consisting of ethnic Macedonians. The wording in the Constitution helps delineate between the various narodi (peoples, nations). For many Macedonians, it would be preferred if the ‘others’ (Albanians, Turks, Serbs etc.) were simply minority groups as in the case of the 1991

---

Constitution; however, their status as co-constitutive nations is currently a constitutional fact.

In spite of this, Albanian parties such as the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) and the National Democratic Revival (NDR) have called for a new political agreement between the Macedonians and Albanians. DPA, for example, put forward a party platform in 2011 and 2014 calling for a “new agreement that would [re]define the rights and obligations between the Albanians and Macedonians”. In essence, DPA calls for a bi-national state of Macedonians and Albanians in which both would enjoy equal power and resources, while governing the state on a consensual basis despite the fact that Macedonians outnumber Albanians two to one. From the available DPA documents, it seems that any new constitutional arrangement would exclude other minorities as constitutive nations and either relegate them to some form of ‘lower status’ or ignore them altogether.

In practice, Macedonia already functions as a bi-national state. In the majority of instances, the governing Macedonian political party consults with its Albanian coalition partner. In circumstances where it does not, and the issues are contentious, a crisis of government normally ensues. These lead to parliamentary boycotts, increased inter-ethnic tensions and inevitably European Union (EU) intervention.

While Macedonian politicians argue that the Framework Agreement is a final settlement, there is a growing number of Macedonians that also want to revise the current constitutional arrangements in their own favour seeking to reduce what they see as undue political power for the Albanians. The argument is that the provisions of the Framework Agreement are more akin to special privileges than legitimate group rights. The other argument, noted above, is that organising political power along ethnic group lines disenfranchises the 75 per cent of the

---

population that are not Albanians and infringes their right to individual equality in terms of political power and influence.
Chapter Five
Local Self-government

Monteux has noted that most arguments in favour of decentralisation in ethnically mixed states “centre on the ability to find a mechanism to distribute political power among the different segments of the society in an equal manner that is perceived as legitimate and just by the various factions”.\(^1\) The justifications for decentralisation include arguments that it limits the central authority through the redistribution of formal power, aims to enhance minority group participation through enhancing their weight in the decision-making process to protect them from a so-called ‘dictatorship of the majority’, and allows groups to deal with local issues at the local level.\(^2\)

Monteux has also countered these claims by arguing that decentralisation on an ethnic basis “reinforces and legitimises ethnic divisions instead of limiting conflicting antagonisms between groups”.\(^3\) Any new territorial divisions resulting from decentralisation will “inevitably create new numerical minorities which in turn will generate dissatisfaction towards the new political settlement”.\(^4\) Further, Monteux has argued that the devolution of too many powers from the central government to ethnically homogeneous localities could increase demands for succession.\(^5\)

Lyon has agreed that decentralisation in ethnically divided societies can inadvertently exacerbate the causes of conflict. She has contended that the creation of newly defined sub-national units together with the entrenchment of ethnicity locally could lead to the creation of ‘local tyrannies’ and shift ethnic conflict from the national to the local level, while also causing conflict to become

---
\(^1\) Monteux, “Decentralisation”, p. 164.
\(^2\) ibid.
\(^3\) ibid, 165.
\(^4\) ibid.
\(^5\) ibid.
more intense. Lyon has agreed with Monteux that decentralisation creates new ‘minorities within minorities’ that will inevitably become subject to domination by local elites who may resent having to share power with other minorities, having just obtained greater autonomy from the central government, particularly if the new local minority is a part of the national majority. Lyon has also argued that where corruption and clientelism already exist in politics, devolving political power and resources to local governments may simply shift the locus of corruption and clientelism from the national centre to the local periphery.

While decentralisation is currently advocated by a number of international agencies (the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Council of Europe) as a mechanism through which to improve local democratic governance and economic development, this was only a secondary consideration in Macedonia. Most Macedonian citizens (regardless of ethnicity) agree that local self-government is an important reform and that their needs are not being met by the national government. However, the imperative for the fast-tracked decentralisation and revision of municipal boundaries was largely to provide increased levels of local self-government and linguistic/cultural concessions to the Albanian community, as agreed under the Framework Agreement. For the provisions of the Framework Agreement to take effect at the local level, Albanians would need to constitute at least 20 per cent of the municipal population. Negotiations to revise boundaries attempted to re-zone as many Albanians as possible into Albanian dominated municipalities so that more of them could exercise the provisions under the Framework Agreement. This meant that factors such as economic sustainability, local government administrative capacity, and traditional ties between town and village (along with clan ties) were ignored.

---

7 ibid, p. 160.
8 ibid, p. 160.
Local Self-government and Municipal Boundaries

Under Yugoslav rule, local governments in Macedonia had a relatively broad range of powers, considerable fiscal autonomy, and somewhat free local elections. Some have argued that the level of autonomy available to local governments during this period went too far because the majority of the municipalities did not have the capacity to manage their responsibilities effectively. The situation was reversed under the 1991 Constitution. After independence, municipalities were largely stripped of their powers, finances, and responsibilities. This was mainly due to their inefficiency and corruption. In addition, rising Albanian ethnonationalism saw the central government interfering in the composition of elected municipal councils. It began removing elected municipal officials that it deemed dangerous for state security. For example, the central government could dissolve an entire council if the council adopted an act which “endangered the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country”. As there were no objective criteria provided to define such acts, the central government held fairly broad powers. While the Macedonian Government began to gradually devolve some powers back to the local municipalities, particularly fiscal control, in the latter half of the 1990s, this trend significantly accelerated after the implementation of the Framework Agreement, of which local self-government was a key component.

Local self-government under the Framework Agreement involved two concurrent processes. Firstly, decision-making power and budgetary responsibilities were devolved to municipal councils. Secondly, the existing boundaries of municipal councils were revised. However, no rationale was provided for the revision of the municipal boundaries within the Framework Agreement and the only stipulation surrounding their revision was that it was to take place within one year of a new census being undertaken.

10 ibid, p. 22.
Local Self-Government

A revised Law on Local Self-Government will be adopted that reinforces the powers of elected local officials and enlarges substantially their competencies in conformity with the Constitution (as amended in accordance with Annex A) and the European Charter on Local Self-Government, and reflecting the principle of subsidiarity in effect in the European Union. Enhanced competencies will relate principally to the areas of public services, urban and rural planning, environmental protection, local economic development, culture, local finances, education, social welfare, and health care. A law on financing of local self-government will be adopted to ensure an adequate system of financing to enable local governments to fulfil all of their responsibilities.

Boundaries of municipalities will be revised within one year of the completion of a new census, which will be conducted under international supervision by the end of 2001. The revision of the municipal boundaries will be effectuated by the local and national authorities with international participation.

*Framework Agreement, Articles 3.1 and 3.2.*

Increased decentralisation and the related revision of municipal boundaries has perhaps been one of the most controversial elements of the Framework Agreement, particularly within the Macedonian community. The basis on which the revision of municipal boundaries was implemented fuelled suspicion against Albanian intentions and anger towards the Macedonian political elite for what was essentially seen as treason. The reason that the revision of municipal boundaries was received so harshly by the Macedonian community was because many of them saw it as an exercise in carving out territory for the Albanians. The perception was that it would create an autonomous territorial unit, much like Kosovo, which would then be used to call for further self-rule, if not outright secession. Roeder has suggested that calls for secession based on pre-existing autonomy is not uncommon.\(^{12}\) Roeder and Rothschild argue that “territorial

---

autonomy and the decentralisation of decision-making powers gives ethno-politicians the ‘institutional weapons’ to mobilise the local population and demand more political power from the centre, which will inevitably lead to tension between the majority and the minority elites.\footnote{P. Roeder and D. Rothschild, Dilemmas of State-Building in Divided Societies, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2005, cited in C. Koneska, “Vetoes, Ethnic Bidding, Decentralisation”, p. 34.}

**Figure 1. Municipal Ethnic Majorities**

![Map of Municipal Ethnic Majorities](https://commons.wikimedia.org)

Both processes and their outcomes have been highly contested. Rather than promote economically sustainable municipalities (regardless of their ethnonational and religious composition),\footnote{The author acknowledges that this in itself does not necessarily promote improved inter-ethnonational relations.} Macedonian and Albanian political elites conspicuously drew up new boundaries based solely along ethnic and religious lines (consolidating their own power bases in the process), and further segregating the two communities politically, economically, and socially. The

entire process lacked adherence to basic principles of transparency and accountability, and involved only a handful of politicians from the ruling Macedonian and Albanian parties.\textsuperscript{15} Even the larger opposition parties were ignored. A senior official from the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), which was part of the ruling coalition at the time, interviewed by the International Crisis Group explained that:

We want to maximise the number of municipalities where Albanians make up 20 per cent of the population (and thereby make Albanian an official language) and we want to bring Albanians in connection with the urban centre; the Macedonians want the opposite – to preserve Macedonian urban control, keeping Albanians in rural areas and minimising the number of 20 per cent Albanian municipalities.\textsuperscript{16}

In 2004 a Macedonian member of the Government confirmed suspicions that the revision of municipal boundaries was completed along ethnic lines. During the ‘Mavrovo Process’,\textsuperscript{17} this anonymous parliamentarian commented that:

The rules concerning Skopje were agreed upon as part of a major compromise...Struga and Kichevo were also parts of that package. By the end of the negotiations [Framework Agreement], all the parties had agreed that the best solution would be to change the boundaries of Struga and Kichevo, while leaving the capital intact. Before this bargain was made, all three municipalities were predominantly ethnic Macedonian. Afterwards, the municipal boundaries of Struga and Kichevo were modified and the municipalities became predominantly ethnic Albanian. In this way, the ethnic Macedonian parties recognized the legitimacy of the interests, fears and concerns of their Albanian counterparts and made a serious concession, while the Albanians demonstrated an understanding of the position of the Macedonians and agreed to preserve the status of Skopje unmodified. This compromise certainly helped the Macedonian

\textsuperscript{17} The ‘Mavrovo Process’ was a series of roundtables hosted by the Project on Ethnic Relations and the Swiss Embassy in Macedonia, which provided a neutral and anonymous setting to open discussions between the key political parties in the Macedonian Parliament after the 2001 war.
politicians explain to citizens that the deal benefits all the parties concerned.\textsuperscript{18}

With regards to Skopje, the participant was referring to the proposal to merge the rural municipality of Saraj (Albanian-dominated) with the City of Skopje for the sole purpose of making the Albanian population greater than 20 per cent and ensuring that the capital became bi-lingual. This proposal was eventually accepted, causing further anger among the Macedonian community who saw it as yet another capitulation.

Dimitrova has argued that the decision to enlarge Skopje and Struga ran contrary to expert advice on municipal organisation, which contended that attaching villages to large cities stifles the development of the village.\textsuperscript{19} Ragaru has also bluntly asserted that ethnonationalism played a key role in determining municipal boundaries:

In 2004, both sides knew what they were doing when the SDSM tried to guarantee that the road to the international airport located 7km east of Struga near the lake shore would remain in an ethnic Macedonian municipality or when they negotiated the delimitation of Skopje districts so as to guarantee that the Cyril and Methodius University, although on the side of the Vardar [river] where Albanians now tend to predominate, would remain in Centar municipality, where ethnic Macedonians prevail. Similarly the Albanian DUI was fully aware of the impact of drawing some Albanian villages and the city of Struga together. By giving ethnic Albanians a relative majority, they guaranteed that the next mayor would be an Albanian.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19} Dimitrova, “Municipal Decisions on the Border of Collapse”, p. 177.
At one stage Albanian political parties advocated that municipalities have the constitutional authority to merge and create larger Albanian-populated entities.\textsuperscript{21} This was promptly rejected by Macedonian elites who perceived it as a strategy for the creation of a single Albanian territorial unit that would eventually seek greater autonomy.\textsuperscript{22} However, the final version of the \textit{Law on Local Self-Government} (2002) does allow municipalities to share resources, and establish joint public agencies and administrative bodies. Whether that provides municipalities with the power for the de facto creation of a ‘super’ municipality is up for debate. It may very well provide for legitimate inter-municipal collaboration and work to redress many of the problems created by fiscally unsustainable municipalities established by the re-demarcation process in the first place.

The fact that the revision of municipal boundaries failed to take into account local government efficiency and economic sustainability is demonstrated in a number of studies. For example, nearly one-third of respondents to a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) survey stated that they believe their local mayor and municipal council is inefficient.\textsuperscript{23} In relation to the failures of the mayor, 34 per cent believe they are a result of residents’ interests not being a priority.\textsuperscript{24} Further, half of all respondents stated that they are never informed of opportunities for direct participation in the governance of their municipality,\textsuperscript{25} while an equal number of respondents also felt that municipal council corruption existed.\textsuperscript{26} Another UNDP report notes that local governments are marred by a

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{22} ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} ibid.
\end{flushleft}
series of deficiencies relating to administrative capacity, transparency, and corruption.\textsuperscript{27}

While the World Bank supported decentralisation, it warned against the revision of boundaries arguing that it could “set off demands for ethnically homogenous municipalities, resulting in...[the institutionalisation of] ethnic separation”.\textsuperscript{28} Kreci and Ymeri have noted that there was an increase in the number of municipalities that are dominated by a single ethnic group.\textsuperscript{29} For example, 93 per cent of all Macedonians in the country now live in a municipality where they constitute a majority.\textsuperscript{30} Similarly, 79 per cent of all Albanians now live in a municipality where they constitute a majority.\textsuperscript{31} In the case of the Albanians, this is an increase of 10 percentage points compared with the previous municipal boundaries.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{Table 5.} \textit{Ethnic Composition of Selected Municipalities}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Pre-2004</th>
<th>Post-2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>Albanians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debar</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gostivar</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kičevo*</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumanovo</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skopje</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struga</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetovo</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Note: The creation of the new Kičevo municipality was delayed twice because of threats of violence. It was finally established in 2012.

The \textit{Law on Local Self-Government} (2002) and the \textit{Law on the Territorial Boundaries of Local Self-Government Units} (2004) were strongly contested by

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{30} ibid., 279.
\textsuperscript{31} ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} ibid.
\end{flushleft}
the overwhelming majority of Macedonians. A total of 41 local referendums took place in relation to the revision of municipal boundaries and all had rejected the new demarcations. However, the coalition government, consisting of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) and DUI, declared these local democratic plebiscites unbinding. A national referendum on the revision of the boundaries was organised by the then opposition VMRO-DPMNE and the World Macedonian Congress (WMC) and held in November 2004. VMRO-DPMNE and WMC utilised Article 73 of the Constitution, which obliges the government to hold a referendum if one is supported by at least 150,000 voters. However, the referendum failed owing to low voter turnout (it did not meet the required participation rate of 50 per cent). Of those that did vote, 94 per cent rejected the revised municipal boundaries. There are suggestions that the low voter turnout was a result of state pressure on citizens not to vote, including threats, intimidation, and abuse.

In addition, there was an element of international manipulation. The United States and the European Union (EU) are the key international supporters of the peace process and the Framework Agreement and both viewed the referendum as a threat to the peace accord. However, the referendum question brought neither the Framework Agreement nor decentralisation into dispute; it merely opposed the specific laws (for decentralisation and the revision of boundaries) that had been enacted by the governing coalition. The referendum question asked:

Are you in favour of organising units of local self-government (municipalities and the City of Skopje) as per the Law for the Territorial Division of the Republic of Macedonia, which also defines the scope of local government (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No.

33 Z. Ilievski and D. Taleski, “Was the EU’s Role in Conflict Management in Macedonia a Success?”, Ethnopolitics, Vol. 8, Iss. 3-4, 2009, p. 361.
34 The decision to disregard the local referendums was in contravention of Article 5 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which states that “changes in local authority boundaries shall not be made without prior consultation of the local communities concerned, possibly by means of a referendum where this is permitted by statute”, see European Charter of Local Self-Government, art. 5.
35 Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia 1991, art. 73.
36 Ilievski and Taleski, “Was the EU’s Role in Conflict Management in Macedonia a Success?”, p. 362.
37 It should be noted that polls leading up to the referendum consistently indicated high voter turnout with strong opposition to the new municipal boundaries, see Karajkov, “Macedonia’s 2001 ethnic war”, p. 483.
Nevertheless, the EU threatened that the country could return to war if the provisions of the Framework Agreement were not implemented. On the contrary, the EU argued, allowing the referendum to fail and implementing the plan for decentralisation and the revision of municipal boundaries would assist Macedonia with its EU membership aspirations. The United States supported the EU’s position and undertook practical measures to dissuade Macedonians from voting against the laws in question. This included the official recognition of Macedonia’s state name three days prior to the referendum as an inducement for Macedonians not to participate in the vote. The Americans accurately judged that if they provided name recognition the Macedonians would feel they had gained a significant nationalist victory (in relation to Greece) in return for their appeasement of Albanian demands.

The issue of boundary revisions also caused violent clashes within the Macedonian community. In July 2004 the then Defence Minister, Vlado Bučkovski, and SDSM Secretary-General Nikola Įurčiev were attacked by a large Macedonian crowd in Struga while attempting to explain the new boundary adjustments. Bučkovski and Įurčiev were escorted by police to the local SDSM party headquarters and then needed to be evacuated by special police after a large group of armed Macedonians besieged them for two hours with gun fire and Molotov cocktails. Approximately 40 people were injured, Albanian-owned stores were stoned, and vehicles owned by the government coalition and the EU were torched. The implementation of the Framework Agreement, including the revision of municipal boundaries, was politically devastating for SDSM. It lost the following election in 2006 and is yet to recover in the polls.

---

38 Decision to Hold a Referendum, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 59/2004.
A significant fear among Macedonians with regard to decentralisation was that they would be marginalised in Albanian-dominated municipalities, becoming “foreigners in their own country”.40 Fear of being denied access to public resources and employment is widespread.41 Some report that it is expected that the party representing the majority within the municipality will naturally provide employment for their “own” and “funding for projects that benefit villages inhabited by their own ethnic group”, regardless of whether those in power are Macedonian or Albanian.42 Even Albanians in Tetovo concede that Macedonians are underrepresented in the municipal council, with 47 per cent stating that decentralisation has not brought about better representation.43

Many Macedonians in Struga assert that since the implementation of the new municipal boundaries they are being marginalised and are migrating from the city.44 Many even accuse the Albanians of undertaking a silent process of ethnic cleansing as part of a broader agenda to secure “ethnically clean territories”.45 Numerous informants have spoken about how they fear living in ethnically-mixed neighbourhoods and ethnic ghettos have been increasingly becoming the norm in towns like Tetovo where Macedonians are moving into ethnically homogeneous neighbourhoods.46 In addition, many of these people claim that they are too afraid to even venture into neighbourhoods dominated by the other ethnicity or patronise their businesses.47 Sixty-seven per cent of respondents in a 2006 survey believed that reforms related to decentralisation brought about a deterioration of inter-community relations in their municipality.48 Further, large

41 This is in part fuelled by historical experience such as the events of 1991 where Albanians gained local power in Tetovo and replaced all Macedonians in charge of public enterprises, see ibid.
42 Conversations with Macedonians, July and August 2013.
44 ibid, p. 13. The claim that residents are migrating from municipalities in which they were once in a majority but are now a minority community after the revision of municipal boundaries is also supported by testimony from local residents and anecdotal evidence in the media.
45 ibid, p. 13
47 ibid, pp. 26-27.
proportions of respondents believed that the ethnification of politics would increase, particularly in Tetovo (60 per cent), Struga (47 per cent), Skopje (43 per cent), and Kičevo (40 per cent).⁴⁹

There is some misapprehension about decentralisation even among the Albanian community. One survey conducted in the Albanian-majority town of Tetovo found that 33 per cent of Albanian respondents did not accept the decentralisation process at the time of implementation.⁵⁰ Initially, a widespread belief within the Albanian community was that the Macedonian Government would not allow real decentralisation and that it would cripple the autonomous functioning of local governments in order to maintain central control.⁵¹ The revision of municipal boundaries reinforced such views by establishing unsustainable and financially non-viable entities.⁵² Since decentralisation a new opinion has emerged: that fiscal decentralisation will go too far and only because the central government wants to cease funding under-developed rural Albanian municipalities.⁵³ However, the Albanian community has generally been much more supportive of both decentralisation and the new municipal boundaries than the Macedonian community.

**Segregation: Governance and Political Participation**

Direct political participation and inter-ethnic political interaction at the local level are undermined by both apathy and outright hostility. The Commissions for Inter-Community Relations are a key example. These Commissions are required to be established where at least 20 per cent of the population belongs to a local minority (this includes Macedonians where they are a local minority).⁵⁴ Their role is to consider issues that impact on inter-community relations and make recommendations to the municipal council, which under law is required to consider these recommendations in its decision-making.⁵⁵

---

⁴⁹ ibid.
⁵⁰ ibid., p. 12.
⁵¹ ibid.
⁵² ibid.
⁵⁵ ibid.
In practice, evidence suggests that the majority of these Commissions barely function. Research conducted by the Community Development Institute (CDI), a Macedonian non-government organisation, found that the majority of Commission members were elected by municipal councils and residents remained generally unaware of the existence of the Commissions. Lyon cites a representative of the CDI who indicated that “Commission membership remains highly politicised, members have limited understanding of their role and the frequency with which municipal councils fail to consider the recommendations of the Commissions is high”. A report by the UN Programme to Enhance Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Collaboration found that the Commissions generally convene for the sake of demonstrating that they have done so and rarely provide advisory, preventative, or reactive recommendations.

Participation in political parties and elections is another example of the lack of inter-ethnic interaction. Since independence in 1991 political parties are highly ethnicised. The largest Macedonian parties are generally made up of Macedonian members. Some members do come from other ethnic communities such as Turks, Roma, and Vlachs. This is the same for the main Albanian political parties. In addition, the recently formed Party for European Integration (the first ‘Muslim’ party) caters for a group of Macedonian-speaking Muslims who have over the past few decades begun to identify solely as Muslims, shedding their ethnic Macedonian identity.

Albanian and Macedonian political parties compete for the votes of their respective communities and cases of cross-community voting in both the municipal and national legislative elections are extremely rare. The only exception is the presidential elections where the non-Macedonian communities

---

56 S. Koceski, Committees for Inter-Community Relations: Establishment, Mandate and Existing Experiences, Community Development Institute, Tetovo, 2007, p. 9.
57 Lyon, “Municipal Decentralisation in the Republic of Macedonia”, p. 36.
are too small to have a candidate of their own elected. In all other instances, an unspoken agreement of non-interference seems to apply.\textsuperscript{59} As Ragaru points out:

\begin{quote}
The moment one community comprises above 50 per cent of the total population in any given unit of government, that unit becomes ‘hers’. The mayor will come from the majority community and he will be expected (by members of all communities) to defend the interests of his ethnic group in the first place. Minority rights might be respected, yet community preference will be the rule rather than the exception.\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

For example, the boundaries of Kičevo (a municipality in western Macedonia) were agreed during the re-demarcation process but changes were delayed until 2012 due to threats of violence. The Albanian community is now the majority within the new expanded municipality. For the 2013 local government elections three key Albanian political parties agreed to support one joint candidate to ensure that an Albanian mayor was elected. The same was attempted by two key Macedonian parties in Struga and Kičevo, who mirrored the strategy unsuccessfully. The defeat of the Macedonian candidates was expected because the demographic structure of the revised municipalities has ensured that Albanian candidates will win local elections. It seems that the Macedonian parties forged pre-election coalitions only to promote a façade of nationalist unity because the Macedonian community holds both responsible for the re-demarcations and their present inability to elect a municipal mayor.

It is important to note that there is a degree of informal political interaction between the two communities at the local level. Most interview participants stated that while formal structures are either non-existent or ineffective, informal networks based on friendship, business ties, or employment allow influential members of both communities to meet on an ad hoc basis and discuss or defuse tensions in times of crisis.\textsuperscript{61} An example are the tensions that arose in the village

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{59} Ragaru, \textit{Macedonia}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{60} ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Local Committee Leader and Former Police Commander, Interview with Author, 20 July 2013, VMRO-DPMNE Official, Interview with Author, 21 July 2013, SDSM Official, Interview with Author, 20 August 2013, and NGO Activist, Interview with Author, Gostivar, 11 August 2013.
\end{flushleft}
of Mislešo (Struga municipality), which is Macedonian-populated and within walking distance of the town of Struga. The Mislešo local committee, with the support of residents, raised a 30 metre flag pole at the entrance of the village where it converges with the town of Struga. Their intention was to counter the large number of Albanian flags throughout the municipality and mark out the village as Macedonian territory.\(^{62}\) The Mayor of Struga immediately ordered municipal workers to remove the flag and flag pole.

Following two tense standoffs between local armed Macedonians and municipal workers at the site (including some MOS paramilitary members) the Mayor sent a close associate, who was also friends with the leader of the Mislešo local committee, to discuss the situation.\(^{63}\) This informal meeting led to a de-escalation of tensions, at least temporarily, and a retreat on the Mayor’s part. The President of the local committee believes that there will be further attempts to remove the flag and flag pole; however, he insists that the residents of Mislešo will never allow it and will resort to arms should the municipal authorities try to remove it forcibly.\(^{64}\)

**Segregation: Education**

Primary and secondary education was among the responsibilities devolved to municipal councils under the Framework Agreement. However, the decentralisation of school education policy and funding resulted in much greater segregation within the education system and this is directly contributing to conflict across wider society. Schenker has argued that segregation such as this produces prejudices and fear and because of this children are much more susceptible to manipulation and misuse for political purposes.\(^{65}\) On the macro level segregation of this sort has a “negative effect on the cohesion of the entire society and potentially of the state, since it undoubtedly produces centrifugal

---

\(^{62}\) Local Committee Leader and Former Police Commander, Interview with Author, 20 July 2013.

\(^{63}\) ibid.

\(^{64}\) ibid.

effects, including persons who do not interact, do not want to live together, or even alongside each other”.

Ethnic segregation is slowly becoming institutionalised in the education system, where many schools in ethnically mixed municipalities hold classes in shifts. While ethnic segregation existed prior to the Framework Agreement, it was relatively uncommon. Once local governments were provided with control over schools, this practice expanded rapidly and is now the norm in many mixed municipalities. Koneska has argued that under the Framework Agreement inter-ethnic integration through education has suffered. She has contended that instead of exposing children from different ethnic backgrounds to each other schools have made Macedonian and Albanian children more encapsulated within their own ethnic group.

Classes for Macedonian and non-Albanian minority students are held separately from classes for Albanian students. The purpose of separate classes has largely been to avoid physical fights between Macedonian and Albanian students, though many parents have also refused to allow their children to study together. According to a 2010 survey cited by the International Crisis Group, 69 per cent of Macedonian and 42 per cent of Albanian parents said they would not send their children to a school where they are not in the majority. The process of segregation itself has become relatively simple. In some cases ‘management issues’ are invoked without further explanation and this is enough to segregate students into separate classes. Even in schools where students attend ethnically mixed classes, “separation and lack of communication between different ethnic

---

66 ibid.
68 ibid, p. 132.
70 ibid. See also Koneska, After Ethnic Conflict, p. 131.
71 Ragaru, Macedonia, p. 24.
72 International Crisis Group, Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict, p. 17, fn. 180.
groups is the norm during breaks and extracurricular activities”. In some cases, entire schools have been physically separated along ethnic lines, including the school administration, teachers, and parents’ councils.

A study completed in 2009 by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on student attitudes towards ethnonational ‘others’ revealed that few Macedonian and Albanian students expressed positive feelings towards one another. Overall, only 13 per cent of Macedonian respondents felt positively towards their Albanian counterparts, whereas 33 per cent of Albanian respondents felt the same towards Macedonians. The report found large regional disparities where respondents in ethnically mixed towns such as Struga, Gostivar, Tetovo, and Skopje were more likely to have negative feelings for ethnonational “others”, while the opposite was true in towns dominated by Macedonians. According to the report, students of ethnically mixed towns were much less likely to have contact with ethnonational “others”, preferring to socialise within their own community. When students were asked what they thought was behind the hostilities at school, 44.2 per cent responded ‘cultural differences’, 43.8 per cent responded ‘political party influence’ and 42.9 per cent responded ‘student prejudices’. Interestingly, 65 per cent of respondents to an OSCE survey on decentralisation believe that the influence of politics on education has either remained the same or increased since the implementation of the Framework Agreement and the new laws on decentralisation.

Vetterlein notes that the politicisation of the education system is likely to increase over time, and notes that soon after municipalities gained significant powers over education up to 21 school directors in 7 municipalities were

---

75 ibid.
76 This was as low as 2.6 per cent in Struga, see J. Schustereder and E. Simonovska-Janačkovska, “Age Contact Perceptions: How Schools Shape Relations Between Ethnicities”, OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, 2010, p. 10, www.osce.org (accessed 16 November 2011).
77 ibid.
78 ibid., p. 13.
80 ibid., p. 17.
81 Dalipi, Decentralisation Survey 2009, p. 65.
dismissed without any clear grounds.\textsuperscript{82} Koneska believes that autonomy within education for the Albanian community has resulted in the creation of two separate and ethnically exclusive education systems in Macedonia.\textsuperscript{83} She argues that reintegrating students into the same classes and schools will be virtually impossible because of ethnic divisions and the institutionalisation of ethnic-based schools through the decentralisation process.\textsuperscript{84} In addition, she maintains that the veto powers (\textit{Chapter Seven}) prevent any challenges to the status quo by the Macedonian majority.\textsuperscript{85}

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{82} Vetterlein, “The Influence of the Ohrid Framework Agreement on the Educational Policy of the Republic of Macedonia”, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{83} Koneska, \textit{After Ethnic Conflict}, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{84} ibid, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{85} ibid.
\end{flushright}
Chapter Six

Proportional Employment in Public Entities

Yusuf Bangura has argued that “inequalities among groups often constitute a more potent source for violent conflict than inequalities among individuals. When inequalities in incomes, wealth and access to services or political power coincide with group differences, ethnicity may assume importance in shaping choices and mobilising individuals for collective action [emphasis added]”.¹ Atanasova has noted similar views in that competition for resources is a strong motivator of ethnic conflict and the struggle for control of resources is usually “fiercer in less developed states where the economic pie is small and resources scarce…unequal economic opportunities, unequal access to resources such as land, capital and property rights, to jobs, government contracts and allocations, to developmental inputs and social services…within this context politics matters because the state controls access to scarce resources, and groups that possess political power can gain privileged access to resources”.² Resource competition is also highlighted by a number of other authors,³ who maintain that competition for resources, such as land, capital, property rights, state employment, state contracts and grants, and social services all lead to political tension and conflict between groups that feel they are being treated unequally, based on their ethno-religious identity.

This is certainly the case in Macedonia where Macedonians have dominated the public sector for decades, and in doing so, have controlled the development of public policy and the allocation of public resources. In the Macedonian context, proportional representation in state bodies not only suggests proportional

² Atanasova, “Transborder ethnic minorities and their impact on the security of Southeastern Europe”, p. 383.
employment within the public sector, but also institutional control which is at least correspondent to the size of the particular ethnic group in question. Institutional control is seen as a means of influencing public policy and laws, and ensuring an ‘equitable’ share of public resources. This section will deal with proportional employment in the public sector and, where relevant, institutional control and resource competition.

**Macedonian Economic Conditions: 1945-2001**

At the end of the Second World War, Macedonia was a rural country and the least industrialised republics of Yugoslavia. The new communist regime immediately instituted a program of industrialisation and within a decade the number of industrial workers tripled. Nevertheless, the majority of workers continued to work in agriculture until the 1960s and the majority of people continued to live in rural areas until the 1970s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rural (%)</th>
<th>Urban (%)</th>
<th>Agricultural (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The collectivisation of agriculture was an important element of the Yugoslav strategy to industrialise because it was seen as a means for both socialist accumulation and as a method to fight the hostile wealthier peasantry in the countryside. It was also hoped that the collectivisation of agriculture would free

---

4 The number of industrial workers rose from 10,405 in 1945 to 31,932 in 1955, see Brunnbauer, “Fertility, families and ethnic conflict”, p. 580.
5 ibid.
6 ibid.
up labour for industry. The forced collectivisation of agriculture began in 1948 and ended in 1952 during which time approximately half of the total cultivated area in Macedonia was nationalised.\textsuperscript{7} Collectivisation made rural life extremely difficult as the state tried to extract as much as possible from agriculture in order to support its industrialisation efforts, leading to widespread resistance.\textsuperscript{8} By 1953, the Yugoslav authorities reversed their collectivisation policies and allowed for the re-privatisation of family-owned farms, which accounted for 75 per cent of the cultivated land by the late 1960s.\textsuperscript{9} However, rural conditions were extremely harsh and the liberalisation reforms of 1953 lifted the residency restrictions which led to a rural exodus to the towns.\textsuperscript{10} These people largely found work in the new factories and administrative apparatus.

The policy of collectivisation and the rural-to-urban migration largely affected Macedonians. Only some five per cent of all Albanian households joined collective farms, compared to 41 per cent of Macedonian households.\textsuperscript{11} Ačkoska has attributed the failure to collectivise Albanian farms to the strong resistance among the Albanian community and the inability of the communist authorities to enforce the policy in Albanian-populated areas.\textsuperscript{12} She explains their resistance not only by their desire to defend their property, but also by their ‘religious fanaticism’ and their opposition to include women in the workforce, which was a feature of collective farms.\textsuperscript{13}

Ulf Brunnbauer argues that the ethnic division of labour was established early on under communism, whereby many Macedonians left rural areas and were employed in industrial or administrative jobs, while Albanians largely remained in subsistence farming.\textsuperscript{14} Macedonians were more likely to be included in the industrial and administrative workforce for two reasons. First, education

\textsuperscript{7} ibid, pp. 580-581.  
\textsuperscript{8} ibid, p. 581.  
\textsuperscript{9} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{10} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{11} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{13} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{14} Brunnbauer, “Fertility, families and ethnic conflict”, p. 582.
achievements were much higher among the Macedonian community, and the Macedonian language was the official language of administration.\textsuperscript{15} Secondly, Macedonia was established as a Macedonian nation-state and no one was under any illusion that Macedonians would not dominate its political and institutional life, and use the administration and state-owned industries as a source of employment. Albanians viewed the socialist republic in a very different light. They felt increasingly alienated from the state because of its anti-religious ideology, its Macedonian dominance, and its attempts to change the role of women in society.\textsuperscript{16} In addition, they regarded urbanisation and industrialisation as threats to their cultural traditions and saw their moral values threatened by the ruling ideology.\textsuperscript{17} Brunnbauer has argued that these are some of the reasons why so many Albanians declared themselves to be Turks and migrated from Macedonia to Turkey during the 1950s under a migration agreement signed in 1953.\textsuperscript{18} It is also accurate that many Albanians did not seek state employment because they feared being ostracised by their own community as ‘collaborators’ in the Macedonian-owned system.

In contrast to Macedonian families who depended on state jobs, Albanian households learned to exploit different opportunities, particularly seasonal migration to Western Europe (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland).\textsuperscript{19} Workers in Western Europe sent remittances back home and these funds were largely invested in the purchase of more agricultural land and machinery.\textsuperscript{20} This enabled many Albanians to maintain agriculture as the core of their subsistence, while using non-agricultural income to supplement it, and by doing this they were able to maintain their distance from Macedonian socialist development both economically and culturally.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{15} ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} ibid, p. 583.
\textsuperscript{17} ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} ibid, p. 584.
\textsuperscript{20} ibid, p. 585.
\textsuperscript{21} ibid.
The Albanian household-based economy proved to be very beneficial during the transition from socialism to the free market beginning in 1990 because they were less exposed to the economic shocks of unemployment and the collapse of the welfare state. The combination of remittances, household-based subsistence agriculture and entry into private business enabled Albanian families to transition much easier than Macedonian families. It should be noted, however, that although Albanian households (in general) were and continue to be relatively wealthier than Macedonian households, both are facing harsh economic conditions.

On the other hand, many Macedonians were severely impacted when the Yugoslav system collapsed in 1990. For the previous 45 years, the majority had relied on the state for financial survival. They had worked in loss-making factories that were ultimately subsidised by transfers from the wealthier republics and Belgrade’s ability to obtain foreign loans and assistance. When they exited Yugoslavia, and the onset of transition from a socialist to a market-based economy began, most factories and other state companies were either closed or privatised, creating serious economic problems ranging from large-scale unemployment to rampant inflation.\(^\text{22}\) Loss of their largest markets within the Yugoslav federation and regional events further devastated the Macedonian economy. United Nations sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro from 1992 until 1995 disrupted trade with its main trading partner, even though the sanctions were not always enforced. In addition, Greece’s punitive economic measures against Macedonia from 1991-95 and its 19-month economic blockade during 1994-95 further crippled Macedonia’s economy. The Kosovo War and the nearly 350,000 refugees resulted in another economic shock, followed again by the 2001 War in Macedonia.

Macedonian GDP per capita had crashed from $8,115 in 1991 to $1,202 in 1992 (Figure 5), stalled until 2002, and is yet to recover its pre-independence levels

\(^{22}\) Atanasova, “Transborder ethnic minorities and their impact on the security of Southeastern Europe”, p. 383.
($6,655 in 2016). These conditions made the Macedonian community even less inclined to share what little had been left from socialist economic development,\(^{23}\) and continue to influence its desire to maintain control over national economic resources, which they view as essential for their own survival.

Figure 2. Macedonian GDP Per Capita ($US Current Prices), 1991-2016

![Macedonian GDP Per Capita Chart](source)


The transition from a centrally planned to a free market economy is yet to be completed. The process of transition itself was highly corrupt and largely mismanaged. Sections of the old communist elite both obstructed the reform process and grossly benefited from the privatisation of state companies by buying under-priced state assets through newly formed companies or selling them to family members and close associates.\(^{24}\) These same elites are closely linked to organised crime and many are accused of being directly involved in (or indirectly profiting from) drug, tobacco, and arms smuggling, prostitution, and money laundering. \(^{25}\) Unemployment is high within both Macedonian and Albanian communities, inflation is rampant, the welfare system is insufficient to

---

\(^{24}\) Atanasova, “Transborder ethnic minorities and their impact on the security of Southeastern Europe”, p. 402.
\(^{23}\) ibid.
compensate for poverty or other risk factors such as old age, illness or disability, and healthcare resembles third world conditions.\textsuperscript{26} The country continues to lack basic infrastructure (reliable communications, modern roads, clean running water, and a stable supply of electricity), technology and general skills (let alone a labour force with high-end specialist skills or knowledge).\textsuperscript{27} Foreign investment is minimal (Macedonia is ranked 128\textsuperscript{th} out of 216 jurisdictions having accumulated only \$5.5 billion between 1994 and 2015) and is usually stifled through bureaucracy and mired in corruption.\textsuperscript{28}

These structural problems, combined with a corrupt and clientelist elite, have impoverished a large proportion of the population (22 per cent),\textsuperscript{29} which (seeing its situation through an ethnic lens) further consolidates around its own community with the conviction that its capacity for survival lies in its ability to obtain resources at the expense of the ethnic ‘other’. While these circumstances have produced deep divisions along ethnic lines, they have also caused grievances within ethnic communities where those not aligned with the party in power are left disenfranchised. The relative difference in the economic circumstances of the Macedonians and Albanians has further coloured pre-existing ethnic stereotypes. Many Macedonians feel disadvantaged by having to bear the brunt of the transition to privatised industry, and regard Albanians as ‘wealthy’.\textsuperscript{30} Relatively affluent Albanians are automatically associated with organised crime by ordinary Macedonians, who either cannot understand that market-based entrepreneurship is necessary in their post-socialist reality or are simply rationalising Albanian financial success as impossible without illicit activity. Many Albanians, on the other hand, see Macedonians as “lacking initiative and unwilling to work, wedded to white collar jobs and patronage

\textsuperscript{27} ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} International Monetary Fund, [website], \texttt{www.worldbank.org} (accessed 15 August 2016).
\textsuperscript{30} Atanasova, “Transborder ethnic minorities and their impact on the security of Southeastern Europe”, p. 405.
networks”. They further see Macedonians as greedy and unwilling to share state resources with fellow citizens purely based on their ethnicity.

**Ethnonationalisation of the Public Sector**

Under the Framework Agreement, Macedonian politicians agreed to achieve proportional employment of minority communities in all national and municipal public entities and at all levels of employment within such entities. In particular, the police force was signalled out as an area of priority, based on Albanian arguments that they could no longer trust the institution – particularly after the 2001 war and the numerous violent confrontations during the 1980s and 1990s – unless they themselves were equitably represented within its ranks. More broadly, Albanians wanted control of local police in the municipalities where they were a majority; however, this was strongly opposed by Macedonians who saw it as a means to creating separate Albanian security forces through legitimate state structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportional Representation in State Bodies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laws regulating employment in public administration will include measures to assure equitable representation of communities in all central and local public bodies and at all levels of employment within such bodies, while respecting the rules concerning competence and integrity that govern public administration. The authorities will take action to correct present imbalances in the composition of the public administration, in particular through the recruitment of members of under-represented communities. Particular attention will be given to ensuring as rapidly as possible that the police services will generally reflect the composition and distribution of the population of Macedonia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Framework Agreement, Article 4.2.

---


32 *Framework Agreement*, s4.2. The Framework Agreement states “equitable representation”. However, “equitable” was never defined and in practice the Macedonian Government is recruiting state employees on a proportional system based on the percentage that each minority groups represents of the total population.

33 *Framework Agreement*, s4.2.
Since the implementation of the Framework Agreement the Albanian demand for proportional representation in public entities, is tied to the belief that it has a right to its share of resources (state employment and budget allocations to Albanian dominated municipalities) and power (control or influence over state institutions and state-level decision-making), reflecting its new status as a co-constitutive nation. As with many other issues, Macedonians see this as a zero-sum game and perceive any gain of power and resources by the Albanian community as a loss for their own. For many Macedonians this is just another component of a broader campaign for the Albanianisation of the state. Macedonians also argue that employing more Albanians in the public sector is a waste of public funds by unnecessarily bloating public sector bodies. Given that they have historically relied on state employment and considered it a birth right, by virtue of being a member of the titular nation, this is a hypocritical position. Interestingly, a study conducted in 2015 found that 73 per cent of respondents believed that the state is responsible for providing employment to its citizens.34

One theory on proportional representation is that passive representation – the public sector should match the demographic make-up of the general population – will lead to active representation, which is the formulation of policies that will benefit the interests of diverse groups,35 creating legitimacy for, and commitment to, state institutions and the state itself. The link between passive and active representation is premised on research showing that people from similar backgrounds – ethnicity for example – will have similar values and beliefs.36 However, Pitt has argued that for active representation to occur, and for proportional representation to make sense, public sector employees (and particularly bureaucrats) must be afforded discretion in their jobs with regard to policy making and/or implementation, and the policy issue must be relevant to the specific group being represented.37 In practice, outside of senior positions,
few bureaucrats are provided the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to policy direction and the parameters for its implementation. This is particularly the case in Macedonia. In addition, many bureaucrats are merely awarded positions through clientelist practices, are unqualified, and have little interest in policy development.

At the time of signing the Framework Agreement many commentators noted that proportional employment in the public sector would need to be undertaken over a generation in order for it to be achieved in an efficient and transparent manner, warning that any rapid changes could turn the reform into a zero-sum game over state employment. Since then there have been numerous reports of serious deficiencies in the competence of employees and the mechanisms of employment. These include new public employees (mainly from the Albanian community):

- failing to meet the selection criteria;\(^\text{38}\)
- being employed through party affiliation;\(^\text{39}\)
- being requested to remain at home on full salary because of a lack of work and/or office space;\(^\text{40}\) and
- being unable to speak the Macedonian language, making it impossible for them to undertake their normal duties.\(^\text{41}\)

In implementing the Framework Agreement, the Macedonian Government was pressured by both the Albanian community and the European Union to make rapid changes to the public sector. As a result, advice for the development of affordable and sustainable recruitment targets and planning to ensure their gradual fulfilment was largely ignored. Rather, a non-transparent and clientelist approach to recruiting high numbers of public servants (particularly Albanians) irrespective of the needs of the public sector or the competency of those


\(^{41}\) T. Angelovski, “Na “Ramkovnite” im treaat preveduvači”, Vreme, 14 August 2009, p. 3.
employed continues to be undertaken. Recruitment is also politicised in that to obtain state employment individuals generally need to be members of a ruling political party, related to a party member, or be a close associate of a party member. Members and supporters of opposition parties rarely obtain state employment and are largely disenfranchised until there is a change of government. Every change of government has resulted in the replacement of large numbers of public sector workers with the incoming government’s own party supporters. There have been occasions in changes of government when rather than retrenching employees, loyalists from the previous government are simply asked not to come to work or given meaningless positions while still getting paid.

Local-level recruitment and retrenchment is felt much more acutely. For example, in 2002 the European Stability Initiative (ESI) noted that there were around 870 public sector positions in the town of Kičevo. Given their proportion of the population of Kičevo (54.5 per cent), the Albanians could claim over 400 of these positions, which would be more than three times the number they held at the time. The ESI report noted that to rebalance the ethnonational mix, the authorities would need to reduce the number of Macedonian employees by a third to make room for so many Albanians. Alternatively, more people could be employed but at significant public cost. In Kičevo the decision was made to increase the number of Albanian staff by employing more people and not retrenching anyone. In other instances, such as in Čair, Albanian staff numbers were increased by retrenching Macedonians and employing large numbers of Albanians. Even at the local level, party-based patronage is the norm in terms of securing public sector employment. For example, a survey completed in 2015 found that 64 per cent of respondents believed that recruitment processes at the municipal level were only open and

43 This excludes the education sector that already had proportional representation due to language requirements, see Cox, Ahmeti’s Village, p. 28.
44 ibid.
46 ibid.
accessible to individuals who were close to the governing party within the municipality.\footnote{Bliznakovski and Popovich, Conflict of Interest and Corruption at the Local Level, p. 8.}

Macedonian ‘concerns’ for public expenditure on unnecessary state employees have more to do with their own job security than fiscal mismanagement. The Macedonian political elite have further contributed to the problem by using it to reward political clienteles and assist friends and family. Even now one of the most serious problems in public sector recruitment practices is the increasing politicisation of the sector. The International Crisis Group (ICG) has pointed out that the public administration is over-staffed, professional employees are increasingly being set aside (while still being paid), and new party loyalists are being appointed to high-level positions with control over decision-making.\footnote{International Crisis Group, Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict, Europe Report No. 2012, 11 August 2011, p. 10.}

These practices are common both at the national and local levels, and by the governing Macedonian and Albanian parties.\footnote{For example, a senior Albanian official noted that DUI had “failed to deliver on quality personnel in public administration and the judiciary...[focusing instead] on hiring party militants in administration, finance and other positions where there is more money”. Some observers note that DUI has equally disenfranchised Albanians who are not its members by excluding them from public sector employment, see International Crisis Group, Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict, p. 10.}

It has also enabled political elites to distribute patronage and by doing so entrench their hold on power. At the same time, elite bargaining on the number of state jobs available and how many each community receives causes financial insecurity and ethnic tensions between ordinary Macedonians and Albanians.

These practices have only incited further tensions between Macedonians who consider them as highly corrupt and a waste of public funds (particularly when state bodies are under pressure from international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to down-size and loss-making public enterprises are being restructured, privatised, or closed) and Albanians who now consider state employment as a right under the Framework Agreement.\footnote{According to the standby agreement with the IMF (April 2003), employment in the public administration should be reduced by approximately four per cent annually, see H. Willemsen, “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Persisting Structural Constraints to Democratic Consolidation”, Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, Vol. 6, Iss. 1, 2006, p. 94.} The
European Union, which is the key international driver behind the implementation of the Framework Agreement through Macedonia’s candidature for membership, certainly has not helped the situation. It initially criticised the Macedonian Government for not progressing this reform quickly enough and continually demanded that sanctions be established for public bodies failing to reach recruitment targets. In return, the EU would promise favourable progress reports relating to membership. This has contributed to the unaccountable practices relating to ethnic quotas that are widespread throughout the country at both the national and local levels. Ironically, the EU has reversed its criticism and is now reprimanding Macedonia for these issues.51

Sašo Georgievski has argued that Macedonia functions like a ‘party state’, known in Macedonia as Partizacija, rather than a Rechtsstaat (i.e., one with the rule of law and the provision of justice) in that public officials are selected by the spoils system (in which the ruling party provides public jobs to its supporters, friends and relatives) and work as party officials rather than state officials.52 Georgievski has noted that political parties in Macedonia are highly centralised and generally under the personal control of their party leader and a close group of party members loyal to the leader.53 Georgievski has contended that this style of governance tends towards autocratic control over state institutions to the point where it is difficult to determine where the state ends and the party begins.54 He has argued that “given the rather primitive and authoritarian political culture among Macedonian [and Albanian] political elites…party leaders often arrange major public and administrative appointments and negotiate access to public wealth”.55 Interviews corroborate this analysis and maintain that control by party leaders is preserved through patronage and the corrupt distribution of state resources and favours.56 More accurately, Macedonia’s political system that

53 ibid.  
54 ibid, p. 929.  
55 ibid, p. 932.  
56 SDSM Official, Interview with Author, 20 August 2013 and VMRO-DPMNE Official, Interview with Author, 21 July 2013.
mixes some democratic processes with authoritarian rule could be described as anocratic (*Part III*).

Examples of patronage and politicisation of the public administration are rife. In 2011 investigative journalists from A1 television exposed documents demonstrating that the current ruling party, VMRO-DPMNE, was rewarding party members with public sector jobs if they could provide a list of 15 or more people who would guarantee that they would vote for the party in the upcoming elections.\(^{57}\) Politicisation at the local level is much the same. Rufi Osmani, the former Mayor of Gostivar, was accused of demoting 15 employees because of their “disloyalty to his newly established party”.\(^{58}\) The Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), as the governing Albanian coalition partner since 2008, has been largely employing only party members and supporters in the public administration.\(^{59}\) There are claims that there is an intra-party agreement within DUI that one in three of those employed must be a former National Liberation Army (NLA) fighter or a member of their family, under the rationale that they are supporting those who risked their lives for the Albanian cause and maximising electoral support because of the social prestige that former NLA fighters enjoy within their local communities.\(^{60}\) In 2011 DUI even attempted to formalise the allocation of the state budget along ethnic lines, claiming that the concept was in accordance with the Framework Agreement, particularly the requirement for decentralisation.\(^{61}\) DUI Members of Parliament insisted that the Albanian community should receive one quarter of the budget (€750 million in 2012), which would have been approximate to their proportion of the population.\(^{62}\) Regardless, in a country with scarce resources and high


\(^{60}\) ibid.

\(^{61}\) Anonymous, “Macedonia experts reject party’s ethnic budget idea as leading to federalisation”, *BBC*, 4 October 2011, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) (accessed 12 July 2016).

\(^{62}\) ibid.
unemployment (officially at 24.5 per cent), state employment can make the difference between living in poverty and supporting an extended family. Because of these realities, many citizens who complain about corruption, clientelism, and politicisation in principle ignore it in practice, particularly when they can personally benefit from its existence.

It should also be noted that the employment of minority groups is uneven across the public sector. In particular, state bodies with Albanian ministers or heads of ministries have been disproportionately staffed by Albanians. For example, in 2014 (the latest year for which figures are available) Albanian employees were overrepresented in the Ministry of Local Government (58 per cent), Health (45 per cent), Culture (34 per cent), Economy (34 per cent), Justice (31 per cent) and Environment (31 per cent). On the other hand, Macedonians clearly continued to dominate in the Judiciary (both at the administrative and judicial levels), public enterprises, smaller government agencies and Ministries such as Finance (85 per cent), Information Society (84 per cent), Defence (79 per cent), Transport and Communications (79 per cent), Agriculture, Forestry and Water (78 per cent) and Internal Affairs (77 per cent). Ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Labour and Social Policy, and Education and Science are approximate to the overall ethnonational composition of the population. For the 2011 reporting period the Ombudsman reported that of a total of 972 institutions which submitted data, 495 (51 per cent) did not employ any Albanians and 32 (three per cent) did not employ any Macedonians. Other communities fared much worse.

---

65 ibid.
66 ibid.
67 ibid, p. 40.
Table 7. Ethnic Composition of Public Sector Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlachs</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnians</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The table above provides statistics on the ethnonational composition of the public sector in Macedonia. The public sector has grown over the past decade, and much of this growth has been due to the employment of staff from minority communities, while the number of Macedonian employees has been reduced in both real terms (until 2006) and as a proportion of the total workforce – particularly at the local level. Once VMRO-DPMNE returned to power in 2006, however, it began a clientelist recruitment drive and Macedonian public employees increased in real terms, though their numbers continued to decline proportionally because Albanian employees continued to grow exponentially.

Nevertheless, Macedonian resentment towards Albanians who they consider are ‘taking their jobs’ runs high, and this is supported by recent employment trends and attitudes. For example, findings from the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) People-Centred Analysis report suggest that more Macedonians (approximately 35 per cent) are looking for work than Albanians (approximately 30 per cent). In addition, 45 per cent of Macedonian respondents believed that they were likely to lose their job within the following

---

69 Cox, Ahmeti’s Village, p. 28.
70 Ragaru, Macedonia, 14.
six months compared to 25 per cent of Albanian respondents. Macedonians were also more likely to report that their lives had become worse (34 per cent) than Albanians (20 per cent) in the previous 12 months and were more likely to perceive their household’s financial situation as being below average (41 per cent) compared to Albanians (23 per cent). This indicates much more economic insecurity amongst Macedonians and the blame seems to be directed towards the Albanian community and the Framework Agreement.

**The Police and Military**

As noted above, the ethnonational composition of the Macedonian Police Force was singled out for rapid restructuring to ensure more Albanians were employed. Although most Macedonians distrust the police and have endured repression and brutality from the police and various state security services, it is fair to say that the Albanians were particularly targeted.

---

**Ethnic Representation in the Police Force**

The parties commit themselves to ensuring that the police services will by 2004 generally reflect the composition and distribution of the population of Macedonia. As initial steps toward this end, the parties commit to ensuring that 500 new police officers from communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia will be hired and trained by July 2002, and that these officers will be deployed to the areas where such communities live. The parties further commit that 500 additional such officers will be hired and trained by July 2003, and that these officers will be deployed on a priority basis to the areas throughout Macedonia where such communities live.

*Framework Agreement, Article 5.2 and Annex C.*

Albanian demands for greater representation in the police force were met in 2001 through the Framework Agreement. Over 1,100 new cadets were trained, of which 67 per cent were Albanians and 17 per cent Macedonians, along with

---

72 Ibid, p. 62.
smaller numbers of members of other communities. In 2004 the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) assisted the Macedonian police in training an additional 325 cadets in order to increase the number of minority police officers. According to the OSCE, in 2001 Albanians accounted for only 3.8 per cent of the police force, while the presence of other minorities was negligible. By September 2005 Albanians made up just over 15 per cent, while other minorities accounted for nearly 4.5 per cent.

This was a rapid expansion of the police force and these quotas were achieved at the expense of quality and effectiveness. The then Interior Minister, Hari Kostov, complained about incompetence, use of intimidation, and periodic cooperation with criminal elements in relation to the newly recruited Albanian police officers. The OSCE admitted that some unqualified recruits had been employed simply to fulfil quotas. In particular, research undertaken by the UNDP suggests that there are questions about the professional competence of newly recruited Albanian police officers who have not gone through the same professional training as others. One interviewee, a former Police Commander, noted that many new Albanian recruits under his command during that period were clearly unqualified and politically connected to DUI.

Some observers also criticised the OSCE emphasis on promoting Albanian community acceptance of the police, or community policing strategies, rather than preparing officers for the reality that they will need to use force when necessary. The OSCE has defended this strategy claiming that community policing increases citizens’ confidence in the police and improves mutual cooperation. While this may be the case, a large number of high-profile criminals (Macedonian and Albanian) have remained at large so as not to disrupt local

---

77 ibid.  
79 Former Police Commander and Local Committee Leader, Interview with Author, 20 July 2013.
While this practice may appease those connected to these criminals, it is breaking confidence among the rest of the community and sending the message that those willing or able to cause unrest will be dealt with leniently, or not at all.

A further ongoing issue has been the inclusion of former members of paramilitary groups into the police and military. While the Macedonian Government has never officially provided confirmation, party officials have reportedly suggested that up to 3,000 former Albanian NLA combatants were recruited into the police and military after the 2001 war. Former Macedonian soldiers (many of whom fought in the war) and many Macedonian citizens in general have strongly criticized the integration of former Albanian fighters. They argue that the state cannot rely on those who actively fought against it and have shown loyalty to NLA commanders that called for the destruction of Macedonia and unity with Kosovo and Albania. Even more controversial is the fact that many former NLA fighters, who are now being recruited into the police and army or have obtained political office, originally deserted the security forces in 2001 to join the NLA.

One example is that of Talat Xhaferi. Xhaferi, a former commander with the NLA, was appointed as the Macedonian Defence Minister on 18 February 2013. Xhaferi was an officer in the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) from 1985 to 1991, and then became an officer in the Army of the Republic of Macedonia (ARM) from 1992 to 2001. When the 2001 war began Xhaferi deserted the army and joined the NLA. Few details are available about Xhaferi’s actual role during the

---

80 For example, the infamous Dilaver “Leku” Bojku from Velešta, an Albanian populated village in the Struga municipality. Leku was a high profile criminal who had the backing of key elements within the local Albanian community and was considered untouchable for years. The reasoning was that any attempt to arrest him or disturb his operations would ‘provoke’ the Albanian community. The reality was that most Albanians wanted to see Leku behind bars. Leku was eventually convicted for trafficking women and forcing them into prostitution, but even in prison he was provided with extraordinary privileges and approved leave at regular intervals.
war but it is understood that he was the commanding officer of the NLA’s 116th Brigade, which was stationed in the mountains surrounding Gostivar. Few, if any, actual clashes took place in this region and reports suggest that as little as 50 NLA combatants were present in the area. It is unlikely that Xhaferi or the 116th Brigade actually engaged in combat, and claims from Xhaferi to the contrary are most likely political posturing aimed at his constituency. However, Xhaferi has also been accused of some serious offences. In 2008 the Minister of Interior (and police), Gordana Jankulovska, claimed Xhaferi “threatened police officers and the deputy commander of the police station in Grupčin with liquidation”. None of this seems to have been followed up, most likely because Xhaferi’s position within the governing coalition and political expediency persuaded the ruling VMRO-DPMNE to overlook its own allegations (at that time VMRO-DPMNE needed DUI’s support to maintain a majority in Parliament).

Even so, violent protests erupted in Skopje soon after the announcement of his appointment. Macedonians clashed with riot police and accused the government of treason for appointing an ‘enemy of the state’ to the position of Defence Minister. Albanians responded with counter-protests, also clashing with riot police, damaging police cars and private vehicles, and burning buses in defence of Xhaferi. Sporadic clashes between Macedonians and Albanians ensued throughout the city for weeks, with 22 people injured (including 13 police officers) and 18 arrested. While it caused outrage within the Macedonian community, particularly amongst police and army veterans of the 2001 war, the appointment itself was not a surprise. Talat Xhaferi was previously a member of

---

84 Petrovski, Svedoštva, p. 231.
85 ibid.
86 Further controversy was also sparked by the discovery that Xhaferi has a criminal record due to an incident that occurred in 2008 in Tetovo. Xhaferi was convicted of obstructing a policeman on 14 October 2010 and received a six month suspended sentence, conditional on not committing another offence within the next two years. Xhaferi appealed this sentence only to have the Court of Appeals in Gostivar dismiss his plea and confirm the original verdict, see S. Dimovski, “Macedonian Defence Minister Has Criminal Record”, Balkan Transitional Justice, 7 March 2013, www.balkaninsight.com (accessed 12 March 2013).
the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security, and Deputy Minister for Defence from 2004 to 2006 under former Prime Minister Vlado Bučkovski.  

Stojanče Angelov, leader of *Dostoinstvo* (a political party and civil society association representing police and military veterans from 2001), was particularly incensed at the appointment of Xhaferi, denouncing it as a ‘humiliating act’ and a ‘national catastrophe’. He argued that because Xhaferi deserted the Macedonian army and fought against it, he is unfit to lead the Ministry of Defence. Further, it was Xhaferi that led Albanian opposition to a draft law before the Macedonian Parliament that sought to provide state benefits for police and military veterans of the 2001 war. Xhaferi made a mockery of the process by submitting over 15,000 amendments and either remaining silent or reciting poetry and other irrelevant material for hours during Parliamentary debates.

Some of the concerns within the Macedonian community are not unwarranted. It was the NLA that instigated an armed conflict in pursuit of a number of extremist goals. Further, key figures within the NLA (some of which are now senior DUI officials, including party leader Ali Ahmeti) are suspected of committing acts of terrorism and war crimes during the conflict. Four cases, including one against Ali Ahmeti and other leaders of the NLA, were brought forward by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). These cases were deemed as suitable for prosecution by the Macedonian authorities. However, in 2011 the Macedonian Government with DUI as a junior coalition partner provided amnesty to all the accused without any cases going to trial. In addition, some of DUI’s Parliamentary representatives, such as Xhevat Ademi, continue to be listed on the United States’ Specially Designated Nationals List (SDN) which includes individuals who are guilty or suspected of involvement in

88 Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.  
terrorism and war crimes.\textsuperscript{91} None have been prosecuted as they all received amnesty from the Macedonian Government (of which DUI was a coalition partner at the time of its enactment). The SDN also includes Menduh Thaçi, the current leader of the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA).\textsuperscript{92}

On the other hand, 630 members of a Macedonian paramilitary group known as the \textit{Lions} have been employed as police officers (430) or military personnel (200).\textsuperscript{93} The Lions were formed in 2001 by the then Interior Minister, Lube Boškovski (VMRO-DPMNE), and consisted solely of Macedonians. Their purpose was to assist a Special Police Unit, known as the \textit{Tigers}, in fighting the NLA. However, there is doubt as to the legality of the Lions, particularly given that its command and control structure rested outside of the police force and Interior Ministry and within the governing VMRO-DPMNE party hierarchy. For all intents and purposes, the Lions were a paramilitary unit and were not a lawfully constituted part of the state security forces. A further issue was the inclusion of a large criminal element within the Lions. There are claims that members of the Lions were involved in more than 70 criminal acts between 2002 and 2005 (they claimed to have disbanded in 2005), including weapons offences, pub brawls, murders, and assaults on civilians.\textsuperscript{94} Suggestions have been made that many former members with criminal backgrounds were included in the 630 personnel that were transferred to the police and military.\textsuperscript{95} Albanians, as well as some Macedonians, have expressed their opposition to the continued employment of former Lions members within the current police and army structures. Regardless, many of the dismissed personnel have gone on to join other paramilitary groups and private security firms (\textit{Chapter Nine}).

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{91} United States Department of the Treasury, \textit{Specially Designated Nationals List}, [website], \url{www.treasury.gov} (accessed 6 September 2016). Xhevat Ademi is reported to have been head of the KLA’s ‘secret police’ in Macedonia, head of the ‘Albanian National Army (ANA)’, and a key organiser of financial assistance for the NLA.
\bibitem{92} ibid.
\bibitem{94} Stojčevski, \textit{Macedonia: Lions Menace Ends}.
\bibitem{95} International Crisis Group, \textit{Macedonia: No Room for Complacency}, p. 7.
\end{thebibliography}
In 2012 Albanians represented 19 per cent of the army and other minorities accounted for a further eight per cent.\textsuperscript{96} After strong increases in representation from 2001 these figures have plateaued since 2008. Considering the extraordinary measures the military has undertaken to recruit Albanians and other minorities,\textsuperscript{97} minority representation may have reached its peak. However, this plateau may also be a result of continued distrust of the military among minority communities in general and Albanians in particular.

Table 8. Ethnic Composition of the Macedonian Armed Forces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>2005 (%)</th>
<th>2006 (%)</th>
<th>2007 (%)</th>
<th>2008 (%)</th>
<th>2009 (%)</th>
<th>2010 (%)</th>
<th>2011 (%)</th>
<th>2012 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnians</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlach</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Research indicates that approximately 65 per cent of Albanians do not have confidence in the military, while nearly 70 per cent do not have confidence in the police.\textsuperscript{98} These findings are supported by more recent surveys which suggest that only 37 per cent of Albanians are satisfied with the police force.\textsuperscript{99} This is an interesting finding when it comes to confidence in the police force on the part of the Albanian community, particularly given that there has been extensive recruitment of Albanian police officers and these officers are stationed in Albanian-dominated municipalities. Possible explanations may include many suspect recruits from both the Macedonian and Albanian community being


\textsuperscript{97} This includes members of minority groups being recruited into the Macedonian army through a different set of criteria, see Ivanov, “People-Centred Analysis”, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{98} ibid, p. 73

employed in the police and military, and the high level of corruption among public employees, including the security forces.

Significant trust issues have also been reported between Macedonian and Albanian members of both the police force and the military. One Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in the Macedonian Army noted that while Macedonian and Albanian personnel work together in a professional manner on a day-to-day basis and some have formed lasting friendships, many are highly suspicious of the ‘other’.¹⁰⁰ He noted that it is generally understood by military personnel from both communities that sooner or later they will “look upon each other through their gun sights”.¹⁰¹ The NCO suggested that for many of his colleagues military service was seen as a way to obtain weapons and training for the next inevitable war.¹⁰²

Similar accounts were provided by a former Police Commander. He noted that while on the whole police officers from both communities were able to work together professionally, there was still a great deal of mistrust between officers and that mixed patrols were still tense.¹⁰³ Although it was rare for an officer to actively side with a suspect of the same community against his colleague, there were many instances where passive support was provided to suspects of the same community while in the field.¹⁰⁴ An example witnessed by the interviewee was that of two officers, one Macedonian and the other Albanian, in an ethnically mixed town. They were confronted by an aggressive ethnic Albanian woman who was pulled over for a minor traffic violation. The woman became hysterical, claiming that she was being assaulted. Almost immediately an Albanian crowd gathered and the Albanian police officer stepped aside, leaving his Macedonian colleague to deal with the situation alone. A group of Macedonians quickly came to assist the Macedonian police officer. Eventually reinforcements arrived and

¹⁰⁰ Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), ARM, Interview with Author, 5 August 2013.
¹⁰¹ ibid.
¹⁰² The NCO noted high levels of pilfering from military depots by both communities. This was also corroborated by former draftees spoken to.
¹⁰³ Former Police Commander and Local Committee Leader, Interview with Author, 20 July 2013.
¹⁰⁴ ibid.
the incident was brought to an end. While physical violence was limited to shoving, the situation could have easily escalated because of a lack of support from the Albanian officer, which the interviewee believed was an act of passive resistance to the Macedonian officer and more generally the Macedonian state.
Chapter Seven
Parliamentary Veto Powers

Parliamentary Veto Powers

Although some argue that the provision of veto powers is necessary to protect minority rights, and indeed it is an effective method of doing so, it is also a power which can be abused to pursue ethnonationalist and party-political interests, creating an arena for conflict and competition rather than forming the basis for cooperation. Kelleher has argued that if veto powers are not carefully designed and used sparingly (as a last resort) they are able to immobilise the political decision-making process, reinforce existing ethnic divisions, and have a confrontational and destabilising effect within a power-sharing system.¹

Veto powers are generally justified on the basis that proportional representation and power-sharing alone may not be sufficient to protect the vital interests of a minority because it can be outvoted.² Therefore, veto powers are intended as a guarantee to minority groups that they will be able to defend their vital interests if these are threatened.³ However, their intended use does not necessary align with their practical implementation and Kelleher has identified the following four concerns with vetoes: firstly, the identification of an appropriate veto holder can be problematic. Veto powers granted collectively to a number of different ethnic groups acting as a single veto bloc may fail their essential functions as each ethnic group may have its own vital interests that conflict with the others; secondly, if vital interests are defined too narrowly, veto powers again may fail to perform their basic function; however, if vital interests are defined too widely, veto powers may allow the minority to hold the majority to ransom over a wide range of legislative issues and ultimately discredit the power-sharing system;

² ibid, p. 3.
³ ibid, pp. 3-4.
thirdly, the exercise of a veto can cause deadlock or political crisis that is damaging to ethnic relations, particularly if there are no mediation mechanisms in place to assist the various groups in finding an acceptable solution; and finally, the manipulation of veto powers by opponents of the power-sharing system can cause a political crisis in which the veto functions as a weapon in an ethnic ‘showdown’ with clear winners and losers rather than as a tool for minority protection. Bieber has largely concurred with the four problems identified by Kelleher above and broadly notes that the success of veto rights depends on two components: the definition of policy areas where veto rights apply and the mediation processes that are activated once a veto is invoked.

Macedonia lacks the critical elements described above to support its veto system. While policy areas in which a veto can be used have been identified through the Framework Agreement, the Constitution, and legislation, these are contested and Albanian political elites continually attempt to redefine the scope of their veto power. In addition, there is no mediation mechanism in place. If a veto is used or threatened, the leaderships of the governing Macedonian and Albanian parties are left to negotiate an outcome. This has rarely worked in practice and in many instances international mediation through US and EU ambassadors or special envoys is required to resolve disputes.

Marolov has argued that the Albanian veto in Macedonia favours collectivism as opposed to individual rights. This veto power presupposes that individuals belonging to minority groups will automatically support their representatives enforcing a veto, just because they belong to the same ethnic group. This undervalues the primacy of the individual as a free and equal citizen and indirectly violates their freedom of choice to not support a particular point of view that may be prominent among their own ethnic group.

---

4 ibid, pp. 3-6.
**The Badinter Principle**

Under the Framework Agreement minority communities were provided with veto powers in relation to a number of constitutional provisions and legislative acts. This veto power, known as the Badinter Principle, is effected through a double majority system:

a) At the central level, certain constitutional amendments cannot be approved without a qualified majority of two-thirds of all votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of representatives from minority communities. This also applies to legislation with regard to local self-government and national symbols.

b) At the central and municipal levels, legislation affecting culture, language, education, personal documents, the use of minority symbols, local finances, local elections, the City of Skopje, and the boundaries of municipalities, must receive a majority of votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of representatives from minority groups.

The Badinter Principle, developed by Robert Badinter who presided over the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia in 1991, was designed to redistribute political power between the Macedonian majority and its minority groups. In theory the veto power is held collectively by all the minority groups represented in Parliament as a counterweight to the Macedonian majority. In practice it is a veto mechanism for the Albanian community to protect its constitutional and legislative interests. This is because the vast majority of minority representatives in Parliament are Albanians (82 per cent of the total

---

7 The Badinter Principle in this case applies to constitutional provisions dealing with the Preamble, language, religion, use of minority symbols and national identity, culture, the Public Attorney, the Committee for Inter-Community Relations, the Security Council, the Republican Judicial Council, the Constitutional Court, local self-government, and the provisions dealing with constitutional amendments themselves, see Framework Agreement, s5.1 and Annex A.

8 Law on the Committee for Inter-Community Relations, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 150/2007, s11.

9 Framework Agreement, s5. The Law on the Committee for Inter-Community Relations identifies 44 specific legislative acts to which the Badinter Principle applies, see Law on the Committee for Inter-Community Relations, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 150/2007, s11. These were agreed to by the ruling Macedonian and Albanian parties at the time.

10 Framework Agreement, s5.2.
minority representatives in the 2014-18 Parliament) and the vote of other minorities is not required to meet the requirements of enacting a veto. However, because the Badinter Principal also applies at the municipal level, other minorities, along with the Macedonians where they constitute a local minority, can take advantage of it at the municipal level.

Table 9. Parliamentary Representatives by Ethnicity, 2014-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnonationality</th>
<th>Number of Representatives</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonian</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Minority</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Minority Excluding Albanians</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Since its implementation the policy areas that are covered by the Badinter Principle have been contested. Some of these have arisen from genuine differences in interpretation of the Framework Agreement and subsequent constitutional and legislative amendments. However, others have arisen from political elites attempting to either disregard democratic processes or obtain greater powers for the Albanian community.

In 2004 the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) attempted to derail the referendum on the revision of municipal boundaries by claiming that the referendum itself was subject to a double majority. When this reasoning was rejected it proposed that legislative issues that are subject to the Badinter Principle should be exempt from referendums.\(^{11}\)

---

Albanian elites have also attempted to broaden the scope of the veto to include:

- election of the executive branch of government (2006);
- the national budget (2010);
- funding allocated to the ministries for education, culture and local self-government (2011);
- the Law for Youth and the selection of members for the State Council for Youth (2011);
- decisions for the conferring of state awards (2011);
- all parliamentary and municipal council votes (2012).\textsuperscript{12}

Macedonian constitutional experts have dismissed all of these proposals as going beyond what was agreed in the Framework Agreement and subsequently codified within the Constitution and legislative acts.\textsuperscript{13} Professor Osman Kadriu, an ethnic Albanian constitutional layer, has argued that while the broad policy areas that require a double majority have been agreed, the details remain ill-defined. He has noted that there are many spheres in law that could potentially impact on minority rights and that this needs further consideration so as to reduce differences in interpretation of the Framework Agreement and the constitutional amendments.\textsuperscript{14} Law Professor Savo Klimovski (and former president of the national assembly) has argued that the biggest issue with the Badinter Principle is not its parameters but the absence of democratic political culture among the political elites:

> We should not be surprised that the Badinter Principle continuously finds itself where it does not belong. The problem is that we have a rule that makes opinions more important than the Constitution. That is why these four leaders [of the two largest Macedonian and two largest Albanian parties] act like tribal chieftains who have usurped the right to make decisions and then force these solutions onto us.\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{13} For example, Professor Karakamiševa-Jovanovska, see Neškova, “Badenter stana kako kaučuk”.


\textsuperscript{15} ibid.
The two largest Macedonian parties have at various times argued that Albanian domination over the veto power is untenable and unfairly locks out smaller minorities. They have attempted to diminish this domination over the veto power by proposing guaranteed Parliamentary seats for non-Albanian minorities.\textsuperscript{16} Their motivations are not entirely concerned with minority representation. Providing guaranteed Parliamentary seats would allow ruling Macedonian political parties to more easily gain a double majority and push through controversial legislation as non-Albanian minority representatives generally support Macedonian political elites over Albanian representatives. This proposal has been supported by the smaller communities that have been effectively locked out of utilising the Badinter process.\textsuperscript{17} Although the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) supports guaranteed seats for the smaller communities, it vehemently opposes the idea that these representatives should be part of the Badinter process, arguing that the Albanian community would lose its control over the veto power.\textsuperscript{18} This in itself acknowledges that the Badinter Principle is not meeting its stated intent of protecting the interests of \textit{all} minority groups.

Regardless of the motivations of both communities, the Badinter Principle has already been grossly misused for political party advantage. For example, after the 2006 elections the victorious Macedonian party (VMRO-DPMNE) formed a coalition government with the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), its ideological equivalent from the Albanian political block. However, DUI found that its loss of executive power that it held from 2002-2006 (in coalition with SDSM) was unacceptable for them. DUI argued that because it had obtained the largest number of votes among the Albanian parties at the 2006 elections it held a mandate to govern on behalf of its community and it should form part of the governing coalition. Further, DUI argued that constitutional amendments should


\textsuperscript{18} ibid.
be enacted that would oblige the Macedonian party with the most votes to form a coalition with the Albanian party with the most votes. This was rejected by all politicians and vehemently opposed by DPA. Given its numbers in Parliament, DUI alone was able to block all legislation required to be voted on under the Badinter Principle and did so, demanding it be invited to join the governing coalition. The DPA leadership was infuriated and demanded that its larger Macedonian partner refuse to even consider the matter. For its part, VMRO-DPMNE was adamant that it would not accept a ‘party of terrorists’ into government and claimed that no agreement was possible.

While using the Badinter Principle to create obstructions at the central level, DUI ignored its observance at the local level where it held control of municipal councils. Meanwhile, VMRO-DPMNE was under pressure from its elected municipal councillors to force DUI to respect the Badinter Principle at the local level. However, its rank and file membership pressured the leadership to resist DUI’s demands to join the governing coalition in the national parliament. Nevertheless, international pressure was applied by the European Union and VMRO-DPMNE agreed to negotiate DUI’s entry into the governing coalition. DUI unblocked the legislative impasse it created only after it had secured an agreement with the new Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, on a number of key issues that formed a part of its own political platform. Having blackmailed its way into government, it also managed to anger DPA into leaving the coalition, making DUI the sole governing representative of the Albanian community.

The issues surrounding the Badinter Principle at the national level seem minor when compared to its implementation at the municipal level. Most municipal councils simply ignore their constitutional and legislative obligations to use the double majority voting system when it does not suit the interests of the local

---


20 The infamous ‘Skopje Agreement’ contained five key issues that were agreed. Prime Minister Gruevski later denied that any such agreement existed, claiming that the document made public by the leader of DUI, Ali Ahmeti, was merely ‘minutes of the meeting’.
ethnic majority, regardless of whether they are Macedonians or Albanians.\textsuperscript{21} Lyon has noted that in most cases “political deals between the major parties concerning sensitive local issues are made behind closed doors and long before the issue is debated in municipal councils”.\textsuperscript{22}

This is particularly the case when questions arise over the naming of public spaces, such as streets and schools, the conferring of awards, and the construction of monuments and memorials.\textsuperscript{23} Xhabir Derala, an Albanian analyst, believes that the Badinter Principle has been repeatedly violated since its inception. He argues that the whole concept needs to be revisited, including how it can work at the local level, and particularly how the remaining minorities can be included because they have been locked out of the voting mechanism.\textsuperscript{24} Others have argued that the Badinter Principle has further weakened political institutions because sensitive ethnic issues are now discussed through direct talks between party leaders outside of Parliament and its working bodies, and the decision-making process looks more like blackmail and unprincipled trade-off than a consensual and meaningful process of reaching agreement.\textsuperscript{25}

Questions over the definitiveness of the Badinter Principle have also been raised and have caused significant tensions. Igor Spirovski, a Macedonian Constitutional Court Judge, has reported on the view among many Albanian political leaders and legal professionals that any law adopted through the Badinter Principle should not be challengeable in the Constitutional Court, either on procedural or material grounds, while at the same time Constitutional review is welcomed if a law should have been adopted through the Badinter Principle and was not.\textsuperscript{26} Spirovski provided the example of the \textit{Law on the Use of Community Flags} (2005), where amendments to it were passed by Parliament

\textsuperscript{22} Lyon, “Political decentralization”, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{23} Jovanoski, “Badenteroviot princip da se prekroi po merka na site?!!”.
\textsuperscript{24} ibid.
that would allow the majority community within a municipality to raise a larger flag than the flags of other communities and the state flag. The Constitutional Court overturned these amendments determining that all community flags would remain of equal size and that none could symbolically diminish the importance of the state flag.\textsuperscript{27} The decision was followed by a strong reaction from Albanian political parties, the resignation of two Albanian judges (one being the President of the Court) and a proposal to either exclude the review of the constitutionality of laws adopted through the Badinter Principle or that the Court should decide on the constitutionality of such laws through its own Badinter Principle mechanism.\textsuperscript{28}

Spirovski has noted that the Venice Commission, in its opinion CDL-AD (2005) 039, strongly opposed such proposals finding that a veto right for judges would run counter to European standards by introducing a political element to decision-making where the law should act as its sole guidance.\textsuperscript{29} Such reactions and proposals are certainly concerning, considering that the neutrality of the courts and judges would come into question because ethnonationalist interests permeate society and its legal and political institutions.

The Badinter Principle also has the potential to cause serious tensions between Macedonians and Albanians in a number of other areas. One of these is the laws concerning state symbols, including the flag, national emblem and national anthem. In Macedonia these are highly sensitive issues, particularly for the Macedonians whose very identity is being attacked and denied by its neighbours. For example, in 1995 the then Macedonian Government capitulated to a Greek demand that it change its national flag (among other demands), which had been freely chosen by the Macedonian people. To this day the event has left deep psychological scars for the Macedonian people, in addition to the very real violation of their national sovereignty and basic human rights to freedom of expression. Bearing this in mind, it is not difficult to see the tensions surrounding

\begin{footnotes}
\item[27] ibid.
\item[28] ibid.
\item[29] ibid.
\end{footnotes}
the national emblem, which has remained unchanged since the end of the Cold War, with the exception of the removal of the ‘red star’. For the past two and a half decades Macedonians and Albanians have been unable to agree on a new coat-of-arms. Although the two largest Macedonian political parties disagree on the exact symbol that could replace the current emblem, anecdotal data reveal that many Macedonians see the stylized double-tailed gold lion on a red shield as the ‘true’ Macedonian coat-of-arms, dating back to at least the 16th century, and possibly the 14th century. Albanians, on the other hand, argue that it is a Macedonian symbol unrepresentative of the Albanian community. Now that any new symbol requires passage through the Badinter Principle the replacement of a symbol that neither community associates with seems like an impossible task, while Macedonia remains one of only two former European eastern-bloc states (along with Belarus) that still has its socialist emblem.

There is also criticism that the Badinter Principle places “undue emphasis on ethnicity and thereby runs counter to the aim of transforming Macedonia into a civil, non-ethnically based society”. Jones has identified two conceptions of group rights – collective group rights and corporate group rights. According to him, the collective conception of group rights argues that moral value is only ascribed to individuals and that group rights arise when the joint interest of a number of individuals justifies the imposition of duties upon others, while the corporate conception of group rights ascribes moral value to the group itself, conceived as a single, integral entity. “Morally, the group might be said to constitute a right-bearing ‘individual’. The right is not held jointly by the several individuals who make up the group, but by the group as a unitary entity: the right is ‘its’ right rather than ‘their’ right”.

30 The Fojnica Armorial from 1340 shows this symbol as representing Macedonia; however, its date is disputed. A later example is from the Korenić-Neorić Armorial from 1595.
33 ibid, pp. 84 and 86.
34 ibid, p. 86.
Jones considers these two conceptions of group rights in relation to the right of a nation or a people to self-determination. He argues that if this right is a corporate right, moral value would be ascribed to the nation conceived as a corporate entity and not the individuals who make up the nation.\textsuperscript{35} If the right is a collective right, then it would be held by each individual jointly with his fellow nationals.\textsuperscript{36} The questions that arise are: how can corporate entities be ascribed moral value, which is a human characteristic; and how is the ascription of moral value to corporate entities reconciled with human rights, democratic governance and the liberal notion of the primacy of the individual?

The veto power provided under the Badinter Principle is a corporate right in that it is ascribed to the ethnonational community as a corporate entity and is exercised on its behalf (regardless of diverging views within the community). One could also argue that the corporatist nature of the Badinter Principle itself violates individual rights by making the assumption that each individual is supportive of the view(s) espoused by the political party that controls the veto power. Further, as in the example provided above, the Badinter Principle was used in a manner by DUI that was not representative of the Albanian community as a whole, particularly those that voted for other Albanian political parties that opposed DUI’s use of the veto power.

Many Macedonians see it as fundamentally undemocratic and claim that it is xenophobic. They consider the fact that the Albanian community is able to block legislation that is of fundamental importance pertaining to their identity and culture when they constitute two-thirds of the population as democratically indefensible. Many also see xenophobic undertones in the Badinter Principle because ultimately one Albanian vote is equal to nearly three Macedonian votes simply because of their ethnicity. One final point in relation to the Badinter Principle is that the Albanian community, in general, insists that it does not go far enough. As noted previously, most Albanian leaders promote a consensus

\textsuperscript{35} ibid, p. 89. 
\textsuperscript{36} ibid.
model for Macedonia in which both communities would share power equally, implying that either could veto any legislative initiative. DPA and the National Democratic Revival (NDR) have consistently called for new constitutional amendments to supersede the Framework Agreement and establish a bi-national state in which power would be shared equally by the two ethnic blocs.
Chapter Eight
Minority Languages

Language in Macedonia is highly politicised and considered as a marker of identity and group loyalty rather than a skill that can and should be utilised to pursue career and social objectives. There are relatively few occasions where language acquisition is upheld as an advantage or virtue; rather it is perceived in terms of differentiation and separation.¹ Forcing others to learn your language can be seen as a weapon used to demonstrate dominance and ownership in a particular region. While the view that one should not learn other languages spoken within Macedonia is much more prevalent among Macedonians (69 per cent), a similar trend is rising among Albanians (11 per cent opposed learning another language spoken in Macedonia in 1995, while following the Framework Agreement this figure rose to 39 per cent).²

Duncan has noted that languages are inextricably linked to ethnic identities,³ particularly in Macedonia. Nation-building projects in this part of the world have resulted in linguistic nationalism, which often results in the restriction of linguistic rights for minorities.⁴ Duncan has argued that these policies can backfire when minority groups defensively counter the nation-building project and emphasise the necessity of their own language.⁵ He has also contended that even when language is not the immediate issue in a conflict it takes on a highly symbolic role.⁶

¹ Reka, “The Ohrid Agreement”, p. 65. Conversations with Macedonians during fieldwork revealed that a common perception among Macedonians seems to be that the only ‘virtue’ in learning Albanian is to ‘understand the enemy’.
² Tasevska Remenski, Albancite i Makedoncite, p. 322.
⁴ ibid, pp. 456-457.
⁵ ibid, p. 457.
⁶ ibid, p. 455.
Albanian as an Official Language of Administration

Under Yugoslav rule, Macedonia had a largely pluralistic language policy embedded in both the federal and republican constitutions of 1974, which offered strong legal protections in terms of maintenance and usage for the various languages of different ethnic groups in the country. However, by 1981 the re-emergence of nationalist forces and the crisis of the Yugoslav ideology of ‘brotherhood and unity’ saw a move away from Macedonia’s previously pluralistic policies, which in any case were more a creation of Belgrade than Skopje. The Macedonian Government was being challenged by Albanian demands for greater cultural and language rights, as well as political autonomy in the regions where they were in a majority. Macedonia’s response was to shift to what Petruševska has referred to as ‘centrist’ policies, which she defines as aimed at “maintaining the power position of the dominant ethno-linguistic group by means of excluding the languages of the others from public domains”. This was justified as necessary to halt Albanian nationalism and separatism and to ensure the territorial unity of the state.

With independence, Macedonia proclaimed the Macedonian language (along with the Macedonian Cyrillic script) as the official language under the 1991 Constitution. Albanians saw this as a restriction of their cultural and linguistic rights and a threat to the future use of Albanian in the country. Throughout the 1990s, Albanian leaders demanded the Albanian language be recognised as an official language of administration, equal to Macedonian. This was in line with their view that the Albanian community should be a co-constitutive nation. Albanian language demands were far too radical for the Macedonian community and its political representatives. They believed that language rights at the local level were reasonable and sufficient to enable the Albanian community to effectively communicate with the state. On the other hand, Macedonians consider the demands around language with suspicion, interpreting them as disloyalty and

---

8 ibid, p. 60.
9 ibid, pp. 55 and 61.
10 ibid, pp. 61-62.
an assault on the identity and security of the state. This is largely due to the sensitivities around Macedonian identity and the challenge it faces from Greece and Bulgaria. Neither the Greek nor Bulgarian governments accept the existence of a Macedonian identity. In line with this policy, the Macedonian language is not officially recognised in either country. The Bulgarian Government claims that it is a Bulgarian dialect, while the Greek Government prohibits its use entirely.

Under the 1991 Constitution minority languages were official in municipalities where a minority constituted a local majority. The same applied to municipalities where minorities were not a local majority but constituted a significant proportion of the local population, which was never defined and varied in practice. Further, members of minority groups had a right to education in their own language throughout primary and secondary school but were also obligated to learn Macedonian. Legislation also provided for state-funded Albanian-language television and radio programmes, court proceedings and other institutional communication in Albanian, and public signs.

Under the Framework Agreement minority group languages are official, in addition to the Macedonian language, at both national and municipal level if they are spoken by 20 per cent of residents at their respective levels of government. In addition, local authorities may decide to make a minority language official even if the 20 per cent threshold is not met. The Framework Agreement also stipulates that primary and secondary education will be provided in the students’ own language, while state funding will be provided for tertiary education in the languages spoken by at least 20 per cent of the national population.

12 ibid.
14 Macedonian remains the only official language for international relations and use in the armed forces, see Framework Agreement, s6.
Belamarić has argued that the Framework Agreement created a three-tiered hierarchy of languages:

1. Macedonian as the official language of administration;
2. Languages spoken by at least 20 per cent of the population (in practice, only Albanian meets this criterion); and
3. Languages spoken by less than 20 per cent of the population.\(^{15}\)

Belamarić argues that the manner in which language rights are recognised under the Macedonian Constitution is one of its peculiarities (similar to the arguments put forward by Karakamiševa-Jovanovska). Language rights are not based on ethnicity or whether it is autochthonous to any particular area, but rather a crude percentage that was specifically chosen to provide greater rights for the Albanian community (and no other community) without having to explicitly name the Albanians within the Constitution.\(^{16}\) Both the Macedonian and Albanian communities view the increased status of the Albanian language (even though it is not explicitly named) as further confirmation of the Albanian community’s elevated constitutive status,\(^{17}\) and this is another reason it is opposed by many Macedonians.

Since 2001, besides Macedonian (which is official in every municipality), a number of other community languages are in official use at the local level. These include Albanian in 28 municipalities, Turkish in four municipalities, and Serbian and Romani in one municipality each.\(^{18}\) Lyon notes that additional resources to fund the associated costs of formally recognising other languages at the local level (such as the salaries of translators and interpreters) are not provided by the Macedonian Government.\(^{19}\) As a result, there is no guarantee that a formally recognised community language will become a working language in practice.\(^{20}\)

---


\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) Ibid, p. 36.


\(^{19}\) Lyon, “Political decentralization”, p. 165.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
Albanian elites continue to protest that the Albanian language is not becoming as pervasive as quickly as it had hoped it would, though this is mostly due to a lack of resources, particularly at the municipal level. Further, they claim that the *Law on the Use of Languages* (2008) has limited what was agreed to in the Framework Agreement and subsequent constitutional amendments. However, the *Law on the Use of Languages* (2008) has in fact expanded the use of Albanian beyond what was agreed to in the Framework Agreement and codified in the Constitution. For example, the Framework Agreement and the Constitution provide for the use of Albanian in education, parliament, local self-government, criminal and civil judicial proceedings, official personal documentation and the central government’s communication with individuals.\(^{21}\) In addition, the *Law on the Use of Languages* (2008) also provides language rights at the national level such as the right to communicate with state-owned firms in Albanian and strict radio and television content quotas in minority languages. At the local level, where a community language other than Macedonian is official, the law allows for its use in electoral commissions, candidate lists and ballot papers, state libraries, governance and financial information of private firms, and the naming of local infrastructure such as streets, squares, bridges, and other structures.\(^{22}\)

Language has been politicised beyond what could be reasonably expected in debates over its use in private and public communication. One example of this is the ‘signage wars’. These incidents relate to the language in which public signs are written, including road signs, signs in front of public buildings, and municipal boundary signs. The language(s) in which these signs are written are hotly disputed to the point where the two communities at times cannot even agree on the order in which the languages appear. This has led to instances in which signs are vandalised and in some cases where the two parties simply agree not to erect a sign at all. In one example, the municipality of Vevčani (which is populated solely by Macedonians) removed bilingual road signs from its portion of a


\(^{22}\) Law on the Use of Minority Languages, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 101/2008.
regional road that leads into the majority-Albanian municipality of Struga and replaced them with Macedonian-only signs.\footnote{S. Marušić, “Bilingual Signs Cause Ethic Jitters in Macedonia”, Balkan Insight, 25 October 2013, www.balkaninsight.com (accessed 27 October 2013).} The Albanian Mayor of Struga, Ziadin Sela, threatened to knock down the entrance gate to Vevčani and an adjoining church on the boundary of the two municipalities in retaliation.\footnote{ibid. Previously Sela, who was a Member of Parliament before becoming the Mayor of Struga, had threatened to burn down the national assembly if it failed to stop the passage of a controversial army bill that his party (DPA) opposed.}

The conflict over the status of the Albanian language at the national level continues, with renewed efforts by the Albanian community to have it recognised as an official language of administration in every municipality and at the national level (including the police and military). Further, Albanian political representatives are demanding that the Constitution be amended to explicitly name the Albanian language as a second official language of administration, rather than relying on the formula in the Framework Agreement that refers to any language spoken by at least 20 per cent of the population. In this way, Albanian representatives argue, Albanian will permanently remain an official language regardless of any negative demographic changes.\footnote{For example, see the proposed amendments to the Law on the Use of Languages (2008) by DPA in Macedonian Parliamentary Debates, 13th Continuation of the 16th Session of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, 13 January 2012.} Some Albanian commentators have even suggested that it be mandatory for Macedonian children to learn Albanian in order to develop a fully bilingual society.\footnote{For example, see F. Rustemi et al, “Perceptions about the Albanian Language, Culture and Education 10 Years After of the OFA” in B. Reka (ed.), Ten Years from the Ohrid Framework Agreement, South East European University, Tetovo, 2011, p. 212.} Needless to say, these ideas are anathema to many Macedonians.
It is important to specify the current language regulations in Macedonia. According to the *Law on the Use of Minority Languages* (2008), those languages that are spoken by at least 20 per cent of the total population will be used in the following instances:

- Macedonian Parliament;
- Communication between citizens and all central government ministries, institutions and the judiciary;
- Election-related material;
- Personal/identity documents;
- In the application of police powers;
- Broadcasting and infrastructure;
- Local Government;
- Taxation and company governance; and
- Education.\(^{27}\)

Many Macedonians argue that towns such as Struga, Kičevo, Gostivar and Tetovo are becoming linguistically Albanianised in that municipal councils have spent a great deal of resources to ensure that the Albanian language replaces Macedonian as the sole official language. For example, prior to the Framework Agreement, public signs were generally in Albanian, Macedonian and English, while many are now beginning to appear only in Albanian and English. Further, municipal communication with Macedonian individuals has slowly shifted from being conducted in Macedonian, to numerous documents such as letters and invoices being printed in Macedonian and Albanian, and now with reported instances of documents being provided in Albanian only.\(^{28}\) This is causing tension with Macedonian communities in the west of the country, which condemn it as a gradual takeover of the state by the Albanian community and view it as a betrayal by their own government which is accused of being indifferent to the affairs of what are considered ‘Albanian municipalities’.

---

\(^{27}\) *Law on the Use of Minority Languages*, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 101/2008.

\(^{28}\) Conversations with Macedonian residents in Struga and Gostivar, July and August 2013.
Albanian in Education

As noted above, Macedonian language policy was much more pluralistic under Yugoslav rule. During the 1950s, for example, Albanian students studied in Albanian and learnt Macedonian only three hours per week from the third to eighth grades.\textsuperscript{29} The 1974 Macedonian Constitution guaranteed minorities education in their own languages.\textsuperscript{30} Legislative Acts ensured the participation of ethnic minorities in shaping educational institutions and curriculum. For example, teachers in schools and classes that used minority languages had to be competent in those languages, school registers were kept in the relevant minority languages, and student reports were issued in both Macedonian and the relevant minority language.\textsuperscript{31} Student enrolments in Albanian-language schools increased from 28,619 (1950-51) to 85,430 (1980-81).\textsuperscript{32}

The post-war pluralism came to an end by the early 1980s. Laws on secondary education restricted the formation of Albanian-language classes in cases where it was not possible to obtain a minimum of 30 students and adequately trained staff.\textsuperscript{33} A 1989 revision of the law then allowed all subjects in the higher grades of primary education to be taught by teachers not competent in Albanian, despite the fact they were teaching in Albanian-language schools and classes.\textsuperscript{34} These legislative changes had the effect of decreasing both the number of classes available in Albanian and the number of students enrolled in Albanian-language classes.\textsuperscript{35} Table 10 below shows that the number of students enrolled in Albanian-language schools in 2014-15 has returned to 1980-81 levels; however, given the growth of the Albanian population over the past 35 years much higher enrolment numbers would be expected.

\textsuperscript{31} Petruševska, “Language Policy and Nationalism in the Republic of Macedonia”, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{33} Petruševska, “Language Policy and Nationalism in the Republic of Macedonia”, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{34} ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ortakovski, “Interethnic Relations and Minorities in the Republic of Macedonia”, p. 30.
### Table 10. Schools by Language of Instruction, 2014-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language of Instruction</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonian</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>175,574</td>
<td>16,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>84,916</td>
<td>7,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>7,140</td>
<td>845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2,519</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,107</strong></td>
<td><strong>270,149</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,009</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: The total number of the schools according to the language of instruction does not correspond with the total number of schools in the final row because where a school offers bilingual or trilingual instruction it is counted under each language.

Under the current arrangements Albanian school children are not required to learn Macedonian until the fourth grade. In January 2010 the Macedonian Government proposed reforms in which Albanian children would begin learning Macedonian from the first grade. The Albanian reaction was aggressive, with threats from the major Albanian political parties and the association representing former veterans of the National Liberation Army (NLA).  

Teuta Arifi, Vice-President of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), claimed that the government simply wanted to “demonstrate power, to show which language is first and which is second or third”. She also claimed that a policy of making Albanian children learn Macedonian from the first grade would lead to disintegration and not integration, a nonsensical but often repeated claim. Nevertheless, her comments are characteristic of Albanian views and their growing aversion to learning the Macedonian language. A report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) disagrees with Arifi’s position, noting that:

> Teaching in the mother-tongue is generally recognised as a good approach for the inclusion of minorities in the educational system...however minority language as language of instruction can have its challenges...minority-language teaching also carries a risk of enclosure of

---

36 For example, Fazli Veliu (President of the NLA Veteran’s Association, Parliamentary Member for DUI, and uncle of the DUI President, Ali Ahmeti) warned the Macedonian Prime Minister that he would suffer the same fate as the late President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, see Anonymous, “Veliu: Gruevski ke završi kako Milošević”, *Večer*, 26 January 2010, http://daily.mk (accessed 30 January 2011).


38 ibid.
the ethnic minority within its own cultural codes and values if perceived as an alternative to proficiency in the majority language. This is why if it is to be indeed beneficial for the children, teaching in the minority language should be an intrinsic part of a system of bilingual education [so that] the minority ethnic group can pursue options for education that allows it to protect its cultural heritage, while preparing it to participate in the broader society… Minority-language teaching therefore cannot be an alternative but should be complementary to majority-language proficiency.

There is in fact a growing body of Albanian school pupils not learning the Macedonian language and even resenting having to study the language of the ‘other’, which is perceived as “an act of weakness of surrendering to the ‘stronger’ group and yielding to the imposition of its will and culture”.39 It is likely that this trend is also influenced by the newly acquired municipal powers under the Framework Agreement where local authorities have more flexibility in developing their own curriculum. For example, Vetterlein has reported that some Albanian teachers speak only between one and four hours per week in Macedonian to their students,40 hardly enough for students to gain proficiency. This is corroborated by a USAID fact finding mission, which found that schools dominated by minority students study Macedonian only for up to three hours per week.41 The USAID report notes that during the 1990s Macedonians would deliver Macedonian language instruction in minority schools, however, the government later changed policy and allowed minority teachers to provide instruction in Macedonian. As a result, the team found that there is a sub-standard proficiency in Macedonian among many Albanians,42 most likely due to the unwillingness of teachers and local authorities to use Macedonian as a language of instruction.

42 ibid.
Most external actors such as the EU, OSCE, and the US have stressed that instruction in Macedonian in non-majority community areas should start as early as possible with the goal that all citizens speak Macedonian fluently upon completion of their studies.\textsuperscript{43} While Macedonians agree with this point, they are opposed to suggestions from the same international organisations that Macedonian students should learn Albanian – at least in areas where Albanians are a majority. It is interesting to note that while most Macedonians dislike the idea of learning Albanian, many have expressed regret for not doing so when presented with the opportunity while they were younger.\textsuperscript{44} However, these sentiments were more tactical in nature than a willingness to embrace bilingualism. The expressed purpose for knowing Albanian was to understand the ‘enemy’ and not be caught off guard in crisis situations.

The lack of local resources and capabilities to deliver Albanian-language education has also contributed to increased tensions. There have been instances of Albanian parents complaining that their children either do not have access to education in Albanian or do not have as much access as they would like.\textsuperscript{45} Some of these issues have arisen because of a lack of resources at the local level and Koneska has argued that instances such as these often poison ethnic relations.\textsuperscript{46}

Tertiary education is also a point of contention. Under the former Yugoslavia, the Albanian community was able to access higher education in their own language through Kosovo’s Prishtina University. When Prishtina University was closed down by the Milošević regime in 1991 the Albanian community in Macedonia had access only to primary and secondary education in Albanian. The demand for tertiary education in Albanian ran high during the early years of independence and grew into a significant nationalist cause. In 1994 a number of Albanian academics established the Tetovo University in north-western Macedonia. The Macedonian Government reacted by declaring the university illegal and ordered

\textsuperscript{43} Jovanovska, “Macedonia Wrestles with School Language Dispute”.
\textsuperscript{44} These views were expressed in conversations with the author during fieldwork.
\textsuperscript{46} ibid.
police to raid the institution, destroy the building, confiscate its equipment and
arrest several of its administrators. One Albanian died in the clashes that
followed between Albanian protesters and police.47 The key fear of an Albanian-
language university was that it would act as the basis of a parallel system similar
to the role played by Prishtina University and something that was later supported
by some Albanian leaders.

In order to reintegrate Albanian students into existing tertiary institutions the
government reintroduced (after previously prohibiting) Albanian-language
classes into the Pedagogy Department at Skopje University and established
ethnic quotas for the then two state universities in Skopje and Bitola. While
Albanians saw this as tokenistic, international organisations report that access to
higher education for Albanians and other minorities was more than fair and that
actual practices on admissions provided substantial advantages to them.48
Opposition to this move was strong amongst Macedonian students and
academics.49 In early 1997 Macedonian students demonstrated in Skopje daily
for two months and expressed general anti-Albanian and anti-government
sentiments. These protests are well-remembered for their taunting and extremist
slogans such as ‘Albanians to the Gas Chambers’.50 The tensions led to sporadic
and random acts of violence against Albanians, including violent confrontations
between Macedonians and Albanians at public events, and particularly between
football ultras.

The Tetovo University very quickly became a symbol of Albanian resistance to
the Macedonian state and a hotbed of Albanian ethnonationalism. The then
President of the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), Arben Xhaferi,
advocated a parallel system similar to that in Kosovo to break central control and
believed that the related political causes of the Tetovo University and the
Albanian language where the instruments through which to achieve this.51

Macedonians largely saw Tetovo University and the call for tertiary education in Albanian as further evidence of the separatist aspirations of the Albanian community.

Despite its best efforts, the Macedonian Government was unable to stop Tetovo University from functioning and eventually chose to ignore it. However, without external recognition qualifications awarded by the university were useless. Their quality was highly questionable and even among Albanians Tetovo University was perceived as being of low quality. Many of the Albanians that studied there did so to demonstrate their nationalist credentials within the community. A degree from Tetovo University demonstrated separateness from Macedonian society and functioned as a form of resistance to the state. It was also a convincing demonstration of personal sacrifice to the Albanian cause because any qualifications awarded by Tetovo University were useless within Macedonia and one’s employment prospects would be unpromising.

In 1998, the governing coalition (VMRO-DPMNE and DPA) reached a compromise with the assistance of the High Commissioner of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Max van der Stoel, whereby a new private university, the Southeast European University (SEEU), would be established in Tetovo with classes in English, Macedonian, and Albanian. The university was to be funded by the international community and tuition fees. While the Albanian community at first argued that they were still treated as second class citizens because the state paid for tertiary tuition in Macedonian-language universities, the Framework Agreement ensured that the SEEU was provided with state funding from 2004 (while remaining a private institution). Although stringently opposed by VMRO-DPMNE (which was then in opposition), Tetovo University was later reconstituted as a public university by an Act of Parliament and renamed the State University of Tetovo (SUT).

---

53 Van Fleet et al, p. 12.
55 ibid.
Vetterlein has argued that SUT was legalised not because demand was high enough for a second Albanian-language university, but because the SEEU was established by the governing coalition of which DPA was a part. The new Albanian governing coalition partner, DUI, also considered that it needed a win on the education front as the university issue was a core, long-running demand.\(^{56}\) The SEEU is considered to be politically aligned to DPA, which uses the university to reward its loyal followers and from which it draws its recruits.\(^{57}\) DUI uses the SUT largely for the same purposes.\(^{58}\)

The two communities essentially attend rival universities, where the vast majority of Albanians study at the private SEEU (Tetovo) or the State University of Tetovo and Macedonians generally attend various other state and private universities, including the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius (Skopje), St. Clement of Ohrid University (Bitola) and Goce Delčev University (Štip). There are some smaller private universities such as the International University of Struga and FON University where the student body has a greater ethnonational mix. Segregation along linguistic lines, which began in primary and secondary education, has found its way into the tertiary system and the views of the wider community have only become further polarised. For example, research conducted by Tasevska Remenski shows that the vast majority of Macedonians and Albanians are diametrically opposed on the question of whether there should even be an Albanian-language university.\(^{59}\)

* * *

The constitutional status of the Albanian community is unlikely to have reached a final settlement. The current state reached through the Framework Agreement, and successive constitutional and legislative amendments, has placated relatively

\(^{57}\) ibid, p. 14.
\(^{58}\) ibid.
\(^{59}\) Eighty-one per cent of Macedonians are opposed to the idea, while 96 per cent of Albanians are in favour, see Tasevska Remenski, *Albancite i Makedoncite*, p. 315.
few across the two communities. Outside of a narrow circle of politicians, ideologues, and academics the Macedonian and Albanian communities have been calling for change since the new Preamble’s inception. Both communities are seeking opposing solutions, while the Albanians have been more assertive in their demands.

The results of decentralisation and the revision of municipal boundaries over the past 12 years have been viewed by Macedonians, in general, as an exercise in carving out territory where Albanians would comprise a majority.60 This is largely seen among Macedonians as a betrayal by their own political elite that will eventually lead to a Kosovo-style scenario where Albanians will have a defined territorial unit with administrative and institutional structures that they can use to secede from the Macedonian state.61

On the other hand, some Albanians hold the view that the decentralisation process did not go far enough and that further power needs to be devolved to the local level.62 It seems that even though the Framework Agreement explicitly rejected territorial solutions for ethnic conflict as one of its basic principles, decentralisation has effectively accomplished just that. Municipal boundaries were revised to allow the greatest number of Albanians possible to take advantage of the new powers obtained through the Framework Agreement. However, this resulted in municipalities becoming more ethnically homogeneous and Macedonians and Albanians more segregated along ethnic lines. Under the Framework Agreement decentralisation has become a zero-sum game between the two communities who compete for local political power and control over local resources. But even more than that, it has become a struggle over the ethno-religious identity of the municipalities themselves – are they Macedonian or Albanian? Christian or Islamic? Finally, the practice among Macedonian and

60 Ilievski and Taleski, “Was the EU’s Role in Conflict Management in Macedonia a Success?”, p. 361-62.
61 According to Brunnbauer, many Macedonians fear that the Albanians, “once in control of local governments with more powers, [will] start to sever the links to the central government, eventually pulling away from the Macedonian state”, see Brunnbauer, “The Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement”, p. 17.
62 Engström, “Multi-ethnicity or Bi-nationalism?”, p. 17.
Albanian national elites of not interfering in each other’s municipalities where they constitute a local majority ensures that Macedonia functions as two separate political and administrative units.

The People-Centred Analysis report highlights the tension that proportional employment has created, stating that “it is very dangerous when minorities are discontented, but it is even more dangerous when the majority is discontented”. The report notes that dissatisfaction among Macedonians stems from several sources, including the loss of privileged status in the public sector, reforms within the public sector where many Macedonians continue to work (28 per cent), and the economic crisis in Europe. In addition, the retrenchment of many Macedonians from the public sector to make room for members of minority communities is another source of frustration. In implementing proportional employment in public entities through a non-transparent and fiscally unsustainable manner, Macedonian and Albanian political elites have introduced another element of zero-sum game, and because livelihoods are at stake the issue has become personal in addition to being a matter of ethnic solidarity. The People-Centred Analysis report concludes that given such a high level of dissatisfaction the Macedonian community can easily become radicalised.

The Badinter Principle has divided the Macedonian and Albanian communities on a number of levels. Albanians see it as a partial equaliser to the Macedonian community not only helping to ensure that their interests are protected but increasing their power and influence over the state. The misuse of the veto power, however, has also caused intra-Albanian conflict between the supporters of the major Albanian parties, DUI and DPA. The power struggle over which of the two is the legitimate representative of the Albanian community often turns violent with beatings, damage to private property, and shootings.

---

63 Bartlett, People-Centred Analysis, p. 63.
64 ibid.
65 For example, in July 2003 600 retrenched public sector employees clashed with police in front of Parliament, angered in part by the suggestion of an Albanian parliamentarian that the retrenchments were positive because they would leave Albanians as a higher proportion of the public sector, see International Crisis Group, Macedonia: No Room for Complacency, p. 11.
66 Bartlett, People-Centred Analysis, p. 64.
On the other side, Macedonians see the Badinter Principle as an undemocratic mechanism designed to undermine the Macedonian nation and its proper position within the state. The fact that it has not only been used to block legislation related to fundamental cultural issues for Macedonians but also to force through legislation which is largely seen as anti-Macedonian has many Macedonians, rightly or wrongly, comparing it to apartheid rule. At the local level the Macedonian experience has been mixed. There are cases in which Macedonians (as a local minority) have successfully used the veto power to protect their interests. However, there are many more instances where the Badinter Principle has been ignored by Albanian-dominated municipal councils. The Badinter Principle will continue to act as a conduit for conflict in the future because there is a substantial legislative backlog, which has been deferred due to the difficulties in navigating the veto power.

Language in Macedonia has become highly politicised with many refusing to learn the language of the ‘other’ and language itself is being used as a political tool to dominate or demonstrate power. Macedonians generally feel that they have been excessively generous with their provision of language rights to the Albanian community. Albanians, on the other hand, are continuing to push for full equality for Albanian. This is seen by many Macedonians as an attempt to ‘Albanianise’ the state. Albanians, given their co-constitutive nation status, consider it as a natural extension of their newly acquired position and status within the state. With the establishment of two Albanian-language universities, the segregation within primary and secondary schools is now endemic to tertiary education. Macedonians and Albanians are now capable of maturing into adulthood without ever having spent any substantial amount of time with members of the other community. The effect this will have on integration for the Albanian community into wider society will be disastrous.

Macedonians and Albanians hold opposing views in relation to claimed rights. Compounding this is the sheer number of rights claims over which the two
communities oppose each other. In light of this, it is difficult to foresee a sustainable resolution to these disputes as there are multiple junctures that could set off violent conflict.
Part III
Anocracy and Dysfunctional Political Culture
Nominally, Macedonia is in transition from a totalitarian regime under Tito’s Yugoslavia towards a liberal democratic political system. However, while there was considerable liberalisation (at least in terms of political plurality) during the first few years of independence, its new institutions remain weak and ineffective, and are largely controlled by political elites through corruption, patronage, and nepotism. In practice, Macedonia is an anocracy – with characteristics of both democratic electoral competition, and autocratic governance and institutional control.

Regardless of which party is in government, democracy in Macedonia has come to denote elections (whether they are free or fair is of no consequence) once every four years and absolute rule in between by the successful party elites. Civic participation, public consultation, and open debate over laws and government policies are alien concepts to most Macedonian citizens, and ignored and discouraged by Macedonia’s political elite. In Macedonia it is normative practice for a small circle within the ruling party to determine public policy and legislation. They will necessarily consult with their Albanian coalition partners and occasionally have policy rubber-stamped by parliament into law. Once decisions have been made, they are announced to the public. The public is then expected to submit to the ruling elite, which it generally does, believing that this is the full extent of the democratic ideal.

The most recent US State Department Human Rights Report provides a bleak, though accurate, picture of the situation in Macedonia:

The most significant human rights problems stemmed from high levels of corruption and from the government’s failure to respect fully the rule of law, including by continuing efforts to restrict media freedom, interfere in the judiciary, and selectively prosecute offenders. Political interference, inefficiency, cronyism and nepotism, prolonged processes, violations of the right to public trial, and corruption characterized the judicial system. During the year the release of unauthorized intercepted communications recorded by the government’s intelligence services allegedly revealed evidence of political interference in public administration and the media
as well as high-level corruption. Other human rights problems reported during the year included physical mistreatment of detainees and prisoners by police and prison guards; delayed access to legal counsel by detainees and defendants; restrictions on the ability of Roma to leave the country; restrictions on access to asylum; discrimination against persons with disabilities; discrimination against ethnic minorities, including Roma and ethnic Albanians.¹

Interestingly, a survey on political culture in Macedonia found that only 42 per cent of respondents agreed that democratic systems were better equipped to solve social problems, whereas 28 per cent would favour a ‘strong leader’ and 25 per cent would prefer an unelected technocratic government of experts.² The same survey found that the ideal politician would deal with issues by using their ‘knowledge and expertise’ and ‘strong will’ (71 per cent).³

While Macedonia functions as an anocratic state, control by the central authorities is haphazard at best. There are three distinguishing features to this. Firstly, Macedonian political elites generally do not interfere with majority Albanian-populated municipalities and Albanian political elites generally do not interfere with majority Macedonian-populated municipalities. Most national-level elite disagreements occur over mixed municipalities that constitute dangerous inter-ethnic flash points (Appendix Six). Regions such as the Struga Valley and Skopska Crna Gora are ethno-religiously mixed and local control is highly contested by Macedonians and Albanians. Secondly, central government control is weak, particularly outside of Skopje. National institutions are staffed by party loyalists, but they work within a patronage system and the realm of local kinship ties, and are therefore unreliable for central control.⁴ Most locally-based state employees (administrative and police) are closely linked with the governing party, and most have received their positions as a reward for their support.

² Marković et al, Survey on Political Culture in Macedonia, p. 10.
³ ibid.
⁴ For a discussion of patronage and politics in Macedonia see Lyon, “Political decentralization”, pp. 157-178.
However, their support is contingent on continued patronage, and is further weakened when kinship or clan ties conflict with the interests of the political elite. As a result, there is a lack of central control and an absence of the rule of law. Finally, local municipal councils have their own governance structures and local institutions, which are staffed through local patronage and kinship networks (and are personal and much more trustworthy) and act as a strong counter to central national control.

A clear example is the hesitance of police (who are local residents and have extensive kinship ties across the community) to get involved in anything except for the most serious of criminal matters, and only when significant pressure is applied. An example that occurred in Struga was the hit and run of a cyclist by a car. The cyclist was seriously injured and taken to hospital. His bicycle was found damaged on the side of the road with the registration plate of the offender’s car caught by its back wheel. Even so, the police claimed that they could not identify the owner of the vehicle and witness testimony was disregarded; the matter went unresolved. These are not isolated incidences. Corruption, nepotism, incompetence and negligence plague the state administration and its institutions.

In some instances, particularly in some of the more remote Albanian-populated villages of the Polog region (northwest Macedonia), Skopska Crna Gora (northern Macedonia) and the Struga Valley (southwest Macedonia), police are unable to even enter certain localities. The state is completely absent in some of these cases and the villages are run as independent fiefdoms, with clan networks providing governance and security. One interesting case is that of Kondovo where a small Albanian paramilitary (with local support) declared (on two separate occasions) that the village was off-limits to the Macedonian state (and Kondovo is only 10km from the centre of Skopje). This is not unlike Aračinovo (15km from the centre of Skopje) and similar villages, which were occupied by

---

5 The author was undertaking fieldwork in Struga at the time.
the National Liberation Army (NLA) for virtually the entire duration of the 2001 war.

This also occurs in some Macedonian towns and villages where locals govern them quite autonomously from the central government. A key example is the village of Vevčani with a population of 2,400 residents. In 2004 the Macedonian government wanted to subsume the municipality of Vevčani into Struga municipality (given its location in the centre of the Struga valley). Vevčani’s residents threatened an insurrection, and their message was clear: “You will either leave us as an autonomous municipality or we will secede. We will be the Andorra of the Balkans”.6 Perhaps given the village’s historical resistance to authority and its self-sufficiency, the Macedonian government conceded and reconstituted the Vevčani municipality with the village of Vevčani as its sole settlement.7

Finally, the role of the European Union and the United States has not helped the institutional inertia in Macedonia. Engström notes that:

The Macedonian state today is dangerously weak, lacking any consolidated political capacity, and public confidence in the politicians, on both sides of the ethnic divide, is extremely tenuous. International diplomatic intervention in Macedonia – characterized to a large extent by the setting of a seemingly endless number of conditions for Macedonia, some of which amount to sheer blackmail – has further undermined the capacity and authority of the state and its political leaders.8

---

7 The Vevčani clans have previously resisted both the Macedonian republican and the Yugoslav federal authorities on at least two occasions. The first in 1968 when local officials from Struga attempted to appropriate modern medical equipment from the village’s self-funded hospital and again from 1987-89 over water rights to its natural springs. The 1987 confrontations were the result of a project by Macedonian authorities to redirect water from Vevčani’s natural springs into Struga’s drinking supply. The residents of Vevčani blocked construction workers and police were dispatched to the village. Violent resistance ensued and dozens of residents and police were injured. The incidents turned into a major political clash and by 1989 both the Minister and the Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs were forced to resign. The local leadership in Struga who had overseen the project were pressured to publish critical accounts of their role in the affair, see K. Brown, “Order, Reputation and Narrative: Forms of State Violence in Late Socialist Macedonia”, European History Quarterly, Vol. 45, Iss. 2, 2015, pp. 295-314.
8 Engström, “Multi-ethnicity or Bi-nationalism?”, p. 344.
Ongoing international intervention in Macedonian politics has only increased the perception among the citizenry (lest they needed any further evidence) that the central authorities are incompetent and unable to provide even the most basic functions of government.
Chapter Nine
Credible Commitments

The problems of credible commitments can arise in newly independent states that contain one dominant group and at least one powerful minority group, and in particular anocratic states that are transitioning from autocratic regimes to democracy. Generally, the state (controlled by the dominant group) is unable to provide convincing guarantees for the protection of the rights and property of the minority group(s). It is argued that minority groups have an incentive to establish their own self-governing state, or to obtain significant autonomy within the existing state, rather than rely on the dominant group to honour their commitments. Further, settlement of any violent conflict which may have taken place is also difficult as neither side trusts the other to disarm or comply with peace agreements. Weingast maintains that armed conflict can emerge from commitment problems even if only vague suggestions of repression exist, as individuals who are convinced by their group leaders that they are targets of repression, extermination or forced removal would rationally take up arms even if their leaders’ assessment is not credible.\(^1\) In Macedonia problems of credible commitment also exist in the fact that the Macedonian majority does not believe the Albanian minority is committed to peaceful coexistence within the framework of the Macedonian state. An additional problem in Macedonia is the weak control of state institutions and the complete lack of control of non-state actors such as nationalist paramilitaries and local militias.

Ethnic distrust in Macedonia is high. Research conducted by the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation (MCIC) in 2011 found that 43 per cent of Albanian participants did not personally trust Macedonians, while 45 per cent of Macedonian participants did not personally trust Albanians.\(^2\) Grassroots views

---

\(^1\) Weingast, “Constructing Trust”, p. 179.
\(^2\) C. Klekovski, Meѓuethnički odnosi vo Makedonija, Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation, Skopje, 2011, p. 7.
such as these have a considerable impact at the societal level and serious implications in terms of credible commitments between the two communities. The same study also found that 37 per cent of Albanian participants viewed the Macedonian community as a nation of discriminators and 32 per cent viewed the state as an instigator of the violation of their rights.\(^3\)

In Macedonia the lack of credible commitments is evident through three ongoing issues: political elites who incite violence and seek the revision of international borders; widespread grassroots opposition to the Framework Agreement; and the existence of armed militias and nationalist paramilitary groups within both communities.

**Threats of War and Appeals for Partition**

Since independence there have been sporadic calls for the revision of Macedonia’s international borders. Many Macedonians have often called for the reunification of ethno-historic Macedonia – namely, the incorporation of Aegean Macedonia (Greece), Pirin (Bulgaria), Mala Prespa (Albania) and Prohor Pčinski (Serbia) into the independent republic (*Appendix Seven*). There have also been various Serb and Bulgarian proposals to partition the Macedonian republic. Official Serb proposals ended with the collapse of the Milošević regime,\(^4\) while unofficial Bulgarian proposals continue to occasionally appear in the Bulgarian media.

During the first years of independence a number of ideas to either expand the borders of the Macedonian republic or partition it among its neighbours were floated but were then quickly superseded by the Balkan wars in Croatia and Bosnia, American and European intervention in Greek and Bulgarian foreign policy, and the explosive Macedonian-Albanian relationship. Instead, new ideas began circulating with regards to the Albanian minority and possible territorial solutions to the internal Macedonian-Albanian conflict.

---

\(^3\) ibid, p. 18.

The earliest of these surfaced in July 1992 when a former diplomat, Saško Todorovski, put forward his idea in the Macedonian weekly *Puls*. According to Todorovski, Macedonia required a shared space, shared consciousness and shared authority in order to function as a civic state. In Todorovski’s assessment, due to the Albanian community’s irredentism Macedonia possessed none of these attributes, and as a result, he proposed an exchange of territory and a voluntary exchange of population with Albania. Todorovski never specified which territories should be exchanged other than arguing that Macedonia should request a 40km-wide strip of territory extending from Lakes Ohrid and Prespa to Albania’s coast on the Strait of Otranto. In relation to the exchange of populations, Todorovski argued that it should be voluntary and based on civic loyalty rather than ethnicity.

The next proposal to come to light was secretly discussed by the new coalition government (VMRO-DPMNE and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA)) shortly after it came to power in 1998. In a June 2005 interview, Arben Xhaferi (DPA leader), admitted to holding discussions with the then Prime Minister (Ljubčo Georgievski) and other high ranking officials from neighbouring countries such as the Serbian Prime Minister (Zoran Đinđić) on various scenarios that involved Macedonia’s partition. Xhaferi claimed that he and Georgievski had plans “to carry out a peaceful separation of Macedonians and Albanians because [they] did not believe in a multiethnic state”. Xhaferi also claimed that they had Đinđić’s support not only for a partition of Macedonia but for the partition of Kosovo as well, however, the war in Kosovo prevented the

---

6 ibid.
7 ibid.
8 ibid.
9 ibid.
realisation of these plans. Georgievski confirmed these claims in a 2012 interview on Croatian television.

Partition was raised again during the 2001 war, this time by the Chairman of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ėgorji Ėvremov. Ėvremov’s proposal was for the exchange of population designed to:

Make western Macedonia into a homogeneously ethnic Albanian enclave for eventual cession to Albania. In return, Albania was expected to yield to Macedonia a small area of land populated primarily by ethnic Macedonians.

The proposal was perceived as a serious attempt to partition Macedonia as a solution to the Macedonian-Albanian conflict. Three factors contributed to this: 1) the proposal was leaked during the war; 2) Prime Minister Georgievski refused to denounce it; and 3) Ėfremov was a senior official within a respected institution. However, it was met with strong opposition from the public. Macedonians were in no mood to concede territory to what they saw as a disparate group of terrorists, particularly given they had already lost lives in defence of it. Additionally, the two largest Albanian political parties (including Xhaferi’s DPA), the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), and even the National Liberation Army (NLA) rejected it outright.

Two years later (April 2003), after losing government to SDSM, former Prime Minister Georgievski published his own proposal for partition titled, Thesis for the survival of the Macedonian nation and state. Georgievski, a signatory to the Framework Agreement, argued that the agreement had marked the end of Macedonia as a Macedonian nation-state and that the Macedonians should now attempt to save the towns of Kumanovo, Skopje, Kičevo and Struga as ethnically

---

12 ibid.
14 Friedman, “The Ethnopolitics of Territorial Division in the Republic of Macedonia”, p. 213.
15 ibid.
Macedonian in a newly reconstituted Macedonian nation-state. Georgievski proposed that Albanians living in these towns should be assisted to relocate (without specifying where but presumably to Tetovo, Gostivar, and Debar – towns he would later nominate as areas that should be ceded to a future ‘greater Albania’), and that a new Macedonian state be established as a nation-state of the Macedonian people with the broadest possible rights for the remaining minorities. If the Albanian political parties would not agree to such a plan, Georgievski proposed that the Macedonian Government act unilaterally and follow the Israeli example by building a concrete wall to physically separate the two communities. Georgievski’s ideas were rejected by the governing coalition consisting of SDSM and the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), along with the ambassadors of the EU, NATO, OSCE and the US. DPA agreed with Georgievski’s assessment of Macedonia’s situation and reiterated its position that it no longer had any hopes for the successful implementation of a multiethnic political and social model in Macedonia.

In 2007 Georgievski reiterated his views on his 2003 proposal and further proposed “that the US, EU and Russia organise a ‘new Balkan conference’ with the explicit purpose of creating a Greater Albania”. According to Georgievski, Macedonia would need to cede Debar, Gostivar, and Tetovo as the only means of salvation and survival. However, with the political circumstances having changed significantly and his own descent into obscurity, Georgievski was largely ignored outside of his own small circle of influence. Since 2007 Georgievski has argued in favour of partition numerous times, though most Macedonian citizens view him as a largely discredited politician.

---

17 ibid.
18 ibid.
20 ibid.
21 ibid.
22 ibid.
23 After Nikola Gruevski’s ascent to the leadership of VMRO-DPMNE Ljubčo Georgievski established a new party (VMRO-NP) and maintains a small following, most of which he drew from VMRO-DPMNE. He has also been plagued with accusations of pro-Bulgarianism stemming from numerous articles on history and politics that he has written since losing the Prime Ministership. In addition, he later obtained Bulgarian citizenship, which only fuelled the allegations that he has betrayed the nation.
It is ironic that while the Macedonians have consistently accused the Albanians of disloyalty and secretly harbouring aspirations to secede and create a ‘Greater Albania’ or a ‘Greater Kosovo’, most concrete public proposals for partition have come from high ranking members within their own community – a diplomat, various scholars, and a Prime Minister.

For their part, representatives of the Albanian community have made many explicit and implicit references to secessionism. Arben Xhaferi’s admission that such discussions were undertaken within the Macedonian coalition government and with neighbouring states is one example. However, many speeches and interviews given by Xhaferi, Ali Ahmeti, Menduh Thaçi, Nevzat Halili and others over the years have demonstrated that independence from the Macedonian state remains an option should the Albanian community remain unsatisfied with the status quo.

The example of Nevzat Halili is possibly the most overt among the Albanian community. Halili was founder and first President of the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) and was elected to the Macedonian Parliament in 1990 through the first democratic elections. During 1991, with the formation of an independent Macedonian state and the codification of a new constitution and national laws, Halili was at the forefront of pushing for either a bi-national state or autonomy for Albanian-populated regions within a federal structure that would consist of two republics – Macedonia and ‘Ilirida’. By 1992 Halili had organised a referendum on autonomy among the Albanian community. Of the 92 per cent of eligible voters that reportedly participated, 74 per cent voted in favour of autonomy. Following the referendum several local leaders within Albanian-populated municipalities declared their regions part of a ‘Republic of Ilirida’ and called for the federalisation of Macedonia in which Ilirida would cover half of

---

the republic’s territory.\textsuperscript{26} The Macedonian Government declared the referendum illegal and sentenced five Albanian members of the ruling coalition to prison, convicting them of conspiring to create a secessionist state. Meanwhile, Halili managed to distance himself from the Ilirida project, avoiding prison.

As the PDP’s political support fell among the Albanians, Halili slowly faded into obscurity until the 2001 war. While his role during the conflict is somewhat vague, in July 2002 the United States blocked his assets (along with Gafur Adili and Kastriot Hazhirezha) for providing leadership or material support to armed insurgents in the Western Balkans.\textsuperscript{27} Halili remains on the United States’ Office of Foreign Assets Control list of designated nationals and blocked persons,\textsuperscript{28} which is most likely linked to his paramilitary associations and continued efforts to destabilise the country.

In 2004 Halili established a group known as the Albanian National Movement of Ilirida (ANDI) of which he is still president.\textsuperscript{29} ANDI reportedly operates a parallel government which has promulgated a constitution for the so-called Republic of Ilirida and drawn detailed maps of its internal borders within Macedonia.\textsuperscript{30} ANDI is also reported to have an armed wing known as the Albanian Republican Army (ARA).\textsuperscript{31}

Halili, as a representative of ANDI, has regularly made public demands for a separate Albanian republic (Ilirida) within a federalised Macedonia. He envisions a federal state named ‘Ilirida and Macedonia’, modelled on the previous union between Serbia and Montenegro.\textsuperscript{32} Through various public pronouncements Halili has called on Albanian representatives in the Macedonian Parliament to

\textsuperscript{26} Bugajski, \textit{Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe}, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{28} United States Department of the Treasury, \textit{Specially Designated Nationals List}.
\textsuperscript{30} ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} The details of the model change with each subsequent demand. At times a federation is called for, while other times looser confederate models are nominated.
resign their positions and establish a parliament of Ilirida in Tetovo, while also urging Albanians employed in the state administration to leave their positions and return to their ‘parent republic’. Halili bases his claims for an autonomous Albanian republic on the 1992 referendum that he organised. Most recently (September 2014), Halili gathered a few dozen Albanians in Skanderbeg Square in Skopje to proclaim the establishment of the Republic of Ilirida. Halili provided a map of the republic to media outlets and demanded an urgent meeting with the Prime Minister in order to “call for a referendum on the internal territorial division of Macedonia” (Appendix Eight).

Although Halili claims widespread support from the general population and some Albanian MPs from DUI, he is a relatively marginal figure within Macedonian politics. Though, this does not ensure his inability to destabilise the country. It is believed that he commands some Albanian fighters attached to ANDI. The example of Ali Ahmeti is a valuable lesson here. In 2001 Ahmeti began his Macedonian campaign with only a few hundred supporters. Yet he was able to inspire the Albanian community into providing thousands of recruits for the NLA, defeat the Macedonian security forces, and bring about significant constitutional amendments through the Framework Agreement. A key difference between the two that may disadvantage Halili is that he is considered a part of the corrupt and discredited political scene made up of PDP and DPA (PDP has lost its electoral support since 2001), whereas Ahmeti at the time of the 2001 war was perceived as a hero of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and free from those that many in the Albanian community were beginning to view as corrupt collaborators.

Politicians who incite violence seem to be one of the few constants of Macedonian politics since independence. While they have come from both

---

33 Anonymous, “Ilirida and Macedonia’s federalization brought up again”.
36 ibid.
communities, most threats of war have originated among Albanian politicians and activists. It is difficult to ascertain their significance because such pronouncements are frequently in the public domain. Some threats have preceded violence and popular unrest (including the 2001 war), while others seem to have been merely posturing and an exercise in ethnic outbidding (particularly during election campaigns).

In recent times Menduh Thaçi (DPA) has warned that the war between Macedonians and Albanians is not over. In February 2010 and again in September 2013 Thaçi warned that war would be inevitable if the Gruevski Government did not begin to respect the Albanian community.\(^\text{37}\) His demands were the replacement of the Framework Agreement with a new “political contract” as outlined in DPA’s policy platform.\(^\text{38}\) This new contract would reconstitute Macedonia into a bi-national state belonging to two constituent nations (the Macedonians and the Albanians), establish Albanian as an official language of administration, and institute a bicameral parliament.\(^\text{39}\) Thaçi and DPA have long argued that the Framework Agreement is dead and a new strategic settlement between the two peoples is necessary. Thaçi has criticised former leader Arben Xhaferi, stating that he had made a critical mistake on behalf of the Albanian community when he signed the Framework Agreement.\(^\text{40}\) He boasted that the Macedonians would not only agree to the demands set out in his “political contract”, but that they would ask whether anything further was necessary – otherwise he threatened that Macedonia and the Macedonians would no longer exist.\(^\text{41}\)


\(^{39}\) Anonymous, “Menduh Tači – Samo mrtov Makedonec e dobar Makedonec!?”.\(^\text{40}\)


\(^{41}\) Anonymous, “Menduh Tači – Samo mrtov Makedonec e dobar Makedonec!?”.\(^\text{41}\)
Whether DPA has the capacity or the will to resort to armed conflict is questionable. During the 2001 war, under the leadership of Arben Xhaferi, DPA sought to play a political role and denounced violence for the purpose of obtaining political change as extremism. However, it is noteworthy that it maintained close contact with the political representatives of the NLA. Since then the leaders of the NLA, under the banner of DUI, have enjoyed firm electoral support and established themselves as the most popular Albanian political party. DUI politicians have used what has become a form of ‘hero’ status from the war to achieve electoral success, while DPA is part of the older political scene perceived by many as corrupt and collaborative with Macedonian oppressors. Further, the Framework Agreement is seen as the achievement of the NLA, which risked the lives of its fighters while DPA and PDP functionaries negotiated in the comfort of the Presidential villas. Some of the pronouncements from DPA, such as threats of war, need to be seen within this context and in part as a response to DUI’s continued electoral success.

**Opposition to the Framework Agreement**

Regardless of its problems, the Framework Agreement is still supported by some within both communities. Support is greater within the Albanian community, and particularly among supporters of DUI. Among Macedonians, support for the Framework Agreement generally lies within the political class and academia. Research undertaken in south-western Macedonia during 2011 found that 42 per cent of participants did not believe that the Framework Agreement had a positive influence on Macedonian-Albanian relations. Of the Macedonian participants, 49 per cent agreed that the Framework Agreement did not have a positive influence on inter-community relations, while 48 per cent of Albanian participants believed that it did have a positive influence. According to the 2003 United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Early Warning Report, 69 per cent of Macedonian respondents found the constitutional changes adopted as a result of the Framework Agreement as undesirable, of which 33 percentage

---

42 NGO Activist, Interview with Author, Gostivar, 11 August 2013.
44 ibid, pp. 49-50.
points were of the view that they were completely unacceptable and justified armed confrontation with the Albanian community.\footnote{Kapital, “Early Warning Report”, United Nations Development Programme, 2003, p. 69, www.unpan1.un.org (accessed 23 August 2011).} In terms of the Framework Agreement itself, 55 per cent of Macedonian respondents did not support it, while 92 per cent of Albanian respondents did.\footnote{ibid, p. 70.}

Research conducted in 2007 (outlined in the table below) suggests that views of the Framework Agreement had solidified along ethnic lines. Taševska Remenski found that 91 per cent of Albanian participants either fully or partially accepted the Framework Agreement, whereas only 23 per cent of Macedonian participants partially accepted it.\footnote{Taševska Remenski, Albancite i Makedoncite, p. 240.} Similarly, she found that 82 per cent of Albanian participants believed that the Framework Agreement could establish equality between the two communities, while 83 per cent of Macedonian participants rejected that notion.\footnote{ibid, p. 241.} Finally, 79 per cent of Albanians claimed that the Framework Agreement could secure long-term peace within Macedonia, while 93 per cent of Macedonians did not believe it could.\footnote{ibid.}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\small
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Question} & \textbf{Response} & \textbf{Macedonians} & \textbf{Albanians} \\
\hline
View on Framework Agreement & Fully Accept & 4.4 & 44.4 \\
& Partially Accept & 23.3 & 46.6 \\
Can the Framework Agreement Establish Equality between Communities & Yes & 17.3 & 82.0 \\
& No & 82.7 & 18.0 \\
Will the Framework Agreement Secure Long-term Peace & Yes & 7.2 & 79.4 \\
& No & 92.8 & 20.6 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Attitudes towards the Framework Agreement}
\label{tab:attitudes}
\end{table}

Another key difference among Macedonian and Albanian supporters is that while Albanians consider that a number of provisions still require implementation, Macedonians consider the agreement as fully implemented and the matter closed.

On the Albanian side, DUI is a staunch supporter of the Framework Agreement, given that it was born out of an armed rebellion that DUI (then as the NLA) instigated against the existing constitutional order. The Framework Agreement is a key aspect of DUI’s mythology and status among the Albanian community as freedom fighters. It is also the basis of DUI’s claim to be the only Albanian political organisation capable of advancing the Albanian cause in Macedonia. Ali Ahmeti, for example, has promoted the Framework Agreement as a historic “document that regulates the relations between the two largest ethnic groups in Macedonia [and that] Macedonia is on the right track, having a much brighter future” for having implemented it.\(^\text{50}\) Ahmeti maintains that while the Framework Agreement is a positive development for Macedonia, there remain disagreements over some of the more vague provisions, primarily the issue of language usage.\(^\text{51}\) According to DUI, Albanian should be a second official language of administration, while Macedonian politicians argue that the Framework Agreement was referring only to municipalities with a significant Albanian population. The wording in the Agreement is sufficiently ambiguous to cause legitimate differences in opinion and some have contended that this was purposely done by international mediators to obtain agreement from both sides.\(^\text{52}\) Nevertheless, even Ahmeti remains cautious and warns that:

The Albanians need to be the owners of their own house, Albanians do not want to be tenants in their own homes, I have stated this a number of times. The Albanians want to be loyal towards the state, however, loyalty towards the state is dependent on the loyalty of the state towards its citizens.\(^\text{53}\)


\(^{51}\) ibid, p. 21.


\(^{53}\) Ahmeti, “Progresot kon multietnička država e vo dobra nasoka i treba da se vrednuva”, p. 19.
The late Abdurahman Aliti (former leader of PDP) generally agreed with Ahmeti. He has argued that the Framework Agreement is a good foundation for Macedonia and believed that it should be understood as a way of life or a philosophy of living.\(^4\) However, he did not rule out possible changes in the future to clarify what he believed were some ambiguous clauses in the agreement but neither did he specify which clauses needed clarification.\(^5\)

Macedonian supporters mostly stem from SDSM or are affiliated with it. For example, former Prime Minister Vlado Bučkovski calls post-Framework Agreement Macedonia a “model for multiethnic and multi-confessional societies”.\(^6\) Yet at the same time he admits that in his view the greatest threat facing Macedonia is religious intolerance.\(^7\) Denko Maleski, a member of the first Macedonian government post-independence and now an SDSM-affiliated political commentator, is also a strong supporter of the Framework Agreement. Maleski has argued that the Framework Agreement “positioned the Macedonian state on the right track towards a multiethnic state…[which has] created a positive climate for further economic and political development”\(^8\)

Others, while they may not see it as an ideal agreement, argue that it was necessary to end the 2001 war. Former Prime Minister and President (and a signatory to the Framework Agreement) Branko Crvenkovski argues that while its “contents were not ideal, and the method through which it was brought about unacceptable, it provided a foundation for a functioning multi-ethnic democracy”.\(^9\) Many supporters of the Framework Agreement, both Macedonians and Albanians, argue that without it Macedonia would not be able to join the European Union and NATO, and that not doing so would inevitably lead to civil

\(^5\) ibid, pp. 64-67.
\(^6\) V. Bučkovski, “NATO i EU garanti za Makedonija” in Klekovski, Ohridski Ramkoven Dogovor, p. 49.
\(^7\) ibid.
war.\textsuperscript{60} However, it appears that even with the Framework Agreement Macedonia is unable to obtain membership of these two organisations, largely due to its dispute with Greece, but also its inability to meet key reforms. Nor is membership any guarantor that inter-ethnic tensions will not continue with sporadic outbreaks of violence and possibly a future general war.

Opposition to the Framework Agreement, on the other hand, is quite strong. Though it varies from specific provisions to the entire agreement in general, and the circumstances under which it was negotiated and implemented. Opposition is mostly from the Macedonian community, which sees it as a severe loss of both security (particularly in relation to their identity) and sovereignty over what they consider to be their state. However, opposition also comes from within the Albanian community who see it as having failed to meet their aspirations.

Brunnbauer has argued that Macedonian public opinion is largely hostile to the Framework Agreement, considering it a threat to its identity, and that the strongest opposition was reserved for provisions dealing with the identity of the state that had more symbolic characteristics.\textsuperscript{61} Legislative changes in these areas, argued Brunnbauer, were “directly related to the way Macedonians view themselves and the character of the state”.\textsuperscript{62} In 2001 the Macedonian-language media viewed the Framework Agreement negatively and reported on it as the end of the Macedonian nation-state, calling it a great injustice and likening it to past injustices. For example, various editorials in leading newspapers called it a fatal indulgence to terrorism and argued that the Framework Agreement “would put the country’s future existence under threat because the real aims of the extremist Albanians were not the acquisition of rights but of territories”.\textsuperscript{63}

Many ordinary Macedonians saw the Framework Agreement in the light of previous unjust settlements, particularly the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), which

---

\textsuperscript{60} For example, see Mitevski, \textit{2001}, p. 260.
\textsuperscript{61} Brunnbauer, \textit{“The Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement”}, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{62} ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} ibid. p. 8.
partitioned ethno-historic Macedonia among its neighbours. This feeds into Macedonian security concerns and the perception that its neighbours still harbour territorial designs. The loss of Macedonia as a nation-state is viewed as another threat to the Macedonian identity, which is contested by Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia to varying degrees. Slaveski et al have agreed with this assessment noting that Macedonians were opposed to provisions in the Framework Agreement that dealt with the identity of the state, particularly in the Preamble, for which they had fought so hard. Given such circumstances, some have accurately noted that “Macedonian nationalism grows not so much from pride, but from desperation to survive”.

Vankovska has been particularly critical of the Framework Agreement. She has referred to both the agreement and post-conflict peace as a false peace promoted as a success story by the international community and local elites:

The official propaganda on the “magnificent success of the Ohrid Agreement” resembles the post-WWII paradigm of “Brotherhood and Unity”…Nowadays Macedonia is mostly praised as a new ‘miracle’ thanks to this document that allegedly miraculously averted civil war…However, instead of rushing into another miracle what the country’s citizens really need is an honest reality-check…[the Framework Agreement] is an example of how not to carry out conflict prevention, and even more – on how not to rush into claiming a fantastic success story in post-conflict resolution.

Vankovska has cited a number of problems with the Framework Agreement, concluding that she has no doubts as to the fact that it is only a transitional

solution.\textsuperscript{67} Among these problems, she observes that the agreement itself was negotiated under international pressure from the United States and the European Union that were not seen as neutral or unbiased facilitators, particularly by the Macedonian community.\textsuperscript{68} In addition, domestic political leaders suffered from a “catastrophic lack of legitimacy among their own constituencies”,\textsuperscript{69} made worse by their total disregard for public debate while rubber-stamping the relevant constitutional changes. Deliberations around the implementation of the Framework Agreement were largely limited to the governing coalition, deceitfully justified by the necessity to stabilise the political situation as quickly as possible.\textsuperscript{70} The fact that the Albanian community obtained the concessions that it did through an armed rebellion is criticised by Vankovska as well. She argues that this has reinforced the lesson learned in Kosovo – that violence can be a viable means of political change and that it has all but been legitimised in Macedonia as a political tactic, citing the lawlessness in parts of western Macedonia and the use of paramilitary groups at key political junctions for tactical gain.\textsuperscript{71} While Vasilev has generally been supportive of the Framework Agreement, he has stated that the means through which the accord was brought about has been the target of much criticism from within the Macedonian community:

Much of this criticism has predictably come from the Macedonian majority, which has felt bitter and humiliated at having to extend minority rights against the threat of Albanian violence.\textsuperscript{72}

Some Albanian politicians suggest that the same gains could have been made if the Albanian community continued to follow a political path. Menduh Thaçi, for example, has repeatedly asserted that his party would have achieved the same

\textsuperscript{67}ibid, p. 16.  
\textsuperscript{68}ibid, p. 8.  
\textsuperscript{69}ibid.  
\textsuperscript{71}Vankovska, “The Role of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Peace Process in Macedonia”, p. 11.  
\textsuperscript{72}G. Vasilev, “Multiculturalism in Post-Ohrid Macedonia: Some Philosophical Reflections”, \textit{East European Politics and Societies and Cultures}, Vol. 27, Iss. 4, 2013, p. 687.
concessions for Albanians in a coalition government with VMRO-DPMNE without the war inflicted by the NLA. Slaveski et al have argued that the Framework Agreement has only reinforced and increased the democracy deficit in Macedonia. They contended that implementation of the agreement has been relegated to the elite level, and it has become a “habit of political actors to resort to extra-institutional means and to undermine institutions to address inter-ethnic relations”. They argued that rather than blindly implementing the Framework Agreement Macedonia needs to address its fledging democratic system and only then can it hope to stabilise relations between the two communities. Slaveski et al have previously agreed with Vankovska in relation to the finality (or lack of) of the agreement, calling it naïve to assume that it could resolve the disputes between the two communities.

The fact that the Framework Agreement failed in its key goal of building a civic political culture and identity among Macedonian citizens has been heavily criticised. The Framework Agreement’s “group-specific measures mark a significant departure from a civic ideal of coexistence, because they cultivate an institutional environment where people participate not as citizens but as ethnic members”. This raises concerns about the kind of loyalties the state promotes – in this case loyalties tied to mutually exclusive ethnic groups rather than an all-encompassing civic nation. Popstefanov argues that the Framework Agreement

---

73 Ilievski and Taleski, “Was the EU’s Role in Conflict Management in Macedonia a Success?”, p. 359.
75 Slaveski et al, “Negotiation and Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Future of the Macedonian State”.
76 ibid.
77 ibid.
has only reinforced the fact that two separate nations exist in a single state competing for power against each other.\(^{80}\)

Former Prime Minister Ljubčo Georgievski has been one of the most vocal opponents of the Framework Agreement within the political establishment, to the point of proposing territorial divisions and a new international border between the two communities. Georgievski repeatedly sought to distance himself from the terms of the agreement. Prior to signing it Georgievski told the media that this was a “shameful capitulation and a shameful agreement under pressure from Albanian terrorist paramilitaries”.\(^{81}\) At the signing ceremony on 13 August 2001 he was outraged that Arben Xhaferi addressed the press in Albanian.\(^{82}\) For months afterwards Georgievski also threatened to put the Framework Agreement to a referendum, knowing that it would most likely be voted down by the Macedonian community, but refrained from doing so under international pressure.\(^{83}\) However, the inability of the Macedonian public to vote on such fundamental and substantive constitutional changes continues to aggrieve many within the Macedonian community. In his address to parliament on 3 September 2001 Georgievski argued that approving the Framework Agreement would send a message that terrorism pays.\(^{84}\) He continued to publicly denounce the agreement as “blackmail from the West who supported the ‘Taliban of Europe’ in its genocide against the Macedonians”.\(^{85}\)

In his *Thesis for the survival of the Macedonian nation and state*, Georgievski explicitly outlined his view of how disastrous he believed the Framework Agreement was for Macedonia and the Macedonian people. In it he stated that

---


\(^{82}\) Georgievski has repeatedly claimed that he was forced to sign the Framework Agreement by the international community, see K. Neškova, “Ramkovniot ne premeni, ama ne ne obedini”, *Nova Makedonija*, 1 July 2011, [www.novamakedonija.com.mk](http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk) (accessed 6 May 2015).


\(^{84}\) Friedman, “The Ethnopolitics of Territorial Division in the Republic of Macedonia”, pp. 213-214.

the agreement marked the end of Macedonia and the ideals for which Macedonian patriots had given their lives.\textsuperscript{86} He argued that: the Albanians had not fought for human rights but for fundamental changes to the character of the Macedonian state; that Macedonia was no longer a sovereign state (rather it was now an international protectorate); that Macedonia was no longer a unitary state; and that it was no longer a Macedonian state (rather it was a bi-national state shared with the Albanians).\textsuperscript{87} Georgievski has also lamented that the Framework Agreement has turned Macedonia into a de facto federal state with a Macedonian and Albanian component and that such federalisation will eventually result in a final territorial and political division between the two communities.\textsuperscript{88}

There is little doubt that for the most part the Macedonian community views the Framework Agreement as a Macedonian loss and an Albanian gain in what is a zero-sum game.\textsuperscript{89} A 2013 survey showed that only three per cent of participants (Albanians and Macedonians) thought that the Framework Agreement benefited Macedonians, while 47 per cent thought it benefited Albanians.\textsuperscript{90}

Some Albanian academics (such as Blerim Reka, Professor at the South East European University (SEEU)) have put forward proposals that seek significant constitutional changes far beyond the Framework Agreement. Reka has promoted his vision of the Macedonian state based on the principles of the Memorandum of the Forum of Albanian Intellectuals in Macedonia (which were submitted to President Gligorov in 1991).

Reka argues that constitutional reform should include:

- Equal constitutive status for the Macedonians and Albanians, which should be codified in the Preamble and the body of the Constitution;

\textsuperscript{86} Georgievski, “Thesis for the survival of the Macedonian nation and state”.
\textsuperscript{87} ibid. See also Neškova, “Ramkovniot ne premeni, ama ne ne obedini”.
\textsuperscript{88} Neškova, “Ramkovniot ne premeni, ama ne ne obedini”.
\textsuperscript{89} P. Rosulek, “Macedonia in 2011 – on the way towards stabilization or before the new ‘grand’ agreement?” in M. Risteska and Z. Daskalovski (eds.), \textit{One Decade after the Ohrid Framework Agreement: Lessons (to be) Learned from the Macedonian Experience}, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Skopje, 2011, p. 68.
• The equality of the Albanian language;
• Consensual democracy in decision-making on crucial issues of national and state importance. Both constitutive nations should approve decisions through a two-chamber Parliament (a Chamber of Citizens and a Chamber of Municipalities). The approval of laws by both constitutive nations would only be required for laws that applied to: the territorial integrity of the state; security and defence; entrance into international institutions, organisations or alliances; national and state symbols; the national budget and economic policy; and language and education at the tertiary level;
• A rotational two-year presidency to be elected by popular vote among the two constitutive nations; and
• The establishment of a special international status for Skopje.91

Menduh Thaçi has consistently called the Framework Agreement a ‘dead document’ and has suggested that there is no hope for a multi-ethnic society in Macedonia.92 Since 2009 he has called for a new agreement between the Macedonians and Albanians, seeking a non-territorial federalisation of the country, a bicameral legislature, and substantial veto rights in the lower house for Albanians.93 DPA incorporated many of Thaçi’s ideas for a new agreement into its policy platform. These include:

• Consensus-based decision-making between the two communities in which both can veto the other;
• Equal budgetary allocations between the two communities;
• Albanian as an official language of administration;
• One of the three key state positions (President, Prime Minister or Chairman of the Parliament) to be held by an Albanian representative;
• New municipal divisions and further decentralisation;
• Establishment of institutions for the development of Albanian culture;

93 International Crisis Group, Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict, p. 20.
• The removal of ethnic motifs from all state symbols;
• A commitment from the Macedonian Government to integrate into NATO and the European Union; and
• Punitive measures for the violation of the new agreement.94

These proposals have been rejected outright by the Macedonian community at large and DUI, which has largely tied its political fortunes to the success or failure of the Framework Agreement. However, smaller Albanian parties have supported the idea of a new agreement with their own specific proposals. Rufi Osmani, leader of the National Democratic Revival (NDR), has also argued that the problem between the Macedonian and Albanian communities was not resolved with the Framework Agreement,95 because it was essentially a short-term compromise to end the 2001 war.96 In particular, Osmani argues that the fact that the Albanian people and their language are referred to as those ‘over 20 per cent of the total population’ is offensive to the Albanians and unacceptable.97

Osmani would like to see what he refers to as a new ‘peace’ agreement in which the Albanian community would pledge not to seek self-determination by seceding from Macedonia (thereby guaranteeing its territorial unity) in exchange for new rights, including co-constitutive status for the Albanian community which he claims was not achieved with the Framework Agreement.98 Osmani’s vision of a new agreement would more closely resemble a bi-national state of the Macedonians and Albanians (as opposed to the multi-national state it has become under the Framework Agreement).99 He envisions a maximalist approach to decentralisation, while decision-making at the national level would be strictly consensus-based between the representatives of both communities.100

96 Rufi Osmani, Former Mayor of Gostivar and Leader of NDR, Interview with Author, Gostivar, 10 August 2013.
97 ibid.
98 ibid.
99 ibid.
100 ibid.
The newly established Albanian Besa (Oath) movement has also strongly come out against the Framework Agreement. In its political platform it has called for a complete redefinition of the entire political and legal system of Macedonia, seeking to establish a state based on a Macedonian-Albanian consensus system without the possibility of majoritisation.\(^{101}\) Besa also calls for a historic reconciliation between the Macedonians and Albanians, recognition of the autochthonous status of the Albanians in Macedonia and their contribution to the formation of the state, and consideration of the consequences of not undertaking these actions.\(^ {102}\)

During 2015 the Secretariat for the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (SIOFA), with the assistance of the European Institute of Peace and the OSCE, undertook an analysis of the Framework Agreement and its implementation. SIOFA made a number of controversial recommendations to amend the Framework Agreement. These included:

- amending the Preamble to the Constitution in line with the original civic model agreed to under the Framework Agreement (*Appendix Five*);
- establishing Albanian as an official language administration, equal to the Macedonian language;
- adopting the national and municipal budgets through the Badinter Principle (double majority vote);
- establishing a new ministry for the ‘political system and inter-ethnic relations’ responsible for oversight and implementation of the Framework Agreement;
- criminalising hate crimes and hate speech; and
- agreeing to some form of social security for the veterans of the 2001 war, and the families of those who died.\(^ {103}\)


\(^{102}\) ibid.

The report recommends that a new law be enacted to determine the meaning of the Amendment 5 to the Constitution. According to the report, this determination should specify that the Albanian language be pronounced an official language of administration, equal to the Macedonian language. In addition, it recommends that knowledge of the Albania-language, or another minority language, should be a prerequisite for state employment and promotion, particularly to senior levels. This would no doubt have a negative effect on Macedonians and their opportunities for employment in the state sector – at least in the short to medium term. It’s also likely to further aggravate inter-ethnic tensions related to issues discussed above such as competition over state resources, ownership of the state, and the use of minority languages.

Karakamiševa-Jovanovska has argued that the Framework Agreement has opened new disputes without having solved any of the causes of conflict between the two communities. She has contended that the Framework Agreement has three key problems: firstly, the model of power-sharing it instituted; secondly, it was not an adequate response to the 2001 war and it has increased tensions rather than decreasing them; and thirdly, it is likely that the Agreement created a binational state where political conflict has been reduced to a Macedonian-Albanian conflict to the detriment of other issues and other ethnic groups. Karakamiševa-Jovanovska has asserted that the Framework Agreement not only failed to overcome the strong ethnic divisions within Macedonian society, it actually increased the divisions.

Rosulek summed up the general view among the majority of Albanians arguing that they are not satisfied with the Framework Agreement and do not consider it to be a final ‘grand’ agreement with the Macedonians, but only as the first gain [emphasis in original], enabling them to formulate further demands at the expense of the Macedonians. This is not lost on the Macedonians and hence

104 ibid.
105 Karakamiševa-Jovanovska, Macedonian Constitutional Identity, p. 11.
106 ibid, pp. 11-12.
the desire among many of them to annul the Framework Agreement and repeal all constitutional and legislative changes that stemmed from it. In addition, the ideas of group rights and consensual decision-making are targeted as anti-democratic and a form of apartheid.

**Paramilitaries and Militias**

In a highly fragmented society like Macedonia where the state has only weak control over its territory (virtually none in some areas), the rule of law is essentially non-existent with corruption permeating dysfunctional police and military forces, and where sporadic violence is common place, security is a critical issue. Through both necessity and traditional social organisation, local communities across the country (but in western Macedonia in particular) have developed their own security arrangements.

Irregular paramilitary forces and militias have a long history in Macedonia within both the Macedonian and Albanian communities. Clan or communal village defence was a necessary part of life under Ottoman rule, continuing into the 20th century – particularly during the Balkan wars, the lawlessness of Vančo Mihailov’s Vrhovist interwar period and both world wars. Under Yugoslav rule a formalised doctrine of locality-based peoples’ defence was implemented (largely underpinned by the traditional clan networks). In 1969 Yugoslavia adopted a military doctrine named *Total People's Defence* (TPD).\(^{108}\) Each constituent republic established a Territorial Defence Force (TDF) as an integral part of the Yugoslav defence doctrine. The TDF consisted of able-bodied males and females between the ages of 15 and 65 and numbered up to 3 million people (across the federation) who would fight as irregular or guerrilla forces in wartime. The TDF concept focused on small, lightly armed infantry units fighting defensive actions on familiar local terrain. A typical unit was a company-sized detachment. More than 2,000 villages (clan-based), factories, and other enterprises organised such units to fight in their home areas.\(^{109}\) This official local defence system was

---


\(^{109}\) Ibid, p. 252.
relegated back to the extrajudicial sphere after the collapse of Yugoslavia and the onset of the Balkan wars. Since independence, and due to the threat of interstate and ongoing intrastate conflict, new nationalist paramilitary formations have also been established alongside, and sometimes as an extension of, the traditional clan or village-based militias.

Here a paramilitary unit refers to a militarised group whose organisational structure, command hierarchy, training, and function are similar to those of a professional military, but which is outside of state control, even though it may at times cooperate with the state and its formal armed forces. Militias, in this context, are loosely organised armed groups based on clan and/or village social structures, and exist for the purpose of local security and defence.

Many of these paramilitaries and militias have fluid links with the state through personnel that are either members or material supporters of a non-state group and are simultaneously employed by the state, and particularly the security services.110 These links exist between Albanian and Macedonian paramilitary/militia groups and the state. They generally serve to obtain favours and information (both ways), and training and weapons from the state by non-state groups.111 Training is usually obtained by members of non-state groups by formally enlisting in the military or police where weapons and other equipment are generally obtained informally through pilfering of state supplies.

It is difficult to give precise numbers of weapons in the country; however, weapons are readily available and relatively cheap.112 There has been a large influx of small arms from around the former Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria and other former eastern bloc countries, particularly since 2001. Firearm ownership

110 Non-Commissioned Officer, ARM, Interview with Author, 5 August 2013, Central Committee Member, Dostoinstvo, Interview with Author, Skopje, 15 July 2013, Officer, ARM, Interview with Author, 15 August 2013, Retired Colonel, ARM, Interview with Author, 22 July 2013, and Police Officer, Interview with Author, 1 August 2013.
111 ibid.
112 One estimate puts the number of small arms in Macedonia (mostly owned by civilians) at up to 750,000, see S. Grillot, “Guns in the Balkans: controlling small arms and light weapons in seven Western Balkan countries”, Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, Vol. 10, Iss. 2, p. 157. These estimates are highly conservative and very likely undercount the true number of small arms circulating the country.
across the country is the norm, especially in western Macedonia. Celebratory fire, normally during the summer months when most weddings are held, is a regular occurrence. Many Macedonians and Albanians ‘return fire’ (into the air) when they hear celebratory shooting from members of the other community. This is to signify that ‘we’re ready for you’.

Illegal arms in Macedonia are mostly smuggled through the western and north-western borders. The capacity of the Macedonian authorities is fairly limited and difficult terrain, due to mountainous and forested areas, makes it hard to maintain security. Corridors for illegal trafficking into Macedonia are found along the entire length of the border with Albania and Kosovo, including:

- both sides of Lake Ohrid, near the official border crossing of Kafasan;
- numerous mountain passes along the border with Albania, especially the region to the north and south of Debar;
- the numerous crossings on the Šar Mountain range into Kosovo;
- the northern part of the Skopje valley; and
- the Kumanovo-Lipkovo region.

Another key transport route into Macedonia is its eastern border with Bulgaria. Here the weaponry is primarily of Soviet/Russian origin. One international observer noted, “I cannot tell you how many arms are around, but I have a firm belief that arms can easily be found if a need arises”. Large caches of weapons are hidden in bunkers across the country and in particular across Albanian-populated areas with strong support for the various paramilitary groups. In November 2007, for example, the Macedonian police seized a large cache hidden in a bunker in the village of Prvce (Tearce municipality) in the remote Šar Mountain range on the Kosovo border. This was the third major confiscation in the area in two months and these weapons were reportedly brought in from

114 ibid, p. 35.
115 ibid.
116 ibid.
Albania on horseback. Another example of arms smuggling was the police capture in October 2007 of 15 coffins on horseback full of munitions, clothing, Kalashnikovs, bombs and guidelines for military training in the Albanian language.

A note on extended family groups, which will be referred to as clans here, is necessary at this juncture. While little contemporary literature is available in the Macedonian (or wider Balkan) context, there are studies from which some general insights can be obtained, particularly in relation to former eastern bloc countries. A clan is typically defined as a group of people who are related, or believe to be related, through a common ancestor. Writing on Soviet Central Asia, Collins argues that collectivisation, rather than destroying clan ties, pushed clan members together into the same state-run farms, committees and government structures. These new elites maintained the well-being of their own kinsmen by providing them with political, social and economic opportunities, and in return counted on their kinsmen’s personal loyalty to maintain their own status and positions. The situation across Yugoslavia was similar since its collapse, and mostly because of the economic and political chaos that has ensued, this continues to be the case across the Balkans more generally, and in Macedonia specifically.

Macedonians have a very rich and complex kinship structure. Kinship relations are traditionally patrilineal, meaning an individual's descent is established by tracing it exclusively through males from a founding male ancestor. However, scholars such as Schubert argue that kinship networks among Macedonians are much more complex, and while patrilineality is upheld for the purposes of inheritance of property, names and post-marital residence patterns, relationships with family are really bilateral in which relatives from both the mothers and

118 ibid.
119 ibid.
122 ibid.
fathers side are equally important.\textsuperscript{123} For example, the Macedonian language has an elaborate kinship (\textit{rodininstvo}) system, which includes commonly used words for relations up to five generations removed (great-great-grandparents and great-great-grandchildren).

In addition, Macedonians have two other types of important kinship relations – in-laws (\textit{svat}) and godparents (\textit{kumstvo}). Both are important kinships and can be considered as an extension of the clan. Marriage forms new bonds not only between the families of the couple, but their entire clans. All members of the other clan become svatovi (in-laws), not just the parents and siblings of the marriage partner. This bond turns into a kinship relationship and reciprocal favours, socio-economic assistance and (in some cases) political allegiances are formed. Each patriline is also related to another patriline through kumstvo. Inter-marriage is permitted only if kumstvo is dissolved, which is relatively rare. Kumstvo is inherited by the male members of the group and like the svatovi, it opens a network of people from whom a reciprocal system of important favours, socio-economic assistance and political alliances can be obtained.

The traditional structure of the Macedonian family is an extended family group known as a joint family structure (reminiscent of the historical \textit{zadruga} units),\textsuperscript{124} and this continues to be the norm. Macedonian households, particularly outside of the capital Skopje, still survive in this form with 3-4 generations typically living in the same household. This would normally include an older grandparent, parents, their married sons and their grandchildren. In many rural communities, family homes may be extended or compounds (single properties with multiple dwellings) are developed to accommodate additional family members and in many cases multiple brothers will build joint structures with separate living quarters for their own nuclear families and their parents. Family continues to

\textsuperscript{123} V. Schubert, “Refusing to Sing: Gender, Kinship and Patriliny in Macedonia”, \textit{The Australian Journal of Anthropology}, Vol. 16, Iss. 1, 2005, pp. 62-75.

\textsuperscript{124} The \textit{zadruga} refers to a type of rural community historically common across the Balkans. They were generally formed out of one extended family or a clan of related families. The \textit{zadruga} held its property, herds, and money in common usually with the oldest (patriarch) member ruling and making decisions for the family.
underpin political and socio-economic relations, and constitutes an economic survival strategy. The importance and reliance on the clan network has only strengthened since independence.

Much like the Macedonian community, Albanians also have a rich and complex clan system, and their social organisation is perhaps even more dependent on kinship networks than that of the Macedonians. Albanian familial structures are based on the exogamous patrilineal clan, with a closely knit social, political and economic system occupying a demarcated territory.125 Albanian households are complex and much larger than typical Macedonian households. In rural areas particularly, Albanian households have preserved the patriarchal system, where the oldest male member holds authority.126 Boys and girls are segregated at a young age, and men always hold authority over women.127

Outside of Skopje and a handful of smaller towns, Macedonia is largely rural with small villages littered across the country.128 A typical village usually has a few hundred residents, though some number up to a few thousand.129 These residents usually belong to half a dozen families, with many consisting of a single clan. Even in relatively larger villages, it is common for clans to co-locate in their own sectors within the village due to the pattern of ancestral property inheritance. The general breakdown in law and order, combined with socio-geographic settlement patterns among Macedonians and Albanians, have led to security arrangements based on either clan or village formations where most adult males either own or have access to firearms and other military equipment in times of crisis. This is particularly prominent in western Macedonia with the additional threat of inter-ethnic conflict. These militias are difficult to assess and

126 Brunnbauer, “Fertility, families and ethnic conflict”, p. 578
127 ibid.
128 Approximately 890,000 people, or 43 per cent of the population, live in rural areas, see World Bank, [website], www.worldbank.org (accessed 5 September 2016). However, most Macedonian ‘urban’ centres are small towns by Western standards and are highly rural.
129 Almost 60 per cent (961 villages) of Macedonian villages have between one and 300 residents, while a further 21 per cent (337 villages) have between 301 and 800 residents, see State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia, Census of Population, 2002.
quantify in either community. They are loosely organised, and their strength and capacity vary over time. Most households own firearms of various types and quality.\textsuperscript{130}

**Macedonian Paramilitaries and Militias**

Macedonian clan/village formations played a significant role in 2001, both within the war zone and on the effect they had in relation to the states’ ability to provide an adequate defence of its territory. Their primary purpose is local defence and it could be argued that their existence undermined the government’s war effort against the NLA. For example, during 2001 the Macedonian government ordered a general mobilisation, which in theory should have fielded up to 86,000 men.\textsuperscript{131} The vast majority of Albanian reservists ignored their mobilisation orders (while some joined the ranks of the NLA).\textsuperscript{132}

However, many Macedonian reservists also disobeyed their orders to mobilise. It’s estimated that only 50 per cent responded to their mobilisation orders,\textsuperscript{133} and there were cases of entire battalions refusing to mobilise.\textsuperscript{134} Examples include the Berovo and Demir Hisar battalions who turned up to their barracks, collected their arms and uniforms, and then (refusing to move to the front) returned home.\textsuperscript{135} An army reservist officer, who served in defensive positions in the Struga Valley during 2001, noted that:

> When the mobilisation was ordered, most of us only sent one man from each family, the rest stayed back to protect our homes. We couldn’t trust the government…they’re incompetent and if the Albanians attacked our villages, our homes would have been destroyed and our families turned


\textsuperscript{131} At the time Macedonia had a standing army of 16,000 active duty soldiers, 60,000 reservists and 10,000 police (who were theoretically capable of frontline operations), see C. Langton (ed.), *The Military Balance*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Vol. 101, Iss. 1, 2001, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{132} Arsovski, Kuzev and Damjanovski, *Vojnata vo Makedonija vo 2001 Godina*, pp. 116-122.

\textsuperscript{133} ibid, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{134} A battalion consists of 500 soldiers.

\textsuperscript{135} ibid, pp. 121-122. The Macedonian army has undertaken significant reforms since 2001. Until then its organisation was locality-based, much like the former TDF. As a result, members of battalions were largely from the same towns and their surrounds. The men involved in the Berovo and Demir Hisar battalions most likely lived in close proximity to each other (and most were probably related to some degree) and had the opportunity to agree on their actions prior to mobilising.
into refugees…even if the government sent in the army they’d all turn up drunk.\textsuperscript{136}

The same interviewee noted that he was out in the field for three months with a few hundred other reservists, stationed in the Jablanica mountain range overlooking the Struga Valley. Their orders were to shell Albanian villages (harbouring NLA fighters) surrounding Struga if the war spread to that district. According to him, these men were mostly Macedonians, with a handful of Vlachs. The importance of local defence was foremost in his mind:

We were there to punish the Albanians if they started anything, but most of the time we were too busy pilfering the new weapons that were brought in from the Ukrainians, Serbs and Bulgarians, and passing them on to our relatives and selling them to friends…for the first time since Yugoslavia the armoury was full and everyone from the top down was taking advantage of it.\textsuperscript{137}

Similar accounts on local security structures were provided by others. One retired army Colonel noted that:

The Albanians cannot be trusted, even in peacetime they stir up trouble. Just look at all the attacks they have launched since 2001 – Kondovo, Brodec, bombing police stations - and those poor kids executed in Smilkovci. We need to be able to protect ourselves. We need to be organised and armed. Our ability to protect our territory has declined since independence, our security forces have no discipline, no equipment, no training. They’re nothing but a bunch of drunken kids. And the government does not care – they’ve allowed our military to decline. That’s why we rely on ourselves and our neighbours. Each town and village needs to make its own arrangements – the Albanians have. If we don’t, they’ll destroy us.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{136} Reservist Officer, ARM, Interviews with Author, July-August 2013.
\textsuperscript{137} ibid. Corroboration of the widespread pilfering of police and military supplies can be found in numerous sources, for example, Arsovski, Kuzev and Damjanovski, \textit{Vojnata vo Makedonija vo 2001 Godina}, p. 121.
\textsuperscript{138} Retired Colonel, ARM, Interview with Author, 22 July 2013. For a detailed discussion on the state’s inability to provide security, see also B. Vankovska, “Ethnic-military relations in Macedonia”, p. 326.
The village of Radožda, with approximately 800 residents and located 10 km south of Struga on Lake Ohrid, is a Macedonian-populated village surrounded by the Albanian border to the south and west, and Albanian-populated villages to the north (Appendix Nine). Residents of Radožda have always expressed a sense of isolation from their Macedonian kin, resulting in a perception of insecurity. This sense of isolation and insecurity has also been borne out of their experience during the Second World War when Radožda and its residents were looted numerous times, and many massacred by the Albanian Balli Kombëtar forces operating in the Struga Valley. A resident of Radožda notes:

The Government has always left us to our own devices. We’re a small isolated village wedged between the Jablanica range on the one side and the lake on the other. We’re completely surrounded by Albanians – Kališta, Radolišta, Frangovo, Šum, even Struga. We saw what they did to us in the Second World War…I lost family in those massacres. The only thing stopping them from annihilating us then and now is our ability to fight. We’ll never give that up – we can’t.

The experience of the Second World War, the Balkan wars of the 1990s and the 2001 war in Macedonia reinforces the idea among many Macedonians, particularly in western regions, that organised local defence forces independent of government are indispensable. In 2001, for example, the village of Lešok was abandoned by the Macedonian Government. The government had ordered security forces to retreat under the terms of the July 2001 general ceasefire agreement. The NLA took this opportunity to take control of the village – one of the few Macedonian villages in the Šar region that had not been ethnically cleansed. However, prior to leaving the police defied the authorities and ensured that the village militia (200-strong) was well armed. A number of police reservists originating from Lešok defied their orders and remained in the village

---

139 J. Trifunoski, Ohridska-Struška Oblast, Srpska Akademija za Nauki i Umetnosti, Belgrade, 1992, pp. 159-162.
140 Radožda Resident, Interview with Author, 23 and 25 July 2013.
142 ibid.
to fight the NLA.\textsuperscript{143} While the battle for Lešok lasted two weeks, Macedonian authorities refused to allow the police and army to engage in the fighting.\textsuperscript{144} During the attack Lešok was isolated and surrounded by NLA forces in the neighbouring villages of Varvara, Brezno, Slatino and Neprošteno. One local recalls:

At first our goal was to defend the village to the last man – we didn’t want to leave our homes, everything we owned, to the Albanians. We tried to evacuate as much of our families as we could before the terrorists attacked us – some made it out, others didn’t. We fought as hard as we could…in the end we were being overrun and because we still had women and children with us we finally decided to leave…when we returned after the war everything had been destroyed…they had ransacked everything. We would never have been forced out if those traitors on Vodno had let the army and police back in.\textsuperscript{145}

After a brief hiatus during Yugoslav rule Macedonian nationalist paramilitaries began re-establishing themselves in the newly independent republic as early as 1992. The first was VMRO-DPMNE’s Macedonian National Guard, formed during the negotiations between the Macedonian leadership and the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) in relation to the latter’s withdrawal from Macedonia.\textsuperscript{146} Its stated aim was to resist the JNA if it refused to withdraw from the republic.\textsuperscript{147} With the establishment of the Macedonian armed forces, the Macedonian National Guard was disbanded.

The 2001 war saw an upsurge in both paramilitary groups and volunteers. There was a mixture of motivations behind these forces, ranging from patriotic, party-political, and criminal factors. Many of these groups attracted police and army

\textsuperscript{143} Čoko Lazarevski from Lešok was one of the police reservists that stayed behind to defend the village alongside the Lešok militia. He was wounded in battle on 23 July 2001 and died the following day.

\textsuperscript{144} Anonymous, “Teroristite go sardisaa Lešok, seleite sami se branat”.

\textsuperscript{145} Resident of Lešok, Interview with Author, 12 August 2013. Vodno is a peak overlooking Skopje where many of the political class own villas.


\textsuperscript{147} ibid.
reservists (mostly conscripts) who either viewed the state as weak and their government as treasonous, or sought additional income that was available through the paramilitaries (particularly those attached to organised crime and political parties).

Paramilitaries such as Paramilitary 2000, United Macedonian Forces (MOS), Todor Aleksandrov, the Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (MRO) and the Blue Birds were formed by nationalists seeking to protect the homeland from what they considered a terrorist/secessionist movement. Some of these groups were partially armed by the state.\textsuperscript{148} While there was some cooperation with the state in terms of training and supply, and coordination with the armed forces on the battle field, command and control of these groups fell outside of the states’ influence. This was most apparent when the government was nearly overthrown by thousands of angry protesters, many of which were paramilitaries who had just returned from Aračinovo having witnessed the government allow US forces to extract NLA fighters from the village.

Paramilitary 2000 especially frustrated the Macedonian Government’s attempts to win diplomatic support in early July 2001 by engineering a mass cleansing of Albanians from the Macedonian capital. The paramilitary group delivered pamphlets to Albanian shopkeepers across Skopje, warning them to leave or be killed and threatening retaliation against Macedonians who continued to do business with Albanians. Within 10 days most store owners had closed down and up to 30,000 more Albanians had left Skopje for Kosovo.\textsuperscript{149} It was also reported that during that time up to 50 Albanian journalists, intellectuals and business owners had disappeared.\textsuperscript{150} Others, like the Vipers, saw no action on the


The most notorious of all the paramilitaries were perhaps the Lions. The Lions were originally conceived of by the government as a highly-trained rapid reaction unit to undertake anti-terror operations. It was to consist of mainly military and some police personnel and be jointly controlled by the army and police. However, after the order was given to form the new unit the General Staff of the Army informed the President that all their soldiers were already in combat positions or securing the state’s borders.\footnote{S. Ordanoski, “Lions and Tigers: The Militarisation of the Macedonian Right”, Conflict Studies Research Centre, 2004, p. 23, http://isndemo.atlasproject.eu (accessed 24 July 2010).} At the same time they insisted that it should be comprised of professional soldiers and not reservists. Prime Minister Georgievski and Interior Minister Boškovski refused to cooperate with the President’s initiative for an army unit and by claiming that the military was incapable of timely action, they organised their own police unit to fill the role.\footnote{ibid.}

While Boškovski obtained government sanction to form the new police unit, he created its command and control structure outside of the Interior Ministry and through the VMRO-DPMNE party.\footnote{For example, see Ordanoski, “Lions and Tigers”, Phillips, Macedonia, pp. 157-160, and E. Rubin, “A simple NATO mission faces bad faith and Lions”, The Christian Science Monitor, 11 September 2001, www.balkanpeace.org (accessed 2 May 2016).} Although the unit ultimately answered to Boškovski as Interior Minister, it was a political party paramilitary. Its members, all Macedonians, numbered 7,000 at its height, and were primarily drawn from police and army reservists (who were transferred to the Interior Ministry). Many also reportedly had substantial criminal records and were VMRO-DPMNE party members,\footnote{Ordanoski, “Lions and Tigers”, p. 24.} though large numbers of civilian volunteers were also recruited and organised in units based on their place of origin.\footnote{Former Lions Member, Interview with Author, 12 August 2013.}
The Lions have been implicated in numerous kidnappings and intimidation of both Albanians and Macedonians. For example, on 11 October 2002 (over a year after the war ended) approximately 30 members of the Lions entered the Albanian-populated village of Presil (Kruševo municipality) at around 5:40am. The paramilitaries allegedly opened fire randomly on homes across the village and this continued for 30 minutes. Before leaving they also allegedly stopped in front of the local mosque and fired at it, causing significant damage.

However, paramilitary forces such as the Lions (alongside local militias), reversed the tide of the war in 2001. Their brazenness was not lost on the NLA or the general public. A Tetovo-based journalist was quoted as stating, "when you see these guys fight, you can only ask: where were they hired? In Idrizovo or Demir Hisar?" (referring to the notorious jail in Idrizovo and the Demir Hisar Psychiatric Hospital). Nevertheless, their cooperation and loyalty to the government were transient. Even the Lions who were led by Boškovski and the ruling VMRO-DPMNE felt it their duty to disobey their superiors when they thought the nation was at stake. While the army and regular police forces suffered continuous defeats, and the government withdrew regular forces from the frontline to abide by ceasefires, it was the local militias and paramilitaries that defended frontline villages and stopped the advance of the NLA in the Northwest during its July 2001 offensive.

Zoran Dalevski, a commander in the Lions and a VMRO-DPMNE activist, noted that during the July NLA offensive the Lions were protecting the Prime Minister and the Parliament building from attack by thousands of Macedonians enraged with the government. Dalevski recalled:

They [the protesters] provoked us and said, 'Go protect Macedonians,' and they were right. So we pressured our commanders. Either send us, or we

---

158 ibid.
159 ibid.
go on our own…for 17 days we fought with no reinforcements just 50 meters away from the NLA. When we asked the Army for help, nobody came. We weren't well trained, but a lot of us are a little 'gone,' and we held out.161

In essence, most of the volunteers in these paramilitaries – even in the Lions – were nationalists seeking to protect their ethnic kin and homeland first and foremost. The paramilitaries, much like the local militias, did not trust the government and considered politicians as corrupt and treasonous. Their entire raison d’etre was to defend the republic because they saw the state and the regular police and military as incapable of doing so. When they saw a government or military decision which they believed was not in the interest of Macedonia’s national defence, they acted independently. One former member of the Lions was forthright in his condemnation of the Macedonian Government:

> These people in the government are clowns. They’re incompetent and corrupt. They don’t care about this country. They have enough money to leave if it all comes apart. But where will I go? Where will I take my family? No one wants us; this is all we have left. We’ve been sold out enough. If we didn’t take action in 2001 and left it to those fools, we wouldn’t even have this. Their answer to Albanian bullets was duck and cover or just retreat. That’s not how you fight battles.162

By their nature, it is difficult to determine whether some of these paramilitaries still exist or whether those that do are fully functional and have the capacity to deploy a large number of men quickly. However, it is quite certain that in a crisis situation some of the paramilitaries would be able to mobilise and enter the conflict relatively quickly. While there are varying views on them, two Macedonian groups have the potential to quickly organise – United Macedonian Forces (MOS) and Dostoinstvo. MOS, led by Ljubiša Nastevski, regularly provides communiques through sympathetic media outlets and is frequently seen in public at various rallies, protests and confrontations with the Albanian

161 Rubin, “A simple NATO mission faces bad faith and Lions”.
162 Former Lions Member, Interview with Author, 19 July 2013.
community. At public rallies and demonstrations, its members are usually dressed in their distinct black uniforms and have on occasion appeared in full battle dress, armed with Kalashnikov rifles and holstered pistols. The group also keeps a fairly visible social media presence and appears to function in a largely decentralised manner with dozens of local chapters across the country. MOS is loosely affiliated with various right-wing political organisations and sees people like Johan Tarčulovski as national heroes. MOS also claims to have many former members of the Lions and veterans from 2001 among its ranks. Its rallying cry can be seen posted across the country and is included in all of its official communiques:

We, the Macedonian crusaders, are prepared to defend our fatherland, our faith and our people with our lives.\(^{163}\)

Dostoinstvo, the other paramilitary group is a peculiar case. Dostoinstvo does not claim to be a paramilitary group, rather an association of veterans from 2001 that also welcomes as members all active, reserve, and past police and armed forces personnel. Dostoinstvo was established shortly after the war by former General-Major Stojanče Angelov, commander of the Police’s Special Operations Unit, known as the *Tigers*. Angelov quickly gained a strong following among veterans and serving military and police officers, particularly because of his political activities around obtaining better conditions and pensions for veterans. Originally, Dostoinstvo was aligned to VMRO-DPMNE; however, as it became clear to its leadership that VMRO-DPMNE was both unwilling to consider its concerns and politically aligned with DUI, its former enemies (NLA) on the battlefield, Dostoinstvo broke ties with the party. Eventually Dostoinstvo formed its own political wing by the same name that was registered as a political party in 2011 with Angelov as its President.

Dostoinstvo, the veteran’s association, claims that it has up to 14,000 members.\(^{164}\) Its many public rallies certainly support this figure – thousands of

Dostoinstvo members regularly turn up to political rallies and peaceful protests in support of Angelov and his various political causes, marching in military formation (though dressed in civilian clothing). Over the past 15 years, Angelov has regularly appeared on national television and in print media (in addition to Dostoinstvo’s and his own personal social media accounts) speaking on a variety of subjects including government corruption, democracy, the rule of law, and primarily the welfare of veterans and their families, bringing former NLA war criminals to justice and annulling the Framework Agreement. With thousands of well-trained (and undoubtedly well-armed) men behind it, Dostoinstvo has repeatedly warned Albanian elites and paramilitaries, and the Macedonian Government that it will defend the republic, its constitutional order and the Macedonian people, with or without the support of its corrupt officials. For example, in 2014 Angelov responded to renewed threats by Albanian paramilitaries that they were here [in Macedonia] and ready for another war with the following:

You might be here, but so are we. We are the Macedonian guardians from 2001! We are dissatisfied, angry and rabid, but always prepared to defend our Macedonian state and our Macedonian people. This time it won’t be like 2001, this time we will clean out our own ranks first and then you will feel the Macedonian wrath!\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{164} Central Committee Member, Dostoinstvo, Interview with Author, Skopje, 15 July 2013. This figure was corroborated with other members of the association during separate conversations with the author. 
Table 12. Macedonian Nationalist Paramilitaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paramilitary</th>
<th>Years Active</th>
<th>Estimated Strength</th>
<th>Area of Operation</th>
<th>Affiliations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonian National Guard</td>
<td>1991-1993</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>VMRO-DPMNE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lions</td>
<td>2001-2004</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>VMRO-DPMNE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Berets</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>VMRO-DPMNE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paramilitary 2000</td>
<td>2001-unknown</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>Skopje</td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vipers</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>Vardar Region</td>
<td>Organised Crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Macedonian Forces (MOS)</td>
<td>2001-current</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dostoinstvo</td>
<td>2002-current</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Dostoinstvo Political Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todor Aleksandrov</td>
<td>2000-unknown</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Macedonian National Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonian Revolutionary</td>
<td>2001-unknown</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Eastern Macedonia</td>
<td>TMRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation (MRO)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Birds</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Research.

Albanian Paramilitaries and Militias

Much like the Kosovo Albanian clans, Albanian clans in Macedonia traditionally have small armed units for the protection of their villages and compounds.\(^{166}\) Albanians living in the isolated mountainous regions of western Macedonia are left outside of the reach of the state. Albanian villagers rarely encounter police, children are often not sent to school, and very few pay taxes.\(^{167}\) An Albanian interviewee from an isolated village in the Gostivar region discussed the self-sufficiency of his small community:

We’ve lived outside of the state system for centuries and we probably always will. It’s clear that the Macedonians do not want to share the state with us anyway…and to be honest, we cannot trust them. I think given the chance, they would be worse than Milošević, worse than Hitler even. We

---

\(^{166}\) Tsekov, “Sons of the Eagle”, p. 8.

have to be able to protect ourselves and control our territory…this is why we are armed…it comes down to self-defence.\textsuperscript{168}

An ethnic Albanian officer in the Macedonian army held a slightly different view on working within the system:

More and more Albanians are joining the police and army. Before it was not an option – the Macedonians did not want us and we did not want to serve a regime that oppressed us. But now after Ohrid [the Framework Agreement] they have to accept us in the military…and we have realised that we can use the state for military supplies and training, just like they do [Macedonians]. Why should they benefit and take everything when we can take our share as well? We can use the state for our own interests too.\textsuperscript{169}

The first Albanian paramilitary organisation to come to light after independence was the All-Albanian Army (AAA) in 1993. It was believed to have existed since 1991 and some of its organisers are believed to have been PDP functionaries, including the then Deputy Minister of Defence, Hussein Huskaj, and the PDP Secretary-General, Midhat Emini.\textsuperscript{170} According to the Interior Ministry, the group was funded by the Albanian diaspora and the police seized 600,000 DM, 300 rifles, thousands of rounds of ammunition and a list of 21,000 recruits.\textsuperscript{171} Ten organisers were arrested, including the officials noted above of which Huskaj was believed to be the leader, and sentenced to prison.\textsuperscript{172} Stojan Andov, who was President of the Parliament at the time, wrote that some of the accused claimed that the formation of the paramilitary group was agreed to by the then Prime Minister, Nikola Kljušev, and its role was to assist in defending the state

\textsuperscript{168} Local Militia Leader, Interview with Author, 11 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{169} Officer, ARM, Interview with Author, 15 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{171} ibid.
\textsuperscript{172} Mithat Emini, former Secretary-General of PDP, and Hasan Agusi were sentenced to eight years in prison; Ejupi Rezni, Selam Elmazi and Sinasi Redzepi to seven years in prison; Hussein Huskaj, the Deputy Defence Minister, Akif Demiri and Abdiselam Arslani to six years in prison; and Burim Murtezani and Eugen Cami to five years in prison, see Shea, \textit{Macedonia and Greece}, pp. 230-231.
from possible Yugoslav invasion.\textsuperscript{173} John Shea corroborates this, claiming that President Gligorov had encouraged both Macedonians and Albanians to form paramilitary forces prior to the departure of the Yugoslav army and the establishment of the Macedonian armed forces.\textsuperscript{174} Once the Yugoslav army had withdrawn, Gligorov apparently retracted his support for these groups and ordered the prosecution of its organisers.\textsuperscript{175} Other sources suggest that it was unknown to the Macedonian Government and may have even been clandestinely operating within the structures of the newly formed Macedonian army.\textsuperscript{176}

The next known Albanian group was the National Liberation Army (NLA), which fought against Macedonian government forces in 2001. It was established in 1999 by Ali Ahmeti (its Supreme Commander and political representative), his uncle (Fazli Veliu) and Emrush Xhemaili – all three of them Albanians from Macedonia. They were all members of the Executive Council of the People’s Movement of Kosovo (PMK) which was founded in May 1982 and which later created the KLA in 1993 at a meeting in Kičevo, Macedonia (Ahmeti is from Zajas, Kičevo municipality).\textsuperscript{177} This meeting was attended by Ahmeti, Veliu, Xhemaili, and Hashim Thaçi who went on to become the leader of the KLA.\textsuperscript{178} Ahmeti, Veliu and Xhemaili were all involved in the war in Kosovo, which likely led them to conclude that the same strategy could be replicated in Macedonia.

The NLA was estimated to comprise approximately 5,000 to 7,000 men (including logistical support) and was organised into six brigades.\textsuperscript{179} The majority of combatants were from Macedonia; however, these were supplemented by volunteers from Kosovo and Islamist veterans from the wars in

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{174} Shea, \textit{Macedonia and Greece}, p. 230.
  \item \textsuperscript{175} ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{176} L. Mincheva, “The Albanian Ethnoterritorial Separatist Movement: Local Conflict, Regional Crisis”, \textit{Nationalism and Ethnic Politics}, Vol. 15, Iss. 2, p. 227.
  \item \textsuperscript{178} ibid.
\end{itemize}}
Bosnia and Kosovo. A leaked Interior Ministry report also outlined the existence of two ‘mujahedeen’ units, one numbering 120 fighters and the other 250 fighters, which operated outside of the NLA structures in northern Macedonia. According to this report the majority were Albanians from Macedonia and Albania, but also included fighters from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Jordan, and Chechnya.

Table 13. National Liberation Army (NLA) Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brigade</th>
<th>Region Active</th>
<th>Commander(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief of General Staff</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Gzim Ostreni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111th (Reserve)</td>
<td>Crna Gora</td>
<td>Samedin Xhezairi (Commander ‘Xoxha’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hamdi Ndrecaj (Commander ‘Panteri’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daut Redzepi (Commander ‘Leka’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112th</td>
<td>Tetovo</td>
<td>Daut Haradinaj (Commander ‘Maliki’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sami Shakiri (Commander ‘Sami’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113th ‘Ismet Jašari’</td>
<td>Kumanovo</td>
<td>Fadil Nimani (Commander ‘Tigri’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nazim Bushi (Commander ‘Adaši’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114th</td>
<td>Skopje</td>
<td>(Commander ‘Musi’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115th</td>
<td>Raduša</td>
<td>Talat Xhaferi (Commander ‘Forina’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116th</td>
<td>Gostivar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Research.

The NLA had claimed responsibility for a number of bomb attacks on police stations and other targets across Macedonia during 1999-2000, and it is believed that Veliu had organised earlier attacks on police stations in 1998-1999. By January 2001 the NLA had initiated a systematic campaign of attacks, which escalated into a full-scale insurgency after the battle of Tearce (Tetovo municipality) on 22 January 2001. In the beginning its aims were ill-defined and contradictory, with different field commanders issuing varying demands ranging from improved constitutional rights to outright secession and unification.

---

182 Dettmer, “Al-Qaeda’s links in the Balkans”, pp. 22-23
184 ibid.
with Kosovo and/or Albania. By April 2001 the NLA had more clearly aligned its political aspirations with those of DPA and PDP, and in May 2001 the Prizren Agreement was signed between the three. This agreement later became the basis of the DPA and PDP negotiating position for the Framework Agreement.

While the NLA was officially disbanded in October 2001, it’s unlikely that this actually happened. Most NLA fighters joined DUI as the core of the new party’s membership and many of the NLA’s former commanders became high-ranking party officials. The NLA’s core personnel and structure remains. In fact, it has been reported that many former NLA commanders now head DUI’s local party branches, which are stacked with former NLA fighters.\(^{185}\) It is also evident that it maintains some security structures as DUI ‘supporters’ are frequently engaged in armed battles with its rival, the Albanian National Army (ANA).\(^{186}\) NATO launched a 30 day mission named Operation ‘Essential Harvest’ in August 2001, after the Framework Agreement was signed, to collect NLA weapons that were voluntarily surrendered. However, this was largely considered a farcical operation, receiving approximately 3,900 small arms.\(^{187}\) Estimates suggest that the NLA (including the personal weapons of its fighters) could have possessed up to 100,000 small arms,\(^{188}\) which would be more in line with the vast amount of weaponry available across the country and the Balkan region more generally. As a comparison, the Interior Ministry has noted that between 2003 and 2007 it had seized over 20,000 weapons (including caches it had found in various bunkers across north-western Macedonia).\(^{189}\) NATO also conceded that about 30 per cent of the weapons collected were not serviceable,\(^{190}\) and many more were either of vintage design, including some World War II era firearms, or unusable

\(^{185}\) Taleski, *From Bullets to Ballots*, pp. 13-14.
\(^{189}\) Arsovskas and Kostakos, “Illicit arms trafficking and the limits of rational choice theory”, p. 368.
for combat, such as hunting rifles and shotguns. Even Menduh Thaçi, Ahmeti’s key political opponent, during a subsequent disarmament drive in November 2003 visited villages in Northern Macedonia like Kondovo and Saraj to urge the locals to hold on to their arms.\textsuperscript{191}

After the Framework Agreement and the inclusion of the NLA (through DUI) into the political system, other groups began to appear. One of these includes the \textit{Albanian National Army} (ANA), which is believed to have been founded in 1999 and may have taken part in the 2001 war.\textsuperscript{192} For example, the ANA took responsibility for the 8 August 2001 ambush on the Skopje-Tetovo highway that resulted in the death of ten soldiers, among a number of other incidents.\textsuperscript{193}

Some sources suggest that the ANA includes many former NLA fighters who felt betrayed by the peace process and by Ahmeti opting for a watering down of their original aims. The ANA is reportedly seeking to create a greater Albanian state across the region – one that would include Albania, Kosovo, north-western Macedonia, south-eastern Montenegro, the Preševo Valley in Serbia, and north-western Greece.\textsuperscript{194} They view the Framework Agreement as a betrayal of this vision and their senior commanders becoming politicians within the corrupt Macedonian political system as collaborators and traitors.\textsuperscript{195} The Albanian National Union Front (ANUF), headed by Gafur Adili (Commander Valdet Vardari), allegedly commands the ANA. Adili has been quoted as stating:

\begin{quote}
From the first moment the Ohrid agreement was signed, ANA publicly stated that we do not recognise it and judge it as harmful and treacherous…[Ahmeti entered into a] coalition with the Macedonian
\end{quote}

---


\textsuperscript{193} Matveeva et al, \textit{Macedonia}, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{194} Stojarova, \textit{Albanian national armies}.

occupiers of Albanian ethnic land. We have no trust in the occupiers and their Albanian collaborators.  

Jane’s Intelligence Review estimates the ANA presence in Macedonia at about 200, and possibly up to 2,000 in the tri-border zone of Macedonia, Kosovo, and southern Serbia. The group allegedly fields two Divisions in Macedonia, the Skanderbeg Division and the Tahir Sinani Division. Some sources suggest that a number of Albanian village militias have aligned with the ANA, which could significantly boost their numbers. Other sources suggest that the ANA includes fighters from now disbanded groups such as the KLA and the Liberation Army of Preševo, Medvedje and Bujanovac (UCPMB). This is a possibility given the territory that the ANA operates on.

While it is not believed to have widespread support among the general population, the ANA’s activities have been devastating. Between 1999 and 2003 it is believed that the ANA had instigated up to 6,571 attacks across the region, killing up to 1,206 people and injuring up to 1,324 others. It has targeted Macedonian institutions and the police in numerous attacks across the country, including bomb attacks in Skopje, Struga and Kumanovo. In a February 2000 communique the ANA claimed responsibility for an attack on a Macedonian police station in Aračinovo that resulted in the death of four police officers a month earlier. In late 2001 it kidnapped nearly 100 civilians from buses and cars along a highway outside of Tetovo and caused the death of three policemen. Other claimed attacks include a bomb blast on 31 October 2002.

---

196 Anonymous, “Macedonia: Militants Threaten Renewed Conflict”.
200 Institute Anonymous, “Macedonia: Militants Threaten Renewed Conflict”.
201 Stojarova, Albanian national armies.
203 Matveeva et al, Macedonia, p. 29.
204 Eldridge, “Playing at peace”, p. 68.
outside the Parliament building in Skopje,\textsuperscript{205} the 14 September 2002 assassination attempt on Interior Minister Boškovski,\textsuperscript{206} and the 14 February 2003 bomb outside the Court of Original Jurisdiction in Struga.\textsuperscript{207} These attacks have continued and it is possible that the ANA (or rogue ANA members) was responsible for the Kumanovo clashes on 9-10 May 2015; though, the fighters in Kumanovo claimed they were NLA members.

The \textit{Albanian Republican Army (ARA)}, also known as \textit{Army of the Republic of Ilirida}, is believed to be the military wing of Nevzat Halili’s Albanian National Movement of Ilirida (ANDI). It appears that the ARA was established in 2002, two years earlier than its political wing.\textsuperscript{208} It is currently thought to have about 200 fighters, many of them ex-NLA members.\textsuperscript{209} Reports suggest that it had close ties with the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), the Kosovo Albanian security forces established under NATO auspices out of former KLA,\textsuperscript{210} and ANA members.\textsuperscript{211}

Various smaller groups appear in Macedonia from time to time. One example is the \textit{Krasniqi group}. Agim Krasniqi was a commander in the NLA during the war, but remained active after the peace deal with a band of approximately 80 fighters based in the village of Kondovo, just outside of Skopje.\textsuperscript{212} Krasniqi occupied the village of Kondovo and declared it off-limits for Macedonian police from July to December 2004. One of his stated demands was to be amnestied like the other NLA war veterans.\textsuperscript{213} The government refused to accede to his demands and Krasniqi retaliated by threatening to bomb Skopje.\textsuperscript{214} The situation was finally defused by joint DPA/DUI led negotiations. However, Krasniqi again occupied

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{205} Matveeva et al, \textit{Macedonia}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{206} Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, \textit{Macedonia: Existence of ethnic Albanian nationalist or extremist groups}, 13 February 2006, \url{www.unhcr.org} (accessed 5 January 2010).
\textsuperscript{207} ibid.
\textsuperscript{209} Matveeva et al, \textit{Macedonia}, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{210} Naegele, “Authorities Allege Existence of New Albanian Rebel Group”.
\textsuperscript{211} Grillot et al, \textit{A Fragile Peace}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{212} Kondovo is the site of the madrassa with radical Islamist links, including Ramadan Shiti who cooperated with Krasniqi.
\textsuperscript{213} Anonymous, “Getting to the Bottom of Kondovo”.
\textsuperscript{214} ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Kondovo from February to August 2005. The then SDSM Government was reluctant to move against him as he had the backing of its coalition partner DUI. After the second occupation it appears that the Macedonian Government negotiated a settlement with Krasniqi, as he agreed to stand down and appear in court some time later.\textsuperscript{215} When he did the judge dismissed all outstanding international and domestic warrants against him.\textsuperscript{216} This caused uproar among the Macedonian community; however, Krasniqi disappeared until he was arrested in 2008, along with eight others, for violence related to the Parliamentary elections and for possession of illegal weapons and narcotics.\textsuperscript{217} In October 2008 he was sentenced to prison for six and a half years.\textsuperscript{218}

Ramadan Shiti and Lirim Jakupi are another case in point. These two men led a small armed band known as the \textit{Jakupi Group}, with links to the ANA. Jakupi was wanted in Macedonia for launching a rocket at a police station, killing a taxi driver, wounding three police officers, placing the village of Volkovo (Skopje municipality) under siege, and threatening to bomb Skopje.\textsuperscript{219} Shiti was a Wahhabi extremist and is believed to have been previously involved with Wahhabi leaders such as Zenun Berisha and Ramadan Rama\textsuperscript{dani} in their attempts to take control of the Islamic community in Macedonia. It is believed that various members of the group were veterans from across the region, including the wars in Kosovo, the Pre\textsupersvo Valley, and Macedonia.

On 7 November 2007 a day long battle, codenamed \textit{Operation Mountain Storm}, ensued in the villages of Brodec, Ve\textsupersv\textsupersa and Vejce (Tetovo municipality) near the Kosovo border. Shiti and Jakupi fought in the village of Brodec where the heaviest fighting took place. Six militants were killed, including Shiti who

\textsuperscript{215} Once Krasniqi and his group had left Kondovo the police found a large cache of weapons, including mortars, heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, bombs, and landmines, see Nikolovski, “Macedonian Opposition Parties Cry Foul Over Government’s Handling of Armed Standoff”.

\textsuperscript{216} ibid.

\textsuperscript{217} Anonymous, “Agim Krasniki izveden pred istražen sudija”.

\textsuperscript{218} Stanković, “Agim Krasniki osuden na 6,5 godini zatvor”.

\textsuperscript{219} Anonymous, “Eight Albanians dead in clash with Macedonian police”.

reportedly died as a suicide bomber during the operation, and 13 were arrested.\textsuperscript{220} Large quantities of weapons were seized, which according to police could have armed over 600 soldiers.\textsuperscript{221} The seized weaponry included rifles and ammunition, artillery pieces, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and laser-guided anti-aircraft missiles; most of the arms were of Chinese, Yugoslav, and Russian origin.\textsuperscript{222} Bunkers had been dug into the mountainside above Brodec, stocked with sleeping bags, food rations, and weapons.\textsuperscript{223} The structures also included improvised beds and shower cabins.\textsuperscript{224} The men had been conducting night-time uniformed patrols and roadblocks in the weeks leading up to the battle, and were clearly preparing for a prolonged armed confrontation.

Another smaller group calling itself the \textit{Skopje Liberation Army (SLA)} appeared in 2014. Some have suggested the possibility that this group is either responsible for (or linked to) the execution of five Macedonians in Smilkovci in April 2012. This has been suggested because in July 2014 the SLA threatened to start attacking police if the men convicted for the executions were not freed.\textsuperscript{225} While this did not eventuate, mass protests and riots took place across the country, with the largest in Skopje, demanding that the perpetrators be pardoned and released. Little is known about the SLA, its goals, or its capacity to undertake armed combat or terrorist actions. However, many small groups have undertaken significant actions across the country, which have resulted in substantial damage and the loss of lives.

\textsuperscript{223} ibid.
\textsuperscript{224} ibid.
In October 2014 a group claiming to be the NLA attacked the Macedonian Government building with a rocket-propelled grenade. Its communique stated that it was dissatisfied with the progress in implementing the Framework Agreement and demanded international intervention in Macedonia. On 21 April 2015 a police watchtower at the Macedonia-Kosovo border, in the mountain village of Gošince, was attacked by 40 heavily armed men wearing uniforms and claiming to be the NLA. Following this a two-day battle erupted between Macedonian police and Albanian militants (numbering between 40 and 50 men) in the Kumanovo district of Diva Naselba on the weekend of 9-10 May 2015. This ended with eight dead and 37 injured policemen, and 10 dead militants. More than 30 of the remaining militants surrendered to the police, though it was reported that some may have later escaped.

The fighting began when Macedonian police entered the neighbourhood and launched a counter-terrorist raid against the group. Prime Minister Gruevski claimed that the militants were preparing for terrorist attacks on government and civilian targets in order to destabilise the country (and that some of the militants had previously fought in other conflicts, including in the Middle East), while police spokesman Ivo Kotevski noted that the group’s founders were former NLA members.

Alternative explanations for the incident have arisen; however, they lack supporting evidence and are largely inconsistent. For example, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov suggested that the attack on Kumanovo was orchestrated by the West in response to the Gruevski Government’s support for Russia and the

---

227 ibid.
229 Marušić, “Macedonia Declares Mourning for Police Killed in Gunbattles”.
231 Marušić, “Macedonia Declares Mourning for Police Killed in Gunbattles”.
Russian-led Turkish Stream gas pipeline project.\textsuperscript{232} The implication was that the West was attempting to stop the Turkish Stream project by preventing its passage through Macedonia. However, this is unlikely because the pipeline would first need to pass through Turkey and Greece/Bulgaria before it reached Macedonia. If the West wanted to prevent its construction, it could have stopped it by applying pressure on its NATO allies without needing to orchestrate such an incident.

Another was raised by the Macedonian opposition and later claimed by the Albanian defendants tried for the incident. This version suggests that the Gruevski Government planned and instigated the attack to deflect criticism from the wire-tapping crisis.\textsuperscript{233} However, given the Albanian commanders involved, it is difficult to imagine that they would help Gruevski (and Ahmeti) retain power.

Within days of the battle, however, various Albanian media outlets published a press statement from a group calling itself the National Liberation Army, claiming responsibility for the attack. This may be the same group that has claimed responsibility for a number of other attacks over the past few years and is believed to be an off-shoot of Ahmeti’s NLA formed by disgruntled former commanders.\textsuperscript{234} Among the group in Kumanovo were also prominent members of the former KLA, including Muhamed Krasniqi (Commander Malisheva), Mirsad Ndrecaj (Commander NATO), Sami Ukshini (Commander Sokoli), Beg Rizaj (Commander Begu) and Deme Shehu (Juniku).\textsuperscript{235}

Later Ali Ahmeti admitted on Alsat-M television that DUI had been in regular contact with the leaders of the group for an entire year prior to the clashes in


May.\textsuperscript{236} Ahmeti claimed that they tried to convince their former NLA colleagues to refrain from undertaking any violent attacks. Ahmeti also claimed that he was unaware of how the group ended up in Kumanovo or what their exact aims were. Other reports suggest that both the Kosovo and Macedonian governments knew of the group’s existence and its intention to commit violent acts.\textsuperscript{237} Some of these alleged planned attacks included targets such as police stations, shopping malls, and sports events.\textsuperscript{238}

Within a few days of the Kumanovo clashes an Albanian named Suleyman Osman (Sulja) contacted the Albanian news service \textit{Almakos} claiming to be one of the militants from Kumanovo who surrendered to Macedonian police and later escaped.\textsuperscript{239} According to him, his group was in contact with Ahmeti during the fighting and had asked him to negotiate a retreat from Kumanovo. He claimed that Ahmeti convinced them to surrender, assuring them that the OSCE would take them into custody and later release them to Kosovo.\textsuperscript{240} Osman noted that once they had surrendered, they were taken by Macedonian police rather than OSCE observers who were not even present and accused Ahmeti of betraying them.\textsuperscript{241} Ahmeti, speaking to \textit{Alsat-M}, confirmed that the militants had called him seeking his intervention and that he persuaded them to surrender.\textsuperscript{242}

Reports suggest that this same group was responsible for the attack on the police station in Gosince where they briefly kidnapped a number of policemen and raided the armoury (some of these weapons were later found among the Kumanovo militants).\textsuperscript{243} Their stated demand in Gosince was apparently the creation of an Albanian state. The captured policemen later reported that the armed group had

\textsuperscript{238} ibid.
\textsuperscript{240} ibid.
\textsuperscript{241} ibid.
told them, “[we are] from the NLA…we want our own state”.

The International Crisis Group claims that it obtained copies of written statements from the captured militants where they claimed that they wanted to reconstitute Macedonia as a federation with an Albanian republic. This would bring its aims into line with Halili’s group (ANDI) in seeking a federal state with two republics based on ethnicity. The same group is also possibly linked to earlier attacks in late 2014, including the shelling of the Government Building in Skopje on 28 October 2014.

---

246 Marušić, “Liberation Army Claims it Shelled Macedonian Government”.
Table 14. Albanian Nationalist Paramilitaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paramilitary</th>
<th>Years Active</th>
<th>Estimated Strength</th>
<th>Area of Operation</th>
<th>Affiliations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All-Albanian Army (AAA)</td>
<td>1991-1993</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>Northern and Western Macedonia</td>
<td>PDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Liberation Army (NLA)</td>
<td>1997-2002</td>
<td>5,000-7,000</td>
<td>Northern and Western Macedonia</td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian Republican Army “Ilirida”</td>
<td>2002-current</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Northern Macedonia and Polog Region</td>
<td>Albanian National Movement of Ilirida (ANDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian National Army (ANA)</td>
<td>1999-current</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Northern Macedonia and Polog Region</td>
<td>Albanian National Union Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protectors of Islam</td>
<td>2005-unknown</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Skopje and Western Macedonia</td>
<td>Wahhabi Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advil Jakupi</td>
<td>2003-current</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Northwest Macedonia</td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krasniqi Group</td>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Northwest Macedonia</td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLA/Hasan Prishtina</td>
<td>2014-current</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>Northern and Western Macedonia</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiti/Jakupi Group</td>
<td>Late 1990s-2007</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Northwest Macedonia</td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skopje Liberation Army</td>
<td>2014-current</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>Skopje</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Research.

Private Security Firms

Private security firms are another factor contributing to the intense distrust in Macedonia between the Macedonian and Albanian communities. The two key reasons are: a) most private security firms are mono-ethnic and b) many are either aligned to political parties or owned by individual politicians, nationalist crime bosses and/or other nationalist benefactors. Private security firms, however, also contribute to a lack of trust within ethnic communities. Page et al have noted that the private security industry in Macedonia tends to mirror the wider society in which it operates, with Albanian firms operating in areas with an
Albanian majority and not in those with a Macedonian majority, and vice versa.²⁴⁷

There are approximately 145 registered private security firms in the country with up to 16,000 armed personnel employed by these firms.²⁴⁸ This means that there are twice as many private security personnel as there are police officers (7,600) in the country.²⁴⁹ The vast majority of personnel employed by private security firms have a police or military background and are either veterans of the 2001 war, former conscripts, and members of paramilitaries or football ultras. In many cases they move fluidly between these organisations, working in multiple roles to earn additional income. For example, it has been reported that up to 30 per cent of the Macedonian Army’s Special Forces units are working for private security firms.²⁵⁰ Page et al have noted that ethnically based groups, formally from the security forces, have established their own security firms.²⁵¹ They argue that this is a way of keeping armed paramilitary groups active following the end of a conflict and essentially acting as a reserve force should they need to be rapidly mobilised, pointing specifically to the Army Special Forces Battalion, the Wolves, and the Lions paramilitary group.²⁵²

Two key examples in the Macedonian community include OSA Security and Kometa No. 1 Security Agency. OSA is owned by Branko Bojčevski, the former Director of Public Security within the Ministry of Interior.²⁵³ In 2005 it was OSA personnel, rather than the police, that arrested a number of VMRO-DPMNE

²⁵² ibid.
²⁵³ Branko Bojčevski simultaneously held his position as Director of OSA Security while Director for Public Security under the SDSM Government. Bojčevski’s position and contacts within the government ensured him large-scale state contracts and he aligned OSA with SDSM, see Tholens and Strazzari, “Privatised Security in the post-war Western Balkans”.

members linked to the Raštanski Lozja trial. Earlier in 2002 OSA personnel were also reportedly present during incidents that occurred in the process of privatising the ‘Kiro Čuk’ factory in Veles where, in spite of a strong police presence, OSA personnel opened fire on strikers and protesters, wounding four. Kometa, owned by Zoran Jovanovski, is politically aligned to VMRO-DPMNE. During 2001 its personnel worked fluidly between the security firm, paramilitaries and police reserve units. A number of its personnel took part in the Ljuboten massacre of Albanian civilians. How exactly they came to be a part of the force that attacked Ljuboten is uncertain, but when Johan Tarčulovski organised the force it was a motley assortment of police reservists, paramilitaries and (from the accounts at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia), it appears that Jovanovski aided Tarčulovski by supplying his own men.

Politically aligned security firms have also been accused of a host of electoral scandals, including ballot stuffing, extortion, and extra-judicial killings. Pavle Trajanov, a former Interior Minister, claims that private security firms are integral to political party election campaigns – they not only maintain security at various events such as political rallies, but they organise them, maintain discipline among party members, and cause a large number of irregularities. For example, in 2005 OSA was caught stuffing ballot boxes for SDSM in Ohrid, while during the 2006 Parliamentary elections a street fight broke out between the employees of Lupus (backed by VMRO-DPMNE) and NIKOB (backed by SDSM). In a 2000 local election 22 year old Fatmir Jakupi was killed by DPA

---

254 Page et al, “SALW and Private Security Companies in South Eastern Europe”, p. 53. Raštanski Lozja, near the village of Ljuboten, is where six Pakistani and one Indian citizen were executed by the Lions on 2 March 2002 in a staged murder. The Macedonian Government ordered the execution in an attempt to enhance Macedonia’s image as a partner in the War on Terror and possibly link the so-called terrorists to Albanian extremists, see H. de Quetteville, “Macedonia staged fake terror plot to woo US”, The Telegraph, 22 May 2004, www.telegraph.co.uk (accessed 3 May 2016).

255 Tholens and Strazzari, “Privatised Security in the post-war Western Balkans”.

256 Prosecutor v Boškovski and Tarčulovski (Judgement) IT-04-82-T (10 July 2008).


258 ibid.

259 ibid.
bodyguards at an electoral booth in Kondovo because he reportedly refused to fill ballot boxes with fake ballots.\textsuperscript{260}

The head of the Macedonian Rifle Association, where security personnel are trained in firearms use, has claimed that the 30 largest private security firms in the country are owned by former high ranking police officers and that several local mayors also have their own firms.\textsuperscript{261} Security firms such as these have caused not only distrust between communities, but within communities. They largely act as a legalised security force for organised crime, and undertake extortion and racketeering activities. For example, the head of a local school in Struga was told by the mayor that he would need to hire VIP Security, an Albanian-owned firm, to protect the school from terrorism – a service that the parents are required to pay for.\textsuperscript{262}

Thales and Strazzari explain that the private security sector in Macedonia is sustained by a near feudal clan system comprised of a complex web of ethnic paramilitary groups and ex-combatants that have been integrated into party-affiliated parallel security structures.\textsuperscript{263}

\textit{Football Ultras}

During the Balkan wars of the 1990s football ultras delivered many recruits to the paramilitaries in Bosnia and Croatia, of which the most notorious were perhaps Želko Ražnatović’s (Arkan) \textit{Tigers}, a paramilitary formed out of Red Star Belgrade’s ultras. Like many other Macedonians, Johan Tarčulovski followed a similar path. He was once a leader of the \textit{Komiti}, the Vardar Skopje FC ultras who are linked to the ruling VMRO-DPMNE. He later formed a youth wing for VMRO-DPMNE – the Union of Youth Forces (UYF), and in 1993 he was selected as President of the UYF for Čair municipality. In 1998 he was selected as a personal bodyguard for the then Prime Minister Ljubčo Georgievski

\textsuperscript{261} Tholens and Strazzari, “Privatised Security in the post-war Western Balkans”.
\textsuperscript{262} ibid.
\textsuperscript{263} ibid.
and in 1999 as the personal bodyguard for the then President Boris Trajkovski. Tarčulovski was officially a police officer acting as an Escort Inspector in the President’s Security Unit in the Ministry of Interior.\footnote{International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia [website], \url{www.haguejusticeportal.net} (accessed 6 May 2016).} However, like many others, he had close links with various paramilitaries and continues to openly associate with groups such as Todor Aleksandrov and a lesser known group called Hristo Uzunov based in Ohrid.

Most outbreaks of violence between football ultras (outside of the stadium) are linked to political events. Football ultras have been involved in the mass protests and riots across Skopje and other cities over the past few years and in some instances were involved in organising them. A case in point is the battle over Kale in 2011. Kale is a medieval Skopje Fortress built in the 6\textsuperscript{th} century. Archaeological excavations began in 2006, and after the foundations of a 13\textsuperscript{th} century church were found within the complex the Cultural Heritage Protection Office approved a project to restore it. Its purpose was to function as a museum, though its appearance would be that of the original church. Ethnic Albanians, supported by DUI, claimed the site also contained an older Illyrian structure and that, by virtue of their claimed Illyrian ancestry, the site should be theirs. They were also strongly opposed to the church-like structure being re-built. This resulted in hundreds of Macedonian and Albanian football ultras fighting each other with knives and stones.\footnote{A. Manasiev, “Political Football: The Balkans’ Belligerent Ultras Avoid Penalties”, \textit{Balkan Insight}, 30 November 2012, \url{www.balkaninsight.com} (accessed 15 May 2015).} A young Albanian from the Šverceri claimed that “this is a real war…at the stadium we fight with words, on the street we fight with fists. We defend our national identity with our blood”.\footnote{ibid.} A Macedonian ultra from the Komiti posited similar nationalist views with a religious undertone, asking “when will they stop dishonouring us? No one destroys a church in our Orthodox country!”\footnote{ibid.}
Manasiev, a journalist with Balkan Insight’s Investigative Reporting Network, notes that the larger political parties all have strong ties with football clubs and their ultras, claiming that ultras “regard themselves as the foot soldiers of the nationalist causes that dominate politics”.  

Manasiev points out that while football hooligans in the West are stigmatised, the ultras in Macedonia generally expect their activities to enhance their status. One Albanian, leader of the Ballisti (Shkendija FC), noted that “the doors of local government, companies and political parties are always open to us”. Ivan Anastasovski, a former board member of the Macedonian Football Federation (MFF), says that political parties see the ultras as a potential base for voters and activists during elections, and in return for mobilising their members the leaders of the ultras are provided with jobs in the public sector, political parties and even the security services. Ultras from Komiti, for example, also formed part of the cadre of the Lions paramilitary and possibly of Paramilitary 2000.

Table 15. Football Ultras in Macedonia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ultras Group</th>
<th>Claimed Size</th>
<th>City (Club)</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Komiti</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Skopje (Vardar Skopje FC)</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Čkembari</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Bitola (Pelister FC)</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vojvodi</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Tetovo (Teteks FC)</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majmuni</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Prilep (Pobeda Prilep FC)</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lozari</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>Kavadarci (Tikveš FC)</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legija V</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>Skopje (Rabotnički FC)</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divizija Hanrievo</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Skopje (Gorče Petrov FC)</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballistët</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>Tetovo (Shkëndija FC)</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sverceri</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>Skopje (Shkupi FC)</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Research.

Football ultras are an underrated, but dangerous element within inter-ethnic relations. They consist of young and ill-tempered men, highly fluid in their social and political circles and linked to paramilitaries, organised crime, and political parties. They are both easily mobilised by political elites for their own personal

---

268 ibid.
270 ibid.
271 ibid.
272 Sherwell, “Ministers arm paramilitaries in Macedonia”. 
or party interests, and highly unpredictable and capable of undertaking independent action that can spiral out of control. The battle over Kale, violent protests, riots, and street fights that have caused significant damage to public and private property, along with the deaths and injuries that have resulted from these actions, are a testament to the volatility of the ultras.

More broadly, the large number of ethnically motivated men and the groups that can mobilise them are a two-edged sword. On the one hand, they provide security and protection where it would otherwise not exist. On the other hand, they contribute to the lack of trust and commitment between the two ethnic groups, particularly where organised crime and corrupt political officials are involved.
Chapter Ten

Ethnic Outbidding

Ethnic outbidding, or ethnic competition, theories posit that “politicians create platforms and programs to ‘outbid’ their opponents on the anti-minority stance adopted”.¹ The literature on ethnic outbidding predicts that competition in ethnic-based party systems like Macedonia’s compels all parties to take up mono-ethnic causes because a party of only one ethnic group can rarely win votes from other ethnic groups and must instead compete for votes within its own ethnic community.² In these cases, political parties vying for the vote of one ethnic group can often only distinguish themselves through radical rhetoric, and this dynamic usually advantages nationalist parties.³ Koneska has contended that ethnic outbidding becomes a spiralling process of intra-bloc party competition where each party claims to be the most effective defender of the bloc’s interests.⁴

It is argued that ethnic outbidding marginalises minority communities and exacerbates tensions leading to minorities losing confidence in state institutions and the majority. This would promote reactive nationalism leading to ethnic rivalry and conflict. DeVotta, for example, argued that the political structure of a state is the most important factor in encouraging, or discouraging, ethnic outbidding. He held the view that multi-ethnic political coalitions elicit ethnic coexistence, while encouraged competition between ethnic parties engenders ethnic outbidding.⁵ This, however, is not necessarily the case in Macedonia, where the ruling Macedonian majority party has always ruled in coalition with an Albanian minority party. However, these coalitions have always been formed post-election, while elections have been contended along ethnic lines rather than

---

¹ DeVotta, “From ethnic outbidding to ethnic conflict”, pp. 141-159.
⁴ Koneska, “Vetoes, Ethnic Bidding, Decentralisation”, p. 35.
⁵ DeVotta, “From ethnic outbidding to ethnic conflict”, pp. 144.
through multi-ethnic electoral coalitions. Further, ethnic outbidding is a common feature of the Macedonian political scene not only among Macedonian politicians but Albanian ones who also need to compete for votes within their own ethnic group.

Macedonian anocracy is important to consider as well. As Fareed Zakaria pointed out, anocracies (or illiberal democracies as he calls them) have the potential to provide for legitimately free and fair democratic elections; however, these will not necessarily produce liberal governments. He noted that liberalism is not about the procedures for selecting government, but rather the philosophy and practice of protecting an individual’s autonomy and dignity against coercion, whatever the source – state, church, or society. Zakaria contended that in countries like Macedonia, where ethnic outbidding is a normative practice, compromise seems impossible – one can bargain on material issues like housing, hospitals, and welfare, “but how does one split the difference on a national religion? Political competition that is so divisive can rapidly degenerate into violence”.

Since independence political parties in Macedonia have been highly ethnicised. The largest Macedonian parties are generally made up of Macedonian members, with limited membership coming from other ethnic groups such as Turks, Roma, and Vlachs. This is the same for the main Albanian political parties and those of the Turkish, Serb, and Roma communities. In addition, the first religious-based party, the Party for a European Future (PEF), caters solely to Macedonian-speaking Muslims.

---

6 Zakaria, “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy”.
7 ibid.
8 ibid.
Table 16. Parliamentary Seats, 1990-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VMRO-DPMNE</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSM Coalition</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUI</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDR</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, [website], 2016, http://www.ipu.org [accessed 13 May 2016]

Note:
1. The coalition that formed government is highlighted in red in the relevant year. The Albanian party that joined the governing coalition is highlighted in green in the relevant year.
2. Representation in the Macedonian Parliament was increased from 120 members to 123 members in 2011. The additional electoral districts are: a) Australia and Asia; b) Europe and Africa; and c) the Americas.

Albanian and Macedonian political parties compete over the votes of their respective communities and cases of cross-community voting in both the municipal and national legislative elections are extremely rare. The only exceptions are the presidential elections where the non-Macedonian communities are too small to have their own candidate elected. In all other instances an unspoken agreement of non-interference seems to apply, though given the social distance between the two communities it is highly unlikely that members of one community would vote for the political parties of the other community in any significant numbers.

Generally, the two largest Macedonian political parties, VMRO-DPMNE and the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), have followed a strategy of attempting to ethnically outbid each other, while co-opting Albanian political representation by inviting it into coalition governments. Albanian elites, on the other hand, have tried to work within government as this is the easiest way to obtain resources for their own group goals, and disrupt it when in opposition.

---

9 Ragaru, Macedonia, p. 25.

Ethnic outbidding in the Macedonian community occurs mostly between the two largest political parties, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. However, smaller political parties and other political associations also contribute to the phenomenon. The practice generally occurs during election campaigns and when tensions are heightened between the two communities over a specific political or religious issue, or inter-ethnic violence such as the Smilkovci executions.

VMRO-DPMNE was founded prior to independence on 17 June 1990 after the political system was liberalised by the former Yugoslav authorities. Ljubčo Georgievski, then only 24, was elected leader of the new party. Along with the Movement for All-Macedonian Action (MAAK), formed on 4 February 1990, VMRO-DPMNE was the only political party in Macedonia calling for independence at that time. It claims to be the ideological successor of the anti-Ottoman Macedonian liberation movement, Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (VMRO), founded in 1893. From 1990 to 1995 the party certainly held to the principles of what is locally known as Makedonizam (Macedonism), the idea that the Macedonian people should constitute a free and sovereign nation with their own independent and democratically-governed nation-state. Its stance was also staunchly anti-Yugoslav (along with anti-Serb and anti-Greek) and anti-communist. Most of its members and supporters were from families that opposed Yugoslav rule and communism, and during the early 1990s VMRO-DPMNE had almost universal support from the Macedonian diaspora.

VMRO-DPMNE’s immediate priorities in the first half of the 1990s were to remove Yugoslav influences from Macedonia and consolidate its independence, and to define the status of the Albanian community within the constitution. The party envisaged Macedonia as a nation-state of the Macedonian people with room for minorities whose fundamental human rights would be respected. It

---

rejected outright Albanian claims to ethnic or group rights and their demands for co-constitutive nation status. VMRO-DPMNE, like most Macedonians, saw the Albanian community as untrustworthy at best and secessionists seeking to carve out Macedonian territory at worst. During the 1990 election campaign, Georgievski famously stated that “we will cut the claws off the Albanian eagle”

While developing the 1991 Constitution SDSM had envisaged that Albanian could become a second official language of administration. However, VMRO-DPMNE attacked them and questioned their commitment to the Macedonian people. It was an easy victory as it was impossible for a Macedonian party to allow Albanian to become an official language. In addition, it was only two years earlier that the SDSM leadership (under the banner of the League of Communists) removed legislative rights relating to the public use of the Albanian language and a reversal of this policy was politically untenable. During the transition to independence VMRO-DPMNE was easily able to outbid SDSM among the Macedonian constituency, frequently accusing the former communists of being too lenient on Albanian extremist demands.

VMRO-DPMNE was unable to form government even though it had gained the largest proportion of votes (31.7 per cent) during the first free parliamentary elections in November 1990. In order to do so, it needed to enter into a coalition with either SDSM or the Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP). VMRO-DPMNE refused to do either as it saw both options in stark contradiction to its own principles and ideological outlook, and viewed both parties as detrimental to the Macedonian national cause. Further, it boycotted the 1994 parliamentary elections citing wide-scale fraud undertaken by SDSM in the first round. This ensured that it remained outside of government until 1998.

---

12 Albanian demands for greater collective rights and a constituent Republic of Kosovo (within the former Yugoslav federation) had begun during the late 1960s and culminated in violent protests during March and April 1981. The Albanians in Macedonia joined their ethnic kin in demanding greater rights within Macedonia and the option to be included in a future Kosovo republic.
13 Shea, Macedonia and Greece, p. 277.
14 Rossos, Macedonia and the Macedonians, p. 263.
15 Shea, Macedonia and Greece, pp. 247-254.
SDSM is the successor to the League of Communists of Macedonia (LCM), the Macedonian branch of the ruling League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY). The LCM was reconstituted into the League of Communists of Macedonia – Party for Democratic Renewal (LCM-PDR) prior to the first free elections in 1990 and then again into its current form, the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia at its 11th Congress on 21 April 1991. It is a social democratic party that attracts progressive voters but also many unreformed Leninists and Titoists among its membership. It was not until 1998 that SDSM distanced itself from orthodox Leninism and the repressive aspects of the previous one-party system.16

SDSM claims to be the ideological heir to the First Conference of Macedonian Socialists convened on 3 June 1900 and to Vasil Glavinov’s Macedonian Revolutionary Social Democratic Union (that SDSM claims fought for an independent Macedonian state), but which actually envisaged a Macedonian republic within a Balkan Socialist Federation. SDSM also claims roots from VMRO and specifically its left-leaning factions led by Goce Delčev and Nikola Karev. However, its key historical association is to the Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) convened on 2 August 1944 after the liberation of Macedonia from German occupation. This is considered by Macedonian socialists and social democrats as the foundation of the modern Macedonian state and the realisation of the Macedonian people’s desire for freedom (albeit within the Yugoslav framework).

The Social Democrats and their predecessors in the LCM were far from the internationalists that they claimed to be. They were still heavily influenced by Macedonian nationalism that was encouraged by Yugoslav authorities in

18 ibid.
19 ibid.
contradiction to *Yugoslavism* and socialist patriotism. During the 1980s and the 1990s, the LCM and the SDSM leadership were brutal in their dealings with the Albanian community. On the one hand, SDSM under Kiro Gligorov conveyed conciliatory messages about inter-ethnic cooperation and minority rights, and PDP and the National Democratic Party (NDP) were welcomed into the broad governing coalition. Due to his reliance on the Albanian parties to maintain an SDSM-led government, Gligorov even agreed to amend the Constitution in February 1993 after a year of negotiations. The proposed amendments would remove references to the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) and the Albanian language would have been recognised as an official language alongside Macedonian. VMRO-DPMNE refused to accept the proposed changes and without its votes the necessary two-thirds majority to amend the Constitution was unachievable.

On the other hand, Albanians were considered a fifth column by SDSM and were the constant target of the unreformed secret police. Prior to the October 1994 elections, Gligorov ensured that he would not need to rely on Albanian parties to form government by changing electoral voting boundaries, which saw Albanian political parties drop from a total of 24 seats to 14 seats in the 120-member Parliament. VMRO-DPMNE had boycotted the second round of voting citing an extraordinary large number of irregularities, which allowed SDSM to win an absolute majority in Parliament of 95 seats. Now that he was free of the Albanian political parties, Gligorov had no intention of amending the Constitution. However, SDSM maintained a conciliatory tone and included Albanian parties in the governing coalition, along with promoting more Albanians into high positions across the judiciary, the army and the diplomatic service. Again, this was largely an attempt to co-opt Albanian political elites and,

---

20 *Yugoslavism* was meant to be a supranational identity for the Balkan nations, underpinned by the concept of *Brotherhood and Unity* – the *Brotherhood* of the so-called ‘south Slav’ nations and *Unity* of the working class.
22 ibid.
23 ibid.
24 SDSM led a coalition known as the *Alliance for Macedonia*, which included the Liberal Party and the Socialist Party.
through them, the wider Albanian community. This was considered unacceptable by many Macedonians and resulted in a considerable erosion of SDSM’s popular support.\textsuperscript{25} Even though SDSM won the 1994 election, it was largely due to VMRO-DPMNE’s boycott. Voter turnout reached only 54.7 per cent and of those that voted, only 53.5 per cent voted for the SDSM-led Alliance for Macedonia.\textsuperscript{26}

The events surrounding the Tetovo University in 1994 (\textit{Chapter Eight}) showed that there were limits even to SDSM’s willingness to meet Albanian demands. The then Prime Minister, Branko Crvenkovski (SDSM), called the death of an Albanian activist ‘tragic’, but firmly warned that there were consequences for working outside the legal framework and going against the Government’s decision.\textsuperscript{27} He described the leaders of the university as ‘self-declared messiahs’ with no regard for human life and pledged that “all activities violating the Constitution and law” would be punished.\textsuperscript{28} However, VMRO-DPMNE found an opportunity even in this instance to accuse SDSM of pro-Albanian leanings. Dosta Dimovska, its then Vice President, claimed that it was a fabricated affair between SDSM and its Albanian coalition partners with the purpose of intimidating Macedonians in the western part of the country to accept Gligorov’s policy of retreat and constant concessions to the Albanian community.\textsuperscript{29} Dimovska went on to claim that Gligorov was planning to provide the Albanians with independence so that he could then engineer the annexation of the rest of Macedonia by Serbia.\textsuperscript{30} The heightened tensions around the use of the Albanian language led to violent confrontations between Macedonians and Albanians on the streets of Skopje, and other acts of violence.\textsuperscript{31}

PDP was one of the first two Albanian political parties founded in Macedonia. It was established in Skopje on 15 April 1990 by Nevzat Halili. The other was

\textsuperscript{25} Rossos, \textit{Macedonia and the Macedonians}, p. 274.
\textsuperscript{26} State Electoral Commission, [website], \url{www.sec.mk} (accessed 12 May 2016).
\textsuperscript{27} Shea, \textit{Macedonia and Greece}, p. 269.
\textsuperscript{28} ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} ibid. VMRO-DPMNE has consistently claimed that SDSM is a pro-Serbian party that would like to see Macedonia either absorbed into Serbia or join a renewed Yugoslav federation.
NDP, founded by Ilijaz Halili. NDP was a nationalist alternative to PDP based in Tetovo. However, it largely cooperated with PDP until it eventually sided and merged with the Party for Democratic Prosperity of Albanians (PDPA) to form the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) in 1997.

PDP was largely considered to be the more moderate of the Albanian parties, particularly because it was willing to join the governing coalition with SDSM (1992-1998) and work within the Macedonian political system. In actual fact, its policy platform and actions, particularly during the early 1990s, were highly contentious. It was PDP that organised the Albanian referendum on autonomy, boycotted the Macedonian referendum on independence, and is believed to have established the All-Albanian Army (AAA) paramilitary group. For the most part, its focus was on defending what it saw as Albanian interests and minority rights. Since 1998, however, PDP’s popular support has been eroded and it currently has no elected members of parliament.

DPA grew out of a division with PDP at its February 1994 Congress. Many members were dissatisfied with what they saw as slow progress in obtaining greater minority rights for the Albanian community, and were opposed to working with Macedonian political parties whom they viewed as oppressors. They were also dissatisfied with the party leader, Abdurrahman Aliti, whom they accused of being a collaborator with the Macedonian Government. This wing of the party, led by Arben Xhaferi and Menduh Thaçi, established PDPA. The newly established PDPA merged with the NDP on 4 July 1997 to form the current DPA. DPA was a nationalist challenge to PDP and eventually surpassed it in popular support and joined the VMRO-DPMNE led coalition government (1998-2002). Its platform is largely focused on Albanian minority rights and the development of a new settlement to replace the Framework Agreement.

---

32 Pettifer, The New Macedonian Question, p. 139.
33 Those who aligned themselves with Gligorov were viewed as his subordinates and traitors to the Albanian cause and it was argued that they could not effect any real constitutional change, see Buck, Fear and Loathing in Macedonia, p. 9 and International Crisis Group, The Albanian Question in Macedonia, p. 6.
34 International Crisis Group, Macedonia’s Ethnic Albanians, p. 11.
Abdurahman Aliti, a former PDP leader, dismissed accusations of treason for working with the Macedonian government and asserted that PDP’s participation in government kept more nationalist Macedonian parties out of power.\textsuperscript{35} In order to maintain a semblance that PDP would defend Albanian interests, Aliti regularly warned of ‘grave consequences’ if the Macedonian Government failed to satisfy Albanian demands.\textsuperscript{36} However, the failure to actually achieve anything for their constituents, other than build a system of patronage funded through the state budget, played into the hands of DPA who called for an end to all participation within the Macedonian political system.\textsuperscript{37} As inter-ethnic relations deteriorated during the 1990s, a growing number of Albanians switched their support from Aliti to Xhaferi, whom they considered less willing to make concessions and likely to do more to satisfy Albanian demands.\textsuperscript{38}

During the mid-1990s Xhaferi “resorted at first to populism in order to build a political basis for his party, while the Albanian representatives [PDP] in the Macedonian assembly stressed their own achievements for the Albanian cause”.\textsuperscript{39} Xhaferi threatened to take the Albanian community underground numerous times,\textsuperscript{40} a reference to the Kosovo Albanians who had created a parallel state in their province. As DPA began to capture PDP’s political base, PDP was forced to adopt a more confrontational approach with Macedonian officials in the coalition government.\textsuperscript{41} However, the two parties were not at odds with pragmatism. At the 1998 parliamentary elections PDP and DPA formed an electoral alliance and fielded joint candidates in order to maximise the impact of the Albanian vote.\textsuperscript{42} Between them they managed to elect 24 candidates to parliament, including 14 from PDP and 10 from DPA. The electoral alliance was short-lived and DPA joined a coalition government led by VMRO-DPMNE.

\textsuperscript{35} International Crisis Group, \textit{The Albanian Question in Macedonia}, pp. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{36} ibid, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{37} ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} International Crisis Group, \textit{Macedonia’s Ethnic Albanians}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{39} A. Babuna, “The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia: Ethnic Identity Superseding Religion”, \textit{Nationalities Papers}, Vol. 28, Iss. 1, 2000, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{40} ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} International Crisis Group, \textit{Macedonia’s Ethnic Albanians}, p. 12.
DPA took the opportunity to attack PDP after Rufi Osmani was sentenced to prison for the Albanian flag incidents in Gostivar in July 1997. DPA organised 5,000 protesters to march in Skopje, in addition to protests in Debar, Gostivar, and Tetovo, calling for Osmani’s release and the resignation of PDP ministers and parliamentarians. The protesters chanted ‘Free Osmani’, ‘Away with Traitors’ and ‘Leave your Chairs’ (in reference to the comfortable leather chairs used by Cabinet Ministers and directed at PDP). By the 1998 elections PDP was forced to distance itself from the governing coalition in an effort to strengthen its electoral position, which was being threatened by DPA’s overtly nationalist policies.

In 1995 Georgievski had decided that VMRO-DPMNE’s ideological stance would never enable them to obtain power. He calculated that the ideological divisions among Macedonians, coupled with weak ethnonational identity across a large part of the Macedonian community, would not enable him to gain enough votes to win government outright. In a reversal of conventional Balkan wisdom and in contradiction to the theories of ethnic outbidding, VMRO-DPMNE moved away from its founding principles and nationalist ideology. Macedonism was for all effective purposes declared dead by the party leadership and a ‘moderate’ stance was required to secure government. At its May 1995 Congress Georgievski announced:

We were building an image of a party which refused to have anything to do with ex-communists or extreme parties of Albanians, but we lost the sense of pragmatism and missed a chance to form a government…we are aware that, despite the huge support of our party, we cannot come out as absolute winners of any elections by ourselves.

Georgievski did not win universal support within his party for this change of direction. Ordinary members were particularly incensed at what they considered

44 VMRO-DPMNE Official, Interview with Author, 21 July 2013.
45 Shea, Macedonia and Greece, p. 276.
was a centuries-old struggle to establish a Macedonian state, not a state that would have to be shared with Albanians or Serbian collaborators (in relation to SDSM and other communist ideologues). Many within the party saw Georgievski’s shift as a calculated move for purely personal political gain by a man that had grown impatient with having been locked out of government. As a result, a number of factions split from the party and formed new political parties all claiming to be the true heirs to the original VMRO.

VMRO-DPMNE toned down its nationalist rhetoric in the lead-up to the 1998 Parliamentary elections. However, it still maintained a core of its nationalist policies that it was not yet prepared to part with. For example, the party platform continued to include references to what it saw as an Albanian population explosion. It called the Albanian community’s natality rate a characteristic of the ‘third world’ and promised to adopt an ‘appropriate population policy’, which would include reducing high birth rates and preventing migration into the country from Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia’s Sandzak region. It also advocated increasing the amount of instruction in the Macedonian language at all levels of education, as well as abolishing quotas in secondary and post-secondary education. In addition, while it explicitly advocated a civic society, its electoral program clearly stated that VMRO-DPMNE considered the Macedonian nation as the bearer of Macedonian statehood; in other words, the state was founded by the Macedonians and for the Macedonians. The party program went on to list a number of responsibilities for minorities, including respect for the Constitution and the laws of the state, respect for the rights of the majority, especially in areas

46 VMRO-DPMNE Official, Interview with Author, 21 July 2013.
47 ibid. VMRO-DPMNE had formed a pre-election coalition with Vasil Tupurkovski’s left-leaning Democratic Alternative (DA) for the 1998 Parliamentary elections. Tupurkovski was a former high-ranking communist party official under Yugoslav rule and was the last Macedonian to serve on Yugoslavia’s collective presidency. After the 1998 electoral victory VMRO-DPMNE formed government by including Xhaferi’s DPA into the coalition.
48 This and subsequent policy changes led to a number of factions breaking away from VMRO-DPMNE. These factions established new parties, all claiming to be the heirs of the original VMRO (1893-1908). For example, VMRO-VMRO, VMRO-United, VMRO-Democratic Party, VMRO-Macedonian and VMRO-Peoples Party.
50 ibid, pp. 82-84.
51 ibid, pp. 5 and 8.
where it is in a minority, and abstaining from activities which are directed against
the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of the state.52

While the party leadership had (incorrectly) determined that nationalism was an
exhausted ideology in Macedonia, its membership viewed the political landscape
very differently, and so did the broader Macedonian public. SDSM was aware of
the nationalist current within Macedonian society and it was also well aware of
the fact that it had been able to form government at both the 1990 and 1994
elections only because VMRO-DPMNE refused to work with parties that did not
share its ideological and philosophical purism and boycotted the latter election.53
By 1998 the Social Democrats had largely lost the little support that they had
commanded and SDSM “started to harden its position towards the Albanian
community in an effort to confront the challenge presented by the strengthening
VMRO-DPMNE”.54 The 1998 election was unsalvageable for SDSM. Nearly a
decade of corruption, failed democratic reforms and an economic transition that
had barely begun was enough for the electorate to abandon them, regardless of
VMRO-DPMNE’s ideological position.

The 1998 election resulted in a VMRO-DPMNE-led government, in coalition
with two unusual choices – the former communist functionary Vasil
Tupurkovski’s Democratic Alternative (DA) and the radical nationalist DPA led
by Arben Xhaferi. Once in government VMRO-DPMNE faced the same
problems in regards to its Albanian coalition partner as did SDSM before them.
While SDSM generally refrained from inserting statements into its policy
documents that could be perceived as anti-Albanian,55 it was now free to take an
even harder nationalist stance and accused VMRO-DPMNE of being too soft
with DPA (DPA had argued that the Albanian community should pursue either
autonomy within a federalised Macedonia or outright independence). In 1999, for

52 ibid, pp. 13-14.
53 SDSM Official, Interview with Author, 20 August 2013.
55 For example, SDSM stated in its 1995 election platform that it considers inter-ethnic, confessional, and
cultural tolerance as necessary conditions for the stability of the state and that Macedonia is a state of
equal citizens, see Friedman, “Party System, Electoral Systems and Minority Representation in the
example, former Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski accused VMRO-DPMNE of participating in an Albanian-Bulgarian conspiracy to dismantle the state:

Today, Georgievski and [KLA spokesman] Demaci are meeting in Skopje, and in Sofia Xhaferi and [Bulgarian Prime Minister] Kostov are debating the future of Macedonia, the future of all of us. This is the same Demaci who declared that the goal of the KLA is the creation of Greater Albania, in the borders of which are also included parts of Macedonia. This is the same Xhaferi who asserted that a Macedonian people does not exist, that it is the invention of Gligorov and the company around him, and that we are a population which steals others’ history, the history of neighbouring states.56

By 2000 VMRO-DPMNE was already plagued by accusations from within its own membership that it was catering to the Albanian community and that excessive concessions had been provided to them.57 In particular, the issue of the Tetovo University had been resolved between VMRO-DPMNE and DPA in favour of the Albanian community, which was strongly opposed by the Macedonians. The newly elected President, Boris Trajkovski (VMRO-DPMNE), bore most of the blame as his election relied on the support of the Albanian vote and many Macedonians saw the settlement of the university issue as a reward.58 SDSM took advantage of this mood and began to publicly speculate that there was a secret agreement between VMRO-DPMNE and DPA to divide the country into ethnic enclaves and that Albanian political leaders were collaborating with their colleagues in Kosovo and Albania (the insinuation was that they were planning to create a ‘greater Albania’).59

Until 1998 DPA had accused PDP of treason for participating in both the Macedonian political system and in a coalition government. After the 1998 parliamentary elections DPA found itself in the reverse situation. While DPA

58 ibid.
59 ibid.
was forced to moderate some of its rhetoric in government, PDP successfully used the same tactics and accusations that were once levelled against it.  
Ironically, by 2000 many whom had originally left PDP to follow Arben Xhaferi were rumoured to be ready either to return to the now more nationalist (as they perceived it) PDP or establish a whole new political party.  
They accused Xhaferi of having become too soft since joining government.  
Nevertheless, Xhaferi’s moderated stance on many issues saw the rise of several smaller nationalist parties, including Mevaip Ramadani’s Democratic Alliance of Albanians (DAA), which claimed that DPA was unable to achieve any of its promises.

The balance between the two larger parties had completely shifted and DPA was now able to fill positions within the state administration and public enterprises with its own supporters at the expense of PDP supporters.  
This included the replacement of several police chiefs in Albanian-populated municipalities.  
The same state budgets and posts that had once driven the PDP party machine now enabled Xhaferi to establish his own dominance.  
Had it not been for the National Liberation Army (NLA) and its political successor, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), to overthrow the political domination of both older parties, it’s likely that DPA would have enjoyed further electoral success based on its more strident nationalism and newly established patronage networks.

**War and the Implementation of the Framework Agreement**

The 2001 war saw a complete breakdown in inter-party relations between VMRO-DPMNE (which held government until the 2002 elections) and SDSM.  
As one observer noted, the two parties seemed to be running a long election campaign rather than defending the state in wartime.  
The practice of ethnic outbidding reached its height with explicit and open warfare between the two

---

61 ibid.
62 ibid.
63 ibid, p. 15.
64 ibid, p. 12.
65 ibid.
Macedonian parties. At the beginning of the war Branko Crvenkovski (SDSM) blamed VMRO-DPMNE for the appearance of the NLA, accusing the Georgievski Government of being incompetent and suggesting that it was unable to effectively use the military and intelligence services to protect the country.\textsuperscript{67}

Vlado Bučkovski (SDSM) reiterated the accusations of incompetence:

\begin{quote}
This is the government’s final warning that it should not turn a blind eye to the establishment of paramilitary formations in Macedonia. Alongside a political crisis, of the government’s own making, the state now faces a security crisis. \textsuperscript{68}
\end{quote}

In the government’s defence, DPA levelled the accusation that the ‘terrorist actions’ of the NLA were in fact coordinated by SDSM with the sole purpose of bringing down the government.\textsuperscript{69} Even after a Government of National Unity was formed,\textsuperscript{70} divisions between the two Macedonian parties on how to deal with the war were significant. Prime Minister Georgievski and Interior Minister Boškovski insisted that they would not negotiate with terrorists and believed that the armed forces could defeat the NLA militarily. Branko Crvenkovski argued that ‘reasonable’ force should be used in conjunction with negotiations, but his idea of ‘reasonable’ force was to leave large swaths of Macedonian territory at risk of NLA attack unprotected and this did not sit well with Macedonians, especially those living in the war zone.

In general, Macedonian politicians did not want to be perceived as appeasing the Albanian rebels; rather, a demonstration of their willingness to protect the


\textsuperscript{68} ibid. The political crisis that Bučkovski was referring to was the wiretapping scandal in 2000, similar to the 2015 wiretapping scandal where the VMRO-DPMNE Government used the intelligence services to spy on its political rivals. It erupted when Branko Crvenkovski, then leader of SDSM, released transcripts of illegally recorded conversations just prior to the NLA beginning its attacks on Macedonian forces.

\textsuperscript{69} ibid. Even Xhaferi’s DPA referred to the NLA as terrorists during the initial phases of the war. Later accounts suggest that Xhaferi saw the NLA as a political threat, which proved to be accurate given that DUI ousted DPA as the government’s Albanian partner in 2002 and again in 2008 after a DPA briefly returned to government (2006-2008).

\textsuperscript{70} A Government of National Unity was formed on 13 May 2001 and consisted of VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM from the Macedonian bloc, and PDP and DPA from the Albanian bloc.
country was necessary to maintain the support of the Macedonian community. Ljubomir Frčkovski argued that:

Trajkovski played a crucial role for the peaceful solution of conflict, because he was the only politician who could take the responsibility to take care of negotiations. No other Macedonian politician wanted to lead the peace negotiations with Albanian parties because they thought they would lose the elections if they did so.

The 2004 referendum on decentralisation (*Chapter Five*) saw a strong increase in inter-ethnic tensions, which were already high after the previous few years of implementing the Framework Agreement. Political leaders on both sides engaged in strong rhetoric. Condemnation of the now SDSM-led government (2002-2006) was strong, not only from VMRO-DPMNE, but also from many smaller Macedonian parties, civil society groups, and the media. Nikola Gruevski, having assumed leadership of VMRO-DPMNE in 2003, declared that the leaders of SDSM were guilty of high treason against Macedonian national interests for the sole purpose of personal political gain. He called on the nation to oppose the territorial redistribution plan, calling it a historical duty:

*We have a historical duty to oppose this evil treason against the Republic of Macedonia. SDSM has agreed to everything demanded by DUI. The future of our country is at stake. This treasonous act was undertaken by a number of careerists in the government...they did not win a mandate for treason. VMRO-DPMNE has nothing against the Albanians and the Albanian language. However, there are radical groups with hidden agendas that want something different, not integration. Struga and Kičevo will become municipalities with a majority Albanian population. Ethnic enclaves are being shaped, which will mean Macedonians will emigrate from them.*

---

71 S. Cabestan and A. Pavković (eds.), *Secessionism and Separatism in Europe and Asia: To have a state of one’s own*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2013, p. 91.
72 ibid, pp. 91-92.
74 Anonymous, “Gruevski: Mora da se spreči najgolemoto predavstvo na zemjava”.

VMRO-DPMNE’s Executive Committee called the plan for territorial redistribution a catastrophe and announced that it would be joining the referendum campaign organised by the World Macedonian Congress (WMC), led by Todor Petrov.\(^{75}\) Blaže Ristevski, from the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, also denounced the SDSM/DUI plan calling it an atrocity and claimed that there would be migrations between regions creating mono-ethnic enclaves.\(^{76}\) His colleague, Katica Kulavkova, stated that SDSM “devalued the needs and vital interests of citizens from all ethnic communities, except the Albanians”.\(^{77}\) The SDSM leadership even came under criticism from its own party membership. Tito Petkovski, SDSM representative from Struga, denounced the leadership for undertaking secret negotiations with DUI on matters that brought into question the stability of the country.\(^{78}\) Other than the four members that took part in the secret negotiations, it was claimed that the entire Central Committee of SDSM was in revolt against the agreement.\(^{79}\)

The two opposition Albanian parties, DPA and PDP, did not help the situation with their radical pronouncements during the referendum campaign, which reinforced the idea among Macedonians that the municipal revisions were part of a larger agenda to either federalise Macedonia or carve out Albanian territory, and that they would undertake this project regardless of what the result of the referendum was. Abdulmenaf Buxheti, leader of PDP, announced that if the referendum to annul the new territorial arrangements was successful, his party would respect the results of the 1992 Albanian referendum and establish an autonomous Ilirida.\(^{80}\) DPA, however, declared that what was happening was evidence that the Framework Agreement was ineffective in solving inter-ethnic

---

\(^{75}\) Dimevski, “Gruevski: Mala grupa od SDSM gi predade nacionalnite interesi”.


\(^{77}\) ibid.


\(^{79}\) ibid. The only members of the SDSM Central Committee that were reportedly privy to the negotiations were Vlado Bučkovski, Radmila Šekirinska, Ilinka Mitreva and Nikola Kurkčiev.

issues and demanded that it be annulled and a new agreement between the Macedonians and Albanians negotiated – and until then all options were open, implying support for PDP’s autonomous Ilirida idea.\(^81\) Xhaferi later called for an international protectorate to be established over Macedonia if the referendum succeeded and reiterated his long-held belief that multi-ethnic countries were unsustainable and where different ethnic communities could not agree on a common existence, they needed to separate.\(^82\)

The governing coalition led by SDSM (2002-2006) was left with the responsibility for implementing the vast majority of the Framework Agreement after the war ended. The agreement itself, along with the legal and constitutional amendments that it prescribed, was extremely unpopular with the Macedonian community. This left SDSM exposed to attacks by VMRO-DPMNE (which never annulled any of the measures implemented by SDSM) and other right-leaning parties, including Ljubčo Georgievski’s newly established party, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – People’s Party (VMRO-NP). VMRO-DPMNE was able to use these circumstances to mobilise the Macedonian community in opposition to SDSM, painting it as a party of traitors who were set on destroying the Macedonian state. However, VMRO-DPMNE borrowed tactical lessons from SDSM. In this electoral cycle, it also refrained from making statements in its policy documents that could be perceived as overtly anti-Albanian. This did not prevent it from making overt accusations against SDSM, with the implication that extremist Albanians were using the Social Democrats for their own ends and calling their government the ‘fascist-Ballisti’ coalition after the German-backed Albanian Balli Kombëtar movement, which occupied western Macedonia during the Second World War.\(^83\) In combination with the Albanian factor, VMRO-DPMNE was also able to convince the Macedonian public that it would never betray the Macedonian identity or abrogate the human rights of Macedonians in respect of Greece’s

---

\(^81\) ibid and Petrušева, “Macedonia: Storm Over Opposition Resignations”.
assault on Macedonia’s name. SDSM was targeted as a party of traitors that were not only prepared to capitulate to Albanian extremists, but part with Macedonia’s very soul at the behest of Athens.

**VMRO-DPMNE & DUI: A Coalition of Komiti and Kaçaks**

VMRO-DPMNE easily won the 2006 Parliamentary elections, a political defeat for SDSM from which it is yet to recover having been defeated at every Parliamentary and Presidential election, and the majority of local elections since.\(^{84}\) Maleska has argued that while the Macedonian public punished VMRO-DPMNE at the 2002 elections for not being able to put down the Albanian insurgency, it devastated SDSM from 2006 onwards because of its role in implementing the Framework Agreement.\(^ {85}\) The 2006 election campaign involved frequent clashes between the followers of the two major Macedonian and Albanian parties and included verbal and physical attacks on campaign officials and non-fatal shootings.\(^ {86}\) As usual, numerous irregularities involving the intimidation of voters by party representatives and employers, vote buying, and ballot box stuffing were observed.\(^ {87}\) The VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition, *For a Better Macedonia*, still needed the support of one of the Albanian parties in order to form government. It was extremely reluctant to ally itself with DUI (as former NLA fighters),\(^ {88}\) particularly given it had spent the last few years vowing it would never work with terrorists and criticising SDSM for doing so.\(^ {89}\) Instead, it formed government with its previous governing coalition partner, DPA.

DUI was outraged that it was excluded from government and undertook a number of measures, including exercising its control of the veto power under the Framework Agreement, which eventually led to VMRO-DPMNE accepting them into the governing coalition in 2008 (*Chapter Seven*). The two parties have

---

87 ibid, p. 20.
remained in a governing coalition for the past eight years and are likely to continue if they win the 2016 elections. VMRO-DPMNE’s rank and file membership saw this move as catastrophic, and as the very treason that they had opposed when SDSM was in a coalition with DUI. The fallout for VMRO-DPMNE was humiliating. SDSM frequently took the opportunity to remind VMRO-DPMNE’s leadership of its vow never to form a political coalition with ‘fascists and terrorists’.  

The VMRO-DPMNE/DUI coalition, while long-lasting, has been very volatile and inter-party communication has been limited. Cooperation between the two in Parliament fluctuates depending on ethnic tensions between Macedonians and Albanians, and the specific issues at hand. Threats by DUI to leave the coalition or boycott Parliament sittings are not uncommon and are usually undertaken when VMRO-DPMNE promotes or undertakes policies or actions that are perceived as anti-Albanian. Depending on the final outcomes, DUI’s parliamentary boycotts have mixed results for VMRO-DPMNE. These crises in the ruling coalition are usually mediated by special envoys representing the European Union and/or the United States to find a compromise between the two governing partners. Concessions made between the two parties are viewed in zero-sum terms and they can be interpreted as victory or defeat for their members and constituents. More importantly, the two communities view any concessions or compromises between the ruling coalition parties as a zero-sum game that either strengthen or weaken their respective communities in relation to the other.

There have been sporadic cases of solidarity between VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM based purely on ethnic interests. In such situations it would have been politically impossible for one to oppose the other and impractical to attempt to outbid them. One example includes the VMRO-DPMNE draft law to compensate wounded veterans and the families of veterans killed during the 2001 war. The

---

90 VMRO-DPMNE Official, Interview with Author, 21 July 2013.
91 Kramarska, “Vlada na nacionalnoto pomiruвање?”.
92 VMRO-DPMNE Official, Interview with Author, 21 July 2013 and SDSM Official, Interview with Author, 20 August 2013.
draft law only covered police and military veterans and excluded all members of paramilitary organisations, including the NLA.93 While DUI and DPA strongly opposed the draft law, SDSM supported VMRO-DPMNE unreservedly and dismissed Albanian accusations that the draft law was anti-Albanian.94

Symbolic issues, such as the use of flags, have generated some of the most significant tensions both between the two communities and have been demonstrated to be a fertile arena for ethnic outbidding. In 2012 VMRO-DPMNE agreed to DUI’s request for the government to fund the 100th jubilee of both Albanian Flag Day and Mehmet Derralla’s appointment as Albania’s first Minister of War.95 SDSM demanded that VMRO-DPMNE withdraw its support for the public funding of what it argued were national holidays of neighbouring countries. Albanian Flag Day commemorates the Albanian declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire on 28 November 1912 and the raising of the Albanian flag in Vlora on the same day. Mehmet Derralla was one of the signatories of the Albanian Declaration of Independence and a major figure in the anti-Ottoman uprisings. SDSM accused VMRO-DPMNE of being pseudo-patriots willing to sell out Macedonian national interests for personal political gain and the unbridled pursuit of power.96

At the same time DUI and DPA undertook their own political manoeuvring. DPA accused DUI of backing down to its Macedonian partner and not going far enough because DUI did not support DPA’s own proposal to make Albanian Flag Day a national public holiday.97 DUI officials called DPA’s proposal hypocritical and a simple political stunt, noting that DPA previously rejected DUI’s proposal (when DPA was in a coalition government with VMRO-DPMNE) to make both 28 November (Albanian Flag Day) and 13 August (the

---

94 ibid.
96 ibid.
signing of the Framework Agreement) national public holidays. Given that DUI has built its political legitimacy on the Framework Agreement, acknowledging it formally would be politically unacceptable for DPA, which sees such a proposal as a DUI electioneering stunt and the Framework Agreement as a failed settlement between the Macedonian and Albanian communities. Ziyadin Sela, then a DPA Member of Parliament (and current Mayor of Struga), condemned DUI for even suggesting 13 August as it would effectively endorse the idea that the Albanian question in Macedonia had been resolved, that the laws relating to language and community symbols are acceptable, and that the status of the NLA fighters was finalised. During the flag day celebrations, Ali Ahmeti took full advantage of the platform provided to him to both appease the Albanian community and outmanoeuvre DPA when he declared that “this [Kičevo] is Albanian territory…these flags will fly throughout the ages”. Albert Musliu, an Albanian observer, notes that the pomp surrounding the Flag Day “may be interpreted as provocations towards Macedonians” but are primarily fuelled by election cycles, further stating that he had concerns about the “approach of both the parties [VMRO-DPMNE and DUI] and their pursuit of easy votes by causing ethnic tensions”.

The following year (2013) Ahmeti raised the stakes even further by initiating an annual commemoration for NLA fighters who lost their lives in Aračinovo during the 2001 war, and a celebration of the NLA victory there. Aračinovo’s municipal authorities announced that the commemoration was a day of “pride and the international recognition of the NLA. On this day, the NLA was recognised as an organised army with a clear political platform for the rights of Albanians in Macedonia”. With silence from the larger Macedonian parties, Stojanče Angelov took the opportunity to remind his Albanian counterpart, and Gruevski indirectly, that “had it not been for the international community, the

98 ibid.
99 ibid.
100 Marušić, “Albanian Flag Day Causes Jitters in Macedonia”.
101 ibid.
103 ibid.
members of the NLA would all be dead and today they would not have been celebrating, but mourning”.

The use of the 2001 war as a key nation-building event has opened political rifts between DUI (as the successor of the NLA) and the main opposition DPA. As DUI has been a part of the governing coalition for the vast majority of time since the 2001 war, it has been able to secure funds and undertake various projects related to the 2001 war that not only shape Albanian identity but reinforce DUI as the legitimate representative of the Albanian community. This has enabled DUI to ‘own’ the narrative, as it was DUI (NLA) that went to war, and made it difficult for DPA to compete with its own narrative. DPA has no fallen heroes to build statues of, or name public spaces and objects after, and no events to commemorate. DPA’s response to DUI’s use of the 2001 narrative is to engage in ethnic outbidding where it takes a more radical approach to almost all issues and goes beyond what was settled in the Framework Agreement in order to demonstrate that it has the interests of Albanians at heart.

At one point DPA attempted to mimic DUI’s electoral popularity by trying to draw legitimacy from the NLA through the inclusion of former NLA commanders (who then opposed Ahmeti) on its list of candidates. DPA recognised the importance of former NLA fighters, their large family groups, and the social prestige through which they attracted a solid voter base. However, the strategy failed largely due to the fact that DPA already had a large perception problem within the community and was considered as part of the old corrupt elite.

An example of DUI’s dominance over the Albanian nationalist narrative is the Museum of Freedom, also commonly referred to by the public as the Museum of the NLA. The museum was opened under the initiative of DUI and paid for with

---

104 ibid. Macedonian military and paramilitary forces were close to destroying the NLA force in Aračinovo when US troops stationed in Kosovo intervened and withdrew the NLA fighters under guard.

105 Taleski, “From Bullets to Ballots”, p. 17.

106 ibid.
public funds. The building itself, in Čair (Skopje), was built by Yaşar Bey Kumbaraci as his house during the 19th century. This was strongly opposed by both the Macedonian community and DPA. The museum’s goal is to tell the history of the Albanian people in Macedonia from the Prizren League (1878) until the 2001 war.107 The artefacts include old weapons, photographs, coins, documents, NLA uniforms and flags.108

Given that DUI has so inextricably entwined its political legitimacy and nationalist narrative with the Framework Agreement, DPA sees its electoral changes in exploiting the growing sentiment that the Framework Agreement is not meeting the expectations of the Albanian community, and for some was a weak compromise to begin with. The DPA leadership, and in particular Arben Xhaferi (who was a signatory to the Agreement), refused to attend the Framework Agreement’s anniversary celebrations early on. In addition, when it saw public support among the Albanians weakening in relation to the Agreement, it announced its alternative plan for a new contract between the Macedonian and Albanian nations.

Rufi Osmani explains the divisions between DPA and DUI as completely contradictory on important issues such as the 2001, war suggesting that “while DUI’s position is that the 2001 war was a historic necessity as a consequence of the permanent repressions up to that period by the Macedonian authorities towards the Albanians, DPA characterises this war with vocabulary which is completely inappropriate – as the largest act of treason towards the Albanians”.109 Menduh Thaçi accuses DUI of wanting to obtain power by force, while DUI officials claim that DPA is not a political party but rather a private enterprise in which Arben Xhaferi and Menduh Thaçi are the President and CEO.110 Ragaru argues that power and access to state resources are at the core of

108 ibid.
110 ibid, pp. 33-34.
inter-party tensions between DUI and DPA (though this could be said of Macedonian political parties as well). Ragaru notes:

Albanian political parties can only deliver (jobs, contracts, public funds) when they are in power. The moment they fall out of government, they lose most of the resources that allowed them to control political loyalties. Traditionally, Albanian parties have therefore tried to survive while in opposition through adopting radical national discourses and ethnicising day-to-day politics.\(^{111}\)

During this period VMRO-DPMNE opened its own museum in Skopje, which is the official national museum of Macedonia. Colloquially it is known as the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle, though its full name is perhaps the longest museum name in the world: The Museum of the Macedonian Struggle for Sovereignty and Independence – Museum of VMRO – Museum of the Victims of the Communist Regime. The exhibits cover the period from the beginning of the resistance movement against Ottoman rule (with the Karpoš Rebellion of 1689) until the declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in 1991.\(^{112}\) It consists of 109 wax figures, 16 large portraits of revolutionaries and intellectuals, 80 massive portraits of significant events from Macedonian history, and a large collection of artefacts including maps, documents, photographs, weapons, and clothing.\(^{113}\) The museum’s key function is to tell the Macedonian narrative of that period, but more specifically, VMRO-DPMNE’s version of that narrative. The exhibits covering the victims of communism, while legitimate, are also a condemnation of SDSM and its party and ideological predecessors.

The return of Johan Tarčulovski to Macedonia, after having served an eight-year sentence for war crimes, was used by VMRO-DPMNE to display its supposed patriotic credentials. Tarčulovski was arrested and handed over to the Hague Tribunal in 2005 by the then SDSM Government. Many Macedonians view him as a national hero and the role of SDSM in his arrest as yet another betrayal.

\(^{113}\) ibid.
From the beginning VMRO-DPMNE funded his defence counsel and took every opportunity to use the situation for a political attack on SDSM. When Tarčulovski was released from prison in 2013 the VMRO-DPMNE Government organised an extravagant home-coming celebration. Tarčulovski was welcomed as a national war hero, a patriot who had been sacrificed by a treasonous SDSM Government at the behest of the ‘West’. The celebrations were attended by the VMRO-DPMNE party elite, and Tarčulovski and his family were invited to meet President Ivanov at the Presidential Office.

The outbidding strategies of smaller Macedonian political parties have also met with substantial success, both in terms of changing VMRO-DPMNE policies and growing their own support base. One example is that of Strašo Angelovski, former President of the now defunct MAAK-Conservative Party and current President of the Macedonian Fatherland Organisation for Radical Renewal – Vardar-Egej-Pirin-Prespa (TMORO-VEP). TMORO-VEP was established in 2006 and advocates restoring the status of Macedonia as a Macedonian nation-state and vehemently opposes the Framework Agreement, including the constitutional and statutory changes that resulted from it.\footnote{Z. Saveski and A. Sadiku, “The Radical Right in Macedonia”, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2012, p. 2, www.fes.de (accessed 19 November 2015).} Between the 2006 parliamentary elections and the 2009 municipal elections its vote increased from 744 to 15,147.\footnote{ibid.} Its votes were concentrated in Prilep, Kisela Voda (Skopje) and Kumanovo, which enabled it to win substantial representation at the municipal level.\footnote{ibid.} During the 2011 and 2014 parliamentary elections TMORO-VEP entered the VMRO-DPMNE led coalition. Similar parties, including Vančo Šetanski’s Permanent Macedonian Radical Unification (TMRO) party and Janko Bačev’s People’s Movement of Macedonia (NDM), which oppose the Framework Agreement and what they see as a continuous stream of capitulations from the Macedonian side have also had substantial electoral success by outbidding VMRO-DPMNE. While initially running independently of any
coalitions, these two parties have also been co-opted by the VMRO-DPMNE machinery and recently joined its electoral coalition.

Saveski and Sadiku have argued that the inclusion of these smaller parties in the broader VMRO-DPMNE electoral coalition has not extinguished their opposition to the Framework Agreement or their nationalist rhetoric. Rather, they argue, VMRO-DPMNE has been forced to take on a more overtly nationalist policy stance and that nation-building projects such as Skopje 2014 are partly explained by the necessity to placate a plethora of smaller, but popular, political parties on its right.\(^{117}\)

**The ‘Coloured Revolution’**

Macedonia entered a serious political crisis in early 2015. The crisis was sparked by alleged illegal surveillance exposed by Zoran Zaev (leader of SDSM) in early 2015 through the release of surveillance tapes that he alleges were made by the Macedonian Directorate for Security and Counterintelligence (UBK) on the orders of its Director, Sašo Mijalkov and Prime Minister Gruevski, who is Mijalkov’s cousin. Zaev alleged that up to 20,000 people had been under surveillance for at least the past five years, including journalists, academics, political opponents, judges, activists, religious leaders, Gruevski’s own cabinet ministers and the Macedonian President. If true, this number would surpass the estimated 14,000 that came under surveillance during the previous four to five decades under Tito’s regime.\(^{118}\) Zaev has stated that the recordings were provided to him by a whistle-blower within UBK. Many of the publicly released wire-taps indicate widespread corruption at the highest levels, financial crime, electoral fraud, executive interference in the judiciary, state control over the media and intimidation of the government’s opponents among many other serious breaches of the law.

---

\(^{117}\) ibid, pp. 4-5.

As the surveillance tapes were released thousands took to the streets demanding the resignation of the government. This included Macedonians and Albanians – though they have tended to hold separate protest rallies. These protests became known as the Coloured Revolution (Šarena Revolucija). When the protests turned violent the European Union brokered an agreement between the government and opposition, known as the Pržino Agreement, which set out a roadmap for ending the crisis. The key provision was early elections, initially scheduled for April 2016. To enable free and fair elections, a transitional administration was formed that included the opposition. In addition, Gruevski resigned as prime minister and installed Emil Dimitriev, Secretary General of VMRO-DPMNE.\textsuperscript{119} The government also agreed to verify Macedonia’s electoral list and provide the opposition with equitable access to the state-owned media. In parallel, Macedonia appointed an independent Special Prosecutor to investigate the evidence contained in the leaked recordings.\textsuperscript{120}

However, political leaders failed to agree on key issues that could guarantee free and fair elections, and as a result missed two scheduled election dates – in April and in June 2016. Further, in June 2016 VMRO-DPMNE and DUI used their majority in Parliament to expel opposition ministers from the transitional administration and restored their previous coalition government.\textsuperscript{121} Gruevski’s hold on power is now completely reliant on DUI’s continued participation in backing his authoritarian rule. This is a high-risk undertaking for DUI, particularly if the European Union and the United States decide to introduce sanctions on the government and its leadership. However, given the significant loss of electoral support it has experienced since the crisis has begun, it may be its final opportunity to retain power. Given their pivotal position in keeping VMRO-DPMNE in power, some have suggested that DUI may move to demand the federalisation of Macedonia, which could help revive its deteriorating

\textsuperscript{120} T. Less, “Macedonia is reaching crisis point and the West is looking the other way”, The Independent, 2 June 2016, www.independent.co.uk (accessed 30 August 2016).
\textsuperscript{121} ibid.
popularity. This would undoubtedly create another inter-ethnic crisis in the country and could re-ignite armed conflict.

Another important issue to note is that Macedonian and Albanian opposition groups are yet to establish a united front against the government. The likelihood that they will maintain separate protest movements is very high. Macedonians and Albanians, both opposed to Gruevski and Ahmeti, have largely organised their own separate anti-government protests. Nor are they likely to form a joint front in the upcoming elections. While they may be united in their short-term goal of ousting the government, their longer-term goals and interests are at odds. There have been discussions between SDSM, DPA, and Unity (a new Albanian party) on a potential united front at the next election; however, political analyst Naser Ziberi maintains that “the two sides are not ready for more serious cooperation for now [because] their platforms are in large part based on ethnic issues and, on that subject, they have completely opposing views”. Given the presence of new Albanian political parties (discussed below) and their intention of outbidding the established parties, this will be a period of more intense nationalist rhetoric as they vie for votes within their own ethnic community. The possibility of forming electoral coalitions with Macedonian parties (who will also be engaging in increased nationalist rhetoric) is very unlikely.

The question remains, however, how much of the public has engaged in the Coloured Revolution. At best, the protests have attracted 20,000 to 40,000 people, most of whom are SDSM-affiliated, or those organised by newly established Albanian opposition groups. Gruevski has managed to organise pro-government rallies matching the size of the opposition protests. While most protests have been in Skopje, smaller anti-government protests have been held in towns across the country – though these have been intermittent. In large part, the ‘Coloured Revolution’ has been an elite power struggle supported by their

---

122 ibid.
respective party faithful and with regards to Gruevski those whom he influences through patronage or threats (such as public employees). The large majority of the public seem to be rather apathetic towards the crisis, which they see as just another in a long line of political crises over the past 25 years.

Gruevski and his party still command a great deal of support among the electorate with committed supporters dismissing all and any accusations of wrongdoing as some sort of treasonous, western-backed SDSM plot to discredit the regime (conflating the regime with the nation and the state). However, none of what has transpired makes those from SDSM any more qualified than their counterparts in VMRO-DPMNE. SDSM under Kiro Gligorov and Branko Crvenkovski ruled the country in the same authoritarian manner, and were perhaps even more brutal in their grip on power. While Zaev’s release of these recordings (assuming they are authentic) is justified and may bring about regime change, his claim to offer a democratic alternative is preposterous.

As noted above, DUI is increasingly losing its credibility among its own constituency. It is seen by a growing section of the Albanian community as part of the corrupt political system that it had originally ousted in the form of DPA and PDP. Further, its detractors believe that it no longer represents the interests of the Albanian community. For example, in recent years a number of events have forced DUI to support its coalition partner, VMRO-DPMNE, in circumstances that has earned it the ire of its constituency. When the suspects in the Smilkovci executions were convicted in 2014, large Albanian crowds protested the court’s decision. DUI’s senior officials supported the outcome, which was seen as treachery resulting from long-term neglect of Albanian nationalist interests. After the initial wave of protests DUI recanted its original position and denounced the trial and its verdict. Protesters remained

126 ibid.
128 ibid.
unconvinced of DUI’s changed position and during the next wave of protests targeted Ahmeti’s party itself. Ahmeti’s abrupt change of policy was seen by the Albanian public as tokenistic and deceptive.

A number of new Albanian political parties have emerged over the past few years seeking to challenge the established political landscape and in particular DUI. Besa (Oath) was established in November 2014 by Zeqirija Ibrahimi, Bilal Kasami and Afrim Gashi as an anti-establishment party. Besa’s political platform calls for a ‘redefinition’ of Macedonia and an entirely new agreement between Macedonians and Albanians, proposing a strong consociational model of governance. Besa has gained significant support and leads the Opposition Council, a grouping of Albanian political parties that are not allied with the government. Besa has organised many of the Albanian anti-government protests throughout 2015 and 2016, targeting DUI as much as VMRO-DPMNE in relation to the ongoing illegal surveillance scandal and the resulting political crisis. It has done so position itself as an Albanian alternative and champion of democratic reform. Besa accuses Gruevski of authoritarian rule and imposing a policy of discrimination against the Albanian community. In June 2015 Besa’s Chairman, Bilal Kasami, accused both Gruevski and Ahmeti of politicising all spheres of society, misusing state institutions, failing to integrate the Albanians, and a host of other anti-Albanians policies.

In May 2016 Besa organised a protest in Skopje that attracted over 20,000 people. Its purpose was to call for an end to the Gruevski-Ahmeti coalition government. Protesters denounced what they deemed to be ‘fascism’ in Macedonia and demanded the immediate resignation of ‘Ali the Betrayer’ along with all DUI representatives. One of the protesters was reported as saying, “I
came here since I’m discriminated [against] everywhere: in school, by police and the state structures. But more than Gruevski I blame Ali Ahmeti who has always taken the votes of Albanians [for granted]”.

DUI’s unpopularity within this cohort suggests that new political movements are likely to make an impact on the next round of elections. These movements are dismissing DUI’s key achievement, the Framework Agreement, as an irrelevant farce that never met their demands. Throughout the protests organised by Besa Albanian nationalism and the failure of DUI to protect its interests has been the key theme, even though their official purpose was democratisation and the resignation of the Gruevski-Ahmeti coalition. For example, these protests are opened with the Albanian national anthem, draped in Albanian flags, and include chants of “Greater Albania” for the entire duration of the events.

Kim Mehmeti, Spokesman for the Opposition Council, made it clear that the new political movements are seeking much more than DUI, DPA, or PDP before them imagined would be possible within the framework of a Macedonian state:

> We have been waiting for 26 years to have an Albanian paragraph in the Macedonian anthem, to have an eagle in the Macedonian flag and to have an Albanian President or Prime Minister.

Zejadin Sela, Mayor of Struga and a longstanding factional leader within DPA, established his own political party in July 2015 named Movement for Reforms – Democratic Party of Albanians (MR-DPA). As part of his own manoeuvring, Sela accused DPA (his main rivals) of only feigning to be in opposition, while closely collaborating with Gruevski. Sela’s claim seemed to be given credibility in July 2015 by one of the leaked surveillance recordings in which a person who is believed to be Menduh Thaçi (DPA President) swears allegiance ‘to the death’ to the former UBK Director, Sašo Mijalkov. Some analysts believe that Sela’s new party, like Besa, is an attempt to capitalise on the political

---

135 Ridvan Azizi quoted in Mejdini and Marušić, “Albanian Opposition Takes to the Streets in Macedonia”.
136 ibid.
137 ibid.
139 ibid.
crisis and supplant the existing Albanian political organisations using the dissatisfaction against them to mobilise opposition that may not have been possible without the current crisis.\textsuperscript{140}

The formation of a third Albanian party (Unity) was announced in September 2015. Its founders are dissatisfied high ranking DUI officials, including the Head of DUI’s General Assembly, Zuluf Adili, and former DUI Secretary General and once NLA Chief of General Staff, Gzim Ostreni. Zuluf Adili claims that the party will pursue a civic concept for Macedonia so that it is a country that belongs to all of its citizens rather than just one or two ethnicities.\textsuperscript{141} There had been growing rifts within DUI for a number of years with violent incidents among the party leadership. For example, in October 2014 five people were wounded in a gun fight at the DUI branch in Saraj on the outskirts of Skopje.\textsuperscript{142} In December of the same year a fight between DUI members in Struga left several in hospital, while in July 2015 two party members were killed in separate shootouts in the towns of Kumanovo and Struga.\textsuperscript{143} The intra-Albanian rivalries in Macedonia are exceptionally violent and “marked by murders, bombings, kidnappings and sheer banditry”.\textsuperscript{144} Electoral violence is particularly vicious, with beatings, shootings and assassination attempts on party officials.\textsuperscript{145}

* * *

Macedonia is an anocratic state with a highly dysfunctional political culture. The central government does not have full control over the country and there are some areas that exist entirely beyond the reach of the authorities. Its institutions are ineffective and incapable of meeting some of the most basic expectations of

\textsuperscript{140} ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} ibid.
its citizens – social services, security and justice – let alone acting as a mechanism through which complex ethno-religious disputes can be managed. Many basic services that would normally be expected from the state are provided for locally through kinship groups, intra-ethnic community ties and household self-sufficiency. This creates parallel social institutions among Macedonians and Albanians that compete for resources.

Neither the state nor non-state actors within both communities are able to provide credible commitments that a long-term rapprochement is possible. Influential political elites engage in threatening war and making proposals for the revision of international borders. Small non-state actors that cannot be controlled by party elites take independent violent action, like the NLA in 2001 or smaller incidents such as those in Kondovo and Kumanovo. Widespread grassroots opposition to the Framework Agreement continues to grow among members of both ethnic groups and new political movements are arising that are challenging the status quo and the established political parties.

The electoral strategy among ethnically-based political parties in Macedonia is to promote nationalist solutions to ethno-religious problems in order to obtain support from within their own ethnic constituencies. Both VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM have followed a broad strategy of ethnically outbidding each other on issues pertaining to minority rights, while at the same time attempting to co-opt Albanian political elites by forming coalition governments with them. Albanian elites, on the other hand, have worked within the political system when in government as this provides them with resources to pursue Albanian nationalist goals and reward their supporters through patronage. However, when in opposition, they have tended to try and disrupt the work of government and pursue a much more radical agenda in order to outbid their opponents.
Conclusion

This thesis set out three hypotheses:

1. Violent and non-violent conflict between Orthodox Christian Macedonians and Sunni Muslim Albanians in Macedonia is the result of: 
a) incompatible worldviews (ethnonationalist and religious); b) competing rights claims, namely self-determination (Albanians) and state sovereignty (Macedonians); and c) an anocratic regime that lacks democratic institutions to manage conflict, coupled with a dysfunctional political culture;

2. There was an attempt to resolve some of these issues through significant constitutional and legislative amendments under the Framework Agreement, which was an outcome of the 2001 war. However, rather than addressing these issues, the Framework Agreement has exacerbated the causes of conflict noted above, while becoming a contentious issue in and of itself; and

3. There cannot be peaceful cohabitation or successful national integration between the two communities under the status quo.

The investigation has found that there are three broad causes of conflict between Macedonians and Albanians in Macedonia. Incompatible worldviews, built upon opposing ethnonational identity and religious belief systems is a central cause of conflict between the two groups. While Macedonians and Albanians in the region under investigation have lived in the same state since Ottoman times, they have existed in parallel societies and relative isolation from each other, particularly since the Second World War. From the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans (1912-13) until the German invasion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1941) the two communities were subjected to similar treatment under Serb rule and in many cases had similar interests and cooperated in day-to-day socio-
economic life. In some cases, they even cooperated in military-political activities such as the joint rebellion against Serb rule (1913) in south-western Macedonia.¹

However, during the Second World War and the Italian occupation of Albania the Albanian quisling government in conjunction with local Albanian fascist formations (Balli Kombëtar) in Macedonia sought to carve out a greater Albanian state. Macedonian partisan forces came into direct conflict with the Balli Kombëtar and both were responsible for atrocities against each other’s civilians. The experience of the Second World War brought the conflict between both communities into much sharper focus and the subsequent establishment of a Macedonian republic (within Yugoslavia) ended any cooperation between Macedonians and Albanians as the Macedonian authorities replaced the Serb authorities, in the minds of Albanians, as the main antagonists. On the other hand, Macedonians viewed the actions of the Balli Kombëtar as a renewed effort by Albanian separatists (beginning with the Prizren League) to carve out Macedonian territory.

Macedonian elites focused their nation-building efforts on Macedonian ethnonational identity and the construction a Macedonian socialist republic (1944-1991) as a nation-state for the Macedonian people. While lip service was paid to the historical and contemporary importance of its minorities, particularly the Albanians, the reality was that they were left largely to their own devices. Neither the Macedonian authorities in Skopje nor the Yugoslav federal authorities in Belgrade made any real attempt to integrate the Albanians into a national civic identity at the republican level or a supranational identity at the federal level. Until the Yugoslav-Soviet split, Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo cooperated to a large degree with the authorities in Albania in standardising the Albanian language and school textbooks. During the Cold War the Albanians in Macedonia faced significant ethnic and religious discrimination and became increasingly isolated from the Macedonians. This was compounded

by the geographic concentration of the Albanian population in northern and western Macedonia, and the relative isolation of many Albanian-populated towns and villages.

Since Macedonian independence Macedonian elites made even less of an effort to integrate its ethnic and religious minorities. Rather, its focus sharpened even more so on consolidating Macedonian ethnonational identity and securing Macedonia as their nation-state. This came about because of the extremely negative reactions to its independence by Greece and Bulgaria, which refuse even to acknowledge the existence of Macedonians as an ethnic group with its own culture and language, or its right to use the Macedonian name. With independence came a breakdown of law and order, and a significant weakening of state institutions. Added to this were the economic embargoes on Serbia to the north and Greece’s own economic embargo on Macedonia from the south. This chaotic environment allowed the Albanians to effectively run their own affairs within the Macedonian state at the local/regional level and enabled them to strengthen their own ethnonational identity in competition with a national civic identity. The result has been the consolidation of competing ethnonationalist identities and loyalties to ethnic groups.

Religious differences between Macedonians and Albanians also created further divides and more opportunity for conflict. Having learned the nationalist narrative of Ottoman oppression, many Macedonians are deeply suspicious of Islam, which they do not completely understand. They view Islam as foreign and dangerous, and consider it both an existential threat to the Macedonian nation and a civilizational threat to Europe. Albanians, on the other hand, see Macedonians as part of a ‘sea’ of Orthodox Christians in the Balkans who, as a whole, are an existential threat to the Albanian nation and their Islamic faith. They believe that their Islamic religion is a central reason why they are discriminated against, but view it also as the means through which they were able to survive as a people through Serb and Yugoslav rule.
Religion has also become highly politicised, and both communities have integrated their respective faiths as an essential element of their respective ethnonational identities. The Orthodox Church and Islam are both used to mobilise their communities for political action and violence. At the same time, nationalism is also used to mobilise the two communities in support of religious goals, such as constructing churches and mosques or establishing religious schools. Religion has also become so embedded in the Macedonian-Albanian conflict that it is a cause, a means and an end in and of itself.

The issue of radical Islamism is becoming more problematic, particularly since the 2001 war. The war brought militant Islamists who had fought in the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, and new recruits from the Middle East and Central Asia to the ranks of the National Liberation Army. While it is not believed that they participated in the war in significant numbers (probably because it did not last long enough to drive mobilisation and recruitment), these militants began to see Macedonia as a chaotic state with weak central control that they could use as a staging ground for action across the Balkans and further into Europe. As noted in Chapter Two, numerous radical Islamist training camps have been reported in Macedonia and it is possible that some continue to exist in the west and the north. Since 2001 Islamists have been recruiting young Muslims (from both the Albanian and Macedonian-speaking Muslim communities) to study Islamic theology in places like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. These young imams have returned to Macedonia and many are believed to be preaching radical interpretations of Islam, coming into conflict with the local Islamic institutions and local Islamic doctrines and traditions. In addition, some of these radicals have been involved in recruiting what is estimated to be hundreds of locals to fight for groups like ISIS in Syria.

While radical Islamism does not yet have a substantial following across the country, its adherents have demonstrated that they are persistent and patient. Its followers are growing in numbers and their ability to organise large-scale protest is impressive (for example, the protests against the conviction of the Smilkovci
murderers). For now, political and religious elites within the Muslim communities dismiss radical Islamist theology and practices as foreign and unacceptable to local Muslims; however, a generational divide has already appeared with younger Muslims more accepting of influences from the Middle East generally, and in some cases radical interpretations of the Qur’an. It remains to be seen how influential the radicals will ultimately become. Nevertheless, their presence is dangerous and their influence has already caused conflict within the Muslim community, and between the Macedonian and Albanian communities.

All of these underlying beliefs form the basis of the incompatible worldviews between Macedonians and Albanians. This is not to say that each and every individual subscribes to these, nor is it to say that these views do not evolve and change. However, they form the basis from which many in both communities currently perceive reality. These worldviews determine how people view their place in the world, the place of the ‘other’, and how they are mobilised into action. The competing rights claims of the Macedonians and Albanians that the Framework Agreement attempted to accommodate principally stem from their perception of reality, understood through the framework of their respective ethno-religious worldviews.

The first time that either of the two groups were in any position (in the modern era) to determine their own political system was when the Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) was convened in 1944. However, the vast majority of the deputies elected to the assembly where Macedonians from the Macedonian partisan movement, with only a handful of Albanians. The Macedonians (within the limited framework they were provided by Yugoslav authorities in Belgrade) shaped the Constitution and legislative agenda for the following five and a half decades, until Ali Ahmeti and the National Liberation Army (NLA) rebelled in 2001.

Since independence Albanian elites have claimed that the Albanian community should be recognised as a state-forming nation within the Constitution, equal to
the Macedonians. Macedonia should, in their view, be a bi-national state of the Macedonian and Albanian peoples governed by a group-consensus system. Under such a system decisions would only be valid if the representatives of both communities agreed. This would in effect give both communities a veto over all political decisions and legislative acts. With the end of the 2001 war, and the signing of the Framework Agreement, the Constitution was amended to recognise Albanians and a host of other communities as constituent peoples of the Macedonian state – equal to the Macedonian people. The issue of constitutive status is important because Albanians argue that as a constituent nation they are entitled to certain powers and resources. These include local self-government, proportional employment in state entities, parliamentary veto powers, and the recognition of the Albanian language as official language of administration.

However, the constitutional status of the Albanian community is unlikely to have reached a final settlement. Outside of a narrow circle of politicians, ideologues, and academics the Macedonian and Albanian communities have been calling for change since the new Preamble’s inception. Both communities are seeking opposing solutions; the Albanians want to relegate the smaller minorities to a non-constitutive status so that Macedonia is formally a bi-national state as described above, while the Macedonians want to reconstitute the state as a nation-state for the Macedonian people and relegate all minorities, as well as the Albanians, to a non-constitutive status.

The results of the implementation of the Framework Agreement have been largely negative. It failed to resolve any issues that it attempted to settle, while at the same time it opened new problems between the two communities. Decentralisation and the revision of municipal boundaries over the past 15 years have enabled the greatest number of Albanians to take advantage of the provisions within the Framework Agreement at the municipal level. However, this has also led to greater structural segregation where more Macedonians and Albanians now live in ethnically homogenous local territorial units. As these municipal councils have been granted greater responsibilities, particularly in
education, they have also witnessed the institutionalisation of segregation. For example, the school system where Macedonian and Albanian children either attend separate schools or separate classes within schools so that they can study in their own languages and avoid ethnic violence between students.

The criteria used to revise municipal boundaries – ethnic homogenisation - is largely seen among Macedonians as a betrayal by their own political elite, which will eventually lead to a Kosovo-style scenario where Albanians will have a defined territorial unit with administrative and institutional structures that they can use to secede from the Macedonian state. On the other hand, many Albanians hold the view that the decentralisation process did not go far enough, and that further power needs to be devolved to the local level. Some Albanians argue that all issues, apart from those that directly affect the national interest and the defence of the country, should be determined at the local level, similar to a Swiss-style canton political system.

It seems that although the Framework Agreement explicitly rejected territorial solutions for ethnic conflict as one of its basic principles, decentralisation has effectively accomplished it. Decentralisation has become a zero-sum game between the two communities who compete for local political power and control over local resources. But even more than that, it has become a struggle over the ethno-religious identity of the municipalities themselves – are they Macedonian or Albanian? Christian or Islamic? Finally, the practice among Macedonian and Albanian national elites of not interfering in each other’s municipalities where they constitute a clear local majority ensures that Macedonia de facto, if not de jure, functions as two separate political and administrative units.

The issue of proportional public employment for all ethnic groups has been particularly divisive. As the bearers of statehood, the Macedonians have dominated the public sector and few others were able to obtain state employment. The reasons for this vary, including: the fact that knowledge of Macedonian as the working language of the administration was necessary; Macedonians had
much higher levels of education; and they viewed state employment as a birth right due to their position as the titular nation. The implementation of proportional employment has meant that many Macedonians have been retrenched to make room for minorities. This has particularly been the case at the municipal level where Albanians now dominate local government. Previously Albanians were excluded and disenfranchised from public employment, now Macedonians face that same problem. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) argued that “it is very dangerous when minorities are discontented, but it is even more dangerous when the majority is discontented”.¹ It further contends that by implementing proportional employment in public entities in a non-transparent and financially unsustainable manner, the Macedonian and Albanian political elites have introduced another element of zero-sum game, and given the high levels of dissatisfaction, the Macedonian community can easily become radicalised.²

The Parliamentary veto powers (Badinter Principle) have created a partial bi-national system where Albanians are able to veto some constitutional and legislative changes, particularly in the cultural, educational, and religious spheres. However, the threat of a veto on legislation where it can be applied if other legislative acts are unacceptable makes its use much broader. Nevertheless, it has divided the Macedonian and Albanians communities on a number of levels. Albanians see it as a partial equaliser to Macedonian dominance, not only helping to ensure that their interests are protected, but increasing their power and influence over the state. The misuse of the veto power, however, has also caused intra-Albanian conflict between the supporters of the major Albanian parties (DUI and DPA) that have used it for party political interests.

On the other hand, Macedonians see the Badinter Principle as an undemocratic mechanism designed to undermine the Macedonian nation and its ownership of the state. The fact that it has not only been used to block legislation related to

¹ Bartlett, People-Centred Analysis, p. 63.
² ibid, p. 64.
fundamental cultural issues for Macedonians but also to force through legislation which is largely seen as anti-Macedonian, has many Macedonians (rightly or wrongly) comparing it to apartheid rule. At the local level, some Macedonian communities have been able to use it to protect their local interests. However, the observance of the Badinter Principle at the municipal level is rarely respected. Key disputes relating to the Badinter Principle at the local level involve the ethno-religious character of the municipality, particularly in terms of naming public places and structures, obtaining approval to build churches and mosques, and even obtaining permits to build structures on private property, which at times is done simply to frustrate the members of the other ethnic group.

The Badinter Principle is a case in which the Framework Agreement opened a new source of conflict, both across ethnic lines and within the Albanian community. At the same time, it moved conflict into the local level where constitutionally imbedded voting requirements have created a new structural conflict. The Badinter Principle will continue to be contentious in the future as there is a substantial legislative backlog at the national level which has been deferred due to the difficulties in navigating the veto power, and ongoing disputes over cultural, educational and religious issues at the local level.

Macedonian language policies under Yugoslav rule were much more liberal and allowed for greater use of minority languages, particularly at the local level. This changed with independence and the Macedonian Government’s attempt to consolidate a Macedonian nation-state, and as a reaction to Greek and Bulgarian elites disputing the very existence of the language and its identification as Macedonian. For Albanians, use of their own language as an official language of administration was of primary concern. Firstly, it was a mechanism with which to maintain their own ethnonational identity; secondly, it was a matter of expanding their opportunities in education, employment, and participation within the political and institutional structures of the country; and thirdly, it was a means with which to increase their power and influence in society. Therefore, language became highly politicised with many refusing to learn Macedonian. In
addition, language itself began to be used as a political weapon with which to conquer public space and dominate or demonstrate power, particularly in local municipalities where the use of language in public spaces can construct the ‘identity’ of that territory. For example, the use of Albanian as the primary language on street signs, shop fronts, and other objects works to mark that town or village as Albanian.

Many Macedonians feel that they have been excessively generous with their provision of language rights to the Albanian community. Albanian demands for full equality of the two languages is seen by Macedonians as an attempt to ‘Albanianise’ the state, and extending the public use of Albanian into municipalities with little or no Albanians residents is seen as unacceptable. Nevertheless, language differences have led to the segregation of Macedonians and Albanians into their parallel worlds. With the institutionalisation of language through the creation of separate schools and the establishment of two Albanian-language universities Macedonians and Albanians are now capable of maturing into adulthood without ever having to spend any substantial amount of time with members of the other community. The affect this will have on integration for the Albanian community into wider society will be disastrous.

Finally, Macedonia is an anocratic state with a highly dysfunctional political culture. Nineteen ninety-one saw the beginning of an ambitious project to transition from a totalitarian regime that controlled all aspects of social, economic and political life to a liberal democratic society that would resemble the West in both its nature and its practical function. The problem was Macedonian citizens had never experienced a classical liberal or democratic political system (as understood in the West). New and old political elites were the product of the society in which they lived, and they continued to govern the state in the only manner with which they were acquainted. While the political elites undertook a substantial amount of formal liberalisation and democratisation, including removing government control from most aspects of social and economic life and opening politics to a multi-party system, once
elected they continue to rule like autocrats. They continue to ignore central tenets of democracy such as open public debate, public consultation, and free and fair elections. In addition, human rights abuses, patronage, corruption, and nepotism are pervasive throughout society, not just at the elite level.

Nevertheless, the central government does not have full control over the country, and there are some areas that exist entirely beyond the reach of the authorities. In addition, its institutions are weak, ineffective, and incapable of meeting some of the most basic expectations of its citizens – social services, security, and justice – let alone acting as a mechanism through which complex ethno-religious disputes can be managed. Many of the basic services that would normally be expected from the state are provided locally through kinship groups, ethnic community ties, and household self-sufficiency. This creates both competition for scarce state resources and parallel socio-political institutions (some of which should be met by government, i.e., security and justice) among Macedonians and Albanians.

Neither the state nor non-state actors within both communities are able to provide credible commitments that a long-term rapprochement between the two is possible. Influential political elites continue to incite violence and propose revisions of international borders. In addition, widespread grassroots opposition to the Framework Agreement continues to grow among members of both ethnic groups, and this has given impetus to new political movements (particularly among the Albanian community) to challenge the status quo (in terms of the Framework Agreement) and the established political parties. Small non-state actors that cannot be controlled by political elites take independent violent action, like the NLA during the 2001 war or smaller incidents such as those in Kondovo (2004-05), Brodec (2007), and Kumanovo (2015).

The electoral strategy among ethnically-based political parties in Macedonia is to take advantage of nationalist sentiment (or create it where necessary) in order to maintain support from their own ethnic constituencies. Both VMRO-DPMNE
and SDSM have broadly followed a strategy of attempting to ethnically outbid each other on issues pertaining to minority rights, while at the same time attempting to co-opt Albanian political elites by forming coalition governments with them, and offering some peripheral ministerial posts or posts without portfolio. Albanian elites, on the other hand, have worked within the political system to the extent that it has suited them when in government as this provides them with access to resources to pursue Albanian nationalist goals (such as its nation-building projects) and to reward their supporters through patronage. However, when in opposition, they have tended to try and disrupt the work of government accusing it of betraying the interests of the Albanian people, boycotting parliamentary sessions, and pursuing a much more radical agenda in order to outbid their opponents.

In the final analysis, Jenny Engström argues that:

The conflict is...not merely over rights for the [Albanians] in a country dominated by the [Macedonians] but, more fundamentally, about who controls the state and what kind of state Macedonia should be.4

The Macedonian-Albanian conflict is but one of a myriad of chaotic social, economic, and political problems with which the country finds itself struggling. The fact that Macedonians and Albanians have far-reaching disputes relating to issues of fundamental importance is compounded by the sheer number of issues over which they disagree. In light of this, it is difficult to foresee a sustainable resolution to this conflict. Nor is the status quo going to deliver peaceful coexistence between the two communities. Rather, the existing state of affairs is on a trajectory of increasing ethno-religious segregation, competition and violence.

---

4 Engström, “Multi-ethnicity or Bi-nationalism?”, p. 6.
Appendices
Appendix One

Map of Macedonia

Source: http://ontheworldmap.com/macedonia/macedonia-political-map.jpg
Appendix Two

Albanian Language Map

Source: A. Hamiti & I. Hamiti, Gjuha Shqipe: Per Klasën VI, Ministerstvo za obrazovanje i nauka na Republika Makedonija, Skopje, p. 5.
Appendix Three
Nation-Building

Adem Jashari Monument

NLA Memorial, Aračinovo
Source: Author’s Personal Archive
NLA Memorial, Tetovo
Source: Author’s Personal Archive

Tsar Samoil, Skopje
Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons
Founders of VMRO, Skopje
Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons

Philip of Macedon, Skopje
Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons
Appendix Four
Chronology of Key Events

May 1876
Macedonian Razlovci uprising began.

June 1878
Albanian notables and chieftains created the League of Prizren.

October 1878
Macedonian Kresna Uprising broke out.

3 November 1893
The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) was established in Salonica.

2 August 1903
Ilinden uprising against Ottoman rule led by VMRO declared an independent Macedonian state known as the Kruševo Republic.

22 November 1908
In Bitola, a committee of Albanian political and cultural activists adopt a unified alphabet standard.

10 August 1913
The Treaty of Bucharest ended the Second Balkan War. Macedonia was partitioned between Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Albania.

23 September 1913
Macedonian komiti allied with Albanian Kaçaks rebelled against occupying Serb forces in Ohrid, Struga, Debar, and Kičevo. The Serbs suppressed the uprising by killing thousands of Macedonians, Albanians, and Turks. The town of Debar was razed to the ground.

1918
Macedonian territory under Serbian occupation became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

1941
Germany invaded Yugoslavia. Macedonian territory under Yugoslav occupation was then partitioned among Bulgaria and Italian-occupied Albania. A Macedonian partisan army was established and fought occupying German, Bulgarian, Italian, and Albanian forces.
November 1942
The fascist Albanian Balli Kombëtar was established. Its aims were to create a greater Albanian state.

March 1944
The Germans established the Skanderbeg Waffen SS division, composed of Albanians. The unit was deployed in Macedonia and Kosovo.

2 August 1944
The establishment of a Macedonian republic was proclaimed by Antifascist Assembly of the People’s Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) at the St. Prohor Pčinski monastery.

7 January 1945
A revolt by Macedonian recruits due to be dispatched to the Srem front in northern Serbia was crushed by the Yugoslav partisan army.

29 November 1945
The establishment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was declared, with Macedonia as a constitutive republic.

February 1953
Yugoslavia signed a trilateral pact with Greece and Turkey. Muslim emigration from Kosovo and Macedonia increased. By the mid-1960s, more than 200,000 Turks and Albanians had left Yugoslavia; approximately half of them were from Macedonia.

19 July 1967
The independence (autocephaly) of the Macedonian Orthodox Church was proclaimed after having been dissolved in 1767.

1 February 1990
Over 2,000 Albanians demonstrated in Tetovo against the treatment of Albanians by the Macedonian authorities. The protesters demanded independence for regions in western Macedonia where ethnic Albanians constituted a majority.

25 August 1990
Nevzat Halili was elected chairman of the Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP). The party's main objectives included the attainment of proportional representation in the government of Macedonia for the Albanian community, and strengthening their cultural rights.

11 November – 12 December 1990
The first free multiparty elections were conducted in Macedonia since 1938. In the three rounds of elections for the Macedonian Parliament, no clear winner emerged. The coalition between the Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) and the National Democratic Party (NDP) received 25 seats in the 120 seat
Parliament. The nationalist VMRO-DPMNE gained 37 seats and the League of Communists of Macedonia (LCM) won 31 seats.

29 March 1991
After months of discussions on political power sharing arrangements, the Parliamentary deputies concluded that the country should be led by a politically unaffiliated cabinet. VMRO-DPMNE and PDP both voiced displeasure at the compromise.

15 September 1991
Macedonia declared its independence from Yugoslavia.

20 November 1991
The new Constitution was promulgated at a special session of Parliament, which was boycotted by PDP and NDP in protest against the Preamble of the Constitution, which established Macedonia as "the national state of the Macedonian people".

1992
The Macedonian National Guard was created by VMRO-DMPNE (then in opposition) to protect Macedonia in the event that the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) refused to withdraw from the newly independent republic.

11-12 January 1992
A referendum on autonomy was organised by Albanians throughout Macedonia. Albanians overwhelmingly voted in favour of autonomy. The Macedonian government refused to recognise the results of the referendum.

31 March 1992
Approximately 40,000 Albanians protested in the Macedonian capital, Skopje. The protesters demanded that the Macedonian state remain unrecognised by the international community until it granted Albanians the right to autonomy in regions where Albanians constituted the majority.

7 April 1992
Representatives of the Albanian community declared an “Albanian Autonomous Republic of Ilirida”.

June 1992
In Radolišta, a village in the Struga Valley near the Albanian border, Macedonian police found a cache of weapons including pistols, Kalashnikov rifles, Skorpio machine guns, explosives, ammunition, and uniforms with the Albanian emblem of the black two-headed eagle. The finding further raised fears among Macedonians that Albanian separatists had organised paramilitary forces.

September 1992
Following two months of negotiations, a new government was formed to replace the "government of experts" led by Nikola Kljušev. The new government was led
by a coalition of parties that included PDP, NDP, Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), and Reformist Forces of Macedonia-Liberal Party (RFM-LM).

30 September 1992
Following a lecture given by Nevzat Halili to an extremist Albanian émigré group (Balli Kombëtar) at a Chicago mosque, his departing entourage came under gun fire. Halili, PDP chairman, was continually interrupted and antagonized during his speech. The audience objected to the cooperation of PDP with the Macedonian government.

6 November 1992
Clashes between Macedonian police and Albanians in the mostly Albanian neighbourhood of Bit Pazar in Skopje left four dead, and 36 Albanians and police injured. Following the disturbance police detained 87 people. The unrest exploded when police arrested and allegedly severely beat an Albanian youth charged with illicit dealings of cigarettes. During the unrest over 50 shops were ransacked and several police vehicles destroyed. Gunfire was also exchanged between the Macedonian police and Albanians. The rumour of the youth's beating, which infuriated ethnic Albanians, was apparently false.

8 November 1992
Following the disturbances that occurred in Skopje, the Interior Ministry announced the seizure of 2,000 leaflets calling on Albanians to wage war for the right to self-determination.

9 November 1992
Over 20,000 Albanians participated in the funeral of the three Albanians who died during the Bit Pazar riot. The men were buried in the Muslim section of Skopje's cemetery as observers waived the Albanian flag.

10 November 1992
The Parliament approved a new citizenship law which allowed ethnic Macedonians from abroad and those born in Macedonia to receive citizenship automatically. Those not fitting into these categories were required to have lived in Macedonia for 15 years before being eligible for citizenship. Further, the new law placed the status of citizenship under the full discretion of the Interior Ministry.

11 December 1992
The UN Security Council decides in Resolution 795 to deploy 700 UN peacekeepers to Macedonia.

20-21 February 1993
Macedonians demonstrated in Skopje against the building of refugee housing for displaced Muslims from the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The protestors were met by 200 riot police who dispersed the crowd with tear gas. The housing site
was originally planned for Macedonians returning from other parts of Yugoslavia but the influx of over 50,000 Bosnian refugees made their settlement a priority.

1993
Vevčani, populated solely by Macedonians, held its own referendum on independence after members of the country's Albanian community living nearby did the same. Ninety-six per cent voted in favour of independence and the local authorities declared the establishment of the Republic of Vevčani. This was considered to be a symbolic declaration by the central authorities.

November 1993
Macedonia's Deputy Defence Minister, Hisen Haskaj, and Deputy Health Minister, Imer Imeri, were arrested for alleged involvement in establishing an Albanian paramilitary group. The Macedonian police also reportedly arrested several more ethnic Albanians in Tetovo and Gostivar for charges pertaining to arms trafficking and involvement with ethnic Albanian separatist paramilitary organisations. Interior Minister Ljubomir Frčkovski stated that Deputy Defence Minister Hisen Haskaj was arrested for spying and collaborating with foreign secret services to smuggle arms into Macedonia. He stated that the operation was aimed at developing an organization called the All Albanian Army (AAA). The Interior Minister also said that AAA lists detailing the names of 20,000 ethnic Albanians were seized during the earlier arrests.

4 December 1993
Disagreements between hard line and moderate factions of the ethnic Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) culminated in the resignation of party president Nevzat Halili, General Secretary Mithad Emini, as well as the entire party presidium. PDP radicals, led by Menduh Thaçi, complained that the party, as part of the ruling coalition, made too many compromises which undermined ethnic Albanian interests.

January 1994
Mithad Emini, the former General Secretary of PDP, was arrested along with nine other ethnic Albanian for alleged separatist activities. The group was charged with involvement in the AAA plot.

12 February 1994
At a national congress held by PDP, the party officially splintered into two factions. The moderate faction, led by the old leaders, was determined to work within the system and achieve ethnic Albanian demands through compromise. The radical faction, led by Arben Xhaferi and Menduh Thaçi, criticised the government and opposed government policies. The split was preceded by growth in ethnic Albanian dissatisfaction with the PDP's involvement in the coalition government.

18 June 1994
As tensions concerning the July census escalated, Albanians and Macedonians clashed in Tetovo. A Macedonian youth was fatally stabbed. Macedonian authorities arrested two Albanians as they attempted to leave the country.

2 July 1994
PDP walked out of the Macedonian parliament in a show of protest against the conviction of several ethnic Albanians accused of organising separatist paramilitary groups. PDP denounced the convictions as a political manoeuvre aimed at weakening PDP and constraining Albanian rights. Among those convicted by a Skopje court were two high level PDP members. The General Secretary of PDP, Mithad Emini, received an eight year sentence, and the former Deputy Defence Minister Hisen Haskaj received a six year sentence.

14 November 1994
Macedonia's census showed that Albanians accounted for 22.9 per cent of the country's population. The Albanians claimed that the census was falsified and that they accounted for up to 40 per cent of the population. International observers dismissed their objections.

December 1994
The Macedonian government blocked the opening of an Albanian-language university in Tetovo declaring it illegal. They later bulldozed the building which was to house the university.

10 February 1995
Albanian deputies forced Parliament to adjourn over the issue of ID cards that were to be printed only in Macedonian.

15 February 1995
2,000 ethnic Albanians gathered for the opening of Macedonia's first, albeit illegal, Albanian-language university. Police closed the university within a day.

17 February 1995
Violent clashes erupted between Albanians and Macedonian police. One man was killed. Deputies from PDP began to boycott parliamentary sessions.

23 February 1995
About 2,000 Macedonian students protested outside of Parliament demanding the closure of the Albanian-language university.

27 February 1995
All 19 Albanian deputies withdrew from Parliament demanding the right to use the Albanian-language in Parliament and the approval of the Albanian-language university in Tetovo.

May 1995
Several Albanian-language television and radio stations were closed by the government.
3 May 1995
The dean of the illegal Albanian-language university was sentenced to two and a half years in jail for inciting the 17 February riot outside the university. Others were later sentenced to lesser sentences on similar charges.

3 October 1995
President Gligorov was critically hurt in a car bomb attack. The bomb, which targeted his car as he headed to work, cost him an eye and killed his driver and a bystander.

4 July 1996
More than 10,000 Albanians rallied in Tetovo, protesting against the jailing of Fadil Suleymani, the Dean of Tetovo University. Demonstrators demanded the university’s legalisation and its integration into the official education system.

24 July 1996
About 3,000 members of the Albanian minority protested in Skopje demanding the release of five of their leaders and permission to set up an Albanian language university in Tetovo.

22 May 1997
The Constitutional Court prohibited the use of the Albanian flag. The Parliament moved to adopt restrictive legislation.

8 July 1997
Protests in Tetovo and Gostivar demanding the free use of Albanian national symbols ended in violent clashes with security forces. Three local Albanians were killed and 500 arrested, including Rufi Osmani (Mayor of Gostivar). Gun battles ensued in which several policemen were wounded and 312 protesters were arrested.

22 July 1997
In an effort to defuse tension in Gostivar and Tetovo, Parliament passed a law allowing the Albanian flag to be flown outside the town hall, but only on certain Macedonian national holidays. The mayors in both towns rejected the new law.

17 September 1997
Rufi Osmani is sentenced to 13 years in prison on charges of inciting ethnic hatred in the July riots.

30 September 1997
In his talks with Albanian President Meydani and Prime Minister Fatos Nano, Arben Xhaferi asks the Albanian Government to show more commitment to Albanians in Macedonia. Xhaferi proposes the establishment of a pan-national assembly to draft a pan-national strategy, including the creation of pan-national institutions and the foundation of a pan-national parliament.
18 April 1998
Thousands of Albanians protested in Gostivar for Rufi Osmani’s release from prison.

22 July 1998
Three explosions shocked Macedonia. The blasts, one of them in the centre of Skopje, caused only minor damage.

20 January 1999
Members of the governing coalition and Albanian parties in Macedonia backed an appeal by Speaker Savo Klimovski to President Kiro Gligorov, asking Gligorov to sign the amnesty law passed by Parliament in December. The law covered, among others, the Albanian mayors of Gostivar and Tetovo, Rufi Osmani and Alaydin Demiri.

4 February 1999
The Macedonian Parliament overruled a presidential veto and amnestied 8,000 prisoners, including Rufi Osmani.

15 April 1999
Albanian political parties were reportedly helping the Prime Minister of Kosovo’s provisional government. Recruits from western Macedonia were been sent to training centres in northern Albania, where they were trained for combat in Kosovo.

17 April 1999
The Tetovo police rejected media claims that there were centres for the recruitment of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) fighters in Tetovo municipality. The Skopje daily Dnevnik, reported that a special headquarters existed in the Tetovo village of Poroj, which performed the task of accepting Kosovo refugees, as well as organising the transfer of Albanian volunteers from Macedonia to the KLA.

22 April 1999
Macedonian Prime Minister Ljubčo Georgievski warned that the influx of Albanian refugees from Kosovo was threatening the demographic balance of the country.

25 January 2001
Albanian paramilitaries claimed responsibility for a rocket attack on a police station in Macedonia, which left one officer dead and three others wounded.

19 February 2001
The National Liberation Army clashed with a military patrol in Macedonia.

2 March 2001
The Macedonian Parliament ratified a border treaty with Serbia. Only the opposition PDP voted against ratification on the grounds that authorities in
Kosovo were not consulted. NATO issued a last minute appeal to Macedonia not to embark on a military offensive against Albanian paramilitaries. Macedonian authorities warned NATO that they were losing patience following the appearance of about 200 Albanian fighters in the border village of Tanuševci.

4 March 2001
Macedonia sealed its border with Kosovo after three soldiers were killed in heavy fighting with Albanian rebels, led by Ali Ahmeti.

5 March 2001
The Macedonian army announced a general mobilization.

7 March 2001
Macedonia’s Defence Ministry claimed that Macedonian positions had been attacked with mortar fire, as NATO peacekeepers joined Macedonian units in a bid to seal off the rebel-held areas. As he addressed Parliament, the Macedonian President made a public promise to root out Albanian terrorism and extremism.

10 March 2001
Albanian rebels launched separate attacks on Macedonian and Yugoslav forces killing two people and wounding another three. Armed Albanians, numbering 300 to 500 men, with a logistic base in Kosovo were operating in a mountainous region in Macedonia bordering Kosovo. Greece and Bulgaria announced they were sending military aid to Macedonia to help its struggle against the rebels.

14 March 2001
The Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA) extended its attacks to Tetovo.

20 March 2001
Security forces began a heavy attack against paramilitary fighters and issued an ultimatum that weapons be laid down.

21 March 2001
The government rejected a rebel cease-fire and proceeded with its military offensive.

22 March 2001
Two Albanians were killed by police at a checkpoint when they appeared to pull out grenades. The EU urged Macedonia to show restraint and intensify discussions with Albanian militants.

24 March 2001
Macedonia began using Ukrainian-piloted attack helicopters against Albanian rebels.
25 March 2001
Macedonian security forces undertook attacks with tanks and helicopters against rebels in Tetovo. Prime Minister Georgievski stated that the attack began immediately after the termination of the government ultimatum to the terrorists.

2 April 2001
President Trajkovski expressed readiness to join an all-party dialogue and revise sections of the Macedonian Constitution. Macedonians protested against anticipated changes. DPA leader Arben Xhaferi threatened to leave the government if the demands of the Albanian minority were not met within one month.

28 April 2001
Eight Macedonian soldiers and police were killed by rebels near the Kosovo border. This led to Macedonians rioting in Bitola on 1 May where they destroyed Albanian shops following the funerals of soldiers killed in the ambush.

3 May 2001
Troops backed by helicopter gunships began a fresh offensive against Albanian rebels after two soldiers were killed and one kidnapped in an ambush.

12 May 2001
The Parliament approved a national unity government.

15 May 2001
The new unity government ordered a halt to attacks on Albanian rebels but warned them to clear out of northern villages within two days or face full-scale assaults.

25 May 2001
Government troops began a ground assaults against rebels and some 3,000 civilians fled the area.

1 June 2001
The government offered amnesty to the Albanian militants if they laid down their weapons.

6 June 2001
Albanian shops and a mosque in the southern town of Bitola were torched in riots before the funerals of Macedonian soldiers killed by rebels.

10 June 2001
Albanian rebel leader Commander Hoxha threatened to take the insurgency into the cities unless the government stopped fighting in the north.

13 June 2001
Police announced that men of fighting age in Skopje were mobilised, following rebel threats to shell the city.
Rebels declared a unilateral cease-fire as politicians began talks to resolve the crisis.

Government troops ended an 11-day cease-fire and attacked Albanian rebels with tanks and helicopter gunships.

Macedonia called off an offensive against Albanian rebels near Skopje after talks with European Union officials.

Rioting erupted in Skopje after US troops escorted rebels from Aračinovo.

Armed protesters besieged the Parliament in Skopje, angry at what they saw as leniency towards Albanian rebels. President Boris Trajkovski made a national appeal for peace.

Macedonian protesters in Skopje, angered by Western efforts at mediation, attacked symbolic targets.

Political leaders initialled a peace accord as rebels ambushed an army convoy and killed 10 soldiers.

Two mines hit military trucks near Skopje and seven soldiers were killed. Macedonian security forces supported by paramilitaries launched an assault on Ljuboten. Macedonian forces killed six Albanian civilians and burned at least 22 houses in the village. Another three were killed from indiscriminate shelling and another died when shot while fleeing.

Macedonian and Albanian political parties signed the western-backed Framework Agreement, involving greater recognition of Albanian rights in exchange for a rebel pledge to hand over weapons to NATO forces.

NATO’s 1st advance troops of Operation Essential Harvest arrived in Skopje.

NATO members gave formal approval for alliance soldiers to collect weapons from Albanian rebels in Macedonia.
24 August 2001
Rebels agreed to hand over some 3,000 weapons. The government had earlier estimated that the rebels had up to 100,000 weapons.

26 August 2001
An explosion at a hotel in Čelopek killed two Macedonians.

27 September 2001
Albanian rebels declared that they had formally disbanded and were returning to civilian life.

4 October 2001
Macedonian security forces, in opposition to external warnings, took control of three Albanian villages but were met with armed resistance from others.

11 October 2001
Police found a cache of arms in an area held by Albanian rebels.

12 November 2001
Three policemen were killed in fighting following the seizure of hostages by Albanians near Tetovo in response to a police raid.

16 November 2001
The Parliament adopted constitutional amendments agreed to under the Framework Agreement.

2-3 March 2002
Macedonian police killed seven men who allegedly attempted to ambush them near Butel, a suburb of Skopje. Police say the attackers were Pakistanis. Foreign officials later discounted these assertions and suspected that they were illegal immigrants. A two year investigation into the so-called Raštanski Lozja affair revealed that police had staged the killing to demonstrate their support for the US-led campaign against terrorism and claim that Macedonia too was dealing with its own Islamic militants. A bomb blast at the Macedonian consulate in Karachi on 5 December 2002 killed three people in apparent retaliation.

29 August 2002
In western Macedonia police killed two Albanians after gunmen abducted at least five people from a bus. The five abducted people were released after two days.

14 September 2002
An Albanian was killed and two were wounded in a clash with police, as tensions soared on the eve of national elections. The Albanian National Army (ANA) launched a number of attacks in Kosovo and Macedonia. ANA also claimed responsibility for an assassination attempt on Interior Minister Ljube Boškovski.
15 September 2002
The Social Democrats under Branko Crvenkovski won government. Most Albanian voters backed the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), under former rebel Ali Ahmeti.

31 October 2002
ANA claimed responsibility for bomb blast outside of the Parliament building.

August 2003
Grenades launched by unknown people hit government buildings in Skopje.

7 September 2003
Macedonian police clashed with Albanian militants in the volatile north and reported killing several men in what they said was a major sweep against paramilitary groups.

23 January 2004
The Macedonian Parliament officially recognised the University of Tetovo, where the language of instruction is primarily Albanian.

14 February 2004
ANA claimed responsibility for a bomb blast outside of the Struga courthouse.

26 February 2004
Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski was killed when his plane crashed in southern Bosnia.

28 April 2004
Macedonians elected Branko Crvenkovski, the then Prime Minister, as President. His opponent, Saško Kedev claimed electoral fraud.

23 July 2004
Thousands of Macedonians protested against proposals to revise municipal boundaries and give Albanians more power in certain areas. Macedonian protests turned into rioting in Struga.

July to December 2004
The Krasniqi group occupied the village of Kondovo, outside of Skopje.

7 November 2004
A referendum against the revision of municipal boundaries and the related decentralisation failed.

February to August 2005
The Krasniqi group occupied the village of Kondovo for a second time.
14 March 2005
The Hague tribunal indicted former Macedonian Interior Minister Ljube Boškovski and Johan Tarčulovski for war crimes.

6 July 2006
Prime Minister Vlado Bučkovski conceded defeat to VMRO-DPMNE in Macedonia's parliamentary elections. Nikola Gruevski became Prime Minister.

26 August 2006
The Democratic Union for Integration and the Party for Democratic Prosperity held a protest at which three police officers were injured.

29 November 2006
The Macedonian Minister of Education received several death threats after dismissing the rector and several Albanian professors from the University in Tetovo.

16 April 2007
Former Interior Minister Ljube Boškovski went on trial at the international tribunal in The Hague, charged with war crimes during the 2001 war.

March 2007
Gruevski met with the leader of the Albanian opposition and Ali Ahmeti agreeing to start over with the (until then) blocked political dialogue, as well as to have a meeting to determine a list of laws that should be adopted under Badinter Principle.

August 2007
Another grenade attack on government facilities occurred.

7 November 2007
Police undertook Operation Mountain Storm near the village of Brodec against a group of Albanian paramilitaries and Islamists in which eight gunmen were killed and large quantities of weapons were found.

1 June 2008
Macedonia's parliamentary election was marred by violence in Albanian areas and suspected fraud, with one person killed and nine wounded, and voting halted in one town after a gun battle. Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski won an overwhelming election victory but monitors criticised the violence that marred the poll. The government promised to repeat voting in 22 polling stations that were shut down due to shootings or alleged ballot fraud.

10 July 2008
Ljube Boškovski was freed by the ICTY in his trial for the Ljuboten massacre. Tarčulovski was sentenced to 12 years.
5 April 2009
Горге Иванов won the Presidential elections.

12 May 2010
Macedonian police stated that a shootout between police and an armed group near the country's border with Kosovo left four people dead. Police had intercepted them attempting to smuggle weapons across the border from Kosovo.

13 February 2011
Albanians and Macedonians clashed at the historic Kale Fortress in Skopje over a dispute relating to a new structure being built on the foundations of a 13th century church. Eight people were injured.

March 2012
Twenty people were arrested and dozens injured in two weeks of clashes between Macedonian and Albanian youths.

8 April 2012
Five Macedonians were executed on the shores of Lake Smilkovci near Skopje.

May 2012
Police arrested 20 suspected Islamists over the Lake Smilkovci executions.

1 March 2013
Macedonians protested in Skopje, angry at the appointment of an Albanian Defence Minister, who was an NLA commander during the 2001 war.

2 March 2013
Violent ethnic riots rattle Macedonia's capital, culminating with hundreds raging through the city centre, clashing with police, overturning cars, and attacking a bus station. At least 22 people were injured, 13 of them police officers.

20 May 2014
Macedonian police announced that they had detained 18 people following overnight riots in Skopje sparked by the fatal stabbing of a Macedonian teenager by an Albanian bicycle thief. Police arrested a 19-year-old suspect for the murder.

30 June 2014
A Macedonian court convicted six Albanians of murdering five Macedonian fishermen in Lake Smilkovci on Easter 2012, in an alleged plot to destabilise the country and sentenced them to life imprisonment. Two of the defendants were tried in absentia because they were serving jail terms in neighbouring Kosovo over illegal weapons charges. A seventh suspect was acquitted.
14 July 2014
Macedonian police fired tear gas and stun grenades in clashes with around 2,000 Albanians who took to the streets of the capital to protest the jailing of the Smilkovci suspects for murder and terrorism.

28 October 2014
A group calling itself the NLA claimed responsibility for the rocket-propelled grenades that were launched at a Macedonian government building in Skopje.

21 April 2015
Forty militants claiming to be part of the NLA attacked a police watchtower in the village of Gošince on the border with Kosovo.

9-10 May 2015
Clashes in the northern town of Kumanovo left eight police and 14 gunmen dead. The government blamed Albanian terrorists from neighbouring Kosovo for the gun battle. The militants were linked to the same group that attacked the police watchtower in Gošince on 21 April 2015. Opposition parties staged large protests calling on Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski to resign over alleged corruption, prompting counter-rallies by pro-government supporters.
Appendix Five

The Preamble

Preamble (1991)

Taking as the points of departure the historical, cultural, spiritual and statehood heritage of the Macedonian people and their struggle over centuries for national and social freedom as well as for the creation of their own state, and particularly the traditions of statehood and legality of the Kruševo Republic and the historic decisions of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the People's Liberation of Macedonia, together with the constitutional and legal continuity of the Macedonian state as a sovereign republic within Federal Yugoslavia and the freely manifested will of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia in the referendum of September 8th, 1991, as well as the historical fact that Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romanies and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia, and intent on:

- the establishment of the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign and independent state, as well as a civil and democratic one;
- the establishment and consolidation of the rule of law as a fundamental system of government;
- the guaranteeing of human rights, citizens, freedoms and ethnic equality;
- the provision of peace and a common home for the Macedonian people with the nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia; and on
- the provision of social justice, economic wellbeing and prosperity in the life of the individual and the community,

the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopts THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
Preamble (as agreed in the Framework Agreement)

The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, taking over responsibility for the present and future of their fatherland, aware and grateful to their predecessors for their sacrifice and dedication in their endeavours and struggle to create an independent and sovereign state of Macedonia, and responsible to future generations to preserve and develop everything that is valuable from the rich cultural inheritance and coexistence within Macedonia, equal in rights and obligations towards the common good – the Republic of Macedonia, in accordance with the tradition of the Kruševo Republic and the decisions of the Antifascist People’s Liberation Assembly of Macedonia, and the Referendum of September 8, 1991, they have decided to establish the Republic of Macedonia as an independent, sovereign state, with the intention of establishing and consolidating rule of law, guaranteeing human rights and civil liberties, providing peace and coexistence, social justice, economic well-being and prosperity in the life of the individual and the community, and in this regard through their representatives in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, elected in free and democratic elections, they adopt THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Preamble (as amended in 2001)

The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people, as well as citizens living within its borders who are part of the Albanian people, the Turkish people, the Vlach people, the Serbian people, the Romany people, the Bosniak people and others taking responsibility for the present and future of their fatherland, aware of and grateful to their predecessors for their sacrifice and dedication in their endeavours and struggle to create an independent and sovereign state of Macedonia, and responsible to future generations to preserve and develop everything that is valuable from the rich cultural inheritance and coexistence within Macedonia, equal in rights and obligations towards the common good - the Republic of Macedonia - in accordance with the tradition of the Kruševo Republic and the decisions of the Antifascist People’s Liberation Assembly of Macedonia, and the Referendum of September 8, 1991, have
decided to establish the Republic of Macedonia as an independent, sovereign state, with the intention of establishing and consolidating the rule of law, guaranteeing human rights and civil liberties, providing peace and coexistence, social justice, economic well-being and prosperity in the life of the individual and the community, and, in this regard, through their representatives in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, elected in free and democratic elections, adopt THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
Appendix Six

Key Flash Points

Key zones prone to ethno-religious violence include Skopksa Crna Gora, the Polog, and the Struga Valley.
Appendix Seven

Ethno-Historic Macedonia

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnicmacedonia.jpg
Appendix Eight

Nevzat Halili’s Proposed Federal State

Appendix Nine

Ethnic Map of Struga Municipality

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons
Appendix Ten
Paramilitaries

NLA (2001)
Source: Provided to Author

NLA (2001)
Source: Provided to Author
Suspected Islamists from Kosovo, Saudi Arabia and Turkey (2001), NLA
Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikimedia/mk/5/56/муџахедини_во_македонија_2001_година.png

Lions (2001), Šar Planina
Source: Asocijacija Makedonski Braniteli
Lions (2001), Kumanovo
Source: Asocijacija Makedonski Braniteli

Lions (2001), Ratae
Source: Asocijacija Makedonski Braniteli
Macedonian Paramilitaries (2001), Tetovo
Source: Asocijacija Makedonski Braniteli

Russian volunteers (2001), attached to Macedonian paramilitaries
Source: Asocijacija Makedonski Braniteli
Appendix Eleven
Crosses and Mosques

Millennium Cross, Mt. Vodno (Skopje)
Source: Author’s Personal Archives

Skopje
Vevčani
Source: Author’s Personal Archives

Newly constructed mosque, Struga
Source: Author’s Personal Archives
Newly constructed mosque, Tetovo
Source: Author’s Personal Archives
Appendix Twelve

Protests

Albanian protesters (2012), Skopje

Albanian protesters (2012), Skopje
Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b5/Albanian_Protesters_2.jpg
Albanian riots after sentencing of Smilkovci murder suspects (2014), Skopje
Source: http://republika.mk/278902
Appendix Thirteen
Weapons Cache – Brodec

Operation Mountain Storm (2007)
Appendix Fourteen

Field Interviews

1. Army Reservist Officer, ARM, Interviews with Author, July-August 2013
2. School Principal, Interview with the Author, 10 July 2013
3. Central Committee Member, Dostoinstvo, Interview with Author, 15 July 2013
4. Ministry of Interior Official, Interview with Author, 16 July 2013
5. Former Lions Member, Interview with Author, 19 July 2013
6. Local Committee Leader and Former Police Commander, Interview with Author, 20 July 2013
7. VMRO-DPMNE Official, Interview with Author, 21 July 2013
8. Retired Colonel, ARM, Interview with Author, 22 July 2013
9. Resident of Radožda, Interview with Author, 23 and 25 July 2013
10. Police Officer, Interview with Author, 1 August 2013
11. Member of MOS, Interview with Author, 5 August 2013
12. Non-Commissioned Officer, ARM, Interview with Author, 5 August 2013
13. Rufi Osmani, Leader of the NDR, Interview with Author, 10 August 2013
14. NGO Activist, Interview with Author, Gostivar, 11 August 2013
15. Local Militia Leader, Interview with Author, 11 August 2013
16. Resident of Lešok, Interview with Author, 12 August 2013
17. Military Officer, ARM, Interview with Author, 15 August 2013
18. SDSM Official, Interview with Author, 20 August 2013
19. Orthodox Priest, Interview with the Author, 21 August 2013
20. School Principal, Interview with the Author, 24 August 2013
21. Imam, Interview with the Author, 27 August 2013
Bibliography


Bieber, F., Institutionalizing Ethnicity in the Western Balkans: Managing Change in Deeply Divided Societies, European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg, 2004.


Cabestan, S. and Pavković, A. (eds.), *Secessionism and Separatism in Europe and Asia: To have a state of one’s own*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2013.


*Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia* 1991

*Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia* 1974


*European Charter of Local Self-Government 1985*


*Framework Agreement 2001.*


*International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia* [website], [www.haguejusticeportal.net](http://www.haguejusticeportal.net) (accessed 6 May 2016).


Karajkov, R., “Macedonia’s 2001 ethnic war: Offsetting conflict. What could have been done but was not?”, *Conflict, Security and Development*, Vol. 8, Iss. 4, 2008, pp. 451-490.

Karajkov, R., “Macedonia’s 2001 ethnic war: Offsetting conflict. What could have been done but was not?”, *Conflict, Security & Development*, Vol. 8, Iss. 4, 2008, pp. 451-490.


Law for Civil Servants, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 76/2010.


Law for the Legal Status of the Church, Religious Communities and Religious Groups, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 113/2007.

Law for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Members of Communities that are Less than 20% of the Population of the Republic of Macedonia, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 92/2008.

Law on Amnesty, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 18/2002.


Law on the Committee for Inter-Community Relations, Služben Vesnik na Republika Makedonija, No. 150/2007.


Less, T., “Macedonia is reaching crisis point and the West is looking the other way”, The Independent, 2 June 2016, www.independent.co.uk (accessed 30 August 2016).


Rustemi, F. et al., “Perceptions about the Albanian Language, Culture and Education 10 Years After of the OFA” in Reka, B. (ed.), *Ten Years from the Ohrid Framework Agreement: Is Macedonia Functioning as a Multi-ethnic State?*, South East European University, Tetovo, 2011.


S. Koceski, *Committees for Inter-Community Relations: Establishment, Mandate and Existing Experiences*, Community Development Institute, Tetovo, 2007.


*Social Democratic Union of Macedonia*, [website], www.sdsm.org.mk (accessed 10 May 2016).


