DIVERSITY IN MACEDONIA. HISTORICAL TENSIONS, IGNORANCE, CONFLICT AND COOPERATION

1. *Introduction*

a. *A general and historical overview*

The region commonly known as *The Balkans* was always, from an historical standpoint, a region ruled by instabilities and a wide range of different political and military crises. Although odd, probably the period of maximum political stability was during a war; during the Cold War, to be more precise. This happened during the communist regime, which froze most of the internal conflicts of the area. Inside the Balkans, the most problematic region is considered to be the former Yugoslav space.[1]

After the fall of communism in The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav state began a fatal process of decomposition, shattering in small independent republics, the very own republics that initially agreed upon the formation of The Republic. This process involved almost always military tensions and conflicts between the different sides, the conflicts usually being based on ethnic attributes.

This was the background of the Macedonian 1991 referendum, which legitimized the proclamation of independence from Yugoslavia, on September, 8th, 1991. Disrespecting the regional "tradition", the separation and the drawing of the borders was a peaceful process, and it did not cause conflict in neither of the two sides involved in it. However, Macedonia's short independent life was first disrupted only 8 years after the independence, in 1999, by a wave of nearly 360.000 Albanian refugees of the Kosovo conflict. Two years afterwards, an armed Albanian insurgency produced radical changes regarding the legal status of the ethnic minorities residing in Macedonian territories. This insurgency and its outcomes are precisely the subject of this paper.

b. *The 2001 Albanian insurgency. A factual overview*

The Albanian 2001 insurgency was an ethnic based conflict, whose main actors were the Albanian ethnical movement and the Macedonian security forces. The first rebellious actions undertaken by Albanian ethnics started in the latter part of 2000, but the essential moment regarded as the trigger for the whole strife was during the first two months of 2001, when groups of Albanians started fighting the Macedonian governmental

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[1] Made up of the republics that once formed together *The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* and *The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and two autonomous provinces within Serbian territory: Kosovo and Vojvodina.

authorities, represented by legitimate military forces. In this early stage emerged the first paramilitary group fighting and representing the Albanian side – *the National Liberation Army*.[2] The NLA claimed responsibility for attacks directed against Macedonian security forces. During the conflict, another armed faction, used as a technical support for the original movement, spawned. This second movement, entitled *The Kosovo Liberation Army*[3] was also made up of ethnic Albanians. The Macedonian reprisals appeared shortly and produced significant damages, due to deliberate arson, and destruction directed against Albanian-owned shops, mosques and other buildings.

The insurgency meant the death of 63 Macedonian security forces, 64 Albanian NLA members, 70 civilian casualties, 2 European observers and 1 British soldier and it also resulted in the territorial displacement of approximately 100.000 civilians.[4] The insurgency, eventually vanquished by Macedonian forces, determined the signing of the Ohrid Agreement in 2001.

2. *A theoretical perspective*

2.1. *Theoretical alternatives for conflict analysis*

Although it will not deal exclusively with it, the focus of this paper is the 2001 Ohrid Agreement. The rationale of this specific subject being essential in our approach is because this ethno-political conflict marked a change in how ethnic diversity is seen within Macedonia and also because it proposed a legal framework to encourage and promote ethnic diversity. Furthermore, due to the specific nature of the main actors involved in developing and promoting this document, it is regarded as a political compromise between the political representatives of the two ethnic groups, considered to be constituents of Macedonia, the Macedonian majority and the important Albanian minority.

The fundamental questions of which this research stemmed out were *How could an armed conflict change a country's policy concerning ethnic diversity?* and *What is the theoretical logic behind this change?* In addition to trying to address these two questions, we will strive to examine which were the changes in the areas of political participation and representation of ethnic groups in Macedonia, but also which were the constitutional power-sharing policies before and after the 2001 Albanian insurgency.

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[2] The original name of the movement, in Albanian spelling, is *Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare*, but for practical purposes the English version of the name, or its abbreviation – NLA, will be used for the remainder of this paper.

[3] The original name of this second movement was, in Albanian spelling, *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës*, but the paper will use the English version of the name, or its abbreviation – KLA, for practical reasons.

[4] Ulf Brunnbauer, "The Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement: Ethnic Macedonian Resentments", in *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority issues in Europe*, 1 (2002), p. 2.

For the present study, we considered relevant Ted R. Gurr and Barbara Harff's attempt to theorize ethno-political conflicts. The model proposed by the two authors in *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*[5] gives us a very well structured analysis of ethno-cultural conflicts but also tries to find theoretical patterns for this type of conflicts. Levente Salat feels that this model "describes a hypothesis regarding the probability of conflict formation and their possible nature".[6] Referring to the possible ethnic groups that are bound to face ethno-political conflicts, the Gurr-Harff model distinguishes between four types of mobilized communities: ethno-nationalistic, indigenous folk, elites representing ethno-cultural communities and ethno-classes. Furthermore, this model distinguishes between seven factors that are "faithful indicators of the ethno-cultural state of mobilization": discrimination, group identity, the connection between the community and its leaders, the political entourage, the governments' use of force, foreign support and international appreciation.

Besides the Gurr-Harff model, the literature notes also other theoretical models that are dealing with the causes and origins of ethnic conflicts. Thus, a good starting point in searching for parallel models is the already mentioned *The Liberal Multiculturalism. Normative grounds of authentic minority existence*, by Salat. A very interesting opinion on this matter belongs to one other reputed scholar, Donald Horowitz. He argues about the evolutions of the international system that contributed to the spreading of ethnic conflicts: the spread of the national self-determination doctrine, of the egalitarian doctrine and the state system already in place.[7] Horowitz regards ethnic conflict as being the "product between the rate of social mobilization and the rate of assimilation".[8] Other noteworthy approaches in this area of ethno-political conflicts are those of Lake and Rotchild[9] and of Zellner.[10] Because both lines of study give a higher importance to international

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[5] Ted Robert Gurr, Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*, Boulder-San Francisco, Oxford, Westview Press, 1994.

[6] Levente Salat, *Multiculturalismul liberal: baze normative ale existenţei minoritare autentice* [The Liberal Multiculturalism. Normative grounds of authentic minority existence], Iaşi, Polirom, 2001.

[7] D. L. Horowitz, *Ethnic groups in conflict*, Los Angeles-Londra, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985 *apud* Salat, *Multiculturalismul liberal*, p. 23-24.

[8] Horowitz, *Ethnic groups*, *apud* Salat, *Multiculturalismul*, p. 25.

[9] D. A. Lake, D. Rotchild, "Spreading Fear: The Genesis of Transnational Ethnic Conflict", in D. A. Lake, D. Rotchild (eds.), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict. Fear, Diffusion and Escalation*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1998.

[10] W. Zellner, *On the effectiveness of the OSCE minorities regime. Comparative case studies on the implementation of the recommendations of the High Commissioner on National minorities of the OSCE*, Hamburg, Institut für Friedenforschung und Sicherheitspolitik, 2001.

repercussions or involvement, the present analysis will not continue analyzing them, although acknowledging their significance and explanatory relevance.

2.2. *The Gurr-Harff Model*

a. *The engaged community. Characteristics*

Due to the characteristics proposed by the Gurr-Harff Model, we consider useful to apply the model to the Macedonian case. Regarding the politically mobilized ethnic communities we can identify the Albanian ethnic group in Macedonia as being a community of elites acting in the name of the Albanian ethno-cultural community. This happened because the Albanian group did not want autonomy or independence (characteristic to the ethno-nationalists communities), but only wanted to play a more powerful role in ruling the state. This ethnic group was represented by ethnic Albanian parties which were already participating in governmental coalitions and in the high circles of Macedonian politics: *DPSH (Albanian Democratic Party)*, and *PDP (Democratic Prosperity Party)*. Leaders of the two parties were among the signatories of the Ohrid Agreement, thus reconfirming their importance.

Comparing the model's theoretical factors with the Macedonian case reality, one could observe the applicability of the Gurr-Harff theory. Out of practical reasons, we will not carry on listing each of the factors' characteristics identified by the two authors and we will restrict ourselves to analyzing the compatibility between the Macedonian case (before the outbreak of the Albanian insurgency of 2001) and them.

b. *Discrimination*

In pre-conflict Macedonia we cannot really speak of discrimination (neither political, nor economic) directed against ethnic minorities in general, or against the Albanian minority in particular. It was rather a case of ignoring the ethnicity and its importance altogether in the two domains. The parliamentary political scene also comprised ethnic Albanian parties, and in the economic domain, there were no discriminatory measures targeted against the ethnic minorities. Furthermore, education, culture and public administration did not contain any ethnically based discriminatory elements, but it rather excluded any legal relevance of ethnicity in assuring quality education or efficient public administration.

c. *Group identity*

This element was of great importance in generating this particular conflict. Without the intent of any biased generalizations, we can state that in Albania there are very well developed characteristics of identity, but also the conscience of a national identity – a feeling that was also manifested in the Macedonian case. Religion is also a good example of unity for Albanians, especially in Macedonia, were there was an extremely evident contrast

between the Muslim Albanians and the Christian Macedonians, thus creating walls between them and the Macedonian majority and bridges amongst themselves.

d. *The connection between the community and its leaders. Solidarity amongst members*

This factor was only relevant to a certain extent, because there were several parties representing the Albanian population in Macedonia, which normally weakens group cohesion because of rivalry between different party leaders. However because of the group characteristics, slight cohesion among members of the community was present, and this was one factor, although maybe not essential, but at least one which facilitated the 2001 conflict.

e. *Political entourage*

Although a young state in 2001, nobody can rightly state that Macedonia was a politically unstable state. At least, not as unstable as its neighboring countries. Thus, the political entourage was not one that favored inter-ethnic conflict. The political stability of the country, as well as the acceptance of ethnic parties in Parliament determines us to assume that the political entourage was not a direct cause of the insurgency. But here is where the Gurr-Harff model is weak. It only differentiates between four types of political systems, and we cannot correctly categorize Macedonia as being one of the four (if we insist on categorizing, then we have to stretch extremely the authors' definitions).

f. *Governmental use of force*

Out of the repressive methods identified by Gurr and Harff, during research for this paper, we did not find evidence that the Macedonian authorities had used any of them before the start of the conflict. Although the conflict did caused human casualties on both sides, victims were produced by the armed confrontations between the two sides and were not a result of abuse from Macedonian authorities. Having these considerations in mind, it should be noted that this factor also was not visible in the accumulation of tensions in Macedonia. Taken together with other elements of the Gurr-Harff model that were not applied to the Macedonian case, they can provide an explanation to the relatively reduced size of the insurgency and violence in the 2001 Macedonian events.

g. *Foreign support*

Albanian insurgents in Macedonia have been (partially and limited) supported by Albanian forces. Involvement was not directly from the neighboring country of Albania, but from a military faction called Kosovo Liberation Army, a movement in Kosovo giving logistical support to colleagues in Macedonia. Given this support, the Macedonian government even suspected Albania of involvement, although a direct involvement was not proven.

h. *International appreciation*

This factor was not visible before or during the conflict itself, but rather after the end of hostilities with the signing of the Ohrid agreement, when the mediation process was attended by representatives of the European Union and the United States. The changes this Agreement brought in Macedonian politics and also the support given by the European Union and the United States transmitted a similar message as in other ethnic conflict areas of the world: minorities must have more rights. However, this cannot be considered as a cause for the conflict.

In retrospect, we can conclude that the small number of factors that were fully present before the insurgency in Macedonia was also, probably, a determinant of the limited intensity that the conflict has had.

3. *Analysis of the Macedonian minority regime*

Before proceeding to analyze the actual status of ethnic minorities in Macedonia before and after the Albanian insurgency of 2001, it would be useful to look at a theoretical approach of the conflict settlement model that has been applied in this case.

Regulations that came alongside the Ohrid Agreement created in Macedonia a system that is close to consociationism, with strong elements favoring the preservation and development of cultural identity of minorities. The Agreement does not expressly mention any special rights for the Albanian minority, but the newly created conditions virtually eliminate the rest of the minority groups from access favorable provisions brought by the agreement. The most restrictive condition, met only by the Albanian minority is the existence of a threshold of 20% minority citizens for the minority to enjoy extensive cultural and administrative rights, in a certain community or in the entire country. However we cannot speak completely of consociationism in Macedonia, since there is no minority with veto power, but only legal conditions favorable to minorities, without specifying which those minorities actually are.

3.1. *Political participation before the Ohrid Agreement*

Signed on 13 August 2001, the Ohrid Framework-Agreement brought in elements that tried to promote and develop the cultural identity of minority groups living in Macedonia. However, relevant for this paper is not so much the cultural story, but the political participation of minorities and measures for more efficient power-sharing.

Ethnic Albanian parties have been participating in Macedonian politics since the formation of the state. Except for the first government, formed strictly out of technocrats, every governing coalition in Macedonia has included at least one party representing the Albanian minority. Although we could assume only political and electoral motivation for such a situation, the reality is that not every coalition was driven only by electoral purposes. For example, in 1998 there was a good example when an electoral alliance had won the

elections and it could form by itself the government, but it preferred to partner up with an ethnic Albanian party. What is even more interesting is that both of those parties were nationalistic parties: VMRO-DPMNE representing the Macedonians and DPA, representing ethnic Albanian interest. The participation of Albanians in governments was still possible even after the 1998 change of the electoral laws.[11]

For a better understanding of the political system in pre-conflict Macedonia, we shall take a short glance at the patterns of the coalitions that governed the country between 1989 and 2001. The first government formed after the 1989 elections were particularly unstable, being the subject of numerous restructurings and of frequent entries/exits of parties in/from the coalition. In most post-1989 cabinets the Albanian party in government has held the newly formed Ministry of Local Governance. This position was the subject of long negotiations and also it was the subject of international monitoring, by the Council of Europe.

The government formed after the 1998 elections was not only a difficult government, but also an inefficient one, due to the intense ideological opposition between the two parties that formed the coalition, many decisions being over-politicized, while others provoked fairly large scandals inside the coalition.[12]

However, the period between 1990 and 2001 was a period when, despite the lack of special rights for minorities, ethnic Albanians were always represented in government coalitions. We can state that it was a situation of *de facto* minority rights rather than *de jure* provisions. Regarding the power-sharing mechanisms, they were exclusively in the central government, due to a lack of constitutional regulations that could favor any minority whatsoever in local government bodies.

3.2. *Political participation after the Ohrid Agreement*[13]

The Ohrid Framework-Agreement introduced regulations favorable to ethnic minorities in Macedonia. Stating that the sovereignty and the unitary characteristics of the state cannot be modified, the Agreement promotes however the preservation and the reflection in public life of the multiethnic character of the Macedonian society, and also the development of local government as a method to encourage citizen participation.

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[11] Aneta Jovevska, Natasha Graber, "Minorities in Political Life in the Republic of Macedonia", in Monica Robotin, Levente Salat (eds.), *A New Balance: Democracy and Minorities in Post-Communist Europe*, Budapest, Open Society Institute, 2003, p. 50.

[12] Jovevska, Graber, Minorities, p. 52.

[13] The electronic version of The Agreement can be found online at: http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/ legal_co-operation/police_and_internal_security/OHRID % 20 Agreement %2013august 2001.asp.

Furthermore, the Agreement promotes principles of non-discriminatory and equitable representation. It calls for measures that would ensure equitable minority representation in both central and local government. The Agreement also calls for corrective measures that would straighten the proportion of members from minority ethnic groups in public administration. Special attention is given to the police, in order for it to reflect the composition and distribution of population in Macedonia, and also to the judicial system, in order for it to have 1/3 of members elected from ethnic citizens.

Very interesting are also the provisions regarding special parliamentary procedures. For example, at a central level, certain constitutional amendments regarding the law of Local Government cannot be approved unless there is a qualified majority of 2/3 the number of MPs, *and* it also comprises a majority of the votes from the minorities. A similar regulation applies to laws that directly affect matters of culture, use of language, education, personal documents and use of symbols. The Ohrid Agreement included also constitutional amendments that had the role to create a legal and institutional framework that would apply the principles stated in the Agreement. One example of regulation that references to culture and identity is one regarding symbols and education. The Macedonian state is bound to ensure financing of higher education given in the mother tongues of those minorities whose speakers exceed 20% of the total population.[14] As for the languages used in local public administration, the Agreement sets as an official language only the Macedonian language, but leaves plenty of room for the existence and use of other languages, although not specifically nominated. For such a use, there is the same provision as in the case of the education laws. But for public administration, the provision goes one step further, by stating that every language spoken by more than 20% of the total population of an administrative unit is recognized as a dialogue language with the authorities.

The Agreement also changed the electoral system in facilitating minorities' participation in the political life and creating a more fairly system of proportional parliamentary representation. However, regarding power-sharing provisions in the central government, not much change came with the Agreement.

The Ohrid Agreement brought elements of multiculturalism on the political and social scenes of Macedonia. Through its principles and provisions, the Agreement made

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[14] Today, the only minority to meet this criteria is the Albanian minority, which has a population of 509.083 people, representing 25.17% of the entire population of Macedonia according to the National Statistics Office and the 2002 Census. The 2002 Macedonian Census, available at: http://www.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb 2007bazi/Dialog/statfile1.asp.

possible a better coexistence between the Macedonian majority and the Albanian minority in particular, and between all ethnic groups in general. The legal regulations that came alongside this agreement were meant to implement the principles agreed upon at Ohrid.

4. *Conclusions*

This paper proposed to integrate the 2001 Albanian insurgency in Macedonia in a theoretical model of ethnic conflicts, but also to consider the changes addressing diversity that resulted with the cease of the conflict. Thus, during the first part we used the Gurr-Harff model, and for the second half of the paper, we tried to identify the main changes brought by the Framework Agreement in terms of political participation and political power sharing in the Macedonian state. By doing so, we noticed that it favored the development and promotion of cultural and ethnic identity, but also that it has made a change in the electoral formula. The present paper could be followed by another paper that could do a deeper analysis of the ways in which the Agreement was implemented and its effects on the Macedonian political life.

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DIVERSITATE ÎN MACEDONIA. ÎNTRE TENSIUNI ISTORICE,
IGNORANŢĂ, CONFLICT ŞI COOPERARE
Rezumat

Deşi nu se centrează exclusiv pe acesta, punctul central al prezentei lucrări este Acordul de la Ohrid din anul 2001. Insurgenţa albaneză din 2001 a fost un conflict pe baze etnice, între mişcarea etnicilor albanezi şi autorităţile de securitate macedonene. Victimele umane produse în urma acestei insurgenţe au fost de aproximativ 130 de militari din ambele tabere şi aproximativ 70 de civili, iar dislocarea teritorială s-a produs pentru peste 100.000 de persoane. Insurgenţa, stăvilită până la urmă de către autorităţile macedonene, s-a finalizat cu semnarea acordului de la Ohrid.

Întrebările fundamentale care au născut această cercetare au fost: *cum poate un conflict armat să modifice politica unui stat vizavi de diversitatea etnică?* şi *care este logica teoretică din spatele acestei schimbări?* Pe lângă încercarea de a răspunde acestor două întrebări, ne-am străduit să analizăm punctual care au fost schimbările din aria participării şi reprezentării politice a grupurilor etnice din Macedonia, dar şi care au fost politicile de împărţire a puterii înainte şi după insurgenţa albaneză din 2001. Relevantă pentru studierea acestui conflict am considerat încercarea de teoretizare a conflictelor etnopolitice a lui Gurr şi Harff. Modelul propus de cei doi autori disemineaz foarte structurat conflictele etnoculturale şi încearcă să găsească *pattern*-uri teoretice ale acestor tipuri de conflicte.

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Încercând să integrăm insurgenţa albanezilor din Macedonia din 2001 într-un model de conflict etnic şi să analizăm schimbările în abordarea diversităţii care au rezultat Acordului de încetare a conflictului, am observat că el a favorizat dezvoltarea şi promovarea culturii şi identităţii etnice, dar şi că a adus o schimbare în planul formulei electorale.

Cuvinte cheie: minorităţi, Balcani, insurgenţă, înţelegere, participare politică.