# Macedonian National Identity: Origins, Tensions, and Challenges

A THESIS

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

April 27, 2012

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# Macedonian National Identity: Origins, Tensions, and Challenges

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

By

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Edmond, Oklahoma

2012

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## Content

# Chapter I

## I. Introduction

During the second half of the 20th century many scholars and analysts anticipated a decline in the role of the nation-state in international politics. Some even foresaw a world without nations and nationalism. By the early 1990s, Europe was realizing the dream of integration for an ever closer union. However, even then, when the belief of a post-national world seemed strong, a few observers perceived that the decay of the power-blocs, new collective identifications of pan-nationalism, and nationalization of global communication networks brought anything but the expiration of nationalism (Smith 1991). In the face of different variants of regionalization, transnationalism, and globalization, the overarching position of states' role and authority has actually strengthened with the rise of new waves of post-communist nationalism, leaving national identity as a powerful and proliferating force (Sutherland 2011). Europe was suddenly facing separatist movements, and the world witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Ethnic politics was also persistent in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Consequently, ethnic nationalism has become a global phenomenon and even today continues to be an important political force (Danforth 1995).

For the last two centuries, the nation-state remains the main form of human organization at the country level (Anderson 1991). Precisely because of their globally strengthened position, states have become less amenable to satisfying nationalist claims by ethnic groups within their borders. In contrast to the spirit of the right to national self-determination, states have been typically intolerant of self-determined groups. Again, as Eley and Suny (1996) note, this new

specter of ethnic nationalism has only reinforced the political unity of nation-states. Even when efforts at self-determination have brought ethnic intolerance and ethnic conflict to the very doorsteps of nation-states, the latter have maintained their role as major political actors and have promoted or forced group solutions, one of them being consociational democracy.

Pressured by ethnic nationalism, states have undergone transformations of not only their political systems, but also of the identities of their populations. The shift from nation-states into states consisting of ethnic communities has in turn shaped the ethnic and national identities individuals have. Under the influence of state-sponsored group solutions, designed to protect states' unitary character, the national identity has become their victim.

National identity is a broad, collective, and cultural phenomenon, which may be considered as one of the most important forms of group identity (Tartakovsky 2011). It is a multidimensional and dynamic concept that draws from other kinds of collective identity and reflects the changing conditions and effects of different social factors. On the other hand, national identity is a subjective sense of belonging to a specific national group, which is accompanied by a complex set of cognitions and emotions that express members' attitudes towards their groups and other national groups (Barrett and Davis 2008).

Some national identities in Europe are still a matter of dispute and all of them carry a particular narrative. These include: the Ruthenes, the Silesians, the Vlachs, the Montenegrins, and the Macedonians (S. P. Ramet 2005). Within Europe one of the most remarkable areas to trace identity politics and identity problems would be the Balkans. Before proceeding any further, one should bare the note made by Ivo Banac, almost thirty years ago, which says that "it is more difficult to write summary of most of the Balkan history than the most detailed history of Western Europe, and, for the modern period at least, it has been tried less often" (Banac 1984).

The Balkan Peninsula is characterized by many complex conflicts. Some are territorial disputes, some are identity disputes, and some are cultural disputes. The common link is the mythology that accompanies them (Poulton 1992). Although ancient as any in Europe, when referring to the identities of the Balkan peoples, both national and ethnic, the challenging part is that they are latecomers in their self-assertiveness (Banac 1984). Among these varied conflicts, the Macedonian question is perhaps the most intractable of all (Pettifer 1992).

The Macedonian question has been haunting the Balkans for more than a century. It is a set of disputes over Macedonian identity that has intersected with the state interests of Macedonia's neighbors (S. P. Ramet 2005). In 1912, the Balkan Wars resulted from competing Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian claims concerning Macedonia. During the 19th century, and well into the 20th, disputes over the territory of Macedonia have unfolded in terms of competing claims. Even today, when R. Macedonia (henceforth R. Macedonia) is an independent state and territorial claims are no longer an issue, disputes over the existence and nature of Macedonian identity still remain. These disputes center upon claims concerning the Macedonian nation, language, state, and church.

This thesis argues that Macedonian national identity went from nonexistent to formally recognized, in former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), to be disputed again in the 1990s in the form of a "New" Macedonian question or Skopjan question, when R. Macedonia proclaimed independence. This "New" Macedonian question has been amplified with the Ohrid Framework Agreement (henceforth OFA) in 2001. Establishing a consociational democracy, the Agreement ethnicized the Macedonian state and society and, as a consequence, strengthened the identities of domestic groups at the expense of national identity. Thus, in addition to external disputes, Macedonian national identity has been challenged by internal factors, arising out of the

country's consociational democracy. The consequences of the stabilization of the R. Macedonia as a consociational democracy for its national identity are, in part, the focus of the following discussion.

In general, consociational or power-sharing democracy is a type of democracy which emphasizes the importance of power-sharing among different segments in society (Binningsbo 2005). As Arendt Lijphart (1985) explains consociationalism is characterized by four main political institutions: a grand coalition, a mutual veto, a proportional representation and segmental autonomy. The Macedonian OFA in 2001 prescribed a mechanism for power sharing among ethnic groups in R. Macedonia that satisfied the 20% of population threshold. Accordingly, the power division between government and opposition, is transformed into, power division among groups. Therefore, despite the identity struggles, R. Macedonia, today, is a consolidated democracy and along with Croatia and Albania, is one of the success stories of democratization.

In sum, the Macedonians are among those nationalities that even today are subject to controversy. Therefore, the notion, origins, and tensions of the Macedonian national identity remain an intriguing matter of discussion, or in the spirit of Eric J. Hobsbawm, an "eternal matter of debate".

## II. Statement of the Problem

Ever since the Ottoman Empire began decaying in the 19th century, the Macedonian question has been tormenting the Balkan Peninsula. The Macedonian question comprises a multifaceted dispute over territories, borders, people, their languages, and their identities. After the Second

World War, Macedonian nation-building commenced with the formation of the S. R. Macedonia within the Yugoslav Federation. However, the end of the Cold War gave rise to the R. Macedonia in 1991. With the bloody collapse of the Yugoslav Federation by the mid-1990s, a revived Macedonian question centered upon another set of contesting claims concerning the Macedonian nation. For example, Greece has objected to the very name "Macedonia", which it applies to one of its own provinces. Bulgaria does not recognize the existence of the Macedonian nation and language, considering Macedonians to be Western Bulgarians speaking a variant of Bulgarian. While some nationalist factions in Serbia consider the R. Macedonia to be South Serbia, the Serbian Orthodox Church does not recognize the autocephaly of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Even until 2001, Macedonian national identity was disputed from within the Republic's own borders by the Albanian ethnic community.

Macedonian-Albanian conflicts were brokered by OFA of 2001, which altered the constitution and reconfigured R. Macedonia as a consociational democracy in accordance with the "ethnic community" principle. As a result, Macedonian national identity can be thought of in two ways. On one hand, it may be treated as a separate identity of the Macedonian ethnic group, with possible negative consequences for the consociational mechanism prescribed by the Framework Agreement. Moreover, the construal of Macedonian identity along entirely ethnic lines would complicate relations between R. Macedonia, Greece, and Bulgaria because of its irredentist implications. On the other hand, Macedonian national identity may be described as a nascent civic identification associated with the consociational institutions of R. Macedonia, thus refocusing the discourse of identity away from the nation and towards the state.

## III. Background and Need

After a bout of post-Cold War bloodshed, the countries of the Balkan Peninsula have moved in the direction of joining their fellow Europeans. All of these states have put regional and international integration on their foreign policy priority lists. The highest priority has been put on the integration processes of the European Union (henceforth EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (henceforth NATO), or the so-called Euro-Atlantic family of states. Currently, some Balkan countries are in the EU (Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Greece are member states, while Croatia is an acceding country), some are candidates for membership (R. Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro) and some are potential candidates (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo). In addition, some of the Balkan countries are members of NATO (Slovenia, Croatia, Albania, Bulgaria, and Greece).

In regards to the EU, the R. Macedonia is waiting for an official start of accession negotiations to begin, which is a result of more than ten years of commitment to the integration processes. With respect to NATO, an invitation to join NATO was vetoed by Greece at the 2008 Summit in Bucharest. In December of 2011, this controversial blockage of NATO's membership invitation to R. Macedonia has been adjudicated by the International Court of Justice. The Court found that Greece, by objecting to the admission of R. Macedonia to NATO, has breached its obligation under Article 11 of the Interim Accord of 1995 (International Court of Justice 2011). The accession of R. Macedonia to both the EU and NATO has been held up by Greece's objections. The leaders of these institutions have called for a prompt solution of the name dispute between the two states. Much of the promise of the future depends upon a resolution of the

dispute. It is of immense importance for the Balkan community of states to discuss the challenge of the Macedonian national identity, as its regional integration is imperiled by these struggles.

This discussion addresses a passionate topic that stems from nationalist discourses that have divided the Balkans for more than two centuries. These nationalist discourses have dominated historiographical tradition. As Tziampiris emphasizes, writing history in the Balkans has always been a controversial endeavor undertaken as a part of national, political, partisan, or personal agendas. "It can also have real and occasionally pernicious consequences by nursing grievances, inventing 'truths' and fostering manifestations of extreme chauvinism" (Tziampiris 2011, 69). When these 'truths', 'grievances' and histories are in direct confrontation, excluding each other, the result is an obsession with who is right and who is wrong. "This has often been the case with the Macedonian Question which has aptly been described as 'one of the most explosive issues in the universe' (Legvold 1996, quoted in Tziampiris 2011, 70). One rather simple way to observe the severity of the impact of nationalist discourses in the Balkans is to count the numbers of internet forums and websites that propagate one discourse or another. For example, the website www.topix.com maintains multiple forums where approximately 45,000 threads discuss the Macedonian question. There, at the "Macedonia" forum, one of the most popular topics is the question: "Is Macedonia Hellenic YES or NO". From 2009 onward, it has been visited every 5 minutes and now contains more than 300,000 comments (see image 1).

In the academic community, an excellent example of the intensity of these disputes is Anastasia Karakasidou's experience with Cambridge University Press regarding her manuscript of the book *Fields of Wheat, Rivers of Blood* (later published by University of Chicago Press). After 18 months of preparations and reviews, the Press decided not to publish her book as a result of fear for the safety of the press staff members in Greece. As Lyall (1996) recounts it,

Karakasidou's 300-page study of ethnicity and identity in the northern Greek province of Macedonia was controversial since it argued that residents of that province do not consider themselves Greeks (Lyall 1996)

The first reaction came as a result of three of the Press's academic advisers in anthropology "who charged the publisher, one of the most prestigious in the world, with violating the author's freedom of speech and caving in to a threat that was largely hypothetical" (Lyall 1996). From campus to campus, the message sent by these scholars to boycott the Cambridge University Press spread to thousands of anthropologists and historians. The Press has managed to alienate leading academics, the British Foreign Office, and the intelligence services. The Press was accused of self-censorship and commercial expediency (Mazower 1996).

The Greek government was also upset at the portrayal of Greeks as "intolerant maniacs liable to fly off the handle at the sight of an academic monograph" (Mazower 1996, 2). Ultimately, commercial motives were the most likely explanation. The Press had an economic interest not to upset the Greeks as it was a major provider of English proficiency exams and had a large market for English-language books in Greece.

As the name dispute illustrates, the Macedonian question is still very sensitive underscoring the need for further scholarship in ethnic and national identity in the Balkans. The present discussion attempts to shed light on the consequences of the 2001 OFA for ethnic and identity politics in the R. Macedonia. In addition, using ideas from the constructivist social paradigm, the discussion proposes a point of view that steps outside of the frames of present-day possibilities. Including R. Macedonia in the Euro-Atlantic family may promote identity solutions that would be elusive without the institutional cooperation and norms that exist within the EU and NATO. The discussion in this thesis is not referring to notions of any ancestry as it deems it unfruitful,

cumbersome and unproductive in any manner. Nationalist discourses in the Balkans are in constant and perpetual contradiction to each other precisely because they arise from the position of absolute truths and without any opportunity or regard for change.

## IV. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature, causes and consequences of Macedonian national identity as a collective phenomenon. In the light of most recent events regarding Macedonian identity (the ongoing name dispute and inability of R. Macedonia to enter NATO and the EU, and the process of antiquization) this study insists on post-modern or constructivist understanding of national identity. Moreover, it points to the problems that stem from Balkan nationalist discourses, aiming to reconcile them within the constructivist understanding of how identities and social selves are created.

## V. Research Questions

The Macedonian question has been researched for decades, and in essence, it has never lost the power to animate scholars (Mazower, Introduction to the Study of Macedonia 1996). This discussion is focused on the development of Macedonian national identity in the course of the 20$^{th}$ century. The biggest challenge to the Macedonian nation-building from within has come from the Albanian ethnic community and was, in part, resolved with the 2001 OFA. R. Macedonia has also been challenged by the so-called New Macedonian question, which has prevented, or inhibited, its Euro-Atlantic integration efforts. In its various aspects, this question

is manifested as the name dispute with Greece, the church dispute with Serbia, and the language and nationality dispute with Bulgaria.

The most important research question asks whether it is possible to move beyond the discussion of nationhood, into the discussion of statehood that is extensively guided by the Euro-Atlantic integration processes. Also, the international and regional structures may offer an arena for cooperation among rivalries. The research question that arises then is whether such an arena could be utilized for finding potential solutions to the Macedonian controversy. If R. Macedonia becomes a member of the EU and NATO before, rather than after, a solution to the name dispute with Greece is reached and new possible mechanisms for resolving the overall Macedonian question may arise.

## VI. Definitions

A discussion of Macedonian national identity would have to begin with previous definitions of Macedonia and the Macedonians. Defining these basic terms might simplify the complex task of discussing the Macedonian question.

What is Macedonia? Who are the Macedonians? What is the Macedonian question? Most of the definitions of Macedonia contradict each other. Macedonia may be defined as a geographical area, a glorious ancient territory, or as the present-day state of R. Macedonia. Ancient Macedonia has been defined as an ancient country north of Greece or an ancient kingdom in northern Greece. It depends on which entry in the existing encyclopedia or dictionary one decides to consult.

The most recent online edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines Macedonian as "member of an ancient people inhabiting the kingdom of Macedonia", "an inhabitant of the region of Macedonia" or "a person from any of the geographical entities called Macedonia, esp. the administration general of Macedonia in modern Greece or the R. Macedonia (a republic within Yugoslavia, 1944–91 and since 1991 an independent state)". The dictionary also explains that the territory of Macedonia "after the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 was partitioned between several countries, and, by the late 20th century, parts of its territory fell in Greece, the Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Albania". A Macedonian is also "a member of a people of Macedonia distinguished by their Slavonic language and culture and a person identified with this ethnic group, whether or not a native or inhabitant of Macedonia". Macedonian as an adjective is also defined as "the South Slavonic language of the Slav Macedonians, closely related to Bulgarian and written in the Cyrillic alphabet" or as "of or relating to (ancient or present-day) Macedonia or Macedonians".

The second online edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, from 1989, defined Macedonian as "pertaining to Macedonia, an ancient country north of Greece; now, a geographical area in the central Balkans lying astride the frontiers of southern Yugoslavia, northern Greece, and southwestern Bulgaria; also, the name of a province in Yugoslavia".

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines Macedonia as "Makedonija, officially Republic of Macedonia, or Republika Makedonija, country of the southern Balkans, bordered to the north by Kosovo and Serbia, to the east by Bulgaria, to the south by Greece, and to the west by Albania. The capital is Skopje "; as the "republic located on the part of the southern Balkan Peninsula traditionally known as Macedonia". The second definition of Macedonia as a land again brings a new set of complexities as it pronounces Macedonia as a "region in the south-central part of the

Balkan Peninsula that comprises northern and northeastern Greece, the southwestern corner of Bulgaria, and the independent Republic of Macedonia".

These definitions underscore the multiple meanings of Macedonia and Macedonians. Macedonians have been described as the people who live in geographical Macedonia, the ancient descendants of Alexander the Great, and Slavs. They have been considered Slavophone Greeks, South Serbs, Western Bulgarians, and a distinct nationality or citizens of R. Macedonia (S. P. Ramet 2005). Hugh Poulton (1992) argues that there are three ways to identify Macedonians. The first identification refers to inhabitants of geographic Macedonia and includes the territory of R. Macedonia, part of southwest Bulgaria, part of northern Greece, and part of Albania. The second identification of Macedonians is the one that refers more narrowly to the citizens of R. Macedonia. The third identification of Macedonians refers to the Slav population living within either of the former two areas, i.e. ethnic Macedonians.

Jane K. Cowan (2000) argues Macedonia and its meaning are beset by a diversity of names and terms. Macedonia, as Loring M. Danforth (1995) notes, means the "same thing" and "too many things". An excellent example of this perplexing contestation can be read in Cowan's (2000) edition on Macedonia. In her note on names and terms, Cowan (2000) writes:

> Imagine three second-cousins – Kyril (a Macedonian citizen), Kole (a Bulgarian citizen) and Kostas (a Greek citizen) – whose grandfathers were three brothers living, until the First World War, in a small village near to the town that Greeks call Kastoria, Macedonians and Bulgarians call Kostur. When, nowadays, Kyril uses different name for 'X' from Kole or Kostas, he signals that he sees 'X' differently from them, and he simultaneously constructs that difference in the very act of naming. To complicate the situation even more, Kyril, Kostas and Kole may not be absolutely consistent in the words they choose for 'X': what they choose may depend on the context. Conversely, the 'same' word – 'Macedonia' or 'Macedonians' – means different thing to Kyril, Kole and Kostas. (Cowan 2000, xiii)

At a minimum the reference literature (encyclopedias, dictionaries) defines the Macedonian question as a political and territorial dispute that occurred during the 19th and the 20th centuries. This is a remarkable and complex discussion. The question of a separate Macedonian identity has not been contested, as much as the idea that a separate identity of Macedonians exits along and apart from the identities of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia.

With regards to the term antiquization, a definition is suggested by Vangeli (2011) and comes from the history of arts and originally designates "the Renaissance practice of giving a city the appearance of ancient Rome or Athens through the introduction of structures organized in the classical mode" (Tzonis and Lefaivre quoted in Vangeli 2011).

## VII. Methodology

This thesis is genuinely qualitative in its matter. Like most qualitative studies, the discussion on the Macedonian national identity delves into a particular situation in order to better understand a phenomenon within its context and the perspectives of the participants involved (Gay 2006). As such, this thesis has a qualitative research design that utilizes the approach of narrative inquiry and a case study of the Macedonian question.

Examining identities includes exploring how self-awareness is formed and understood. The narrative approach is a kind of storytelling. Barbara H. Smith (1980, 162) defines narratives as "verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened." The narrative is also the way individuals and groups form memories, remember the past, and construct present realities. Giovannoli (2008, 2) argues that since "we create ourselves in narrative, narrative methodology is a most appropriate means for the study of human beings".

Narrative inquiry tends to follow a sequence. The sequence may be a chronological order of events or a thematic order of causal events. Similarly, the thesis examines the early beginning of the Macedonian national consciousness as building blocks for the later "imagining" of the nation. This period of proto-national identity provides the construction process with symbols, events and individuals that are revived and reanimated in historiographies and identity politics.

This thesis employs the case study method to intensively analyze the origins and tensions in the construction of Macedonian national identity. The method of case study is common for social sciences. A case study can be descriptive of phenomena and or it can be explanatory and aim for finding causation. This thesis aims to describe the challenges to present-day Macedonian national identity as well as to explore it in-depth and in a longitudinal sense. The intensiveness of the case study method enables a focused understanding of particular instances important for the development of the Macedonian national identity.

## Chapter II: Review of the Literature

This discussion of Macedonian national identity draws from both the literature on nations and nationalism and the literature on identity. The role of ethnicity and ethnic identity is also an important part of the scholarship on national identity, particularly the study of the Macedonian national identity. It is still an ongoing debate whether the Macedonian question should be observed as exclusively as a struggle between ethnic groups or rather a conflict between national movements transforming peasants into nationals (Livanios 2008).

Stressing the necessity to investigate different approaches to Macedonian national identity, one must step away from the mass nationalist discourses that prevail in the identity politics of the

day. Therefore, the approach to national identity must be careful in its deconstructive ideas, at it may always be accused of accommodation with one or the other nationalist discourse.

Thus, the following review of the literature examines the most relevant ideas first, within the general study on nations and nationalism, and then its implications for the study of identity and national identity. Since the social construction of national identity and memories requires material to build upon, ethnicity provides those building blocks. At the same time, the social construction of relations that individuals "imagine" has to start from somewhere, and this discussion locates the beginning of the construction of Macedonian national identity with the first political unit of S. R. Macedonia.

## I. Multidisciplinary Approach to National Identity

The global revival of nationalisms has contributed toward the revival of nationalism as an area of study. Scholars of nationalism have explored the origins of the ethno-nationalism. Some scholars (Gellner 1983, Anderson 1991) have argued that nationalism came as a result of a particular developmental (as if inevitable) event or phase; others (Hobsbawm 1972, 1990) argued that the reason for the ethnic revival at the end of the 20$^{th}$ century was a continuation of the late 18$^{th}$ century processes of national unification.

Proliferating nationalisms as political phenomena have also reawakened scholarly interest in the study of identity. Thus the literature on nationalism has highlighted the role of nationalist and ethnic movements in transforming (often violently) political and social structure. Social sciences have responded and contributed to the scholarship of nationalism and identities, as a result of the intensive political changes that have happened throughout the world.

Therefore, one must take careful and multidisciplinary approach to the discussion of the national identity. In the constructivist spirit, the concept of culture is of immense importance in the scholarship of nationalism. Hence, this text, in addition to discussing identities, is, in essence, arguing for a concept of culture.

In part, this thesis explores the social construction of Macedonian national identity. It shows how the politics of memory has helped to shape the idea of the Macedonian nation. Constructivist international relations theory provides an optimistic point of view as it sees that changes in interests and identities can happen over time. This point of view offers the prospect of resolving decades-long struggles surrounding the Macedonian national identity. Resolving these struggles within the international structures may support the constructivist suggestion that "institutions can help reconstruct identities" (Fierke 2010) and thus bring the Macedonian question's identity struggles to an end.

So, what does a careful and multidisciplinary approach to the question of national identity mean? Careful refers to escaping the trap of nationalist discourse. In order to have an effective discussion on national identity one must maintain sufficient analytic distance between the examined identities as part of the nationalist discourse and the discourse in which one writes.

Why multiple disciplines' perspective is needed? In the spirit of the multidisciplinary milieu, this text discusses identity, national and ethnic, but it also surveys the scholarship of nationalism and nations, ethnicity and ethnic groups. Since all social sciences are very close to each other, but also very close to the nationalist discourse that they study, the only way to maintain the required distance is through defining their tasks as the deconstruction of nationalist discourse.

## II. Constructivism and Social Construction

This text identifies two important divisions in the contemporary discussion on national identity that stem from nationalism and ethnicity on one side, and national and ethnic identities on the other. The idea of social construction of identity has not been accepted unanimously. Moreover, constructivism has been considered as one of the "four paradigms that currently are competing, or have until recently competed, for acceptance as the paradigm of choice in informing and guiding inquiry, especially qualitative inquiry" (Guba and Lincoln 2005, 105).

### A. Constructivism as a paradigm

Paradigms are considered as "basic belief systems based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions" (Guba and Lincoln 2005, 105). Constructivism, as with other paradigms, is a human construction itself and subject to errors. Thus, it is expected that different scholars disagree with its "beliefs". No human construction can be "incontrovertibly right" and the "advocates of any particular construction must rely on *persuasiveness* and *utility* rather than *proof* in arguing their position" (Guba and Lincoln 2005, 108).

Social constructivism is a contemporary theory that originates from the constructivist system of beliefs. It draws its assumptions from constructivist epistemology (Piaget 1967) that discusses the nature of scientific learning. One arrives at knowledge by being "interactively linked" to the examined object. Thus, "findings" are *literally created* as the investigation proceeds" (Guba and Lincoln 2005). As a result, social constructivism is a learning theory, a theory in international relations, and a sociological theory of knowledge. Social constructivism's ontology is relativist,

meaning that it assumes "multiple, apprehendable, and sometimes conflicting social realities that are the products of human intellects, but that may change as their constructors become more informed and sophisticated" (Guba and Lincoln 2005, 108).

In the United States, social constructivism was introduced first in sociology as a theory of knowledge. The theory examines knowledge as being constructed by social groups in social settings. A classic scholarship from that period is Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967). Influenced by their mentor, Alfred Schutz, Berger and Luckmann have written about the process of creating reality within society. This process of actual construction of reality is done through the knowledge of individuals and their perceptions of their roles and actions. When this knowledge is institutionalized, it becomes a constitutive part of society. Social construction is a continuous and active process resulting from the constructive work of a social group and the choices individuals make. Social construction is finalized when it creates individuals, who learn who they are as being part of a social group or culture that shares common artifacts and meanings.

Social constructivism is essentially a learning theory (influenced by psychologists such as Vygotsky and Bruner), which argues that individuals, through processes of accommodation and assimilation, produce knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas (Tobias and Duffy 2009). Individuals learn within the context of their experiences. As such, social constructivism is laden with values and claims that knowledge and reality stem from their cultural context. Hence, its task is to explore how individuals and groups construct their reality and knowledge, and how they reproduce their own interpretations and their knowledge about it. This emphasis on the cultural context has contributed to social constructivism's cultural turn in the social sciences (Danforth 1995).

In international relations theories, constructivism claims that international relations are socially constructed. The roots of constructivism in international relations came from authors like Nicholas Onuf and John Ruggie (Fierke 2010). Presently the most prominent constructivist in the study of international relations is Alexander Wendt. Constructivism as an international relations theory challenges neorealist and neoliberal assumptions. International relations arise not from the fixed human nature or from the features of the world politics, but are solely dependent upon context. Since constructivism in international relations is able to conceptualize change in the interstate relations, it is a useful perspective for this thesis. Protracted disputes among the Balkan states cannot be explained as a consequence of the balance of power or an anarchical international system. The presence of international institutions is crucial and must be considered in the overall analysis. Membership in these institutions should not be seen as a reward or a motivation for solving disputes. This thesis argues that there exists a possibility for change in social relationships. Thus, instead treating the membership in EU and NATO as a carrot for solving disputes, it should be the arena for solving them.

B. The task of deconstruction

A constructivist perspective on national identity must not only discuss nationalist discourses separately and effectively, from a distance, but also show how precisely social categories are constructed. While nations are reified in nationalist discourse, they must be dereified in the scientific discourse. The process of dereifing raises an important instance within social science. This text examines the source, development, and existence of identity, ethnicity and nationalism, from a constructivist position.

Still, in order to have an effective discussion, the deconstruction of the nationalist concepts of identity, culture and ethnicity has to be done by showing how these are socially and historically constructed. This methodology requires presentation of the nationalist discourse and analysis of the processes of construction of its concepts. This must also be applied to the entire array of concepts that nationalist discourse presents. It is what Richard Handler (1985) describes as "destructive analysis". Here, it is important to distinguish between the processes of reification and objectivation. While reification considers human products as natural or divine phenomena, the objectivation implies that the socially constructed reality is an external and objective fact (Handler 1985).

C. The first dividing line: does the social construction of concepts imply their artificiality?

The first dividing line in this discussion stems from the constructivist paradigm or how real are social phenomena if they are socially constructed? With regards to this thesis, how real are identities, nations and nationalism, and how are they linked with ethnicity? The mere attempt to answer these questions is laden with complexities of different interpretations of reality. Despite the relativism that often is subscribed to constructivism, the idea of socially constructed or "imagined" reality does not imply an unreal or a fake reality. The question of reality is the first, ontological question that each paradigm aims to answer and it is the question of "what is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?" (Guba and Lincoln 2005, 108). Constructivism holds that social phenomena are neither real nor artificial. As Guba and Lincoln contend, "constructions are not more or less 'true,' in any absolute sense, but

simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated. Constructions are alterable, as are their associated 'realities.'"(Guba and Lincoln 2005, 111).

This thesis argues that social categories are both real and socially constructed. Although in some instances the concepts of "imagined" and "invented" sound as an "imaginary", they are not designed and named with that purpose. The fact that a community is "imagined" does not imply that it is not real or artificial. Social reality is a product of human reasoning. As constructors change their constructions change in a mutually-interacting fashion.

Specifically, social constructs by actors and states stem from real social categories that are the essence and base of the construction process itself. The construction process cannot create construction building blocks of phenomena as they exist in their own reality. In addition, these building blocks function as mobilizing base for the creation of the identities associated with the certain construct.

The tendency to misunderstand social constructs as not as genuine social forms or as negation of identities or groups points to the troublesome aspect of the constructivist claim. It arouses affective responses from groups that have been constructed on the basis of sentimental bonds as opposed to instrumental bonds. These affective reactions happen when sentiment groups, i.e. ethnic groups, feel threatened. The threat comes from the idea that groups cannot be real if they are not based on instrumental ties. The emotional responses to the constructivist idea, that all communities, groups, nations are unreal and artificial, must be dismissed. To constructivism, social categories are constructed and drawn from real social material; this is the essence that lies at the heart of every social invention. The affective attachment of individuals for their groups is almost always assumed and does not influence the "realness" or autonomy of social categories (Fenton 2010).

The recent and most common approach to the concepts of identity, ethnicity and nationalism, to treat them as socially constructed has raised important questions. The idea of social construction of knowledge is not supported equally and it has been challenged, partially or fully, by modernist authors like Gellner or Smith. Postmodernist constructivists, like Benedict Anderson, Eric J. Hobsbawm, Loring M. Danforth, or Steve Fenton, argue that nations do exit both as human products and as objective social facts and that social analysis must acknowledge it, but still insist on its socially constructed character. Thus, this discussion culminates with the question of whether the idea of phenomena being socially constructed implies their artificiality. This dividing line has also affected the study of nationalism.

Another essential discussion within the study of socially constructed phenomena is the idea of the nation as an imagined community. Authors like Benedict Anderson (1991) and Eric Hobsbawm (1991) agree that nations and nationalisms are modern phenomena. They argue that the nationalists' concepts of identity and ethnicity are socially and historically constructed. The constructivists have been criticized as looking at the nation as a wholly imaginary category since they wish to demystify nationalist views of the nation as somehow primordial. However, this is, in a way, a vulgarization of the idea of social construction, as it deems anything socially constructed as unreal and artificial.

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* is one of the most widely cited works in the humanities (Cheah 1999). Anderson (1983, 1991) defines the nation as an imagined political community, which is at the same time both inherently limited and sovereign. Imagined communities are socially and culturally constructed via complex political and social processes. Pre-industrial mercantile capitalism has given way to "print capitalism". Anderson argues that the emergence of "print capitalism" and

the role of the literature and culture, gave rise to national consciousness and national public spheres. Anderson's (1991) main concern is with the birth of the "framework of new consciousness". His formal argument is about how nations are imagined rather than what they imagine themselves to be (Cheah 1999).

Eric J. Hobsbawm is also a significant contributor to the scholarship of nationalism, especially with his *Invention of Tradition* (1983) co-authored with Terence O. Ranger. The concept of the invented tradition says that traditions are very often a rather recent phenomenon, a matter of great importance for the modern development of nations and nationalism, as the differences between tradition and modernity are also invented. In *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, published in 1990, Hobsbawm argues that nations and nationalism are "dual phenomena" that have been "constructed from above". While other scholars examine nationalism as a self-preservation effort of traditional elites, Hobsbawm looks at "middle peasants" that seek to protect their way of life and their advantages (Kemper 1991). Thus, nationalism has to be observed from "below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings, and interests of ordinary people" (Hobsbawm 1990, 10).

D. <u>The second dividing line: on the origins of nations or a temporal one</u>

In addition to examining what social construction means, it is important to observe another dividing line in the scholarship, namely that concerning the temporal origin of phenomena or how old are nations. This is a rather postmodernist discussion that argues how individuals and groups do, or do not, preserve awareness of the past. At instances this question is more or less reconciled, as there is a common core to which most authors agree. So, despite the fact that in the

scholarship of nationalism the number of competing theories has multiplied and has been subjected to intense scrutiny and debate, a common understanding is that of nationalism emerged in the course of the European 18th century.

Hence, some authors associate nationalism with the power of the modern state. The modern state has the monopoly over the use or threat of the apparatus of violence, thus it is one of the main factors associated with nationalism. In *Nationalism and the State*, John Breuilly (1994) has taken on a general investigation of nationalism as a form of politics. Breuilly creates a typology of nationalist politics and studies cases in comparative historical perspective. He argues that the state plays a key role in shaping nationalism. Thus, nationalism should be understood as a political behavior in the context of the modern state. Breuilly shows that nationalism is related to the means and goal of obtaining and using state power.

Similarly, some authors see nationality as in a close relationship with different bases of citizenship (Bechhofer, et al. 1999). In many societies the formal base of citizenship rights comes from the place of birth or *ius soli*. However, in others *ius sanguinis* prevails, emphasizing the meaning of descendancy and ancestry. Therefore, one's national identity may be observed via the citizenship rights that are obtained. Nationalism begins, in this case, after the establishment of the states and citizenship rights.

Nations, as well as nationalism, socially constructed or not, are considered to be modern phenomena. Thus, as Victor Roudometof argues, "most scholars of nationalism consider this phenomenon to be a product of the last 200-500 years, although national narratives usually trace the history of a nation back many hundreds of years" (Roudometof 1996, 254). The distinction is made between authors who regard nations as completely contemporary phenomena and those who take the past into consideration (before the 18th century) when examining nations and

nationalism. The latter group of authors discusses past kin ties, ethnic and ancestral features of present-day national identities. The former group sees nations as product of modernization.

These dividing lines have, in part, contributed to the primordial/constructivist debate. The idea of Antony D. Smith (1991) that nations are historically embedded in pre-modern ethnic ties, memories and heritages have been labeled primordial by his mentor, Gellner. Likewise, Miroslav Hroch (1996), a Czech historian and political theorist, lists economic, political, linguistic, cultural, religious, geographical, historical ties as "objective relationships". These relationships reflect in groups' consciousness and contribute toward the nation building process. He explains that three of these relationships

> stand out as irreplaceable: (1) a 'memory' of some common past, treated as a 'destiny' of the group - or at least of its core constituents; (2) a density of linguistic or cultural ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group than beyond it; [and] (3) a conception of the equality of all members of the group organized as a civil society. (Hroch 1996, 79)

In general, to scholars like Ernest Gellner (1995), the primordial camp considers the past as an important part of the study, whereas modernists, like himself, believe that the world of nation-states was created in modernity or before the end of the 18$^{th}$ century. The debate does not end there. Postmodern scholars of nationalism observe social phenomena as socially constructed and thus, nations and nationalism are recent and rather real "inventions". Similarly, Hroch (1996, 79) argues that the nation is not an "eternal category, but product of a long and complicated process of historical development in Europe".

In his study of nationalism, Ernest Gellner points to the temporal dividing line between himself and his well-known student, Anthony D. Smith. Ernest Gellner is one of the most prominent modern theorists of nationalism. To Ernest Gellner, a nation is the mutual ascription of belonging to the same group, by two or more men who share the same culture or when these

men recognize each other as belonging to that same group (Gellner 1983). In 1983, in his influential book *Nations and Nationalism*, Gellner defined nationalism as the normative principle that says that the political and the national units should be congruent. Gellner (1983) argued that Western societies have experienced one single important change, the transformation from agricultural to industrial period of development. He considered nationalism as a phase in which societies developed, context-free "high culture", transmitted via standardized and uniformed educational system to all of its members. Gellner was a modernist and functionalist, and his understanding of modernity was grounded on the experience of industrialization (Conversi 2007). Not surprisingly, Gellner was doubtful that ideology can have an independent power to transform political climate and therefore, plays a subordinate role in his thinking of the development of nationalism.

Accordingly, in the 1980s, Gellner's main rival was Elie Kedourie, a colleague from the London School of Economics. Kedourie was a historian of ideas and opposed Gellner's idea that ideology is irrelevant to the study of nationalism. Kedourie argued that nationalism imposed homogeneity, and Gellner, in contrast, claimed that homogeneity is imposed by the "imperative" of modernization that appears on the surface as nationalism. Underneath it, this imperative was produced by the particular shift from agrarian to industrial phase of history.

Anthony D. Smith has been both Gellner's most prominent student at the London School of Economics and at the same time, his fiercest critic. Smith and Gellner have agreed upon some common features of the modern world and modern character of nations and nationalisms. They have both understood nationalism as "elusive, even protean, in its manifestations"; they both perceived an "underlying sociological reality of nationalism and its creation, the nation" (Gellner and Smith, Ernest Gellner Resource Page 1995). Despite being part of the modernist

camp, both Gellner and Smith (1995) argued that nations and nationalism are real sociological phenomena, in the face of postmodernist  who have argued that "nations exist only in the imagination and can be deconstructed away" (Gellner and Smith, Ernest Gellner Resource Page 1995).

The major point of distinction between Gellner and Smith is about the events preceding nations, the pre-modern period, or, in a way, the pre-national period of nationalism. Gellner (1983) claimed that the nation is a relatively recent product of specifically modern conditions. In contrast, Smith (1991) has argued, using his renowned ethno-symbolic approach that nations and nationalisms are products of preexisting traditions and heritages (similarly with Fenton 2010), which have coalesced over the generations. Smith (1995) considers his position to be postmodernist, versus the materialist, rationalist and modern theorists. He claims that his post-modernist, ethno-symbolic approach is able to explain why ethnic and national conflicts are endemic; that nationalism is a political necessity in a world of competing and unequal states requiring popular legitimation and mobilization; and finally, why individuals feel "that their nation performs important social and political functions" (Gellner and Smith, Ernest Gellner Resource Page 1995). In 1995, at the Warwick University debate titled "Nations and Nationalism", these two scholars debated the temporal dividing line in the study of nationalism, or the origin of nationalism and nations. Part of the discussion was dedicated to what precisely separates the primordialists from the modernists. Gellner, being the modernist that he was, spoke that the world was created round about the end of the eighteenth century, and nothing before that made the slightest difference to the issues we face today (Gellner and Smith, Ernest Gellner Resource Page 1995). However, Gellner was not the first to propose such ideas.

In the same way, earlier in the 20th century, Hans Kohn understood nationalism as a phenomenon not older that the second half of the eighteenth century when it emerged simultaneously in widely separated European countries (Kohn 1945). Kohn developed a dichotomy of Western and Eastern nationalism. Western nationalism was brought up by democratic and liberal ideas and was therefore civil and progressive; Eastern nationalism was based upon ethnicity, that is ancestry, and since it was reactionary (associated with dictatorship and authority) should have been denounced (Hroch 1996). Miroslav Hroch (1996) has criticized Kohn and other Western scholars for disregarding historical processes. Hroch insists that the task of scholars is to "analyze and explain, not to judge" (p.4).

## III. Ethnic and National Identity and the Importance of the Past

### A. Dereification

The revival of interest in identity across the social sciences has reflected new concerns and interests (Bechhofer, et al. 1999). The starting point is that there is no "self" without the "other". From the aspect of sociology, the "self" draws boundaries around itself to restrain the "other". Emile Durkheim (1964, quoted in Neumann 1999, 4) explains that "the lineation of an 'in-group' must necessarily entail its demarcation from a number of 'out-groups', and that demarcation is an active and on-going part of identity formation" (p. 4). Similarly, Fredrik Barth (1969) discusses boundaries determined by ascription.

Again, the constructivist line of reasoning can be observed with utilization of the process of dereification. An illustration of this process would be how the science of anthropology has

explored and understood ethnic groups throughout its past. In anthropology, at first ethnic groups were recongnized as social groups that have had common origins, histories, languages, and cultures. However, Fredrik Barth, a Norwegian anthropologist, was the first to reject this approach. Barth (1969) argued that this reified ethnic groups, and equated ethnicity with race and society. In his seminal work, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969) Barth defined ethnic groups in terms of categories of ascription and identification, which individuals use to identify them and others. Refusing any a priori cultural determinant, Barth examined negotiations on boundaries between people and concluded that ethnic identities persist even if individuals move beyond the assumed boundaries. Thus, culture is not a bounded entity, and ethnicity is not connected to the primordial categories of society.

Barth (1969) outlined four lines of definition of ethnic groups: 1) a group which is largely self-perpetuating; 2) a group which shares fundamental cultural values; 3) a group which makes up a field of communication and interaction; 4) a group which has a membership that identifies itself and is identified from other categories of the same order.

Probably, the most important argument set forth by Fredrik Barth (1969) would be the interdependency and interaction of ethnic groups. Ethnic identities are maintained by mutual ascription and relational processes among ethnic groups. The reproduction of ethnic groups is done via maintenance of the boundaries that distinguish them (Balalovska 2003). Thus, even if geographical boundaries did not exist, there would still remain differences among the Balkan people. We would not have to reach into antiquity to collect evidence for that. There would always remain some ascription and identification that symbolizes the differences between Macedonians and the other groups on the Balkan. Also, these boundaries are not always connected solely with a particular language. The boundaries may be drawn by social behavior

which is relevant for the recognition of the membership and to the drawing of distinctions (Barth 1969 quoted in Fenton 2010).

B. Ethnicity and importance of the past

Nonetheless, when identity is placed in the realm of politics, the question of power appears to the surface. In addition, identity politics is substantially enhanced when it is coupled with the politics of memory. The question of the importance and the awareness of the past is a crucial point that leads to ethnic identity as a starting point for social construction of national identity.

However, no matter how disputed or outdated Gellner's idea of nationalism is today, his questions remain unresolved and merit further reflection. For how can one say for sure how individuals felt in the time before the Guttenberg revolution? Obviously this new "galaxy", in the spirit of Marshall McLuhan (1962), from the print press onward, is a rather different "galaxy" than any other before. So how can one tell with any certainty when social categories began living? In the 1995 Warwick University Debate, Gellner underlined the importance of the past:

> I mean, what I really have been wondering is by what kind of evidence can we establish the reality of the past? Most of you may know the debate in which Bertrand Russell asked tongue in cheek how do we know that the world wasn't created five minutes ago complete with memories? Well, how do you know? Maybe it was! What is the evidence? And of course some of the real debates of this kind are embedded in the division between the creationists and evolutionists. (Gellner and Smith, Ernest Gellner Resource Page 1995)

These questions also lay at the heart of Bauman's (1996, 2000) "liquid modernity" which holds that people ponder upon identity because they are not sure who they are (Bechhofer, et al. 1999). However, while Ernest Gellner decided that it is impossible to discuss whether nations

have "navels" or not, authors have been persistently interested in the other half of the story. Thus,

> if the modern 'problem of identity' was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the post-modern 'problem of identity' is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open. In the case of identity… the catchword of modernity was creation; the catchword of post-modernity is recycling. (Bauman 1996 quoted in Todorova 2005)

Precisely, this idea of avoiding fixed identities, as well as the position on constant change, as seen in the catchword of recycling, is what makes the constructivist viewpoint of identity. Steve Fenton examines contesting claims that surround ethnicity and ethnic identity. In his work on ethnicity, he discusses theorists, core meanings and contested ideas. Fenton (2010), also discusses ethnicity and how ethnic identities become part of social action. He claims that there is no theory of ethnicity but a theory of the modern social world as the context for expression of ethnic identities. He rejects the separation of "ethnicity", "race" and "national identity" from the social and theoretical mainstream. Fenton argues that these concepts share the same core of common descent and culture, and differ in their periphery. He argues that there is no single discourse on ethnicity or nation, but a multitude of discourses in accordance with the specific historical and political demands of the countries. These demands include the search for social dominance as some groups struggle to hold power over others (Fenton 2010).

As Fenton (2010) shows, ethnicity can be discussed in the same way the study of nationalism, through the primordial and constructivist approaches. Observers give names to social facts that genuinely exist in society; they examine actors as the constructors of the social facts, and at the same time participate in the process with their own intellectual constructs. In this sense "(all) identities are in some measure created, sustained and made relevant in political action by ethnically oriented actors and by the state" (Fenton 2010, 72). The alternative would be

to understand groups as corporate identities that were formed as a result of natural divisions of the population (Fenton 2010).

Therefore, the ethnic groups of Macedonians, Albanians, Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians are all considered to be socially constructed. Also, the idea is that proposal of equally imagined political communities in the Balkans may form the basis of solutions to complex identity disputes, allowing for the reconciliation of the contested narratives and historiographies these countries have.

Simple enough, identities are socially constructed by ethnic actors themselves, and the states (Fenton 2010). As part of the debate between primordialist and constructivist camp, Fenton (2010) aims to answer questions such as whether ethnic groups are real or socially constructed, and whether these groups are guided by instrumental (rational) or affective (emotional) attachments.

In the study of nationalism, Rogers Brubaker (2006) analyzes how "ethnicity and nationhood appear in everyday encounters, practical categories, common sense knowledge and cultural idiom" ethnicity with regards to "nationalist politics from above" (Brubaker, et al. 2006).

But national identities may be contested on a higher, diplomatic level. In the field of international relations theory, a well-known figure of constructivism is Alexander Wendt. His article "*Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics*" (1992), and his main work *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999) challenges neorealists and neoliberal institutionalists as crude materialists. Concepts are socially constructed and individuals can transform them. Wendt defines identities by examining them as social objects. Wendt argues that social entities or actors ascribe meanings to themselves via others'

perspectives, and thus build their own identities. The maintenance of social identities is enabled by social practices (Wendt 1994).

Similarly with nations, ethnic groups can be defined in terms of what they share. People may share solidarity and culture, a sense of belonging to the same group (Seton-Watson 1977). Although similarities between the concepts of ethnic group and nation exist, it is important to stress the various differences that these concepts entail such as size, polarization, or territorial relationships. Nations are large and politicized ethnic groups that have or seek autonomy or sovereignty over particular territory (Danforth 1995).

Ethnicity has the quality of belonging as a psychosocial bond. Ethnic bonds are non-rational indeed they defy rationality (Fenton 2010). Individuals choose to act ethnically even though it might cost them some benefits. In the social sciences, there is a long tradition of duality and tension between the affective and the emotional on one hand, and the rational on the other. Social scientists from Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, to Talcott Parsons have worked on methodological approaches in order to explain the basis for social action and social cohesion. But sentiments and the affective, although deemed unsuitable for rational social science research strategies, remain infused into social disciplines. The scientific terminology has a way to differentiate and incorporate both concepts.

In the field of ethnicity individuals are observed as both driven by unreasoned loyalty and affective ties, as well as by a particular calculation of their interest (i.e. political, economical benefits, gains). Whenever the group is based on the affective relationship social science has referred to it as primordial. If individuals are driven to action by a particular goal or gain, this is perceived as opposing the natural and mystic ties that are presumed of affective attachment.

Again, it may seem as if it is only a conceptual progress from the natural and affective (primordial) to the instrumental and calculated (constructivist).

Moreover, in the study of ethnicity, the problem of primordialism appeared when scholars attributed primordial features of ethnic ties as opposed to instrumental concepts of ethnic groups. But primordial-ness opposes not calculation and rational behavior, but civic ties of obligations of citizens in modern states. As Fenton (2010) argues, it is possible to have a conception of ethnic groups which allows one to see them as being constituted by elements which are civic, instrumental, circumstantial and primordial, all at the same time.

## IV. Macedonian National Identity

In the late 20th century there is an accelerating trend to support ethnic minorities that demand cultural freedoms, human rights, political autonomy, and even national independence (Danforth 1995). There are different reasons for this so-called ethnic revival. Danforth (1995) argues that the reasons for "ethnic revival" come from the refusal of the states to implement in practice the right of national self-determination, the processes of democratization, the unequal regional development, the position of the mass media, are part of the explanation.

The logic behind this explanation is that when ethnic identities are threatened they need a tool to preserve themselves from assimilation, and thus ethnic nationalism helps prevent their disappearance and maintenance. In the spirit of Fredrik Barth (1969), even if geo-political boundaries did not exist, there would still remain differences among the Balkan peoples. One would not have to travel to antiquity to gain evidence for that. There would still remain something that symbolizes the differences between Macedonians and the other groups in the

Balkans. These boundaries are not always connected solely with a particular language. The boundaries may be drawn by social behavior which is relevant for the recognition of the membership and to the drawing of distinctions (Barth 1969 quoted in Fenton 2010).

Still, the role of language is important in the process of nation-building. As Mackridge (2009) argues, the question of the language has entailed two distinctive processes:

> The first has been the projection of language as a constitutive element of nationhood, a practice generated by the ideas of Romanticism that prevailed in the first part of the nineteenth century; the second has been a gradual standardization of a language that in turn has functioned as an integrative element in the emergence, some would say construction, of a modern nation-state. (Mackridge 2009 quoted in Kitroeff 2011)

The entire Balkan space of states has been constructed in similar ways. One has to find empirical foundation stones before anyone tries to build a theoretical superstructure (Kitroeff 2011).Alexander Kitroeff (2011) welcomes Peter Mackridge's (2009) treatment and critical distance from prominent Greek scholars. In Greece

> Language became important in nationalist discourse relatively early, in the Enlightenment era, when Adamantios Korais employed it in his construct of continuity between ancient and modern Greece. But it is the other Greek particularity that lent the Greek language question a controversial, divisive edge: the conflict between the advocates of a more archaic pure version, the so-called *katharevousa,* and the advocates of a more vernacular version, *demotic* Greek. These two elements intersected at several moments throughout the 19$^{th}$ and 20$^{th}$ centuries, but the clash between the purists and the vernacularists remained constant through the late twentieth century. (Kitroeff 2011, 145)

"Did the nation create the state or the state the nation? Both positions have their adherents where Macedonia is concerned" (Mazower 1996). As Basil C. Gounaris (2006) observed, the Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Macedonian nationalist historiographies took the former position, basing nationalist claims to territory in Macedonia upon the purported prior dominance of one ethnic group in the region.

The core of the disputes over the Macedonian national identity is in fact summarized by the Macedonian question or controversy, which started at the end of the 19th century. In James Pettifer's *The New Macedonian Question* (2000) there are authors that point to different processes to locate the actual beginning of the controversy around Macedonia. Elisabeth Barker's article dates from the 1950s yet it is an intriguing addition to this 2000 edition of the book. Barker (2000) locates the beginning of the disputes in the Russian intervention in the Balkan ecclesiastical matters (specifically, the foundation of the Bulgarian Exarchate and its claim to the Christian population in the Ottoman Empire that was previously under the Greek Patriarch). Barker (2000) analyzes the impact of the ecclesiastical struggles as the frontline of all nationalist narratives that concern the Macedonian question. In the same volume, Kyril Drezov describes the contemporary Macedonian question and the claims set forth by Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, while also examining Macedonian nationalist claims.

Victor Roudometof (1996, 264) discusses national identity as "a modern manifestation of people's awareness of their membership in a group". The non-Western model of national identity observes nationality as an "outcome of conflicting claims that are generated by more or less selective references to, and interpretations of, written and oral historical narratives, a process that establishes collective beliefs in the legitimacy of claims to a territorial 'fatherland'" (Roudometof 1996). This idea of national identity is in opposition with the Western model of national identity which, according to Roudometof (1996, 2) "emphasizes the importance of citizenship rights and the territorial nature of the state". Accordingly, the Balkan nationalisms focus on cultural bonds and ethnic descent.

Although there are a variety of opinions about what precisely is national identity, a common element is the idea of political community. In order to understand the foundation and formation

of national identity, one might turn to look at pre-modern precursors of modern nations and connect national identity with ethnic identity, as Anthony D. Smith (1991) does when he refers to the pre-modern *ethnie*. In *National Identity*, Smith (1991) argues that national identity is a wider collective and cultural phenomenon than nationalism. National identity is a "multidimensional concept, extended to include a specific language, sentiments and symbolism". Smith (1991, vii) makes a distinction between the Western and the non-Western concepts of national identity in order to inform his ethno-symbolic approach that contains important elements from both concepts.

Similarly, Hobsbawm (1990) differentiates between Western and non-Western concepts of national identity. He uses the threshold principle to differentiate between them. This principle says that the right to national self-determination applied only to nations that were of sufficient size to form viable political and economic units. In contrast to Hobsbawm, presently there seems to be no relevance to the size of the pursued unit for the right of national self-determination (Danforth 1995).

Loring M. Danforth (1995) has dealt with the Macedonian question in *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*. Here he examines Macedonian ethnic nationalism in the Balkans, but also in the Diasporas. Danforth (1995) presents the conflicting claims to Macedonian identity and history between the Greece and R. Macedonia and their respective immigrant communities. Most importantly, Danforth shows how and when the construction of Macedonian national identity occurred. He claims that national identities have been socially constructed and that they are in constant motion. Danforth urges scientists to avoid ratifying nationalist claims for the naturalness of national culture and the innateness of national identities. Very recently, in 2012, Danforth and Riki van Boeschoten published *Children of the*

*Greek Civil War: Refugees and the Politics of Memory*, which examines the Cold War era controversial topic of displacement of thirty-eight thousand children throughout Greece and Eastern Europe.

Danforth also contributes to an edited volume by Jane K. Cowan *Macedonia: the Politics of Identity and Difference* (2000). This book brings together prominent authors to discuss the "Macedonian Controversy", as Cowan says, and the diversity in the communities that live on the territory named Macedonia. This volume contributes to the critique of national and ethnic identities as historical inventions, or imagined categories, "rather than essential attributes" (Sutton 2002).

Victor Roudometof has written extensively about the struggle between contested Balkan narratives. In one of his works "The Social Origins of Balkan Politics", he argues that the growth of administration and military administration or "statism" and the development of public sector have provided the social structure of the Balkan states. Since the public sector was operating under the logic of patronage, nationalism and state-sponsored modernization led to a fusion between politics and economics. As a result of this fusion, economic decision-making is not driven by the market, but by the interests of the heads of state-run companies. When these companies fail, their problems become a political issue.

Roudometof (2000) discusses the relationship between nationalism and modernization in Balkan political culture. In contrast with modernists such as Ernest Gellner, Roudometof identifies Balkan nationalism with the Balkan states' pursuit of irredentism in the 19th and early 20th century. He blames these as impediments to the effects of modernizations. Also, he argues that there is a link between "statism" and irredentism and he sees irredentism as a consequence of state-sponsored modernization. Thus, the group in all Balkan nation-states that was most

closely associated with irredentism was the officer corps. Roudometof discusses modernization as a consequence of the enlargement of the state-dependent strata and the need to justify it. As a result nationalistic and irredentist ideas were supported since they reproduced and sustained the need for the modernized bureaucracy.

The forces of intensified ethnic politics in the second half of the 20th century have been threatening modernity with the destruction of state itself. This transition to "liquid modernity" has ceased the rush to race and map territories. Since, "whoever traveled faster could claim more territory and, having done that, could control it, map it and supervise it... Modernity was born under the stars of acceleration and land conquest" (Bauman 2000 quoted in Todorova 2005, 141). The continuation of ethnic politics and divisions has put the state mechanisms into danger in the spirit of the Immanuel Wallenstein's "it is the end of the world as we know it". Consequently, in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of the economic decline and the fact that statism provided the link with which economic grievances became a basis for nationalist mobilization (Roudometof 2000).

One might want to escape any discussion on national identity and nations that reaches before the eighteenth century. The practice of speculating as to the origins of peoples, languages, and culture has been a typical feature of the Balkan nationalist narratives. Consequently some authors consider relevant to discuss the coming of the Slavs to the Balkans in the sixth century A.D. Some authors go back even further to discuss proto-peoples in order to understand troublesome issues of the present. For example, as Sabrina Ramet (2005) shows, Hugh Poulton in *Who Are the Macedonians?* (1995) discusses that in year 864 the Proto-Bulgarians converted to Christianity in order to emphasize that these Proto-Bulgarians included the ancestors of today's Macedonians.

Imagining the eastern part of Europe has provoked interest among all social scientists. Larry Wolff (1994) with his *Inventing Eastern Europe* and Maria Todorova (1997) with her *Imagining the Balkans* have both dealt with imaginative geography. Similarly, Ivo Banac argues that the Balkan is an intellectual construct born of a geographical appearance. In civilizational terms, it is as real as Eurasia (Banac 1984).

# Chapter IV: Discussion

## I. Overview

The task of discussing Macedonia is a formidable one. As previously argued, even the simple task of defining it, assisted with dictionaries and encyclopedia, when applied to Macedonia, might seem impossible. Similarly, Henry Wilkinson has written: "Macedonia defies definition" (Wilkinson 1951, quoted in Danforth 1995). Danforth (1995) argues that Macedonia means many different things to many different people, and sometimes it means too many things. As a result, even the attempt to define Macedonia and Macedonians is an excellent way to examine the basic ideas that surround the Macedonian question and the Macedonian national identity.

This thesis explores the social construction of Macedonian national identity. It shows how the politics of memory and, as Dimitris Livanios (2005) notes, the "mechanisms that construct, celebrate, internalize and diffuse" this politics, create the dream of the Macedonian nation. This is also valid for the Macedonian case, where the nation-building process, like its neighboring countries, has been heavily state-oriented and supported by state institutions such as academies, institutes, museums, etc. If one accepts that "although all nations dream, the Balkans have mostly

nightmares", than it is even more important to examine those dreams that turn into nightmares (Livanios 2005, 18).

This discussion is centered on the Balkan Peninsula and covers crucial instances of the 19th century and the entire 20th century. Also, the discussion examines important, uncontested and common events in Balkan historiographies, as well as historical events that have been differently interpreted. The beginning of the Macedonian question is observed first as part of the Eastern question at the beginning of the 19th century. Very broadly, in European history, the slow fall of the Ottoman Empire and the problems it brought with it, are denoted as the Eastern question. The Eastern question ceased to exist with the end of the First World War and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

However, the Macedonian question perpetuates in the interwar period and receives partial reconciliation after the Second World War and the establishment of SFRY. Here for the very first time, one can discuss Macedonian statehood, and therefore a Macedonian national identity. The Macedonian statehood commenced with the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia[i] (henceforth ASNOM) after the Second World War, "despite the latest media trends to locate the traces of the 'Macedonian pre-state' in prehistory and the attempts of the 'state' archeologist Pasko Kuzman to transform the government into an ancient museum" (Trajanoski 2009 quoted in Vangeli 2011, 19).

The first Macedonian national identity begins with the official establishment of the first Macedonian state - S. R. Macedonia. The assumption is that the state was founded upon the notion that in the course of the 19th century, a separate Macedonian identity developed. This identity can be observed within the frames of the Eastern question when nationalist movements in the Balkans began and thus gave birth to the Macedonian conflict. Zdravkovski (2011) argues

that "while attempts at identifying and validating a Macedonian identity may be traced as early as the turn of the 18th century, with ecclesiastic efforts towards a codification of the vernacular Slavic dialects of the region, one can speak of Macedonian nationalism realistically in terms of the post-1850 period" (p. 1 ).

The second important milestone in the construction of the Macedonian national identity during the 20th century is the collapse of SFRY during the 1990s and the founding of independent R. Macedonia in 1991/2. The events during and after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, as well as the declaration of independence of R. Macedonia, have revived once again the Macedonian question. Hence, some authors choose to discuss it as the sequel or *New Macedonian Question* (Pettifer 1992, Vangeli 2011). Ever since, the Macedonian national identity is a subject of domestic, international, and transnational struggles. Most of the disputes that stem from contesting claims by neighboring countries remain until active present-day. Moreover, R. Macedonia's prospective membership into the EU and NATO has been affected by the name dispute with Greece.

Finally, the most important change in the past decade that affects Macedonian national identity is the constitutional intervention in the form of the 2001 OFA, which reconstituted the republic as a consociational democracy with a specific power-sharing mechanism. The arrangement was reached with the intervention of the international community in preventing civil war in Macedonia. OFA puts an emphasis on ethnic communities and thus, ever since, ethnic identities have received a public sanction as opposed to a national identity. The once insisting on group ethnicity in the post-2001 period may be valuable for keeping the country stable and free from interethnic conflict, but it is troublesome for many aspects of the ethnic groups and their identities in R. Macedonia. In addition, it is also problematic for the ethnic Macedonians in the

neighboring states of which they are citizens. The recently intensified process of antiquization in R. Macedonia is viewed as part of the heightened process of emphasizing ethnicity in the period post-OFA.

## II. Antecedents or "proto-ethnicity" of Macedonian national identity

Nationalist discourses offer a variety of interpretations of the past. The Balkan historiographies are more often in direct conflict with each other than not. Different interpretations of the past go as far as ancient Macedonia, and some (ridiculously) even before that. The recent antiquization in R. Macedonia has been derided by many. In an interview in 2009, the first Macedonian president and one of the founding fathers of R. Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov said:

> Serious historians are laughing with all these things that are happening in my country …There are historians who argue that we are in these lands for 2,000 years before Alexander the Great. It is for laughing … I was telling to a historian friend that the way things are going, we will end up being direct descendants of Adam and Eve, and it will be proven that Paradise was also Macedonian and our property. (Gligorov 2009 quoted in Tziampiris 2011, 71)

This process of memory politics, although accentuated in the last five years, has been present throughout the Macedonian nation building. During the 19th and early 20th century there was an idea among the Orthodox Slavic speakers in Macedonia of a link to an ancient Macedonian people. These beliefs resulted from anti-Bulgarian efforts by Greek institutions that disseminated the myth of origin from Alexander the Great. The idea was that if the local Orthodox Slavic people were Macedonians they descended directly from Alexander the Great, which made them Greeks (Vangeli, 2011).

Thus, the nationalist discourses of R. Macedonia and its neighbors offer conflicting interpretations of key events. These conflicting claims go as far in history, as the nationalist narrative reaches. So, the farther back in history discourses rewrite histories and further resurrect their "past", the more contestation emerges. Before the two world wars, such examples would include the origin and role of the Internal Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Organization (IMARO) and the identities of most of its figures, the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, etc.

The IMARO was a secret revolutionary organization whose "extensive organizational activities resulted in a wide and intricate network of communities across Macedonia" (Zdravkovski 2011, 6). The IMARO antagonized organizations that had more peaceful solutions for Macedonian independence. Zdravkovski (2011, 6) examines the rift between IMARO and the Macedonian Scientific and Literary Society (henceforth MSLS) as the former represented the "most militant and enduring manifestation of the ideology of Macedonian political autonomy from the Ottoman Empire, […thus…] suffered from an inability to formulate and deliver a clear cultural policy on nationalism and language in post-Ottoman Macedonia".

This thesis argues that the official start of the Macedonian national identity began with the formation of S. R. Macedonia. Despite the claims of some scholars that Macedonian national identity began in the second half of the 19$^{th}$ century, the treatment of national identity, in this thesis, is linked with the formal existence of a Macedonian state. This treatment does not, however, dispute that a distinctive Macedonian identity and consciousness developed among the Slav-speaking people in the course of the 19$^{th}$ century. This Macedonian identity first developed as a consciousness of not-belonging to other categories of identity. This opposition to the "other" basically means that "people know who they *are not*, before they know who they *are*" (Danforth

1995). This discussion, also, does not dispute that Macedonian ethnic nationalist sentiments were expressed in the 19th century, among intellectuals in Thessaloniki, Belgrade, Sophia, and St. Petersburg. At the end of the 19th century, in addition to small groups of intellectuals, an entire movement, claiming "Macedonia for Macedonians", demanded autonomous Macedonia on the "bases of whatever criteria best suited their national arguments – language, religion, history, household customs, and national consciousness" (Cowan 2000).

Secret and public associations were active in the struggle for Macedonian autonomy and state. The Macedonian Club (1901) in Belgrade promoted a Macedonian state within the Ottoman Empire "whose language, territorial integrity and regional security would be brokered by a Great Power such as Russia" (Zdravkovski 2011, 22). The Macedonian Club published the *Balkan Gazette*, a periodical that promoted a peaceful nation-building project such as Balkan Federation. Another such organization, inspired by the Club, was the Macedonian Scientific and Literary Society (1902-1917). This was a group of students at the University of St. Petersburg, Russia, who led by Dimitrija Cupovski, aimed at creation of autonomous Macedonia, and the introduction of the Macedonian language as an official one (within a autonomous Macedonia as administrative unit in frames of the Ottoman Empire). The MSLS published the periodical *Makedonskiy Golos* or *Macedonian Voice*, which promoted the cause of Macedonian statehood. Aleksandar Zdravkovski (2011, 3) argues

> That the emergence of the MSLS was inspired by ideas of a separate Macedonian Slav identity that students thought to translate into a platform for a prospective independent Macedonian state. This state was initially imagined as an autonomous Ottoman protectorate with provisions for an officially recognized language, nationality and an autocephalous Orthodox Church.

Through an analysis of publications, documents, letters, and memoirs, Zdravkovski shows that the MSLS was not a tool of the governments of Russia, Bulgaria, or Serbia, but had its own

agenda. The most important contribution of MSLS was the publication of Krste P. Misirkov's work *On Macedonian Matters* (1903) that argued for a Macedonian literary language. The book "has been described as the culmination of the development of the 19th century Macedonian nationalism" (Zdravkovski 2011, 7)

The construction of Macedonian national identity draws heavily from this period of early identity formation. The construction of national identity leans on the process of shared forgetting, as well as shared remembering (Danforth 1995). The Macedonian question is the material out of which the Macedonian state and Macedonian national identity began "imagining" themselves. The grievances that derive from the Macedonian question arise out of the mutually exclusive nationalist narratives in Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia and Serbia. The building blocks of the construction of the Macedonian national identity can be found in the period of the Eastern European awakening, when the Ottoman Empire was slowly disintegrating in utter violence. The Macedonian question is a gist for the mill of nationalist discourses, as it represents an important source for different grievances.

A. The Eastern Question

The entire period of the 19th and the beginning of 20th century when the Ottoman Empire declined and dissolved is known as the Eastern question[ii]. It marks, in its most general sense, the problems caused by its decline. The origin of the Eastern question is tied with the Russo-Turkish War, which ended with a decisive Russian victory and the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji in 1774. The termination of the Porte happened with the abolition of the Sultanate in 1922 and the departure of Mehmed VI. The Republic of Turkey was founded a year later, in 1923, with the

Treaty of Lausanne, putting an end to the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1922). The end the First World War and the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire ended the Eastern question.

The Eastern question not only refers to a particular diplomatic and political conflict, but encompasses a multiple issues and pressures within the European territories of the Ottoman Empire in the period between the 19th century and the 20th century. During this period and as a result both of domestic and international pressure, the Porte put efforts to transform the caliphate into a constitutional monarchy, but failed soon after.

During the period of decline the Ottoman Empire, pressured by the Great Powers of Europe, sought desperately to modernize. Faced with proliferating invasions and other challenges the Porte entered into alliances with Great Britain, Russia, France, and the Netherlands. The Crimean War was one of these challenges, and was the first instance when the Ottoman Empire received European financial support. The Crimean War was not one single event, but series of armed campaigns from 1853 to 1856. It demonstrated the Great Powers' contesting claims over the decaying Ottoman Empire in Europe, or as Tsar Nicholas I of Russia would refer to it as the "sick man of Europe" (Bellaigue 2001). The war ended with the Treaty of Paris of 1856, which strengthened the position of the Ottoman Empire on the Balkans until it was defeated in the Russo-Turkish War.

In 1815, at the Congress of Vienna, the great powers of Europe negotiated the outcomes of the French Revolutionary Wars, the Napoleonic Wars, and the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire. Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria redrew the map of the entire continent; Eastern Europe was divided between three empires that absorbed the fragmented and ethnically diverse medieval survivors (Gellner 1993).

During this period in Eastern Europe, nationalism, ethnic identity, and the right to self-determination were easily disregarded and that was considered completely normal. The three empires of Russia, Austria, and the Ottomans were grouped under features such as dynasty and religion (Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, and Sunni Islam). These features were considered natural and appropriate bases for political systems.

The Ottoman Empire, or the Sublime Porte, was one of the greatest world empires in the history. It spread slowly from the 13$^{th}$ century onward, reaching three different continents. After defeating the Byzantium Empire at the end of the fifteenth century, the Empire's capital was transferred from Edirne to Constantinople. The Empire was ruled by a caliphate, and one of its most important sultans was Suleiman the Magnificent.

In the Ottoman Empire the basis of administrative organization was religion, which was also known as the millet system. The term millet means a confessional association. Religion was the basis for most population distinctions, rather than language or ethnicity. Ottoman rule preferred collective privileges over individual claims. (P. Ramet 1989). The millet system, and the collective rights it implemented, was founded on particularistic (or non-Western) rather than on universalistic (or Western) principles.

This millet system had implications over the nation-building process of the states that emerged after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Identities were built first within the millets and based upon religion. Individuals were considered part of their confessional associations and thus, Muslims or Christians. Consequently, it is no wonder that the first clashes over populations and territories were foremost ecclesiastical ones. Ethnic identity was built upon this religious, or ecclesiastical, relationship of belonging.

This feature of the Ottoman rule sheds a new and different light at Mazower's question: "Did the nation create the state or the state the nation?" It is no wonder why the Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Macedonian nationalist historiographies took the former position. The state was considered a product, or a natural consequence of the nation, defined, first in religious and then in ethnic terms. Being a citizen was equated with being a member of particular religious or ethnic group. This is how the millet system enabled the Slavic speaking inhabitants to have a variety of national affiliations, and thus, enabled a "multitude of Macedonian identities" (Tziampiris 2011).

In the Ottoman Empire that ruled Macedonia from the 14th century until 1913, the population consisted of Christians as members of the Orthodox or rum millet (under the Greek Patriarchy, the Serbian Orthodox Church or the Bulgarian Exarchate) and Muslims. Belonging to the confessional community was considered primary to the identity of the inhabitants of Macedonia. Other important aspects were, as Danforth (1995) writes "the status as members of certain family, residents of a certain village or town, and members of a certain socioeconomic class" (p. 22).

This criterion of confessional community allowed the powers of the "Concert of Europe" to disregard any national principle that might have existed in the Porte. Ethnic diversity was not considered problematic for maintaining the European status quo. Accordingly, there was no major and immediate revolutionary response throughout Eastern Europe to the Congress of Vienna. Consequently, some authors (Gellner) doubt the existence of ethnic consciousness of the groups that thrived under the empires in the period. For some, like Gellner (1983, 1993) in this pre-modern Ruritania, ethnic identity was present in the form of proto-ethnicity.

But soon after, the 19th century turned into a century of the nationalist principle. Ernest Gellner (1993) asks why something that seemed acceptable and even natural in 1815 lost legitimacy in the course of the century. Stemming from different sources, the answers to such questions have different varieties. The nationalists would argue that the nations were awakened and claimed legitimate right to their own state. Romanticism saw the tumultuous and bloody period as a mere confirmation of the Darwinism notion that man is only a beast. So, it was not to be expected that the turmoil came from a rational place, but from the reemergence of the atavistic instincts (Gellner 1993). Still others (Elie Kedourie) deem the emergence of the nationalist principle as a purely European product of 19th century political ideology or, in Marxist terms, as a distraction from the ongoing process of class awareness. The processes of nation-building that started during the 19th century drowned the Balkan Peninsula in blood until the end of the 1950s.

The idea that the nation was the source of legitimation of the state was contagious and spread from Western throughout Eastern Europe, weakening the already fragile Ottoman Empire. Thus, the period of decline is also known for the rise of ethnic nationalism in the Balkans. In the Balkan Peninsula, the Macedonian question marks a shift from the politics of empires to that of nation-states (Cowan 2000). As Mazower (2000) cites the warning words of the Austrian Foreign Ministry in 1853:

> The claim to set up new States according to the limits of nationality is the most dangerous of all Utopian schemes. To put forward such a pretension is to break with history; and to carry it into execution in any part of Europe is to shake to its foundations the firmly organized order of States, and to threaten the Continent with subversion and chaos. (Mazower 2000, 114)

The 19th century's national awakening in Central and Eastern Europe influenced the Porte. Throughout the Ottoman Empire some territories had dominant groups that were more or less

homogenous and could create a nation-state (Greece and Serbia). Hence, during the period of the Eastern question, different groups in the Balkans took advantage of the decay of the Ottoman Empire, and asserted their resistance to the Ottoman rule. In addition, the processes of the European balance of power and the Great Powers' interests in the failing Ottoman Empire gave rise to numerous struggles. Supported or repressed by non-Balkan power holders (Russia, Austro-Hungary, and Great Britain), different candidates for nation-state status gained or lost their standings (Pettifer 1992). The power struggles produced revolutionary political parties and uprisings, which preoccupied Ottoman internal policy.

During the Napoleonic Wars, the Porte first faced Serbian uprisings. The Serbian Revolution started in 1804 and ended in 1817, with the raising of the Serbs' status to self-governing monarchy under the Empire. However, the first state that received independence from the Ottoman Empire was Greece. During the war of independence against the Ottoman Empire, the provisional state of Greece was known as the First Hellenic Republic (1821-1832). This was a revolutionary regime that predicted the establishment of the Kingdom of Greece. The Kingdom of Greece was created with the assistance of Great Britain, France, and Russia at the London Conference of 1832, which named the Bavarian prince Otto as king.

During this period, a sense of Macedonian identity began to develop mainly as a struggle to overthrow the Ottoman rule, as was the case with its four neighbors: Albania, Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria (Pettifer 1992). In this period, the movement for an autonomous Macedonia gained strength in opposition to the contesting claims of Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria. The 1903 Ilinden Uprising has been seen as the "culmination of IMARO's endeavors" (Zdravkovski 2011). The disputes over Macedonia have survived until today, when these claims take the form of interstate

disputes involving R. Macedonia and its neighbors, as well as the Balkan Diasporas in United States, Australia, and Canada.

## B. The Macedonian Question

The Macedonian question is a complex set of political and territorial disputes in the Balkans that lasted from the end of the 19th century into the 20th century. Everything about the Macedonian question is disputed, including its origin and beginning. Some authors, like Elisabeth Barker (2000), find its beginning in 1870, when Russia pressured the Ottoman Empire to allow the founding of a Bulgarian Orthodox Church, or Exarchate, with authority extending over parts of the Turkish province of Macedonia. Serbian historiography locates the beginning of the conflict in earlier Bulgarian encroachments of Macedonian territory that date before the establishment of the Exarchate. Others locate the origin of the Macedonian question in 1878, "after the Treaty of Berlin had overthrown the short-lived 'Greater Bulgaria' established by the Treaty of San Stefano" (Pettifer 1992, 2000, Reuter 2000). By the San Stefano Treaty of 1878 Russia gave all Slavic Macedonia to Bulgaria, thus stimulating the dream of Greater Bulgaria. Nationalist Bulgarians thus find the origin of the Macedonian question in "the Treaty of Berlin, in the same year, by which the Great Powers took Macedonia away from Bulgaria" (Barker 2000, 9).

This Macedonian controversy encompasses competing claims over the territory and the population of Macedonia that have been pursued by Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Each of the contenders has tried to justify territorial aspirations with arguments about the population that lived in the territory, from national consciousness to ethnic and linguistic identity.

The failure of the Krusevo or Ilinden Uprising, led by IMARO, has been subject to many controversies, too. Zdravkovski (2011) argues that the failure came as a result of lack of "intellectual contributions towards the construction of a national program for Macedonia, […] overshadowed by a focus on its campaign of armed struggle as means for securing 'liberation'".

According to Roudometof (1996), the Macedonian question is an illustration of how Balkan nationalisms elevate the concept of nationhood as essential element of nation-building and their concomitant subordination of citizenship. This is reflected by the fact that rarely have national communities given way to a federation or multinational state. This was the outcome of the Balkan wars, as ratified by the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, whereby Macedonia was partitioned among Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Instead of forming a loose federation or confederation, the Balkan states opted for separate nation-building processes. In fact, the borders of present-day R. Macedonia originate with this Treaty. Although nation-building began in a population organized by the Ottomans into millets, by this period in Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, this system was replaced by the ethnic principle of nationhood.

The Macedonian question began with an ecclesiastical conflict, when Russia sponsored the formation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870. It included Bulgaria, on one side, and Serbia and Greece, on the other. Immediately after the Exarchate was declared as a separate institution, the Greek Patriarch from Constantinople refused to recognize it as autocephalous. The Serbian government also contested the formation of the Exarchate. Both the Patriarch and Serbian ecclesiastical institutions complained about the spread of Bulgarian influence in Macedonia. The Macedonian question, as Barker (2000, 4) notes, "began [as] three-sided contest for Macedonia, waged first by priests and teachers, later by armed bands, and later still by armies, which has lasted with occasional lulls until today."

These "national-ecclesiastical wrangles" (Barker 2000) were not a single event that happened only as a result of the Russian interference. For centuries the Ottoman Empire supported and exploited ecclesiastical conflicts. When the Ottomans arrived in the Balkans, they first removed the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate and set up a Bulgarian administration of the Church, which was staffed by Greek priests. The Serbian Patriarchate was restored in 1557 and suppressed in 1766. Instead of promoting the Bulgarian Church, in 1777 the Ottomans placed the Greek Patriarchate in control of both Bulgarian and Serbian Churches. Until 1870, the Greek Church was controlling the entire population of Macedonia. This is the context in which the Bulgarian Exarchate was formed.

The rivalry in the Balkans was not expected by Russia when it interfered in 1870. Moreover, the Great Powers dismissed any redistribution (power and territory) in the Balkans that might have endangered the status quo of the alliances. The Russian idea, to extend influence in the Balkans, was a simple matter of choice. Russia had to choose between one of the Slavic peoples that practiced the Orthodoxy, thus either Bulgaria or Serbia. The Greeks were not suitable as they were not Slavic and already had their Patriarch in Constantinople. The newly liberated Serbia was geographically farther away from Russia and the Serbian royal families were either too susceptible to foreign influence or too unstable to stay in power[iii]. So, the still oppressed and geographically more fitting Bulgaria was the best choice for the determined plans of Russia. Unexpected, these ambitions were inhibited by the strong clashes between Serbia and Bulgaria.

With the establishment of the Bulgarian Church, this institution worked to extend its influence to as much of the population as possible, as enabled by an Ottoman decree of 1870. This document allowed districts to join the Bulgarian Exarchate if two-thirds of the population desired so. In order to convert the population, the Bulgarians sent priests and teachers who

founded Bulgarian schools. These same methods were, later on, employed by both Greeks and Serbs.

After the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), the Russian-imposed Treaty of San Stefano from 1878 inspired Bulgarian nationalist dreams ever since, and awarded all of Slavic Macedonia to Bulgaria. The Treaty also prescribed autonomy for the rest of the European territories under the Empire. San Stefano had an "explosive effect on the atmosphere in the Balkans, which was poisoned by expansionist greed and mistrust" (Reuter 2000, 29). However, only several months later the Great Powers restored Macedonia to the Ottoman Empire with the Treaty of Berlin. Although following the 1871 London conference the Great Powers decided that no changes of the European status quo could be made without being sanctioned by an international congress, Great Britain moved to alter Russia's ambitious plan for San Stefano Bulgaria. The Berlin Congress recognized partial autonomy for Macedonia[iv]. The French Foreign Minister, William H. Waddington appealed to the Berlin Congress that apart from the Bulgarian people, in European Turkey exists another Slavic people (Dimevski 1968).

In effect, the territory was simply divided into three districts (*vilayets*) under direct control of the Empire and named "the three *Vilayets*". Jens Reuter (2000, 30) argues that in the "background it was the fear that the designation Macedonia [instead of the 'three *Vilayets'*] might awaken a desire for national independence". Nonetheless, the biggest antagonisms did not have ethnic "identity" quality, since the village and the church were the most important source of identification.

The years that followed were marked by the establishment of IMARO led by Dame Gruev and Goce Delcev. The IMARO had two wings, one closer to the Supreme Committee and the Bulgarian Tsar, and the other a genuine Macedonian movement that strived for the independence

of Macedonia. The pro-Bulgarian wing had as its real aim the annexation of Macedonia by Bulgaria. The genuine IMARO "preached brotherhood of all people of Macedonia and tried to preserve an independence of the Supreme Committee and the Bulgarian War Office" (Barker 2000, 10).

In general, the genuine IMARO fought against the Ottomans, but also against Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek domination over Macedonia. The IMARO organized a secret administration throughout Macedonia and armed the population for the Ilinden uprising. In 1903, the IMARO rose against the Ottoman army but was quickly and violently subdued.

As a reaction to the bloody crushing of the uprising, the Great Powers created international forces to protect the territory of Macedonia. By 1908 the Great Powers agreed on reforms to be implemented in Macedonia. These reforms did not follow; however, as events were undertaken by the Young Turk revolution emerged with promises of liberal and progressive changes. Nonetheless, the Young Turks continued the repressive politics of the Empire and to implement nationalist politics. In 1908 the Bulgarian King Ferdinand proclaimed Bulgarian independence. Austria-Hungary supported the King and annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Macedonian question was crucial to the stability of the peninsula and the Powers sought to contain it. Still the clash over competing claims over Macedonia led to the outbreak of the Balkan wars in 1912. Despite the Great Powers' desire to maintain the status quo, the Balkan states decided to throw off the Ottoman rule. In 1912 Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria allied against the Ottomans. Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria only temporarily placed their differences over Macedonia aside and settled on a partial solution. A Serbo-Bulgarian agreement was reached in 1912 and prescribed a partition of Macedonia between these two countries. Several months later a Treaty between Greece and Bulgaria made no special territorial

arrangements. This outcome of the First Balkan War disregarded the agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria and enabled Greece to enter Southern Macedonia and Thessaloniki. Since Serbia occupied most of the Vardar Valley (Vardar Macedonia), Bulgaria lost its agreed share of Macedonia.

In 1913, an unsatisfied Bulgaria attacked Serbia and Greece, a maneuver that is known as the Second Balkan War. In 1913, the Treaty of Bucharest resolved the Balkan wars leaving Bulgaria defeated and unsatisfied as it was left with only a small part of Macedonia, or Pirin Macedonia. Serbia kept the entire Macedonian territory it occupied, whereas Greece retained the entire southern Macedonia, which from that point on became known as Greek or Aegean Macedonia. Despite the IMARO campaigns, none of the three states envisaged an independent and autonomous Macedonia. Hence, Macedonia was liberated from the Ottomans, but not independent in its own right. In the period after 1913, the Greek government took repressive measures against the Slavs in the region and in a way helped them learn "who they are not," first and foremost. Greece adopted a policy of forced assimilation and destroyed any evidence of the existence of Slavic literacy. The repression produced frustration among the population which was channeled into separatist movements. Some authors argue that "since 1913 the fates of the Slavic-speaking inhabitants of Bulgarian (Pirin) Macedonia, Greek (Aegean) Macedonia and Yugoslav (Vardar) Macedonia have varied considerably" (Danforth 1993, 3).

Bulgaria tried to satisfy its territorial appetite during the First World War, as it joined the side that offered it the desired part of Macedonia. During the War, Bulgaria occupied the entire portion of Macedonia that was under Serbian control and parts of Macedonia that were under Greek control. This period is known for the attempts to impose Bulgarian national identity on the Slavic Macedonians (Ex: the practice of changing surnames). With the defeat of the central

European Powers in 1918, Bulgaria was forced out of Macedonia and almost completely lost its foothold in the territory. By 1918, Macedonia was divided into three parts between Bulgaria with only a very small part (Pirin Macedonia), and Yugoslavia and Greece with larger shares. Greek or Aegean Macedonia was left with a large population of Slavic Macedonians.

In the interwar period some politicians in Yugoslavia declared Macedonians as a separate people. Even by this period, there was no reference to the link between a possible Macedonian statehood and ancient Macedonia (Vangeli 2011). After 1918, the victorious Kingdom of Yugoslavia, first known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, united the Serbian kingdom (which included Vardar Macedonia) with former Austro-Hungarian territories (Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina). The kingdom became an absolute monarchy for a short time period (Alexander I), disappeared with in the German occupation in 1941. In 1924, Greece, with the Kalfov-Politis protocol, attempted to recognize its so-called Slavophone Greeks as Bulgarian minority; however, this attempt was blocked by a strong opposition from the Yugoslav government.

Since the Kingdom of Yugoslavia united different nationalities, it was often viewed as an "artificial" state. But as Hayden (1992) notes: "Yugoslavia in 1920 was no more artificial than Italy or Germany at the time of their unifications, or India in 1947, or Belgium or Switzerland at any time" (1378). The official Yugoslav position toward the Slavs in Macedonia was that they "did not constitute a distinct ethnic or national group, but that they were all 'South Serbs'" (Danforth 1993, 3).

Still, as a result of its different nationalities, Yugoslavia confronted separatist sentiments from its inception. This enabled Hitler to tear apart the country, by forming the satellite state of Independent State of Croatia. The Ustasha (Croatian separatist independence movement) terror

campaign against Serbs was, at the same time, accompanied by fights between the Serbian royalists and Tito's communist partisans, who fought both Germans and each other. As a result, the Second World War, in Yugoslavia, was also a civil war (Hayden 1992).

In Greece, the years before the Second World War i.e. from 1936 to 1940, were significant for the harsh rule of the Metaxas dictatorship.

> The repression of the Slavic speakers, who by this time had increasingly begun to identify themselves as Macedonians, were particularly severe: people who spoke Macedonian were beaten, fined and imprisoned. After the Greek Civil War (1946-49), in which many Macedonians supported the unsuccessful Communist cause, some 35,000 Macedonians fled to Yugoslavia and other countries in Eastern Europe under extremely difficult circumstances. (Kofos 1964 quoted in Danforth 1993, 4)

Similarly, the Greek purge of Aegean Macedonia continued with a similar pace and Danforth (1993) refers to Pribichevich (1982) who shows

> In the decades that followed, conservative Greek governments continued this policy of persecution and assimilation, perhaps the most egregious examples of which were the 'language oaths' administered in several Macedonian villages, which required Macedonians to swear that they would renounce their 'Slavic dialect' and from then on speak only Greek. (Pribichevich 1982 quoted in Danforth 1993, 4)

During the Second World War, there was no notion among the Macedonian partisans that their actions were animated by the existence of an ancient Macedonian state. Antiquization was absent in the partisan movement during the Second World War. In 1944 during the ASNOM sessions no reference was made toward Alexander the Great and the popular ideas of the new Macedonian state. Vangeli (2011) argues that the only narrative that approximates the idea of ancient Macedonia to the foundation of ASNOM Macedonia has been the concept of Greater Macedonia. He claims that this happened because of the proximate borders of the territories of ancient Macedonia and Greater Macedonia. ASNOM provides the link between the two

territories in its manifesto that decries the partition of Macedonia at the beginning of the 20th century.

The Second World War ended with the support by the Allies of Josip Broz Tito's partisans. The Independent State of Croatia (1941-45) collapsed with the fall of Hitler. The new, or second, Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (henceforth FPRY) was formed in 1945 and kept the territories that were part of the Yugoslav kingdom during the period of 1920 to 1941. FPRY was organized into six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

## III. Official Recognition of Macedonian National Identity (SFRY)

Over the past millennium, the territory of Macedonia has been a part of the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, numerous medieval empires, and the Ottoman Empire. By the end of the Second World War, geographical Macedonia was now known as a combined territory of Yugoslav Macedonia, Greek Macedonia, and Bulgarian Macedonia.

During the Second World War, through several plenary sessions, ASNOM founded the new Macedonian republic as part of the Yugoslavian federation. ASNOM was the supreme representative body of the Macedonian state and its people. It operated in the period between 1944 and the end of the Second World War. After the end of the war, a People's Republic of Macedonia was formed within the framework of Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1963, this state was renamed S. R. Macedonia within the (also renamed) SFRY. For the first time, Macedonians acquired a state of their own.

With ASNOM began the construction of the Macedonian national identity, which invoked the Macedonian movement at the turn of the century. Nation building in Yugoslav Macedonia was a state-sponsored project implemented through cultural and scientific institutions. The state promoted the so-called doctrine of Macedonism, "a state framed approach towards history and the Macedonian nation inspired by 19th and early 20th century intellectuals, such as Krste P. Misirkov, primarily focused on proving and the affirmation of the cultural uniqueness of Macedonians" (Vangeli 2011, 16). In 1945, the introduction of the Macedonian language as an official language was based upon Krste P. Misirkov's work in *On Macedonian Matters* (1903).

Krste P. Misirkov, as Georgievski (1999) argues "set the basic directions for the linguistic and orthographic solutions for the standard Macedonian language, which was established four decades later with the codification solutions by ASNOM" (12). If Misirkov was the main initiator of the codification of the Macedonian language, then Blaze Koneski was its creator in the legal sense and in accordance with contemporary linguistics. Koneski, apart from being a prominent poet, published the first *Grammar of Standard Macedonian Language* in 1952, and edited the first *Macedonian Dictionary* as well as *A History of Macedonian Language* in 1965/66.

ASNOM, apart from calling upon grievances from the tripartite division of Greater Macedonia, did not set forth any other reference to antiquity. However, ASNOM proclaimed itself a "Second Ilinden", connecting with the precedent set by IMARO's 1903 Krusevo Uprising. The idea of Macedonian statehood was thus presented as an uninterrupted thread back to the beginning of the 20th century.

However, not all nation-building projects in the Balkans have followed the non-Western model of national identity. At least for seven decades, the nation-building process was triumphed

by civic model of national identity. Yugoslavia formally recognized the importance of national identity, but it denied the legitimacy of chauvinistic nationalism. In the SFRY nationalism was officially unrecognized and the republics lived instead under the Titoist principles of "brotherhood and unity". But national identities prevailed as the common policy was continuously balancing national interests. Separatist movements and extreme nationalism were purged and driven outside SFRY. In the Diasporas these movements, often considered to be terrorist, continued to operate. The Yugoslav identity has been seen as fragile and some authors (Burg and Berbaum 1989 quoted in Hayden 1992) have suggested that those who identify themselves as Yugoslav might decline in numbers as the economy in the state worsened. In the end, "Yugoslavia's failure to accommodate [its] ethnically mixed populations provoked demands for secession [which] were not consistently handled by the international community [were] also due to the tension between the principles of self-determination, state-sovereignty, and democracy" (Lucarelli 2003, 365).

The Yugoslavian nation-building in S. R. Macedonia was subordinated to the Macedonian building of national identity. In the hierarchy of myths, the idea of the Yugoslav origin of Macedonians was the basis of the nation-building process. So the narratives of the link to antiquity were not as important as the regional category of identity. The only trace of this narrative of antiquity can be seen in the fact that the history textbooks in Yugoslavia contained a chapter (approximately 20 pages) on Alexander the Great and ancient Macedonia.

> Still, this notion was taken with a reserve, and was mostly instrumentalized in the disputes with Bulgarian historiography and also as a protection from the nationalist discourse among certain Macedonians that was based on the idea of "returning the Bulgarian consciousness" of Macedonians. This discourse later came to be known as anti-Macedonism and had a strong impact in the debates on the national self. (Maleska 2010 quoted in Vangeli 2011, 16)

The basis of Tito's policy after the Second World War to declare the Macedonians as a separate people is found in the policy position of interwar politicians such as Svetozar Pribichevich. This idea was part of the Croatian Ilyrian movement for a united state of all south Slavs that accompanied the rise of national consciousness in the Balkans, during the 19th century. "So what gave rise to some of the most acute political turmoil of the interwar period, seemed to have been 'solved' by Tito's creation" (Pettifer 2000, 475). By creation, Pettifer (2000) understands the establishment of a Macedonian republic by the Yugoslav Communist Party at the end of Second World War.

However, in the early 1950s, to some the Macedonian question seemed as a resolved matter of the past. Some considered that with the establishment of SFRY, the Macedonian question "lay dormant in the international imagination" (Cowan 2000). To others, especially in the Balkan states' system, it was merely "frozen" or

> cemented through the East-West opposition and through the discipline of the blocs, but also as a result of the existence of a relatively strong Yugoslav state which, in fact, could not be offensive or aggressive in this field, but which was able to thwart the emergence of all potential aspirations to Vardar Macedonia. (Reuter 2000, 30)

The Institute for National History was established in 1948 and held a monopoly over historical research. Institutions sponsored by the state wrote the first Macedonian history. With the help of institutions such as the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (henceforth MANU) or the Institute the Macedonian historiography recreated, as termed by Stefan Troebst, "historical masterpieces." The state university was established in 1949.

MANU has been an important institution in the construction and nurturing of the Macedonian national identity. As the President of the Macedonian academy wirtes in his welcoming note on the MANU website: "The Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts was

established by the Macedonian Assembly on 22nd February 1967 as the highest scientific, scholarly and artistic institution in the country with the aim of monitoring and stimulating the sciences and arts" (Kambovski 2007). At the Academy's web site an opening text by the institution's president Vlado Kambovski provides a direct linkage between ASNOM and MANU. Kambovski (2007) writes that "the Macedonian state came into being with the First Anti-fascist Assembly of the People's Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) in 1944. Twenty-three years later, in 1967, the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts was founded." The literary and publishing activity of MANU has supported the new Macedonian state since its beginning in 1948. Certainly, the nationalist discourse abounds, as the Academy has never been only an impartial observer. Moreover, one of its first publications in the 1970s, *The Thousandth Anniversary of the Death of St. Cyril of Thessaloniki*, might have had an antagonizing effect upon the relationship with Greece.

The discourse pursued by MANU, as well as its interpretations of the past, go in direct conflict with most of its neighboring countries' academies. For example, whereas Bulgaria is reluctant to acknowledge any Macedonian national consciousness or the Macedonian Ohrid Archbishopric, MANU has published works such as *The Cyrillo-Methodian (Old Slavic) Period and the Cyrillo-Methodian Tradition in Macedonia* (1988), and *St. Clement of Ohrid and the Role of the Ohrid Literary School in the Development of Slavic Enlightenment* (1989).

Another example of different interpretations would be IMARO. For some the IMARO pursued the goal of establishing Greater Bulgaria in accordance with the Treaty of San Stefano. In this version of the story, IMARO was against the territorial divisions after the First World War. Its activities were supported by the Bulgarian government. This IMARO cooperated with the Ustasha movement in Croatia. Both movements were played by external powers, such as

Italy and Germany, in order to use them for their own purposes (Hayden 1992). The result of this cooperation was the assassination of the King of Yugoslavia, Alexander I, in 1934 in Marseilles. Thus, this version of the IMARO history argues that a split happened in the organization in the 1930s. The split occurred between the pro-Bulgarian and pro-Macedonian wings. The second rejected a pro-Bulgarian politics and "proclaimed a distinct Macedonian national consciousness, wishing to combine the three parts into a single united and independent Macedonia" (Reuter 2000, 29). Some recognize the existence of two different wings within IMARO: one, a pro-Bulgarian one and the other, a genuine Macedonian one.

In this context of different interpretations by different nationalist discourses, MANU has published *100 Years since the Foundation of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and 90 Years since the Ilinden Uprising* (1994), and *Goce Delcev and the Macedonian National Revolutionary Movement* (1973). Its 1986 publication on *Macedonia and the Macedonian People: the History of the Macedonian People* has also different interpretation of past events. Inspired by the name dispute with Greece, MANU published *Macedonia in the Wars between 1912 and 1918* (1991), *Macedonia and its Relations with Greece* (1993). In the face of Greek denials of the existence of Macedonian minority Zuzanna Topolinska has published *Macedonian Dialects in Aegean Macedonia* in 1995 and 1997.

In the middle of the 1980s, Macedonians started dismissing the celebration of the Balkan Wars as the liberation from the Ottoman Empire since one occupation was simply substituted with another - Serbian (Poulton 1995). Thus, in the past decade, the obsession with writing and rewriting history can be seen through the extensive work of Blaze Ristovski *A History of the Macedonian Nation* (1999), *Evidence on Language, Literature and Nation* (2001), or MANU's

*Cultural History of Macedonia: Civilizations on Macedonian Soil* (1995) and Gjorgjija M. Pulevski's *Slavonic-Macedonian General History* (2003).

MANU supported the government in the newly independent R. Macedonia in the 1990s and thus the idea that it considered the first Macedonian state to be established with ASNOM. As a result in 1995, MANU published *ASNOM – Fifty Years of the Macedonian State (1944–94)*.

## IV. Independent Republic of Macedonia and the New Macedonian Question

> From 1945 through 1990 Macedonia existed as a republic within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This period came to an end in 1991 when a referendum on independence was held in Macedonia, and a majority of 74% voted in favor of forming an independent state. Macedonia declared its full independence from Yugoslavia in January 1992. (Ringdal, Simkus and Linsthaug 2007, 79)

R. Macedonia proclaimed its independence on September 8th, 1991, after it seceded from Yugoslavia. Unlike several other states in the Balkans, it had never been an independent country. As a result, the rights and protections afforded to this newly sovereign state under international law were comparatively fragile

This thesis inspects the nation-building efforts in the context of internal and external struggles over Macedonian national symbols and identity. The external struggles are observed as continuation of the Macedonian question. Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian interpretations are juxtaposed with the official Macedonian interpretation. In this domain, one notices an overall presence of nationalist discourse in official governments' politics. The internal struggle in Macedonian identity building arises from its construction and the tensions it produces with, mainly, the Albanian ethnic community.

A. External struggles

Ever since the bloody break-up of SFRY, the Macedonian question has been revived. What started off as an ecclesiastical dispute in the 19th century transformed into a battle for the Macedonian population. The main aspect of the Macedonian question has been the identity of the inhabitants of Macedonia. The majority of the population in geographical Macedonia until the exchange of population in the 1920s has been Slavic. The population that has lived in this contested land has been named differently by different sides, in different times. Authors choose to name these south Slavs as Slavic Macedonians, as a way of distinguishing between the Bulgarian and Serbian Slavs. However, the citizens of present-day R. Macedonia that consider themselves ethnic Macedonians regard the term "Slavic Macedonian" as extremely offensive.

Although the revival of the Macedonian question plays a romantic nationalist tune from the 19th century, its present international force comes from the involvement of the diasporic communities. Moreover, international, governmental and non-governmental, and state bodies, including academics, are actively participating in this new Macedonian question.

In continuation of the Macedonian question, the identity, name, symbols, language, and history of the newly independent R. Macedonia have been a contentious matter in the Balkans (Trajanoski 2009). Kyril Drezov (2000) examines different "schools of thought" on the contention regarding the Macedonian question and the significance of R. Macedonia. Greek historians and politicians adhere to the view that rejects the use of the adjective "Macedonian" as a way to describe R. Macedonia. Another perspective is taken by Bulgarian politicians and academics, who reject the separateness of the Macedonian nation and language (before 1944, some even after), although they acknowledge Macedonia as a geographical term and state name.

With regards to Serbia, "even the most level-headed Serbian intellectuals remain skeptical about the historical existence of any fixed ethnic identity among Slavs in present-day Macedonia before the 20th century" (Drezov 2000, 47). Lastly, the Macedonian version, also represented by intellectuals and politicians, observes the present statehood as drawing from national consciousness and language, sometimes even before the 19th century, and some even going as far back as antiquity. Additionally, these various ideas are accepted in different ways by non-Balkan scholars and politicians who almost always end up being biased towards one "school of thought" or another.

After proclaiming independence R. Macedonia in 1991 faced a rather inhospitable security environment along all of its borders by various nationalist ideologies and movements. Although Bulgaria was the first to recognize the Macedonian state, it denied the separateness of the Macedonian nation, claiming Macedonians as Bulgarian (Danforth 1995) and regarded the Macedonian language as Western Bulgarian dialect. Serbia did not recognize the state until 1996, while Serbian nationalists continued to refer to Macedonia as "South Serbia". Greece refused to recognize anything that contained the name "Macedonia", as it was regarded as an exclusively Greek term. The proclamation of independence of a Macedonian state was treated by the Greek government as a direct threat to the Greek nation and territory. Danforth (1995) observes that both governments' positions (Greek and Macedonian) and the nationalist ideologies they represent "lay claim to the same name, the same symbols, the same ancient heroes, even the same cities and towns" (30).

The denial of Macedonian national identity by its neighbors has conditioned the international recognition of R. Macedonia. Specifically, the struggle for the Macedonian national identity is also a struggle for recognition of the Republic's national symbols. Official Greece does not

recognize the state's name and flag, official Bulgaria does not recognize the Macedonian language and the Ilinden Uprising, the Serbian as well as Bulgarian Orthodox churches have refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and allow it its own archbishopric (Siegel 2010).

1. The Greek side

After 1945 Greece has had the tendency to identify its Greek state with the Greek nation. The conflict between Greeks and Macedonians over which group has the right to identify itself as Macedonian is a dispute over names, flags, history, and territory (Danforth 1995). After the declaration of Macedonian independence in 1991, the international recognition of R. Macedonia was blocked due to its use of the name "Macedonia" for its state. Greece refused to recognize Macedonia's independence from the former Yugoslavia. In 1994 Greece imposed a trade embargo upon R. Macedonian, which economically damaged the newly formed country. This, combined with economic sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia during the civil war in Bosnia, produced seriously deleterious effects for its economy (Siegel 2010).

The Greeks claim exclusivity over the name "Macedonia". Officially Greece recognizes its Slavic population as Slavophone Greeks. The Greek's nationalist ideology claims that "Alexander the Great and the ancient Macedonians were Greek, and because ancient and modern Greece [were] linked in an unbroken line of racial and cultural continuity, only Greeks have the right to identify themselves as Macedonians" (Danforth 1995, 32). On the other hand, R. Macedonia holds the position that a "Macedonian is defined as a person by inheritance who

speaks a Slavonic language coming from that area of Europe known as Macedonia whether such is part of Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, or Albania" (Danforth 1995, 44).

> The negation of Macedonian identity in Greek nationalist ideology focuses on three main points: the existence of a Macedonian nation, a Macedonian language and a Macedonian minority in Greece. From the Greek nationalist perspective, there cannot be a Macedonian nation since there has never been an independent Macedonian state. The Macedonian nation is an 'artificial creation', an 'invention', of Tito, who 'baptized' a 'mosaic of nationalities' with the Greek name 'Macedonians'. Similarly, because the language spoken by the ancient Macedonians was Greek, the Slavic language spoken by the 'Skopians' [sic] cannot be called 'the Macedonian language'. Greek sources generally refer to it as 'the linguistic idiom of Skopje' and describe it as a corrupt and impoverished dialect of Bulgarian. (Danforth 1993, 4)

Greece is still uncomfortable recognizing minorities. Therefore, the new Macedonian question has been heavily focused on whether a distinct Macedonian nation actually exists and on whether there really are Macedonian minorities in Bulgaria and Greece. Half a century ago, as Danforth (1993) has explained, Evangelos Kofos (1964) with his *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* elucidated the claims of the Greek government that deny the existence of minorities in Greece, which is still considered valid. Today, equally as in the 1950s, "the Greek government denies the existence of a Macedonian minority in northern Greece, claiming that there exists only a small group of 'Slavophone Hellenes' or 'bilingual Greeks', who speak Greek and 'a local Slavic dialect' but have a 'Greek national consciousness'" (Kofos 1964 quoted in Danforth 1993).

Consequently, Greece still has not ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (henceforth FCNM) nor signed the European Charter for Minority Languages (henceforth ECML). As a result, Greece still refuses to recognize existence of minorities, or citizens who do not speak Greek, who are not Orthodox Christians, or who simply do not identify themselves as Greek (Danforth 1995). These political tensions have come in clash

with the existence of a Macedonian human rights movement within Greece. The movement has refused the terminology of "Slavophone Hellenes with a Greek national consciousness" (Danforth, 1995). Greece has refused the right to freedom of association and expression not only to its ethnic Macedonian community, but also to its Turkish community as well.

In the 1998 ECtHR judgment of *Sidiropoulos and Others v. Greece,* Greece was found in violation of Article 11 for its refusal to allow the registration of the organization Home of the Macedonian Culture (Minorities Rights Group International 2011). In 2007 and 2008 the ECtHR brought three decisions against Greece for the same violation against members of the Turkish community. In sum, Greece, a member of the EU and NATO, prevents the right to self-identification for its minorities.

On the other hand, Drezov (2000) finds two problem areas as uncomfortable for modern Greece. The first one refers to the identity of ancient Macedonians where Greeks consider them as one of the Greek tribes. The official Greek stance is that Philip II and Alexander the Great were representatives of the entire Hellenic world. Historical evidence suggests that Greeks perceived ancient Macedonians as barbarians and absolute non-Greeks. Support for the claims of modern Greek history comes from linguistic arguments and archeological findings in ancient Macedonian places.

The relationship between ancient Macedonians and ancient Greeks does not say anything about the relationship between modern Greeks and their claims to geographical Macedonia. The fact that ancient Macedonians spread Hellenic culture and thus left abundant artifacts in their territories does not qualify them as a sub-Greek tribe. Much evidence exists of the ferocious refusal of many ancient Greeks to accept ancient Macedonians as Greeks. In addition, "the complexity of Greek-Macedonian relations in antiquity does not fit the straight-jacket of 19$^{th}$ and

20th century Greek nationalist propaganda, which has invariably projected on to antiquity the contemporary reality that a sub-division of the Greek people lives in geographic Macedonia" (Drezov 2000, 48). In these terms the only thing that one can be certain of is that the ancient Macedonians were not Greek people, nor were they Slavic.

The second problem area for the present Greek position is the recent Hellenization of Aegean Macedonia. The Greeks became the predominant population in Aegean Macedonia, only with the influx of Asia Minor refugees, with the Treaty of Lausanne from 1923. This Treaty ended the Greek-Turkish war and prescribed compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey. This has resulted precisely in Greece's policy, supported domestically, to implemented a campaign to "safeguard the name as designating exclusively the northern territories incorporated into the Greek state in 1912-13" (Cowan 2000, 1).

Greek nationalist discourse presents the so called 4,000 years of Greek civilization, and presents grievances of the Greeks as victims of Ottomans, Bulgarians, and "Skopjans". In this discourse, the Aegean Macedonia was liberated and not conquered by the Greeks "against the will of the local population, most of which was either slaughtered or expelled" (Drezov 2000, 49). The successful Greek nation-building process included complete Hellenization of the conquered territory. Émigré Greeks from Asia Minor contributed to an increase of the Greek population in Aegean Macedonia.

Drezov (2000) argues that the Greeks refuse their own contribution to the Macedonian national identity. In fact, the name of Macedonia itself was resurrected in the course of the 19th century as a result of the modern Greeks' "obsession with antiquity". Modern Greeks realized that the West understood the name "Macedonia" as the territory of ancient Macedonia, whereas in the Balkans, it was rarely used, (and when it was) it denoted a mere geographical place. So the

19th century Greeks revived the classical utilization of the name "Macedonia" instead of its geographical. The presence of the Greek priests and teachers led to application of this classical employment of the name "Macedonia" to all Orthodox Christians. Drezov (2000) argues that the very term "Slav Macedonian" was popularized by the Greeks since 1890 "in order to emphasize a separateness from the Bulgarian church, nation, and state, and conversely, to stimulate closeness to the Greeks through a linkage to the ancient Macedonians." The Greek assumption was (and still is) that these Slav Macedonians did not have any ethnic and national identity except for their "natural" Greek identity. In this early period, some authors find the very first instances of antiquization thus "…this remote proto-antiquization, the role of ethnic Macedonian refugees from Greek Macedonia during the Greek Civil War has been especially important" (Voss 2007 quoted in Vangeli 2011, 9).

2. The Bulgarian side

Bulgaria recognized R. Macedonia under its constitutional name, but still has not recognized the Macedonian language and the Macedonian people. However, Bulgaria has also contributed to the national identity of R. Macedonia although it denies the contemporary Macedonian nation and language. When it does acknowledge it, it usually describes it as a Serbian or Titoist invention. In the past, the "Bulgarians have fluctuated between saying that all Slav Macedonians were Bulgarians and declaring that there was a separate Macedonian people, according to the needs or convenience of the moment" (Barker 2000, 5). Danforth (1993) similarly describes the official Bulgarian position:

> With the exception of a brief period following World War II, the Bulgarian government has officially denied the existence of a Macedonian nation, arguing

> instead that all the Slavs of Macedonia are Bulgarians. Since that time its policy toward the Macedonians in Bulgaria has been one of forced assimilation into mainstream Bulgarian society. (4)

Medieval historical events and strong Bulgarian national movement during the 19th century influenced the population in Vardar Macedonia before the 1940s and contributed to part of it having Bulgarian identity. At the same time the genuine Macedonian struggle, as part of IMARO, nurtured a strong Macedonian identity thus enabling further advancement of Macedonian national consciousness. With Yugoslav communist support, this Macedonian national consciousness triumphed over the Bulgarian identity and caused, as Drezov (2000) notes, its "natural dying-out."

> Until the 1940s Bulgarian academia and propaganda played a major role encountering [sic] Greek claims about the Greekness of ancient Macedonians, and – very similar to the present day Skopje line – insisted either that they were a people totally separate from the Greeks (in more academic publications), or that they were Slavs, or directly related to present day Bulgarian-Macedonians (in popular propaganda). (Drezov 2000)

3. Serbian interpretation of Macedonian identity

Until the beginning of the Second World War the official Yugoslav policy named Slav Macedonians as Serbs and Yugoslav Macedonia was considered "South Serbia." Present interstate relations between Serbia and R. Macedonia have not imperiled the Macedonian national identity. The challenges, however, come from the Serbian academic community.

Serbia recognized R. Macedonia under its constitutional name along with its nation and language. Serbia also recognized the continuity of the republic since ASNOM, although the Serbian Orthodox Church refuses to acknowledge it. The troublesome aspect of ASNOM is that at its session it addressed Macedonians from Greece and Bulgaria and called for their

rights to self-determination. When Serbia recognized the Macedonian language it was troublesome for Bulgaria, as it does not recognize a separate Macedonian language.

Serbian academics stand close to a famous Serbian geographer and ethnographer, Jovan Cvijic, from the early 20th century. Cvijic argued that the Macedonian Slavs did not have significant ethnic features and they vacillated between Serbs and Bulgarians. This is illustrated by Cvijic's words in 1906, as cited in Drezov's (2000):

> the Macedonian Slavs were an amorphous mass that could be easily made either Serb or Bulgarian depending on the strength of the relevant propaganda; the name Bulgarian with which Macedonian Slavs usually call themselves is not an ethnographic name, and it does not mean that they are ethnic Bulgarians. (53)

In 1914, the Carnegie International Commission that investigated the Balkan Wars, considered Cvijic's use of the term of Slav-Macedonians, as an attempt to conceal the existence of Bulgarians in Macedonia. As these squabbles show, both Cvijic and the Carnegie International Commission considered Macedonian identity non-existent. In fact this is precisely the position that Greeks and Bulgarians have taken after R. Macedonia proclaimed its independence. It is the position that sees the Macedonian national identity as an "erroneous" identity (Drezov 2000).

4. R. Macedonia's interpretation of Macedonian identity

During the late 19th century, Macedonian identity developed as a geographical, or regional, collective identity which facilitated the later Macedonian national identity as part of S. R. Macedonia. Currently, the majority of the citizens in R. Macedonia consider themselves as part of a Macedonian nation that speaks a Macedonian language. This self-identification has been

disputed by majority of Greeks and Bulgarians. In addition to these competing claims, the onerous task of gaining international recognition for the R. Macedonia has been based upon the assertion of "ethno-specificity". Emphasis has been put on insisting that Macedonians are not Serbs, Bulgarians, or Greeks. Macedonians find it offensive when their ethnicity is written in hyphenated form as Danforth (1993, 7) suggests:

> They reject hyphenated names such as […] Greek-Macedonian as 'divisive labels' indicative of a 'partition mentality' that needs to be overcome. There are no Slav-Macedonians, either, any more than there are Slav-Russians or Slav- Poles. According to many Macedonians, those Greeks and Bulgarians who live in Macedonia (whose nationality is Greek or Bulgarian) may identify themselves as 'Macedonians', but in a regional or geographical sense only.

However, the process of creating reality is marked by the power of the awareness and certainty that individuals are what they feel they are, regardless of protracted disputes. The social construction of the national identities has included changes in traditional self-identification. From peasants or "raja" in the millet system, individuals' perceptions transformed the collective into individual categories, and religious, familiar and regional into ethnic category of identity.

This process was practiced during the 19$^{th}$ century and included antiquization of communities in order for them to be able to "imagine" themselves as connected with some glorious past. Thus, as Danforth (1993, 7) has observed: "the extreme Macedonian nationalists, who are concerned with demonstrating the continuity between ancient and modern Macedonians, deny that they are Slavs and claim to be the direct descendants of Alexander the Great and the ancient Macedonians." Similarly, R. Macedonia has reached for the same tools. It is not a novel thing for the nation-building processes to reach back in history, to remember the past, in order to create the present reality. The only thing that can be said about this Macedonian nationalism is that it is

a unique late-bloomer. The uniqueness about it is that it uses the tools and propaganda of its main contesters. Apart from the nationalist propaganda,

> The more moderate Macedonian position, generally adopted by better educated Macedonians and publically endorsed by Kiro Gligorov, the first president of the newly independent Republic of Macedonia, is that modern Macedonians have no relation to Alexander the Great, but are a Slavic people whose ancestors arrived in Macedonia in the sixth century AD. Proponents of both the extreme and the moderate Macedonian positions stress that the ancient Macedonians were a distinct non-Greek people. (Danforth 1993)

B. Internal struggles: The Ohrid framework agreement and beyond

Within R. Macedonia there is strife among Albanians and Macedonians. The overall Albanian population's dissatisfaction with its political status and with the Republic's nation-building process has threatened Macedonian national identity. Trajanoski (2009) has offered an analysis of the construction process of the Macedonian state symbols by addressing this "internal" political struggle:

> The political struggle regarding the definition of state symbols has so far been primarily fought between the political parties of the ethnic Albanians (as opponents of state symbols voted out by the majority led by the "Macedonian political block"), and political parties of the ethnic Macedonians (as their supporters). (Trajanoski 2009)

In addition to the external struggles for political recognition of R. Macedonia, the construction process has been challenged internally too. Thus Trajanoski (2009) describes how Macedonian national symbols like the anthem have also been contested from within R. Macedonia.

The 1991 Constitution was written as a continuation of the state and legislative tradition of the 1903 Krusevo Republic. R. Macedonia was founded as a state that belonged primarily to the

Macedonian people. The Macedonian people perceived the 1991 Constitution imparting a strong civic character to the state, which belongs to all citizens regardless of religion, nationality, gender, and convictions. This idea also assumes that statehood comes before ethnicity. This civic character of the Constitution can be observed through the national anthem that refers to Vlachs as Macedonians. In this sense, being a Macedonian has been a civic category, not an ethnic one.

This idea underlined the construction of this Macedonian national identity and was not necessarily shared by the entire population in R. Macedonia. This is especially because the rest of the symbols and elements that constructed the Macedonian national identity persisted on favoring the Macedonian ethnic community.

As a result, the Macedonian referendum for independence in 1991 was boycotted by the Albanians. The 1991 Constitution denied the non-majority communities equal status institutionally and in reality. The disagreements between the Macedonian and Albanian political blocks stemmed from previously ignored Albanian demands as part of Yugoslavia. Although the Yugoslavia's constitution of 1974 granted Albanians constitutional equality with Macedonians, after the proclamation of independence, R. Macedonia changed its policy with the adoption of the new constitution in 1991. As the preamble of the 1991 Constitution shows:

> Proceeding from the historical, cultural, spiritual and statehood heritage of the Macedonian people and their centuries-long struggle for national and social liberty and the creation of their own state, and particularly from the statehood and legal traditions of the Krusevo Republic and the historic decisions of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the People's Liberation of Macedonia, from the constitutional and legal continuity of the Macedonian state as a sovereign republic within Federal Yugoslavia, from the freely expressed will of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia in the referendum of September 8th, 1991, as well as from the historical fact that Macedonia is established as a National state of the Macedonian people, which guarantees the full civic equality and permanent coexistence of the Macedonian people with the Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and the other nationalities.

The preamble has been blamed for institutionalizing inequality as its wording has declared the Macedonian people "above" the nationalities. Zhidas Daskalovski (2002) has interpreted it as a "pecking order"

> Symbolically then we have a classification of peoples into three categories, the Macedonians as the primary bearers of the right to the state, the members of the four mentioned minorities as peoples with equal rights but not being the primary claimants to the right to the state, and the members of the nations not even mentioned in the Preamble specified as 'others. (Daskalovski 2002 quoted in Reka 2008, 57)

The Albanians lost the right to higher education in their Albanian language and declared the standard Macedonian the only official language of the country. Moreover, the Macedonian Orthodox Church was the single religious community mentioned in the Constitution, which was interpreted as "a clear symbolic advantage over the Islamic, Catholic and other religious communities" (Daskalovski 2002 quoted in Reka 2008, 57). In this context, in January 1992, the Albanian minority in Macedonia held a referendum and voted overwhelmingly in favor of creating own its Republic of Ilirida as a separate political and territorial unit from Macedonia (Danforth 1995).

Some authors point out that during the dissolution of Yugoslavia there was no armed conflict in S. R. Macedonia. Alice Ackermann (2000) has discussed the reasons why the expected spillover of conflict of the other former Yugoslavian republics into Macedonia never happened. Macedonia followed Slovenia and Croatia and peacefully declared its secession from Yugoslavia in September 1991. But the spillover effect ensued not too long after Ackermann's study in 2000. Soon after, as Siegel (2010) argues

> The collapse of the government in Albania, after the implosion of a giant Ponzi scheme only exacerbated concerns that ethnic tensions between the Macedonian and Albanian communities would worsen if there were a large influx of refugees.

> The outbreak of war in Kosovo in 1999 would be the first conflict to directly involve and threaten the security of the Macedonian state.

The beginning of the new millennium has been a terrible time for making prognosticism about the future of R. Macedonia. Authors have fallen into the trap of calling R. Macedonia a success in prevailing ethnic and religious conflict. Thus, Ackerman (2000) wrote an account of the establishment of the independent R. Macedonia, which stressed its peaceful transition from its former status as S. R. Macedonia.

This optimism was premature and the truth is, as time has shown, R. Macedonia did experience armed conflict. The spillover effect was delayed, but it did emerge in clashes between Albanian paramilitary groups and the Macedonian armed forces in 2001. “In 2001 Macedonia suffered a short-lived armed conflict between the Macedonian security forces and ethnic Albanian rebels. The hostilities ended with the signing of a peace deal that same year that granted greater rights to the country’s Albanians.” (Siegel 2010) In fact, R. Macedonia, throughout the decade between the 1991 independence and 2001, was continuously destabilized by tensions and sporadic violence. The 2001 conflict was, in part, a culmination of those pressures.

In this perspective, Ackermann’s advice that violent conflict can be prevented "through design rather than by accident" (Ackermann 2000) tends to fade. In the case of R. Macedonia, the spillover effect and the disintegrative forces continued to permeate. Still, the fact that the country avoided the first and most bloody wave of the dissolution should be observed. Therefore, Ackermann is credited for developing a set of six key factors[v] that were necessary for a feasible prevention diplomacy in the early 1990s.

Overall, the collapse of the former Yugoslavia happened through violent conflicts that have been among the most devastating since the Second World War. In contrast, R. Macedonia faced rather limited fighting in 2001 between Albanian and Macedonian ethnic groups. Still, the conflict in Macedonia was serious and there was an opportunity for it to escalate into a violent and destructive civil war. There are many ways to explain why R. Macedonia escaped the fate of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. An important role has been played by the international community, especially the EU and the United States. As Ringdal, Simkus, and Listhaug (2007) argue, "the Macedonian conflict followed a clear insurgency pattern with small groups of Albanian National Liberation Army (henceforth UCK) guerillas attacking police stations and other government institutions in a relatively small part of the territory of the Macedonian state" (78). An important transnational influence and possible spill-over have come from the conflict in Kosovo.

The Kosovo crisis influenced the political life in R. Macedonia. The NATO strikes on Yugoslavia produced an influx of refugees from Kosovo to R. Macedonia. In addition to the disrupted trade relations with Yugoslavia, unemployment in the country sky-rocketed and the industrial production diminished.

In this context the inter-ethnic balance in R. Macedonia tilted towards Albanians and fighting began between the Macedonian armed forces and the UCK in early 2001. Numerous and short-lived cease-fires did not improve the situation. The political elites reacted by forming a national unity government in which all major parties, both Albanian and Macedonian, were included. There was no progress toward solving the conflict without the interference of the EU and the US. Peace talks began only after international mediators brought the political parties together in Ohrid. The series of meetings resulted in the OFA in the summer of 2001.

OFA raised the status of the ethnic Albanian communities and provided a framework for further emancipation of Albanians. Changes brought about by the new constitutional amendments included reforms of the local self-government, increases in Albanian participation in the civil sector (especially the police), disarmament of the UCK, and amnesty to the participants in the conflict.

Soon after, the Albanian language was recognized as a second official language of R. Macedonia. Reka (2008) summarize OFA's achievement in setting the link between the use of language and the law on self-government:

> The law on local self-government stipulates that if an ethnic community numbers more than 20% in the total population within the municipality, its language and alphabet automatically become official. This provision has allowed Turkish, Serbian and Roma to become official languages in certain municipalities. Moreover, the law allows non-majority languages to be declared "official" by a municipality decision. For instance, Turkish was declared an official language in the municipality of Gostivar despite the less than 20% Turkish population. (Reka 2008)

The first test of the constitutional changes occurred in the new parliamentary elections based upon the recently adopted new election law.

Nonetheless, the tensions over the process of the implementation of the agreement have never really subsided. The 30th Anniversary Freedom House Survey denotes Macedonia's political rights and civil liberties ratings as improved amid increased stability and the gradual implementation of the 2001 agreement (Karatnycky 2003). Democratization processes, by themselves, do not prevent wars (Lucarelli, Democracy, Ethnic Diversity, and Security in Post-Communist Europe By Anita Inder Singh 2003). As hurdles have been overcome, however, new ones arise continuously and the challenges must be met in a proper fashion. The rationale behind the OFA has been that "wars were [triggered by] assimilationist or discriminatory policies that

provoked the nationalists into seeking secession" [and that therefore the] "domestic control of ethnic diversity and unresolved territorial claims [have been] reported to be the most important triggers of conflict in (and between) multiethnic states" (Lucarelli, Democracy, Ethnic Diversity, and Security in Post-Communist Europe By Anita Inder Singh 2003). The reality of the 1991 Constitution changed with OFA in 2001 when emphasis was put on ethnicity instead of civic community.

The 2001 Preamble of the Constitution proclaimed that "the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, [were] taking over responsibility for the present and future of their fatherland, […], equal in rights and obligations [striving] towards the common good–the Republic of Macedonia" (Reka 2008). Therefore, the antiquization has only contributed to the feeble mechanism prescribed in OFA.

In a public opinion research study done by Ringdal, Simkus, and Listhaug in 2007, the society in R. Macedonia has been shown as a highly polarized one. The authors, however, have learned that there are differences in the "perceptions of the reasons for the civil strife" between Macedonians and Albanians. While the Macedonians considered the conflict as a result of inter-gang rivalry, influenced by Kosovo's paramilitary, ethnic Albanians see the guerillas as local heroes fighting for equality and representation of Albanians.

In multiethnic states, such as R. Macedonia, peace has always been a "highly relevant and equally troublesome issue" (Lucarelli, Democracy, Ethnic Diversity, and Security in Post-Communist Europe By Anita Inder Singh 2003). After the 1990s, the international organizations such as the United Nations, the EU, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, and NATO, have promoted peace efforts via sustaining security through means of democratization. In this manner, the multiethnic societies have been encouraged to

"accommodate their ethnically mixed populations through democratic rule" (Singh 2001 quoted in Lucarelli 2003). The underlying thinking is that ethnic conflicts might be prevented if the rule of law is in place, rights are guaranteed, and the overall political system allows for equal participation.

The assumption that democracy is the basis for conflict prevention has been proven wrong as "democratization might trigger ethnic tensions within a country (such as in the case of political elections that might be perceived by some minorities as a threat to their future status within the country) or might be at the core of attempts at secession by a minority claiming its right to self-determination" (Lucarelli, Democracy, Ethnic Diversity, and Security in Post-Communist Europe By Anita Inder Singh 2003). Similarly, the political status of the Albanians is rather fragile and based upon the population distribution in R. Macedonia, namely the 20% threshold.

The post-Ohrid society has transformed R. Macedonia as a supra-national community that is consisted of several ethnic communities. The success of this new community is due to the power-sharing mechanism of consociational democracy, and the conflict experiences, which integrated conflict within the supra-community of the republic. Consociationalism has been criticized. The most common dynamic criticism, evident in research from the late 1950s to the present, is the way criticisms of consociational community models based on the documentation of conflict often lead to the conclusion that there is no community, or a crisis of community, rather than a redefinition of the term incorporating conflict (Creed 2004).

The dispute is limited to the governments and their diplomatic relations as well as to the public sector. There is a dissent to the official position on the name of the government in Greece. An example is the 2008 visit to R. Macedonia by the delegation led by Mr. Janis Sifakakis, a representative of the Socialist Workers Party. The visit had a goal to "attempt to stop the further

deterioration of relations between the two countries and put a stop to ever increasing nationalism and nationalist stereotypes" (Velkovski 2008).

> At the Cultural Center [Tocka], a book [was] promoted which the Socialist Party had published back in Greece, in 1993. The book [Anastasia N. Karaksidou's *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990*] reveals information on historical facts and calls on Greece […] because Macedonia has always been Macedonia. The book was forbidden for sale and is completely anonymous in Greece, like any other book that has information contrary to Official Athens. Unfortunately, the information in the book sent five leaders of the Socialist Workers Party to Court, and quickly afterwards to jail. This has happened to dozen Greek authors who dared to say anything different from the Greek government, in particularly when it comes to history. Macedonians always wonder why Greek Customs Officers take away any pamphlet or any written information before they enter Greece, even if it's a recipe. Paranoia is a difficult thing. (Velkovski 2008)

The confusion that stems from the variety of historiographies of the Balkan states is demonstrated in Trajanoski's field research on the question "what do you consider to be the first Macedonian state." He writes: "Even though, as expected, most interviewees located the 'first Macedonian state' in the year 1944/1945, referring to it more often as 'ASNOM Macedonia' and seldom as 'AVNOJ Macedonia[vi],' I still found it surprising to realize that almost as many interviewees could not temporally locate the 'first Macedonian state' whatsoever" (Trajanoski 2009). Large number of answers located the first Macedonian state as ancient Macedonia. The smallest amount of interviewees found it to be the medieval Macedonian state. The Krusevo Republic was also perceived by some as the first Macedonian state. The largest number of interviewees located ASNOM Macedonia to be the first Macedonian state. Only few of Trajanoski's (2009) interviewees regarded the first Macedonian state to have begun in 1991.

## V. Present Challenges and Possible Constructivist Solutions

Until Macedonia became an independent state, it did not really exist. As long as Macedonia remained only a geographical region, it was invisible in the world of states, and it suffered the same fate as places like Palestine or Kurdistan (Danforth 1995).

In the period between 1991 and 2002, the construction of the Macedonian national identity happened in a context that was saturated with a negative image of the Balkans. This negative image of the Balkans has been perceived in relationship with Europe, through sets of dichotomies; wisdom, dignity, and peace, versus stupidity, war, and lack of reason. So, the Macedonian elites have been trying to distance the nation from the negative image of the Balkans and move toward a more positive self-image, an aspiration to be a European (Balalovska 2003).

The present challenges to the Macedonian national identity come from the Macedonian question and interstate relations, as well as from the power-sharing mechanism within the Republic, which has emphasized ethnicity and has culminated with the current efforts at antiquization. Antiquization glorifies the Macedonian ethnic community, alienating the Albanian population and directly resurrecting the Macedonian question. As a result, R. Macedonia, in order to be considered for membership in NATO and EU has to solve the name dispute with Greece.

A. Antiquization and the power-sharing mechanism

The benefits of the OFA are well-argued and the power-sharing mechanism has been more than justified. But what is also known is that OFA created grievances within the ethnic Macedonian community. OFA in effect transformed the "tyranny of the Macedonian majority" into the "tyranny of the Albanian minority". Maleska (2003) explains this Macedonian resentment of OFA:

> All of us here knew quite well that the great majority of the Macedonians considered the 2001 Ohrid Agreement an unjust act, the product of violence on the side of the ethnic Albanians supported by the "international community" against the Macedonian national state and against the interests of the Macedonian nation.

However, as time has gone by, the grievances have slowly become dormant. As Maleska (2003) notes:

> The feeling of insult, humiliation and lost dignity is gradually giving way to understanding and, although so far still very rarely, even to an open acceptance. I have lived to see a Macedonian say that "consociational democracy is our future." What is equally important is this happened at an assembly of pro-governmental intellectuals and political activists.

That is, grievances have been dormant before they were abruptly awakened by the "call for rise of the Macedonian race" by the present Gruevski's government. But, even when the negotiations of OFA were taking place, the process was described with the phrase: "When nobody is entirely satisfied, it means you have achieved the right compromise".

So the mechanism that OFA has enhanced the stability of R. Macedonia by moving in a liberal direction and providing all ethnic communities or peoples (*narodi*) with equal constitutional standing. In general, OFA has represented a tremendous improvement over the

mono-ethnic constitution and has broken with the previous tradition of disregard for non-Macedonian and non-orthodox Christian citizens. Nevertheless, while the OFA explicitly aimed to constitute a civil state of R. Macedonia with civil identity of its citizens, it implicitly emphasized the ethnic group identity, and thus undermined the Macedonian national identity as a civic construct. Reka (2008, 59) considers it "a lost opportunity to create an exclusively liberal and ethnically neutral Constitution."

In this context, it is unclear how these grievances of the ethnic Macedonians, some dormant and some active, have enabled the process of antiquization, which in turn exacerbates the interethnic relations and endangers the identity construction that began with OFA. Certainly, even before the antiquization and despite OFA some national symbols have been rejected and marginalized. One example is the Macedonian national anthem. In his essay on the role of the anthem, Trajanoski (2009) analyzes the internal process of the construction of the Macedonian national state symbols. Trajanoski (2009) describes official narratives about the national anthem as an unsuccessful attempt to create a national myth.

The tendency to emphasize ethnic group identity in R. Macedonia has been done at the expense of the identity of the nation as a whole. Implicitly, the nation-state concept is not adequate for discussing national identity in the Macedonian case. Is it possible at all to discuss a unified nation-building process in post-conflict multiethnic societies? There is a need to go beyond the discussion of nationhood into statehood as a result of the different contexts in which the construction of identity takes place.

If the power-sharing mechanism is able to provide for a viable Macedonian state, will it create, in time, a civil identity common for all inhabitants in R. Macedonia? Is it possible to have a common civic identity in a society defined by its ethnic and religious cleavages? How can

Albanians and Macedonian imagine themselves as a unified community? The answer might be found in the Euro-Atlantic integration processes. As some authors find that "…in the few years of Macedonian independence, and despite a divided political scene, seemingly the only political national consensus has been on integration in European political and economic structures" (Balalovska 2003).

This would imply that the citizens of R. Macedonia do not need and cannot build a nation that would by force amalgamate all varieties of ethnicities and religions. Both the failed Yugoslav identity building and the Macedonian identity building pre-2001 can testify that that would be impossible. The one thing R. Macedonian would need is to build institutions that would work properly in accordance with OFA and prescribed laws and arrangements. Institutions that would enable representation of all ethnic communities could strengthen the political unit of R. Macedonia. The need for a viable state and secured statehood surpasses the need for nationhood. Efforts that would insist on nationhood would only recreate the conflicts.

The troublesome part with R. Macedonia is that the name of the political unit is congruent with only one of the ethnic groups - the Macedonian one - and if not used carefully it might aggravate antagonizing interethnic relations. Can we abandon the idea of labeling the political community's identify in strictly national or ethnic terms? How can it be possible to de-ethnicize the name of the country so that it is not congruent with the ethnic community of the Macedonians, but encompasses the identities of all ethnic groups?

In addition to the failing attempts to create a civil state of all citizens in R. Macedonia, the power-sharing mechanism and the construction of the Macedonian community has been imperiled by the antiquization process that exalts ethnic Macedonians. The process of antiquization, intensified in the past several years, has exacerbated the struggles around the

Macedonian question, particularly the name dispute between R. Macedonia and Greece. This state-inspired intervention in national-identity building might endanger the multiethnic character of the country. The most recent process of antiquization has endangered the stability of the country as it antagonizes the Albanian ethnic community within R. Macedonia and impedes the country's accession to EU and NATO. Thus the antiquization is a mere continuation of the Macedonian nationalist discourse. Conversely, this identity politics, pursued by the rightist political party of VMRO-DPMNE [vii] (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) as well as the President of the Republic, Gjorgje Ivanov argues that this identity politics is part of the maintenance of the Macedonian national identity. The Macedonian public uses the term "antiquization" as both positive (process of enhancing national unity) and negative (tool for political mobilization).

The assumption that has underlined the antiquization process is that the ethnic Macedonians are direct descendants of the ancient Macedonians. A thread of this idea can be found throughout the 20th century in various forms and intensities. This, recently heightened, antiquization started with the renaming of the national airport in the capital, Skopje Airport as "Alexander the Great". Furthermore, the Skopje stadium was renamed "National Arena Philip II" and the Corridor X highway was renamed "Alexander of Macedonia." The plan of "Skopje 2014" envisaged an entire transformation of the capital.

Vangeli (2011) argues that the antiquization "stems from the premise that the myth of ancient Macedonian nationhood, regardless of its questionable impact, has lived up to its full potency for political mobilization only in the last few years, as part of the political agenda of the Macedonian government under Nikola Gruevski's VMRO-DPMNE" (14).

The nation-building process in R. Macedonia, as well as in S. R. Macedonia, has been, in many regards, state-sponsored. Despite the fact that it is inaccurate to claim a link between present-day Macedonians and ancient Macedonians and the fact that until the late 19th century the term "Macedonia" was rarely used, the antiquization in R. Macedonia proceeds in full speed. The antiquization has also been a prominent process in the Macedonian Diasporas. The revision of the "antiquity" legacy actually began in the Macedonian Diaspora in the 1980s. Ethnic Macedonians in Australia, Canada, and the United States represented themselves by using ancient Macedonian symbols. "Linguistics, philology and etymology are disciplines that are also crucial for the advocates of the idea of Ancient Macedonian nationhood" (Vangeli 2011). This is illustrated by the most recent government's antiquization activities and recent publications of MANU that deal with ancient Macedonian texts and ancient Macedonian anthroponymic. At the 2008 conference on "Pre-Cyrillic Literacy and Pre-Christian Culture among Slavs" the academician Tome Bosevski and his colleague Aristotel Tentov presented their research project entitled "Tracing the Script and the Language of the Ancient Macedonians", which challenged the perception of contemporary science and presented a different reading of the Rosetta Stone[viii]. Bosevski and Tentov

> presented their work […] regarding deciphering the text inscribed on the Rosetta Stone, alongside the ancient Egyptian and Greek languages, the so-called Demotic language, which the Macedonian scholars claim is an ancient Macedonian alphabet and most probably pre-Slavic. Professor Tentov presented the latest results from the research […] identifying the signs, words, grammar rules, dividing them into words and sentences of the ancient Macedonian syllabic alphabet. […] academician Bosevski stressed the importance of the ancient Macedonian alphabet on the Rosetta Stone, taking into account it was the official alphabet of one of the early Macedonian states, created after the decay of [the kingdom of] Alexander the Great. (Academician Bosevski, Professor Tentov at Congress "Pre-Cyrillic Literacy and Pre-Christian Culture among Slavs" 2008)

Later, the well-known philologist Petar Hr. Ilievski, (and academician since 1979 ) disputed the work of Bosevski and Tentov, as they "'without any elementary knowledge of Egyptology, ancient history, nor basic principles of language development … [and] by denouncing all the achievements in the field of Egyptology in the last 200 years' manipulated the facts, leading them to incorrect results …" (Vangeli 2011).

The antiquization aims to resort the image of the national self among the ethnic Macedonian community, disregarding the rest of the ethnic communities. The only actor that indisputably gained from the narratives of ancient Macedonia is the rightist party of Nikola Gruevski. It seems that the nationalist narrative has been the most efficient tool for "for grassroots political mobilization" since it "contributed in the soaring victory of VMRO-DPMNE in the last two electoral cycles" (Georgievski B. 2009; Andreassen 2010 quoted in Vangeli 2011). The rest of R. Macedonia has either been mesmerized or antagonized (and sometimes silenced).

B. How can constructivism help?

The only reason why constructivism can help in any way in the complexities around the Macedonian national identity is because it is "by far the most optimistic in its outlook". Although this phrase refers specifically to international relations theory of constructivism, this thesis applies its main ideas broadly, as it draws from the constructivist paradigm.

This thesis is guided by something that Ivo Andric longs for when he writes: "…These nations…calling themselves with different names and preaching different religions, will have to find, one day, the common ground for their survival - a broader, a better, a more rational, and a more humane formula…" (Ivo Andric cited in Maleski 2001, 1). Again, this thesis suggests the need for going beyond the concept of Macedonian nationhood into Macedonian statehood, to

prevent and protect of the fragile consociational mechanism within R. Macedonia. The same idea, if implemented in the diplomatic realm, with support of the international institutions, may provide a way out of the Macedonian question's disputes.

Constructivism is optimistic because it provides the idea of change. The Balkan states are characterized by looking at the world and each other through zero-sum, realist lenses. If identity is understood as fixed, and change is not possible, then conflicts remain fixed and unalterable. Therefore, "while realists view the international system as static and war as unavoidable, constructivists would dispute this arguing that interests and identities change over the course of history allowing cooperation between states where previously there had been conflict, an example of this would be the states within the EU who were formerly enemies but have now learned to cooperate" (Fierke 2007).

The lack of understanding and acceptance of change has been argued by other authors too. It is necessary to include the possibility of change both in interstate and intrastate relations. With regards to the Macedonian question, Drezov (2000) finds one common thing among all Balkan states:

> Despite all their [sic] differences one feature is common for all Balkan interpretations of the Macedonian identity – be they Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian or Macedonian: none of them recognizes the importance of historical change, in either the past or the present, or both are evaluated exclusively in 'moral' terms. Thus, if Ancient Macedonian were Greek, then no one other than contemporary Greeks has the right to use the Macedonian name – now or in the future. If Macedonian Slavs considered themselves at the turn of the twentieth century, this surely must have been erroneous: they must have been Serb, or at least halfway between Serbs and Bulgarians. If Macedonian Slavs ones considered themselves Bulgarians, then they are Bulgarians nowadays as well. If nowadays they consider themselves Macedonians, then they must have been always Macedonians and, of course, will always be Macedonians. However if the tortuous history of the Macedonian Question is any guide, it surely shows how fluid and unexpectedly changeable these identities can be.

Constructivism recognizes that there is no higher authority than the state, that anarchy is something that is real in the interstate system. However, constructivism decides not to bow before the anarchical principle as it considers it, as well as everything else, "dependent upon the inter-subjective meanings it attaches to it" or "the anarchy is what we make of it" (Wendt 1992, Dornan 2011). In accordance with this idea the features of the interstate system are alterable and not fixed. When anarchy or the conditions of interstate relations can be changed then, constructivism argues identities and interests are transformed, creating new behavior to be explained and understood (Dornan 2011).

The constructivist approach to the Macedonian question examines its contesting claims as a rivalry between nationalist discourses. Nationalist ideologies that prevail the official politics of Skopje, Athens, Belgrade and Sofia, tend to reify their nations and national identities. They "project them far back into the past […], treat them as eternal, natural and immutable essences" (Danforth, Claims to Macedonian Identity: The Macedonian Question and the Breakup of Yugoslavia 1993). The task of social science is to deconstruct the national identities and dereify the nation. Moreover, scholars, as previously discussed, must employ a multidisciplinary approach to the study of national identities and nationalism. Caution must be taken when the nation-building process and the construction of national identities are examined.

The disputes that surround the Macedonian national identity may convince and engulf scholars in the nationalist realm. The safest way to analyze the historical events that have produced the Balkan nation is to link the analysis to an event that clearly marks the beginning of the political unit and the nation it encompasses. In the Macedonian case, the most appropriate discussion of nationhood has to be linked to statehood.

The fact that the first Macedonian state has been created less than a century ago is used as a basis for unqualified and illegitimate rejections of the nation and its identity. Thus, most often, the R. Macedonian's official foreign policy has been the policy of, "equidistance", as Trajanoski (2009) writes. In essence, the neighboring countries are viewed as "hunters" instead of allies; in addition, the neighbors are seen as rivals that aim to expose Macedonia as an "artificial construction" with a national identity that is highly dubious or altogether lacking. So, very often nationalist discourses claim that

> The Macedonian nation is 'artificial', while the Greek nation is 'genuine'. The Macedonian national identity is only 'imagined', while Greek national identity is 'real', as one Greek writer [Evangelos Kofos] put it, citing Anderson in what is a clear misuse of Anderson's work to serve the goals of nationalist historiography. Both Macedonian national identity and Greek national identity are equally constructed. Similarly, [as would Trudgill argue] the Greek claim that there is no linguistic evidence to support the view that Macedonian is a distinct language and not just a dialect of Bulgarian ignores the widely accepted sociolinguistic insight that the decision as to whether a particular variety of speech constitutes a language or a dialect is always based on political rather than linguistic criteria. The existence of the Macedonian language is accepted by linguists everywhere in the world except in Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. Finally, an anthropological perspective suggests that attempts by the Greek state to impose a homogeneous national culture on a group of people with different linguistic and cultural traditions may itself contribute to the creation of a national minority. By denying the existence of a Macedonian minority in northern Greece, the Greek state may be nurturing 'the very nightmare it wishes to dispel'. (Trudgill 1974, Kofos 1989, McDonald 1989 quoted in Danforth 1993)

In the international name dispute between Greece and Macedonia, constructivism provides an opportunity for a change in interests and identities over time. Constructivism argues that cooperation is possible even when states have engaged in disputes and conflicts (some on much higher scale than the Macedonian name dispute). An example are the states within the EU that were once enemies, and yet who now cooperate and even pool part of their sovereignty in order to implement policies. The change in the understanding of self and other can come when and if

identities and interests are internalized in international institutions. As Dornan (2011) suggests "institutions can help reconstruct identities for example Germany was viewed as an aggressive state but as a member of the EU, Germany is no longer viewed in this manner."

The current position of R. Macedonia in the international community is contingent upon its dispute with Greece. The invitation to join NATO was blocked by Greece's veto on the 2008 Summit in Bucharest. The veto was controversial as it represented only the national interest of one single member state of the organization. On the other hand, "with the exception of Australia and New Zealand, Macedonia has made the largest contribution of military staff from a non-NATO member state" (Siegel 2010). The non-acceptance was not due to R. Macedonian lack of implementation efforts but to the lack of political will to override the provincial interests of one single member. In December of 2011, the case against Greece's blockage was resolved in the International Court of Justice. The Court found that Greece, by objecting to the admission of R. Macedonia to NATO, has breached its obligation under Article 11 of the Interim Accord of 1995 (International Court of Justice 2011). The accession of R. Macedonia to both the EU and NATO has been prevented by Greece's threat, or use of veto. The leaders of these institutions have called for a prompt solution of the name dispute between the two states. Most of the promises for the future depend upon resolution of the dispute.

A similar fate has followed R. Macedonia's accession to the EU. Date to start official negotiations will not come until the two countries reach a solution for the name. The protracted and difficult negotiation process on the name dispute between Greece and R. Macedonia is beyond the domain of this thesis. After more than decade, the negotiations have not yet produced any possible compromise.

In constructivist terms, if there is a political will among the NATO member states to admit R. Macedonia this May at the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago, there might be more opportunities to solve the name dispute institutionally. The opportunity of R. Macedonia to cooperate, as part of the NATO structure, with the Balkan states might influence the behavior and interests of the states and thus, influence the outcome of the Macedonian question. If interests and identities are subject to change, then by internalizing the conflict within the international structure, the effects of anarchy may be ameliorated. As Fierke (2010) argues constructivism is based on the general notion that international relations are socially constructed. "To construct something is an act which brings into being a subject or object that otherwise would not exist. Social phenomenon such as states, alliances or international institutions, are not thought to exist independent of human meaning and action" (Fierke 2010). If political actors rationally act and accept R. Macedonia in the Euro-Atlantic family, it would enable the region to construct a new reality and overcome its troublesome reputation.

## Chapter V: Conclusion

In order to conclude the discussion over the origins, tensions, and challenges of the Macedonian national identity, one would have to summarize the main points of the argument, which lie at the heart of constructivism. In addition, the conclusion points to prospective research routes that would analyze not only the Macedonian identity, but also the overall nationalist discourses and the politics that they have created in the past and in the present.

Overall, in this discussion the constructivist paradigm is utilized as an interpretation of current and past events, nationalist discourses, nation-building, and finally it is applied to the international political efforts of R. Macedonia at gaining international recognition.

In sum, the discussion has identified the origin of the Macedonian national identity, as it has emerged through internal and external challenges over the last several decades. Additionally, the thesis pinpoints several important milestones of the Macedonian nation-building. It begins by identifying events that preceded the materialization of the Macedonian national identity and calls them the antecedents of the Macedonian national identity. Furthermore, after the establishment of S. R. Macedonia within SFRY, the thesis evaluates subsequent nation-building efforts. A critical event was the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement, which created a power-sharing mechanism among ethnic groups in R. Macedonia.

With regards to the origins of the Macedonian national identity, this thesis has identified the emergence of the Macedonian national identity as related to the first Macedonian state after the Second World War. The social construction of the Macedonian identity is evaluated as a heavily state-sponsored process promoted by state academic and research institutions, assisted by politics of memory (especially the most recent and intensified antiquization process) and politics of language (the codification of the Macedonian language, history of the language, publication of official grammar). This thesis has argued that the social construction of the Macedonian national identity has only been possible because of the existence of national consciousness. This national consciousness is found in the work of intellectuals in the Macedonian Diaspora during the second half of the 19$^{th}$ century, and it is similar to contemporaneous nation-building efforts by Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria. The social construction of the Macedonian national identity has been enabled precisely because of the existence of these building blocks of national

consciousness. The thesis sees the nation-building process as antagonizing the minorities (especially the Albanians) in R. Macedonia ever since its independence in 1991.

In this respect the thesis has argued that internal challenges to the Macedonian national identity come from the ethnic Albanian community within R. Macedonia. Although the constitutional changes, brought by the 2001 Agreement, raised the status of Albanians, the pressure that the power-sharing mechanism has placed upon Macedonian national identity is remarkable. Additional tensions stem from the ongoing antiquization in R. Macedonia, led by a rightist political party heavily influenced by a nationalist political ideology. The glorification of the Macedonian past, in this manner, includes only the ethnic Macedonian community, and alienates the ethnic Albanian community.

At the same time external challenges to the Macedonian national identity come from the neighboring countries of R. Macedonia. The thesis has examined historical junctures that comprise the Macedonian question, in order to argue that contesting identity claims produce nationalist impasses in the Balkans. Thus, irredentist fantasies in the Balkan Peninsula are interpreted as nationalist discourses that are both mutually-antagonistic and mutually-constitutive. Accordingly, Greater Albania or *Ilirida*, Greater or *Golema* Macedonia, Greater or *Velika* Serbia, and Greater or *Sanstefanska* Bulgaria are nationalist discourses that are based on the identity rejection (partially or fully) of the other discourses. The statement that all Balkan states are equally constructed assists in rejecting notions that some are more "imagined" than others. For R. Macedonia, in particular, these dynamics culminate in the name dispute between R. Macedonia and Greece. As a consequence of the name dispute, R. Macedonia's efforts to take its place in international organizations have been stymied. In particular, the solution to the name dispute has been the single hurdle that prevents R. Macedonia's entrance into NATO. The

membership to the alliance would guarantee the territorial integrity of the state and it would finally sanction the present status-quo in the Balkans.

Consequently, and again in the spirit of the constructivist paradigm this thesis has suggested that if there is a political will within the majority of NATO members, then the name dispute between R. Macedonia and Greece should be solved within the structure of the organization. Instead of assuming a zero-sum environment that exclude change, this thesis argues that interests and identities can change, especially through mutual cooperation. If diplomatic corps are "forced" to cooperate as part of the functioning of an international organization, such as NATO, then their perceptions or each other's positions change. In this environment of changing perceptions, this thesis contends that meanings and preferences of former positions can be altered, particularly if economic benefits are included in the position-building.

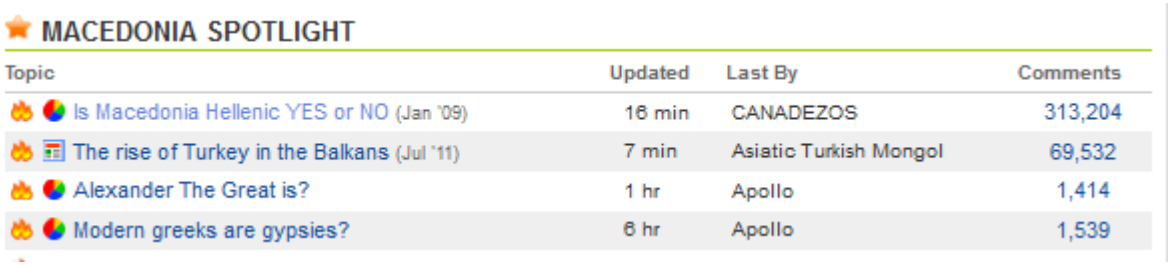
Future research endeavors may include any of the periods chronologically ordered in the thesis. Thus, ethnographical research may confirm the existence of building blocks of national consciousness before the first Macedonian state. The social construction of the Macedonian national identity can be traced in history textbooks published from 1945 onward. The same process can be investigated through the work of state institutions that deal with politics of memory and the past, such as museums, statistical and census undertakings, universities and academic institutions, etc. As the discussion of identity construction is essentially multidisciplinary the diversity of possible research projects is broad.

Lastly, this thesis sets the chronological and thematic order of the study of the social construction of Macedonian national identity. At each point, there is a space to broaden the discussion with respect to the available historical data. The narrative that may be produced at

every level depends upon the type and purpose of the academic effort, as well as upon the individual preferences of the author.

# Images

Image 1: http://www.topix.com/forum/world/macedonia (accessed April 9, 2012)



MACEDONIA SPOTLIGHT

| Topic | Updated | Last By | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is Macedonia Hellenic YES or NO (Jan '09) | 16 min | CANADEZOS | 313,204 |
| The rise of Turkey in the Balkans (Jul '11) | 7 min | Asiatic Turkish Mongol | 69,532 |
| Alexander The Great is? | 1 hr | Apollo | 1,414 |
| Modern greeks are gypsies? | 6 hr | Apollo | 1,539 |

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[i] ASNOM stands for Antifasisticko Sobranie na Narodnoto Osloboduvanje na Makedonija, in Macedonian: Антифашистичко Собрание на Народното Ослободување на Македонија.

[ii] It should be noted that scholars differentiate between two periods in the Eastern question: the decline from 1828 to 1908 and the dissolution between 1908 and 1922.

[iii] Russia supported the Kingdom of Serbia under Mihailo Obrenovic who departed in 1868 leaving the Kingdome with Milan Obrenovic who led pro-Austrian politics.

[iv] Article 23 from the Berlin Treaty prescribed implementation of an organic constitution for Macedonia similar to that of Crete.

[v] These include timely involvement, support of major international actors, coordinated, varied, and multifaceted intervention, moderate behavior of domestic leaders, along with group and country-specific factors (Ackermann 2000).

[vi] AVNOJ stands for Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia or in Serbo-Croatian: Antifašističko Vijeće Narodnog Oslobođenja Jugoslavije. This was a wartime institution that represented the national liberation councils formed by the Yugoslav partisans.

[vii] VMRO-DPMNE stands for Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity; or Vnatresna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija – Democratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo or in Macedonian: Внатрешна Македонска Револуционерна Организација – Демократска Партија за Македонско Национално Единство.

[viii] The Rosetta Stone is a "popular historical artifact from Ancient Egypt, discovered by Napoleons [sic] army in 1799" (Vangeli 2011).