MACEDONIA BETWEEN NATIONALISM(S) AND MULTICULTURALISM: THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT AND ITS MULTICULTURAL CONJECTURES

Makedonija između nacionaliz(a)ma i multikulturalizma: Okvirni sporazum i njegove multikulturne pretpostavke

ABSTRACT This paper deals with the nationalism(s) and multiculturalism in the Macedonian society, and the multicultural democracy contingency within Macedonian practice. Furthermore, it shed lights on the implementation of the Framework Agreement after the conflict of 2001 seen through the national and multicultural paradigm. In addition, the paper attempts to correlate the class and the ethnicity in Macedonian socialist, pre-ethnic period, with the transition processes and current Macedonian state-of-affairs. The paper argues that the management of ethnic differences must reconcile the two nationalisms, and, in opposite direction, the 'battle' for the resources and symbols between Macedonians and Albanians will reinforce the affections toward their own national (ethnic) identity.

KEYWORDS Macedonia, nationalism(s), multiculturalism, Framework Agreement

APSTRAKT Ovaj rad se bavi problemom nacionaliz(a)ma i multikulturalizma u makedonskom društvu i uslovima multikulturne demokratije u makedonskoj praksi. Takođe se osvetljava i proces sprovođenja Okvirnog sporazuma nakon sukoba 2001. kroz prizmu nacionalne i multikulturne paradigme. Tekst nastoji da dovede u vezu klasno i nacionalno u makedonsko socijalističko, pre-etičko vreme, sa tranzicionim procesima i današnjem »stanjem stvari« u Makedoniji. U radu se ističe da upravljanje etničkim razlikama mora pomiriti dva nacionalizma ali da će, u suprotnom smjeru, »borba« za resursima i simbolima između Makedonaca i Albanaca osnažiti osećanja prema svom (etičkom) identitetu.

KLJUČNE REČI Makedonija, nacionalizam/nacionalizmi, multikulturalizam, Okvirni sporazum
Introduction

Macedonia is thorn in 2001-2004 between state-national nationalism, in a western sense of the notion, and it’s internal Albanian sub-national nationalism, in its eastern variant, which meets a strong public Macedonian resistance ‘directly connected with the Macedonians’ perceived need to assert their national identity vis-à-vis neighbouring nations’ (Engström, 2002: 3-17). What is at stake for the Macedonians is their fear for preserving the state as a nation-state, regarding its multiethnic composition. What is at stake for the Albanians is their demand for higher political and cultural (ethnic) concessions. It is a matter of winning or losing. It is a matter of gaining more for ‘us’ against ‘them’. The stakes, however, are much higher, since the ‘national’ represents not only identities but our dominant form of association as nation-state organized societies (Berking, 2003: 248). The watershed of these opposite standpoints in Macedonia is the Framework Agreement reached in 2001, after sixth months of clashes between the armed Albanian groups versus the Macedonian security forces. The 2001 conflict in Macedonia, from a sociological point of view, was an ethnic conflict. Whether this rough qualification is seen as a consequence of other non-ethnic factors or as an independent variable is not topic of this article.

With the Framework Agreement, the Albanians raised their political status in Macedonia and gained cultural concessions and legally protective mechanisms concerning usage of their language, issuing official documents, high education in Albanian, etc. What happened to the Macedonians? They still have questions to the extent that the more discussions and negotiations are underway the more concessions they have to agree with, in relation to their constitutive national role. In the mid 2004 the most fierceful public question is the decentralization process and the new territorial boundaries map in relation to the long-delayed devolution of power. It is frustrating to give up the monopoly of the national cultural matrix (and political power), as well as resources, in order to meet the Albanians’ demands for equal public status for their language and equitable and fair representation in the state institutions. Every society, argues Parekh, has a historically inherited cultural structure which informs its conduct of public life, and resists modifications beyond a certain point without losing its coherence and causing widespread disorientation, anxiety and even resistance (Parekh, 2000: 263). Macedonians still perceive Macedonia as their ‘natural’ state, and involuntarily make more ‘space(s)’ for the Albanians. Even the new Preamble of the amended Constitution starts with the words that ‘The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people, as well as citizens living within its borders who are part of the Albanian people, the Turkish people, the Vlach people, the Serbian people, the Romany people, the Bosniak people and others taking responsibility for the present and future of their
fatherland…’. This declarative discourse does not solve the Macedonian multiethnic puzzle, it is just emphasizing it. What is needed is more searching and practice as well.

In this respect, the main Macedonian dilemma is how to reconcile the two nationalisms, civic (ethnic) Macedonian and ethnic Albanian. Can both be instructive for a stable society or do they have potentials for disintegration of society. Which model to follow? Is there any model? Recalling the ambiguous theory and practice of multicultural democracy and what then will be the consequences on national matrix seen through the prism of the ethnicity, firstly, this paper will deal with the Macedonian nationalism(s) and multiculturalism, and, secondly, with the main points of the ‘battle’ between Macedonians and Albanians. I will argue that the management of the ethnic differences must reconcile the two nationalisms, and, in opposite direction, the ‘battle’ for the resources and symbols between Macedonians and Albanians will reinforce the affections toward their own national (ethnic) identity weakening the integrity of society. The first possibility is a multicultural democracy, the latter draws against it. The gap is sharp and questions the society’s multicultural contingency.

**Macedonian ‘multicultural’ nationalisms**

The Framework Agreement starts with five basic principles. The first and the fourth refer to throwing away the usage of violence for political purposes and securing constitutionally based rights that fulfill the basic needs of the citizens in accordance with international standards. The second refers to non-existence of territorial solutions for ethnic questions, the third, that the multiethnic character of the Macedonian society must be preserved in the public life, and the fifth, that the development of the local government will improve the respect for the identity of the communities. In the wider framework, these principles should have overcome the social inequalities of the different ethnic communities in the equitable representations in the institutions of the state, protect minorities from the Macedonian cultural dominance and raise the political power of the non-majority communities (on national and local level). The most of it addresses the Albanian demands for public recognition of their status as a community in the society. But what is the novelty in the Macedonian story of multicultural paradigm? Certainly, the Framework Agreement, as an attempt to reduce the further widening of latent ethnic conflict in the society, and moreover, to preserve the multiethnic character of the state. But, why is it not, or will not, going smoothly?

Nationalism and multiculturalism, theoretically at least, have basically two different intensions. Nationalism intends to homogenize (culturally and politically)
and, contrary, multiculturalism aims to distinguish (emphasize) cultural differences. They crux when opposed in the political arena. But, paradoxically, they have the same goal. Nationalism is politicized ethnicity, consequently, it is an ethnic group with a political agenda. An ethnic group must be somehow politically mobilized before it becomes a nation and that political mobilization occurs in the form of some sort of collective objective of recognition (Joireman, 2003: 12). So are the numerous cultural groups that seek recognition through political mobilization. Today, this is known under the label of multiculturalism. Multicultural groups are groups that have political agenda. Questions concerning whether and how cultural groups should be recognized in politics are among the most salient and vexing, on the political agenda of many democratic and democratizing societies today (Gutmann, 1994: 5). In the late twentieth century national minorities and ethno-cultural groups, and other groups as well, different from the dominant cultures within states, seek recognition, acceptance, respect and even public affirmation of their differences. While acceptance of differences calls for changes in the legal arrangements of the society, some leaders press for public affirmation of their differences by symbolic and other means (Parekh, 2000: 1-2). Consequently, the demands are for restructuring and re-evaluation of the societal, cultural, political and economic values. It is very clear that what is in common for nationalism and multiculturalism is that they have a political agenda with goals on behalf of communities (groups) they represent. More precisely, they tend to fulfill their goals through political mobilization, instrumentalizing the groups or collectives. When a dominant group seeks to monopolize its role in the state, it is called nationalism, but when a minority group want the same, at least in the local context, it is a multicultural demand (based on ethnicity). The crucial point is, then, who will be the main decision maker (who has bigger political power) and through which mechanisms (laws and strategy enactment).

Can we in this way see Macedonia as a society in which Macedonian nationalism competes with other nationalisms, or, more practically, how powerful are different cultural groups seeking for more recognition and resources interfering the Macedonian ‘national status quo’? In this regard, the only nationalism that can compete with the Macedonian one and did receive recognition and partially resource redistribution (on the municipality level) through the constitutional changes, is the Albanian one. Respectively, the public debates after the Ohrid Agreement are more concerned with the ‘biculural’ arguments, pros and cons, than with multicultural perspectives. The impression that the Macedonians are very fond of the state multicultural paradigm can mislead the commentators, because the Macedonians’ perceptions are that Macedonia fulfills their national dreams (nation-state model). The Albanian arguments are more bicultural persistent, at least until they outnumber the other ethnic communities. Having said that, it is evident that the biggest ethnic groups in Macedonia do not celebrate the multiculturalism but their
own cultural group politics. The multicultural ‘arguments’ in this case are used more as an excuse in pursue of their own political (ethnic) goals. Yet, can this biculturalism be substitute for Macedonian multiculturalism? On one hand, the Macedonian state is a multicultural and multi-confessional society. Many cultures and religions intermingled on its soil in relation to the historical records. It was such in the last couple of centuries. That is due to various historical and demographic factors (Atanasov, 2003: 115). One century ago there were still one-third Muslims in the territory today represented as a Republic of Macedonia (until mid 20th century the dominant Muslim population were the Turks). On the other hand, Macedonia is more like Canada in pursuing the multicultural model, insisting on majority representation, and Albanians insisting on more cultural and political rights (they did that through the political parties) and pursuing bicultural agenda. What is the solution? The problem is that, comparing the numbers, the Macedonians will have difficulties to hold its ‘multicultural model’ socially cohesive and with strength to succeed, while the Albanians will, furthermore, step by step, insist on re-structuring the ‘model’ that privilege the Macedonian symbols of the society. Even though it is difficult to imagine that the Albanians will have in near future their own (sub)national anthem or football team as a federal part of Macedonia, it is more difficult to imagine Albanians standing proudly while Macedonian national anthem proceed, the flag as well. In this way, the highest argument against the Macedonian ‘national enterprise’ from the Albanian side is that in the multicultural states all citizens cannot identify under one name as nation, if the name of the state is the same with the name of the dominant national community. In the Macedonian case putting everyone under the name Macedonians assumes assimilationist connotations (Ramadani, 2004). That is a strong objection concerning more the Macedonian future representation than its distant past or current present.

Another line of explication that shed lights of this clash of two nationalisms and national (ethnic) identities paradigm refers to a cultural globalization process that affects the very mode of identity constructions inasmuch as it appears to encourage the ethnicization of cultural identities. Berking very rudely stresses that once ethnicized cultural identities have reached the institutional level of collective actors, the struggle for recognition turns into a merciless fight for territorial presence (the Albanians in Macedonia are concentrated geographically). This would mean, if further complicated, that we are faced with a significant reconfiguration process of the relation between state, territoriality, sovereignty and identity (Berking, 2003: 255-261). Here we are confronted with the arguments that the ‘new geography of power’ knows many agents who act simultaneously in local, regional, national and global context. This geography necessitates not only elementary deterritorializations, but also reterritorialization processes with respect to cultural identities and local and transnational forms of communities. Berking argues that nation-state is loosing its social-integrative functions and is turning just to a state. This state still functions,
but no longer integrates. But what may be the integrative factors in such a multiethnic state. Parekh is very precise on this stressing that a multicultural society is likely to be stable, cohesive, vibrant and at ease with itself if it meets certain conditions: a consensually grounded structure of authority, a collectively acceptable set of constitutional rights, a just and impartial state, a multiculturally constituted common culture and multicultural education, and a plural and inclusive view of national identity (Parekh, 2000: 236-7). In general, Parekh argues that these would enable different individuals and communities to identify with the political community, recognize themselves as part of the society, and build up a sense of loyalty to it.

About the Parekh’s first three arguments, we can say that all of them are somehow incorporated in the Framework Agreement. There is a consensus that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Macedonia and unitary character of the state are inviolable and must be preserved (Framework Agreement, Basic Principles 1.2.). There is a Constitution that is amended with the Ohrid document, that should ‘adjust’ the state’s just and impartial ‘behaviour’ towards non-majority population (Albanians respectively). The multicultural education is something that a modern state should think and act about, especially in the socialization process. It should be noted that multilingual education can easily be implemented without resorting to consociational mechanisms recognising language communities (Van den Berghe, 2002: 443). Multiculturally constituted common culture is something that the state cannot ‘manage’ alone. It is an everyday practice of people, communities and individuals. What is important is that the public sphere should make more ‘space’ for that to happen. But it is a majority business. It is of crucial importance to have one public sphere. To be recognized and have space on this ‘stage’. At the other end of the ethnic reconfiguration of urban spaces, we have the ghetto, a sociospatially fixed, place-bound institution of racist exclusion which is kept up not through the expression of ethnic affinity or ‘choice’, but through outside pressure and violent defence of the ‘colour line’ (Berking, 2003: 260-1).

The ‘production’ of other public spaces, especially in ethnic terms, argues Berking, does not necessarily result in social relations of recognition, but instead goes hand in hand with narratives of exclusion which do not at all strengthen the self-regulatory potentials of societies still organized around the principle of the nation-state. Namely, so far in Macedonian society only the Albanians (even very rarely recently), other communities did that very smoothly being small in numbers, crossed the line and did some culture ‘together’ in Macedonian public sphere. Macedonians, due to their dominance did not need to. The theory itself has no answer to the question what is more multicultural, to do something on other language (dominant group language for instance), or to have just its ‘own cultural products’ that, together with the rest of others cultural production (bigger or smaller), would count as multicultural existence. To the higher level of crossing the
line, the theorists refer to as just a post-national society, which for sure has cultural essence, but that of the majority community (USA for instance). The values as different languages, religions and family customs are very difficult to share. Some are very exclusive by their nature (religion, wedding practices). Maybe ‘to do something together’, on whatever cultural basis (even music without words), is the best solution, but for that what is needed is peace as the first desideratum in every society. At all costs, a multicultural society must find ways of holding itself together long enough to enable its different communities to become used to each other and build up common interests and mutual trust (Parekh, 2000: 207). What about the plural and inclusive view of national identity? Can Macedonia ‘produce’ that? The Framework Agreement precisely aims to do that, with the development of decentralized authority and expression of the identity, allowing the local authorities to use the symbols of the identity of the communities in majority on local level besides the symbol of the Republic of Macedonia. And the symbol of the Albanian community is the flag of the Albanian state, black two-headed eagle on red background. That is the Balkan nightmare regarding history, borders, majority-minority relations, even frustrations and animosities that are re-opened every time the global processes (wars, conflicts) interfered this territory. This struggle in the area of the symbols in Macedonia, after the resource battle is finished, does not promise that the Macedonians and Albanians can easily overcome their national (ethnic) policies. Rather, I argue, that the ‘battle’ for the symbols between Macedonians and Albanians will reinforce the affections toward their own national (ethnic) identity. It means that the further strengthening of ethnicization of the politics will permanently run against the society cohesiveness, in the competition between Macedonian and Albanian nationalisms. The question is how to manage the ethnic differences and reconcile the two nationalisms. Can Macedonia be a model for multicultural democracy?

Multicultural democracy prospects

The nationalist projects in 19th and 20th centuries had the power to integrate. In the Macedonian nationalist project that was successful with other minorities, but not with the Albanians (due to their 25 % share of the whole population according to the census of 2002). It became clear that the weak attempt of the Macedonian nationalist platform to convince Albanians that they live in a multi-ethnic democracy had failed. At the same time Albanian elites contested ever more fiercely the validity of the Macedonian discourse on multi-ethnic democracy (Adamson, Jovic, 2004: 305). But what is a multi-ethnic (multicultural) democracy? Can it work? We do not know yet, because as yet no state has clearly and self-consciously applied the model (Van den Berghe, 2002: 438). The attempt of answering these questions is part of
the analysis of Van den Berghe who poses the question whether the multiculturalism can be wedded to democracy. Answering positively, he states four conditions for the case: if the state is denationalised, if the multiculturalism is decoupled form policies aimed at reducing educational, economic, social or political disabilities or inequalities between the groups, if the minimalist programme is used (namely, official policies that recognize and protect diversity, but do not celebrate and actively support it), and if the spatial model for it is a city, especially the city-state (for this Van den Berghe proposes Luxemburg or Swiss Canton-size states, made up of cities and their surrounding areas, or, at least, massive devolution of central powers to local communities; Van den Berghe, 2002: 447-8). In sum, the multicultural democracy is antithetical to the notion of a national state (the state must be denationalized, much as it was secularized in most Western-style democracies), the two sets of policies (multiculturalism and positive discrimination) must be pursued independently of each other, the minimalist programme of multiculturalism should stop at the recognition and tolerance of different cultural matrix (celebrating diversity between unequal groups is most likely to increase all differences between them), and the evidence about the spatiality of multicultural model is that the more polyglot cosmopolitan cities attend to be more prosperous, peaceful and pleasant ones, irrespective of size: Geneva, Strasbourg, Brussels, Amsterdam, New York, London and Paris. There are also many obstacles. One of it is that all of the above mentioned are western cities. A certain level of material wellbeing is a prerequisite for a decent existence of any kind, argues Van den Berghe.

But let us clear these propositions one by one. It will be difficult for the Macedonian state to denationalized itself. It was just nationalized. It is nearly impossible for the state not to have some kind of implicit or explicit language policy or practice, and language is most commonly associated with ethnicity, argues Van den Berghe. He also says that a truly democratic language policy is an oxymoron. The domination of the Macedonian language in the public, the administration and the education is a simple argument due to a nationalist ideology of the state for more than a half century. Still, there are two solutions to this: the first, the Macedonian language must be accepted by the Albanian elites as the lingua franca, and as a tool for equality of opportunity (the latter is a very rarely mentioned argument), and second, the Macedonian state must make more space in the public sphere for the Albanian values, including the language, because that is one of the crucial points in the Macedonian-Albanian conflict (the other one is the resources competition). Then, can the modern, liberal, secular, democratic state give all of its inhabitants equal rights to celebrate their diversity in any way they choose, so long as it is consistent with certain internationally accepted standards of morality and human rights, as Van den Berghe argues. Macedonian Constitution did not suffer from this criticism even prior 2001. Furthermore, Van den Berghe is right when he decouples
the multiculturalism from policies aimed at reducing educational, economic, social or political disabilities or inequalities between the groups. The latter should be a matter of practice, not of theory or written laws. Again, the answer to this is the public sphere and enabling enough space for Albanians to be recognized as equal community as Macedonians. But that conflicts with the political model of the state. Macedonia is neither Belgium nor Switzerland. It has a majority dominant Macedonian community. Certainly, the positive discrimination, that was for long period practice in the Macedonian model, did not overcome the symbolical struggle over the ‘possesion’ of the society. However, the Framework Agreement deepened the recognition of the other ‘communities’ (being over 20 % in the population) and intend to stop the celebrating of the cultural (politically mobilized) differences on higher political level. Is this enough? The proposed devolution of power on the local level should give the communities (municipalities) a great share of privileges and responsibilities towards public services, urban and rural planning, protection of the environment, local economic development, culture, local finances, education, and social and health care. And, according to decision makers (Macedonian-Albanian ruling coalition), the last proposition about the municipality model for the multicultural paradigm combined with the ‘massive devolution of central powers to local communities’ would be sufficient as a space for enjoying the multicultural democracy. At the last point, the proposed Law on territorial boundaries was enacted by the Assembly in August 2004 (the time this paper is written) but also a referendum was proposed by the majority Macedonians on whether is this acceptable or should be abolished. Whatever the outcome of the referendum would be, successful or not, it may drive the Macedonian society towards more distrust among Macedonians and Albanians.

All told, the four arguments about the prosperity of multicultural democracy can apply on the Macedonian case, at least, theoretically. Still, it will be very hard for the fragile democratic atmosphere in the country (being a post-conflict society due to the 2001 conflict) to develop a strategy aiming at denationalizing the state, admit its multicultural public sphere, and in the same time not to make more complications recognising the multiculturalism on political level and not to contribute for deeper division between the Macedonian and the Albanian communities, and to implement a multicultural democracy as a local democracy, assuming that the society will reach a certain level of material wellbeing as a prerequisite for a stable society. Then the question arises, would certain level of wellbeing ease the level of ethnicization to a more peaceful and stable interaction, or relation, between Macedonians and Albanians. Can the class category impose some solutions to the ethnic dilemmas?

One newspaper article, a letter from one Albanian citizen in a Macedonian daily, asks a crucial question in the multicultural puzzle, and not just for the Macedonian case: ‘The biggest contribution for the future will be when the terms
majority and minority would be wiped out, under condition multiethnicity to be imperative.’ How can one analyze this sentence? How to be equal (to be ‘same’, I suppose) and why the multiethnicity should be an imperative (to have an ethnic celebrity model, I presume)? Do these get along together? To be equal would mean to be the same, one group. To have the same values and interests. Can different ethnic communities be one civic community, one nation? If this is possible, a lot of problems would be wiped out. In relation to the four above mentioned propositions would mean that the state should be denationalized, but the communities should have their ethnicities as an imperative. Here we cannot analyse the spatial dimension, the fourth one, but the second proposition seems an important one, connected with this ordinary citizens thinking. Namely, to be a multicultural society, but with no need of positive discrimination, because everybody is equal and have the same opportunities in the society. That is a centuries long liberal society ideal. Let us try one line of explanation, namely, the interplay between the ethnicity and the class.

The Macedonian society was relatively cohesive community three-four decades ago. The Albanians had lower percentage in the whole population (1953: Macedonians 66%, Albanians 12%; 1961: Macedonians 71%, Albanians 13%; 1971: Macedonians 68%, Albanians 17%)\(^1\). In the Macedonian socialist, pre-ethnic model: the Macedonian society was an integrated society; in the society no big ‘historical’ events took place; the Macedonian group was not endangered by the size of other communities; the ‘citizens’ had an equal status and privileges; the economic status of the people was almost identical; the class was basic category of identity; different cultures were enriching the society and were not sources of conflicts; the people were treated as individuals, not as groups; the individuals merits were basic condition for success; in the public sphere the Macedonian symbols were dominant (Atanasov, 2003: 141). From the above three things are clear, concerning our analysis: it is clear that in order for some individuals to be equal they have to be measured by the same category or merits (in this case the class category as an identity category), the best solution for the position towards the state is to have equal rights as individuals (groups consist of different individuals with different interests and wishes), and the society should not be threaten by the sizeable number of other ethnically politicised non-majority communities. The first argument is ruled out by the politics of identity, as a global process, also the second as multiculturalism became a world process, and different collectives waved their ‘flags’. Macedonian case is a no exception. The third argument means that today not many states in the world of nation-state arena can claim dominant national (ethnic) majority. In regard to the third argument, the Macedonian society could not be listed as a multicultural democracy in the socialist pre-ethnic period, because of the dominance of the Macedonian culture and symbols, at least, prominently the Macedonian nationalism. In Macedonian society until 1991 those Albanians who competed with the
Macedonians were successful only if they used the Macedonian values (language, education, communist party membership). The different ethnicities were enriching the society to the extent that they were not a main category of identity, and they had no political power of mobilization of the ethnicities (no Albanian political parties existed as a main instrumental tool as is the case today). Yet, the class category as an identity category is main indicator in many stable liberal democracies (USA, France). That was a ‘solution’ of the West towards the class conflict (welfare state), and it happened to be a solution also for the decreasing ethnicization of the different cultural groups in the political arena. Still, these are achievements in the civic nation projects, as the theory claims. In its eastern ethnic variant, as many argue, it is difficult to instrumentalize and control the integrational categories, if you do not have something more attractive than ethnicity, as a powerful source of mobilization and instrumentalization. In the struggle for recognition, the advantages of ethnicization seem self-evident. Ethnicization promotes a continuation of categorical belonging and creates islands of identity in the sea of contingency while also opening up political space for the construction of foe images of the highest intensity. An increase in intensity can serve as an affirmation of identity (Berking, 2003: 257). And intensifying the affirmation of identity runs against the ‘other(s)’. Here we can confirm the argument that the stronger the process is of the game ‘us’ against ‘them’, the affections towards its own national (ethnic) identity rises.

The class in the Macedonian society was in big part replaced with ethnicity, the changes in the society contributed to the intensifying of group identification on ethnic basis, and the Macedonian society from the phase of integration entered the phase of disintegration. The ethnic and cultural differences became factor of confrontations, the politics of recognition did not contribute for development of integrated multicultural society, the politics of differences have got dimensions of politics of inequality, the Macedonian society, instead of multiculturalism, received the elements of plural society, and the processes of ethnopolitical mobilization became factor of separation. Some elements of socio-cultural variant of multiculturalism, practiced until 2001, with the Ohrid Agreement are more and more transformed in the model of division of power among different ethnic groups, through balancing of the individual and the group rights as consequence of ethnicization of all spheres in the society (Atanasov, 2003: 142). Whether the Macedonian case is a consequence of the global, the regional (the Balkans) or the local factors is another topic for discussion. The lesson is that the people need mobilizing factors. To belong to some ‘extended family’, even though that is an imagined one – the nation, the ethnic group also. For many reasons: emotional, psychological, biological, economic, security and socially, reasons specific for the human species. If the state does not provide the glue, some groups are able to provide it themselves, to efficiently mobilize and fight for it. The ethnicity proved as the most powerful glue due to the recent ‘historical’ evidences.
Conclusion(s)

I argued that the management of the ethnic differences in the Macedonian case must reconcile the two nationalisms, civic (ethnic) Macedonian and ethnic Albanian, still, in opposite direction, the ‘battle’ for the resources and symbols between Macedonians and Albanians will reinforce the affections toward their own national (ethnic) identity. If the management of two nationalisms is efficient, the multicultural democracy would enable existence of one society, contrary, if the ethnic identification deepens, it would mean creating of two societies, which will cause more stresses for the state in relation to its political model. What are then the consequences of this clash of conceptions? The main task of Macedonian state must be reconciliation of the two nationalisms, the Macedonian and the Albanian one, in order to preserve the unitary character of the state. Still, recognizing and celebrating the ethnic differences would mean weakening the civic cohesiveness of the society. What would be then the consequences of the struggle for resources, including the symbolic struggle, in the society is very difficult to predict. I would say that one of the crucial factors for cohesiveness and reconciliation of the different conceptions is the perception of the integration of the Macedonian state in the European Union. Then a lot of tensions will diminish as the playground will be a huge one, and in the same time the resources will probably rise. On that platform it would be easier for the majority as well the minority communities to seek their promotion in the ‘rough’ western-style capitalism, highly competitive society, where the local politics and cultures are small fish in the big sea. The European model makes space even to protect the ‘small fish’ through various strategies and programmes (Europe of regions, Council of Europe conventions, etc.). People (individuals) then can go wherever they wish (without visas!?), do their business cross-country, and they can behave as differently as they want (until they do not violate the laws – national or supra-national). Some problems are still unanticipated regarding the European integration. On the global and continental level, the political and cultural homogenization, not to say economic one, is a monster that eats everything. The market economy is not about wishes and needs, it is about profit. Still, the state model will continue to be efficient in some areas. Nationalism in Europe is not dead. Europe is a nation-state business. The Balkans too. Macedonia is one of the rare interesting examples from a multicultural point of view as a practice, theory too. The Macedonian state is driven between the nationalism(s) and multiculturalism, and there are no easy solutions. The Framework agreement is just a road sign. Macedonia needs a highway, built together by its citizens and communities. Whether it is called national, multicultural or ethno-cultural, it is not a matter of convinience, it is a matter of rationalism. There are many challenges as well. Can Macedonians together with Albanians (and other communities) make more money than
nationalism, even being multicultural? This is just another modern ‘integrative’ dilemma. To be on track, the current state-of-affairs in Macedonia is as I argued in this paper.

References


Notes

1 Macedonia is referring to the existing Republic of Macedonia, which is it’s constitutional name as a sovereign state and is accepted by United Nations in 1993 as The former yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

2 The Framework Agreement which stopped the violence was signed in Ohrid on 13th of August, and which caused constitutional changes. Also known as the Ohrid Agreement.

3 According to the census in 2002, the ethnic proportions of the population is following: Macedonians 64.10 %, Albanians 25.17 %, the rest consists of Turks, Romas, Serbs, Bosniaks, Vlachs and others.

4 The term 'identity of the communities' is category that is introduced in the Framework Agreement as a notion which is a collective in its essence, and that represent different ethnic communities that are not in majority in the population.
Due to the Constitutional amendments, any language which is spoken by at least 20% of the population is also an official language.

Republic of Macedonia was founded as a national state of the Macedonian people in 1944, and got its full sovereignty in 1991, proclaiming its independence from the Yugoslav Federation.

Since 1991 up to date, the Macedonian Governments always included Albanian political parties.

The Law propose 84 municipalities, instead of 1996 Law that have 123. The main ‘battle’ was whether the cities of Struga and Kichevo will have a dominant Albanian population, due to a new Law, and whether the capital city of Skopje will become bilingual (on which the coalition Government agreed on). The coalition Government consists of Social-Democratic Alliance and Liberal-Democrats plus Democratic Union for Integration (former combatants in the 2001 conflict).

For the Referendum to be successful about 850,000 voters should participated (as 50+1 of the whole population), and half of it to vote against (Albanians already said that they would not participate, even there were some opposition about the new Law of territorial division from the majority Albanian municipalities that should be abolished).

The unemployment rate points 30-40% of the population, and economic situation, due to an experts, will take long time to recover (the foreign investments comparing to other countries are symbolic).