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DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE EU AS A GLOBAL ACTOR: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

The role and position of the European Union as a global actor on the international stage was based on the thesis that the creation of the Union is aimed at ending geopolitics, the usual notion of which builds on the understanding of dynamic power in international relations. The EU promotes a new security concept based on interdependence and transferred sovereignty to jointly established institutions. Maintaining peace on European soil was intended to take place through the economic cooperation of the member states, which would further lead to their mutual solidarity, as envisaged in the Schuman Declaration of 1950. The post-World War II liberal world order is based on multilateralism, as a foreign policy practiced by many actors on the international stage through voluntary and (essentially) institutionalized cooperation governed by norms and principles that apply (largely) equally to all countries - participants, in order to jointly face the shared problems and challenges.¹ As a product of multilateralism, the EU has for decades ignored the "politics of power" and focused on economic integration², although the reasons for the formation of this sui generis construct of international law are primarily of a security and safety nature. In foreign relations, the EU is perceived as a "soft power" that promotes democracy and fundamental rights by relying on the instruments of "soft power", as an effective substitute for military power, i.e. the security and defense policy in which member states rely on US leadership within the Transatlantic Alliance. With the Lisbon Treaty, the EU acquired international legal personality so that it could exercise foreign policy powers, including participation in the work of international organizations, within the limits of the powers conferred on it by the member states.

However, in recent years there has been intense talk of a "return to geopolitics"³, thus the new composition of the European Commission was presented with unprecedented rhetoric - President Ursula von der Leyen announcing "a geopolitical commission that Europe urgently needs"⁴. This statement, which revealed a strategic change in the EU approach, followed an earlier statement by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Joseph Borrell, who said that "the world has changed for the worse" and that "the EU must learn the language of power"⁵. This approach, announced by

1 Elena Lazarou, *The future of multilateralism Crisis or opportunity?* (Brussels: EPRS Briefing, May 2017), 2, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/603922/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)603922_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/603922/EPRS_BRI(2017)603922_EN.pdf).

2 Stefan Lehne, *How the EU Can Survive in a Geopolitical Age* (Brussels: Carnegie Europe, 2020), 1, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/2-24_Lehne-EU_Geopolitics.pdf.

3 See Albert J. Bergesen & Christian Suter, *The Return of Geopolitics* (Zurich: LIT Verlag Münster, 2018).

4 European Commission, "Speech by President-elect von der Leyen in the European Parliament Plenary on the occasion of the presentation of her College of Commissioners and their programme", 27.11.2019, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/speech_19_6408.

5 European Parliament, "Hearing with High Representative/Vice President-designate Josep Borrell, European Parliament", 7.10.2019, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20190926IPR62260/hearing-with-high-representative-vice-president-designate-josep-borrell>.

the representatives of the supranational actors in the Union, is a logical consequence of several signals sent by European leaders about the need to build the EU into a strategically autonomous player⁶, as well as of the process that began with the adoption of the joint communication of the Commission led by Juncker and the HREU Mogherini, presenting the strategic view of the growing economic power and political influence of China⁷, setting itself up as a competitor and potential partner, which in turn inspired the European Council to take a more coherent approach to international change. The focus of this new language of power is not only on the common trade policy as a foreign policy tool, but also implies that the EU must begin to act as a strategic power and strengthen its role in creating global security.

At the same time, in recent years there have been several initiatives to build the security capacity of the EU, strengthen the defense cooperation and improve the EU's response to global crises.⁸ The security aspect, as a strategic priority, is linked to the one on energy, or rather the EU action in the field of environmental protection, through the ambitious package of public policies called "European Green Agreement"⁹ which aims to achieve greater environmental sustainability of the EU economy, but also contains geopolitical repercussions. The promises to strengthen the role of the EU as a global actor are, in fact, a response to the crisis of multilateralism, the growing competition between the United States and China, the polarization on the international stage, the aftermath of Brexit, and numerous crisis areas in the EU neighborhood. The pursuit of a stronger EU worldwide is intended to contribute to a "closer/more united Union" within its internal borders.

From the very beginning of its activities the new "geopolitical commission" was faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, which nullified the positive effects of the multi-year integration process, such as the internal market and the Schengen area, and led to further division within the EU.¹⁰ The coronavirus disrupted the European Commission's newly adopted agenda, paralyzing governments and international institutions, including the EU's decision-making body in Brussels. The aim of this paper is to study the perspectives for the development of the EU's global role in the current environment, taking into account the aspirations for strategically increased influence on international trends. The main argument of the research is that the EU should use the available instruments to

6 Emmanuel Macron, "NATO is becoming brain-dead", *The Economist*, 7 November 2017, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>; Angela Merkel, "Europe 'can no longer rely on allies' after Trump and Brexit", *BBC*, 28 May 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40078183>.

7 European Commission, "EU-China Strategic Outlook: Commission and HR/VP contribution to the European Council (21-22 March 2019)", 12 March 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_1605.

8 See more kaj Vasko Naumovski, Milena Apostolovska-Stepanoska, Leptosava Ognjanoska, "European Army: Reality or Fiction?", *Iustinius Primus Law Review* 11, Issue 1 (2020).

9 https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en.

10 See Anja Ettl and Holger Zschäpitz, "This slump throws Italy back into the pre-euro era", *Welt*, 31.07.2020, <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article212619879/BIP-Dieser-Einbruch-wirftItalien-in-die-Vor-Euro-Aera-zurueck.html>.

strengthen its role, while working to strengthen its position as a strategic autonomous actor, i.e. to combine the instruments of soft and hard power. Finally, in order to achieve such a “mission”, the EU should recognize the Western Balkans as its strategic ally, i.e. a region in which it can, with its actions, make the most significant change.

The role of the EU on the international stage: From soft power to geopolitical actor

A review of European and international literature indicates that there is a widely accepted position on the four basic attributes of the EU in foreign relations - civil, soft, economic and normative power, which indicates that it is undoubtedly a global actor, but with contradictory characteristics.¹¹ The EU's geopolitical agenda is primarily focused on finding modalities for advancing EU foreign policy and sharing unifying values as a cornerstone of integration.

The civil power was affirmed after the Second World War, as an acceptance of the need for cooperation with other actors in achieving international goals; concentration of non-military, primarily economic means to achieve common goals, while the military power as a separate instrument primarily serves to protect other means of international interaction; and, readiness to develop supranational structures to address critical issues of international management.¹² Within the EU, there has always been tension between advocates of the thesis that integration would be incomplete without the defense dimension and proponents of the commitment that the EU should be recognized as a “civilian power” for ideological reasons, but also because of the existence of NATO.¹³ As a result of the dominance of the “civilian group”, the EU has developed a civilian international identity, backed by supranational actors - the European Commission, the European Parliament and certain Member States - who emphasized that the EU was created to eliminate the threat of war in Europe by transforming anarchic international relations between sovereign states in a legal and institutional framework of internal policy and consequently, this idea and experience should also be reflected in a civilian foreign policy.¹⁴

The concept of civil power is followed by soft power as a power of attraction instead of coercion, the confirmation of which is seen not in the resources, but in the ability to change the behavior of states.¹⁵ The soft power of the EU is seen in climate diplomacy as a “global pioneer” in the field of environmental protection, which has traditionally played a leading role in climate activities and encouraging cooperation in this area through various instruments such as organizing bilateral and multilateral summits and dialogue

¹¹ Konstantinos Papanikolaou, “What Kind of Power? How the Covid-19 Crisis Affects the Orientation of the EU as A Global Actor”, in *Geopolitics & Values: what is the real power of the EU?* (Brussels: Institute of European Democrats, 2020), 7.

¹² Hanns Maull, “Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers”, *Foreign Affairs* 69, no.5 (1990): 91-92.

¹³ Karen E. Smith, “Beyond the Civilian Power EU Debate”, *Politique européenne* 3, no. 17 (2005): 70.

¹⁴ Smith, “Beyond the Civilian Power”, 70.

¹⁵ Joseph Nye, “Soft Power”, *Foreign Policy* (1990): 155.

on public policies and the creation of transnational networks.¹⁶ Thus, the Paris Agreement was a significant achievement for the EU climate diplomacy, whereby, with the launch of the European Green Agreement, the Union expressed its desire to be “the first climate-neutral continent” and reaffirmed its ambition to be a world leader in climate change.¹⁷

The concept of normative power, in turn, is used to describe the characteristic ideological influence of the EU on other members in international relations. This concept combines civilian power and soft power to show that the EU, unlike other great powers, shapes the international system with the appeal of the values and standards on which the European integration process is based, as a counterweight to the hard power (military power or economic sanctions).¹⁸ These norms include peace, freedom, democracy, supranational rule of law and human rights, solidarity and good governance, all manifestations of EU identity and shared values, but are far more than mere rhetoric, thus their legal nature forcing the Union to act in a normative way.¹⁹ Nevertheless, economic power is the EU’s strongest “weapon”, which ranks it among the world’s three economic powers,²⁰ as the largest exporter and provider of development aid, while the euro is the second most powerful currency in the global monetary system. With the help of the external normative power, the EU has largely established the regulatory framework for global economic governance. The EU’s external economic representation has largely been the result of an inadvertent overflow of internal competencies for integration on the international stage, with which the European bloc began to use its vast “arsenal” of economic instruments to achieve geostrategic goals - by concluding trade agreements, investments in regions of EU interest and sophisticated use of restrictive measures and economic sanctions. Thus, the main tools used by the EU in the process of defending democracy in North Africa, such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, were in fact of a financial nature. In contrast to the geopolitical action, in this context we are talking about geo-economic policies.

Unlike other major powers (US, China, Russia), the EU is not a typical military power, i.e. the absence of a stronger common defense policy and the divergence of member states’ national interests are the main factors suggesting that the Union is not a single military power. The EU’s common defense policy is enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty (Article 42 (2) TEU), but the importance of a national defense policy, including NATO membership or a neutral position, is also clearly stated. On the other hand, some EU member states are considered large and medium-sized military powers - an indicator of potential European

¹⁶ See Camilla Adelle, Katja Biedenkopf & Diarmuid Torney, *European Union External Environmental Policy*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹⁷ European Commission. “Speech by President von der Leyen in the Plenary of the European Parliament at the debate on the European Green Deal”, 11.12.2019, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_19_6751.

¹⁸ Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe a Contradiction in Terms?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2, (2002): 239.

¹⁹ Manners, “Normative Power”, 240.

²⁰ According to the ranking of The Economist: <https://worldinfigures.com/rankings/topic/8>.

defense capabilities is the fact that the defense budget of all 27 member states is the second largest defense budget globally, smaller only than that of the United States.²¹

However, dealing with global security crises in recent years has shown that the absence of the security and defense attribute of power does not allow the EU to be an equally great power in all dimensions of international politics. At the same time, these “crisis times” have prompted the development of several new instruments of EU security and defense policy, including the establishment of a European Defense Fund²² and the launch of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)²³ process, with European leaders expressing increased support for a stronger common security and defense policy, recognizing that no EU member state can deal with modern security threats in isolation.²⁴ Some theorists hailed the EU’s defense efforts²⁵, arguing that the EU was finally strengthening its role in international relations, namely that “surrounded (EU) by security crises, it is difficult to think of anything more important than collective action in order to overcome the storm”²⁶, narratives that are reflected in the EU Global Strategy for 2016 entitled “Shared Vision, Joint Action: A Stronger Europe”²⁷. The strengthening of the common security and defense policy is in line with the demands of EU citizens who expect the EU to guarantee security and peace - in 2017 75% of citizens voted in this direction, while the majority (55%) approved the creation of the EU army.²⁸ But unlike the EU’s instruments of economic power, which are well developed to pursue strategic interests, the instruments of a common security and defense policy are still in their nascence.

COVID 19 as a test for the balance of powers: perspectives of the EU

However, the COVID-19 virus pandemic brought with it many other repercussions that completely changed the world in the full sense of the word, and also affected the EU’s orientation as a global actor and the international balance of power. Although it is a threat that knows no borders, the major powers, however, did not choose to cooperate through existing international mechanisms, but turned to a unilateral policy that reached

21 Papanikolaou, “What Kind of Power?”, 7.

22 More in https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/defence/european-defence-fund_en.

23 More in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) – Factsheet: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/34226/permanent-structured-cooperation-pesco-factsheet_en.

24 Angela Merkel, “Nationalism and egoism must never have a chance again in Europe”, Address to the European Parliament, 13.11.2018, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20181106IPR18316/merkel-nationalism-and-egoism-must-never-have-a-chance-again-in-europe>; Elysee, “President Macron gives speech on new initiative for Europe”, 26.9.2017, <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/09/26/president-macron-gives-speech-on-new-initiative-for-europe.en>.

25 Antonio Missiroli, “Foreword”, in *Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO): What’s in a Name?*, ed. Daniel Fiott, Antonio Missiroli and Thierry Tardy (Paris: Chaillot Papers, 2017), 5–6.

26 Hilke Dijkstra, “Introduction: One-and-a-Half Cheers for the EU Global Strategy”, *Contemporary Security Policy* 37, no 3, (2016): 369.

27 Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign And Security Policy, June 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf.

28 According to results of the special Eurobarometer dedicated to security and defense, conducted in 2017: <https://ec.europa.eu/comfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/search/defence/surveyKy/2173>.

its peak with the “vaccine race”. In the first months the virus “attacked” precisely the fundamental values of the European integration, as the principle of “solidarity” was severely violated and even absent, given that several member states closed their national borders and refused mutual coordination in dealing with it, and some even stopped the export of urgently needed medical equipment to their EU partners, severely disrupting the internal market, the leader of European integration.

In addition to the health and humanitarian crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an economic crisis and has had some negative impact on European economic power and the EU's role in the global economy. Thus, the economic consequences of the crisis felt in the second quarter of 2020 indicate a serious deterioration in the public finances of the member states and a decline in trade and investment performance²⁹, but already in the third quarter of 2021 the EU has seen improvement³⁰. On the other hand, the eurozone seems to have been more resilient than the US economy during the first months of the pandemic - in the second quarter of 2020, the US economy shrank by almost 30%, while in the same period the eurozone economy shrank by 10%, and the stability of the euro was maintained.³¹ It is also positive that the unemployment rates did not reach a drastic increase, i.e. in the third quarter of 2020 they even experienced a slight decline.³² Thus, the COVID-19 crisis served as a double catalyst - testing the resilience of the EU and its member states, but also the balance of power between the three global economic powers.³³

At the beginning of the pandemic, the behavior of the EU did not differ from the other great powers, but the EU still managed to activate its “machinery” and formulate a collective response to the economic and health crisis, sending a strong message of unity and solidarity.³⁴ On the international stage, the Union played an important role in boosting and enhancing international cooperation to deal with the virus and its effects and to fill the vacuum created by the US-China rivalry.³⁵ Thus, the EU's success in this regard has been manifested through the resumption of international cooperation within

29 According to Eurostat data for the second quarter of 2020: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/10545332/2-14082020-AP-EN.pdf/7f30c3cf-b2c9-98ad-3451-17fed0230b57>.

30 According to Eurostat data for the third quarter of 2020: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Quarterly_national_accounts_-_GDP_and_employment.

31 Papanikolaou, “What Kind of Power?”, 10.

32 According to data of Eurostat for the third quarter of 2020: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Quarterly_national_accounts_-_GDP_and_employment.

33 Thomas Gomart & Éric-André Martin, *L'Europe face à la rivalité sino-américaine-Le coronavirus comme catalyseur* (Paris: Etudes d'Ifr, 2020).

34 Dawid A. Fusiek, “Towards Normative Power Europe - The EU as a standard-bearer of multilateralism and the role of European norms and values in the post-pandemic geopolitical order”, in *Geopolitics & Values: what is the real power of the EU?* (Brussels: Institute of European Democrats, 2020), 7.

35 WHO, “WHO speaks at the European Parliament on the COVID-19 response”, 30.6.2020, <https://www.who.int/news/item/30-06-2020-who-speaks-at-the-europeanparliament-on-the-covid-19-response>.

the WHO³⁶, as well as the funding of several global initiatives and financial assistance to regional partners in the context of the EU's global response. Through the EU Global Response to the Pandemic Program and the Team Europe package, EU institutions and Member States agreed on € 15.6 billion in financial support to "address the short-term needs [of their partners] as well as the long-term structural impacts on societies and the economy"³⁷, while the latest published data indicate that the package reached a total value of 38.5 billion euros³⁸. The EU provided, through Horizon 2020, support for vaccine development, and is also the largest donor to the COVAX vaccine delivery mechanism for low- and middle-income countries. This contribution makes the European Union as a whole the largest donor to COVAX. Internally, the EU has used existing instruments strengthened by creating a special set of measures for a common European response, which provides mechanisms for vaccine supply and management of the vaccination process, economic measures with a budget of 1.8 trillion Euros, measures to promote public health, border management and mobility, as well as the fight against misinformation.³⁹ With this multidimensional answer, all the above attributes of the EU as a global actor come to the fore, with the EU showing that when faced with a global problem, it formulates the solution in a multilateral and collective way and restores citizens' trust in the European project.⁴⁰ Hence, the EU's civilian and normative power in global governance has so far not been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing multilateral strategic assistance helps build a safer, more peaceful, and more secure world and creates moral authority.⁴¹

However, it should be borne in mind that the crisis is still ongoing and is likely to be longer-term, so these claims are based on past experience and it is too early to determine the consequences in terms of the EU's international influence. One of the risks that are already emerging is the procurement of vaccines, which has already been criticized as inefficient, as well as the (unfair) distribution, due to which the member states have started their own procurement and redistribution. These are public policies in which further failure of the EU is not allowed, because they are directly related to the fundamental values on which it is built, as the Union of faith and hope, and at the same time to maintain its civil, soft and normative power on the international stage.

36 WHO, "WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)", 26.6.2020, [https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-opening-remarks-at-the-standing-committee-of-the-parliamentary-assembly-of-the-council-of-europe-\(pace\)--26-june-2020](https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-opening-remarks-at-the-standing-committee-of-the-parliamentary-assembly-of-the-council-of-europe-(pace)--26-june-2020).

37 European Commission, "Coronavirus: EU global response to fight the pandemic", 8.4.2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_20_604; European Commission, "Coronavirus Global Response: €7.4 billion raised for universal access to vaccines", 4.5.2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_797.

38 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/76341/coronavirus-news-eu-action-team-europe-support-disinformation-repatriation-and-solidarity_en.

39 European Commission, "Overview of the Commission's response", https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/overview-commissions-response_en.

40 See Ivan Krastev & Mark Leonard, *Europe's pandemic politics: How the virus has changed the public's worldview* (Brussels: ECFR Policy Brief, 2020).

41 Clair Apodaca, "Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy Tool", *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (2016).

In addition to COVID-19, environmental protection and climate change are among the greatest geopolitical threats in the modern world, and this is where EU green diplomacy comes into play, which should turn its leading climate agenda into foreign policy - by deploying the financial, market and diplomatic tools at its disposal to lead the rest of the world towards a more sustainable future, as envisaged by the Paris Climate Agreement.⁴² The European Green Agreement is the basis of the efforts to transform the European economy and the European energy patterns, but it also entails a fundamental change in the energy system that will change the EU's relations with its neighbors and other powers, i.e. redefine global policy priorities and as such is in fact an instrument of foreign policy with profound geopolitical influence.⁴³

Thus, dependence on energy imports remains one of the EU's key external weaknesses and an opportunity for other international actors to assert their geopolitical power. For example, Europe's primary concern for energy security lies in its dependence on Russian natural gas, but following the gas crises of recent years, the EU has implemented an infrastructure diversification strategy (liquefied natural gas terminals in Poland and the Baltic; the Southern Gas Corridor), as well as legislative regulation (EU regulations on security of gas supply and risk preparedness in the energy sector). These efforts have significantly boosted natural gas supplies, but by reducing imports between 2030 and 2050, as envisaged by the European Green Agreement, oil and gas security concerns in Europe will definitely be addressed and the bill for imports estimated at 296 billion euros in 2018 will be decreased.⁴⁴ At the same time, the growth of renewable energy sources and the development of regional energy infrastructures enable a geopolitical and more cooperative international framework for the development of energy relations.⁴⁵ The EU's green agenda can have a dual purpose: combating climate change and protecting the environment, but also reducing geopolitical tensions.

This agenda is in part compatible with the pursuit of a more pronounced security and defense policy. The security risks of the COVID-19 crisis were related to dealing with disinformation and new hybrid cyber security threats, as well as the traditional threats from organized crime. The new era of geopolitical competition is also perceived in the ability to develop digital capabilities. The growing risks of social media disinformation campaigns and cyber-attacks require further regulation and serious investment in all areas of cyber security. A decisive step in this direction is the General Data Protection Directive.

⁴² Josep Borrell & Werner Hoyer, "Europe Must Become a Global Climate Power", *Project Syndicate*, Jan 22, 2021, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/eu-climate-policy-is-foreign-policy-by-josep-borrell-and-werner-hoyer-2021-01?barrier=accesspaylog>.

⁴³ Mark Leonard, Jean Pisani-Ferry, Jeremy Shapiro, Simone Tagliapietra & Guntram Wolff, "The Geopolitics of the European Green Deal" (Brussels: ECFR Policy Brief, 2021), 2.

⁴⁴ Mark Leonard et al, "The Geopolitics of the European Green Deal", 11.

⁴⁵ Bovienzo Domenico, "COVID-19 and the Future of Multilateralism: A European Challenge", in *Geopolitics & Values: what is the real power of the EU?* (Brussels: Institute of European Democrats, 2020), 9.

Therefore, in order to achieve its geopolitical agenda in the context of dealing with the COVID-19 crisis, the EU should work on using the instruments of soft power and developing those of hard power, and then turning them into “smart power”⁴⁶ as an evolutionary concept - the ability to combine soft and hard power into effective strategies. It goes without saying that in this endeavor the EU should build its relations with other global actors, but needs to gain its strategic autonomy.

The geopolitics of the enlargement process: The Western Balkans as a strategic ally of the EU

With the accession of Eastern European countries to the EU, enlargement policy has been hailed as the most important tool of EU foreign policy⁴⁷, with the EU strengthening its potential influence on the international stage, inter alia through greater power in the decision-making bodies of international organizations due to the increased number of members⁴⁸. Enlargement policy is seen as a tool for consolidating the democratic transition process, fostering complex reforms, strengthening fundamental human rights and freedoms, and thus ensuring the continent's stability, especially after the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is through the enlargement, based on a policy of conditionality that has led to profound reforms related to democracy, market economy and good governance, that the EU's normative power has come to the fore, and it has acquired the attribute of “transformative power”⁴⁹. If the definition of soft power is taken into account, as having a certain culture as a set of values and legal-institutional structure that encourages other countries to join in accordance with the rules for such cooperation⁵⁰, where the development of norms is a universal instrument of soft power, in the process of Eastern enlargement, the values of the EU related to democracy and human rights were emphasized, so it can be concluded that the Union in this process used and strengthened its soft power.

With the establishment of the regional approach to enlargement in the period 1996-1997, the EU introduced the term “Western Balkans” and gradually separated enlargement with these countries from the Eastern enlargement, as well as from the overall European good neighborly policy. But the instruments of Europeanization that the EU has developed in the Eastern Enlargement negotiation process, such as the policy of conditionality, have

46 Joseph S. Nye, “Hard, Soft, and Smart Power”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

47 Ollie Rehn, “What’s the Future for EU Enlargement?”, Speech 07/185, September 25, 2007, www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/es/article_7355_es.htm.

48 Daniel Finke, “EU enlargement and foreign policy coordination: more powerful, but less cohesive?”, *The Review of International Organizations* 15, no.1, (2020): 189.

49 Heather Grabbe, *The Constellations of Europe: How Enlargement Will Transform the EU* (London: Center for European Reform, 2004).

50 Joseph Nye, “Soft Power”, *Foreign Policy* (1990): 155, 166-167.

become the foundation of the soft and normative power that is further developed in the process of accession of the Western Balkan countries. The reasons for greater EU interest in the Balkans were primarily in the field of security - the instability of the region, most pronounced through the war in Kosovo. The Stabilization and Association Process was a key element of the European Commission's strategy for future enlargement, including five countries in the region - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and our country - which at the time were still under the coinage of "Southeast Europe" or "Central and Eastern Europe", which followed the conclusions of the European Council held in Helsinki in December 1999. The legal instrument for the implementation of this process consists of the Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAAs), concluded with each country separately. They are the central aspect of the SAP, establishing contractual relations and regulating mutual rights and obligations, also providing other instruments such as financial assistance and autonomous trade measures. These Association or Strategic Partnership Agreements are important channels of the European normative power because states on the other side must adhere to binding clauses on respect for human rights and the promotion of democracy.⁵¹ This instrument is followed by other development aids of a financial nature, still linked to a commitment to certain values by which the EU is recognized. Thus, the EU achieves the diffusion of its norms through trade and technical assistance, i.e. it can transfer its norms voluntarily and efficiently to a number of countries and thus project its normative power supported by economic power.

However, just as the formation of the EU has primarily a security and defense background, so are the reasons for the strategic commitment to chart the enlargement process with the Western Balkan countries related to stability. The Thessaloniki Summit in June 2003⁵² reiterated its unequivocal support for the European perspective of the Western Balkan (WB) countries, i.e. "the future of the Balkans lies in the European Union". This decision came at a time when Eastern enlargement was becoming certain, so there was a need to find a framework for the regulation of the relations with the WB. As a region surrounded by EU borders, there are fears that the Western Balkans will turn into an "enclave" of Europe, so the only logical solution is to offer a European perspective to create conditions for its European integration over time.⁵³ The European perspective of the WB also finds support in the founding treaties of the Union, with the legally binding article of the primary law as a basis for accession to the EU, stipulating an obligation for the country to be *European* (to be located on the European continent). Thus, the legal basis itself has a certain geopolitical "DNA". Later on, the Lisbon Treaty in Article 49 of the TEU provided for another formal condition for accession, stipulating that the candidate country respects the principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and

⁵¹ Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe a Contradiction in Terms?", 254.

⁵² European Council. "Presidency Conclusions", Thessaloniki, 19.06.2003.

⁵³ Stefan Lehne, *Geopolitics, the EU and the Western Balkans* (Skopje: Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis", 2020), 7.

the rule of law, as principles common to member states. The policy of conditionality introduced as a novelty in the framework of the Eastern Enlargement based on the Copenhagen criteria, and strengthened in the process towards the Western Balkans, is due to the different political and economic system to which these countries belonged, but also the readiness of both sides expressed as absorption capacity. However, the process of enlargement with the WB, which is still ongoing, has faced many blockages and delays on many occasions - which is why in addition to the conditionality the principle of differentiation was introduced. All this had an impact on both sides of the process - the delivery of results from the social transformation of the aspirant/candidate countries for membership, which at some point was marked as reversibility of the process, but also the credibility of the EU and the transformative power. Truth be told, some of these conditions are in fact a consequence of the time factor and the lessons learned from the Eastern enlargement, which again points to the geostrategic component of the enlargement. This also highlights the limitations of the exercise of EU's purely normative power.

The refugee-migrant crisis, particularly pronounced in 2015, triggered by the situation in Syria and the global power struggle, highlighted security issues in international relations and the EU's capacity as a global actor, as well as the Western Balkans' strategic importance for stability and security of the EU. If the region was previously seen as a potential threat to EU stability due to the internal situation and the potential for escalation within the borders of these countries, with this crisis it became clear that the EU and the WB have shared security risks. The decisive stance of the WB in tackling the migration and refugee crisis has made the region an active player in European geopolitics, leading to full integration into specific EU policies in this area, with the signing of the FRONTEX agreements.⁵⁴ This brought the Western Balkans region back to the EU political map and the need to adopt a more credible enlargement perspective became clear. The new methodology for accession negotiations recognizes the geopolitical aspects of the process - the Commission calls the prospect of membership a "geostrategic investment" and underlines the importance of the enlargement process "especially in times of increased geopolitical competition".⁵⁵ Western Balkans is an important EU trading partner and ally in energy projects.⁵⁶ The enlargement process has always had a strong economic and investment component, given that some of the instruments in the process - such as the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance - are of a financial nature, and at the same time this instrument is used to encourage the most difficult

54 European Council, "Infographic: Border management: agreements with non-EU countries", <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/border-management/agreements-third-countries/>; See: Marie Jelenka Kirchner & Zoran Nechev, *The EU's strategic interest in the Western Balkans: Stimulating EU's Strategic Autonomy through cross-border cooperation* (Skopje: IDSCS, 2020), 7.

55 European Commission, "Remarks by Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi at the press conference on the revised enlargement methodology", Brussels, 5 February 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/varhelyi/announcements/remarks-commissioner-oliver-varhelyi-presentation-revised-enlargement-methodology-committee-foreign_en.

56 European Commission, "Western Balkans: An Economic and Investment Plan to support the economic recovery and convergence", Brussels, 6 October 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1811.

reforms. With the introduction of the new approach in the negotiation process, access to EU funds is conditional on the implementation of reforms in the priority areas of democracy, rule of law and human rights, and can also be used as an instrument to sanction non-delivery of results and lagging behind in the process. The convergence of EU and WB policies needs to continue in other areas. Thereto, it should be borne in mind that trading democracy for stability is not a viable option because these two issues are not mutually exclusive - there is a strong link between security and rule of law areas such as the fight against corruption and organized crime, perceived through the structure of Chapters 23 and 24 of the Union *acquis*, which, by the way, are grouped in the first cluster - *Foundations*. In addition to traditional threats, both the EU and the WB are equally exposed to new hybrid threats, including disinformation and fake news. These issues became particularly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, so although the EU provided the greatest financial assistance to deal with the effects of the pandemic, this information remained unrecognized and unacknowledged in the public discourse of the WB countries, as opposed to the narrative that “the EU has abandoned the Balkans”.⁵⁷ This view has been further exacerbated by the (hitherto) failure to supply vaccines as the most effective weapon in the “virus war”, which has apparently taken on a full geopolitical connotation, while at the same time leaving room for the influence of other powerful geopolitical actors. The EU aspiration to strengthen its geopolitical influence and strategic autonomy as a global actor can be achieved most strongly and only in cooperation with the countries of the Western Balkans. To achieve this, the EU must prove the seriousness of its intentions in the enlargement process.

Conclusion

The international geopolitical environment has changed significantly since the foundation of the EU to date, with the EU resorting to a strengthened geopolitical vocabulary, which has yet to be realized at the level of external action. The COVID-19 crisis has further accelerated this development and once again demonstrated that crises are a systemic product of modern global society, and that global actors, including the EU, are at the forefront of dealing with the consequences. Therefore, the need to define the role of the EU-led Europe on the international stage is more important than ever. No country on the continent has enough power and resources to deal with a crisis on its own, the potential of the EU as a union of more than 500 million citizens is incomparably greater, but it seems to be underused or not properly established. On the other hand, European citizens expect Europe to take greater responsibility as a global actor and guarantor of stability.

⁵⁷ See Ana Cojocar, “Disinformation-19: Challenges to the EU’s Influence in the Western Balkans”, in *Geopolitics & Values: what is the real power of the EU?* (Brussels: Institute of European Democrats, 2020).

The Union's internal cohesion is key to the effectiveness of European responses and dealing with global crises. The EU institutions and the member states must establish a common vision that would be realized through strong coordination structures for harmonization of action and adoption of appropriate measures for increased visibility in the modern international system. The concept of the EU as a global actor that relies primarily on its soft power is a concept that belongs to the past, as it cannot provide a sufficient international presence in proportion to the size of the Union. The EU as a global power with combined power characteristics is a more appropriate concept to achieve the ambitions for influence on the international scene. The COVID-19 crisis has confirmed the thesis that the EU needs "strategic autonomy" to be able to reduce its dependence on other global actors in its foreign relations, so that it can make more autonomous decisions to promote its interests. There are several areas in which the EU has already developed appropriate instruments and initiatives to assert its authority, such as the protection of the environment and climate change, energy and transport, the digitalization process and finance, and needs to work harder to strengthen its position on dealing with modern security and defense threats. In all these areas, the EU's normative power as a promoter of certain values is the strongest attribute it should use to maintain multilateralism through more visible participation in international organizations.

The current crisis brings with it great uncertainty and unpredictability, but what is quite certain is that the map of Europe will not change. Therefore, the EU should recognize the Western Balkans as its ally and partner in the process of the continent's unification and strengthening. Therefore, the EU should approach the region as an equal actor and include it in its foreign policy initiatives to increase continental integrity and promote common European values.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY



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OLD COMMUNITIES, NEW CONTROVERSIES: THE COMMUNITY OF MACEDONIAN SPEAKING MUSLIMS BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND RELIGION

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

In a more general sense this article explores the relationship between identity, ethnicity and religion. Mainstream literature has been trying to explain ethno-nationalism as a product of secular modernist societal dynamics, stressing the role of social, cultural, political and economic factors while often overlooking and disregarding the significant role that religion can play. Thus, this article joins the recent attempts to study the relation between ethnicity and religion as it argues that in certain cases this connection manifests itself as a very powerful factor of identification, promotion and discrimination of social groups. By focusing on the contemporary developments in North Macedonia whilst having in mind the religious bases of the process of creation of national identities in the Balkans, the article addresses the correlation between ethnic identity, religion and politicization as a case of intertwinement and imbrications between these phenomena. In a broader perspective, reflecting the academic debate on the nature of ethnic identities, the article criticizes the essentialist conceptions of the fixed, durable and objective properties of ethnic identification and perceives identities as fluid constructs that are often susceptible to transformations.

The article focuses on the peculiar case of the Macedonian speaking Muslim community where religion emerges as a potent source for ethnic identification. Accordingly, the article investigates how overlaps between the ethno-national and religious identities become a principal determinant of three perspectives: the ambivalent treatment and perception of inclusion and discrimination from the ethnic Macedonians, assimilation with other Muslim ethnicities and the process of formation of a distinct ethnic group.

Ethnic Identity and Religion - Theoretical Considerations

Although of recent age, as it has been developing in the past several decades, the debate that correlates the notions of ethnicity and ethnic identity has been very dense and has sparked a multitude of approaches, conceptions and theoretical models that spread across multiple academic disciplines in social science. The sociological lenses on the processes of ethnic identity formation and transformation, the multidimensional nature of identity politics and its constructedness have been coupled with political discussions on their impact on the liberal notion of the modern nation state and the quality of democracy, justice and liberty in multiethnic societies. Such complexity comes as a consequence of the highly abstract nature of the terms in question and their extensive and ambivalent exploitation in academic and political circles. Thus, some authors point to the ambiguousness of the conception of ethnicity as a cause for misunderstanding

and political misuses.¹ In reference to the abstract character of ethnic groups, Brubaker even questions their very own existence in reality, noting that the only existing notion is a shared representation of groupness, whilst what is conceived as ethnic group conflicts in reality are basically dealings between individuals.² In contrast to this conception, primordialist accounts have been emphasizing the relatively fixed and stable nature of ethnicity through real long-lasting and enduring group attachments and sentiments. On the other hand, the constructivist paradigm that dominates the academic debate today, perceives ethnicity and ethnic groups as human constructs that are not predetermined by primordial attachments, but rather as variable, fluid and subjective concepts.

In this sense, the case of the Macedonian speaking Muslims is a sound example of the abstract, fluctuating, dependent and variable character of ethnic group identity that occurs and transforms as a function of intra and inter group interaction, categorization and politicization. Therefore the analysis of the dynamism of group identity (trans) formations within the Macedonian speaking Muslim community is placed within the context of Fredrik Barth's interactionist theoretical model. In "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries", Barth argued that group identity and ethnic distinctiveness are not a manifestation of static cultural characteristics of a group, but on the contrary a function of social interaction with other groups and their perceptions on being different.³ Hence, ethnicity is a function of categorization that has a dual manifestation, as self - categorization and as categorization of others:

"By concentrating on what is socially effective, ethnic groups are seen as a form of social organization. The critical feature then becomesthe characteristic of self-ascription and ascription by others. A categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background. To the extent that actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for the purposes of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense".⁴

Therefore, ethnicity is based on abstract perceptions on the 'self' and the 'other' that derive from inter group interactions and consequently result with the establishment and maintenance of ethnic boundaries (more in a social than territorial sense). Or, as Barth argues:

1 Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), 160.

2 Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 7-27.

3 Fredrik Barth, "Introduction", in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. by Fredrik Barth (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), 9-38.

4 Barth, "Introduction", 13-14.

"When defined as an ascriptive and exclusive group, the nature of continuity of ethnic units is clear: it depends on the maintenance of a boundary. The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change....[thus] The critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff it encloses".⁵

This paradigm has been further elaborated by Richard Jenkins who pays attention to the association between self identification and social categorization and classification by others. In this sense, Jenkins suggests that ethnicity depends on ascription from *both* sides of the group boundary, whilst indicating two ascription processes: *group identification* which occurs *inside* and across the ethnic boundary *and social categorization* which occurs *outside* and across the ethnic boundary.⁶ He sums up this approach in a basic model that proposes that:⁷

- › ethnicity is a matter of 'cultural' differentiation (bearing in mind that identity is always a dialectic between similarity and difference);
- › ethnicity is a matter of shared meanings – 'culture' – but it is also produced and reproduced during interaction;
- › ethnicity is no more fixed than the way of life of which it is part, or the situations in which it is produced and reproduced; and
- › ethnicity is both collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and the categorization of others, and internalized in personal self-identification.

The interactional dimension of ethnicity is also emphasized by Eriksen:

"For ethnicity to come about, the groups must have a minimum of contact with each other, and they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there is no ethnicity, for ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group.....Ethnicity is an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction".⁸

In this sense, ethnic identity, self identification and the processes of classification are heavily dependent on the construction and durability of distinctions and characteristics of difference. In the Barthian sense⁹, markers of distinctions such as language and culture

5 Barth, "Introduction", 14-15.

6 Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity* (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), 23.

7 Jenkins, *Rethinking*, 169.

8 Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 12.

9 For an extensive discussion on the legacy, criticism and contemporary application of Barth's theory see: Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Marek Jakoubek, eds., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries Today: A Legacy of Fifty Years* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018)

are critical for the identification of boundaries.¹⁰ What makes the case of the Macedonian speaking Muslims interesting is the absence of straightforward distinctions in relation to the other dominant groups. Thus, boundaries are fuzzy and interchangeable and this results with frequent fluctuations of group identity which are a function of an interplay between two markers: language and even more importantly religious identity.

Whilst in the academic literature language is considered as probably the most important marker of ethnic identity, Fawcett argues that there have been relatively few attempts that provide in-depth exploration of the relationship between ethnicity and religion, despite its obvious importance.¹¹ Even more recently, despite some growth in the literature¹², this relation continues to be underresearched. As Gifford puts it:

"A religion provides definitions, principles of judgment and criteria of perception. It offers a reading of the world, of history, of society, of time, of space, of power, of authority, of justice and of ultimate truth. Religion limits or increases the conceptual tools available, restricts or enlarges emotional responses, or channels them, and withdraws certain issues from inquiry. It inculcates a particular way of perceiving, experiencing and responding to reality. Religion can legitimize new aspirations, new forms of organization, new relations and a new social order. Every religion involves struggles to conquer, monopolize or transform the symbolic structures which order reality. All these are issues for political analysis, and issues that are missed".¹³

Especially in the Balkans, religion has become a crucial marker for ethnic identification and in many cases the principal factor of self identification, major signifier of classification and a potent factor in boundary making.¹⁴ Patros gives a very good example on the importance of religion as a determinant of ethnic identity:

"it is difficult to envisage a Serb who is not Orthodox, or a Croat who is not a Catholic. As for the Slav Muslims of the former Yugoslavia, they are unique among Muslims in the world in having their very identity as a separate nation tied directly to the religious and cultural traditions of Islam. In all three cases religion has been one of the driving forces in building up a sense of ethnic identity. Today it remains a powerful symbol of national distinctive-

¹⁰ Jennifer Jackson and Lina Molokotos-Liederman, eds., *Nationalism, Ethnicity and Boundaries: Conceptualising and Understanding Identity through Boundary Approaches* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015)

¹¹ Liz Fawcett, *Religion, Ethnicity and Social Change* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 1-2.

¹² For example, see the collection of case studies in: Joseph Ruanne and Jennifer Todd, eds. *Ethnicity and Religion: Intersections and Comparisons* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015); Claire Mitchell, *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland: Boundaries of Belonging and Belief* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016)

¹³ Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: C. Hurst Co, 1998), 26.

¹⁴ For a discussion on the growing role of religion over language in the accommodation of cultural differences see: Rogers Brubaker, "The Social Organization and Political Contestation of Cultural Difference: Thinking Comparatively about Religion and Language". in: *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries Today: A Legacy of Fifty Years*, eds. Hylland Eriksen and Marek Jakoubek (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 152-168.

ness even among the large numbers of nonbelievers who continue to accept the broad cultural traditions of their more pious ancestors' religious beliefs".¹⁵

This is evident in the case of the Macedonian speaking Muslims as religious identity serves as an extremely important boundary marker and factor of interaction with the other dominant ethno-religious groups, main variable in the variation in self and group identification as well as an agency for formation and construction of a separate ethnic identity. In this sense, the paper does not utilize religion as a theological issue but rather in terms of "*consciousness of group membership i.e. social identity*".¹⁶ Therefore notions such as the roles of religious institutions and rituals are of less concern, whilst the emphasis is more on the cultural aspects of religion and its role in self identification. This reasoning goes in line with Gans's 'symbolic religiosity' conception which corresponds to self identification with a religious culture without practicing of rituals or participative membership in religious institutions¹⁷, as well as what Demerath labels as 'cultural' religion' i.e. "an identification with a religious heritage without any religious participation or a sense of personal involvement per se"¹⁸

Who are the Macedonian Speaking Muslims?

The Macedonian speaking Muslims (usually referred to as Torbesh) are a specific ethno-confessional group that predominantly lives in North Macedonia, as well as in some geographical regions in Albania and Kosovo. Within Macedonia, majority of the Macedonian speaking Muslims are situated in several clusters of villages and towns in western and southwestern Macedonia, the wider Skopje region and some villages in central Macedonia. There is also a significant diaspora population of Macedonian speaking Muslims.

Any attempt to analyze the origin of the Macedonian speaking Muslims will prove a daunting task, having in mind that there are several alternative and often competing theories. The mainstream explanation in Macedonian ethnographic studies is that the Macedonian speaking Muslims are descendents of local orthodox Slavs that belong to the Mijak ethnographic group that have converted to Islam during the five centuries of Ottoman rule. Whilst the first conversions to Islam occurred in the 15th and 16th century during the classical feudal period of the Ottoman Empire, they later progressively

¹⁵ Gabriel Partos, "Religion and Nationalism in the Balkans: A Deadly Combination?", in *Religion, Ethnicity, and Self-identity: Nations in Turmoil*, eds. Martin Marty and Scott Appleby (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1997), 90-91.

¹⁶ Suad Joseph, "Muslim-Christian Conflicts: a Theoretical Perspective" in *Muslim-Christian Conflicts: Economic, Political, and Social Origins*, eds. Suad Joseph and Barbara Pillsbury (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), 4.

¹⁷ Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity and Symbolic Religiosity: Towards a Comparison of Ethnic and Religious Generation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17, no.4 (1994): 577-92.

¹⁸ Nicholas Demerath, *Crossing the Gods: World Religions and Worldly Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 59.

expanded in the 17th century and culminated in the 18th and 19th century. On the other hand, there are alternative theories that argue that the Macedonian speaking Muslims are of Turkish origin. Dikici presents several accounts that promote such claims i.e. arguments that assert that the Macedonian speaking Muslims are descendants of non-Muslim Turkish tribes which settled in the region and converted to Islam, as well as theories that relate the Macedonian speaking Muslims with several Muslim Turkish tribes, most notably the Kuman, Kipchak or Pechenek Turks which settled in the Balkans prior to the Ottoman Empire and have been gradually linguistically assimilated with the Slavic majority.¹⁹ Poulton also indicates some sources that claim that many of the Macedonian speaking Muslims are Serbian speaking Muslims from the Sandzak region in Serbia that emigrated in Macedonia in the 1950's.²⁰ Finally, there are some views that trace the origins of the Macedonian speaking Muslims to the Bogomils from North Macedonia²¹ and their conversion to Islam as a consequence of their conflicts with the mainstream Orthodox Church.

Also there is a big number of ethnonyms ascribed to the Macedonian speaking Muslims. Amongst others, most notable ethnonyms that are used in different regional contexts in Macedonia are: Nashintsi, Pomaks, Apovci, Poturi and Turks. However the most widespread ethnonym (which is also accepted in the academic and political circles) is Torbesh, although the term has polarizing effects on some parts of the Macedonian speaking Muslim community. The term itself is etymologically problematic since there are numerous assumptions on its origin and meaning. Thus, in some accounts the ethnonym is linked with the name of an old Slavic tribe Torbachei, whilst other explanations relate the word with the Persian word torbakes which signifies a person 'with a bag'. Other accounts correlate the word Torbesh with a specific cluster of public servants in the Turkish army that used to carry bags (torba oglanlari), whilst some scholars link the term with the Bogomil missionaries that carried bags (kutugeri).²²

The question of the Slavic speaking Muslims in the Balkans became more prominent with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the intertwining of religious identities with the modern concepts of nationalism and citizenship. In North Macedonia, more important developments occur after the Second World War with the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia as a constituent republic of communist Yugoslavia. In the period between 1962 and 1967 a vast number of Macedonian speaking Muslims have migrated to Turkey under the auspices of the Agreement for free emigration between Yugoslavia and Turkey from 1952. As Svetieva's research indicates, some of these movements have

19 Ali Dikici, "The Torbeshes of Macedonia: Religious and National Identity Questions of Macedonian-Speaking Muslims," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 28, no. 1 (2008): 29-31.

20 Hugh Poulton, "Changing Notions of National Identity among Muslims in Thrace and Macedonia: Turks, Pomaks and Roma" in *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, eds. Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (London: Hurts&Company, 1997), 93.

21 Бранко Панов, *Средновековна Македонија т.3* (Скопје: Мисла, 1985), 269.; Dominik Mandić, *Bogomilska crkva bosanskih Krstjana* (Chicago: Croatian Historical Institute, 1962)

22 For a detailed outline of the etymological roots of the term see: Dikici, "The Torbeshes of Macedonia," 29-30.

been forced and coerced by the authorities on the premises of alleged Turkish origin of the groups.²³ Nevertheless, in comparison with the Bulgarian state where the communist authorities imposed several policies of assimilation of the Bulgarian speaking Pomaks²⁴, the Yugoslav state seemed to establish a more liberal and tolerant stance towards its Slavic speaking Muslim populations. Thus, in 1971 the Slavic speaking Muslims were granted the status of nationality in terms of recognition of the religious term Muslim as ethnicity. As Perica argues, this policy has predominantly affected the Bosnian Muslims but nevertheless “the new identity appealed ... also to Serbo-Croatian-speaking Muslims in Sandzak and Kosovo and Macedonian-speaking Muslims in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia”.²⁵ The 1970's also witnessed the first attempts of association and organization of the Macedonian speaking Muslims primarily with the establishment of the “Republican Community for Cultural and Scientific Events of Macedonian Muslims” which was backed by the authorities and promoted the conception of the ethnic Macedonian identity of the Macedonian speaking Muslims.

Macedonian independence and the democratization process in the past two decades brought further intensification of fluctuations in the self identification of the Macedonian speaking Muslims. This is evident in the ambiguousness of the demographic information on the number of Macedonian speaking Muslims.

Table 1: Census total by year, number, and percentage (North Macedonia)

Declared Nation (narodnost)	1948	%	1953	%	1961	%	1971	%	1981	%	1991	%	1994	%
Macedonians	789548	68.5	860699	66.0	1000854	71.2	1142375	69.3	1279323	67.0	1328187	65.3	1288330	66.5
Albanians	197389	17.1	162524	12.4	183108	13.0	279871	17.0	377208	19.8	441918	21.7	442914	22.9
Turks	95940	8.3	203938	15.6	131481	9.4	108552	6.6	86591	4.5	77080	3.8	77252	4.0
Roms**	19500	1.7	20462	1.6	20605	1.5	24505	1.5	43125	2.3	52103	2.6	43732	2.3
Vlahs	9511	0.8	8668	0.6	8046	0.6	7190	0.6	6384	0.3	7764	0.4	8467	0.4
Serbs	29721	2.6	35112	2.7	42728	3	46465	2.8	44468	2.3	42775	2.1	39260	2.0
Muslims	1560	0.1	1591	0.1	3002	0.2	1248	0.1	39513	2.1	31356	1.5	15315	0.8
Bulgarians	889	0.1	920	0.1	3087	0.2	3334	0.2	1980	0.1	1370	0.0	1547	0.1
Greeks	-	-	848	0.1	836	0.1	536	0.0	707	0.1	474	0.0	349	0.0
Egyptian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3307	0.2	3169	0.2
Bosniac	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7244	0.4
Yugoslav	-	-	-	-	1260	0.1	3652	0.2	14225	0.7	15703	0.8	595***	0.0
Other****	8928	0.8	9752	0.8	10995	0.7	29580	1.7	15612	0.8	31858	1.6	8703	0.4
Total	1152986	100	1304514	100	1406003	100	1647308	100	1909136	100	2033964	100	1936877	100

Source: Victor Friedman, “Observing the Observers: Language, Ethnicity, and Power in the 1994 Macedonian Census and Beyond” in *Toward Comprehensive Peace in Southeastern Europe: Conflict Prevention in the South Balkans*, ed. Rubin Barnett (New York: Council on Foreign Relations/Twentieth Century Fund, 1996), 90.

23 Анета Светиева, “За преселбите на балканските муслимани и за нашинците – Торбеши, Пوماци и други (Турци) во Турција,” ЕтноАнтропологизм бр.6 (2009), 38-68.

24 See: Maria Todorova, “Identity (Trans)formation among Pomaks in Bulgaria,” in *Beyond Borders: Remaking Cultural Identities in the New East and Central Europe*, eds. László Kürti and Juliet Langman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 63-82.; Ali Eminov, “Social Construction of Identities: Pomaks in Bulgaria,” *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 2 (2007): 1-25.

25 Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 75.

As seen in Table 1, the number of Macedonian speaking Muslims considerably varies in past censuses. From roughly the same number of 1500 in 1948 and 1953, 3002 in 1961, 1248 in 1971, to a significant rise to 39513 in 1981. Roughly the same number was evident in 1991 (31356), only to be reduced by double in 1994 (15315). The 2002 census which is the most recent census to be conducted in the country, does not provide any data the Macedonian speaking Muslims. Such anomalies pin point towards multiple identity changes and massive fluctuations of the Macedonian speaking Muslim population between different categories, whereby in most cases they have declared themselves as members of the two dominant Muslim ethnicities, Albanian and Turkish. Consequently, official census data are not very reliable in determining the exact number of Macedonian speaking Muslims.

Religion, Ethnicity, Language and the Processes of Identity Transformation

In the Balkans religion has played and continues to play a critical role in the processes of national identity construction. The strong and durable link between religion and ethnicity is to a large extent a consequence of the long periods of Ottoman rule and its specific features of societal organization based on religion. Any contemporary conceptualization of ethnicity and national identities on the Balkans has to address the legacy of the millet system in the Ottoman Empire whereby political and communal life has been organized on the premises of participation in religious communities (millets). Thus for long periods of time religion has served as the predominant marker of self identification and differentiation. As the Ottoman Empire started to crumble in the 19th century, this specific model of realization of collective identities was confronted with modern western European ethno-nationalist discourses. Having in mind the important role that religion and the Church had played in the preservation of collective identities of the Orthodox peoples, the processes of creation of states in the Balkans had to rely on specific mechanisms of nation formation based on language and religion as principal markers of integration and distinction. Thus, integration of groups into the wider national collective has been a function of one's self identification with the appropriate language and religion that are common properties of the dominant ethnic group. This model has had a tremendous impact on the linguistic and religious minority groups that didn't share both markers with the national majority, especially the Slavic speaking Muslims. As Todorova puts it: "such processes effectively excluded many members of various religious and linguistic groups from the process of national integration (except in the cases of assimilation)...Muslims in the Balkans refrained from adopting a national mode

of identity and instead retained a fluid consciousness displaying characteristics of a millet mentality".²⁶

On the other hand, Bougarel stresses the importance of the processes of politicization of ethnic identity. The relative isolation from the political mainstream entails limited access to political and material benefits, which are fully attainable by recognized ethno-national groups. Therefore, in order to obtain political visibility and utilize resources these groups could adopt three different identity strategies: (1) merging into a larger Muslim group that already enjoyed an institutional recognition of its identity; (2) identification with the dominant Christian ethnicity or (3) definition of a distinctive ethnic identity and subsequent requests for recognition.²⁷ The case of the Macedonian speaking Muslims is a very good example that confirms Bougarel's argument. The dynamic disposition of this group's identity materializes in fluctuations among three sets of self identification: as ethnic Macedonian (Macedonian Muslim), as a member of one of the two dominant Muslim ethnicities, the Albanians and Turks, or in the wake of recent developments, as a separate ethnicity i.e. Torbesh. However, these distinctions are not fixed. Variations in self identification are very frequent and the ethnic boundaries that define the dividing lines are fragile and fuzzy. Therefore, there is a high degree of identity diffusion which is a consequence of the interplay between language and religion where religion seems to have the upper hand.

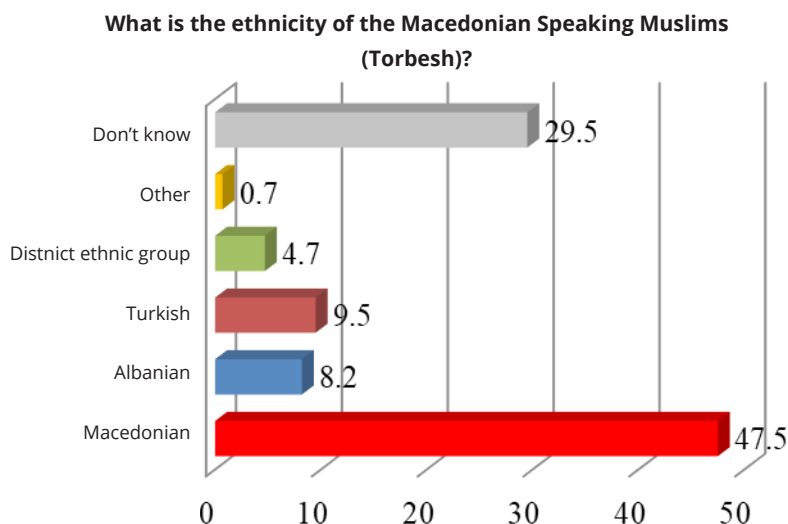
In a Barthian sense, much of this has to do with social interactions between the Macedonian speaking Muslims and the other ethnic groups. Identity isn't only a function of group self-identification, but also depends on out-group perceptions, categorizations and ascriptions of the group in question which are always a result of inter-group interaction. Thus out-group perceptions become very significant for the status and dynamics of the group's identity. In this context, the case of the Macedonian speaking Muslims shows that the overlaps between the ethno-national and religious identities become a principal determinant of inter group interaction and out-group perceptions on one hand and a principal determinant of the variations in self determination (along the three before mentioned lines of identity).

The analysis of out group-perceptions further proves the fluid character of the identity of the Macedonian speaking Muslims.²⁸

²⁶ Todorova, "Identity," 75.

²⁷ Xavier Bougarel, "Islam and Politics in the Post-Communist Balkans (1990-2000)," in *New Approaches to Balkan Studies*, eds. Dimitris Keridis, Elliasn Elias-Bursac and Nicholas Yatromanolakis (Dules: Brassey's, 2003), 345-360.

²⁸ The data presented in graphs 1 and 2 and in tables 2 and 3 is from a nationwide telephone survey conducted in 2012 by the Institute for Political Research-Skopje.



Graph 1: Perceptions on the ethnic identity of the Macedonian speaking Muslims

If we take a look at the perceptions of the overall population in Graph 1 we can see that there is a high degree of uncertainty as to who the Macedonian speaking Muslims are. Slightly less than half of the population thinks that the Macedonian speaking Muslims are ethnic Macedonians. 9,5 % believes that they are Turks, while 8% of the population perceives the group as part of the Albanian ethnicity. However what is intriguing is the number of respondents that could not provide an accurate answer. Thus, one third of the population is not able to provide any ascription or categorization of the ethnic affiliation of the Macedonian speaking Muslims. This is a strong indication for identity diffusion and a rather low degree of visibility of the group. The results reveal that there are not many clear cut cultural distinctions that generate perceptions of a separate ethnic identity, since only 5% of the overall population considers the Macedonian speaking Muslims to be a distinct ethnic group.

Table 2: Ethnic Macedonian perceptions on the ethnicity of the Macedonian speaking Muslims

What is the ethnicity of the Macedonian speaking Muslims (Torbesh)?						
	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Distinct ethnic group	Other	Don't know
Perceptions of ethnic Macedonian respondents	55.7	4	8.7	4.5	0.7	26.4

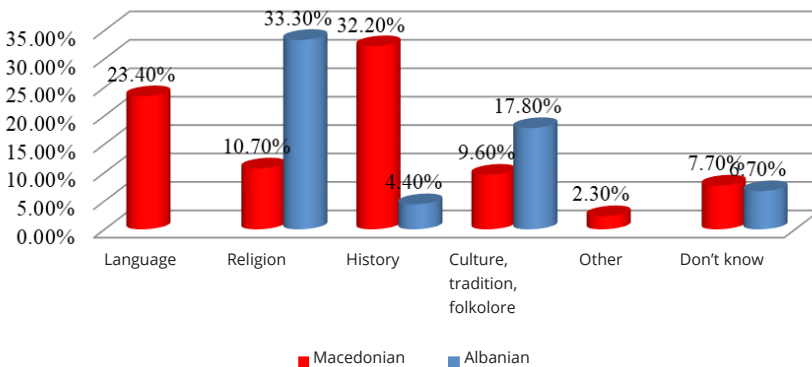
Table 2 shows ethnic Macedonian perceptions on the ethnic identity of the Macedonian speaking Muslims. Interestingly enough, the results reveal that despite the mainstream outlook in North Macedonia that the Macedonian speaking Muslims are ethnic Macedonians, only 55% of the ethnic Macedonian respondents share that opinion. 4% of the Macedonians think that the Macedonian speaking Muslims are Albanians, 8,7% think they are Turks, while 26% cannot define their ethnicity.

Table 3: Ethnic Albanian perceptions on the ethnicity of the Macedonian speaking Muslims

What is the ethnicity of the Macedonian speaking Muslims (Torbesh)?						
	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Distinct ethnic group	Other	Don't know
Perceptions of ethnic Albanian respondents	16.9	23.7	11.9	6.8	0	40.7

The responses from the Albanian respondents are even more dispersed. Hence, 23 % of the Albanians in Macedonia consider the Macedonian speaking Muslims as members of their own ethnic group. 17% of the Albanians think that the Macedonian speaking Muslims are Macedonians, while 12% perceive the Macedonian speaking Muslims as Turks. An exceptionally high percentage of Albanians (40,7%) is not able to define the ethnic identity of the Macedonian speaking Muslims.

Graph 2: Primary factors that determine respondent perceptions for affiliation of the Macedonian speaking Muslims with the respondent's own ethnic group



The cross tabulation in Graph 2 indicates the primary factors that determine respondent perceptions for affiliation of the Macedonian speaking Muslims with the respondent's own ethnic group. Those Macedonians that perceive the Macedonian speaking Muslims

as ethnic Macedonians indicate shared history (32%) and language (23%) as the two principal factors that determine that particular ethnic affiliation. However, in the cases where the Macedonian respondents perceive the Macedonian speaking Muslims as ethnic Albanians, Turks or as members of a separate ethnic group (not shown in graph), religion is indicated as the principal factor for those affiliations. Religion plays an even greater role in the perceptions of the Albanian respondents. Thus, more than one third of those Albanian respondents that think that the Macedonian speaking Muslims are ethnic Albanians regard shared religion as the most important indicator for that affiliation. In the same sense, religion is the principal marker for the perceptions of those Albanian respondents (not shown in graph) that consider the Macedonian speaking Muslims as ethnic Turks.

The role of religion as a factor of social categorization and group identification is even more evident if we look at more qualitative markers that define the interaction between the Orthodox Macedonian group and the Macedonian speaking Muslims. Thus, religious affiliation has serious effects on the quality of this inter-group interaction. In this sense, stereotypes are an important factor for boundary making. As Searle-White argues,

*“stereotypes are the result of categorization and outgroup homogenization. A stereotype is simply a generalization presumed to hold true about a group of people. What is most important for understanding nationalism is that if we hold a stereotype about a group, that stereotype then shapes how we understand any new information that we encounter about that group.”*²⁹

Brubaker sheds light on research on stereotypes that stresses the existence of continuous linkages between stereotypical thinking and categorical thinking in general, to the extent that “because they are not the products of individual pathology but of cognitive regularities and shared culture, stereotypes-like social categories more generally-are not individual attitudinal predilections, but deeply embedded, shared mental representations of social objects”.³⁰ Coakley pinpoints the important role of religious labeling in ethnonationalism stressing the fact that even “simple religious labeling can have significant ethnic connotations, and can play a classical boundary defining role”.³¹ In this sense, the most commonly used ethnonym for the Macedonian speaking Muslims, *Torbesh*, has proved to be a potent source of mental representations. Having in mind that the ethnonym derives from the word *torba* (bag), one of the most common explanations of the origin of the word among orthodox Macedonians is that it denotes somebody who has sold its faith for a bag of rice, a traitor and somebody who is unreliable. Such connotations in environments that are defined by strong linkages between ethnicity and

²⁹ Joshua Searle-White, *The Psychology of Nationalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 13.

³⁰ Brubaker, “Ethnicity,” 73.

³¹ John Coakley, “Religion and Nationalism in the First World,” in *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the Study of Nationalism*, ed. Daniele Conversi (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 218.

religion could be extremely sensitive. Thus the usage of the ethnonym Torbesh has been a polarizing issue to the extent that certain sub-groups of Macedonian speaking Muslims completely reject the usage of the word in public life.³²

In North Macedonia common conceptions on identity emphasize the bond between ethnicity and religion up to a point where religious affiliation is a predicament for acceptance in an ethnic group. The boundaries that derive from such lines of thinking are primarily vivid in the interaction between orthodoxy and Islam whereby religious affiliation is the primary determinant of “otherness”. As Frankel argues, for the common Macedonian, the Muslim is the “other” regardless of his/hers ethnicity, up to the point that it is not conceivable that a Muslim could be a part of the Macedonian ethnic group.³³ For example a common practice that has been widespread in the Ottoman and the post ottoman period which to some extent still prevails today is to label and categorize the Macedonian speaking Muslims as Turks or Albanians i.e. as members of the two biggest Muslim groups.³⁴ The barriers that are shaped by such conceptions are perfectly summed up by one Macedonian Muslim political science graduate student:

“With us religion always comes first. It is prioritized against everything else. Whenever there is an initial contact with Macedonians, Albanians or Turks I have a hard time explaining my ethnic Macedonian identity. For the Macedonians in most cases it is not conceivable that somebody can feel as an ethnic Macedonian if he or she is not Christian. The initial reaction when they hear my name is always associated with the question, how can you be a Macedonian when you have a Muslim name?”³⁵

Such dividing notions are also evident in the perceptions among the Macedonian speaking Muslims on inter-religious marriages. This marker is a part of a much wider picture of inter-religious dynamics in Macedonian society. North Macedonia already has one of the lowest rates of approval of inter-religious marriages in Europe. Thus only 18% of the overall population in Macedonia would marry a spouse from another religion.³⁶ However if we look at the regional distribution of answers the rift is even more extreme.

Hence, in the Polog region where there is a highest concentration of Muslims in general and Macedonian speaking Muslims in particular, 93% of the population wouldn't marry with persons that are outside their own religious community.³⁷ Conversely, marriages between Macedonian speaking Muslims and Orthodox Macedonians are extremely rare,

32 This is especially indicative for the group of Macedonian speaking Muslims that regard themselves as ethnic Macedonians. For example, the Union of Macedonian Muslims which is a legal successor of the Republican Community for Cultural and Scientific Events of Macedonian Muslims has had several public appeals opposing the usage of the ethnonym.

33 Eran Fraenkel, “Turning a Donkey into a Horse: Paradox into Identity of Makedonci Muslimani,” *Balkan Forum* 3, no. 4 (1995):153-163.

34 Анета Светиева, “Политизација на етничкиот идентитет на торбешите (нашинците),” *ЕтноАнтропозум* 4 (2004), 54.

35 Fieldwork information. Personal interview

36 Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” Skopje (IDSCS), *Religious Dialogue in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2011)

37 IDSCS, “Survey”

whereby marriages outside of the group are almost exclusively conducted with members of the two dominant Muslim ethnicities, Albanians and Turks.

On the other hand, ethnic boundaries appear to be more amorphous if we consider interactions between the Macedonian speaking Muslims and the two dominant Muslim ethnicities, the Albanians and Turks. As we have seen with the ambiguous data from past censuses, fluctuations and variations in self-identification in favor of the two ethnicities are quite common despite obvious linguistic and ethnic (in terms of the assumed Slavic origin of the Macedonian speaking Muslims) distinctions. In this sense, religious affiliation appears to be more potent than the other markers. Frankel for example indicates that among the Macedonian speaking Muslims Islam is viewed as more important than their ethnic affiliation up to a point where a lot of group members reject their Slavic roots and adopt a non-Slavic Muslim identity.³⁸ In Yugoslav times, as Poulton argues, in spite of state policies of promotion of the group as ethnic Macedonian Muslims, the Macedonian speaking Muslims remained susceptible to assimilation into the Muslim majority i.e. Albanian and Turkish, proving that Islam is often a more powerful unifying factor than ethnicity.³⁹ Whilst obviously religion plays a significant role for the processes of assimilation, material and individual interests are also an important piece of the puzzle. As Eminov has argued, “people choose between alternative identities in terms of the extent to which a particular identity serves the practical needs and interests of the individuals or groups”.⁴⁰ Therefore, the processes of identity transformation and assimilation have to be perceived through the lenses of both religious affiliation and politicization. As early as the late 1980s there have been accusations that the Albanian clerics in the Islamic Community have been attempting to “Albanianize the Muslim Slavs in Macedonia”.⁴¹ An indicative example of the fear from Albanian assimilation of the Macedonian speaking Muslims is the open letter to the Chairman of the Party for Democratic Prosperity of Macedonia (the main ethnic Albanian party in Macedonia at the time), which in 1990 was sent by Riza Memedovski, chairman of the Republican Community for Cultural and Scientific Events of Macedonian Muslims where he accused the party of instigating a process of ‘quiet assimilation’ and abusing religion for promotion of ‘Kosovarisation’ and ‘Albanianisation’ of the Macedonian Muslims.⁴² Similar debates have been raised several times in the past three decades.

Although it is very difficult to estimate exact numbers of such demographic fluctuations, this issue at times has produced significant controversies on a micro level. Most notable example is the village of Labunista in the wider Struga region, where census data reveal serious switches in identity affiliation i.e. in the period 1995-2002 the number of

³⁸ Fraenkel, “Turning,” 153-163.

³⁹ Poulton, “Changing,” 94.

⁴⁰ Eminov, “Social,” 16.

⁴¹ Aydin Babuna, “The Bosnian Muslims and Albanians: Islam and Nationalism,” *Nationalities Papers* 32, no. 2 (2004): 303.

⁴² Cited in: Poulton, “Changing,” 94.

Albanians more than doubled on the expense of the Macedonians despite the fact that most of the inhabitants of the village have had Macedonian as their mother tongue. Whilst politicization and the campaigning impact of the ethnic Albanian parties have been indicated as major factors for these developments⁴³, some prominent members of the local population claim that they in fact are descendants of slavified Albanian migrants.⁴⁴

Similarly, another issue that has been a source of controversy in the past several decades has been the process of Turkification of the Macedonian speaking Muslims. Notwithstanding the importance of social and economic factors as well as the increasing rise of Turkish power in the Balkan Peninsula, religious affiliation has been the major push factor for the tendencies of self-identification among the Macedonian speaking Muslims with the Turks. In this context, since the early 1990's there have been several disputes that involved groups of Macedonian speaking Muslims that claimed Turkish identity. The most contested incident occurred in the first half of the 1990's in the Debar region and involved disputes between the government and the local Macedonian speaking Muslim population over the issue of instruction in the Turkish language in the primary schools. Thus, in the village of Zupa in the Debar region the local Macedonian speaking Muslims requested primary school education in Turkish although most of them spoke only Macedonian. The authorities initially rejected the request which sparked a series of protests that were backed by the Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia. The dispute ended several years later with a permit from the Ministry of Education for implementation of classes in Turkish. Although recently there were no serious disputes of this nature, the issue of Turkification of the Macedonian speaking Muslims is sporadically a subject of politicization. A decade old statement of the leader of the Movement for National Unity of Turks in Macedonia, Erdogan Sarac serves as a good illustration:

"In our opinion, they [the Macedonian speaking Muslims] are Muslims and are closest to the Turks. They are descendants of the Turkish tribe Torbash. In the period 1951-1960 a large number of them declared themselves as Turks and immigrated to Turkey. And because they were Turks, Turkey accepted them as its own citizens."⁴⁵

The complex interplay between religion and ethnicity in the case of the Macedonian speaking Muslims has had a delicate effect on the micro-level identity dynamics in the areas that are populated with Macedonian speaking Muslims. Frequent fluctuations in self identification in some instances result with extreme examples of identity diffusion. Thus, in the Dolna Reka region in Western North Macedonia there are cases where within the same family the parents adopt a Turkish identity, while the children identify themselves as ethnic Macedonians.⁴⁶ On top of that, recently the already perplexed

⁴³ Светиева, "Политизација," 50-74

⁴⁴ Вест. "Македонците во Лабуништа преку ноќ станаа Албанци," *Вест*, 13.12.2003

⁴⁵ <http://telma.com.mk/index.php?task=content&cat=ytcpnrw&rub=15&item=11078>

⁴⁶ Fieldwork information

picture has been further complicated with the emergence of a new process of formation of a distinct ethnic Macedonian speaking Muslim identity.

Formation of a “Torbesb” ethnicity

The discourse regarding the Macedonian speaking Muslims in the past 15 years has been also influenced by the emergence of a process of construction of a distinct collective identity. In a constructivist sense, a definition of ethnicity presupposes perceptions on the existence of a relatively homogeneous group bonded by conceptions of kinship and sameness among its members, with a sense of shared history, symbolic capital, a distinctive name and with self definition in contrast to other groups. However, as Fawcett argues, “ethnic sentiment does not simply arise spontaneously. Its appearance is related to the material interests of those mobilized by it and, most importantly, the economic and political interests of those who take the lead in awakening ethnic consciousness”.⁴⁷ Accordingly, whilst group self identification with some common social and cultural traits that are contrasted to other groups is a necessary predicament, processes of formation/construction of ethno-national identities and national minorities are decisively reliant on instrumental and political strategies. In Brubakers’ view, such groups are not just ethnodemographic facts, but on the contrary a dynamic *political* stance which is characterized by three distinctive elements: (1) the public claim to membership of an ethnocultural nation different from the numerically or politically dominant ethnocultural nation; (2) the demand for state recognition of this distinct ethnocultural nationality; and (3) the assertion, on the basis of this ethnocultural nationality, of certain collective cultural or political rights.⁴⁸

Such a political stance has been evident in the dynamics of the process of formation of a distinctive Torbesb ethnicity. The principal political driving force that initiated and spearheaded the whole process has been the Party for European Future (PEI) and its leader Fijat Canoski, a wealthy businessman and owner of the biggest private University in North Macedonia. The party was established in 2006 with its stronghold in the south west part of Macedonia. During the 2006 elections, PEI managed to win one seat in the Macedonian Parliament which was occupied by the leader Fijat Canoski who at the same time became the first MP in the history of the Macedonian Parliament to declare himself as Torbesb. During this mandate, PEI initiated demands for official state recognition of the Torbesb population as a separate ethnic minority. Throughout the heated debate in the Macedonian Parliament over the proposed amendments of the electoral code in 2007⁴⁹ (which envisaged guaranteed places in the Parliament for the constitutionally

⁴⁷ Fawcett, “Religion,” 7.

⁴⁸ Brubaker, Rogers, *Nationalism Refrained: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 60.

⁴⁹ Eventually the amendments were not adopted due to opposition from the main ethnic Albanian parties.

acknowledged ethnic minorities) PEI demanded constitutional amendments that would include the Torbesh ethnicity in the Preamble of the Macedonian Constitution. The party also demanded up to 6 guaranteed seats in the Parliament based on the claim that the Torbesh ethnicity entails a population of 150000 thus making it the third largest ethnicity in North Macedonia.⁵⁰

In the 2008 elections PEI once again won one seat in the Parliament, with Fijat Canoski as the only MP who declared himself as Torbesh. In the following period, the policy of promoting the distinctiveness of Torbesh identity was enhanced and became more structured with the establishment of the Cultural and Scientific Centre – Rumelija, a nongovernmental organization that ever since its establishment always maintained strong backing from PEI.⁵¹ In January 2011, Rumelija in collaboration with PEI organized the first so called “Torbesh forum” where the demands for inclusion of the Torbesh ethnicity in the Preamble of the Macedonian constitution were emphasized once again. Furthermore, Fijat Canoski requested introduction of separate guaranteed quotas for public administration employments of Torbesh citizens. According to PEI estimates, such a policy would oblige the Government to create up to 8000 placements for Torbesh public servants. Finally, probably the most important outcome of the Forum was the promotion of two key documents, the Torbesh Charter and the Torbesh Declaration.

The Torbesh Charter on its behalf introduces seven articles that clearly outline a political programme that: (1) promotes state recognition of the Torbesh ethnic minority based on its distinctive identity and common history and (2) requests state affirmation of collective political rights for the Torbesh minority. The Torbesh Declaration on the other hand is even more instrumental since it provides a narrative that attempts to advocate the existence of several markers that define the distinctiveness of the Torbesh as an ethnic group i.e. ascription of a collective name, historical interpretation of the (Bogomil) origin and the evolution of the Torbesh ethnicity and a reference to common cultural traits.⁵²

The 2011 Parliamentary elections provided a significant boost for the Party for European Future. The intensive electoral campaign resulted with three seats in the Macedonian Parliament. All three PEI Members of Parliament declared themselves as ethnic Torbesh. In 2012 they requested to be recognized by the Parliament as MPs from a distinct ethnic community and therefore to be permitted to participate in the Inter-Community Relations

50 Утрински весник. “Опозицијата го обвинува Груевски за манипулации со Изборниот законик,” *Утрински весник*, 6.9.2007.

51 For example, the secretary general of PEI at the time, Mehmed Dzemajloski has been also one of the founders of the Cultural and Scientific Centre – Rumelija.

52 See: Шериф Ајрадиноски, *Торбешка декларација* (Струга: Румелија Торбешки Културно-Научен Центар, 2011).

Committee⁵³ and to be allowed to vote under the double majority principle.⁵⁴ Eventually the demand was rejected by the Legislative Committee of the Assembly who based its decision on the absence of the Torbesh community in the Macedonian Constitution. However, in the subsequent elections, PEI couldn't replicate the success of 2011. Currently they are not a parliamentary party (although they have been members of the winning coalition), while during the previous composition of the Parliament (2016-2020) they had only one MP who also declared as Torbesh.

The policies of promotion of a distinctive Torbesh ethnicity didn't go without controversy. The activities of the Party for European Future invoked furious reactions by the Macedonian Muslims who accused the party leadership of deliberate manipulation in pursuit of material and personal interests. The most vocal actor in this confrontation has been the Union of Macedonian Muslims which on several occasions accused the party and its leader of deliberate distortions of the truth about the Macedonian speaking Muslims and of attempts for construction of an artificial ethnic identity based on religious affiliation.⁵⁵

This confrontation is just another testament of the complexity of the question of the Macedonian speaking Muslims. The puzzle of the variations in self identification has become even more intricate with the processes of construction and politicization of a Torbesh identity. Despite its instrumental nature, the dynamics of the process of identity formation is related to the necessity of a sense of a distinctive collective self-identity. In this sense, a constitutional recognition of the Torbesh as a distinct ethnic community could be an influential factor for the realization of an endeavor that at the moment is very much an open-ended process.⁵⁶

Conclusion

The article has presented the complexities that derive from the correlation between ethnic identity and religion in the contemporary Macedonian society. Through the

⁵³ Currently, membership of the Inter-Community Relations Committee (which in reality refers to relations between *ethnic* communities) is comprised of MPs that come from only those ethnicities that are explicitly cited in the Macedonian Constitution, i.e. Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Roma, Serbian and Bosnian.

⁵⁴ The double majority (also known as the Badinter principle) has been introduced by Amendment X of the Constitution of North Macedonia in order to protect the interests of the minority ethnic communities in those policies that tackle inter-ethnic relations. Amendment X states: "For laws that directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols, the Assembly makes decisions by a majority vote of the Representatives attending, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives attending who belong to communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia".

⁵⁵ For example see: Македонска нација, "Македонските муслимани не се торбеши, туку само Македонци," *Македонска нација*, 23.2.2011, <http://www.mn.mk/index.php/fotogalerija/iselenici-region/iselenici-region/3653-Makedoncite-muslimani-ne-se-torbeshi-tuku-samo-Makedonci>

⁵⁶ In this context, in a recent statement, North Macedonia's Prime Minister Zoran Zaev spoke about the possibilities for amendments in the Constitution to include the Torbeshi as a separate ethnic community before North Macedonia's future entry into the EU. A10n. "Zaev: Во ЕУ ќе мораме да го отвориме уставот, но во моментот нема потреба за дополнување на етничките заедници," *Вест*, 9.3.2021, <https://a10n.mk/macedonia/zaev-vo-eu-kje-morame-da-go-otvorime-ustavot-no-vo-momentov-nema-potreba-da-dopolnivanje-na-etnichkite-zaednici/>

examination of the intriguing case of the Macedonian speaking Muslims, the article argues the socially constructed, inconsistent and changeable nature of ethnicity. In this sense, the article has presented the case of the Macedonian speaking Muslims as a clear paradigm of the abstract, subjective, fluctuating, dependent and variable character of ethnic group identity. In a more specific manner, the article has explored the interplay between ethnic identity and religion and its impact on the variations in self identification among groups. Accordingly, the article has shown that the close entwining of ethnic and religious identity among the Macedonian speaking Muslims creates environments of identity diffusion and identity transformations which occur as a consequence of the delicate interaction between language, kinship and religion. In this context, religion has shown to be the more powerful component as religious identity appears as the most important boundary marker and factor of out-group perception and the state of interaction with the other dominant ethno-religious groups.

On the other hand, the identity dynamics among Macedonian speaking Muslims haven't been immune to politicization. The trilateral variation in self identification of the Macedonian speaking Muslims i.e. the appropriation of a Macedonian, Albanian/ Turkish or a Torbesh identity albeit being influenced by the overlaps between religious, ethnic and linguistic markers, also has an underlying (and underresearched) instrumental side. As this article has shown these dynamics have been a potent source of political contestation in the last two decades. How these processes of (trans) formation of Macedonian speaking Muslim identity will unfold is still an open-ended question.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY



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THE CHALLENGES OF THE MODERN EUROPEAN IDENTITY

POLITICAL THOUGHT

62



The establishment of a collective identity in the creation of a certain political entity is an essential precondition for its existence and further development. The European Union is no exception to this rule, and therefore, the development of the modern European identity can actually direct the way of future development of the European Union itself, as a supranational political identity.

The creation of the identity requires a common idea or concept that will unite, and therefore, the question arises, whether a European identity can be created that will substitute the national identity form to a certain extent, and which will only be founded on the secular tradition.

Given that the identity is a prerequisite for further integration of the supranational European political entity, *the basic assumption in the text below is that there is a better chance of creating and developing a European identity, which, in addition to the secular values, will also be founded on Christianity as a supranational concept with its own symbolism and values, which is the basis of the European tradition itself.*

Regarding the methodological approach, quantitative and qualitative methods will be used that enable testing of the hypothesis, as well as descriptive methods, to deconstruct the basic concepts and categories relevant to the research.

Identity as a collective construct

In defining identity, Gerard Delanty lists five basic characteristics of collective identification. He believes that the European identity, similar to the national identity, represents a collective identity construct, and therefore, theoretically, they do not differ. According to him:¹

- › Identity is formed only as a consequence of social action
- › Each identity has a narrative dimension, i.e., a historical component
- › Identity is shaped as a distinction between oneself and the other through a set of symbolic markers and is therefore based on diversity
- › Collective identities often occur as a complex or multi-identity value formation
- › Depending on their interaction they can be overlapping (partially coincidental), hybrid (mixed), or layered (coexisting)
- › All identities are constructions regardless of their type of identity construction

¹ Delanty, Gerard and Rumford, Chris "Rethinking Europe-Social theory and the implications of Europeanization" London: Routledge, 2005, p. 50-52

These characteristics can be complemented by another concept of the relationship between complex identity constructions that *Antje Wiener* and *Thomas Diez* call the “marble cake” model². According to this model, the layers of the complex identity cannot be separated from each other, because the identity components complement each other, and each layer without the other would be incomplete, which can also be applied to the European identity.

The collective identity as a representative of the community is maintained through symbolism represented by common institutions and traditions, partially manifested through socio-cultural customs and practices, which are emphasized only when we compare *ourselves* to *others*. The collective forms of identity, like the nations, remain relatively resistant to change, especially *ethnic* versus *civic* models, given the support of the tradition and cultural values in some, in contrast to the civic principles of equal representation and legal equality in others. According to *Jack Citrin* and *John Sides*³, the attributes of the ethnic model as easily perceptible and emotional have proven to be much more effective in maintaining the intensity of the very identity constructs. The political identity as a collective one is an important component of any democratic integration process, given that there is a symbiotic relationship, i.e., the precondition of the integration process itself with public support arising from its commitment to creating or deepening relations between the states that are the creators of the new political entity. It is very important that this process is not imposed (by the elites), but arises from the citizens themselves, which is a basic supposition for the success of the integration itself.

Therefore, the issue of the identity relations of the European public with the new political community, and the strengthening of it are important indicators in determining the future development of the European Union, as well as determining the factors that influence the creation and promotion of the concept of European identity, along with the possible solutions for its upgrading and deepening deriving from them, which will be subject to analysis. However, the question of whether there is a European identity should be answered beforehand, i.e., to locate and confirm, as well as to determine the degree of affinity of the citizens towards the European Union.

Identity is not an exclusive category, i.e., not only is the existence of complex political forms of identity not excluded, but they are inherent and are usually in mutual relation with the perception of the degree of gradual development of the territorial environment accepted by the individual. Political identity includes several forms of manifestation and can be local, regional, and/or national, depending on the perception and territorial division of political entities to which there is an identity connection. With regards to identity, the question also arises as to how much it is “formed concentrically [or

2 Wiener, Antje & Diez, Thomas „*European Integration Theory*“Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009, p. 153

3 Jack Citrin and John Sides & Hermann, Margaret G. „*Advances in political psychology- Volume 1*“Oxford: Elsevier Ltd., 2004, p. 58

multilayered] so that its plurality can be accommodated by the individual, and whether some of its aspects can conflict with each other."⁴ Perhaps, the most important feature of multilayered identities is the degree of dominance in the event of a conflict, because that determines which loyalty will be primary. The existence and degree of inclination of the population towards a certain political identity can be determined directly, through public opinion polls, and indirectly, through a comparative analysis of the degree of democratic participation of a certain population in the institutions of two or more distinctive political entities.

Analysis of the perceptions of the European identity

The European Statistical Office (*Eurostat*) conducts regular and representative quantitative public opinion polls, including questions that detect the presence of European identity, as well as public preferences regarding national identity, through the *Eurobarometer*⁵ project. One of the standard questions asked in the Eurobarometer, useful for observing the perceptions regarding the European identity, is: *in the near future, do you see yourself only as a member of the nation, a member of the nation and a European, a European and a member of the nation, or only as a European?*

The offered categories of answers to this question are constructed according to the *Likert scale*⁶, which, although it is an ordinary scale, provides results that can be used to measure intervals that produce dichotomous perceptions by grouping the degree of the variables' intensity. Additionally, the more tolerant, i.e., the more inclusive attitudes that join the two extremes are combined, whereby only two complex sum intervals are obtained, which determine the dominant, i.e., the prevailing attitude through mutual comparison. The answers to this question offer a choice that presupposes the exclusivity of identity (*only as a member of the nation or only as a European*), and attitudes that involve complex forms of identity (*member of the nation and a European, or a European and a member of the nation*).

The results obtained in the analysis of *Albert Weil and Michael Nentwich*⁷ show that the majority of EU citizens have a dual national and European identity, although many perceive only the national, and a very small, almost insignificant, part perceives only the European identity. However, in the cases of respondents with dual identities, most of

4 McAllister, Richard "From EC to EU A Historical and Political Survey" London: Routledge, 1997, p. 234

5 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm the data from the *Eurobarometer* are mostly public and available on its website. For more comparative data on the relationship between the European and the national identity, you can consult the researches 2008/69.2, 2010/73.3, 2009/71.3, 2008/68.

6 For more details, see Neuman, W. Lawrence "Basics of Social Research" New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2007, pp. 129-133 or Pennings, Paul "Doing Research in Political Science" London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2006, pp. 74-75

7 Weale Albert and Nentwich, Michael „Political Theory and the European Union-Legitimacy, constitutional choice and citizenship" London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 20-21

them prefer first the national, and only then the European. If the results of the research are combined into a complex indicator, where one set of values shows the first two answers (*only as a member of the nation* and *a member of the nation and a European*), while the second set shows the other two, i.e., *only as a European* and *a European and a member of the nation*, the results are extremely in favour of the national identity, in a ratio of more than four to one (83% to 17%). These results provide argumentation for the assumption that in the event of a collision between national and European identity, i.e., a conflict of interests between the two entities, support for national identity and the nation will be predominantly superior to European interests. Similar conclusions are presented by *Antonia Jiménez* in the analysis conducted based on the Eurobarometer 57.2 data from 2002. Although the data suggest that dual identity has a relatively wide range among the European population, and both identities are inclusive and complementary, “the attachment to the national identity is still stronger than to the European, i.e., almost half a century of integration shows that the unification of societies is insufficient to create an identity of its own, and therefore, subjective affiliations have remained attached to the national level.”⁸ “According to previous comparative results and the analyses that emerge from them, the nation-state is still a primary collective form of identity, without much prospect of being replaced by some more general form of European identity in the foreseeable future.”⁹

The still-dominant position in the perception of national political identity is also reflected in the discrepancy that arises in support of the European integration process, in a comparative analysis of attitudes as to *whether membership in the Union is a good or bad thing*. The results of the surveys conducted between 1991 and 2004 on respondents from EU-15 (EU member-states before January 2004) show a (serious) decline in support for the EU integration process in all national polls conducted by the Eurobarometer, which leads to the conclusion that there is a general trend of declining confidence in the EU and its institutions, i.e., “the European Union has moved away from the path of integration in the first decade of the new millennium”.¹⁰

A similar conclusion in his analysis has *Cris Shore*¹¹, who in an analysis for the period between 1992-1999 states that support for membership has decreased from 73% to 46%, while only 41% of citizens believe that their country has benefited from membership in the Union.

8 <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2004-011a.htm> Jiménez, Antonia M. Ruiz and others. „European and National Identities in EU's Old and New Member States” European Integration online Papers (EIoP) Vol. 8, 2004 p. 8 и Lacroix, Justine „For a European Constitutional Patriotism” Political Studies: Vol 50, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002, pp. 944-945

9 <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-riga/virtualpaperroom/032.pdf> Jeroen Moes European identity compared

10 Taylor, Paul “The End of European Integration” London: Routledge, 2008, pp. 2 and 24-33

11 Shore, Cris “Building Europe - The Cultural Politics of European Integration” London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 18-19

Concerning the surveys conducted between 2004-2016¹², support amounts to 50% with the highest in 2007 at 58% (Lisbon Treaty) and the lowest in 2011 at 47% (effects of the economic crisis). In 2016, after the end of the economic and debt crises of the previous 8 years, the support reaches 53% and it increases to 62% in 2018, with a slight decrease to 61% in 2019¹³. Given the previous trends, we can expect future research to show again a decline in the support, primarily due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the vaccine crisis, and the deteriorating economic situation caused by the pandemic. From the comparison between the positive perceptions of the Union in the past thirty years, and their variations caused primarily by the impact of various socio-economic developments, one can make a valid observation that the support of the membership depends more on the perceived benefits than the sense of belonging i.e., identification of the Europeans with the Union, which only confirms the failure to create a strong European identity matrix in the past sixty years.

Quite often in the European academic literature, some publications try to promote the European idea with a relatively inaccurate and methodologically unsound presentation of the results from the quantitative research of the *Eurobarometer*. Namely, to the basic question of European and national identity presented by the Likert optional scale, which was explained above, instead of a complex interval as an indicator, *dummy* variables are used to confront the European with the national identity. *Dummy* or binary variable is used to detect the presence or absence of a certain category that affects the final output by sorting the results into mutually exclusive (incompatible or unrelatable) categories. These variables, used to detect identity, are useful for determining its existence, i.e., cognitive perception in complex identity formations, yet they are often misinterpreted. In these comparisons, all the categories in which the European identity is mentioned are added, and the results are set against the category of *national identity only*. However, even in some of these analyses, the conclusion that “the objective conditions for the development of the European political community are met only to a certain, relatively low, degree”¹⁴ is inevitable.

There is another formulation used in quantitative analysis to determine the priority of political identities, i.e., in the Eurobarometer, the question that is periodically asked is *which identity they would choose as first, second, or third*, and the choice is between European, national, and regional identity. This question is interesting given that it introduces an additional identity variable, i.e., *regional* identity. Based on the responses to this question, A. Maurits van der Veen believes that due to the lack of European identity,

12 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2016/major-changes-in-european-public-opinion-2016/report/en-report-exploratory-study-201611.pdf> Nancy, Jacques „ *Major changes in European public opinion regarding the European Union* “ EPRS, November 2016

13 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2019/closer-to-the-citizens-closer-to-the-ballot/results-annex/en-parlemeter-2019-results-annex.pdf> Eurobarometer Survey 91.1 of the European Parliament

14 http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/typo3/site/fileadmin/BookSeries/Volume_One_Schmitt,_Hermann_European_Elections_after_Eastern_Enlargement,_Connex,_2007,_p._511

or at least the lack of stronger identification, there can be a decline in the progress with the European integration itself. "The part of the EU citizens who feel primary or even secondary as Europeans is obviously a minority [through a comparative analysis of national and regional identity], although the most important conclusion from the analysis is that the sense of a European identity is a prominent factor in creating a collective or individual support for the EU integration process."¹⁵

The previous observations are confirmed by an indirect analysis of the identity affinity in Europe. The degree of political identification measured by democratic participation, from which the legitimacy of the institutions derives later, as relative acceptability of the democratic majority, at the European level it can be seen through the turnout in the European Parliament elections. "The average turnout in the European Parliament elections is 10-15% lower than in the elections to the national parliaments, which suggests a lower legitimacy of popular sovereignty at EU level"¹⁶, i.e., "the high degree of voting abstention (from 61% in 1979 to under 50% in 1999 elections) indicates a high degree of indifference or negative perception of the EU, which as rarely before makes the EU unpopular and/or irrelevant to the needs of its citizens".¹⁷ In the 2004 elections, the turnout is 45%, in 2009 and 2013 it is 43%, and a certain increase is recorded in 2019 when the turnout is 51%¹⁸. Although in 2019 there is a slight increase in turnout compared to the very low turnout in the previous three election cycles, it is still lower than the elections for national parliaments, except in cases of mandatory voting or overlapping with national election cycles. That is why, to increase turnout, the authors of the study on increasing participation in the European Parliament elections propose mandatory voting and overlapping election cycles.¹⁹ Although the development of the European communities is perceived as European salvation for the nation-state or "the salvation of Europe from Europe because of the possibility for a declension of the European societies, the question remains whether politics can be practiced without a presumed collective identity?"²⁰

Identity and democratic participation

It is the cause-and-effect relationship between identity and participation in democratic processes that gives rise to the greatest challenges the future expansion of the

¹⁵ <http://isanet.ccit.arizona.edu/noarchive/vanderveen.html> van der Veen, A. Maurits „Determinants Of European Identity: A Preliminary Investigation Using Eurobarometer Data“, 2002

¹⁶ Weale Albert and Nentwich, Michael, 2009, p. 21

¹⁷ Shore, Cris, 2000, p. 19

¹⁸ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/turnout/> EU election results, turnout by year

¹⁹ <https://reconnect-europe.eu/blog/participation-in-european-parliament-elections-is-it-all-about-timing/> Briatte, François, Kelbel, Camille and Navarro, Julien „Participation in European Parliament Elections: Is It All About Timing?“Reconnect, May 2020

²⁰ Delanty, Gerard “Handbook of Contemporary European Social Theory” London:Routledge, 2006, pp. 286 and 299

integration process may face, not only because of “the lack of European identity but also because of the continuity of the national identity’s firm existence”²¹.

From a positive point of view, supranational institutions encourage the creation of a European identity. Nevertheless, *Jack Citrin* and *John Sides* believe that “even if national leaders are prepared for greater integration, there is no guarantee that a federation at a European level can be accepted in the foreseeable future”²². These views are primarily due to the lack of legitimacy, given that one cannot expect trust and support for the institutions and the unification process itself if there is widespread skepticism about their authority and credibility in decision-making caused by the democratic deficit. This further raises the question of the implications for the level of quality of democracy at the supranational level, given that the democratic rule of majority authority gained in elections cannot be fully implemented without a sufficiently high level of legitimacy. “The main challenge for the Union in the future is not whether the degree of integration will be in tandem with the democratization process within the European Union itself, but how to legitimize that democracy.”²³

The construction of a European identity is a lengthy process, which presupposes the creation of community consistency, primarily through cultural identification. In most nations, economic and political unification often involved “state coercion and draconian state-building techniques. The very process of identity formation requires above all *a high degree of cultural homogeneity*, which is achieved through a common language, uniform media, and educational system. The European *vocation federale* is not a guaranteed process, because it depends on the ability of the European administration to gain democratic legitimacy to govern, which is a prerequisite for the ability to create *a European public*.”²⁴ In this context, the question arises of transposing certain political processes that participate in the identity formation from national to European level in an attempt to strengthen legitimacy, but according to Weil and Netwich, this may again create difficulties in legitimizing such decisions. Although “there may be European citizens, the unification process has failed to create an integrated community with a common identity.”²⁵

From the previous analysis, it can be summed up that Europe has not yet built a strong distinctive identity formation that can match the national identity. Thus, the loyalty given to the supranational idea is still unstable and causes a decrease in the perception of trust in Europe in cases of crises, especially after the economic turbulence like the last one.

21 <http://mondediplo.com/1999/06/05thiesse> „Le monde diplomatique” ANNE-MARIE THIESSE, 1999

22 Hermann, Margaret G, 2004, p. 69

23 Chrysochoou, Dimitris N. „Theorizing European Integration” London:Routledge, 2009, pp. 132-133

24 Shore, Cris, 2000, pp. 19-21 and 64

25 <http://www.jhubci.it/ecpr-riga/virtualpaperroom/080.pdf> Memoli, Vincenzo “The Development of European Citizens: When Integration is Not Enough” 2008, p. 10

This presupposes that the durability and consistency of the European unification process, in addition to the initial economic benefits, requires a strong political identity that will generate a surplus in democratic participation, as a foundation of the legitimacy of the European institutions.

Creating a European identity

The problem of the correlation between identity and legitimacy has been anticipated since the late 1980s, when the administration drafted a project *to give a soul to Europe*, introduced by Delors in 1992, and which, among other things, partly appeals to traditional spiritual values. However, Delors project is not the first perception that anticipates the need to create a European political identity. According to *Bo Stråth*, Europe as an entity “is not a stable, sovereign and autonomous object, but exists only in the form of a contest for power in the historical relations between states, while as a concept it was extended in the seventies.”²⁶ However, the dilemma remains whether it is only the mutual antagonism that defines Europe, although the conclusion is correct if we observe the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, the creation of historical Europe should still be sought a little further in time. For the purposes of the Commission, *Henri Janne* prepared a study presented in 1973, which is the European administration’s first synchronized attempt to detect the historical roots of European cohesion, to strengthen the sense of common belonging among the member states. That was the period in which, after several crises of the 1960s, it became clear that economic integration alone, set apart from other socio-economic relations, would not be able to spontaneously create unity among the population of the member states, according to Monet’s presumed integration framework. *Samuel Huntington* believes that “economic associations presuppose cooperation, but it can only be successful and strengthened if it is based on trust deriving from shared values and culture.”²⁷

Jane’s report says, among other things

“...Are there original European values and what causes the current [at the time of the analysis] reexamination of the European cultural system? ...This culture is founded on a moral philosophy based on religion and renewed by rationalism. Europe [EEC] was created as a “marriage out of necessity”, but a much-needed necessity, if this part of humanity wants to continue to exist as a valid civilization... European unity existed in the past founded on Latin and Christianity, and communal

²⁶ Stråth, Bo „*The Meaning of Europe*“ Oxford: Berg, 2000, pp. 7 and 11

²⁷ Huntington Samuel, “*Сукоб Цивилизација*” Београд: ЦИД, 2000, p. 130-131

and feudal structures... The European culture should open up to the world in promoting its diversity."²⁸

Although according to the previous text, the issue with the lack of distinct European identity has been correctly detected, it is still obvious that the instruments that were later used in that direction were not enough to seriously change the public perception towards Europeanization of collective identities. Regarding the evaluation of the attempts to promote the European spirit, *Gerard Delanty* believes that through the more distinct European symbolism, the promotion of the European values gains intensity, but *Richard Bellamy* and *Dario Castiglione* perceive the intensification of the European identity as a "shallow symbolism in an attempt at self-promotion because it is purposeless to celebrate Europe for its own sake, without emphasizing the common national and cultural values and features."²⁹ The reason for not promoting the distinctive European national, and cultural, and social values is, perhaps, precisely in the policy of openness and diversity where the attempts to exclude Europe in relation to the others are suppressed. This is seemingly politically correct and in the spirit of the proclaimed cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism on a wider global scale, but throughout history, European cosmopolitanism has generally been confined to the borders of Europe. The European identity in itself acts as a paradoxical project, which, "on the one hand, should ensure solidarity among members and overcome nationalism, but on the other hand, the very creation of one's *own* identity requires the definition of the *other*."³⁰ The need for a balance of the relations between the EU and the member states at the internal level, and the EU and other countries at the external level, cause reservedness and indecisiveness in the projections for future action towards European identity formation, which create a contradiction in the attempt to create an identity that requires distancing from the *other*, against the promotion of *multicultural* values that are in themselves inclusive, and encompass the *other* from whom one should distance oneself. The policy of balance between the nation and Europe is present through the decisions of the European administration for the integrated promotion of multi-identity features, such as a compatible European and national citizenship. The reason is "the need to create legitimacy at European level, which must, at the same time, ensure the representation of national identities due to uncertainty that if they are suppressed, it will provoke a reaction and negatively affect the integration process itself".³¹ These policies that promote multiple parts of a multilayered collective identity that complement each other cannot adversely affect any of the layers, but on the other hand, can neither intensify the affection for one of those layers, in this case – the European. On the other hand, the attempt to balance complex identities

28 <http://aei.pitt.edu/5588/1/5588.pdf> Henri Janne, "For a Community policy on education" *Bulletin of the European Communities Supplement* 10/73, p. 17

29 <http://www.freewebs.com/ovsiste/nationa%20state%20beyond.pdf> Bellamy, Richard и Castiglione, Dario „*Building The Union: The Nature Of Sovereignty In The Political Architecture Of Europe*" *Law and Philosophy* 16, 1997, p. 439

30 <http://est.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/5/4/387> Stråth, Bo 2002; 5; 387, p. 398

31 Banchoff, Thomas F. и Smith, Mitchell P. „*Legitimacy and the European Union: the contested polity*" London:Routledge, 1999, p. 164

is further enhanced by the promotion of global multiculturalism that includes non-indigenous identities that originate outside Europe but are present through immigration. If in the first case, the promotion of indigenous European national identities is still necessary, what is the reason for the equal treatment of the imported minority identities, especially since, in this way, because it is impossible to define the *other* or the *others*, any construction of a distinct European identity becomes impossible? At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the failure of coexistence through multicultural interaction with non-indigenous cultures in previously compact social communities at a local and national level was confirmed by the political elites themselves.³²

In the process of creating nations that are continuously the most intense collective identity formation, “the state as a sovereign entity had created a political identity equal to the dominant cultural identification, and, therefore, multiculturalism was reduced to the margins of society”.³³ Given that a parallel can be drawn between the desired European and the existing national identity, the need to define a European dominant cultural identity is obvious, which can only arise from the majority. Of course, previously, it is necessary to define European values that will determine cultural superiority. It is, therefore, necessary to promote characteristics of collective identity as values that on the one hand will set the boundaries of inclusion, but on the other hand, they need to be variable and cover a spectrum that will be wider than the national collective socio-cultural specifics. In other words, the promotion of multicultural values should be limited to the range of contents specific only to a wider European region. This would encourage transnational cohesion between member states, but at the same time, those same values would be authentic and apply only to Europe. This will create an integrative matrix for the member states, which, at the same time, will be monocultural for the others, and will create distance from *others* that are not Europe, as a precondition for intensive identity formation. According to Delanty, “if there is no European *self*, the *other* cannot be defined, but there must be a way to be European without being opposed to the primary loyalty to national and regional identity”.³⁴ The only question is, what is the corpus of social and cultural values that would be autochthonously European and would not collide with other collective identity constructs?

32 http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20101018_germany_and_failure_multiculturalism In late 2010, In late 2021, German Chancellor Angela Merkel made a statement that multiculturalism was an absolute failure, followed by similar statements by the French president and the British prime minister.

33 Delanty, Gerard “Community” London:Routledge, 2003, p. 73

34 Delanty, Gerard in Rumford, Chris, 2005, pp. 69 and 76

Perceptions of future development

The preamble to the Lisbon Treaty states³⁵: *inspiration is drawn from the cultural, religious, and humanistic heritage of Europe, from which the universal values of inviolable and inalienable human rights have developed...*

After the debate over whether to include *God* in the preamble, this reference was changed³⁶, but with the mention of religious heritage, his role was finally accepted, i.e., the influence of Christian values and traditions as an attractive force for European integration, which has inspired European ideas of unity for centuries.

Christian symbolism can also be found in the official motto of the European Union – *unity through diversity (In varietate Concordia)*, which, according to Delanty, lacks philosophical depth, but it is still acceptable in the absence of other consensual definitions of Europe. Among other explanations, this motto can be defined as “*diversity arising from unity*, as a unity arising from the historical heritage of the Greco-Roman culture and Christianity, and whose idea is that there is a foundation of unity, and diversity is not an obstacle to its realization”³⁷, asserted by Christian and imperial unity. Even before the creation of the European Union, there was a tendency to identify the future community with Christian values and principles. Namely, given that “spiritual values promote an ethical state, Christian principles must be an integral part of the structure of the new union.”³⁸

In his vision of a united Europe, Konrad Adenauer believes that the main goal of unification should be “the preservation of the Christian tradition and the promotion of its values, opposed to nationalism and other forms of radicalism, thus creating a strong link between Christian and European unity. Therefore, the directions for the future development of a united Europe lead through the intensive promotion of Christian principles in public policies.”³⁹ However, although Christian values and symbolism are present in the European Union, they are generally promoted as part of a broader interpretation, which causes loss of the tradition and the specifics of their European significance necessary in constructing identity, as they are constantly insisted on gaining global civic context. Saint Simon, under the impression of the medieval *res publica Christiana*, also proposes its substitution through a secular model of “restoring European

35 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12007L%2FTXT> Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007

36 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49614233_References_to_God_and_the_Christian_Tradition_in_the_Treaty_Establishing_a_Constitution_for_Europe_An_Examination_of_the_Background Barbulescu, Iordan Gheorghe and Andreescu, Gabriel “References to God and the Christian Tradition in the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe: An Examination of the Background” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* Vol. 8(24), December 2009 pp. 208-209

37 Delanty, Gerard и Rumford, Chris, 2005, p. 56

38 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2144397> <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2144397> Haas, Ernst B. „The United States of Europe” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 4, 1948, p. 540

39 Perkins, Mary Anne „Christendom and European identity: the legacy of a grand narrative since 1789” Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2004, p 107

unity by replacing religious beliefs with the policies of liberalism, and, consequently, the church institutions with those of the parliamentary democracy."⁴⁰

However, despite the fulfillment of these preconditions in a contemporary context, the prospects for the attempt to create a new *European* civil religion, exclusively through civic symbolism, to impose it on the *national* consciousness, are small. The inability to integrate the tradition of the previous universal values of Christianity into the creation of a new identity is the fundamental contradiction in the attempt to replace one nation with an identity saturated with tradition and emotions, with another, which from an emotional point of view is an empty frame without content or *un objet politique non-identifié*. This excludes the possibility of more serious success in the voluntary replacement of the dominant national *civil religion* with another European one, given that the values that are promoted appeal primarily to the one that should be suppressed, as evidenced by the priority of the national identity consciousness even after half a century of Europe.

Therefore, perhaps, the only way to construct an original European identity formation is to connect directly with the Christian tradition as the only strong stimulus that is compatible with the *nation*, but, at the same time, transcends national borders in Europe. It would be a relevant attempt to create a new comprehensive European political identity that would coexist with, but, over time, take away the primacy of national identity as a precondition for creating a legitimate European political entity.

According to *Mary Anne Perkins* and *Golo Mann*, "the idea of a Europe, a state and a nation are mutually compatible and interdependent, given that in medieval *Christianitas*, the diversity of communities that owed their constituency to the natural law and the divine providence, was accepted and affirmed. Local patriotism was in line with the broader cosmopolitanism of *Respublica Christiana*, as was the case with nineteenth-century thinkers in terms of liberal nationalism and the cosmopolitan ideal."⁴¹

The very conclusion about the differences between the respective communities in the Middle Ages, as before, but also after, is indisputable. It is also indisputable that these differences emerged as a result of language, climatic conditions, prevalence, local tradition, and symbolism that are accepted as features of both the modern national idea and its denominators. However, these character traits are also distinctive as features of certain regional and local divisions to a lesser (but also larger) extent in the nation-states themselves, and yet, they are regions but not nations, although some of them have tried and succeeded in transforming themselves, as a result of the recomposing of the regional into a national idea, and solely because of the failure to impose a competitive national form.

⁴⁰ Pagden Anthony, *"The idea of Europe"*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 22

⁴¹ Perkins, Mary Anne, 2004, p. 189

Identities can coexist, but if we draw a parallel between modern and medieval forms of identity in medieval cosmopolitanism, Christianity was the dominant identity matrix in which communities were included, which, with all their peculiarities, were a secondary identity form. On the other hand, the primary identity in the modern state is the national one, which partially absorbs the regional one as an inferior identity. Therefore, previously the question was not whether there are certain characteristics specific to a particular identity because both individual and collective definitions accept multi-identity forms, but what are the characteristics of identity that define belonging to the primary organized political structure, i.e., the dominant political entity.

Perkins also abstracted the primary identity by noting that “every nation wants to promote itself as a defender of European culture synthesized from the classical and Christian heritage”, but then goes on to say that “the balance between the ideal of the *national* and *European spirit* has become too complex to be sustainable. With the partial invocation of the *Respublica Christiana*'s ideal, extreme nationalism is gaining widespread popularity, while building its authority on the premises of religious tradition, making patriotism *a matter of faith*⁴². By misinterpreting and distorting its essence, the Christian narrative has been placed at the service of the nation, as one of its most exploited propaganda tools. National identity with the use of religious mythology has become the antithesis of *Christianitas*, which was previously a continuous source of European identity. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the nation's *civil religion* largely absorbed and partialized traditional cosmopolitan Christian values, and turned them into national Christian values. What was left of Christian European cosmopolitanism was completely marginalized. Europe's identity has become an insignificant form in the shadow of its nations. The question is whether this process can be reversible so that Christian values absorbed in national identities can serve as a basis for a new European identity formation?

* * *

Concerning the challenges of the European identity as a collective construct and its impact on the future development of the EU as a European political entity, several possible alternatives to the European integration process can be singled out.

The first is a strong centralized European Union, for which there is obviously no support from the member states, given that any more serious attempt in that direction fails, as was the case with the European constitution.

42 *Ibid*, стр.190

The second alternative is for the Union to remain within the current definition as an undefined structure, i.e., something between an organization and a separate political entity. However, even in this case, due to the inferior European identity that delegitimizes the supranational institutions, any more serious challenge, such as the recent economic crisis, can seriously shake the foundations of the EU and the integration can take a reversible direction.

The third option is the coexistence of national and European identity in a related compatible structure that will create a “marble cake” model in the new identity structure, and thus legitimize European political institutions. In this way, integration can be intensified without feeling that nation-states are threatened. One of the possibilities for creating a compact set of emotions, feelings, and values that can achieve this effect is Christian cosmopolitanism, demonstrated through “the organic theory which assumes harmony between the individual and the society with a positive attitude towards the political organization as a necessity to complement human nature.”⁴³

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SHORT BIOGRAPHIES



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FUTURE OF THE BALKANS IN THE TIME OF INTEGRATION AND GLOBALIZATION – DANGERS AND CHALLENGES OF CONTEMPORARY TIMES

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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The context of divisions, East - West

A number of authors have written on the topic of divisions between the East and the West, or respectively, the Orient vs Occident, presenting such divisions as if they are mainly taking place between two systems of values. These divisions are cultural, and even more religious and historical. The most vocal proponent of such divisions is Edward W. Said who says that the Orient is the spirit which has been created by the Occidentalists, and this division is grounded on the way of thinking along ontological and epistemological differences¹.

Kulenovic, by recalling Preston, suggests that the idea of superiority of the western man has not been born all of a sudden. The idea of superiority and supremacy of the colonial man has its own evolution. In his view, during the early period of trade exchanges between European and other non-European peoples, the Muslims were observed as exotic, but culturally equal. During the renaissance period, as the trade further expanded, the non-Europeans began to stand for innocence, therefore the term the *wild noblemen*. As colonialism was spreading during the nineteenth century, so the perception of them being wild and uncivilized started to equally change².

John M. Hobson, on the other hand, maintains that the divisions between the East and the West gained momentum after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453. To support this claim, he points to the cylindrical map projected by the geographer Gerardus Mercator in 1569 in which there is an obvious unequal representation, given that the southern hemisphere is twice the size of the northern one, while the map shows quite the opposite, two-thirds covering the northern as opposed to the one-third covering the southern hemisphere³.

Our interest, however, is not in analyzing the divisions between the East and the West, but rather of scrutinizing the position of the Balkans, which geographically is spreading along these imaginary division lines. To this end, we shall refer to the observations made by Maria Todorova, who presents her views in her book „Imaging the Balkans“.

1 Edward W. Said, "Orientalism", translation into Albanian, "Orientalizmi", (2009), Logos-A, Skopje, page.. 24-25

2 Tarik, Kulenovic,(2012), translation into Albanian, "Islami politik – Konceptet themelore, autorët dhe grupet e një lëvizjeje moderne", Logos A, Skopje page 124, Preston (2002:138).

3 John M. Hobson, "The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization"(2013) Cambridge University Press, translation into Albanian, "Origjinat lindore të qytetërimit Perëndimorë" (2018) Logos -A, Skopje, page. 23.

Where is the Balkans' place in the division East -West?

By analyzing the specificities of the peoples who abide in these regions, Todorova, in her book, is trying to find a single corner which belongs neither to the East nor to the West, but which rather belongs to both, more or less, a corner that would be much more authentic and unique, and in that perspective, she sees the Balkans as neither a transit zone for civilizations nor a crossroad at which they clash. This book may serve as a good reference for Balkanologists and the „Balkanization⁴“, and not only for that. According to her, the reference to the Balkan Peninsula was first made by Filippo Buonakorsi Kalimako in 1490 who used the term „Balkan,“ in his memoirs of the Pope Innocenti VIII. Namely, he used the name „Balkan,“ in reference to the mountain that was known as “quem incolae Bolchanum vocant” In 1577, the German priest Solomon Shvajger in one book printed in 1608 used the name Balkan referring to the mountain which during antiquity was known as Hemus, although the local population knew it by the name Komonica. In the beginning, the name was used only for the mountain that was spreading from Timok to the Red Sea in a total length of 555 km, while in 1808 August Cojnei assigned this name to designate the entire peninsula. Some other etymologists trace the origin of this word in the Turkish word “mud” by adding the suffix „an,“ in the sense of it implying decreasing⁵.

If reading more carefully Todorova's book one may get the impression that for those dealing with geography, history and philosophy the term Balkan implies various forms and meanings, depending on the external and the internal factors. It is often perceived as the genesis of modern Europe, as the Orient stuck in the Occident, as Europe which has been left behind, and much more often as an ambiguity or anomaly. Throughout different periods of history, its borders have been defined differently, sometimes as geographical borders, whereas at times as cultural and religious ones. Also, the name varies, from Central European to South-Eastern Europe, but most of the time it remains the Balkans.⁶. And perhaps the most important thing to notice is that it has always been perceived as a synonym to “something different from us, the Westerners”.

Predrag Simic, reminds that the name Balkan has been given by the German geographer August Zeune in his attempt to use the awkward expression of that time referring to the „European part of Turkey,“ or „Turkey in Europe,“. Thus, within a great deal of history recorded, from the borders of ancient Rome to the Iron Curtain of the 19th century, the Balkans was the border between empires, religions, civilizations, at which peoples were often clashing by assuming the role of defenders of these borders. The consequences of

4 The term „balkanization,“ traces its origin back to the beginning of the 19th century, when it was adopted in the lexicological terminology, to designate in its most basic sense „Division of one or more areas into smaller political territories, often hostile to each other,“.

5 Maria Todorova, “Imaging the Balkans”, Oxford University Press, përkythyer shqip, “Ballkani imagjinar”,(2013), Tiranë, Botimet IDK, faq. 43-49

6 Ibid, page, 50-62 .

such imperialist wars include, among others, the great migrations of peoples which had led to ethnic redistribution of population, and consequently, redistribution of various religious and cultural traditions, making thus this region appear as a "leopard skin". The various religious and cultural influences have resulted with mixing the Catholic and the Orthodox Christians with Islam devotees. The point made by Simic may be discerned the best when analyzing the data from the table below with regard to the ethnic compositions of the Western Balkan countries. See the Table1.

The main question seeking answer is why the Balkan states have remained heterogeneous by their national compositions, knowing that in the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century they had been engaged in a permanent conflict, which had subsequently given rise to the term "Balkanization" as a synonym of such divisions and mutual hostilities. A part of the answer was offered by Simic himself, who further added that the fight for independence and national renewal in the beginning of the 19th century had thrust the Balkan nations, in the light of their aspirations for national states, into conflict.

Speaking of nations and national states, we need to recall Anthony D. Smit's suggestion that the national identity of peoples during the various periods of history had had own rises and falls, and depending on the historical context, they may be divided into pre-modern „nations⁸„, or respectively primordial ones, such as the Egyptian, the Israeli (Judaism) and the Armenian. The historical „nations„ are the British and the French, which emerged as a consequence of the 100 year war. Nations which are considered modern and which emerge as a result of nationalism are the German and the Italian (1870-1871)⁹. The group of modern nations also includes those which emerged after the World War I as an antipode to communism. To this division we also add the nations which were promoted under the conditions of feudalism and the millet system of the Ottoman Empire, such as the Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian and the Romanian. They are not the result of industrialism or urbanism as was the case with the western part of Europe, which had resulted with the division of labour and the creation of the modern secular man of Gellner¹⁰ as a precondition for replacing the traditional religion with the „new religion"¹¹, or respectively the nation. Predrag Simic avers that as a result of the interference by the big powers, they had been prevented to delineate ethnic borders and set up hegemony over some of them in the region. This is the reason why, the author believes, the Balkans

7 Predrag Simic, "Do the Balkans exist?", The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001.

8 The term „nations„ is put in inverted commas because they don't belong to the term nation which is in use today.

9 More about categorization, pls see Anthony D. Smith, "The antiquity of Nations", translation in Macedonian, "Origin of nations„ (2016) ARS studio, page. 4-13 and Rizvan Sulejmani, "Shqiptaria Miti&Filozofia"(2020), Interlingua, page.. 123

10 Ernest Gellner (1994), "Conditions of Liberty: Civil society and its rivals", translation in Macedonian (2003), "Услови за слобода: Цивилно општество и неговите противници„, Современa Mislja, Magor, Skopje, page. 45.

11 Rizvan Sulejmani, "Shqiptaria Miti&Filozofia"(2020), Interlingua, page. 123

has acquired the epithet “the powder keg” in the 19th century, which even nowadays is still being a source of stereotypes being made in reference to it.

Overview of the national composition of the population in the countries from the region									
National composition of the population in Republic of North Macedonia									
total	Macedonians	Albanians	Turks	Roma	Serbs	Vlachs	Bosniaks	Other	
2 022 547	1 297 981	509 083	77 959	53 879	35 939	9 695	17 018	20 993	
National composition of the population in Republic of Serbia									
Total ¹²	Serbs	Albanians	Bosniaks	Montenegrins	Vlachs	Magyars	Macedonians	Croats	Other
7186862	5988150	5809	145278	38527	35330	253899	22755	57900	
National Composition of the Population in the Republic of Montenegro									
Total ¹³	Montenegrins	Serbs	Bosniaks	Albanians	Croats	Muslims	Roma	Other	
516590	278865	178110	53605	30439	6021	20537	6251		
National Composition of the Population in the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina									
Total ¹⁴	Bosniaks	Croats	Serbs	Undeclared	Other	Unknown			
3531159	1769592	544780	1086733	27055	96539	6460			
National Composition of the Population in the Republic of Albania									
Total ¹⁵	Greeks ¹⁶	Macedonians	Vlachs	Roma	Undeclared	Undetermined	Montenegrins	Other	
2,876,591	24.243	5.512	8.266	8.301	390938	44144	366	3368	
National Composition of the Population in the Republic of Kosovo									
Total ¹⁷	Serbs ¹⁸	Turks	Bosniaks	Roma	Ashkali	Egyptians	Gorani	Other/ Undeclared	
1739825	25532	18738	27533	8824	15436	11524	10265	3264	

Table 1. Overview of the national composition of the countries from the region

The fact that during the 19th century as many as seven wars were being waged in the Balkans: namely, the First and the Second Balkan War, the World War I, the Turkish - Greek War, the World War II, the Civil War in Greece, and the last one following the disintegration of former Yugoslavia in 1990s, is the main argument supporting the claim that there is a curse looming over the peoples of this part of Europe¹⁹. Furthermore, it is indisputable that the most common reason behind these wars was the establishment of nation-states, whose borders were supposed to coincide with the ethnic borders of the peoples in these areas.

¹² Census 2011, Source, Burimi: <https://www.stat.gov.rs/sr-Latn/oblasti/popis/popis-2011/popisni-podaci-eksel-tabele>-State Statistical Office.

¹³ Census 2011, izvor. <https://www.monstat.org/cg/page.php?id=534&pageid=322>, Statistical Office MONSTAT

¹⁴ REZULTATI POPISA, Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u Bosni i Hercegovini 2013, Source, <https://www.popis.gov.ba/popis2013/knjige.php?id=0..>

¹⁵ Census 2011, Source: www.instat.gov.al/al/census/census-2011/te-dhenat-e-census2011.aspx

¹⁶ A part of the data on the smaller ethnic communities has been taken from the 2014 Ombudsman Report on Minority Rights, which it had taken from INSTAT.

¹⁷ Regjistrimi i Popullsisë, Ekonomive Familjare dhe Banesave në Kosovë, 2011 REZULTATET PËRFUNDIMTARE TË DHËNAT KRYESORE, i realizuar nga Istat, CIRPS- Universiteti i Romës Sapienza, ICON-INSTITUT dhe Rrota Burimi, <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/2074/te-dhenat-kryesore.pdf>

¹⁸ The data from 2011, including the Census of the Population 2011, are included in the assessment on the northern part of Kosovo.

¹⁹ Predrag Simic, “Do the Balkans exist?”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chailot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001.

Where are the borders of the Balkans today?

According to Predrag Simic, who, by recalling a strategic document entitled „The Balkans and its European Obligations”,²⁰ suggests that if we get back a bit to the late 1980s and the early 1990s, we should be able to see that the European Community had not been developing any special policy towards the South-Western Europe; whereas, opposed to this, it had been employing policies customized to address, in particular, the Central and the Eastern European countries. In the author’s view, a part of the political elites of Western Europe maintained that the European borders should overlay the „Carolingian Europe”, and this is the reason why the assistance has been mainly directed towards the so called Visegrad states. Consequently, the divergences created between the Central and Eastern Europe on the one, and the South-Eastern Europe on the other hand, had widened up. Thus, South-Eastern Europe has remained marginalized. Europe’s enlargement towards the Eastern countries is leaving the countries from the South-East into a much larger margin which, according to him, has led to „Europe, de facto, dividing the region on its left side, through the promotion of multilateral cooperation, from the region and its respective states at the right side”,²¹.

The arising question is, if this is a tendency of divisions and gradations, or more precisely, if this region still continues to be divided on the basis of the new accession criteria set for those aspiring for European Union membership? The answer to this question may be found in the 2003 Thessaloniki Declaration and its latest addition broadly known as the 2020 EU reinforced membership criteria.

Under the Thessaloniki Declaration produced by the European Commission, the countries which are aspiring for the EU membership and which, in their estimate, stand this aspiration in perspective, are called the Western Balkan countries. The document lists the countries that comprise this group, including Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, North Macedonia²², Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia²³. Following Croatia’s full-fledged EU membership (2013), in the latest 2020 document entitled, “Enhancing the accession process – A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans” the old criteria, with certain adjustments, will continue to apply for Serbia and Montenegro, whereas Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina and North Macedonia shall be subject to assessment based on the new criteria.

20 Bertelsmann, “The Balkans and New European Responsibilities”, strategy paper presented to the special meeting of The Club of Three and the Balkans, 29-30, June 2000, Brussels.

21 The same document point 17, page 3-4. Quoted by Predrag Simic, “Do the Balkans exist?”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001., page 29.

22 North Macedonia, in the document it is named Macedonia as at that time the name of the country was still not changed.

23 Kosovo is not in the list as at that time the status of Kosovo was still not being determined as independent Republic of Kosovo.

The official explanation is that the two countries which shall continue under the old criteria have already commenced the negotiations, unlike the remaining ones. Notwithstanding, we can't but notice one characteristic which seems to be a common denominator for the countries that will be assessed by the new rules, and that is these countries either have as a majority, or as a significant part of their population, citizens belonging to Islamic confession. It is none of our intentions to claim that this may have had impact on the above decision, but, it anyhow leaves a bad impression as it is likely to correlate to the fact that the Balkan borders are acquiring a new dimension in which the religious belonging is an element that cannot be disregarded.

Another, even more striking example, is the case with the Republic of North Macedonia which, in addition to the general accession criteria is obtaining new ones imposed by the neighboring countries. Such was the case with the name change, imposed by neighboring Greece, while at the moment we are facing new criteria being imposed by neighboring Bulgaria in relation to the language and history. By silently tolerating such commitments, the European Union is taking the risk of becoming a part of the scenario in which the drawing of the Balkan borders will be guided by the hegemonic tendencies of countries that have such pretensions. It would be even more frightening if such tendencies got legalized, and if, at the end, only Macedonia remained to be the Balkans and a faithful guardian of the term "balkanization". Thus, the once "peace oasis" might be turning into the apple of discord pushing the whole region into destabilization and war. Optimism is the motive driving us ahead to persevere, while pessimism makes us cautious. In our estimate, the given prognostication, in this case, is made from the point of view of a real optimist.

The new challenges of the Balkans in the time of integration and globalization

Those countries of the region which are not part of the European Union are no longer referred to as by the EU South-Eastern Europe, but have instead acquired a new name, namely the Western Balkans. As of the extent up to which these countries are considered to be „European or non-European,, this is something that is based on their relation and status with the EU and NATO. Today, they are assessed as "more European" or "less European" in relation to their EU and NATO membership. A part of the countries which are presently regarded as belonging to the Western Balkans are NATO members, while in regard to their European integration, they have either started the accession negotiations or are at the stage of preparing for it. There are such states, like Bosnia and Hercegovina and Kosovo, which represent a kind of a soft protectorate, since their protection from external risks is guaranteed by NATO. The most powerful country in the Western Balkans, Serbia, is running the negotiations with the EU, but it has no intention of becoming a NATO member since it considers itself to be neutral, despite of it proceeding with a



permanent armament more than that is the case in the East, in a similar way in which Russia is doing the same in relation to the West.

Such undefined position is keeping them in a latent uncertainty, which by itself implies risk and danger. The greatest risk for these countries is how to sustain their peace, especially in conditions of unequal status which they have in regard to these two organizations, given that the overall concept of the stability of the region was based on „demilitarization„ of the countries through their entry under the security umbrella of NATO and through their economic and social recovery ensured through the EU integration. With Serbia being set aside from this concept, following its refusal to become a NATO member, and with its doors being permanently open towards Russia, notwithstanding that formally it has started the negotiations with the EU, the aforementioned concept of regional security is put at stake. This issue is becoming even more topical when considering the fact that the countries are completely asymmetrical in view of their military and security forces, but also in terms of their economic and human potentials, as may be discerned from the data provided in Table 2.

Asymmetry of the Balkan countries			
Name of the country	Population2017	GDP \$ / 2017	% of GDP allocations for the army /2017
Macedonia	2.078.453	5350.4	1.0%
Albania	2.873.457	4868.1	1.2%
Bosnia and Hercegovina	3.507.017	5561.2	0.9
Bulgaria	7.075.991	8311.9	1.5
Montenegro	622.471	7812.9	1.7
Serbia	7.022.268	5992.2	1.98%
Turkey	8.0745.020	14933.2	2.17
Greece	10.760.421	23027.4	2.5
Kosovo	1.830.700	4068.2	0.78%
Croatia	4.125.700	15219.8	1.44%

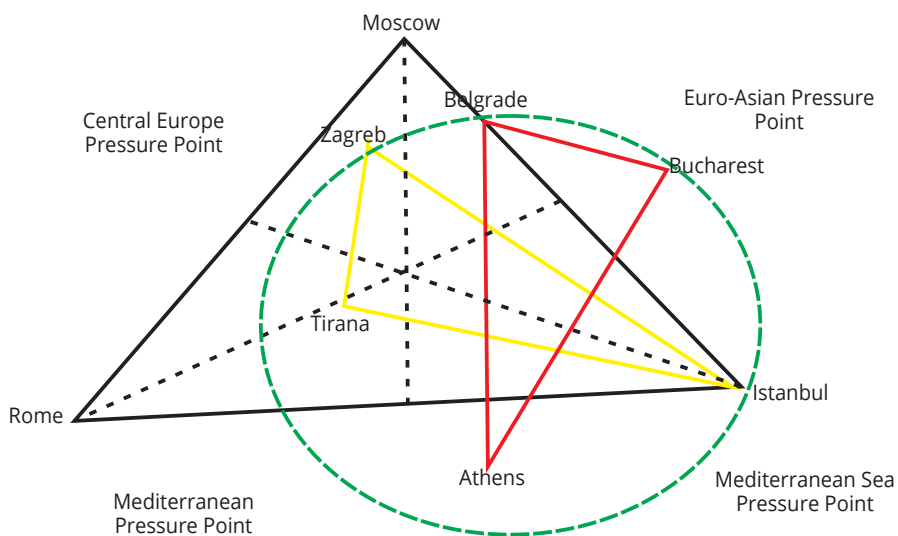
Table 2. Asymmetry of the Balkan countries

The second challenge facing these countries is how to be able to handle the external centers of power which have the tendency to fill in the gap created as a result of the different status that the countries are having in relation to these two powerful organizations, EU and NATO respectively, and furthermore, how to handle their small capacity for resolving mutual problems.

The influence from external centers of power may be seen through the sketch drawn up by S.A. Giannakos, in the book “Ethnic Conflict, Religion, Identity and Politics”²⁴, who analyzes the reasons behind the conflicts in the Balkan and the term „balkanization,,.

The sketch shows two triangles with pressure points, one that is more stable, Belgrade, Bucharest, Athens, against the second one which is more unstable Zagreb, Tirana, Istanbul. Above this triangle the author has added a new triangle, marking the religious centers which have their own influence in the region, namely Rome, Moscow, Istanbul.

If we analyze the data from the Table 2 and the sketch 1, we may conclude that maintaining the stability in the region within the present circumstances, when we face another enemy never seen before, is adding further complexity to the situation. These days while I’m writing this text, there is a huge battle for influence being waged by these power centers, but also by some countries from the Western Balkans who attempt to take advantage of the common danger posed through the pandemic. The jobs that are life-saving within the current “to be or not to be” circumstances, are used as powerful weapons in a broader context, and especially in this region, with the objective of restoring for the respective countries their lost positions.



Sketch 1. Presentation of the points of influence in the Balkan according to S.A. Giannakos²⁵

²⁴ S.A. Giannakos, “Ethnic Conflict, Religion, Identity and Politics”, (2002) Ohio University Press, përkthimi shqip, “Konflikti etnik – Religjioni, Identiteti dhe Politika”.

²⁵ In the sketch, the author of the text had added to the original sketch the triangle presenting the power of influence from the religious centers.

The assistance provided by the power centers, such as EU, but also Russia, China and Turkey, under the veil of humanism, apart from their good intentions, may be very easily turned into hidden weapon for exerting soft influence. The narrow circle of countries which have the tendency of exerting such influence include Serbia and Albania, which are giving out free jabs, the first one to Macedonia, Bosnia and Montenegro, whereas the second one to Kosovo. It is obvious that the hegemonic ambitions are still being very much alive and kicking. In such circumstances, amidst the present halt in the process of integration, the smaller countries, such as Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Bosnia and Hercegovina, may become an easy prey to these centers. As of whether these countries will remain to play on the „balance of fear“²⁶ card, as Professor Frckovski was using as a reference to the politics of the Republic of Macedonia prior to 2001, remains to be seen.

In view of the data presented above, but also in view of the historical development of the term Balkans and “balkanization”, we shall try to make the summary of this paper, which may serve the purpose of the paper conclusions.

Summary

In an attempt to give our conclusive view of the perspective of the Balkans, and the peoples of this region in the time of integration and the challenges of globalization, we will analyze two points of view, one by Ismail Kadare and the other by Maria Todorova.

The first one is by Ismail Kadare, the most renowned Albanian writer, who says:

“The peoples of the Balkans are standing at the gates of Europe, but still, they cannot hide the impression marks that the Ottoman Empire had imprinted on their body and consciousness. They feel nostalgia for Europe, but along this feeling there also lie their irritation and anger: irritation for their own mistakes which they are unwilling to admit, and anger because their mother continent has been oblivious to them for so long.”

(translation made by the author)

In this author's opinion, the future of the Balkans depends on two factors: first, on the peoples who live here, and second, on Europe, or more precisely on Atlantic Europe. The author offers further explanation by saying that when considering the destiny for both sides, understanding and misunderstanding become fundamental factors for their developments that is something for which both sides take their own responsibility. It is fashionable to say that the Balkans is not understandable for Europe, something that

²⁶ Ljubomir Frckovski, “Macedonia and the Region”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001, page. 38

²⁷ Ismail Kadare, “The Balkans: truths and untruths”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001.

even the Balkan peoples are claiming as a fact, the author suggests. He further adds that they make this claim with a certain dose of regret, though behind this special sentiment they still uphold their claim „*We are unpredictable, enigmatic, and no one can even guess what we think,*“ while flirting with capricious pride.²⁸

The second, more optimistic view, is the one of Maria Todorova, who suggests:

“People and gods meet or come across over bridges or crossroads. In the Balkans, they unite in one complex process of contact-conflict, which makes them different from the ideal type of religious doctrines and ideologies. During the development of human civilizations, the Balkans should not be seen as a transit zone, but rather a space where people overcome the contradictions of God and gods. This is the high price of the life paid by many generations, and it requires revision of the basic ideological principles revealed through the metaphorical ethics above the bridge, the crossroads and the strategies heaving in sight „²⁹

Our standpoint is that the words, „... and it requires revision of the basic ideological principles revealed through the metaphorical ethics above the bridge, the crossroads...“, are offering the answer to the question, “which is the main test facing the peoples of the Balkans in time of globalization and new challenges?”.

The nations from this region should try to denounce the burden which they have been unjustly imposed on to carry in the sense of this region being a transit zone or bridge for civilizations, and they should instead take the stance implying “The Balkan is the center of civilizations, rather than the place in which they intersect and clash. Here they merge, they communicate with each other and they find solutions. Even less should they feel remorse for belonging to a certain zone of Europe which, during a certain period of its history, had been a part of an Empire where modernization had arrived late, as Kadare suggests.

They are capable of overcoming the differences between the „little gods,“ who promote partial ethics and ideologies, because they believe in a single God or Allah, and anything else but this truth, which is related to certain historical contexts when the single truth was revealed through actors which history had brought up to the surface, is lateral and meaningless.

Peoples and nations develop within a certain historical context which determines the way in which they aspire to rise. The respective circumstances depend as much on their decisions as they are a product of the cosmological forces in which they do not partake. This process in the Balkans had had its own course, in which both the dark and the bright

²⁸ Ismaj Kadare, “The Balkans: truths and untruths”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001, page.5.

²⁹ Georgieva, “Kohra i bogove”, 41, quoted by Maria Todorova, “Imaging the Balkans”, Oxford University Press, translation in Albanian, “Ballkanin imagjinar”,(2013), Tiranë, Botimet IDK, fq. 94.

side were noticeable. It is the task of this generation to now unveil the bright side of history when the peoples from these areas lived in the past in full peace and harmony, with no mentors and tutors.

Presently, the Balkans should avoid by all means and purposes to serve as a line, a line of divisions between civilizations, religions and cultures, and should instead be guided by the merit it has been endowed with through its geography and history, and that is to be the center of unification.

First it needs to recognize this role, and then it should seek to develop a new strategy, a new philosophy, for the new human of the globalization, the human who would be ready to bring together not only the East and the West, but also the South and the North.

We believe that by taking only such position in the time of integration and globalization, the Balkans will be able not only to overcome more easily the contemporary challenges, but also to open up the way for a brighter future.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY



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THE GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN RESOLVING MULTICULTURAL ISSUES IN REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN AND REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

POLITICAL THOUGHT

62

Introduction

In the last decade of the twentieth century, when the political transition in Eastern Europe began, more precisely within the USSR and SFRY, the countries of the Balkans and the Caucasus in their attempts for independence attracted the world's attention with ethnic conflicts. What makes the countries of these two regions similar are their multicultural societies and geopolitical attractiveness. While the Balkans are a crossroads and a key road point between West and East, the Caucasus, as a land bridge between the Black and Caspian Seas, is a source of energy resources and a key passage for their transport to the West. Such characteristics, as much as they are an advantage for the geopolitically attractive states, are also a target of the great powers' influence. On the other hand, as much as multiculturalism is a wealth for a society, it can also be a starting point for the outbreak of conflicts, a weak point that the great powers can use to achieve their geopolitical interests. For the purposes of this research an analysis of Republic of Azerbaijan from the Caucasus and Republic of North Macedonia from the Balkans has been made¹. What makes these two countries similar besides their geopolitically attractive regions is their multicultural societies and the involvement of the international community² in finding a solution to the ethnic conflicts³ (the 2001 conflict in Macedonia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan). The aim of the research is to find out: what are the results and the role of the international community in resolving multicultural issues, i.e. in resolving the ethnic conflicts that have gripped the two countries; and whether geopolitical factors (such as location or possession of energy resources in conflict-affected countries) have an impact on finding lasting solutions.

Brief overview of the constitution of the states of Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of North Macedonia

If we start from Skopje and travel to Baku, we have to travel 2946 km by road, passing through the territory of Bulgaria (European Union), Turkey (Eurasian member of NATO) and Georgia (pro-European Eurasian country). This vast area, to which both Republic of North Macedonia and Republic of Azerbaijan belong, is part of the Balkan and Caspian region, which have always aroused the interests of others. Azerbaijan is geographically

1 In the analysis and comparison of the two countries, the author uses the abbreviation Macedonia when referring to the Republic of North Macedonia (except where it is otherwise explained) and the abbreviation Azerbaijan when referring to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

2 The international community in this paper refers to several institutions, their representatives and countries, i.e.: European Union, NATO, UN, OSCE, USA, Minsk Group.

3 According to the definition of Britannica: ethnic conflict is a conflict in which the objectives of at least one party are defined in ethnic terms. In other words, when the conflict, its antecedents and possible solutions are perceived along ethnic lines. The conflict is usually not about ethnic differences themselves but over political, economic, social, cultural, or territorial matters. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. (20.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethnic-conflict>

located in the southern part of the Caucasus, on an area of 86,600 km² and borders Armenia, Georgia, Iran, Russia, Turkey and the waters of the Caspian Sea. Its state borders include the exclave Nakhchivan, an autonomous republic, and the Nagorno-Karabakh region, that until 1991 had autonomous status. The history of Azerbaijan⁴ is closely linked to the history of its neighbors in the South Caucasus region, first under Persian rule, only to be gradually conquered and become part of the Russian imperial empire. The first Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was constituted in 1918 (which lasted 23 months, until the Russian invasion in April 1920), while its first Constitution was adopted in 1921 within the Soviet Union. With the beginning of the collapse of the USSR in October 1991, the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan will adopt the constitutional act of independence, and in 1995 the constitution of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan will be adopted. Similar to the case of Azerbaijan, the territory of today's Republic of North Macedonia (which covers an area of 25,430 km² and borders Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania and Kosovo) as part of the geographical region of Macedonia⁵, first falls within the Ottoman Empire, then it became a constituent part of Serbia (with Treaty of Bucharest from 1913) and later constituent part of the Yugoslav federation (1944), and finally in 1991 was constituted as an independent and sovereign state.

Unlike Azerbaijan, which after the collapse of the Russian Empire was constituted as a state, and then became part of the Soviet Federation, the territory of Macedonia⁶, in the process of disintegration of the Ottoman Empire was subject to agreements for its

4 Gabriele Natalizia, Daniele Pommier Vincelli (a cura di), *Azerbaijan, una lunga storia*, Passigli Editori, 2012, Firenze, (04.02.2021) Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264542999_Azerbaijan_Una_lunga_storia

5 The use of the term Macedonia within the Ottoman Empire refers to the geographical region of Macedonia, an Ottoman province that was administratively divided into three vilayets: Thessaloniki, Kosovo (Skopje) and Bitola. In the book *The politics of terror*, Duncan M. Perry, writes that any attempt to determine the borders of Macedonia, even today, is fruitless, and in that context he roughly says that Macedonia is a territory located between Shar Mountain and the Osogovo mountains to the north, the Pind mountain range, the Bistrica River and the Aegean Sea to the south, the Mesta River and the Rhodopes to the east, and the Albanian mountains to the west. He explains that the territory within the Ottoman Empire was divided into three territorial provinces (vilayets), and that at the end of the 19th century the core of ancient Macedonia was again called Macedonia. Namely, in the era of Alexander the Great, Macedonia was considered an area that included today's Macedonia, Thrace, Kosovo, Albania and some other territories. *Duncan M. Perry, The politics of terror, Macedonian liberation movements 1893-1903*, Skopje, Magor, 2001, p.13. During the Byzantine rule, the territory of Macedonia was divided into three themes (provinces) called New Epirus (present-day eastern Albania), Macedonia Salutaris (former Dardania and present-day Republic of Macedonia) and the main part of Macedonia (present-day Aegean Macedonia). John Shea, *Македонија и Грција, битката за дефинирање нова балканска нација*, Скопје, Макавеј, 2002, p.60.

6 The term Macedonia is mentioned in certain bilateral and multilateral agreements concluded in the period from the second half of the 19th century until the Balkan Wars from 1912-1913. See: Михајло Миноски (редакција и коментари) *Македонија во билатералните и мултилатералните договори на балканските држави 1861-1913, документи*. Архив на Македонија, Филозофски факултет, Матица македонска;

division.⁷ Its territory, which will finally be liberated by the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, is divided among its neighbors (in 1913⁸), and on the geographical part that will then belong to Serbia, later in 1944 a Democratic Federal Macedonia is constituted.⁹ Its first constitution was adopted in 1946 as the constitution of the People's Republic of Macedonia, within the Yugoslav federation, while the last constitution was adopted in 1991, when it was constituted as the independent and sovereign Republic of Macedonia.

After the independence and declaration of autonomy, the two countries attracted worldwide attention: Macedonia due to its peaceful withdrawal from the federation (which was not the case with the other members) and the subsequent difficulties over international recognition under its constitutional name; Azerbaijan after the conflict that took place on the territory of Nagorno Karabakh, still inflamed from time to time, due to its not fully resolved status¹⁰. In the context of Macedonia's *peaceful exit* and the successful avoidance of conflict during the break-up of the Yugoslav federation, writer Predrag Matvejevic will state: *Gligorov is living proof that the war in Yugoslavia could have been avoided. That we could have separated without bloodshed ... Macedonia is looking for its place in a changed world. It does so with preserved dignity. It avoided war, which was almost impossible to avoid there. Got rid of enemies that were much stronger. People with good will respect and love that Macedonia*¹¹. Namely, the success of the avoided war is evidenced

7 With the formation of the Balkan Alliance, through negotiations between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, joined by Montenegro, it was agreed to liberate the European part of Turkey, whereas the Treaty of Friendly Cooperation between Bulgaria and Serbia dated 13 March 1912 also contained a Secret Annex for the division of the territory of Macedonia. (See: Art. 2 of the Secret Annex to the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the Kingdom of Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbia, (Sofia, 29 April /13 March 1912) in: Александар Христов, Јован Донеv, *Македонија во меѓународните договори 1875-1919*, Архив на Македонија, Матица Македонска, Скопје, 1994, p.165), while Greece on 13 (26) October 1912, proposed to start negotiations on future borders with Bulgaria and expressed interest in the Macedonian cities of Kavala, Drama, Serres, Thessaloniki, Florina and Bitola. (Јан Рихлик, Мирослав Коуба, *Историја на Македонија*, Македонска Реч, Скопје, 2009, p.181). On September 17, 1912, the Balkan allies issued an ultimatum to the Turkish government, requesting, on the basis of Art. 23 of the Berlin Agreement, autonomy for the Christian areas. After this request was rejected, the Balkan allies declared a state of war, between them and the High Porte. After the victories, in November in London, in the presence of the superpowers, peace negotiations began, and the agreement was signed as late as May 17 (30) 1913. (See: Doc. 31 London Peace Agreement in: Александар Христов, Јован Донеv, *Op.Cit.*, pp. 176-179), with which Turkey renounces all territories west of the Midia-Enos line and the islands in the Aegean Sea. Only two days after the signing of this agreement, Serbia and Greece conclude a secret agreement, by which they agree not to allow Bulgaria to rule the territory west of the Vardar River, marking the border between their countries on the territory of Macedonia. (Art. 3 of the Treaty of Alliance between the Kingdom of Greece and the Kingdom of Serbia, Thessaloniki 19 May /1 June 1913, see in: Александар Христов, Јован Донеv, *Op.Cit.*, p.183).

8 In June 1913, the Second Balkan War broke out between Bulgaria on the one hand and its former Balkan allies Serbia, Greece and Montenegro (joined by Romania and Turkey). The war ended with a truce in July of the same year, and on July 28 (August 10) the Peace Treaty was signed in Bucharest, dividing the territory of Macedonia between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia (Doc.33 Peace Treaty between the Kingdom of Serbia, Kingdom of Greece, The Kingdom of Romania and the Kingdom of Montenegro on the one hand and the Kingdom of Bulgaria on the other, Bucharest, 28 July /10 August 1913).

9 On August 2, 1944, the First Session of ASNOM was held, at which with the Decision for proclamation of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the People's Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM), ASNOM was constituted in the supreme, legislative and executive representative body of Macedonia and the Macedonian state. The Macedonian state is constituted as an equal federal unit within the newly formed Democratic Federal Yugoslavia. *Acts of the first session of ASNOM, Parliamentary Institute of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia*, (24.06.2021). Retrieved from <https://www.sobranie.mk/>

10 The term "unresolved status" in this paper refers to the Win-Win agreement reached, which offers an acceptable solution for both parties, i.e. results that both parties are satisfied with, and which could be assumed to end the conflict.

11 *From the travel through Macedonia, "Gligorov is a living proof that the war in Yugoslavia could have been avoided"* Excerpts from the book by Predrag Matvejevic, "Borders and destinies" (1), 17.03.2015, MKD, (16.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/od-patot-po-makedonija-gligorov-e-zhiv-dokaz-deka-deka-vojnata-vo-jugoslavija-mozheshe-da>

by the Mediterranean Peace Prize¹², awarded to President Kiro Gligorov in 1998 by the Mediterranean Laboratory Foundation. It can most certainly be said that the skill of avoiding conflict was due to his proposal: if there is peaceful withdrawal from Macedonia, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) can take all its weapons, and by the end of April 1992 allow the return of all soldiers from Macedonia who served in the JNA to their country¹³. This proposal was made in 1992 during a meeting with Deputy Federal Secretary of Defense General Adzic where the manner of withdrawal of the JNA from the territory of Macedonia was being agreed. Following the agreement, the weapons were withdrawn, the last JNA soldier left Macedonia on March 27, 1992, and at the end of the same year, in order to protect the country's borders, Gligorov sent a request to the UN President for the presence of peacekeepers in Macedonia. With the Resolution 795¹⁴ a peacekeeping mission was established to monitor the northern and western border of Macedonia and it will remain until 1997, when it will be replaced by NATO. With such actions, avoiding bloody conflict, maintaining peace when leaving the federation, Kiro Gligorov gave his country the epithet "oasis of peace", a term often used by analysts and politicians in describing the situation in the first decade of the Macedonian state's independence¹⁵. In this context of the "oasis of peace" I would mention the view of the American analyst Greg Schulte who later elaborating on the genesis of the 2001 conflict, said that until recently Macedonia was pointed out as a model of democracy and ethnic harmony in the Balkans, but later that picture changed significantly with the outbreak of violence in 2001¹⁶.

This period, although relatively calm compared to the situation in the other former Yugoslav republics, was not at all easy considering: Greece's dissatisfaction with

- 12** On January 5, 1998, in Naples, Italy, Kiro Gligorov was awarded the Mediterranean Peace Prize by the Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo for his actions in preventing a tragedy experienced by similar European regimes. With this award, among other things, he is recognized for his courage in terms of affirming leading ideas that did not coincide with the policies of the time and through which he managed to set Macedonia as an example. *Premio Mediterraneo di Pace 1998 a Kiro Gligorov*, 5 gennaio 1998, Fondazione Laboratorio Mediterraneo (16.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.fondazionemediterraneo.org/index.php/comunicati-stampa/20153?id=313>
- 13** Киро Глигоров, *Македонија е се што имаме*, ТРИ, Скопје, 2000, стр.187-190
- 14** Resolution 795, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 11 December 1992, UNSCR, (16.06.2021) Retrieved from <http://unsr.com/en/resolutions/795>
- 15** Cit: "Prior to the 2001 armed conflict, it was known as the "oasis of peace", largely because everyone needed at least one peaceful actor and an alleged success in the regional nightmare. "The very fact that there was no violence and hostility was highly commended - primarily because this 'achievement' was incredible compared to all other cases in the region", Biljana Vankovska, *The role of the Ohrid Framework agreement and the peace process in Macedonia*, Stefano Bianchini et al (eds.), Regional Cooperation, Peace Enforcement, and the Role of the Treaties in the Balkans, 2007, (16.06.2021) Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/1267906/The_role_of_the_Ohrid_framework_agreement_and_the_peace_process_in_Macedonia
- Cit:** "While Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and even Kosovo endured calamity, Macedonian officials boasted of their "oasis of peace". Western diplomats pointed to Macedonia as a success story. Preventive diplomacy was matched by a UN conflict prevention force, with a few thousand Scandinavian soldiers and a few hundred US rangers, to prevent the conflict from "spilling over". It seemed to work". Blerim Shala, *Fyrom: Removing the causes of war*, (BCR N. 272 17 -Aug.-2001), Blerim Shala is editor-in-chief of the Pristina-based daily *Zeri*. (18.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/former-yugoslav-republic-macedonia/fyrom-removing-causes-war>
- Cit:** Macedonia's brush with disaster has been a sobering experience, shattering the casual optimism that had earlier characterized the attitudes of the Macedonian regarding their country's security, stability and economic prospects. Indeed, during the first decade of their country's independence, Macedonians of all ethnicities were probably complacent about the dangers lurking beneath the surface. In part, the lavish praise of foreigners, who variously described Macedonia as an "oasis of peace", a "multiethnic miracle" and the "only former Yugoslav republic whose sovereignty did not bear the scars of an armed conflict", contributed to this false sense of security. The 2001 crisis brought both Macedonians and their leaders back to reality with a bump. Nano Ruzin, *looking forward to a Balkan Big Mac*, (18.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue2/english/special.html>
- 16** Сашо Вељановски, *Геополитиката на САД во конфликтите на Балканот (1990-2001)*, Балкански форум за безбедност, Скопје, 2007, p. 157

Macedonia's recognition despite the positive assessment received by the Arbitration Commission (also known as the Badinter commission) within the framework of the European Community Declaration on Yugoslavia¹⁷. The name dispute with Greece will lead to a Greek trade embargo¹⁸, delayed recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations with the EU¹⁹, as well as a veto set by Greece on Macedonia's entry into NATO (at the 2008 Bucharest Summit)²⁰. Internally, international attention was also drawn to the armed conflict that took place in 2001²¹, preceded by a series of tense situations and events linked to certain open issues related to the demands of the Albanians from Macedonia. Current events and topics from the third decade of Macedonia's independence that have attracted international attention are the events of April 27, 2017 that the Washington Post wrote about²², as well as the denial of the Macedonian language by Bulgaria and its veto of 2020 to start negotiations with the EU²³.

With regard to Azerbaijan, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has attracted international attention in the first year of independence, when the European Conference on Security and Co-operation expressed deep concern over the ongoing escalation of the armed conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and discussed how to end the conflict, bearing in mind the implications of its spread for regional and international security.²⁴ Three decades later, this region is still in conflict and a topic of the international community. The last armed clashes took place in the autumn of 2020, where Turkey openly supported Azerbaijan, Russia demanded a ceasefire, while Iran, Georgia and Qatar offered mediation²⁵. That this region is still in the spotlight is evidenced by the latest financial

17 *Conference on Yugoslavia Arbitration Commission, Opinion on question arising from the dissolution of Yugoslavia*, (18.06.2021) Retrieved from https://www.pf.uni-lj.si/media/skrk_mnenja.badinterjeve.arbitrazne.komisije.1_10.pdf

18 *Во Фебруари 1994 година Грција воведува целосно трговско ембарго кон Македонија*, Македонска Нација, 03 ноември 2010, (18.06.2021) Retrieved from <http://www.mn.mk/aktuelno/2855-Vo-fevruari-1994-godina-Grcija-vovede-celosno-trgovsko-embar-go-kon-Makedonija>

19 Due to Greece's opposition to the Republic of Macedonia being recognized under its constitutional name, the process of international recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations with the EU was delayed. The full diplomatic relations between the Republic of Macedonia and the EU were established in December 1995, when the mission of the Republic of Macedonia in the EU was opened. *Меѓународна соработка, Република Македонија на патот кон ЕУ*, Собрание на РСМ (18.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.sobranie.mk/r-makedonija-na-pat-kon-eu.nsp.x>

20 We recognise the hard work and the commitment demonstrated by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to NATO values and Alliance operations. We commend them for their efforts to build a multi-ethnic society. Within the framework of the UN, many actors have worked hard to resolve the name issue, but the Alliance has noted with regret that these talks have not produced a successful outcome. Therefore we agreed that an invitation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will be extended as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue has been reached. We encourage the negotiations to be resumed without delay and expect them to be concluded as soon as possible. *Bucharest Summit Declaration, 03 April 2008*, NATO, (18.06.2021) Retrieved from https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

21 *Macedonia: Country Background and recent conflict*, Congressional Research Service, Novembre 7, 2001- March 28,2002 (19.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL30900.html>

22 Sarah Wilson Sokhey, Danilo Gjukovikj, *This is why the West should pay attention to the drama in Macedonia*, Washington Post, 29 May 2017, (19.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/05/29/this-is-why-the-west-should-pay-attention-to-the-drama-in-macedonia>

23 Branimir Jovanovic, *The EU should resolutely after the Bulgarian veto*, The Vienna Institute for international Economic studies, 15 December 2020, (19.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://wiiw.ac.at/the-eu-should-act-resolutely-after-the-bulgarian-veto-n-476.html>

24 *Summary of Conclusion, Helsinki Additional Meeting of the CSCE Council*, 24 March 1992 (19.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/9/29121.pdf>

25 Laurence Broers, *Armenia - Azerbaijan conflict: Why Caucasus flare-up risks wider war*, 30 September 2020. VWC News, (19.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54356336>

support of an additional 10 million euros that the European Union has earmarked for those affected by the conflict.²⁶

From the above brief presentation it is evident that in both cases the international community is involved in solving certain problems, and to compare their involvement, diligence and geopolitical interest, this paper reviews the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the armed conflict in Macedonia in 2001. Common to these two conflicts, in addition to their ethnic nature, is the international involvement.

For the purposes of this research, in continuation a brief overview of the multicultural reality and legal protection in both countries is given.

Comparison of multiculturalism and constitutional protection in Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of North Macedonia

If we take into account the ethnic, religious and linguistic affiliation of the population living in Azerbaijan and Macedonia, we can safely say that both are multicultural societies. According to the latest data from the beginning of 2020, the total population of Azerbaijan is 10,067,100, and according to ethnicity 91.6% are Azerbaijanis, 2% are Lezgis, 1.3% are Russians, and the same percentage are Armenians and Talysh, while the rest of 2.4% are from other ethnicities, such as Avars (0.6%), Turks (0.4%), then Tatars, Tats and Ukrainians (0.3% each), Sakhurs, Georgians, Jews, Kurds (0.1% each), Kryzs, Udins (0.04% each), 0.2% are Khynalgy and 0.10% are of other ethnicities²⁷. The languages used in this country belong to the Turkic family of language, North Caucasian languages, the Slavic and Iranian languages of the Indo-European language family, as well as the Kartvelian language family²⁸. According to CIA data from 2009²⁹, 92.5% of the population speaks Azerbaijani, 1.4% Russian, 1.4% Armenian and 4.7% speak other languages, while in terms of religion 96.6% of the population is Muslim (Shiite), 3% are Christians, less than 0.1% belong to other religions, and an equal percentage do not associate with any religion. Although the figures show that the majority of the population is Azerbaijani (91.6%) with a Muslim religion (96.6%), the existence of other ethnic minorities who speak a language

26 Nagorno Karabakh conflict: EU allocates additional 10 million euro to support those affected, European Commission, 17 May 2020 (19.06.2021) Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_2462

27 Statistical Yearbook of Azerbaijan 2020, The state statistical committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, (04.02.2021) Retrieved from https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/?lang=en

28 The Azerbaijani language belongs to the Turkish language family; Lezgian is spoken by the Lezgians, and falls into the category of vulnerable languages (according to the UNESCO classification). The Avar language belongs to the Northeast Caucasian family of languages and is spoken in northwestern Azerbaijan and Dagestan, while the Talysh language is a language of Iranian origin. In the group of endangered languages according to UNESCO, which also belong to the north-eastern Caucasus family of languages are: Budukh language and Kryts (Krizki) language (which are samuri languages), Khinalug language, Cek language and Udi language. In addition to these, other endangered languages are the Juhuri language, also known as Judeo-Tat, which belongs to the Indo-European languages and is closely related to Persian, then Rutul, Tsakhur and Tat, which are of Iranian origin. *The minority languages in Azerbaijan*, Worldatlas (18.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-azerbaijan.html>

29 *The world Factbook, country Azerbaijan*, CIA, (04.02.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/azerbaijan/>

other than the official one and belong to other religious communities characterizes Azerbaijani society as multicultural.

In the case of Macedonia we have the following situation: according to data from the census held in 2002³⁰ of a total population of 2,022,547 inhabitants, 64.18% declared themselves as Macedonians, 25.17% as Albanians, 3.85% as Turks, 2,66% as Roma, 1.78% as Serbs, 0.84% as Bosniaks, 0.48% as Vlachs and 1.04% members of other ethnic communities. In terms of religion, 64.78% of the total population is Orthodox Christians, 33.33% Muslims, 0.35% Catholics, 0.03% Protestants, while 1.52% of the population has identified with another religion or in general has not been identified on religious grounds. Regarding the mother tongue of the population, the Macedonian language is the mother tongue of 66.49% of the population, the Albanian language of 25.12%, the Turkish language of 3.55%, the Romani language of 1.9%, the Serbian language of 1,22%, Bosnian language of 0.42%, Vlach language of 0.34%, while 0.95% of the population uses another language as mother tongue.

In both cases the multicultural reality is visible and it is a solid basis for the establishment, promotion and development of multicultural societies, i.e. policies for their consolidation. Starting from the fact that both cases had ethnic conflict, the following will be an analysis of the constitutional provisions (from 1991 in the case of Macedonia, and from 1995 in the case of Azerbaijan), in order to see to what extent, does the highest legal act provide protection and promotion of this multiculturalism and in this context, whether it is the cause of the conflict.

The first chapter of the Constitution of Azerbaijan³¹, titled "People's power" contains provisions that determine the source of power, sovereignty, the right to represent the people and its unity. Hence, according to the first article entitled "Source of Power" as the people of Azerbaijan are considered the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan who live in and out of its territory and who are subordinate to the state and its rights. Article 5 entitled "Unity of the People" stipulates that the people of Azerbaijan should be united and that it is the basis of the state of Azerbaijan, which is the common and indivisible motherland of all its citizens. Article 18 regulates the issue of religious, stating that religion is separate from the state and that all religions are equal before the law. According to the State Committee for Religious Associations of the Republic of Azerbaijan,³² there are 942 registered religious communities in the country, of which 907 are Islamic and 35 are non-Islamic: 24 Christian, 8 Jewish, 1 Chrishna and 2 Bahai. The total number of religious buildings is: 2054 mosques, 14 churches and 7 synagogues.

30 Државен завод за статистика на РМ, Попис на населението, домаќинствата и становите во РМ, 2002 (05.05.2020) <http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziPoslednaPublikacija.aspx?id=54>

31 The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, (04.02.2021) Retrieved from https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/5748/file/Azerbaijan_Const_1995_am2009_en.pdf

32 The State Committee on Religious Associations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, (04.02.2021) Retrieved from http://www.dqdk.gov.az/en/view/pages/306?menu_id=83

Regarding the language issue, Article 21 stipulates that the official language of the Republic of Azerbaijan is the Azerbaijani language, and its development, whereas the guarantee for free use and development of other languages spoken by the population is provided by the Republic. More specifically, Article 45 stipulates that everyone has the right to use their native language and the right to be educated and to carry out creative activity in the language of their choice. Part ten of Article 127 stipulates that the official language of the republic or the language of the majority population in a certain area is used for legal procedures. Article 7 of the Law on Education stipulates that education in educational institutions is held in the official language, but in exceptional cases (international agreements or on the basis of agreements with the executive authorities) at the request of citizens and founders of educational institutions, education may be maintained in other languages abiding by certain standards. Set as it is the constitution of Azerbaijan seems to be in line with the standards for the promotion and protection of religious and linguistic diversity, while the ethnic diversity of the people is unified into the civic principle.

Unlike the Azerbaijani Constitution, which is based on the civil principle, the Preamble and Article 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia from 1991 started from the national principle and determined that: Macedonia is constituted as a national state of the Macedonian people, and that the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet are official in the Republic of Macedonia. In addition, Article 19, which guaranteed the free expression of religion, mentioned only the Macedonian Orthodox Church. With such provisions it is perceived that the constituent people of the state are the ethnic Macedonians, and hence their language and religion are accompanying elements for the identification of the majority of them³³, as well as for the identification of the state itself. However, taking into account the fact that nationalities with other ethnic, linguistic and religious affiliations live in the country, i.e. Albanians, Turks, Roma, Vlachs and other nationalities, the Preamble stipulates that the Republic of Macedonia ensures their full civil equality and permanent coexistence with the Macedonian people and Article 7 stipulates that in addition to the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet in the units of local self-government in which as a majority or as a significant number live the members of the nationalities, their language and alphabet are also in official use. Namely, Article 9 stipulates that the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia are equal in freedoms and rights regardless of gender, race, skin color, social and national origin, political and religious beliefs, property and social status. For all issues of inter-ethnic character within the country, the Constitution guarantees in Article 78 the establishment of a Council for Interethnic Relations with the task of reviewing these issues and giving advice and proposals for their resolution.

³³ The majority of ethnic Macedonians are of Orthodox religion and mother tongue Macedonian, while a small percentage of them are of Muslim faith.

Taking into account the positive assessment that Macedonia received in 1992 by the EU Arbitration Commission for its international recognition, it meant that its constitution, among other things, meets the conditions, and is in harmony with international standards for the protection of minorities³⁴. It should be noted that in addition to the required documents submitted to the Commission, Macedonia had to confirm that it rejects all territorial claims and that using the name Macedonia does not mean a territorial claim towards another country. Namely, from the very beginning of its path as an independent state, Macedonia was faced with disputes by neighboring Greece regarding the name Macedonia and with the objection of the Albanians in Macedonia regarding their status in the country. The international community will be involved in resolving both cases, with the armed conflict, resolved in a few months and the dispute with Greece, lasting more than two decades. On the other hand, Azerbaijan will not go unnoticed in its independence and will attract international attention after the military conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the dispute with the Armenians that has lasted since 1988.

The involvement of the international community in resolving the conflicts in Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of North Macedonia

Azerbaijan will become a member of the United Nations one year after declaring its independence in 1991 and will use it to promote its peace policy regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan started in 1988 within the USSR, but will continue when the Caucasian republics were proclaimed independent and turn into an armed conflict and attract international attention. Nagorno-Karabakh, as part of the Transcaucasian region (with a total area of 4,400 km²), became part of the Russian Empire after the wars with Persia and entered its borders in the mid-1920s. Almost a century later, with the constitution of the first Caucasian republics (in the 1920s), claims to this region were made by both Azerbaijan (due to its territorial ties to the "Turkish-Ottoman brothers") and Armenia (due to the natural border of the geographical unity of Armenia and Armenians)³⁵. The status of this region in the USSR will be resolved with broad autonomy within the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, and stability will last until the beginning of the collapse of the USSR. With the introduction of the Gorbachev Perestroika policy, in February 1988, the authorities of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region of Azerbaijan will submit to the Soviet Supreme Council, a Resolution

³⁴ The set conditions provided for the protection of nationalities to be ensured under the provisions of the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter.

³⁵ In July 1918, the Armenians of this region, based on the right of peoples to self-determination, declared their independence, and after less than two years a conflict broke out between Azerbaijan and Armenia, but would soon be resolved within the USSR. The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party in 1921 will decide to cede the region to the new Republic of Azerbaijan, which is of course granted broad autonomy. *Breve storia del Nagorno-Karabakh tra diritto internazionale e legge del più forte*, 2.11.2020, Filodiritto, Quotidiano di cultura, diritto e società, Bologna, (07.02.2020), Retrieved from <https://www.filodiritto.com/breve-storia-del-nagorno-karabakh-tra-diritto-internazionale-e-legge-del-piu-forte>

on the annexation of the region to the Soviet Republic of Armenia. This Resolution will be rejected by both the Azerbaijani Council and the Supreme Soviet Council, citing Art 78 of the Soviet Constitution of 1977, according to which the federal territory cannot be changed without its approval. Additionally, in accordance with Art. 86, the autonomous regions were granted to and under the jurisdiction of the Soviet republics, meaning that they are a constituent part of them and have no right to secede. The second move to separate the region from Azerbaijan was made in 1991 in accordance with Art. 3 of the Soviet Law on secession from the USSR (from 1990) according to which the peoples of the autonomous communities reserve the right to decide autonomously whether to remain within the USSR and within the secessionist republics, as well as to raise the question of their legal status. Namely, after Azerbaijan adopted the Resolution on Independence on August 30, three days later the Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh declared their independence, but on November 26 the Azerbaijani Parliament abolished its statute of autonomy. Following this act, in December, the authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh held a referendum, in which only the Armenian population voted, and in January they declared the independence of the Republic of Artsakh³⁶. In the next two years military battles will be fought, with the Armenians occupying the entire region and conquering seven more Azerbaijani areas, increasing the territorial area to 7,000 km². The Armenian-Azerbaijani military conflict involving Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities and Azerbaijan will be temporarily frozen in 1994 with the signing of the Bishkek Ceasefire Agreement³⁷ with the hope that a peaceful solution will soon be found for all parties involved. Representatives of Kyrgyzstan, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Russia, which, along with the United States and France, are part of the Minsk Group³⁸ will take part in the signing of the agreement. In the period that followed this group called for non-violation of the ceasefire and proposed the implementation of several strategies³⁹. In 2004, ten years after the signing of the ceasefire, the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh was raised at the "Prague Process" between the leaders of the two countries, without the participation of the Armenian government in Karabakh, and new negotiations were

³⁶ It is not recognized by any member of the UN, nor by Armenia itself. Gabriele Natalizia, Daniele Pommier Vincelli (a cura di), *Op.cit.*, pp.77, 86.

³⁷ For more information on the Bishkek Protocol <https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/310>

This agreement was preceded by the initiative of the UN, whose Security Council in 1993 will adopt 4 resolutions for a ceasefire.

³⁸ The Minsk Group was set up by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which will be in charge of further negotiations to find a lasting solution. <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/108306>

³⁹ The first step-by-step strategy envisaged the military evacuation of Armenians from Azerbaijani parts (with the exception of Karabakh) and their settlement with Azerbaijanis (not accepted by Armenians); followed by a package deal strategy to resolve the status of Nagorno, which was to be defined at the same time as the withdrawal of Armenian forces (it was not accepted by the Azerbaijanis because they considered the right of return of refugees not sufficiently protected); the third mediation proposed a "common state" as a federal state of Azerbaijan (rejected by the Azerbaijanis). Gabriele Natalizia, Daniele Pommier Vincelli (a cura di), *Op.cit.*, p.84

resumed based on the “Principles of Madrid”⁴⁰. In 2016, the conflict flared up again and although it lasted for several days, it took many victims and was reactivated in September 2020 and ended on November 9 of the same year with the signing of a ceasefire. The ceasefire agreement was signed by the presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia and stipulates: end to the conflict; takeover of the occupied territories by Azerbaijan and withdrawal of the Armenians from the occupied Azerbaijani territories; Armenia to guarantee transportation to Nakhchivan and eastern parts of Azerbaijan, while Azerbaijan to provide communication along the Lashin corridor connecting Karabakh and Armenia. Both corridors will be under the supervision of Russian peacekeepers who also have the task to take part in the control of Karabakh for the next five years. The issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh remains unresolved, i.e. the demands of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh for an independent republic are not satisfied.

Unlike the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, what preceded the 2001 conflict in Republic of North Macedonia had a different dynamic. A series of demands made by the Albanians from Macedonia (which to some extent, over the years, were realized through adopted laws and policies), were the reason for the outbreak of the conflict, although there are views that the war was “staged”; that Macedonia was a “victim of crime and terrorist operations”; that the extremists wanted “territorial secession”, or that the conflict was the result of a “spillover effect” from Kosovo, a direct outcome of “NATO aggression against Yugoslavia”⁴¹. The demands were certainly not new, but had a history dating back to the independence referendum and the vote on the first constitution in 1991. Namely, after the adoption of the Decision to announce a Referendum (adopted at the parliamentary session held on August 6, 1991⁴²), the Albanian members of parliament (MPs) did not sign and did not support the Proclamation to call on the people of Macedonia to vote

40 Return of the territories around Nagorno-Karabakh under the control of Azerbaijan; Interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh to guarantee security and self-governance; a corridor connecting Armenia with the NK; future determination of the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will; the right of displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence; and international security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation. If accepted by both sides, it would enable the preparation of a comprehensive solution for future peace, stability and prosperity for both countries and the wider region. This proposal was supported by the Minsk Group and at the G8 meeting in 2007 it received the consent of Azerbaijan, but Armenia did not take a clear position. *Statement by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries*, 10 jynv 2009, (07.02.2021) Retrieved by <https://www.osce.org/mg/51152>.

41 According to an Ethnobarometer report published in 2002, most ethnic Macedonians believed that the 2001 armed conflict was the result of a spill-over effect from Kosovo, while most ethnic Albanians rejected such views, arguing that conditions in the country hinted at such a dramatic escalation of events. In the context of the latter, we can mention Aliti's statement according to which: the armed conflict is a reflection of decades of accumulated dissatisfaction of Albanians with their general position ... which springs from the heart and intimately maybe all Albanians support the NLA and are with it. According to Todor Atanasovski, a retired general, the war was staged and methodically and systematically heated and provoked by many, while professor Shkaric says that terrorism, ethnic guerrilla, mercenaries and external influence (NATO and USA) are visible in the 2001 conflict and that extremists wanted to appropriate part of the territory of the Macedonian state and annex it to Albania or Kosovo. A similar view was shared by Mark Thomson of the International Crisis Group, who said that extremists were not interested in human rights and dialogue, but in territory. On the other hand, the American analyst from the Center for International and Strategic Studies, Bruce Jackson says that Macedonia has been a victim of crime and cross-border criminal and terrorist operations.

See in: Сашо Велјановски, *Op.Cit.*, p. 146, 147, 150, 151, 152

Russia's position on the events at the beginning of the 2001 crisis in Macedonia was that it was a direct outcome of the NATO aggression against Yugoslavia and the subsequent wrong steps taken by the Western countries towards Kosovo.. *Russia calls for Balkans intervention*, *Op.Cit.*, The Guardian, 23 март 2001 (25.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/mar/23/balkans4>

42 The question that the citizens of Macedonia voted on in the referendum, organized on September 8, 1991, was: Are you for a sovereign and independent state of Macedonia, with the right to enter a future union of sovereign states of Yugoslavia?

in the referendum⁴³, and later boycotted the vote on the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia (November 17, 1991), due to the unaccepted “national demands of the PDP”⁴⁴. Of the total population with the right to vote 75.75% (1,132,981 citizens) turn out for the referendum, of those 72.16% voted “for”, while 92 MPs out of 120 voted for the proposed Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia (96 MPs voted for the Decision for promulgation of the Constitution)⁴⁵. One of the main reasons for the boycott, referred to the constitutive element of the state. Namely, although the Constitution of 1991 stipulated that the sovereignty arises from and belongs to the citizen (Article 2), the Preamble of the Constitution stated that Macedonia is constituted as a national state of the Macedonian people providing full civic equality and permanent coexistence of the Macedonian people with Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia, in order to ensure, among other things, peace and coexistence of the Macedonian people with the nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia. This content of the Preamble was in a way a reflection of what was previously adopted by the LVI Amendment of 1989⁴⁶ (when the Socialist Republic of Macedonia was still part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) amending the Preamble of the 1974 Constitution⁴⁷ with which in fact the Albanian and the Turkish nationalities⁴⁸ lost their constitutive status in the country.

The 1991 Preamble did not even mention Serbs, who represented about 2%⁴⁹ perhaps because they were one of the constituent peoples in the Yugoslav federation and were now to be listed as nationalities⁵⁰. In the course of the procedure for the adoption of the new constitution, the Albanian MPs also demanded rights related to education, official

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- 43 Дејан Маролов, Оливер Митев, *Создавање на независна Република Македонија, внатрешни состојби и надворешни политики*, Универзитет Гоце Делчев-Штип, 2016, стр.82-83
- 44 From the interview of Ismet Ramadani, MP of PDP in the first composition of the multi-party Assembly, with Sakamadakazam.mk, “If they had listened to the PDP in 1991, there would have been no conflict over a framework agreement,” said Ismet Ramadani. “ Sakamadakazam.mk (21.06.2021) Retrieved by <https://sdk.mk/index.php/neraskazhani-prikazni/daja-slushaa-pdp-vo-1991-nemashe-da-ima-konflikt-zarankoven-dogovor-veli-ismet-ramadani/>
- 45 Shorthand notes from the 26th session of the Assembly held on 17.11.1991, Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje November 1991, (21.06.2021) Retrieved by <https://sobranie.mk/WBStorage/Files/26sed17noem91god.pdf>
- 46 Amendment LVI: 1. Amendment LVI: 1. The Socialist Republic of Macedonia is a national state of the Macedonian people, based on the sovereignty of the people and the government and self-government of the working class and all working people, and a socialist self-governing democratic community of working people and citizens, the Macedonian people and equal to it members of other nations and nationalities living in it; 2. This amendment deletes the words: “and state of. the Albanian and Turkish nationalities, in it” in line 2 of paragraph 1 of the preamble; paragraph 1 of Article 1 is replaced; Article 2 is repealed; the words: “members of other nations” are added in Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitution of the SRM. Amendment to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, No. 29 of July 26, 1989 (June 21, 2021) Retrieved by <https://www.sivesnik.com.mk/Issues/245BBB86D1354148B0725DC74D5D893A.pdf>
- 47 Constitution of SRM from 25.02.1974, Official Gazette of SRM, no. 7, year XXX, 25.02.1974, (21.06.2020) Retrieved from <http://www.sivesnik.com.mk/Issues/0AF2E0456C964935B7705FB5BF6F31F9.pdf>
- 48 In a segment of science nationality refers to the kind or degree of development of an ethnic community that lies between a “nation” and a “people.” With the constitutional changes in Yugoslavia, “nationality” came to be referred to as “national minorities”, so that the word “nationality” gained almost exclusively the meaning of status, while the belonging to a nation or people the term “nationality” was used. Иван Тошевски, *Нација или Нација?*, МИ-АН, Скопје, 2003, Стр.136
- 49 According to 1981 statistics, Serbs represent 2.3% of the population, while according to statistics from the disputed 1991 census, their percentage has decreased minimally to 2.1%.
- 50 On this issue in 1993, the government signed an agreement with representatives of the Democratic Party of Serbs, pledging to guarantee their constitutional recognition and the granting of greater language rights and access to the media. On the other hand, the political representatives of this party undertook to oppose any action against the Macedonian state. Alice Ackermann, *Making peace prevail, preventing violent conflict in Macedonia*, Syracuse University press, 2000, p. 87

use of the Albanian language and its alphabet, national and religious symbols, adequate national participation of Albanians in exercising power, consocial resolution of issues of interethnic relations and others⁵¹. Dissatisfaction with the unfulfilled demands was later manifested through an illegal referendum (initiated by the PDP and NDP on 11 January 1992) on the political and territorial autonomy of the Albanians in Macedonia⁵² and the threat of a repeated boycott of the 1994 census, after the failure in 1991⁵³. The next move, also declared unconstitutional and illegal, was the opening of the University of Mala Rechica with Albanian language of instruction. Although from 1993/1994 the Government provided 10% of the state quota for enrollment in the universities, the Albanians insisted on a state university (and self-initiated the one in Mala Rechica⁵⁴), which according to the then leader of the Party for Democratic Prosperity of Albanians, Arben Xhaferi: was important for promoting the development of the culture of Albanians in Macedonia⁵⁵. Contrary to his position, the Macedonian political representatives considered that the institution would be a cultural and linguistic barrier that could lead to ghettoization of the Albanian nationality in relation to the other citizens of Macedonia⁵⁶. The opening of the university followed the rejection by the Government of the request to establish a university in Albanian (December 12, 1994), but although it was closed, it

51 Мирјана Малеска, *Етнички Конфликт и прилагодувањето*, Култура, Скопје, 1997, p.90

52 The question that Albanians were to vote on in this referendum was: "Are you in favor of political and territorial autonomy of the Albanians in Macedonia?" Ризван Сулџемани, *Консоцијална демократија поделба на моќта во Македонија*, in *Поделба на Влада и спроведување на Охридскиот Рамковен Договор*, Фондација Фридрих Еберт, Скопје, 2008, p.198 (23.06.2020) Retrieved from <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/skopje/06358.pdf>

The Parliament will assess this referendum as unconstitutional and without grounds to produce legal actions, but despite this decision, in April of the same year the Albanians will declare the formation of an autonomous republic of Ilirida. Regarding the idea of Ilirida, Ismet Ramadani, MP and member of the PDP leadership, commented that: the Albanians in that period needed some political capital in the sense that if someone decides to unite with another republic, the Albanians should have that capital, that is, the freely expressed will, that we do not belong there (referring to the second part of the question which was part of the referendum of 08.09.91 "with the right to unite with another"). He explains that: "the atmosphere at that time was that, whatever happens, the Albanians will not accept to be in a common state with that Yugoslavia where the Milosevic regime dominated." If he had listened to the PDP in 1991, there would have been no conflict over a framework agreement, says Ismet Ramadani. Сакамдакажам.мк, Оп.Сит.

53 The main reasons for this behavior of Albanians are related to certain provisions of the Law on Citizenship (subsequently explained in the text), due to the claim that they will be intentionally shown as less and due to the disagreement of the majority of the Assembly on the use of national languages in the census in municipalities where they are in majority, or in a significant numbers. From the notes of Victor Friedman, the 1991 census was conducted from 1 to 15 April (within the SFRY) but was boycotted by all Albanians in Yugoslavia, and most of the Albanians in Macedonia led by the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) and the smaller but louder radical People's Democratic Party (NDP), which claimed they would be deliberately portrayed as less. Regarding the 1994 census, at a meeting between members of the Expert Group and PDP members, Aliti, who later became chairman of the PDP, noted that the census had a political dimension and if he and his party openly called for support for the census, they would be deleted from the political map, so what his party can do most is promise not to call for a boycott, but will not seek support for the census. Aliti made it clear that he understood the situation and wanted the census to be successful, but also said he saw no point in the radicals ruining his political career. Victor Friedman, *Observing the Observers: Language, Ethnicity, and Power in the 1994 Macedonian Census and Beyond*. Toward Comprehensive Peace in Southeastern Europe: Conflict Prevention in the South Balkans, ed. by Barnett Rubin. New York: Council on Foreign Relations/ Twentieth Century Fund. 1996. 81 105 & 119 126, (21.06.2020) Retrieved from <http://www.newbalkanpolitics.org/mk/item/Observing-the-Observers:-Language,-Ethnicity,-and-Power-in-the-1994-Macedonian-Census-and-Beyond/mk#.YNH33GgzbiW>

54 On June 4, 1994, the founding assembly was held in Tetovo and the cornerstone of the University was laid; on September 26 of the same year the second assembly is held at which a decision is made to declare the formal foundation (the start of the academic year was declared on December 17, in front of the Assembly in Tetovo, and on January 15, 1995 in front of the building of the University in Mala Rechica, in the presence also of an American delegation, witnessed by 100 000 citizens, and the following day, on January 16 and on January 18 the Macedonian police tried to prevent the holding of classes, event where one person lost his life), from the speech of Sali Ramadani, at the fifth session of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia on 14.11.1995, Shorthand notes, from the fourth continuation of the twenty-fifth session of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia held on 14.11.1995, (21.06.2020) Retrieved from <https://www.sobranie.mk/WBStorage/Files/25sed4prod14noe95god.pdf>

55 Alice Ackermann, *Op.cit.*, стр. 69

56 Vladimir Ortakovski, *Inter-ethnic relations and minorities in the Republic of Macedonia*, in *Southeast European Politics*, Vol.2, n.1, pp. 24-25, May 2001, стр.37

continued to operate illegally until its official legalization (in 2004)⁵⁷, even though in the meantime a Law on the languages in which the teaching is performed at the Faculty of Pedagogy⁵⁸ and the Law on Higher Education were adopted⁵⁹. Regarding other rights, the requirements were set within the Law on citizenship, the Law on local self-government, the Law on flags, as well as greater representation of Albanians in state and political institutions. Namely, the law on citizenship set a condition for a stay of fifteen years, which excluded the biggest recent wave of Albanian immigration from Kosovo, due to which during the debates on this law, Albanian politicians pressed to reduce the period to five years, because longer period would exclude Albanians who came to Macedonia from Kosovo⁶⁰. Regarding the Law on Local Self-Government, the issue that was the cause of disagreement between the Macedonian parties (late 1991 and early 1992) and between the coalition partners of the ruling elite of 1994, was the degree of autonomy of the Albanian minority, i.e. the degree of decentralization⁶¹. Regarding the law on flags, the protest by the Albanians culminated with the events of July 1997 (when there was an incident, with several injured and three victims) during the police intervention to remove the Albanian flag in front of the municipal building in Gostivar⁶². The Law on the Use of the Flags through which the members of the nationalities in the Republic of Macedonia express their identity and national specificities, was adopted during these events, but the Decree for promulgation of this law and the law itself were repealed in 1998⁶³. Regarding the issue of greater representation of Albanians in state institutions, the request arose

57 *Law on the Establishment of the State University in Tetovo*, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 8/2004 from 23.02.2004

58 According to this law, the teaching of the study groups for preschool education and for grade level teaching, in addition to Macedonian, was planned to be conducted in the languages of the nationalities, as well as for the subjects contained in the curricula. Among other things, departments of literature in Albanian and Turkish were opened at the Faculty of Philosophy, and at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts certain subjects were taught in these languages as well. *Law on the languages in which the teaching is performed at the Faculty of Pedagogy*, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, Macedonia, No. 5/97 of February 6, 1997

59 Article 95 of the Law on Higher Education stipulated that teaching in private higher education institutions may be conducted in the languages of members of nationalities or in foreign languages. *Law on Higher Education*, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 64/2000 dated 03.08.2000

60 Victor Friedmen, *Op.Cit.*

61 The Law on Local Self-Government could not be adopted because it was blocked by the government itself, due to disagreement by both Albanians and Macedonians in the government. Mirjana Maleska, *Op.Cit.* 100-101

62 The Council of the Municipality of Gostivar on February 14, 1997, issues a decision in accordance with the Statute (Article 140) of the municipality, stipulating that the Albanian and Turkish flags should be displayed together with the Macedonian flag in front of the City Assembly. On March 14, the Government submitted a request before the Constitutional Court to initiate a procedure to assess the constitutionality of this act, and on May 21, it adopted a temporary measure to ban the use of flags in Gostivar, i.e. suspended the decision of the Council. On May 24, the mayor of Gostivar organized a rally in response to the Constitutional Court's decision, and two days later informed the Court that they would not abide by its decision, and on June 6 warned the Constitutional Court that the interim measure would lead to ethnic clashes. On June 11, the Constitutional Court revoked the decision of the Council of Gostivar with the explanation that the municipality exceeded its authority by displaying foreign countries flags. On July 9, police removed the flags, followed by riots in the city resulting in 196 people injured and three deaths. Slagjana Dimishkova, *The Use of Flags in Front of Local Public Buildings*, in the Ohrid Framework Agreement, Case Studies, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Skopje, August 2011, pp.51-52

63 The revocation was made following a procedure initiated by the Constitutional Court to assess the constitutionality of these acts, at the initiative submitted by VMRO-DPMNE, the Liberal Democratic Party, the Democratic Party of Macedonia, the League for Democracy, the Macedonian People's Party, VMRO-DP and the World Macedonian Congress. In the decision of the Constitutional Court of 18.11.1998 (Decision U.no.141 / 97 and U.no.146 / 97) among other things, the Court assessed that the provision of Article 48 of the Constitution, guaranteeing the right of members of nationalities to express, nurture and develop their identity and national specificities refers to nurturing, expressing and developing their customs, culture, language and traditions, through cultural and artistic institutions, scientific and other associations, which does not mean that the rights of state symbols of home countries such as coat of arms, flag and anthem can be included in this group. Therefore, the constitutional guarantee for protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of the members of the nationalities cannot be extended by giving an opportunity, i.e. enactment of special laws for the use of the flags. *Decision of the Constitutional Court of 18.11.1998* (21.06.2020) Retrieved from <http://ustavensud.mk/?p=7259>

from the factual situation. Namely, the social sector data from 1986 show that by ethnicity of the employees, Macedonians are 85%, Albanians are 7%, Turks are 1.8%, Serbs are 2.4% and 3.8% are other. The situation is similar in 1991, when the assessment of workers in the Republic of Macedonia according to declared ethnicity is as follows: Macedonians 80.6%, Albanians 10.4%, Turks, 2.3%, Roma 1.6%, Vlachs 0.6%, Serbs 2.3% and 2.3% members of other ethnic groups⁶⁴.

In August 1994, the new PDP leader, Aliti, stated that the party's new goal was integration (not federalization of Macedonia), which meant proportional representation of Albanians in all political, state and other institutions⁶⁵. However, after the coalition between SDSM and PDP did not bring the expected results for the representatives of the Albanians in power, at the rally in Debar held in October of the same year, Aliti said that the option for autonomy of the Albanians in Macedonia was not cast away⁶⁶. As far as this issue is concerned, the implementation of informal policy started, through the employment of members of nationalities in the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense, the Military Academy, within the ranks of cadets, officers, as well as in the Constitutional and Supreme Courts⁶⁷.

All these events, protests and unfulfilled demands culminated in an armed conflict, launched in February 2001 by the so-called National Liberation Army (NLA), to which the state security forces responded, and ended again with the mediation of the international community. To avoid and prevent what failed in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the international community, namely NATO mediated in the evacuation of NLA troops from Arachinovo (one of the sites of the conflict) and were later involved in the process of its disarmament⁶⁸. The international community, through representatives from the USA and the EU (James Pardew and Francois Leotard), participated in the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA), together with the leaders of the two largest Macedonian and two largest Albanian parties, and the engagement of the EU was foreseen in the

64 Славко Милосавлевски, Мирче Томовски, *Албанците во република Македонија 1945-1995, легислатива, политичка документација, статистика*, НИП Студентски збор, Скопје, Декември 1997, стр. 317-318

65 Мирјана Малеска, *Op.Cit.*, p. 92

66 *Ibid.*, p. 923

67 At the beginning of the 1990s, in the Ministry of Interior, members of minorities represented 3% of the total number of employees, and in 1996 it increased to 8.7%. There is also an increase among civil servants in the Ministry of Defense, from 16% to 22%. In the military sector, the number of Albanian cadets in the Military Academy increased from 2% to 12% and the number of officers from 0.1% in 1993 to 3% in 1995. In the Constitutional Court, out of a total of 9 judges, two are members of the Albanian nationality, and in the Supreme Court, out of a total of 16 judges, four are members of Albanian nationality. Alice Ackermann, *Op.cit.*, P. 91

68 Mark Laity, *Preventing war in Macedonia, Pre - Emptive Diplomacy for the 21 st Century*, RUSI Кралски институт на заедничките служби, 2009, p. 84; (translation: Марк Лејти, Спречување војна во Македонија Превентивна дипломатија за 21 век, Вајтхол труд, Фондација Институт отворено Општество-Македонија, 2009) (02.05.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.fosm.mk/CMS/Files/Documents/Sprecurvanje-vojna-vnatresni-mark-lejti.pdf>

coordination and implementation of the OFA, in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the European Commission, as well as the OSCE and the UNHCR⁶⁹.

What are the results of the international community's involvement in the conflict in Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of North Macedonia? While previous agreements on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have so far been signed on a ceasefire and with the hope of further co-operation to find a peaceful solution, what has been achieved with the latest agreement is the return of the occupied territories to Azerbaijan. This means that the conflict not only ended, but was resolved in favor of Azerbaijan, to the great dissatisfaction of the Armenian public, which does not give certainty that the conflict will not continue where it left off. In the Macedonian case, the OFA guarantees that: the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Macedonia and the unitary character of the state are inviolable and must be preserved and that there are no territorial solutions to ethnic issues. The key to the solution was the basic principle that the multiethnic character of Macedonian society must be preserved and reflected in public life. Namely, with the implementation of the OFA, constitutional and legal changes were made which: promote the civic concept, remaining ethnically colored (Macedonia is constituted by the citizens of Macedonia, and they are by ethnicity: the Macedonian people, part of the Albanian people, the Turkish people, the Vlach people, the Serbian people, the Roma people, the Bosniak people and others living within its borders)⁷⁰; it responded to specific requests (in the administrative and political spheres) that correspond to those, which are subject to the political interpretation of multiculturalism⁷¹; multireligiousness and multilingual society are emphasized, and multicultural municipalities were created⁷². Things set up in this way have led to stability, which is important not only for the political, economic and social development of the country, but also for the stability of the region and the smooth development of international relations.

69 The participation of the international community in the implementation of the Agreement is set out in Annex C, titled Implementation and Confidence-Building Measures. Assistance was provided for monitoring the census and subsequent elections, for the implementation of the OFA in the field of higher education, revision of municipal boundaries, financial support and assistance in measures to strengthen local self-government and revitalization and reconstruction of the areas affected by the clashes, return of refugees and displaced persons, assistance in the preparation and implementation of an action plan for the revitalization and reconstruction of areas affected by hostilities, as well as in ensuring the proper deployment of police services with a composition that would reflect the distribution of the population. This and the training and police assistance programs were the responsibility of the OSCE, the EU and the US. *Ohrid Framework Agreement*, (07.02.2021) Retrieved by https://www.pravdiko.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/ramkoven_dogovor-3.pdf

70 The term nationalities was replaced by parts of the peoples in the Preamble and by communities in the constitutional articles. The last amendment to the Preamble, made in 2019, introduced a new item in the name of the state (Amendment 33) and provided for the deletion of the words "living within its borders" (Amendment 34) and hence the final content of the Preamble today reads: "Citizens of the Republic of Northern Macedonia, the Macedonian people, part of the Albanian people, the Turkish people, the Vlach people, the Serbian people, the Roma people, the Bosniak people and others".

71 Provisions that correspond to the political interpretation of multiculturalism (which provides for the realization of the requirements for administrative and political rights by ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities within the nation state) are contained in the fundamental value of adequate and equitable representation of citizens (Amendment 6, amending Article 8) and the Badinter Rule (Amendment 10 replacing Article 69). The political interpretation of multiculturalism is explained in: Andrea Semprini, *Multikulturalizam*, CLIO, Beograd, 2004, p.35

72 Besides the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the constitution also lists the Islamic religious community in Macedonia, the Catholic Church, the Evangelical Methodist Church, the Jewish community and other religious communities and religious groups. With the new territorial division, the results of the census and the constitutional amendment amending Article 7 (according to which, in addition to the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet which remains the official language of the state and in international relations, the official language will be the language spoken by at least 20 % of the citizens) 31 multicultural municipalities were created in which the languages of the non-majority communities are used, and in those where they are a majority or more than 50%, their flags are displayed. In addition, the first state university in Albanian language was opened in Tetovo.

From a geopolitical point of view, a stable region suits the international community, but it suits it even more if it controls it based on its own interests. In case direct control cannot be exercised, the policy of the state through which it can exercise its own interests is supported. In this regard, the interests of the international community regarding Azerbaijan and Macedonia are further elaborated, in order to see if they have influenced the adoption of conflict resolution policies.

The geopolitical interests of the international community in relation to the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of North Macedonia

When we talk about factors or characteristics that make a country geopolitically attractive, it is inevitable to say that it is the location and what it has, in terms of resources (water and energy), mineral resources, population, armaments, labor, etc. Today, energy security as a real daily need, make energy resources, along with location, factors that influence the adoption of policies to achieve their own interests. From a geopolitical point of view, the attractiveness of the Caucasus region is due to its geographical location, giving it the epithet bridge between the East and the West, and to its rich amount of energy resources located in the waters of the Caspian Sea. Since the end of the 19th century this region has been attracting international attention with its oil production, taking place primarily in the area of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan⁷³. It is estimated that today there are about 75 billion barrels of oil and 6.9 trillion cubic meters of gas at the bottom of the Caspian Sea. Thanks to the resources, location and good energy infrastructure of the BTC (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan), BTE (Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum) oil pipelines and the Southern Gas Corridor (consisting of the South Caucasus Pipeline, Trans-Anatolian Pipeline and Trans Adriatic Pipeline), Azerbaijan is the central hub for the East-West energy corridor, which allows bypassing Russian routes to the north and Iranian routes to the south⁷⁴. Hence, the energy security that Azerbaijan provides to the West is one of the fundamental interests of the policy pursued by its countries. Going back to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the results of the Minsk Group's mediation so far, it seems that the status quo suits its co-chairs better than finding a lasting solution that would satisfy both sides. In this context, the question arises: *what would be the interests of international actors in not /resolving the status of Nagorno-Karabakh?*

⁷³ Data from that period (in 1897) show that 45% of the world's oil was produced there, and that Russia in the period from 1898 to 1902, thanks to this region, sets the primacy in world production. Comparing that period to the time of the collapse of the USSR, the oil extracted from this region represented only 3% of world production and most of it was supplied from Azerbaijan. Bülent Gökay, *Petrolio e geopolitica nel bacino del Mar Caspio, Volume IV / Economia, politica, diritto degli idrocarburi*, (07.02.2021) Retrieved by http://www.treccani.it/portale/enciclopedia/handle/4047/exporturi=/export/sites/default/Portale/sito/altre_aree/Tecnologia_e_Scienze_applicate/enciclopedia/italiano_vol_4/423-430_x8.2x_ita.pdf

⁷⁴ Trans Adriatic Pipeline TAP is an 870 km long gas pipeline from the Meridian Energy Gas Corridor that would be drawn from Shah Deniz and then pass through Georgia and Turkey, via the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Pipeline and TANAP (Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline.) via Greece and Albania to Italy and Northern Europe. Idem, p. 212-213

The most influential actor from the Minsk Group in the events in Nagorno-Karabakh is Russia, which has a long-standing historical connection with the region and is geographically closest to it. Russian influence in the region is made possible through Armenia, where Russia, in addition to its military presence (military bases 102 and 3624), has key infrastructure and industrial investments and a monopoly on gas supplies⁷⁵. On the other hand, Russia is not willing to disrupt relations with Azerbaijan, one of the regular buyers of weapons (paying at full price, which is not the case with Armenia, having a privileged treatment on this issue). Although pro-Armenian, Russia's economic interests, given its military and economic co-operation with both countries, are more in favor of balancing the conflict than in its lasting resolution in favor of Armenia⁷⁶. Russia participated directly in the conclusion of ceasefire agreements between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1994, 2016 and 2020, and in the next five years its peacekeeping forces will participate directly in the control of Nagorno-Karabakh. The subsequent agreement reached by Russia with Turkey on its participation in the peace process was sharply criticized by France, also opposing the Turkish military support that Azerbaijan received in the 2020 conflict. Russia, on the other hand, although it was said that it could protect Armenia through the Collective Security Treaty, it did not do that, so as not to damage relations with Turkey, also based on good economic deals, the last related to the Turkish Stream⁷⁷. In this context, in order not to damage relations with Armenia, i.e. so it would not feel abandoned, Russian President Putin said that Russia should not have gotten involved in the conflict, because no one had invaded the territory of Armenia, i.e. no party of the agreement had committed aggression on its territory⁷⁸. On the other hand, France's failure to take sides in the conflict has been criticized in France, having in mind the fact that 400,000 to 600,000 Armenians live there⁷⁹. Subsequently, the French Senate passed a resolution (consultative) urging its parliament to recognize the independence of the Republic of Arzakh, to which Azerbaijan asked the OSCE to expel France from the Minsk Group for failing to maintain neutrality. Namely, Turkey, although not part of the Minsk Group, is much more interested in the conflict and is directly involved through the moral and military support it gives primarily to Azerbaijan. This inclination is due to: the desire to establish good neighborly relations with the Turkophone former Soviet countries and peoples, as well as the energy and economic interests that link it to Azerbaijan (the Trans-Anatolic gas pipeline). The United States, on the other hand, member of the Minsk

75 Anna Hess Sargsyan, *Nagorno - Karabakh: obstacles to a negotiated settlement*, CSS Analysis in security policy n.131, Center for security studies, April 2013 Zurich, (10.02.2021) Retrieved from <https://css.ethz.ch/>

76 Sergey Markedonov, *Russia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: a careful balancing*, 12.03.2018, Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale, (10.02.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/russia-and-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-careful-balancing-19832>

77 For more details see <https://turkstream.info/>

78 *Putin si esprime sulla status giuridico del Nagorno Karabakh*, 24.11.2020, Sicurezza internazionale, Luis Osservatorio sulla sicurezza internazionale, (26.02.2021) Retrieved from <https://sicurezzainternazionale.luiss.it/2020/11/24/putin-si-esprime-sul-nagorno-karabakh/>

79 Chiara Gentilli, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Francia teme il ruolo della Turchia*, 21.11.2020 Sicurezza internazionale, Luis Osservatorio sulla sicurezza internazionale, (10.02.2021) Retrieved from <https://sicurezzainternazionale.luiss.it/2020/11/21/nagorno-karabakh-francia-te-me-ruolo-della-turchia/>

Group, is not “fiercely” involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh case, and in some ways has limited interest and influence. Although it maintains good relations with both warring parties, it has greater cooperation with Azerbaijan due to economic relations, logistical support provided by Azerbaijan during the conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as its location as a buffer zone between Russia and Iran⁸⁰. On the other hand, Armenia is seen as an instrument of pressure on Turkey, and the American recognition (in 2019) of the Resolution on the Recognition of the Armenian Genocide from 1915-1917 can be assessed in that context. Iran, on the other hand, although it has historical, religious, and cultural ties with Azerbaijan that date back to the Persian Empire, supports Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in order not to incite irredentist aspirations on the part of the Azerbaijani minority living in Iran and also because of Azerbaijan’s cooperation with the Israelis. Israel, on the other hand, supports Azerbaijan militarily, and in return is given the use of Azerbaijani airports and infrastructure for the ultimate purpose of gathering information on Iranian security⁸¹. The European Union has taken a neutral stance on the conflict in all these developments, and its only reaction to the recent conflict has been to call for an end to attacks on civilians and resume peace talks, announcing half a million euros in humanitarian aid. Its neutrality is, in some respects, ambiguous given the fact that in 2006 the Action Plan signed with Azerbaijan recognized the importance of respecting the territorial integrity of states, while in the one with Armenia it emphasized the importance of self-determination of nations⁸². In essence, the interests of the EU member states are based on the geopolitical interests in the region, which can be defined as: “a stable region, secure delivery of energy resources” that come to the EU from Azerbaijan.

Unlike Azerbaijan, Macedonia is a landlocked country with no land resources and no energy resources that would arouse the interest of the international community. Its geopolitical attractiveness is due to its territorial location, which occupies the central part of the Balkans, a crossroads between the former trade routes: east-west (Via Egnatia) and north-south (Via Militaris) and through which energy routes from the Caucasus can but not necessarily have to pass. In the past years we have witnessed strategies and competition in spheres of influence again between Russia, the EU, America, and even Turkey, but this time on the map of energy transport. However, in order to understand the international interests in the region and specifically in Republic of North Macedonia, let us return to the 2001 conflict and its resolution. If we look at the events suspiciously, then we may say that the interest of some great powers was realized with the very destabilization of the region, an instrument that will provide assistance for its

80 Zafer Yıldırım, U.S. Foreign Policy towards Azerbaijan: From “Alliance” to “Strategic Partnership”, Alternatives Turkish journal of international relations, (28.02.2021) Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/19299>

81 Giuseppe Gagliano, *Come si destreggia Israele tra Armenia e Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh*, Start Magazine, (10.02.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.startmag.it/mondo/come-si-destreggia-israele-tra-armenia-e-azerbajjan-in-nagorno-karabakh/>

82 Lorenzo Ferrari, *Nagorno – Karabakh: la prudenza dell’UE*, 30.10.2020 (10.02.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/aree/Azerbaijan/Nagorno-Karabakh-la-prudenza-dell-UE-205860>

future stabilization, in other words means for control and maneuver. Therefore, from a geopolitical point of view, it can be said that the interest of the international community in resolving the conflict in 2001 was stabilization through which control would be established⁸³. But how would destabilization affect the interests of the international community? The Macedonian question on the international scene is not new and is part of the ideologies for greater states of its neighbors. Its opening or destabilization would mean destabilization of the whole region. According to analyst Schulte, events in Macedonia have raised concerns about the possible escalation of clashes and the emergence of large numbers of refugees, which would seriously destabilize the region and jeopardize US interests in European security⁸⁴. The conflict in 2001 reached Macedonia as a domino effect from Kosovo and it suited the international community to stop it there and start a period of stabilization in which a country in need of support can easily be conditioned. The support came through the strengthening of KFOR control along the border, facilitators in the OFA signing negotiations, and later support through the NLA disarmament process.

The conflicts in Kosovo and Macedonia were an opportunity for the EU to do what it failed to do in the other conflicts in former Yugoslavia, but despite its involvement through the facilitator in the negotiations, some analysts believe that these conflicts have once again proved the role and the importance of NATO, and through it of the United States, in ending conflicts in the region⁸⁵. As a result of the well-completed "mission" in this area, the United States received space for their physical strategic location both in Kosovo (where the US base, along with the Great Wall of China are the only ones visible "from the moon"⁸⁶) and in Macedonia (where the US Embassy has a strategic location in the city). This way the United States and NATO are one step away from the Eurasian space from where they can act in all directions. In addition, the United States is at the Gate to the East from where it can prevent Russian turmoil, and at the same time control the Moravian-Vardar crossing, which has been on the geopolitical agendas of the great powers for centuries. In line with this are Veljanovski's conclusions that through the diplomatic engagement of the USA and NATO in the Balkan wars, including the 2001 conflict, the US has strengthened its position in the Balkans, completely marginalized the presence of Russia, reaffirmed US leadership role in the international arena, and NATO effectiveness in ending ethnic conflicts⁸⁷ Regarding the Russian diplomacy in the 2001 conflict, it can

83 In this context we can mention the views of the American professor Chosudovski, according to whom: the basis of the modern expansionist strategy of the USA is only the reincarnation of the old Roman-maxima - divide and rule, and the view of the Macedonian professor Shkaric according to whom: the Albanian secessionist movement suited NATO and the United States, because when the Balkans are divided into a number of weak and small ethnic states, they have the power to govern more successfully. In: Sasho Veljanovski, *Op.Cit.*, P. 140

84 *Ibid.*, 157

85 According to Brzezinski, Europe is a de facto military protectorate of the United States, while Senator Biden expresses doubt that the EU can deal with the crisis in its own backyard. See: *Ibid.*, 159

86 Aleksis i Zhil Trud, *Razaranje Balkana, kako su razbili Jugoslaviju*, Xenia, Metella, 2013, p.26

87 Сашо Вељановски, *Op.Cit.*, p. 191

be mentioned that at the very beginning of the crisis Russia accused NATO of failing to destroy the terrorist activities in Kosovo, southern Serbia and Macedonia and called on the international community to take urgent steps, including the use of force to prevent the escalation of the conflict in the Balkans⁸⁸. In contrast to its diplomatic engagement on the Kosovo issue in Serbia, as well as its cultural and historical ties with Serbia and Greece, Russia has had almost no comment on the political situation in the country since the end of the 2001 riots, and Macedonia has failed to attract its attention⁸⁹. The events related to the South and Turkish Streams can be taken as examples. Namely, the plan was to connect Macedonia to the Russian South Stream through a branch, but due to European and American policies that were reflected in Bulgaria, Russia stopped the construction of the South Stream and decided to build a new one, the Turkish Stream. The new stream passes through Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary and this time Republic of North Macedonia is not connected by a branch, which shows its marginal role on energy routes. The latest news is that Macedonia will be involved in the construction of a liquefied natural gas terminal near Alexandroupoulos in Greece, the support being approved by the United States. In terms of EU involvement, unlike the United States, the EU again failed to resolve the conflict on its own, but was involved in the negotiations and the signing of the OFA through its representative, as well as in the financial and technical support for its implementation.

What do the actions of the international community have in common in these two conflicts? In both the Azerbaijani and Macedonian cases, the international community is committed to territorial integrity in resolving conflicts. This means that: Nagorno Karabakh cannot be separated from Azerbaijan, although it is inhabited by a majority of Armenians, who are committed to the right to self-determination, while in Macedonia it means that there are no territorial solutions to ethnic issues and for consolidation of the unitary character of the state decentralization and a new model of multicultural society were introduced. In the first case only the Azerbaijani side is satisfied, while in the second the unity of the state is guaranteed, but the demands of the initiators of the conflict are also met. Namely, the international community allowed itself a deeper “interference” in the internal affairs of Republic of North Macedonia, taking into account its Euro-Atlantic orientation⁹⁰. As early as 1998, the International Commission for the Balkans, in its conclusions and recommendations published in “Unfinished Peace”, stated that the primary goal of external influence should be to encourage the Albanian investment in

88 *Russia calls for Balkans intervention*, Op.Cit.,

89 *Macedonia: a pawn in the Russian geopolitical game?*, DW, 26.05.2015, (25.06.2021) Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonia-a-pawn-in-the-russian-geopolitical-game/a-18476013>

90 From the very beginning of independence, Macedonia expressed its interest in Euro-Atlantic integration, an interest which then resulted in the adoption of: The decision to join NATO in 1993, then the signing of the Partnership for Peace in 1995, the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the Republic of Macedonia and the European Community in December 1995, launch of the PHARE program in support of reforms in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, signing of the Agreement on Cooperation between the Republic of Macedonia and the European Community in 1997, Agreement in the field of transport and textiles, obtaining candidate status for NATO membership in 1999, as well as the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement of 2001, which launched the implementation of CARDS programs (assistance program for countries that are part of the Stabilization and Association Process).

the Macedonian state, (by creating Macedonian-Albanian relations in a unitary state, to be achieved through the application of a high degree of decentralization and constant political restraint on both sides); UNPREDEP, which provides a high degree of tranquility at a relatively low cost and risk, should be sustained until substantial progress is made in resolving the Kosovo problem; and that steps should be taken to reduce tensions around the University of Tetovo and establish a Southern European University⁹¹. With the outbreak of the conflict, extremism will be verbally condemned, KFOR will be called upon to continue to stop the unauthorized movement of illegal arms shipments across the region, and the international community will nominate its own representatives to facilitate the negotiations. The latter was assessed by some domestic analysts as direct interference in the internal affairs of the country, and the need for such interference was justified in order to make certain unpopular decisions⁹², or as the Macedonian professor Tupurkovski will point out, the war in Macedonia is a complex product of the subtle geopolitical logic of the key international factors, which have a strong interest in strategically controlling the Balkan constellations⁹³.

In the case of Azerbaijan, even at the time of independence of the Caucasian republics in 1991 and in accordance with the then norms of secession and independence, it has been established that Nagorno-Karabakh has no legal basis for secession from Azerbaijan or establishment of independence. However, given that the conflict has persisted for decades and different practices have been applied in similar cases (the case of Kosovo), the international community has been and still is very cautious, as Azerbaijan not only has a priority place in their (energy security) policies, but are to some extent dependent on its policies.

Conclusion

Taking into account the multicultural aspect of the Macedonian and the Azerbaijani society, certain problems related to the dissatisfaction of the minorities in these two countries attracted international attention and became part of the agenda of the great powers. Although with a different nature of ethnic conflict, what these two countries have in common is the involvement of the international community in finding a solution to the conflicts. Starting from the purpose of the research, to see what are the results, role and interests of the international community in resolving multicultural issues, i.e. in resolving ethnic conflicts, we would first point out the similarities and differences between the two

⁹¹ Sasho Veljanovski, *Op.Cit.*, p. 161

⁹² Veljanovski points out that: it would be unserious not to interpret the international mediation in the crisis in the Republic of Macedonia as direct interference in the internal affairs of the country, but of course would agree with the statement of prof. Maleski that "this interference should be understood as a necessity, because domestic politicians would have most certainly avoided making the difficult and unpopular political decisions without international pressure and intervention" *Ibid.*, P. 155-156

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 146

cases that are subject to analysis and comparison in this paper. While in the Azerbaijani case the conflict involves two states and a self-proclaimed one, in the Macedonian case the conflict was of an internal nature (between the state security forces and the Albanian paramilitary formation NLA). In both cases there was an armed conflict, which is why the international community intervened.

If we take the general definition of ethnic conflict (which relates to political, economic, social, cultural or territorial issues, and define it as ethnic conflict, when what precedes it and possible solutions are perceived along ethnic lines), we can say that the conflicts in both cases are of ethnic nature. In the Azerbaijani case the reason for the conflict is the self-declaration of independence by a part of the population (Armenians) on a territory (which according to the constitution is a constituent part of Azerbaijan), in which they represent a majority, while in the Macedonian case although there are several views (that the conflict was the result of an “spillover effect”, of “accumulated dissatisfaction of Albanians”, “staged”, that “the conditions indicated it”, that the goals were “territorial”) in the context of the definition and taking into account the solutions (contained in the OFA) for its termination, it can be said that the conflict was of ethnic nature and erupted due to the unfulfilled demands of the Albanians.

There was validity in the demands in the Macedonian case, if we take into account the fact that the Albanians lost their constitutive status in the country, (and their demands and dissatisfaction were manifested from the very beginning of the constitution of an independent Macedonia), but contradictory to this it can also be said that there is no validity if the situation is analyzed from the aspect of protection of minorities and minority rights (nationalities in the 1991 constitution) which according to the Macedonian constitution were in line with international standards for protection of minorities and received a positive rating by the Badinter Commission. In the case of Azerbaijan, on the one hand there is validity in the demands because the right to self-determination and secession is provided, but the same cannot be achieved in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, because it is a constituent part of Azerbaijan.

In the Macedonian case, the international community has found a quick and lasting solution⁹⁴, with a comprehensive promotion of multiculturalism, in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh the settlement of the status is prolonged without a lasting solution that will satisfy both parties. The paper compared the constitutional order for the promotion and guarantee of multiculturalism in both societies; and a full analysis of the ethnic conflicts and the role of the international community in resolving them, with particular emphasis on specific geopolitical interests that could be considered factors for non-problem solving. From the research we can conclude the following: despite the fact that

⁹⁴ Through the methods of “shuttle diplomacy”, the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Solana and NATO Secretary General Robertson, managed to achieve two important goals: to put pressure on the Macedonian authorities not to declare martial law and to allow the creation of Government of national unity. *Ibid.*, P. 155

Azerbaijanis represent 91.6% of the total population, the Azerbaijani constitution is based on and promotes the civil principle, while in the Macedonian case the constitutionality of the state was guided by the national principle, i.e. *national state of the Macedonian people*, which excluded 33% of the population. Hence, this constitutional set-up in the Macedonian case proved to be a problem for the Albanians and it turned into an armed conflict. However, it should be noted that unlike the Azerbaijani constitution, the Macedonian constitution mentions other nationalities living within its state and provides a range of rights for free expression, nourishment and development of the identity and the national specificities. To the question whether such constitutions (referring to the national and civil principle on which the constitutions are based) were a cause for conflict? In the Macedonian case yes, in the Azerbaijani case no, because in the conflict with Nagorno-Karabakh the problem was not minority rights or a constitutive element, but a challenge to the right to self-determination. Hence in the Macedonian case the conflict was resolved quickly with amendments to the constitution aimed at promoting multiculturalism by expanding the rights of minorities, while in the Azerbaijani case the right to self-determination is not supported by the international community either. The question that arises here is: why did the international community manage to influence quickly and deeply in resolving the conflict in Macedonia, and not in the case of Azerbaijan? The answer most certainly lies in the geopolitical interest. From the above examples of involvement, the case of Nagorno-Karabakh shows that economic interests are stronger than even the “brotherly” ones (Slavism, Christianity, Islam, etc.). Iran is on the side of Armenia, Israel is on the side of Azerbaijan, Russia has more gain from Azerbaijan than from Armenia, and in this case it does not oppose Turkey either. Although many analysts have likened the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to the Kosovo conflict, in the Azerbaijani case the “Kosovo” solution was not taken as an option by the international community, as Azerbaijan would lose, which would have a negative impact on the interests of the international community. In the Macedonian case, it is Macedonia that depends on the international community (Euro-Atlantic policies and support for their implementation), and not vice versa, so it had the opportunity to “interfere” internally and “dictate” the rules.

The overall summary of the data in this research once again proves that geopolitical interests are stronger even than international standards and that the geopolitical attractiveness of countries plays a big role in how they will be treated on the international stage.

Finally, it should be noted that in this research a comparison was made between two countries that may not seem to have much in common, but their multicultural societies are always a good reason for comparison of the policies for their promotion and may be taken as examples from which one or the other could learn something. Of course, the focus of the research, apart from the multicultural aspects, was on how the international community intervenes in ethnic conflicts and whether and why different



policies are pursued. Although in this case the conflicts differ from each other, the idea of the research was to see if the international community starts from its own interests in resolving a particular conflict or from the real needs of those who cause conflicts, for which reason the Macedonian and the Azerbaijani case is a good example of such analysis and reflection.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY



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GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY ENLARGEMENT WITH GREECE

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

In 1970s, the European Community (EC) began to turn toward the poorer, newly emerged democracies in Southern Europe – namely, Greece, Spain and Portugal. Initially, the applications from these three states were interconnected, but Greece had managed to stand out thanks to the new Government led by Konstantin Karamanlis and the strict policy which had helped create a new political ambience as a result of the new Constitution and the abolition of monarchy. Greece, Spain and Portugal had pressed the Community to take political responsibility even on the account of denying its own principles on which it had been founded. In the 1980s, changes of great proportions had taken place in the Greek foreign policy. These changes began to unfold as soon as Greece acceded to the European Community on 1 January 1981, thus becoming the 10th EC Member State. The EC decision on the Greek membership was accepted by the broad spectrum of political parties in Greece, with EC becoming the central part of the Greek foreign relations. The accession had made profound and generally positive impact on almost each and every aspect of the Greek society, both on economic and political and social levels. Greece was aiming at reaching economic stabilization and democratic consolidation by introducing a number of the required structural reforms. The European Community membership had acted as a powerful catalyst for the domestic reforms and the modernization of the society.

The analysis presented in this paper aims to demonstrate the impact that the geopolitics in the 1970s had produced on the European Community enlargement with Greece. As the European integration further deepened, so the possibility for its future enlargement had increased. Following the fall of the Greek military junta and the restoring of democracy in July 1974, within a period of merely one year Greece had submitted its application for full-fledged EC membership. The negotiations between Greece and the European Community set a kind of a precedent in the sense of opening negotiations with a country which had just started to walk its path of democracy and which, in a way, was lacking the economic capacity demonstrated by the previous applicants. This paper endeavors to analyze the integration and accession of Greece to the EC through the geopolitical standpoint, including the argument that the major motive for the ensuing EC enlargement with Greece was geopolitical. The reasons why Greece had opted for full accession to the Community will be summarized in chronological order.

This paper is addressing the process of negotiations between Greece and the European Community. Their relation had encountered obstacles due to the internal political developments in Greece and the rule of the military junta. The analysis offered in this paper is conducted through the geopolitical theory point of view, though methodologically it mainly relies on historical analysis of the developments in the 1970s. The historical analysis covers the Association Agreement between Greece and the European Community of 1961, the impact of the military junta on the relations

between the Community and Greece, the renewal of the relations and the continuation of the process of negotiations up to the moment when Greece acquired the full-fledged membership in the Community. To this end, the decisions taken during that period were decisive in tracing the country's development on external level.

Consequently, this paper will aim to emphasize the democratization of the Greek society and identify the main characteristics of the geopolitics impact in the 1970s and 1980s on the future enlargement of the European Community.

Theory of geopolitics and the European Community enlargement in the 1970s

After the World War I, the communist revolution took place in Russia, and later, after the World War II, Great Britain and France became dependent on USA both on economic and military levels. The initial objectives and considerations about EEC are based on such set of developments. The desired „outcome“ was to create peace and stability in Europe, which was the prevailing longing in the aftermath of the two disastrous world wars.

The Cold War refers to that period of the Soviet-American geopolitical and ideological confrontation which covers the 40-year span from the end of the World War II to the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. The term „geopolitics“ was rarely used, until Kissinger started to employ it more actively in the 1970s. Geopolitics continued to influence the political practice throughout the whole second half of the 20th century.¹

After the World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, the geopolitical thought was closely identified with the public frame of mind, as well as with the Nazi program for ethnic cleansing, the holocaust and the attempt for European domination. Geopolitics is closely related to the deterministic factors, such as geography, economy and demographics, their influence and impact on politics, and especially on the foreign policy of a given state. During the Cold War, USA were promoting economic specialization and geographic integration among its allies as the basis for the anti-Soviet alliances.²

The classic geopolitical thinker Halford J. Mackinder presented his objective and factual analysis of geopolitics during the Cold War. According to Mackinder, the end of the World War I contributed to preserving Britain and the British Empire, unlike the World War II, which aimed to defend the West from the communist influence.³ The focus in the European Community geopolitics during this period of time was mainly directed toward

¹ Gokmen, Semra Rana. *Geopolitics and the study of international relations*. Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 2010 (8-10)

² Hochberg, Leonard., Sloan, Geoffrey. *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategic History*. Foreign Policy Research Institute by Elsevier Ltd, 2017 (2-3)

³ Ibid.

delineating Eurasian connections, and reducing and eradicating the Russian influence in Europe.

Geopolitics during the period of the Cold War had turned to be an issue of primary importance. The security issue was brought up to the surface, and according to the assertions made by the anthropologist Hugh Gusterson, the „security scenes“ encompass distribution of military power and military and scientific resources within the national states, including the margins of identity, power and vulnerability. Based on this, the considerations about the geopolitical issues cannot be merely brought down to “geographic” facts, but a profound ideological analysis would also be required.⁴

The critical geopolitics takes into consideration the distortions in the geopolitical discourse, therefore the primary objective is not directed toward the geography of politics, but rather toward the „geographic specificity of politics“.⁵The emphasis is on the intersection of constructivist and post-structuralist directions in the theory of international relations, by equally retaining a special focus on the geographical assumptions that underpin international politics. During the Cold War, Eastern European studies were considered to be a profound ideological field, isolated from theoretical debates led in the social sciences.⁶

The concept of Eastern Europe being a variant of the East was invented in the eighteenth century, when Eastern Europe was marked as a part of Europe in a geographical sense. The difference between this region and the one of Western Europe became conceptualized in a way of representing a detachment from an idealized Europe. Eastern Europe was included in a geographical entity called Europe, but at the same time it was excluded from it as a political or cultural entity. It is crucial to remember that Eastern Europe did not emerge as an irreversible alien outsider, it only grew into a repository of negative connotations in Europe. Conceptually, it had become the border between Europe and Asia.⁷

The Cold War could be seen as a confirmation of the previously stated theses. During the geopolitical discourse about the Cold War, the Soviet Union and its satellite states were not only antagonistic and backward, but also seemed partly Asian. Very often Central and Eastern Europe were treated as a single bloc, with little distinction made between Russia, the Soviet Republics and the satellite states. This disruption in the geographical complexity has been particularly pronounced in security studies. This field was particularly closely linked to the government intelligence and military-industrial complex.⁸

4 Kuus, Merje. *Geopolitics Reframed: Security and Identity in Europe's Eastern Enlargement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 (7)

5 Dawson, Andrew., Fawn, Rick. *The changing geopolitics of Eastern Europe: An introduction*. Geopolitics 6, 2001 (3)

6 Kuus, Merje. *Geopolitics Reframed: Security and Identity in Europe's Eastern Enlargement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 (7)

7 Ibid. (22-23)

8 Ibid. (23)

Central and Eastern Europe is deeply connected to the “geopolitical” past or narrative of “return to the east” because it frames politics in terms of the presence or absence of the east as an identity or feature. The East is strongly associated with the analytical emphasis on the “presence” of history, which is almost mandatory when it comes to Central and Eastern Europe.⁹

In retrospect, the Greek Civil War was one of the first post-World War II military conflicts. The victory over Communists had its epilogue in Greece’s future NATO membership, and was also reflected in the great support that the United States was providing to Greece at that time. In fact, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was triggered by the Greek Civil War and the arising threat from the Greek independence, through the penetration of the US-produced influences within the Western European countries and the Soviet Union within its satellites.

The bloc divisions of the world and the geopolitical implications of the Cold War in Eastern Europe contributed to the growing interest by the United States and the Soviet Union to increase their influence in the Balkans, and especially in Greece. Greece was an economically and strategically important country for preventing the Soviet domination in the Eastern Mediterranean region and protecting the oil supplies from the Middle East. That is why the United States was committed to preserving the independence and territorial integrity of the kingdom, encouraging the authorities to establish a government of national unity and undertake a series of economic reforms. The polarization and instability of the Greek political scene in the mid-1960s was a direct result of the civil war and the deep division between the left and right sections of the Greek society. A coup d’état in 1967 helped to put Greece under the military junta rule. The military junta was in power until 1974, when power was officially handed over to the democratically elected government of Greece.¹⁰ The polarization of the Greek society, the rise of communism in the neighborhood, the civil war, the weak economy, and the EC’s fear of Greece falling under the influence of the Eastern European Communist bloc, were a sufficient reason for the EC increased ambitions to expand and target poor countries who had just stepped out on their path of democracy, and thus completely prevent further penetration of influence and negative consequences caused by the USSR.

In the 1970s, the EC faced profound changes in the international economic system, followed by the corollary of the first oil crisis, national protectionism and the impact of the first enlargement, which would change the way the EC acted in relation to its institutional policies. Such changes within the Community were the product of the European pessimism regarding the European integration in the mid-1970s, especially

⁹ Lieven, Anatol. *Against Russophobia*. World Policy Journal, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 25-32, 2000 (25-32)

¹⁰ “The Civil War in Greece”, Digital Research in European Studies, accessed July 5, 2021, <https://www.cvce.eu/en/education/unit-content/-/unit/55c09dcc-a9f2-45e9-b240-eaef64452cae/2a3241dd-a928-4ef6-808d-f0dae7fed954>.

when it came to the enlargement with the Mediterranean. In the mid-1970s, a wave of democratization taking place in Southern European countries contributed to just another round of enlargement which had not been a top EC priority until then. However, the Community had made concessions with regard to its enlargement policy, the internal reforms and the benefits for the Member States.¹¹

In the mid-1970s, the great challenge for the Community was the enlargement toward countries deviating from previous practices. The priorities set during the previous enlargements were the representative democracy and economic stability and progress. The subsequent wave of EC enlargement was different from the previous enlargements and was targeting countries that did not have sufficient democratic and economic capacity.

The analysis of the European integration would be incomplete by ignoring the enlargement policy, which is related to theoretical debates over the accession of the members. Since the 1970s, the number of members in the EC had increased from six in the 1950s to twelve in 1986.¹² If, on the one hand, enlargement is “the most important issue facing the European Community”, the events related to the Cold War, on the other hand, have affected a great deal of the EC history.¹³

The European Union Treaty explicitly states that any European country can apply for membership provided it is respectful of the democratic values of the EC and committed to promoting them. In 1973, sixteen years after the founding of the European Community, the first enlargement took place. However, it took another two years for a new round of accession applications to come about. With the fall of authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe, Portugal, Greece and Spain would begin their path towards democracy. However, it would take some time until a minimum degree of democratic consolidation was achieved. From the very onset, the EC had been following the political developments in Southern European countries with great care and concern, limiting at the same time its economic aid and political support for the establishment of democratic regimes. First, only the democracies could receive economic and financial assistance, so that later they could become members. The necessary arguments for seeking accession were essential, namely democratic stabilization and economic development. Following the enlargement with Greece, support for democracy became a publicly recognized goal of the EC, with Portugal and Spain using it for their own benefit.

¹¹ Bache, Ian., George, Stephen. *Politics in the European Union*. Oxford: OUP, 2006 (129)

¹² “What is the European Union?”, Open media hub, accessed October 10, 2019, <https://openmediahub.com/eu-basics/what-is-the-eu/>.

¹³ Cunha, Alice. *The European Economic Community's Third Enlargement*. Miami: Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence, 2012 (5)

Greek Foreign Policy in the 1960s and 1970s

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Greek society was facing profound divisions between the communists and nationalists, which had resulted with military interference in politics. Greece was often falling under dictatorial rule, as was the case between 1967 and 1974. Civil war and political instability, monarchist dictatorship, and communist totalitarianism had all contributed to political scientists classifying it as a "Pretorian country," along with Spain, Portugal, and Turkey, as well as with some other Central and South American countries.¹⁴

After the military coup by the colonels on April 21 1967, the King was forced to leave the country and flee to Italy, while Karamanlis¹⁵ had already been abroad for a long time¹⁶, with the remaining leading Greek politicians being arrested. The military junta was in power in Greece until 1974.¹⁷ The fall of the dictatorship of the military junta in the summer of 1974 caused a series of turmoils in Cyprus and opened the leeway for a new era. Konstantin Karamanlis, a representative of the New Democracy party, came to power in 1974, during the transition period of the society, when the democratic institutions were established and consolidated, which led to the effective reintegration of the Greek society.¹⁸

After the fall of the military regime, the new government of Konstantin Karamanlis decided to hold a referendum in order to resolve the political debate, i.e the political schism between those who supported the parliamentary democracy and those loyal to the constitutional monarchy.¹⁹ Karamanlis succeeded in creating a new political environment, thanks to the new constitution and the abolition of monarchy.²⁰ The Cyprus crisis²¹ in 1974 could be seen as a major turning point in the Greek post-World War II security considerations. The Turkish invasion and the subsequent occupation of Northern Cyprus was a very traumatic experience for Greece, but it also served as the basis for new security considerations.^{22,23}

14 Couloumbis, Theodore., Kariotis Theodore. et al. *Greece in the Twentieth Century*. London and New York: Frank Cass, 2003 (33)

15 Konstantin Karamanlis was Prime Minister of Greece during the period (6 October 1955 – 5 March 1958; 17 May 1958 – 20 September 1961; 4 November 1961 – 17 June 1963)

16 Karamanlis's party lost the elections in November 1963, and Karamanlis went into voluntary exile in Paris, while Greece was ruled by a military junta.

17 Докмановиќ, Мишо. Балканот и американската дипломатија во XX век. Скопје: Правен факултет „Јустинијан Први“, 2014 (196)

18 Couloumbis, Theodore., Kariotis Theodore. et al. *Greece in the Twentieth Century*. London and New York: Frank Cass, 2003 (118)

19 Ibid. (35)

20 Crampton, Richard. *The Balkans since second world war*. London: Pearson Education, 2002 (352)

21 Couloumbis, Theodore., Kariotis Theodore. et al. *Greece in the Twentieth Century*. London and New York: Frank Cass, 2003 (35-37)

22 The strained relations between Greece and Turkey over the Cyprus dispute mainly referred to the Cypriot coup that prompted Turkey to invade Cyprus and occupy a third of the northern part of the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus. The further deepening and straining of relations between Greece and Turkey took place in 1983, with the unilateral declaration of independence by the Turkish Cypriots and the formation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The country has diplomatic relations only with Turkey, with which it maintains excellent cooperation in every field. Other countries recognize only the Republic of Cyprus..

23 Jelavich, Barbara. *History of the Balkans, Vol. 2: Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983 (506)

Greece's European aspirations became apparent with its submission of the application for accession to the newly formed European Economic Community (EEC) in June 1959. The application led to the Association Agreement between Greece and the EEC, signed in June 1961, which was also the first agreement of this kind concluded by the EEC. This agreement was, in fact, the first step towards Greece's integration into the European Community. That process "froze" after the imposition of dictatorship in Greece (April 1967) and was reactivated as soon as democracy was restored (July 1974).²⁴ In July 1976, pre-accession negotiations between Greece and the EC resumed.²⁵ Greece became a full-fledged member of the EEC in January 1981, while the elections were held the same year. The main race was held between New Democracy and PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement). The victory was won by the PASOK party, led by Andreas Papandreou, and was largely the result of the country's frustration and weakness at the international level and the government's failure to secure a positive outcome in the Greek-Turkish disputes.²⁶ PASOK promised the Greeks a foreign policy in which Greece would be "proud as a nation". However, the PASOK government had not severed ties with its Western allies.²⁷ Greece's accession to the EC has had profound and generally positive effects on almost every aspect of the Greek society, both economically and politically and socially.

The Process of Accession of Greece to the EC

Greece did not take part in the initial stages of the European unification. Economic and political position distanced Greece from the Western European countries, where security and industrial integration became a priority in the early 1950s.²⁸ The next wave of enlargements occurred in the 1980s, when the EC turned to poorer, emerging democracies of Southern Europe – namely, Greece, Spain and Portugal.

Internal and external turbulence and extensive external interference together shaped the systemic physiognomy of Greece. During the twentieth century, Greece experienced significant turbulence in its external and internal relations. Economically, it was classified as a poor, agrarian, trade-dependent, and externally indebted nation; in short, underdeveloped. Politically, it was polarized, operating under personal and clientelist political parties, whose main goal was domination and rule over the entire public sector.

24 "Greece's course in the EU", Hellenic Republic Ministry of foreign affairs, accessed October 16, 2019, <https://www.mfa.gr/en/foreign-policy/greece-in-the-eu/greeces-course-in-the-eu.html>.

25 Crampton, Richard. *The Balkans since second world war*. London: Pearson Education, 2002 (356)

26 Couloumbis, Theodore., Kariotis Theodore. et al. *Greece in the Twentieth Century*. London and New York: Frank Cass, 2003 (156)

27 Crampton, Richard. *The Balkans since second world war*. London: Pearson Education, 2002 (357–358)

28 Botsiou, Konstantina. *Greece's Road to European integration: from Cold War frontline state to EC/EU-membership*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2014 (1)

At the same time, the history of the modern Greek state illustrated the continuing trends of foreign intervention and interference by big competing powers.²⁹

3.1 Initial approach

Greece's European orientation became apparent with the submission of its application for accession to the newly formed European Economic Community in June 1959. The EEC had emerged as a more attractive option for the country which was desperately seeking support for its agricultural sector and for protecting its weak industrial base from European competition. Accession to the EEC had been slow, but had helped to gradually reduce Greece's traditional trade deficit, as well as meet its financial needs by gradually limiting the continued involvement of Americans in the Greek economy and by reducing the US political and security interference.³⁰ The preamble to the Association Agreement stated that the Parties to the Agreement recognize that the support given by the European Economic Community to the efforts of the Greek people to improve their standard of living would facilitate Greece's accession to the Community at a later date. The perceived main obstacle to overcome was the exposure to the competitive environment in the EEC. According to the European Commission (EC) Reports, the Greek economy was too weak to be exposed to international competition and liberalization policies. The Association Agreement was thoroughly and carefully negotiated for almost two years and was generally considered to be the broadest and most complex agreement signed by the EEC with a third country, and it had met most of the above Greek requirements: a) a long transition period of 22 years for the customs union, b) protection of Greek exports, c) direct investment and d) financial assistance from the European Investment Bank for the Greek modernization program.³¹ The postponement of the conclusion of the negotiations was a result that set a very important precedent for the EEC. At the same time, the delay could also be attributed to the varied interests and views between the EEC and Greece, as well as between Member States. From an economic point of view, the basic principle was that there could be no balance between the obligations of Greece and the Community. In the area of agriculture, the agreement provided for likely harmonization of agricultural policies. With regard to the financial assistance, the agreement provided for the creation of an appropriate framework and the establishment of joint institutions, while Protocol 14 provided that the EEC would approve Greek loans totaling \$ 125 million over a five-year period. The primary purpose of the assistance was to facilitate the industrial restructuring of the Greek economy. The third

²⁹ Kaiser, Wolfram., Elvert, Jürgen. *European Union Enlargement A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004 (81)

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Botsiou, Konstantina. *Greece's Road to European integration: from Cold War frontline state to EC/EU-membership*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2014 (3)

issue was the removal of trade restrictions and the gradual formation of a full customs union.³²

Germany and France strongly advocated for the inclusion of weaker economies, such as Greece, in the Single Market as part of the continental European idea of solidarity and cooperation on political criteria.³³ At the same time, it was stressed that opening up to international competition would be a long process for Greece. To help the economy and society adapt gradually, the Greek government had ruled out direct accession. The Greek leftist parties had rejected the Association Agreement altogether, as they had rejected the European integration.³⁴ On June 8, 1959, Greece requested the opening of negotiations for accession to the EEC. As a result, on 9 July 1961, the EEC and Greece signed an Association Agreement: under Article 72, the Parties to the Agreement undertook to consider the possibility of Greece accession and, through the Association Agreement, to enable Greece to anticipate and fully accept the obligations arising from the EEC Treaty.³⁵ Already being in existence, by that time, for more than a century as a typical Balkan country, Greece had sought to actively direct its presence and project its future within the extraordinary process of European integrations.³⁶ As Tsoukalas noted: "If the idea about Europe being the embodiment of a universal civilization is still to continue, Greece has so far had no reason to feel permanently excluded in the long run. "Consequently, for the first time since independence, the country seemed to be following a path that could lead to a 'final solution' to its related discursive contradiction.".³⁷

The Association Agreement, as well as the overall European policies, enjoyed only partial support among Greek political elites. The agreement with the EEC was seen as a way to appease the internal and external communist threat.³⁸ Loucas Tsoukalis believed that the agreement between Greece and the EEC had a political and economic impact. From an economic point of view, the Association Agreement was part of the growing internationalization of the Greek economy, a process aimed at opening up the country and ensure rapprochement with its Western European partners.³⁹

The focus of the 1961 Agreement was the accelerated economic development of Greece, including provisions for the progressive establishment of a customs union. The institutional arrangements were intended to ensure the effective functioning of the Agreement, and would also set a precedent for future agreements. At the top of

³² Kaiser, Wolfram., Elvert, Jürgen. *European Union Enlargement A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004 (81)

³³ Botsiou, Konstantina. *Greece's Road to European integration: from Cold War frontline state to EC/EU-membership*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2014 (3)

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Tatham, Allan. *Enlargement of the European Union*. Alphen Aan Den Rijn and Austin: Kluwer Law International, 2009 (29)

³⁶ Kaiser, Wolfram., Elvert, Jürgen. *European Union Enlargement A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004 (82)

³⁷ Ibid. (83)

³⁸ Ibid. (84)

³⁹ Ibid.

the institutional pyramid was the Association Council.⁴⁰ The Association Council was to be chaired, on a six-month rotation basis, by a Community representative and by one from Greece respectively and had the authority to set up a committee to assist the performance of its tasks, including a committee to “ensure continued cooperation necessary for the proper functioning of the Treaty.” The Association Council had the authorization to define the tasks and powers of these committees.⁴¹ The Governments of the Member States, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission or the Greek Government could well refer to the Association Council any dispute concerning the application or interpretation of the Agreement.⁴²

3.2. Application

Implementation of the Treaty ceased in April 1967, following a military coup and the takeover of power by the “Greek Regime of the Colonels”. By freezing the Agreement, the EEC restricted the implementation of the tariff reductions and left the agreement in suspense until the restoration of democracy. This took place in July 1974, with the collapse of the military dictatorship and the restoration of a democratic government. In November of the same year, the new Greek Government informed the EC of its intention to apply for full membership, and on 12 June 1975 it formally submitted its application.⁴³

In the mid-1970s it seemed that there were no major difficulties to proceed with enlargement and accept the new unequal partners in the EC; namely, the unequal partners Greece, Portugal and Spain showed a desire and ambition to apply for membership in the Community. Greece, like the other two countries, was willing to join the Community which was reflecting a level of institutional development beyond the specific boundaries these countries were striving to achieve.⁴⁴ Greece was mainly seeking for EC membership due to political reasons.⁴⁵ The reasons why Greece was willing to acquire full-fledged accession to the Community can be summarized as follows: (1) Greece saw the Community as an institutional framework dominated by stability, and deemed it would be a contribution to its own democratic political system and institutions; (2) Greece sought to strengthen its independence and position within the regional and international system by developing its relations with other international actors outside the United States; (3) Greece considered the Community as a powerful factor that would contribute to the development and modernization of the Greek economy and society; (4) Greece, as a European country, sought to be present and able to influence the process

⁴⁰ Tatham, Allan. *Enlargement of the European Union*. Alphen Aan Den Rijn and Austin: Kluwer Law International, 2009 (29)

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid. (30)

⁴⁴ Gürzel, Günay Aylin. *Greece's Accession to the EU and its integration process*. Ankara: Bilkent University, 2004 (15)

⁴⁵ Kaiser, Wolfram, Elvert, Jürgen. *European Union Enlargement A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004 (84-85)

of European integration, as well as the configuration of the European model; (5) The response of the European Community to the Greek application was initially expressed by the European Commission, which according to Article 237 (at the time) of the Treaty of Rome had to express its “opinion” on the country’s application for accession to the Community. The Commission issued its “opinion” on 28 January 1976, stating that a “clearly positive reply” should be given to Greece’s application for accession, and proposed a proposal to institutionalize the pre-accession transition period before full institutional integration could take place, in order to implement the required economic reforms.⁴⁶ The membership decision should primarily be interpreted as a security policy decision. Membership was seen as a means of balancing the US influence and power, and strengthening Greece’s Western orientation and commitment.⁴⁷

The Commission’s opinion resulted with acceptance of the Greek application and advice to open the negotiations, but the accession clearly provided for a pre-accession period, as well as transitional periods for Greece following the accession.⁴⁸ There were three reasons for the Commission’s ambivalent stance: (1) The EC’s delicately balanced approach to Greece and Turkey, with their respective association agreements and eventual full membership, would lead to some unease within the respective circles; (2) Economic implications and structural weaknesses in the economy; (3) Fears about the effect of the Greek membership onto the integration process, especially regarding the direct elections in the European Parliament.⁴⁹ In spite of such findings, the Commission proposed a pre-accession period that would allow Greece to prepare for membership, and which would include significant financial support to ensure the necessary structural adjustments, until the time Greece became fully acquainted with the functioning of the EC institutions and the decision-making processes. Amid strong opposition from the Greek government and much of the effective lobbying by Greek Conservative Prime Minister Karamanlis, the Council of Ministers rejected the Commission’s opinion and instead decided to open the negotiations.⁵⁰ Formal negotiations were concluded at a conference between the Community and Greece, and they lasted from 27 July 1976 (with the opening of the ministerial meeting) to 23 May 1979. However, this was by no means a smooth process. The opinion of the Commission was adopted on 28 January 1976, and the statement was qualified as lukewarm. Greece’s accession prospects had been met with considerable skepticism.⁵¹

46 “Greece’s course in the EU”, Hellenic Republic Ministry of foreign affairs, accessed October 16, 2019, <https://www.mfa.gr/en/foreign-policy/greece-in-the-eu/greeces-course-in-the-eu.html>.

47 Kaiser, Wolfram, Elvert, Jürgen. *European Union Enlargement A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004 (85)

48 Tatham, Allan. *Enlargement of the European Union*. Alphen Aan Den Rijn and Austin: Kluwer Law International, 2009 (30)

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Kaiser, Wolfram, Elvert, Jürgen. *European Union Enlargement A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004 (85)

3.3 Negotiations

The negotiations for accession of Greece began on July 27, 1976, and the Agreement on accession of Greece to the European Community was concluded on May 23, 1979.⁵² Initially, France sought to delay the actual negotiations in order to allow Spain and Portugal - which had recently rejected the dictatorship - to form a group of three candidates, due to the French concerns about EEC cohesion, regional differences and the impact on the agricultural exports of French farmers. That proposal was rejected, but there were concerns that any delay in the negotiations with Greece would send out a completely wrong signal to Spain and Portugal.⁵³ Meanwhile, especially on the topic of the Greek-Cypriot-Turkish triangle, negative arguments had often been voiced, expressing the unease and potentially detrimental effects of Greece's approach to the EC-Turkey relations. The extent of this concern was pointed out by the Commission in relation to the Greek-Turkish relations where it was categorically stated that the Community "should not become part of the dispute" and called on both sides to eliminate their differences.⁵⁴ The Commission also said that Greece and Turkey should find a "fair and lasting solution" to their differences, and Greece complained in this statement about political interference outside the Commission's remit.⁵⁵

The Commission's key proposal was to establish a transitional period, which could be agreed in the context of the accession negotiations. Like Karamanlis, the Commission considered the application to be primarily political, aimed at improving the balance of power between Athens and Ankara, as well as boosting the prospects for the fragile democracy. Thus, the accession was a purely political decision, which carried "a serious risk with the enlargement of the Community amid the Greek-Turkish dispute, thus disrupting the balance that the EC had previously proclaimed in the sense of preserving relations with both countries."⁵⁶ The implication of this was that the EC was initially placed at an equal distance from the two countries, and by accepting Greece as a full member the Community would become directly a part of the "Aegean Cold War". Although Greece had given firm assurances that it was not going to block the development of the EC-Turkey relations, it was inevitable that the Greek-Turkish stalemate would eventually escalate into a Community problem.⁵⁷ The "good neighborhood" criterion remained to be a permanent element in the procedure, at which

52 "Second enlargement: Greece", Digital Research in European Studies, accessed October 15, 2019, <https://www.cvce.eu/en/education/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58a-d4686a3e68ff/4a6854b3-62e2-4e41-aba6-9ccf2cf5a859>.

53 Tatham, Allan. *Enlargement of the European Union*. Alphen Aan Den Rijn and Austin: Kluwer Law International, 2009 (31)

54 Sjurseren, Helene. *Questioning EU Enlargement Europe in search of identity*. London: Routledge, 2006 (23)

55 Emmert, Frank., Petrovich, Sinisha. *The past, present and future of EU Enlargement*. Fordham International Law Journal, Vol. 37, No. 5, pp. 1349-1419, 2014 (1368)

56 Kaiser, Wolfram., Elvert, Jurgen. *European Union Enlargement A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004 (86)

57 *Ibid.*

Greece had to stress that it was not going to block Turkey's accession at a later stage.⁵⁸ The Council of Ministers unanimously accepted the Greek application in the course of the same month, and since then, restoring full symmetry between Athens and Ankara has become an unattainable, and, in most cases, unreachable goal.⁵⁹ Hence, the "fight" for the Greek membership was primarily for political and security purposes, and the economic conditions for entry became an "easy" sacrifice for the future membership.

From the Greek side, the emphasis was placed on the speed and completion of the negotiations at almost any cost. Economic considerations were subordinated to political ones. This resulted in a clash between the government and Kyriazidis⁶⁰, as well as a split in the negotiating team that led to Kyriazidis resigning in early January 1977, within less than two months since the negotiations commenced. This event reflected the reality of the Greek government's political preferences. Karamanlis had appointed Viron Theodopoulos as Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry and as the new Chairman of the Committee. At the same time, the Minister of Foreign Affairs took the lead, replacing the Minister of Coordination in the negotiations at ministerial level.⁶¹ From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, the issue of the Greek EC membership faced divisions among political elites. New Democracy advocated for EC membership, democratization of Greek society, and economic development, and PASOK promoted a direct rejection of EC membership, by calling for Greece's political and military independence.⁶² The main issues within the negotiations focused on: agriculture; free movement of workers and regional policy.

The Commission highlighted Greece's approach and noted the problems in the country's agricultural sector and its impact on the EEC. Disagreements over this point concerned the size and development of farmers' economies and the export of Greek agricultural products, which were in competition with those of the French and Italian farmers.⁶³

The free movement of workers was also an extremely sensitive issue. The Commission considered that external migration was likely to decrease after the accession. However, the Greek attempts to secure direct access to the EC labor market after the accession were partially thwarted. EC and Western countries faced period of acute unemployment and economic recession.⁶⁴ The reasons why Greece, as well as Karamanlis were actively committed to Greece's accession to the EC, can be summarized as follows: first, Greece considered that through the Community it would be able to guarantee the stability and democracy in the country; second, Greece could guarantee its own security through

58 Emmert, Frank., Petrovich, Sinisha. *The past, present and future of EU Enlargement*. Fordham International Law Journal, Vol. 37, No. 5, pp. 1349-1419, 2014 (1368)

59 Kaiser, Wolfram., Elvert, Jurgен. *European Union Enlargement A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004 (86)

60 Николаос Кириязидис бил на чело на Централниот комитет надлежен за проговорите и финализирање на грчките позиции

61 Kaiser, Wolfram., Elvert, Jurgен. *European Union Enlargement A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004 (87)

62 Ibid. (88-89)

63 Tatham, Allan. *Enlargement of the European Union*. Alphen Aan Den Rijn and Austin: Kluwer Law International, 2009 (31)

64 Ibid. (32)

the EC membership; third, accession to the Community, according to Karamanlis, was considered a factor that would contribute to the development and modernization of the Greek economy and Greek society; and fourth, but not least, Karamanlis sought that Greece, as a European country, would have a “presence” and influence in the European integration process.⁶⁵ Following the conclusion of the pre-accession negotiations, the Accession Treaty was signed on 28 May 1979 and, after ratification, it entered into force on 1 January 1981. The agreement provided for a general transition period of five years, ending at the end of 1985. In some sectors there was no transition period or it was much shorter. Only in relation to the free movement of persons and the unrestricted export of tomatoes and peaches, a transition period of seven years was accepted, ending at the end of 1987.⁶⁶

Accession of Greece to the European Community

In 1981, major changes took place in the Greek foreign policy. These big changes, above all, started with Greece’s accession to the European Community on January 1, 1981, when it became the tenth member.⁶⁷ The decision on Greek membership in the EC in January 1981 was accepted by a wide range of political parties in Greece, and the EC became a central part of Greece’s foreign relations.⁶⁸ The same year, a change took place in Greece, and a socialist government led by PASOK came to power. Despite the anti-European and anti-Western policies advocated by PASOK, in the mid-1980s PASOK changed its stance and its anti-Western policies towards the EC. The Greek government recognized the benefits of the EC membership, as it could help resolve the problems with Cyprus.⁶⁹

Conclusion

The bloc divisions had completely changed the relations in the continent, and the issue of Greece was the first major challenge for the US foreign policy during the Cold War. The Cyprus dispute was an additional motive for the growing presence of the US and the Soviet influence in the political scene in Greece. The fall of the junta contributed to the democratization of the Greek society and to the full Europeanization of Greece. The history of the EC shows us that enlargement acts as an impetus for deepening the prospects of the countries, as it insists on institutional changes and reforms in line with the Community policies, with the emphasis that the enlargement must not jeopardize

⁶⁵ Gürzel, Günay Aylin. *Greece’s Accession to the EU and its integration process*. Ankara: Bilkent University, 2004 (20-21)

⁶⁶ Tatham, Allan. *Enlargement of the European Union*. Alphen Aan Den Rijn and Austin: Kluwer Law International, 2009 (32)

⁶⁷ “Greece”, European Union, accessed October 16, 2019, www.europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries/member-countries/greece_en.

⁶⁸ Couloumbis, Theodore., Kariotis Theodore. et al. *Greece in the Twentieth Century*. London and New York: Frank Cass, 2003 (162-163)

⁶⁹ Gürzel, Günay Aylin. *Greece’s Accession to the EU and its integration process*. Ankara: Bilkent University, 2004 (23)

the foundations, goals and the cohesion of the Community, nor its future development. Unlike the other applicants within the second and the third waves of enlargement, Greece had a privileged position. However, the second and third enlargements represent the first conscious enlargements of the Community in supporting transitional democracies. Political consolidation and the return to the European family of democracies were essential goals for Greece, Portugal and Spain, as a confirmation of their international rehabilitation. At the same time, democratic and financial support contributed to their economic growth in the medium and long term; while in the short term, the membership had highlighted the economic progress that these countries had made until then, confirming as credible their prospects for foreign direct investment and increased trade opportunities. This parallelism between democratic consolidation, increased EC funding and the prospect of economic development had been present, to varying degrees, also in the subsequent enlargements. The EC, through its democratic support, emphasized the importance and strengthening of security in the Community. Hence it can be argued that the future enlargement was achieved for European security reasons. Portugal, Greece and Spain made progress in the process of democratization in order to meet EC priorities. On the other hand, it was clear that any rejection of the application by these three countries" implied the risk of triggering the communist forces which were apparently still alive in each of them", thus highlighting the reasons for the second and third wave of enlargement as political, both for the countries and for the member states. The future EC memberships were seen as a "reward for democratization".

The Commission issued its "opinion" on 28 January 1976, stating that a "clearly positive reply" should be given to Greece's application for accession, with a proposal to institutionalize the pre-accession transition period towards full institutional integration, so that the country could implement the required economic reforms. The position of the Commission was influenced by several factors, which had primarily a political background. Among the more significant geopolitical aspects of such EC decision were the Cold War and the Cyprus dispute, issues considered to be potent enough to facilitate the breakthrough of communist movements within the Greek society, the possibility of reverting to undemocratic regimes, and the violation of human rights, especially during the junta, therefore the security issue was regarded as inevitable for the further functioning of the EC. The will to foster democratic governance was considered a sufficient argument to surpass the Commission's negative economic assessment of Greece's accession.

Among the significant arguments from the Greek side regarding its integration into the European family were the national independence, strengthening of democratic freedoms, cooperation, social and economic progress, strengthening of security. The main driving force for the EC to proceed with the enlargement with Greece in 1981 was the geopolitical consideration. Despite the negative assessment made by the Commission in regard of the future enlargement of the Community with Greece, the importance of the geopolitical

factor, as well as the security, were highlighted as crucial to the enlargement. The impact of the Cold War and its uncertain outcome, the geographical location of Greece, the strained relations with Turkey over the unresolved issue of Cyprus' future status, the possibility of stimulating communist forces apparently still present within the Greek society, as a result of the Soviet influence, were only some of the reasons supporting the European Community enlargement with Greece as a tenth member state of the European family. The restoration of democracy in Greece was a signal to the efforts made by the state to move along the same lines with the other Western political systems. Greece's motive for becoming a full-fledged member of this large European family was: national independence, strengthening democratic freedoms, social and economic progress. The Greek membership in the European Union set a precedent for the reason it had implied changes in the conditions required for the membership in the Community which had been applied until then. This practice has continued to be applied also in relation to some subsequent enlargements of the Community.

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