INTERNAL INFLUENCE OR EXTERNAL PRESSURE? MACEDONIA'S DECISION TO RECOGNIZE KOSOVO

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ABSTRACT

Public opinion indicated that the Slavic, Orthodox Macedonian majority opposed recognition of Kosovo in support of Serbia, yet both the ethnic Albanian minority and the international community encouraged it. Eventually, the latter forces won and on October 9, 2008 Macedonia recognized Kosovo, but which force was more salient? Was the Macedonian government trying to placate the Albanian population to prevent another ethnic conflict as occurred in 2001, or did their desire to join international organizations, including NATO and the EU, prevail? While it is apparent that both contributed to this mutually beneficial decision, it is doubtful Macedonia would have heeded the demands of the Albanian minority without the added incentive of membership conditionality, especially at a time when the certainty of accession was first being threatened by Greece.

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INTRODUCTION

Public opinion opposed it. Riots erupted over it. The aftermath affected regional relations a decade after it. So what made Macedonia recognize Kosovo? Though much has been written about ethnic conflict, irredentism, and minority groups striving to attain their rights, considerably less research has been done on how minority groups influence policy both domestically and regionally. The case study of Macedonia's recognition of Kosovo provides an interesting puzzle to explore this subject further. This research contributes to our understanding of how politics play out following the fragmentation and stabilization of a multiethnic federation of republics like Yugoslavia. It also provides insight into the way kinship ties, apart from the external homeland, affect policies pertaining to neighboring states.

Historically, Macedonia's Slavic, Orthodox majority more closely identified with Serbia, but the ties that bound the Muslim Albanians of Macedonia and Kosovo were just as strong. So why would the country cross their Serbian allies in order to appease 25% of the population? Did the memory of their own near-civil war in 2001 and fear of retaliation trump concerns of setting a dangerous precedent? Or was there another factor at play? The Albanian minority certainly endorsed the decision, but so did the international community. In 2008, Macedonia was desperate to stay on the path to European integration, especially after being jilted by Greece at the Bucharest NATO Summit. In this thesis it is argued that despite polarizing ethnic claims made in the regional media, ultimately it was the international community and membership conditionality that led Macedonia to recognize Kosovo. Though the Albanian community exerted some pressure, the Macedonian government would not have done anything to jeopardize their chances of accession into international organizations.

The following chapter puts forth my research question, assesses the literature that can be used to answer this question, states the argument made in this thesis, and presents the research design. The second chapter introduces the state of interethnic affairs domestically, both before and after the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA), as well as outlines regional relations with both Serbia and Kosovo from Macedonia's independence in 1991 up until their recognition of Kosovo in 2008. The third chapter provides an overview of Kosovo's decision to declare independence unilaterally and discusses the responses of both the international community and Macedonia, before analyzing the factors contributing to Macedonia's decision to recognize Kosovo. The conclusion reviews key findings and their implications for regional relations moving forward.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Rationale

The focus of this thesis is the effect Republic of Macedonia's large ethnic Albanian minority has on the country's regional relations with Kosovo and Serbia, since ethnic conflict remains an important issue in Macedonia and the region as a whole. It has been a recurring theme since the country gained independence in 1991, as evidenced by events such as the 2001 insurgency and the Kumanovo clashes of 2015. Macedonia's difficulty balancing power domestically reflects their struggle to balance relationships in the region. Recognizing Kosovo created tension with Serbia, and not wishing to upset Serbia further prevents Macedonia from doing more. In addition, since Macedonia's December 11, 2016 elections, the impact of the Albanian minority is greater than ever, with both major parties vying for their support in order to gain the majority necessary to take power. At the time this thesis was started the Albanian party DUI had agreed to merge with SDSM, the opposition party, to displace VMRO-DMPNE, which had been in power for over a decade, and extend Albanian influence across the country, even to areas in the east without any significant minority population. Their influence already reaches beyond national borders into other countries within the region, as in the previously mentioned cases of Kosovo and Serbia.

1.2 Research Questions

To what extent does Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority influence their regional relations with other countries that also have an ethnic Albanian population?

Though this question is primarily being answered with regard to the case study of Macedonia's recognition of Kosovo in 2008, it also raises several sub-questions about the preexisting condition of Macedonia's interethnic relations both domestically and abroad. A number of key events have shaped Macedonia's relationships in the region since gaining

independence in 1991. Among these are the Kosovo refugee crisis in 1999, during which hundreds of thousands of refugees flooded into Macedonia, the 2001 insurgency, in which the National Liberation Army, assisted by former Kosovo Liberation Army fighters from Kosovo, began attacking security forces in Macedonia, and the creation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which ended the fighting and extended Albanian rights within Macedonia.

These sub-questions include:

- How have interethnic relations within Macedonia changed since the Ohrid Framework Agreement and what has been done to promote their integration into the political system of Macedonia?
- What prompted Macedonia to recognize Kosovo and how did this decision impact their relations with both Serbia and Kosovo?

1.3 Literature Review

In Horowitz's *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, he claims that secession is about inter-group struggle for relative group worth. He begins by labeling ethnic groups as backward, which he defines as less educated and wealthy, or advanced, more educated, and engaging in non-agricultural employment. Similarly, he labels the regions in which these groups live according to their relative economic position, based on per capita income, within the country. Using this system, he attempts to predict under what circumstances an ethnic group will attempt secession from a state. According to Horowitz, backward groups in backward regions will feel discriminated against and fear extinction, thus giving them no reason to stay in the state. Advanced groups in backward regions, however, will benefit from exporting their labor and/or capital elsewhere in the country, and therefore will not want to secede. Advanced groups in advanced regions might feel like the country is reaping the benefits of their labor, but will not secede due to the economic costs. Finally, backward groups in advanced regions

will not secede, as they most likely will not have the resources to do so. One issue with this model is that it overlooks the other factors that might affect a group's decision to secede aside from the purely economic ones, such as political ones and having a stake in the state. Horowitz also discusses irredentism, noting that the homogeneity of the "retrieving state" is key, but generally finds it unlikely after WWII because it will incite defensive action. However, writing in the 1980s he could not have anticipated the changes the end of the Cold War would bring.[1]

In *Nationalism Reframed,* Brubaker further explored the role of this external homeland in ethnic conflict. He focuses on three distinct and contradictory nationalisms which link newly nationalizing states, their national minorities, and their aforementioned external national homelands. The first he calls nationalizing nationalism, which occurs when a previously marginalized group claims they are the "core nation," or nationality, of a newly established state, often accompanied by complaints of a region's historical discrimination against them. The second is called homeland or trans-border nationalism, which arises from a perceived threat of the nationalizing nation towards their national minority, which inspires their homeland to defend their "ethno-national kin" outside of their "external national homelands." It also obliges them "to monitor the condition, promote the welfare, support the activities and institutions, assert the rights, and protect the interest of 'their' ethno-national kin in other states."[2] Finally, Brubaker describes minority nationalism, which occurs in response to discriminatory policies of nationalizing nationalism in order to improve their position. Though it can work similarly to homeland nationalism by undermining the nationalizing state, the two do not always work together, especially when homeland nationalism is based on geopolitical motives, rather than nationalistic ones.[3] While this triadic configuration does

[1] Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1985).
[2] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5.
[3] Ibid.

much to explain regional relations, it would have been beneficial for Brubaker to incorporate an additional actor, expanding trans-border nationalism to include other countries of shared lineage, other than the homeland.

Drawing on both of these works, Fearon's "Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict" analyzes the commitment problem of nationalist leaders in newly independent countries to assure minorities within those states, which had previously been protected by central power, that they will receive the same protection as before. According to Fearon, this will incentivize leaders of such groups to act quickly while the new state is more vulnerable, rather than wait when victory is less likely and they could potentially lose out on state resources. He identifies five conditions that could incite or prevent conflict. If the minority is weak and the cost of fighting is greater than the benefits of secession, they will simply acquiesce. If the minority is geographically concentrated and declares independence, forcing the majority to take action, it results in war. Problems are diminished if the minority doesn't foresee a sudden change in its ability to secede. Similarly, if the minority has an easy emigration option, they will be less likely to wage war and the majority will be less likely to threaten oppression. The fifth and final option Fearon explores is that of a third party intervention from the minority group's homeland. Here he identifies two scenarios. If the external homeland commits to protecting the minority, the problem is diminished. However, if they intervene such that they lower the cost of rebellion, the problem is exacerbated.[4] Unfortunately, such situations are seldom binary, as are their solutions. Accounting for the tensions that might arise from having a third, and external, party involved in domestic affairs would provide a more nuanced understanding.

Van Houten began putting these pieces together in "The Role of a Minority's Reference State in Ethnic Relations." He created his own information game of strategic

[4] James Fearon, "Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict," in The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation, by David Lake and Donald Rothchild. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

interactions by adapting Fearon's Commitment Model to Brubaker's Triadic Configuration, looking at the majority, the minority, and that minority's homeland. Ultimately, he came to the conclusion that secessionist war in post-Soviet cases is determined by whether or not the homeland makes credible commitments to the minority population that they will support them. First the minority must decide whether to fight (at which point the homeland must decide whether or not to intervene) or acquiesce (at which point the majority adjusts their distributions and rights accordingly), again starting the cycle of the minority deciding whether or not to fight, followed by the homeland deciding whether or not to intervene. Van Houten concludes that the likelihood of winning is greatest during the first two rounds, but especially the first, as with Fearon's model.[5]

Laitin begins his article "Secessionist Rebellion in the Former Soviet Union" by testing Horowitz's predictions, which he found do not explain the situation in post-Soviet cases. Using Van Houten's model to explore Fearon's credible commitment problem, he found its predictions to vary according to the actions of the homeland state, prompting him to reexamine the game under different conditions. Like in Fearon's two-player game, he found that if the homeland has no incentive to intervene, the minority will make decisions as if it had no homeland. If the minority is small and weak it will not fight, though it will if the returns are greater than for bargaining. However, if the homeland is overly eager to intervene, the majority, who can't offer more than the homeland, will offer nothing, causing the minority to fight in the first round. The ideal scenario occurs when the homeland is only vaguely interested and sends mixed signals, such that the minority is uncertain whether or not they will support them. The majority then offers concessions, hoping the minority will accept them rather than wage war without guaranteed external assistance. In short, the uncertainty

[5] Pieter Van Houten, "The Role of a Minority's Reference State in Ethnic Relations," *Archives European Journal of Sociology* XXXIX (1998).

induces both to compromise.[6] This is the grey area missing from Fearon's research, somewhere between support and neglect, which is so often present in ethnic politics.

Jenne, noting that Brubaker offers a solid description of ethnic conflict, but little in terms of actual prediction, puts forth a theory of ethnic bargaining in her eponymous book. According to this theory, a group makes a demand through a popular political leader, which challenges the state ranging from affirmative action to secession or irredentism. The former is considered moderate, since it is calling for greater integration into society, whereas the latter is extreme, since it is a challenge to the state itself. This spectrum is reminiscent of Horowitz, who wrote that politicians shift demands across the spectrum in accordance with the wishes of the masses. The logic of ethnic bargaining states that minority radicalization is driven by signals of behavioral intent from the host government and/or lobby actor, which the minority members use to determine their intentions towards the minority group. This in turn informs their decision to radicalize or acquiesce, but is subject to change since they are constantly reassessing the situation and will occasionally mobilize. Though the expectations of credible commitment states that minorities radicalize due to the center's inability to commit to protecting them, Jenne found that sometimes, if minority members are confident of external support, they will radicalize despite the majority's attempts to appease them.[7]

Judith Kelley takes a different approach altogether in her book *Ethnic Politics in Europe: The Power of Norms and Incentives*, observing that although factors such as a nation's demographics, political system of representation, and the relationship among ethnic groups in a country all contribute to ethnic policy, they do not explain why outcomes often more closely resemble international norms than the preferences of domestic actors. Since ethnic minorities are inherently international, ethnic politics must consider the role of

[6] David Laitin, "Secessionist Rebellion in the Former Soviet Union," *Comparative Political Studies* 34, no. 8 (2001): 839-61.
[7] Erin Jenne, *Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowerment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

international institutions on domestic policy actors. Hers was the first study to focus on the methods and effects of the OSCE, CE, and the EU, in addition to "normative pressure," which she defines as an institution making a policy recommendation to a government with no reward other than their praise, and conditionality, which she defines as an institution incentivizing a specific policy by offering some benefit, such as institutional membership. Ultimately, she concludes that membership conditionality motivated most policy decisions, though they were typically guided by normative pressure. Moreover, domestic opposition is more susceptible to membership conditionality than normative pressure; indeed, as domestic opposition increased, so did the necessity for and effectiveness of membership conditionality, regardless of policymakers' initial position. Though she specifically acknowledges Van Houten's discussion of homelands' ability to prevent oppression of their kin by the dominant majority and Brubaker's argument that homelands can exert security and economic pressure to incentivize the majority's accommodation of their minorities, she dismisses them as a direct factor for policy changes. Instead, she argues that the homeland's greatest impact is their indirect ability to involve international actors. As she points out, even Van Houten acknowledged "extending the theory by incorporating the role of other states and international organizations (including the interaction between [homeland] state and these external actors) is a promising direction for further research."[8]

Other scholars have also looked into the impact of membership conditionality and normative pressure, including Manners in "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" and Del Sarto in "Normative Empire Europe: The European Union, its Borderlands and the 'Arab Spring.'" Manners discusses the international role of the EU in promoting norms which displace the state as the center of concern. Among the six factors he identifies that contribute to the diffusion of the EU's normative power is transference, which he defines

[8] Judith Kelley, *Ethnic Politics in Europe: The Power of Norms and Incentives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010): 140.

as "when the EU exchanges goods, trade, aid or technical assistance with third parties through largely substantive or financial means. Such transference may be the result of the exportation of community norms and standards or the 'carrot and stickism' of financial rewards and economic sanctions. . . Both procedural and transference diffusion are now facilitated by the conditionality which is required in all EC agreements with third countries."[9] Del Sarto, on the other hand, sees the EU as a normative empire, which explains their policies towards their neighbors of using normative force to transfer rules and practices to non-members, in the service of their economic and security interests.[10]

Ethnic ties and external homelands often come up when examining politics in the Balkans, with scholars theorizing about their significance and local politicians instrumentalizing them to polarize the constituency. However, it is also important to consider the economic and geopolitical factors that go into decisions like state recognition. Kelley's theory does exactly that, claiming that conditionality guided by normative pressure and indirectly influenced by an external homeland is what truly leads to policy changes in ethnic politics. It is precisely this balance of interests that best explains Macedonia's decision to recognize Kosovo in 2008.

1.4 Hypothesis

This thesis argues that although Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority had some influence, ultimately it was the promise of membership conditionality and normative pressure exerted by the international community that compelled Macedonia to recognize Kosovo. As noted in the literature review, transnational kinship ties and fear of ethnic conflict or secession certainly can affect a country's domestic policies toward an internal minority, but not at the expense of economic and geopolitical interests. A young state itself, facing

[9] Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 235-58.
[10] Raffaella Del Sarto, "Normative Empire Europe: The European Union, its Borderlands, and the 'Arab Spring,'" *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54, no. 2 (2015): 215-32.

opposition from its neighbors, Macedonia was determined to accede to international organizations such as the EU and NATO. They dedicated their foreign policy towards this goal, as demonstrated by their support of NATO operations in Kosovo, their humanitarian aid during the refugee crisis, and their compliance with the NATO brokered Ohrid Framework Agreement. While following their lead on issues such as the recognition of Kosovo could have been expected given their prior relationship, it took on a heightened meaning at this time since just two months after Kosovo declared independence Greece blocked Macedonia's invitation to join NATO at the Bucharest Summit. While they might have been reluctant at first to acknowledge their controversial new neighbor, their desire to further integrate into the international community took precedence, leading Macedonia to finally recognize Kosovo on October 9, 2008.

1.5 Methodology

Martyn Dencombe's *Grown Rules for Social Research: Guidelines for Good Practice* thoroughly explained a variety of research philosophies, and was essential to the selection of interpretivism for this particular thesis. He explains that interpretivism makes several ontological and epistemological assumptions. First, social reality is subjective in that it is constructed by people and reinforced through their interactions. Second, people react to the knowledge that they are being studied, and can become self-conscious or even alter their behavior according to the purpose of the research. Third, objective knowledge is not possible, since observations are affected by the expectations and predispositions of the researcher, and thus one cannot create grand theories or universal truths.[11]

Robert K. Yin's *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* was instrumental in structuring this research design. It confirmed the decision to use a case study as a methodology, while shedding light on some of the potential shortcomings of selecting it. The

[11] Martyn Denscombe, *Ground Rules for Social Research (*Open University Press, 2010), 121-122.

specific case study used is that of Macedonia's recognition of Kosovo in 2008, in an attempt to assess the extent to which their Albanian minority influences their regional relations. It is particularly relevant because it was one of the most emblematic foreign policy decisions in the Macedonia's short history in terms of balancing the interests of both their Slavic, Orthodox majority and those of the Albanian, Muslim minority. It will be a single-case design with embedded units of analysis, domestic and systemic.[12] The specific unit of analysis on the domestic level will be the groups of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia, and the unit of analysis on the systemic level will be the examination of relations between these states.

The research will draw from multiple sources in order to do data triangulation, which will be organized in a case study database in order to maintain a chain of evidence. Specifically, it will draw upon documents (such as communication transcripts, administrative documents, and newspaper articles), archival records (such as organizational records and maps), and interviews.[13] The interviews will be semi-structured and largely open-ended, featuring a combination of grand tour questions and floating prompts.[14] In addition, there will be some informal direct observation during the field visits, since the case study is not purely historical and thus relevant behaviors and environmental conditions should be available for observation.[15]

A case study supplemented with interviews and an intrepretivist research philosophy is the best methodology for this research because the questions posed are predominantly asking "how," and focus on explanatory research, dealing with operational links that need to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidences. It is also a good fit in that it

[12] Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (*Sage Publications, 2009), 47.
[13] Ibid, 101-117.
[14] Beth Leech, "Asking Questions: Techniques for Semi-Structured Interviews," *Political Science & Politics* 35(4): 665-668.
[15] Yin, 110.

does not require control of behavioral events and focuses on contemporary events.[16] Though it uses many of the same techniques as history, it adds two additional sources of evidence: direct observation and interviews of the persons involved in the events. Case studies have an advantage over other methodologies in that they provide a full variety of evidence: documents, interviews, and observations.

One shortcoming of case studies as a methodology is their lack of rigor, meaning that they can be unsystematic and biased.[17] However, Yin suggests this is due to a lack of specific procedures as opposed to other methods. Denscome also addresses this issue, stating the researcher should be very systematic, since interpretivism encourages emergent research design, such that research questions solidify during research rather than in advance. Denscombe also considers relativism and uncertainty when using interpretivist methods, stating that there can be multiple interpretations of the same data and conclusions tend to be more open-ended.[18] Another limitation is the minimal basis for generalization of other populations, though Yin argues it can be generalizable to theoretical propositions.[19] However, this thesis does not aim to create a grand theory or establish a universal truth, but rather to contribute a more nuanced understanding of relations in the region than currently exists, and is limited to drawing conclusions about interethnic relations in the post-Yugoslav space.

[16] Yin, 9-11.
[17] Ibid, 14.
[18] Ibid, 123-124.
[19] Ibid, 15.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Domestic Interethnic Relations: Pre-OFA (1991 - 2001)

"With the constitution of 1974, Macedonians and Albanians were, not the same, but they formulated the state. In the constitution it said Macedonians and Albanians make the state. Now, it is Macedonia and other nationalities who speak at least 20%, they don't write Albanians. For that the position of Albanians was better then than now." Baki Halimi

Macedonia is a multi-ethnic state, and all three dominant groups, Macedonians, Albanians, and Turks, have claims to the present-day territory, hence the fragile ethnic balance. Turks have the longest tradition of statehood, but the smallest present-day population. Albanians have the longest continuous habitation, though they have never actually had a state on the territory. Macedonians are the majority and have their own state.[20] Indeed, control of the state was essential to the creation of a Macedonian national identity, and in the 1980s a national homogenization process was introduced, targeting the Albanian minority.[21]

Though Albanians in Macedonia were spared Milošević's strict rule, they had little influence over the new political system. In 1989, the preamble to the new constitution was changed, along with their legal status, from "the state of the Macedonian people and the Albanian and Turkish minorities," to "the national state of the Macedonian nation, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Rom and other nationalities." This is a clear example of Brubaker's nationalizing nationalism, with Macedonians establishing themselves as the nationality of their newly formed state. Meanwhile, the referendum on independence only received 72% of the vote, with many Albanians abstaining at the behest of their political leaders. Albanians

[20] Maja Muhić, "The Paradox of the Solution: The Impact of the Kosovo Question on Macedonia," in *After Yugoslavia: Identities and Politics within the Successor States*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012), 81.
[21] Gëzim Krasniqi, "The 'Forbidden Fruit': Islam and Politics of Identity in Kosovo and Macedonia," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 11, no. 2 (2011): 200-201.

were now considered a "national minority," after having been a nationality in Yugoslavia, and protests erupted around the country, especially when it was accepted as the preamble to the 1991 Constitution.[22] Unsurprisingly, the constitution was not approved by the Albanian political parties and the Party for Democratic Prosperity-National Democratic Party (PDP-NDP), an ethnic Albanian political party, boycotted parliament in response. However, three Albanian ministers were selected for a non-partisan "cabinet of experts" led by Branko Crvenkovski of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM).[23]

Already, in this early phase of Macedonia's independence, the struggle for relative group worth Horowitz writes about was evident. However, in this case it was as much about representation and political power as economic interests. The Macedonian majority, who claimed they had already established minority rights on par with international law, were afraid of granting more, due to the deteriorating situation in Bosnia and the ever-increasing Albanian population. Indeed, Macedonian politics have long been dominated by a fear of Albanians, whose population has doubled every 25-30 years since 1945, while the Macedonian population has remained stable since 1981. Moreover, the ethnic Albanian minority is mainly concentrated in the Western part of country, from Kumanovo in the north to Struga in the southwest; the population density in general is 76 people per square kilometer, but it is 230 in the Albanian dominant area of the Polog Valley.[24] It is precisely this geographic concentration, which Fearon describes, that would later enable the Albanian population to take action against the Macedonian majority.

Stability in Macedonia was based on three factors. First, the government maintained control through a credible threat of force. Separatism of Albanian parties was tolerated, unless there was any possible violation of laws, in which case it was prevented by police

[22] Zhidas Daskalovski, "The Independence of Kosovo and the Consolidation of Macedonia—A Reason to Worry?" *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 16, no. 2 (2008): 273.
[23] Ibid, 275.
[24] Kyril Drezov, "Collateral Damage: The Impact on Macedonia of the Kosovo War," in *Kosovo: The Politics of Delusion*, ed. Michael Waller, and Bulent Gokay. (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 61.

interventions, arrests, and lengthy prison sentences. In 1995 the police actually bulldozed a building set to become an Albanian University in Tetovo and imprisoned its rector. The director of Macedonian Center for International Cooperation also mentioned a similar example in which two mayors in Gostivar were arrested for raising the Albanian flag. The second factor contributing to stability was the ethnic Macedonian domination of the state, including the central government, police, and military. Both in Yugoslavia and after independence, Albanians were restricted from working in institutions of national security. In 1992, Albanian politicians began participating in the central government, though key-decisions were still made by Macedonians. Implementing changes proved difficult even with outside intervention since Macedonians were unmotivated and Albanians often resorted to separatist rhetoric. The third and final way stability in Macedonia was maintained was through Western support. In the 1990s, there was an implicit guarantee of Macedonia's territorial and administrative integrity, due to fear of irredentism from Serbia or Albania. Beginning in 1993, UNPREDEP, consisting of 1,000 Scandinavian and US troops, was stationed along Macedonia's borders with Serbia and Albania. They also provided economic and diplomatic support, and in 1992 security cooperation was established between the US and Macedonia. However, this stability was threatened due to the collapse of the Albanian government in 1997, which enabled the spread of weapons to Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia. In addition, UNPREDEP was terminated in 1999 after China vetoed its renewal due to Skopje's controversial recognition of Taiwan.[25] This provides an early example of the impact the international community and state recognition can have, for better or for worse.

The 1999 presidential election lasted over a month and left ethnic tensions in the country at an all-time high. There was a lot of negative campaigning, emphasizing the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian

[25] Drezov, 60-62.

National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) candidate Boris Trajkovski's protestant and Bulgarian ties, in comparison to SDSM candidate Tito Petkovski's Yugoslav, Serb, and communist ones. In addition, SDSM portrayed its opponent as working for the partition of Macedonia between Albania and Serbia, which won the support of Macedonians, but alienated Albanians. Before the first round Petkosvki even announced that he did not want Albanian support, though it turned out he needed it in the second round when Trajkovski beat him by 70,000 votes. There election was also marred by irregularities in Albanian areas, including threats against SDSM and PDP members, multiple voting, and ballot-box fixing, though the court ordered rerun confirmed Trajkovski's victory. Unfortunately, for the first time ever, the election ended in physical fights between SDSM and DPA, supporters. SDSM officials were assaulted and even expelled from the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) dominant villages in the west. SDSM supporters opposed the election and called for early parliamentary elections, which destablized the country and increased ethnic tension.[26] The election had a number of effects both domestically and internationally. DPA, whose candidate won 75% of the Albanian vote, replaced PDP as the strongest Albanian party in the country. Their coalition actually strengthened in the second round rerun, despite VMRO doing worse, having lost the support of many young Macedonian voters who had been their base. On an international level, Macedonia lost some credibility due to the irregularities; Jose Pinto Teixeira, special representative to the European Commission, stated that Macedonia was right to be considered "Western Balkan," rather than "Visegrad."[27]

Over time, minority nationalism emerged in response to discriminatory policies against the Albanian community in Macedonia. On February 17, 2001 the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA) entered the border village of Tanusevci and launched an insurgency against Macedonian security forces that eventually expanded to the regions of

[26] Drezov, 66.
[27] Ibid, 67-68.

Kumanovo, Lipkovo, and Tetovo.[28] By March 2001, the story dominated the foreign media, with editorials in the Washington Post and LA Times. The former criticized President Trajkovski for "wag[ing] war against what he calls "terrorists" before starting any talks. The consequence of that poor judgment will be that negotiations between Macedonia's Slavs will be harder and may require an international broker. Even if they go well, heading off more warfare across the Balkans will require satisfactory political solutions for the Albanian populations of Kosovo and Serbia as well as Macedonia."[29] Similarly, the LA Times wrote, "The root cause of the ethnic Albanian unrest is deep frustration born of their uncertain status in Kosovo and discrimination suffered in Macedonia next door." In addition, it urged the US government to exert "diplomatic pressure" on Macedonia "to accept legitimate claims of its ethnic Albanian minority."[30] Nearly a decade before Kosovo would declare independence, Macedonia was already being conditioned to respond to normative pressure from the West in its domestic affairs.

A number of foreign politicians and diplomats also got involved. General Wesley Clark commented, "We must make clear to the government of Macedonia that it, too, is under close scrutiny. . . The longer term solution rests on Macedonia's commitment not to just say the right things about the Albanian minority, but to follow through with actions. Discussion of the constitutional status of Macedonian Albanians and other minorities should begin without delay in Macedonia's parliament."[31] Though Secretary of State Colin Powell, promised support for Macedonia, he, too, alluded to Macedonia's role in the conflict: "Start to look at the points of irritation in your society. There may be some constitutional changes you want to look at."[32] On June 27, 2001, President George W. Bush said the KLA's involvement

[28] Muhić, 78.
[29] T. G. Carpenter, "Kosovo and Macedonia: The West Enhances the Threat, "*Mediterranean Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (2002): 28.
[30] Ibid, 28.
[31] Ibid, 29.
[32] Ibid, 29.

in Macedonia "constitute[d] an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States," and accordingly the US and NATO began to increase pressure.[33]

Together they negotiated a cease-fire and drafted a peace plan granting concessions to the Albanians. Skopje was reluctant and the Macedonian public was even more upset, accusing the West of being biased towards the NLA. In early July they accosted the US ambassador and later that month they attacked the American embassy. On August 13, 2001 they finally signed the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which helped mitigate ethnic tensions through a series of key changes addressing the constitutional status of minorities, their equitable representation in the public sector, and issues pertaining to higher education.[34] Though the NLA was excluded from negotiations and the signing of the OFA, their leader, Ali Ahmeti, founded the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) along with several other members and entered a coalition with SDSM and the Liberal Democratic Party of Macedonia (LDP).[35][36]

The fighting had lasted nine months and resulted in the deaths of hundreds and the displacement of thousands. Some argue the violence was the result of the collusion of a weak state and unresolved grievances, specifically Albanian demands for constitutional reforms, minority rights, and equitable representation. The Kosovo War almost certainly exacerbated the problem, as the relationship between Kosovar refugees and Macedonian authorities further increased polarization between the two ethnic groups. Albanians showed strong solidarity for their Kosovar kin, and intensified political pressure towards Macedonians.[37]

[33] G. N. Bardos, "The Regional and International Implications of Kosovo Independence," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (2008): 59.
[34] Armend Reka, "The Ohrid Agreement: The Travails of Inter-ethnic Relations in Macedonia," Human Rights Review (2008): 68.
[35] Carpenter, 30-31.
[36] Muhić, 78.
[37] Pavlos Koktsidis, "How Conflict Spreads: Opportunity Structures and the Diffusion of Conflict in the Republic of Macedonia," *Civil Wars* 16, no. 2 (2014): 230-231.

These claims are supported by Horowitz, who predicted backward groups in backward regions will feel discriminated against and have no reason to stay in the state. It also gets to the heart of Fearon's commitment problem, in which leaders of minority groups are incentivized to act quickly while the new state is more vulnerable. Others, however, claim that although Macedonia was not an ideal liberal democracy, the state of affairs in 2001 did not justify an armed rebellion. Albanian parties had been included in all governing coalitions since Macedonia gained independence in 1991. Moreover, the current VMRO-DPA coalition had actually improved conditions for Albanians and eased interethnic tensions by releasing the two mayors who had been sentenced to 13 years in prison for raising the Albanian flag, opening a second channel of the national television for minorities, and building two new primary schools for Albanians in Tetovo to accommodate their rising population.[38] Public opinion polls from February 2001 support this claim, showing a high degree of satisfaction for interethnic relations among Albanians.[39] Perhaps Jenne is best equipped to explain this disconnect, noting that sometimes if minority members are confident of external support, in this case from the KLA, they will radicalize even despite the majority's attempts to appease them.

2.2 Domestic Interethnic Relations: Post-OFA (2001 - 2008)

". . . Based on that research, when the conflict happened and in the years after, [ethnic tensions] was in the top three concerns identified. But since then it's dropping, and recently it's not even in the top ten." Aleksandar Kržalovski

The Ohrid Framework Agreement accommodated Albanians while maintaining a unitary state, as reflected in the amended preamble of the constitution, which now declared it a "civic society of all its ethnic groups."[40] The OFA instituted a double majority voting in

38 Aleksandar Kržalovski, interviewed by Claire Manning, April 18, 2017.
39 Zhidas Daskalovski, "The Right to Rebel: The National Liberation Army and the "Macedonian Crisis" of 2001," *Romanian Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 2 (2003): 66.
40 Carpenter, 30-31.

parliament, increased representation in public administration and the police force, extended the usage of the Albanian language and higher education, and implemented a number of confidence building measures.[41]

The introduction of power-sharing in state institutions increased the overall level of trust in Macedonian institutions among Albanians. However, a slight decrease in levels of institutional trust emerged in 2008, which could be attributed to the increasingly nationalistic discourse of VMRO-DPMNE.[42] A number of Albanians explicitly expressed concerns about Gruevski, who campaigned against OFA laws. In accordance with EU political criteria, a bill on the police was used to test this, but they lacked the Badinter majority and the bill was passed without DUI boycotting parliament and cutting off their links to municipalities as they had intended.[43]

Local integration was also emphasized, especially in municipal government structures. The OFA obliged them to diversify and the IMF pressured them to decrease the overall number of civil servants, resulting in a more equitable representation for minority groups in public administration. More than 90% of Albanians supported these measures, though they were considerably less popular among Macedonians, decreasing from 61% in 2004 to 38.2% in 2005.[44]

A number of police reforms were also carried out, aiming to make it more open, transparent and accountable to all, so as to ease interethnic tensions. New municipal councils were given the right to select a local head of police from a list of three or more candidates proposed by the Ministry of Interior, at least one of whom had to be from the majority ethnic community. In addition, the police was decentralized to eight regional centers, each of which

[41] Daskalovski (2008), 276.
[42] Marija Aleksovska, "Trust in Changing Institutions: Effects of the Ohrid Framework Agreement on the Institutional Trust in Macedonia," (M.P.S. diss., Central European University, Budapest, 2014), 66.
[43] Reka, 68.
[44] Joseph Marko, "The Referendum on Decentralization in Macedonia in 2004: A Litmus Test for Macedonia's Interethnic Relations," *Minority Issues* (2005): 719.

have a public relations section and Citizens' Advisory Groups, which hold regular meetings on the local level with police and official representatives. By 2005, 32 community-policing officers were already appointed in accordance with the EU Proxima mission.[45]

In accordance with the OFA, Albanian was introduced as a second language in administrations and schools where ethnic Albanians comprised at least 20% of the population. Additional quotas and fair access mechanisms were established to accommodate minority students, and an Albanian language university was integrated into the state university system.[46] Though about half of the population accepted these changes, when polled only 24.3% of Macedonians and 77.4% of Albanians said they would be willing to learn the other's language. That being said, interethnic relations among friends and business associates remained relaxed, as 2/3 of both communities said they would be willing to have a friend or do business with someone from other community. However, both communities expressed decreasing readiness to intermarry. Finally, though the likelihood of Albanians voting for a candidate from the other community increased from 9% in 2004 to 28.5% in 2005, it decreased for Macedonians.[47]

One of the other major changes following the OFA was the implementation of legislation governing minority groups' use of national flags and symbols, as the extensive usage of the Albanian flag signified to Macedonians disrespect to the country and a desire to reunite with Albania. In response, DUI officials publically stated that the Macedonian flag is their flag, and according to International Crisis Group reports the situation relaxed considerably. Moreover, since key party leaders officially identified themselves as Macedonians as well as ethnic Albanians, the percentage of Macedonian Albanians who

[45] Marko, 718.
[46] Reka, 55.
[47] Marko, 719.

consider themselves not only ethnic Albanians, but citizens of Macedonia rose from 51.9% in January to 64.3% in June 2005.[48]

Unfortunately, however, in the decade that followed the signing of the OFA, not all of the components were implemented and a number of issues persisted, including a weak economy, poor political leadership, lack of trust between the two major communities, and concern over Kosovo. In 2008, Reka identified several challenges, including the persistence of ethnic distance despite lower interethnic tension, the resentment resulting from a lack of resources, and the risk of ethnic outbidding disrupting the process of trust building as opportunistic politicians attempt to exploit dissatisfaction for electoral gain.[49] Similarly, Kitanovski cites several obstacles to Macedonia's development of a strong civil society, including its lack of popular support, transparent institutions, and responsible elites.[50] According to Koinova, elites introduce reforms when incentivized, but implement laws and policies pursuing nationalist goals when not. A good example demonstrating both sides of this conundrum, is the 2004 referendum. Upon receiving recognition from the US under Macedonia's constitutional name, President Crvenkovski was incentivized to pressure Macedonians not to participate, whereas the opposition party, VMRO-DPMNE, used it as an excuse to try reversing the OFA reforms and foster revisionism, which would drive the two communities further apart.[51]

In 2006, Crvenkovski's coalition was replaced by VMRO-DPMNE and DPA. Between 2006 and 2007 DUI occasionally boycotted parliament, with Ali Ahmeti even threatening conflict if Prime Minister Gruevski didn't accept their demands.[52] This sense of growing mistrust was further demonstrated by incidents related to the law on the use of

[48] Marko, 718.
[49] Reka, 68.
[50] Aleksandar Kitanovski, "Poverty, Organized Crime, Violation of Human Rights as Obstacles for Building Up a Strong Civil Society in Macedonia," *JIMS* 10: 67.
[51] Maria Koinova, "Challenging Assumptions of the Enlargement Literature: The Impact of the EU on Human and Minority Rights in Macedonia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 5 (2011): 827-828.
[52] Bardos, 59.

minority flags. In October 2007, only one month before Albanian Flag Day, the Constitutional Court of Macedonia annulled the right to display Albanian flags on municipal buildings, local courts, and state institutions, even where Albanians were the majority. In response, two Albanian members of the court resigned, including its president. VMRO-DPMNE and DPA accused the opposition of arranging the situation to destablize the country. DPA also suggested the court had made "provisional interpretations," while DUI announced they simply would not respect the court's rulings.[53]

Eventually, these tensions turned to violence. On October 24, 2007, a Macedonian policeman was killed and two others injured. On January 3, 2008, a car carrying members of the elite Macedonian police unit was attacked, leaving one dead and two injured. On January 12, 2008, 4 policemen were injured. To make matters worse, in April 2008, at NATO's Bucharest Summit, Albania and Croatia were invited to join, while Macedonia was not, which even dismayed Albanian president Sali Berisha.[54] Despite the progress Macedonia had made in terms of minority rights policies and towards accession into international organizations, the country's future was being challenged by both their internal minority and their nearest neighbor.

2.3 Regional Relations: Serbia (1991 - 2008)

The relationship between Macedonia and Serbia evolved over time, affected by political, economic, and religious issues. Under Yugoslavia, the two federal republics enjoyed close relations, such that only Montenegro seemed closer to Serbia. On November 23, 1943, the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia recognized Macedonia as a legally equal nation of Yugoslavia. They also recognized Macedonian as separate and legally equal to other Yugoslav languages, which was key to the formation of

[53] Muhić, 85.
[54] Bardos, 59-65.

their national identity. Finally, they helped develop the framework for Macedonia's political, economical, cultural, and educational development free of outside or Serbian influence.[55]

Despite these overall close relations, Macedonia differed from the other republics in that it only had a small ethnic Serbian population of approximately 2% at the beginning of the 1990s, primarily centered around Kumanovo. Generally speaking, the Serbian minority could play neither a major role in the development or destablization of the country. However, on August 2, 1990 at a celebration of the Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) at the Monastery of Venerable Prohor of Pčinja in Serbia, a group of Macedonians were attacked and radical nationalist Serbs removed slabs commemorating the event from the walls of the monastery. Later, in 1991 Belgrade accused Macedonia and the leading party VMRO-DPMNE of breaking up Yugoslavia.[56]

The breakup of Yugoslavia severed legal, political, and economic ties between Macedonia and Serbia. Their relationship underwent a series of changes from one end of the spectrum to the other, but generally remained more cooperative than the other republics, as it was the only one to peacefully gain independence. Macedonia held a referendum on September 8, 1991, followed by an announcement and acceptance of a new constitution in Parliament on November 11, 1991. Though Macedonia was not officially considered an enemy, some Serbian radicals called for the "dealing with" of Macedonia. Deputies were dismissed and on February 14, 1992, the Macedonian government took control of military objects in the area, forcing Yugoslav forces to leave by the end of the month. Thousands of soldiers left, along with 90% of Yugoslav armament and technical equipment, rendering the new country virtually defenseless.[57]

[55] Wojciech Szczepański, "Serbia – an Opponent or an Ally of Independent Macedonia (1991-2013)?" *Politeja - Pismo Wydzialu Studiow Miedzynarodowych i Politycznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego* 30, 350-351.
[56] Ibid, 353.
[57] Ibid, 347-352.

One of the first issues that had to be resolved was reaccepting the border that had been established forty years earlier. In January 1991, Robert Badinter recommended the Yugoslav borders remain as the only ones meeting international requirements, which set the precedent for the international confirmation of borders for Macedonia. After 1991, there was minimal tension between the two, with the exception of a few minor disturbances caused by the radical wing of the Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia (DPMS). Relations improved considerably beginning in 1995, with President Gligorov's visit to Belgrade, which resulted in the establishment of official diplomatic relations between the two countries on April 8, 1996. Later, President Crvenkosvski, who also visited Belgrade, told *Danas* that the relationship was reaching new levels and was a good example for the rest of the region. They also appointed a common commission for establishing a border in the agreement regulating mutual relations, however this was halted following the Kosovo crisis.[58]

Relations continued peacefully until 1998 when conflict emerged in Kosovo. Macedonia sided with the West, presumably in the hopes of joining NATO, and supported their military actions towards Serbia. During this time, pro-Serbian and anti-NATO sentiment was heightened among Macedonians, resulting in attacks on servicemen, vehicles, and embassies. This was one of the first instances in which the Macedonian government complied with the international community despite domestic opposition, demonstrating their commitment. Relations also grew tense due to Milosević's authoritative government, which prevented the discussion of controversial issues. When he was finally overthrown on October 5, 2000, cooperation continued and even quickened. An agreement was signed on February 23, 2001 in Skopje, accepting borders existing within Yugoslavia. Though this agreement was unsatisfactory for Albanians in both Macedonia and Kosovo, who were excluded from negotiations, it actually improved relations between Macedonia and Serbia. They began

[58] Szczepanski, 351-355.

cooperating even more in the security sector, as evidenced by their signing a cooperation protocol from the Ministry of Defense in both countries later that year. This protocol entailed the agreement of issues pertaining to the protection of their shared border, such as terrorism and organized crime. The ministers of defense were satisfied to have a common stance on the crisis in Macedonia and southern Serbia, because the free movement between troops from Kosovo and Serbia and Macedonia facilitated the conflict.[59]

Another issue that affected relations between Macedonia and Serbia was the conflict between their national churches, as the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MPC) had unilaterally declared its independence from the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC) in 1967. In 2000, the countries began negotiating which led to the Agreement from Nis of 2002, declaring that Macedonia should have obtained autonomy from the Serbian Orthodox Church. Due to public opinion, Macedonia cancelled this agreement, though some Macedonian clergymen rebelled and established the Synod of Ohrid Archdiocese, a parallel clergy infrastructure supported by the SPC. Macedonian authorities arrested Jovan Vraniškovski, the ringleader, which in turn upset Serbian authorities. The conflict died down during the anniversary of ASNOM, when Serbs allowed Macedonians to visit their monastery. During this time the Prime Minister of Serbia, Vojislav Koštunica, and the President of Macedonia, Branko Crvenkovski, agreed to develop mutual relations to solve the dispute between the two churches. Unfortunately, this was negated by the conviction of Vraniškovski in Bitola two weeks later. The SPC continued financing the organization, and the Macedonian authorities kept attacking it and denying its registration as a religious entity. Relations began to improve in 2008 when the Macedonian Orthodox Church sent a letter to the SPC asking to resume

[59] Zoran Vučković, "An Outline of Serbian-Macedonian Relations in the First Decade of the 21st Century," *Politeja - Pismo Wydzialu Studiow Miedzynarodowych i Politycznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego* 30, 365.

negotiations, which the SPC agreed to, even without the involvement of Vraniškovski. No real progress was made, however, due to the failing health of the SPC's patriarch.[60]

2.4 Regional Relations: Kosovo (1991 - 2008)

" We are one community. Kosovars are Albanians, also we are Albanians. I have a lot of relatives in Kosovo. We have the same line." Baki Halimi

Not only does Macedonia share a border with both Albania and Kosovo, but outside of the two countries Macedonia has the largest ethnic Albanian population, at approximately 23%. Both Macedonia and Kosovo were a part of Yugoslavia; Macedonia as an independent republic, and Kosovo as an autonomous zone. When Yugoslavia broke up, Macedonia gained its independence, while Kosovo remained, but actually *lost* its autonomous status. The following decade proved to be quite turbulent for both, with the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) fighting Serbian troops, NATO bombings, the refugee crisis, and concluding with the Kumanovo Agreement and the Resolution of the Security Council about Kosovo. During this time, Serbia was still effectively governing Kosovo, but the Kosovars had established their own parallel institutions.[61]

Between February and March of 1999, 16,000 NATO troops were deployed to Macedonia. This number increased to 30,000 by the time they entered Kosovo in June. They took over barracks and military facilities, in addition to the airstrip and airport. Most were stationed by the borders with Kosovo and Serbia, where the Albanians welcomed them, and the Serbs were hostile. 20,000 villagers armed and organized themselves into self-defense units, which stoned and attacked NATO soldiers patrolling the borders, and even kidnapped three US servicemen. On March 25, 1999 the Serb minority organized a rally of 5,000 Macedonian youths in Skopje, which resulted in the destruction of US and OSCE vehicles.

[60] Vučković, 367-368.
[61] Dejan Marolov and Elena Ivanova, "The Relations between Macedonia and Kosovo." *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research* 12, no. 1 (2013): 260.

There were also attacks on the German, British, and French embassies, as well as the attempted arson of the American embassy.

Prime Minister Georgievski called anti-NATO sentiment the 2nd biggest threat to stability after the refugee crisis. He also accused the Serbian lobby, naming three specific TV channels, of instigating it. The MPC expressed regret they could not intervene on behalf of their Serbian "brothers," who ironically didn't even recognize them. The Macedonian émigré organizations sided with Milosević and criticized the Macedonian government for siding with NATO. The ethnic Macedonian majority was particularly upset by the economic impact it had on the country due to the NATO air strikes, the loss of trade with Yugoslavia, which made up 16% of Macedonian trade, and the disrupted transit of exports to EU countries. With the road through Serbia blocked, they were forced to find longer and more expensive routes. Moreover, it further divided the population, since the Albanians' salvation was the Serbs' doomsday.[62] From a geopolitical perspective, however, Macedonia's role in supporting NATO operations in Kosovo was one of the milestones in Macedonia-NATO relations, and soon after the country joined NATO's Membership Action Plan.

As a result of the war in Kosovo, Macedonia was flooded with refugees. They successfully dealt with 350,000, despite being prepared for only about 20,000[63]. Macedonia feared the refugees would remain, and the West viewed their reception as hostile and xenophobic. As Aleksandar Kržalovski of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation said, "[People] were saying, 'We have to stop these Albanians coming from Kosovo into Macedonia. They will flood us, they will change our country!'" Approximately 20,000 refugees arrived from border towns before the bombing, joined by 70,000 legal (and possibly as many as 50,000 illegal) refugees in the two weeks following, with another 120,000 waiting to enter. Macedonia tried to close the border several times and especially

[62] Drezov, 62-63.
[63] Marolov, 262.

targeted refugees without identity documents, who were more likely to stay, since Serbia would not take them back. When they could not close the border, they processed refugees slowly. DPA, who was involved in the coalition government at the time, criticized their counterparts and threatened to withdraw from the government if the refugees were not allowed in promptly.[64]

On the other hand, the opposition party, SDSM, said they were being too lax and altering the ethnic makeup of Macedonia. SDSM initially planned a "refugee corridor" to Albania, but VMRO ditched the idea when elected in November 1998. In April 1999 Albania agreed to accept 100,000 refugees, which the UNHCR approved under the circumstances that the transport of refugees was voluntary. The refugees, however, were reluctant to go for fear they would be inducted into the KLA or deemed ineligible to resettle in the West. As a result, Macedonia forcibly bussed 12,000 refugees into southern Albania until the UNHCR finally found out and intervened.[65]

In May 1999, there were 250,000 refugees in Macedonia, which made up 14% of population. This number grew to 276,360 refugees in June, with 150,715 having official status, 99,645 living in camps, and 82,607 being transferred by air to other countries. All refugees settled in predominantly Albanian areas, which increased their predominance in western Macedonia. About half of them were taken in by Albanian families, who were assisted by Islamic charities. The government was especially worried about these refugees since they were more difficult to locate and send back to Kosovo. They were also concerned about the KLA, who were prohibited from recruiting in Macedonia. The police found numerous stocks of smuggled weapons and were anxious about the arming of Albanians

[64] Drezov, 64-65.
[65] Ibid, 64-65.

during a time of ethnic tension. Ultimately, they were relieved to see the Serbs withdraw and the refugees return home, but the polarization internally had already occurred.[66]

In 2001, the ministers of defense from Macedonia and Serbia signed a cooperation protocol regarding Kosovo's border, without their input. In response, Kosovo passed a resolution in 2002 in which they defined the borders themselves, which was cancelled by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and the process of demarcation according to Macedonia and Serbia continued. However, this did not solve the Kosovar part of the border, since Belgrade had no authority over this area, and Macedonia began to negotiate directly with Kosovo, beginning in 2006, and even more intensely as plans for independence solidified in 2008.[67]

[66] Drezov, 64-65.
[67] Vučković, 366.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Introduction: Kosovo Declares Independence

Under Yugoslavia, Kosovo enjoyed a great deal of autonomy. The constitutions of 1963 and 1974 granted them a status nearly equal to the republics in terms of rights, including having their own Constitution and the right to veto. However, this autonomy was abolished when Milošević came to power in 1989. Tensions between Kosovars and federal authorities intensified following the breakup of Yugoslavia, which lead to the creation of the KLA. In September 1991, Kosovo's parliament decided to organize a referendum on independence, which took place later that month. On May 24, 1992, they held presidential elections, which resulted in the establishment of Kosovo's shadow president and parliament.[68] The international community became increasingly concerned about Kosovo beginning in 1997, and by 1998 the situation grew volatile. Finally, the UN Security Council demanded negotiations to settle the dispute, which was upsetting peace and security in the region. When Yugoslavia didn't agree to peace terms in the Rambouillet Agreement, NATO intervened and launched a military campaign, placing Kosovo under UN administration.[69]

Between 1998 and 2008, the Serbian government was effectively replaced by UNMIK who managed Kosovo as a protectorate, leaving Kosovo's official status unclear. Serbia had UN Security Council resolution 1244 claiming Kosovo was a part of Serbia, but Kosovo already had a sort of de facto independence and neither wanted to compromise. The international community intervened, saying "standards before status," which shifted the focus onto building institutions and making reforms. A number of solutions resolving Kosovo's status were proposed, including Former Finnish President Marti Ahtisari's, which called for

[68] Muhić, 82.
[69] Gary Wilson, "Self-Determination, Recognition and the Problem of Kosovo," *Netherlands International Law Review* 56, no. 03 (2009): 458.

the "supervised independence" of Kosovo, but neither side could agree. Finally, on February 17, 2008 Kosovo unilaterally declared independence and adopted a constitution on June 15, 2008.[70]

3.2 International Response to Kosovo Independence

" [The] US. . . and well, the others, Germans, French, they were all, so to say, fighting for Kosovo." Fitim Gllareva

When NATO intervened in Kosovo in 1999 they were responding to human rights violations in an attempt to stop ethnic cleansing and prevent war, not trying to resolve the underlying issues. Though they acted on behalf of the Kosovars, they opposed their unilateral declaration of independence. However, the Kosovars took their involvement as encouragement to advance their cause, and eventually the US and Western powers stopped opposing their independence on the grounds that it was a sui generis case.[71] As the former Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO, General Wesley Clark, said, "Ultimately, the international community must recognize that the nub of the problem is the continuing delay in moving the province toward democratic self-rule and the resolution of its final status. Troubles across the region are unlikely to ebb until Kosovars are fully engaged in building their own institutions."[72]

In October 2005, following seven years of changing goals regarding the safety of minorities, unemployment, organized crime and corruption, changing foreign policy, and a growing desire for independence, the head of UNMIK, Kai Eide, recommended negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina about Kosovo's status. In February 2006, they began, led by Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. After a year of unsuccessful negotiations, Ahtisaari reported that the only way to establish peace and stability was through Kosovo's independence

[70] Marolov, 260.
[71] Mikulas Fabry, "The contemporary practice of state recognition: Kosovo, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and their aftermath," *Nationalities Papers* 40, no. 5 (2012): 666.
[72] Carpenter, 27.

enforced by the international community, and began drafting a settlement proposal.[73] It was rewritten and presented four times to address Russian concerns of state sovereignty, before finally being discarded on July 20, 2007, having never received Russian support. In early August 2007, a "Troika" of international negotiators from the EU, US, and Russia, led a new round of negotiations. Russia supported Serbia, who agreed to all but independence, while the Kosovars, supported by the US, demanded exactly that; little progress was made, and the Kosovar demand for independence only intensified.[74]

High-ranking US officials publically promised Kosovo's independence, which was finally declared on February 17, 2008. On February 18, 2008, the UN Secretary General reported that the UNMIK would continue using Resolution 1244 as the legal framework for its mandate in Kosovo to ensure the stability and security of the Kosovar people.[75] That same day, Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica announced, "The return of Kosovo and Metohija into the constitutional order of the country . . . will eternally define the most important task and the main goal of future state policy."[76]

On May 15, 2008 the foreign ministers of Russia, India, and China made a joint statement at a Conference in Ekatinburg, declaring, "We believe it must be solved solely on the basis of international law . . . In our statement we recorded our fundamental position that the unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo contradicts Resolution 1244. Russia, India and China encourage Belgrade and Pristina to resume talks within the framework of international law and hope they reach an agreement on all problems of that territory." They also expressed concern that it would set a "dangerous precedent."[77] Meanwhile, the US and

[73] Fabry, 666.
[74] Muhić, 80.
[75] Jessica Almqvist, "The Politics of Recognition, Kosovo and International Law," *Royal Institute Elcano* (March 16, 2009): 14, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/Elcano_in/Zonas_in/DT14-2009.
[76] Bardos, 57.
[77] Almqvist, 11.

Western powers emphasized Ahtisaari's report and Kosovo's unique situation, disregarding concerns about challenging international law or setting a dangerous precedent.[78]

During this time, it became increasingly difficult for the UNMIK to follow its mandate since it conflicted with the Kosovar constitution. On June 12, 2008 the UN Secretary General confirmed their neutral approach to independence, but acknowledged that the UNMIK must adapt to the differing approaches taken by authorities in Belgrade and Pristina since their declaration of independence.[79] To complicate matters further, on June 28, 2008 Serb municipalities in Kosovo, who rejected the declaration, formed the Assembly of the Union of Municipalities of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija.[80]

On October 8, 2008, Serbia drafted a resolution resulting in the UN General Assembly requesting the International Court of Justice to give its opinion on the following question: "Is the unilateral declaration of independence by Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo in accordance with international law?" The request was passed with 77 in favor, 7 against, and 74 abstentions, since many preferred to abstain rather than support it. In addition, 28 UN members were absent. This result raised concern for a number of reasons. First, there was concern about the fact that the request did not receive broader support. Second, there was concern for the court since it would review something so political. Finally, there was concern for the political and economic wellbeing of the region as a whole. In accordance with the vote, the UN Secretariat prepared a dossier of relevant documents and submitted it to the Court, which was expected to reach a decision in approximately one year, though it would most likely be split since the members of UN General Assembly, Security Council, and EU were so divided.[81]

[78] Fabry, 666-667.
[79] Almqvist, 15.
[80] Bardos, 55.
[81] Almqvist, 13-14.

Meanwhile, the US and the EU continued promoting Kosovo's independence. On February 5, 2009, the EU issued the common statement, "encourag[ing] those EU member states which have not already done so to recognize the independence of Kosovo." They argued the settlement of Kosovo's status would be a step towards EU integration for both involved countries.[82] In many ways, the conditional recognition of Kosovo was an exercise of soft power, since recognition is based on the adoption of political ideals, outlined in the Lisbon Treaty, rather than legal practice. However, the EU's conditional recognition was not binding, serving only as a recommendation to member states.[83]

Most states who followed their lead and recognized Kosovo included an explanation for their decision, generally emphasizing political considerations. One of the most commonly expressed concerns was for peace and security in the Balkans, which they believe an independent Kosovo would contribute to by putting an end to Yugoslavia's disintegration. As Ambassador Frank Wisner said, "You have a new state, new borders, and though there will be considerable commotion surrounding the event, you will create a situation in which the region can then move forward. The last piece of the Yugoslav puzzle will be in place. It will be possible for the region to get on with its life, develop its transportation links, move in more common step towards the EU, and even Western security institutions, notably NATO."[84]

The few states that mentioned international law focused on the principle of self-determination, rather than state sovereignty. Some recognizing states also called Kosovo a sui generis case, drawing on comments made by then US Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, who said, "The unusual combination of factors found in the Kosovo situation - including the context of Yugoslavia's breakup, the history of ethnic cleansing and crimes against civilians

[82] Signe Olsen, "State Recognition – a Practice between International Law and Politics," *Sommereksamen* (2009): 7-8.
[83] Ibid, 7-10.
[84] Bardos, 56.

in Kosovo, and the extended period of UN administration - are not found elsewhere and therefore make Kosovo a special case." This explanation was also used to dispel the idea of Kosovo being seen as "a precedent for any other situation in the world today."[85] The EU Council reached the same conclusion, but since the EU foreign ministers could not reach a consensus, they left the decision up to the member states, most of whom concurred.

Most states opposed to recognition followed Russia's lead, basing their decision on international law. They contested Kosovo's independence on the grounds that it was illegal, violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Serbia. The fear of further fragmentation was especially prominent among states with similar situations within their own or neighboring countries. Similarly, some felt it would threaten peace and security in the region and beyond. Others stated the necessity of adhering to the decisions of the UN Security Council, and reaffirmed Resolution 1244. Some called for further negotiating and expressed concern for the weakening of international organizations. Finally, a few even called Kosovo's independence an ideological move by the US and EU, identifying objection as a sign of solidarity with Serbia.[86] Russian President Dmitry Medvedev reiterated this idea, stating, "Kosovo for the EU is almost what Iraq is for the US."[87]

3.3 Macedonian Response to Kosovo Independence

" I have a lot of Macedonian friends, but they don't speak bad of Kosovo. I don't hear anyone speak against it. In the social media you will see a lot of it. There was a time when social media had a lot of it, Albanians writing badly about Macedonians, Macedonians writing badly about Kosovo, but you know how it is. You can write whatever you want." Islam Halimi

Kosovo was a divisive and destablizing issue for Macedonia, as what it would take to satisfy one ethnic community is precisely what would upset the other. Some feared the large Albanian minority would take action, resulting in military conflict or unrest, while others

[85] Almqvist, 8-9.
[86] Ibid, 8-10.
[87] Bardos, 54-55.

argued the conditions and factors that led to 2001 were no longer prevalent, as Macedonia was a more mature democracy and an EU candidate with international support. One of the major factors that contributed to Macedonia's recognition of Kosovo was the attention it received from a number of international actors; Macedonia's actions would have had considerable implications moving forward in pursuit of their own recognition. Indeed, many acknowledged that the future political situation in the region was not solely determined by local political agendas, but the politics of the international community. As one scholar hypothesized, "It may be expected that the final solution of the Kosovo question would almost certainly express the fundamental strategic interests of the International Community." She further postulated that Macedonia was unlikely to oppose recognition even without Serbia's consent, due to its desire to join EU and NATO.[88]

Another major consideration for Macedonia was the impact recognition would have on bilateral relations with Serbia, including the possibility of a visa regime, an increase on export and import taxes, and increased political distance and mistrust.[89] Though Macedonia depended on Serbia, both for trade and access to their border for transport, the finance minister and business executives were not concerned. Many focused on the fact that it could actually improve trade with Kosovo. Ideally, Serbia would recognize Kosovo as well, which would not only encourage economic activity and exchange, but also stablize the region, garner more foreign investment, and improve chances of European integration.[90]

When Kosovo declared independence, Macedonia did not immediately recognize them, stating only, "We will act according to our national interest." Negotiations over the border dispute continued, and in April they formed a Macedonian-Kosovar commission, despite protests in Belgrade. On May 16, 2008, the commission declared its intention to begin demarcation work, which commenced four days later. According to a poll conducted

[88] Muhić, 80-83.
[89] Ibid, 83.
[90] Daskalovski (2008), 278.

by the Centre for Research and Policy Making, even this act divided the country. When asked to choose what should be done first, the recognition of Kosovo or the demarcation of their mutual border, 85% of Albanians chose recognition while 74% of Macedonians chose the border. When asked more generally about their stance on recognition, 93% of Albanians answered positively, while only 20% of Macedonians did. Moreover, 47% of Macedonians were opposed.[91]

During this time, Macedonia received pressure from Albanian political groups, the EU, and the USA to recognize Kosovo and establish diplomatic relations. The previous year, on October 19, DPA organized a meeting in Tetovo featuring the slogan "Independent Kosovo and Macedonia in NATO." They took a proactive stance on Kosovo's independence by tying it to Macedonia's NATO aspirations, and thus aligning themselves with the ruling Macedonian party's agenda. However, Macedonians were reserved about the event, suggesting the widening mistrust between the two, as well as a lack of political coordination. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Abdulakim Ademi of DUI took a more moderate approach, stating, "We do not insist on a date for the recognition, we prefer to have the political climate favorable to recognition."[92]

Macedonia's international partners, including British Ambassador Andrew Key and unofficial reports from Washington, encouraged them to recognize Kosovo. In July 2008, Macedonia proposed recognition of Kosovo contingent upon their recognition of Macedonia's constitutional name, which Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu declined. There were also rumors circulating about the possibility of synchronizing recognition with the

91 "Macedonia Divided over Kosovo Recognition," *Balkan Insight* (May 6, 2008), http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-divided-over-kosovo-recognition/ 1615/23.
92 Muhić, 85.

resolution of the name dispute with Greece, such that Macedonia would enter NATO, making it easier to justify their decision.[93]

In late September, when Presidents Crvenkovski and Tadić met at a UN assembly in NY, the latter discouraged recognition, saying there would be strong measures, since "that would be interference with our internal affairs and would definitely worsen our relations." Serbian Ambassador Zoran Popovic reiterated these sentiments, saying, "We expect Macedonia to continue with, at least, a policy of neutrality. If Macedonia recognizes Kosovo's independence, the consequences for our relations will be very serious."[94]

In the months before recognition Macedonia could not maintain a constant stance on Kosovo, but the influence of the international community was clear. Headlines suggested a number of possibilities, such as Macedonia accepting "any solution between Serbia and Kosovo," the "solution of the international community and . . . the UN," or that they "will follow the positions of NATO and EU about Kosovo." The viewpoints of politicians also varied across ethnicity. Ethnic Albanians were clearly in favor, while ethnic Serbs were clearly opposed; even Macedonians were divided. President Kiro Gligorov stated, "In my opinion, Macedonia would be best to have only four neighbors - Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, and SR Yugoslavia." Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ljupco Georgievski, received Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, visited Pristina, and planned to open a Macedonian mission in Kosovo. His replacement, Prime Minister Bučkovski, also took a protective policy towards Kosovo, which he believed would bring internal stability and promote economic interests.[95]

In October 2008, the Albanian community initiated a resolution recommending the recognition of Kosovo, which parliament passed. The next day, October 9, 2008, the Macedonian government finally recognized Kosovo and established diplomatic relations. A

[93] Risto Karajkov, "(When) Will Macedonia Recognize Kosovo?" *Osservatorio Balcani e Caucasa Transeuropa* (October 03, 2008), https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Macedonia/When-Will-MacedoniaRecognize-Kosovo-43368.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Marolov, 260-261.

statement issued in Skopje declared, "The decision to recognize Kosovo . . . is the result of thorough political assessment."[96] On October 11, Gruevski stated, "I understand this could cause negative emotions in some citizens." Indeed, many were concerned that by accepting the unilateral independence of Kosovo, they were potentially enabling the same thing to happen in the western part of Macedonia, where the majority of Albanians lived.

However, as one Macedonian Albanian said, espousing the rhetoric of the Western countries, "An independent Kosovo is the only way to secure stability and peace in the region. If Kosovo is the price, then we need to pay it." Similarly, Foreign Affairs Minister Milan Rocen of Montenegro, who recognized Kosovo on the same day, said, "Serbia will understand. This is not pointed against them. It will make our integration to the EU and NATO faster. Otherwise, it could cause us some problems."[97] Apart from the mixed reaction domestically, the recognition resulted in protests in Belgrade, as well as the expulsion of the Macedonian ambassador to Serbia. He returned in June of the following year, when relations once again stablized, as evidenced by a meeting of the presidents from Central Europe at Novi Sad. Meanwhile, the demarcation of the Macedonian-Kosovar border was finalized on October 24, 2008.[98] Finally, in 2009, Macedonian opened an embassy in Pristina and Kosovo announced plans to open one in Skopje.

Many expected the recognition, since an Albanian party was part of the coalition government and thus lobbied for Kosovo. Some expected it sooner, after the US recognized Kosovo, while others believed they were only waiting for the final demarcation of the border, before they recognized Kosovo along with Montenegro. Others took issues with the specific date of recognition, since it was only a day after Serbia asked the International Court of

[96] "Montenegro, Macedonia Recognize Kosovo," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty* (October 10), 2008.http://www.rferl.org/a/Montenegro_Macedonia_Recognize_Kosovo/1328731.html.
[97] "Riots, Reactions in Montenegro and Macedonia after Recognising Kosovo," *Cafebabel* (October 16, 2008), http://www.cafebabel.co.uk/culture/article/riots-reactions-in-montenegro-and-macedonia-after-recognising-kosovo.html.
[98] Vučković, 366-367.

Justice its opinion on the legality of Kosovo's independence and Macedonia made its decision without considering the outcome.

3.4 Analysis of Macedonia's Recognition of Kosovo

In order to explain Macedonia's decision to recognize Kosovo, one must consider not only the logic of other states, but also the previously mentioned theories of ethnic politics and conditionality. Ultimately, Macedonia's decision appeased both their ethnic minority and the international community, but which played a greater role in the decision? Perhaps the best place to begin this analysis is with the statement of recognition itself. On October 9, 2008, Macedonia and Montenegro issued a joint statement recognizing Kosovo. These are the only two countries that have significant Slavic and Albanian populations, while bordering both Serbia and Kosovo, making their decisions especially difficult.

Macedonia's statement of recognition contained many of the same sentiments as those states that supported and opposed Kosovo's independence. Like both sides, Macedonia emphasized the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the region, adding "with clear European and Euro-Atlantic perspective," which became a recurring theme. Though they did not specifically address Resolution 1244, they praised the UN Special Envoy for the Kosovo Settlement Status and its role in finding a solution and Kosovo's commitment to implementing this plan. Despite having supported negotiations between the two countries, Macedonia acknowledged their failure to have resolved the issue of Kosovo's status. That being said, they also reiterated their commitment to continuing good neighborly relations with Serbia, by maintaining "traditional ties," a nod to their shared past, and assisting them with European integration, a promise for the future. Finally, though Macedonia was one of the countries that could potentially fall victim to the precedent set by Kosovo, there was no

mention it; on the contrary, the document emphasizes their support of multiethnic societies and the protection of cultural, religious, and linguistic rights of ethnic communities.[99]

In response to Macedonia and Montenegro's joint statement of recognition, the Russian ambassador to Serbia, claimed, "They are being blackmailed by certain states which threaten to make problems for their European integration."[100] Though the European focus is instantly apparent, the language used does little to indicate that it was anything other than sincere. The first sentence alone identifies Macedonia as an EU candidate country and Montenegro as a potential one, in addition to mentioning both the EU General Affairs and External Relation Council and the European Council. In addition to some of the EU virtues espoused above, they specifically claim to be striving for the "full implementation of the free flow of people, goods, capital and ideas," which is almost verbatim the EU's "four freedoms": goods, services, capital, and labor.[101] In addition, the text explicitly reaffirms the importance of European integration, specifically referencing the "Thessaloniki Agenda." On June 21, 2003, the European Council issued "The Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans: Moving Towards European Integration," in which they promised their support for the region, declaring "the future of the Balkans is within the European Union." Interestingly, this same text also affirms their "support [for] the full implementation of Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council on Kosovo and the 'standards before status' policy of UNMIK," though, as previously mentioned, they do not comment on this in their recognition.[102]

Speaking with Fitim Gllareva, the Secretary General of the Kosovo Foreign Ministry at the time of independence, shed some light on what was happening behind the scenes. He spoke of the importance of both the Albanian minority and the international community in

[99] "Macedonia Recognizes Kosovo," *Government Archives*, (October 9, 2008), http://arhiva.vlada.mk/?q=book/export/html/1252.
[100] Cole Casule, "Montenegro, Macedonia Recognize Kosovo," *Reuters*, October 9, 2008, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-kosovo-idUSTRE4988ND20081009.
[101] Ibid.
[102] "EU-Western Balkans Summit: Thessaloniki," *European Commission Press Release Database*, (June 21, 2003), http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-03-163_en.htm.

Macedonia's decision to recognize Kosovo, but for him the answer as to who exerted more influence was clear. "There is a very strong link between Kosovars and the Albanian community within Macedonia. And of course they had an impact in making that decision [to recognize Kosovo], but on the other hand, Macedonia was also supporting before the independence, so we were not expecting that they would not recognize Kosovo." In response to their eight month delay in recognition, he explained, "Recognition was an issue which was discussed at other levels which was kind of a plan, because you have one neighbor here which plays that card. And then you have their support of Russia on the other hand. This was a type of issue which had to be solved in a sort of dialogue. Just finding the right moment. . . so you do not make angry anyone around. Our intention was not to create any problems anymore because Kosovo has been a problem in news enough for negative things and we didn't need this now." When asked explicitly about which played a greater role in Macedonia's recognition, the Albanian or international community, he actually laughed, saying, "Well, you don't have to think much about this. As I said, recognition was an issue which was discussed very much and wasn't a strict plan, who does it when, but it was a kind of planning in order not to cause any troubles in that way. So, I suppose US was the one to have that impact, and well, the others, Germans, French, they were all, so to say, fighting for Kosovo."[103]

Most of the literature on ethnic politics borrows from Brubaker's triadic configuration of the majority, the minority, and that minority's homeland. The case of Macedonia and Kosovo is slightly different; in this case, it is not only Albania, the homeland itself that intervened on Kosovo's behalf, but rather another state, Macedonia, that shares their homeland. By supporting their Kosovar kin, the Albanians in Macedonia heightened ethnic tensions within their own country, yet still managed to achieve recognition, which begs the

[103] Fitim Gllareva, interviewed by Claire Manning, April 20, 2018.

question why. Looking at media from the region, the situation is portrayed as a polarizing issue that had the potential to split the country in two as in 2001. While this might lead one to conclude the Macedonia government was merely trying to placate their Albanian minority and prevent conflict, it is important to consider the situation as it was in 2008.

Horowitz's theory is somewhat problematic in the case of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, as there were other factors at play aside from the purely economic ones. While money can sometimes be converted into political power, in this case it took the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement for Albanians to gain proportional representation in the government. However, it does shed some light in why Albanians might have rebelled in 2001, namely, the discrimination they experienced as a backwards group in a backwards region left them with little lose and much to gain. Similarly, his predictions for advanced groups explains why they would have been less likely to rebel in 2008, since their status had improved considerably in the seven years following the OFA, and the benefits of secession or conflict would not outweigh the costs.

Brubaker's model accurately depicts the triangular relationship between Macedonia, their ethnic Albanian minority, and Albania. Macedonia is a clear case of a nationalizing nationalism, as evidenced by changes made to the constitution after independence and complaints about their neighbors. The ethnic Albanian minority is a prime example of minority nationalism, especially pre-OFA, but also currently, as they seek to expand their influence throughout the country. Finally, Albania exemplifies homeland nationalism, taking care of their ethnic kin in both Macedonia and Kosovo. However, Brubaker failed to address the trans-border nationalism that can occur between kin-states other than the homeland. The 2001 insurgency was indeed a case of minority nationalism, and 2008 was a modified form of trans-border nationalism. Though Macedonia is not the Kosovars' external homeland, they have a similar desire to defend their ethno-national kin, by promoting their welfare,

supporting them, asserting their rights, and protecting their interests, namely, independence. It would have been interesting, and relevant to the research at hand, for Brubaker to incorporate a similar sort of trans-border nationalism, one which is emanates from another country with shared lineage, rather than the homeland, as is the case of Macedonian intervention in Kosovo and vice versa.

Fearon's theory is particularly helpful when considering 2001. He predicted that if the minority group was geographically concentrated, as were the Albanians in Macedonia, and declared independence, it would force the majority to take action, even though they would rather wait, resulting in war. In addition, he identifies the importance of acting early when the newly nationalizing state is still vulnerable, since that increases the minority group's chance of success. His final point, about an external homeland committing to protecting the minority without supporting rebellion is tricky because although Albania does not directly intervene in domestic affairs, their implicit support of the Albanian community keeps tensions between the two communities high. Perhaps this approach is better suited to explain Macedonia's recognition of Kosovo. The Macedonian Albanians declared their support, but did not take immediate action. This is reflected in comments like the previously mentioned one from Deputy Prime Minister Ademi, who said, "We do not insist on a date for the recognition, we prefer to have the political climate favorable to recognition." The situation did not escalate and was eventually, favorably, resolved.

Though Van Houten's model is helpful when analyzing the 2001 insurgency, it is less so in the case of Kosovo's recognition, as the homeland, Albania, was not involved. However, Laitin's logic holds up in both the conflict of 2001 and Macedonia's recognition of Kosovo in 2008. In the former case both the homeland, Albania, and Kosovo, which shared that homeland, were eager to provide assistance, leading the Macedonian Albanians to launch an insurgency. However, the case of 2008 is closer to Laitin's ideal scenario. There was an

unspoken solidarity among Albanians in the region, but no explicit call to arms, such that the Macedonian government was perfectly poised to recognize Kosovo and placate their Albanian minority, a decision which perfectly coincided with already mounting pressure from the international community.

Jenne's theory of ethnic bargaining is relevant on a number of levels to ethnic politics in Macedonia. First, her adjustment to the credible commitment theory, which suggests that if minority members are confident of support from their external homeland, they will radicalize even in spite of the majority's attempts to appease them. This might explain why the NLA led the insurgency in 2001, even though improvements to their situation were already being implemented by the new coalition and public opinion polls portrayed general satisfaction among the Albanian community. It might also explain why the Albanian community did not radicalize in 2008, when Albania was not directly involved in Macedonia's decision.

Finally, Judith Kelley puts all of these pieces together, noting that the relationship among ethnic groups in a country contribute to ethnic policy, but cannot explain why outcomes often more closely resemble international norms than the preferences of domestic actors. Kelley specifically looks at the OSCE, CE, and EU, all of which were very active in Macedonia at the time. While Macedonia's decision to recognize Kosovo might have pleased their Albanian minority, the recognition letter more closely resembled the official EU stance than the will of the majority. She acknowledges this contradiction, noting that domestic opposition is particularly susceptible to membership conditionality, which was certainly a priority for Macedonia in 2008, perhaps more than ever, given that Greece blocked them from NATO only months before. Her theory is supported by other scholars, including Manners and Del Sarto, who research the way the EU uses transference in dealing with non-members in order to advance their own economic and security agendas.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to assess the extent to which Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority influences their regional relations with other countries that also have an ethnic Albanian population, namely Kosovo and Serbia. It contributes to the literature by investigating the way in which a country of shared ethnic heritage, aside from the homeland, can intervene on behalf of their kin. Using documents, archival records, and interviews collected from fieldwork in Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia, it finds that although the Macedonian government recognized Kosovo, the decision had less to do with the influence of the Albanian minority, than that of the international community. There are a number of opportunities for further research that would build upon the argument made in this thesis. It would be interesting to examine the role kinship ties have on domestic and regional affairs more generally, even without the involvement of the homeland, since that is the focus of most related literature. It would also be interesting to investigate the effectiveness of normative pressure and membership conditionality during this explicit lull in EU enlargement, since it is the first of its kind.

In 2008 the Macedonian government would have done whatever it took to continue their European integration, especially with the newfound threat of Greece impeding their progress. Recognizing Kosovo was not the first time the country sided with the West over their historic friend and ally, Serbia; nearly a decade earlier they supported NATO's military intervention against them during the Kosovo War. While both of these acts certainly pleased the Albanian minority, it is evident from approval ratings and protests that it was not the will of the Macedonian majority. Some theorists would suggest that such a decision was the result of the government attempting to appease the Albanian minority and prevent secession or ethnic conflict as in 2001, but the more plausible explanation accounts for this while

incorporating Macedonia's economic and geopolitical interests as well. Acceding to the European Union and NATO was Macedonia's top priority in terms of foreign policy at the time and it is doubtful they would have sided against them even without internal pressure from the Albanian community.

Since then little has changed for Macedonia, as Greece continues to block them from international organizations. Meanwhile, the EU has begun complaining of "enlargement fatigue," with the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, announcing in 2014 that there would be no new enlargement for the next five years. With membership seeming less likely than ever, there has been a shift in Macedonian politics, beginning with the election of Gruevski in 2006 and growing increasingly nationalistic until his forced resignation under allegations of wiretapping in 2016. Unfortunately, even in his absence the situation has not improved; not only has the country been without a government since December 2016, due to their inability to reach a consensus about the ruling coalition and the so-called "Tirana Platform," but in recent weeks the dispute has even turned violent, with a mob of presumably VMRO-DPMNE supporters storming the parliament and attacking its members. Relations in the region are also strained, with Macedonia struggling to be a good neighbor to Kosovo without upsetting Serbia. In 2015, Macedonia supported Kosovo's failed UNESCO bid, prompting Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić to vengefully proclaim, "I can't wait for some issue that is important to Macedonia, to Montenegro, to crop up in international organizations. Then we'll see what stance Serbia will take."[104] In response, SDSM leader Zoran Zaev expressed his intention to remain neutral during the next vote. As the situation with Macedonia and its neighbors remains volatile, there is a greater need than ever to better understand the political mechanisms at play in order to truly ensure peace and stability for the region.

[104] "We've Been Fools to Recognize Macedonia Under That Name," *B92*, (January 2, 2017), http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=01&dd=02&nav_id=100130.

APPENDIX

Unabridged Transcripts

April 17, 2017

Bakim and Islam Halimi
Muzeu i Lirisë (Museum of Freedom), Skopje, Macedonia

CM: I'm curious. So what I had read online was that the museum opened on November 28, 2008. Is that the right year?

BH: It was opened on 28th of November for the anniversary of Albanian independence and it started working officially on 20th of February, 2009.

CM: What prompted you to open the museum at that time. Why at 2008 did you decide, or was it a long process?

BH: The start of the works was at May 5th, Martyrs' Day. All the activity that the Albanians had in Macedonia in the past, it was not written anywhere. All the material of value were demolished. This was the main reason that we opened the museum. To take all our national values at one place, historical also at one place, to select them and to expose for visitors. This was the main reason, but also the activity of the national army of Albanians of Macedonia of 2001 which were fighting the Macedonian troops in 2001.

CM: Did it take a long time to assemble all of this. I heard it was rather difficult to get the building, is that correct? There was some. . .

BH: There were no great difficulties to take the place, the building, because they were a request to the Institute of Cultural and Historical places and they declared the place as a state, how to say, institution of state, do you understand? Property of the state. And the state gives the management to the municipality of Chair. The municipality of Chair opened the museum then, after the object was given by the government to administer, to manage, to open the museum.

CM: At what point did your father get involved? Was he a part of this original group that had the idea. . . ?

IH: My father took part in the war of 2001 and is also a historian and helped a lot for the NLA and they know that.

CM: So it's kind of a perfect fit to have the histroy, the experience. . .

IM: Also, historian knows all the history of nearly everything. No one knows everything, but he knows a lot!

CM: Wait, so why isn't his uniform on display?

BH: (Laughter) We expose only the uniforms of the martyrs.

CM: Interesting. Okay. And I was curious because you mentioned part of the vision was to put all of these tributes in one space for visitors, and I was curious - who are most of your visitors? Are they groups of students, are they family members of people. . . ?

BH: As visitors, he recalls, men of all profiles. We have had visitors, professors from America, England, Victor Friedman, a professor from North Carolina. He was rector in University of London, of Oxford, it was the group of historians of the Netherlands, from Austria.

CM: Do many people from within Macedonia come? Do average citizens visit? From Kosovo, from the region?

BH: There were a lot from Jakovo, who was brought by the Kosovars here when they came to visit and brought an award. It was the director of the Museum in Vlora, the Museum of Independence in Vlora. In Albania you have a lot of museums. The director of the University of the Balkan, he is Turkish. Here come a lot from primary and secondary schools. They come with their professors and do a class. Before two days, students from University of Pristina visited the museum.

CM: So then it's starting to get quite a reputation around the region.

BH: Yes. There came a group from Slovenia to visit the museum also.

CM: So then you see people of all ethnic groups visiting.

BH: There was a group from Russia also. It was quite interesting. They recorded an episode here. For three hours, my father says they recorded. There were also some Italians; I translated for my father. They came from Rome I think.

CM: So what would you say it means for the Albanian community in Macedonia to have such an institute, since as you said, there was nothing like this before?

BH: Albanians deserve this and this is a big deal for the Albanians in Macedonia.

CM: So do you think that's why you see so many people willing to donate these artifacts?

BH: With no hesitation.

CM: Okay. I'm also curious, because from what I understood, and what I saw, you start with the League of Prizren in 1878 and then you go forward to 2001. Do you plan to expand upon this in the future, to incorporate more contemporary elements of Albanian culture moving forward?

BH: Sure.

CM: But nothing definite?

BH. Yes.

CM: So on the subject of 2001, I was curious how you see interethnic relations in Macedonia changing since then, with the OFA. Do you see relations improving? Or is there still a lot of progress?

BH: How it feels to the population, interethnic relations are not so bad. But when we speak of authorities, political parties, they work to get worse, they don't want good interethnic relations. They use them to gain political power. To gain votes, how do I say? They try to with nationalism, to win, maybe all the power of the state. Political power.

CM: So, for example, obviously the main issue that's been coming up is the coalition government's that's been proposed and the expansion of certain Albanian cultural elements, like including the usage of Albanian language throughout the country. What would that mean for Albanians in Macedonia?

BH: It's not something extraordinary. In 1974, it was better than now. Albanian language was used more than now it is used. In 1974. But, it will be an advance for the position of Albanians in Macedonia. In the, how to say, it will be better than now for us.

CM: So he said the usage of Albanian or the position of Albanians was better in 1974?

BH: The position of Albanians. With the constitution of 1974, Macedonians and Albanians were, not the same, but they formulated the state. In the constitution it said Macedonians and Albanians make the state. Now, it is Macedonia and other nationalities who speak at least 20%; they don't write Albanians. For that, the position of Albanians was better then than now.

CM: So this museum is obviously open to everyone, do you see many Macedonians visiting?

BH: No.

CM: Interesting, because I would think that perhaps having some better understanding would perhaps lend itself to. . .

BH: Once there was one Albanian from Albania, one Macedonia and one Serbian working for Opcija.

CM: But as we discussed, there really aren't many kind of Albanian institutions in Macedonia, are there any organizations within the community you see working to bring people together?

BH: There are a lot of organizations from NGOs that help interethnic relations, but the success, you know, it's not as expected. Also, the liberal, the Social Democrats of Macedonia, the party that wanted to advance the Albanian language, at this time is trying to get better relations with Albanians within Macedonia, to help intercultural, interethnic relations.

CM: What about with Kosovo? Because as we saw upstairs, there were a lot of people from Kosovo who helped out in Macedonia, a lot of Macedonians who helped out in Kosovo. Do you still see that bond today? Do you still see these ties?

BM: We are one community. Kosovars are Albanians, also we are Albanians. I have a lot of relatives in Kosovo. We have the same line.

CM: So how involved would you say the community here was in 2008 when Macedonia finally decided to recognize Kosovo? Were they very involved in that struggle?

BM: I think, there was no interest of recognizing. I don't know, I think the political party dealt with that, the Albanian parties. There were no problems.

CM: But did people within Macedonia talk about wanting that or promoting that?

IH: No. I have a lot of Macedonian friends, but they don't speak bad of Kosovo. I don't hear anyone speak against it. In the social media you will see a lot of it. There was a time when social media had a lot of it, Albanians writing badly about Macedonians, Macedonians writing badly about Kosovo, but you know how it is. You can write whatever you want.

CM: Does your museum maintain ties with Albanians around the world? Outside of the region? Do they donate or contribute?

BH: Yes, they come to visit and donate materials to the museum. The flag was bought by Topi from Kosovo, because __ was from Macedonia.

CM: But I'm curious about Albanian communities, like from America, coming from further away to visit.

BH: Yes, they come back on holiday. Nearly all Albanians come here for holiday, those who work abroad in Germany and Switzerland, Turkey, France, US.

CM: I know they're everywhere, so I thought it must be interesting to get to come back. It must be interesting to see the museum and see the history.

BH: He's saying they're happy when they see these things.

April 18, 2017

Aleksandar Kržalovski, Executive Director
Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Skopje, Macedonia

CM: So I was curious, I saw that MCIC was founded in 1993 and that you joined in 1995, is that correct?

AK: I missed the best two years!

CM: How did you get involved in the organization initially?

AK: At that time I was involved in the student movements, three of them, actually - one at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering/Computer Science, second of the whole University, as I became member of the executive board at the student union of the university, among others. Because one of my high school friends became president of the union, so I became kind of a minister in the student government. Third, I was a member of the organization for the international exchange of students of technical faculties SCIT, with the hope to go somewhere for exchange, but that was '91, '92, '93, post crash of Yugoslavia years, it wasn't easy to persuade people to come here, and as a result we couldn't go. Some people were coming, but much less than previously. Previously we would host 40-50 people during the summer in Macedonia. Now, during these years, only 5-6 would come. Also, during that time, price drops so only 2 or 3 of our colleagues could go and I never went. But, it was very good experience to host for 2-3 months people from various countries like Ecuador, Brazil. . . at least for practicing English, because none of them were native speakers and everyone wants to speak at that age. So it was good experience.

At that time, the director of MCIC was Director Sasho Klekovski who was also one of the founders of MCIC, was the previous student leader, so that's how we knew each other. So when there was a call for this job position, for their first civil society program, part of it was training about computers to civil society organizations and part of the job position was the maintenance of the computer network within MCIC and developing data bases, applications, etc, so everything I did anyway in those 2-3 years. So I applied and I eventually got the job at MCIC which fitted my sides very well, to continue working with computers which was my educational background and linking to NGOs involvement of student movement. So it was kind of a good fit.

CM: Absolutely! So speaking of getting involved in humanitarian efforts, I also read in your bio that you participated extensively in the humanitarian efforts in Kosovo in 1999 and Macedonia 2001. And I saw also that in the organization's history that that was when they started making a shift towards post-conflict activities and confidence building. So I was wondering if you could expand upon what sort of activities the organization was implementing during that time, and also a bit about your own personal experience.

AK: Well, first of all, that decision in '99 was also a career shift, as I had to split these two things that I mentioned in my decision to get into MCIC as the director said, so far we function well, part time computer guy, part time civil society, but now we need a full time computer guy and a full time manager for Kosovo program and it's up to you to decide what you want to pursue next in your career. Obviously, I decided for managerial, rather than sticking to computer background. I regret sometime, by the way, at that time, FB was not

invented yet. But I also do not regret this as it was also a lesson for my mother. The only thing she regretted in her career was when she was offered a managerial position, she thought she was too young to do that. When she saw who they chose instead of her, she regretted it and the opportunity never came again. So I'm not regretting that and eventually I became director of MCIC, so it's fine for now.

Second interesting thing at that point in time is that was Kosovo refugee crisis, huge effect on our organization and the country itself. So huge shift, because MCIC started as a humanitarian organization helping the refugees from Bosnia in '92-'93, but we moved away from that so we had to shift back quite heavily because at that year our budget from $1 million moved up to $50 million. It was huge and in terms of staff we increased from 17, to 45. So we almost tripled the staff number. And on top of that, 20 more in Kosovo which I was managing for 2 years during that period.

But what was most interesting about the experience was personal, about tolerance, is that at that time, when NATO bombings were going on in Serbia, we used to go on birthday parties for our small children with high school friends. Which I figured out we learned in a pretty much ethnically, mono-ethnic environment. We only had one Albanian in the class, and he was not typical, because his father was a minister in socialist government at that time so he was much better off than all of us. So when we started debating about NATO bombing, I had five friends, I was surprised and shocked even to see how they were saying we have to stop these Albanians coming from Kosovo into Macedonia. They will flood us, they will change our country. So much intolerance that for 2-3 days, I was thinking, what's wrong with my friends? Before realizing, it's not what's wrong with them, but what's wrong with me, because *I've* changed since high school, working in MCIC, quite a lot with other ethnicities, not only Albanians, but Roma, rural people, a lot of people not like the ones we were meeting in high school. And obviously they continued meeting those people, not meeting the diversities of Macedonia, and basically they stayed the same. I've changed, becoming much more tolerant for other ethnicities with my work for MCIC, that's why I'm saying there's something wrong with me, not towards the worst, I cherish and appreciate that I changed in that way, and since then I'm working on changing the minds of my friends, and since then I realize how important the environment in which you work and the values of the organization are to develop your own personality as well.

So it was quite significant and persuaded me it was the way to go. And that's also how I later accepted to run the office of MCIC in Kosovo, with another humanitarian assistance program for the returnees, also for the sake of my school friends, who wanted all these people back to Kosovo. So it was interesting and the first two years it was more the restructuring of the livelihood, the houses, agricultural possessions, and whatever works that they had, and later it became post-conflict management programs that of course were popular at that time, plenty of organizations were doing it, but we also figured out that we were quite well-positioned as an organization to contribute a lot in that respect, for various reasons.

One I said, was personal, we did already work with a lot of minorities, second our composition of the organization/assembly at that time it was organizational members that nominated candidates for the assembly of the council. it was pretty much diverse and reflecting Macedonian society. For example, there were 5 members from NGOs, 3 from religious communities, 2 from private sector, 2 from municipalities, 2 from media, 2 from research institutes, 1 from international community, so pretty much reflecting the Macedonian civil society. One of the major sources of inspiration for the development of programs we'll do is listening to them what they think is important, also reflecting their own organization's needs, so we'll compile that in programs we thought our necessary or needed or requested by societies.

Second, that we have capacities to deal with so we can find the necessary funding to do something about it. So at that time we worked a lot at communication with those difficult target groups. Not something that was unknown to us because also we introduced the topic of gender already in 1997. We worked 6 years to establish the Macedonian Women's Lobby which is very successful, since providing the 40% of women in the parliament, is a major achievement. Then we moved after the conflict to our background, our main supporters were from the council of churches, which is a strange combination of Protestant and Orthodox churches, who never asked to be involved in any work with religious communities, but based on that background and that we appreciating that support, we also had 3/25 members of the council from religious communities, we were seen as a good platform for the five biggest ones to meet on neutral ground and talk about peace, tolerance, and appeals for peace, statements, and even gathering together, and based on that we established a significant program for what we called "Bridging Religions" in Macedonia. And it lasted from late 2003, 2004 until 2008 or 2009 in some activities which were quite comprehensive and enabled religious communities, especially these 5 and 2 theological faculties, Islamic and Orthodox, to cooperate on a much deeper and more frequent level than they used to do before. Actually, they were not cooperating at all. Only one Islamic professor ever visited the other faculty in their lifetime, and none of the students. In our program, all of the students visited the other one. You would say, simple, but for me, important activities that were the basis to get people together to create acquaintanceship which evolved into partnerships, friendships, and are visible in that they continue to communicate even now that the program has long been over. And that sentiment from the legacy of that program is still visible and contributes to the peaceful post-conflict period of 2001 and are preventative for all of that stuff that's happening now.

CM: Yes, actually I just saw an interview you did on Tema Dana, the Croatian news channel, and you were talking about your thoughts on the possibility for fragmentation within the country. And you said, we didn't separate in 2001 and we're not going to do it anymore. And you also mentioned that according to your organization's research, ethnic tensions are not even in the top ten of concerns?

AK: Just one small correction - it's much less likely that we'll do those things; it's not impossible.

CM: Yes, of course.

AK: Yes, but based on that research, when the conflict happened and in the years after, it was in the top three concerns identified. But since then it's dropping, and recently it's not even in the top ten. It was 12th mentioned by the citizens, from which I draw this conclusion that it's much less likely to have an interethnic conflict. Because even at that time it was not that likely, it was just 8% radicals who were supporting violent action. In that sense, I see developments in the country that are improving the interethnic relations and that's why I think it's even less likely that people will take guns and fight each other. And maybe you can notice as a person who has been here in recent years, is how mixed it is. You can even hear Albanian on this side of the river (Vardar), etc. And maybe some people are criticizing heavily the Skopje 2014 project, but I think the square on the other side of the bridge that is developed (because before it was the bus station and kind of ruined pathway to reach the old town). Now with this change, somebody would criticize for many reasons, but for me, just cultivating that area contributed to significant moves from that side to this side of the town. Before I would not see Muslim with scarves to cross the bridge frequently like it happens in

the last five or six years since that happened. So, I am maybe noticing that type of thing and seeing with other lenses, but I do see those changes and I do think it's good.

CM: Can I ask then, what do you think of the protests that have been occurring, not only in Skopje, but even in Ohrid, which I found rather surprising, in response to the newly proposed coalition government. What are your thoughts on that?

AK: Well, there are protests officially against this Tirana Platform as it's called. The promoters of that are not calling it that but the Declaration of Ethnically Albanian Parties, of course, well, I see the logic about that. I do think it was not necessary to present it, including that it was presented in Tirana and on Orthodox Christmas Day. But also I don't see that as a big problem, as the protesters are seeing. First, because it is the platform of legitimate ethnic Albanian parties in Macedonia, so no matter where it is signed, they stand behind it and they have signed it, it is representing their views, so no problem. Unlucky coincidence for the Christmas announcement, but again - it doesn't matter. Finally, except for two or three of those nineteen demands, I don't see a problem at all, because even those are for a debate, they are proposing a solution about the name, the anthem, the flag, the language. They are opening a debate, so what's the harm in that? But I can see the sentiment of the people who are now protesting, that might bring jeopardy to the unitary character of the state. Again, I don't see the danger, because for anything like that, constitutional changes would be needed, and for that you need a qualified majority of 2/3, which means without VMRO-DPMNE, nothing can happen. So for me, it's ungrounded, these protests. Especially since it's still not even on the agenda. Because even it was required by the president, the leader of the opposition, to present the program and there is nothing visible from the Tirana platform in that program so for me it is a solved case, it is questionable what they are protesting for. Though it creates potential for conflict and if it is not handled well and is still escalating in terms of moving towards that direction of being exclusive in either you denounce the Tirana Platform or nothing will move, I think we are democratic enough and have enough mechanisms that the process should go on, the parliament should be constituted, parliamentary speaker should be elected, program of the government should be on the agenda of the parliament, and only then this debate should happen in parliament and maybe then the Albanian parties might not even be satisfied because they don't see enough of the Declaration within the published program for the new government of SDSM and maybe the government will not be elected. We should use the democratic mechanisms and see, and there is nothing to be scared about that.

CM: So on the subject of structural changes in Macedonia, how do you think that the Ohrid Framework Agreement contributed to interethnic cohesion in Macedonia?

AK: Maybe we start with the conflict itself. I still don't see why it was necessary, as there was no reason to take up arms for any struggle for human rights, if that was the reason, which I don't think was the case. And second, there was enough movement of their government at that time, which was also VMRO-DPMNE just with DPA, Democratic Party of Albanians. I think the first three decisions they made were in favor of the rights of Albanians, like first they released two mayors who were in prison for raising the Albanian flag in 1997 and were sentenced to 13 years in jail because of that. Second, they opened a second channel of the national television to be for minorities, and dominantly Albanian. And third, they decided to build two new secondary schools, something that had not been done for twenty years, only for Albanians in Tetovo because their percentage grew in the meantime and there was not enough capacity.

So obviously the government was showing concern to solve the debate and even to solve the issues that even the previous government was not keen on dealing with. And second, dealing with the Kosovo refugee crisis, when we hosted and successfully took care of 360,000 mainly ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, the same government showed the same tolerance that I showed, unlike my friends at that time. So for me, there was definitely no reason for armed conflict. Now, the agreement, luckily it happened soon - only 6 months after the conflict started. And I'm comparing it a lot to the Northern Ireland conflict. And our Ohrid Framework Agreement is a copy of the Good Friday Agreement, and I think the Belfast Agreement was taken as a blueprint for Ohrid. And we even use it in our programs for interethnic cooperation as an example and we were seven times in Belfast bringing different delegations to see to what extent their conflict, which lasted thirty years, came and both of those experiences.

So I think when it was done, it contributed to the feeling of Albanians that they obtained certain more rights than they used to have and that certain issues were resolved faster than they used to be. For example, the territorial organization of the country was contentious in 2004 when it happened, just three years after the conflict, whereas in Belfast they're still debating how to solve that same article from their agreement. And in that sense, yes, I think it contributed. Second, employment of especially ethnic Albanians, even maybe a majority will argue, there were a lot of employments of people who were not qualified for the position or even employed but not doing anything - sitting at home - some, 1,500 cases like that. And that is wrong, but for these first ones, I am not concerned a lot, because I am sure that in 1945 when Macedonia was liberated and became a part of Yugoslavia as a kind of semi-independent republic, at that time only 1% of Macedonians were with high school education, with faculty education and I'm pretty sure the jobs they were getting they were not qualified for, but we developed well and I say it's better to have them inside the system and learning by doing than waiting for them to finish school and then compete on a merit basis and claim that they've earned it. That was a problem in the initial phase.

To what extent was the Ohrid Agreement implemented, even I'm computer engineer and I, I wanted actually, we started one huge research on the 10th anniversary, but we never completed it. One thing was I was kind of insisting we come up with one number, what percentage of the agreement was completed. Because even ten years after, especially Albanian parties would put up statements *nothing* was implemented, or everything was implemented, depending on who was in power. And to relativize those kinds of statements I would say, why not? To put up a number and then at least we cannot be for a lot. I say 70% and it might be 60 or 80, but cannot be 100 or 0. But while researching, the team that participated was advising not to do that because it could create other problems and discredit the research itself because it was really even quite deep. Pity we never published it, but we published parts of it for reports which are available on different issues about it, interviews with relevant people, case studies for some issues: flags, language, education, that kind of stuff, and surveys, but the __ part was not done and I couldn't even at least approximately see the implementation, but in my opinion, it's above 80% implemented, now after 15 or more years, whether it contributed significantly to what the official cause for that was, what to say?

Again, some people in those villages where the conflict started are still without asphalt roads, so not much. Okay, Albanians had ministers in the government, now Albanian is spoken in the parliament, but that was the case in socialism, I believe, so it's not a big accomplishment, and I don't know what is the value of ordinary people with that. Now we're again debating about the use of language and making a big deal about it, unnecessarily, even the agreement itself is not stipulating exactly what should be the solution, so it's always an open question of interpretation. All in all, once conflict happened, even I believe it shouldn't, Ohrid Agreement was good, it was good that it came relatively quickly after the conflict, and

well, I wouldn't say a small number of casualties, 150 people still died, for me without reason. And yeah, that perhaps was good to have it as a solution and it contributed to have a more balanced situation in the country.

CM: Moving just a bit to the region as a whole, because that's kind of what my thesis is looking at, I saw that also as a result of the work your organization was doing in Kosovo, the Balkan Civil Society Network was formed and I was wondering if you could tell me a bit more about that, and which countries are actively participating and how that has improved relations within the region as a whole.

AK: Actually, the Balkan Network was not related to Kosovo, but to one research that this network of the World Council of Churches did in 2000 assessing its own involvement in the Balkans and the evaluator to do that assignment was the previous secretary general, a very experienced person, who visited all the countries, because different agencies, mainly from the West, like Christian Aid from UK, all of them were working in different countries. Perhaps they had some debate when Yugoslavia collapsed, who should take the lead working in each of those countries. Luckily we got the Dutch people, because of one reason only - because when they were here they screened the situation and had only one dilemma - they supported 11 organizations and they had to decide whether to continue supporting one of them or support the creation of a new foundation, obviously the second prevailed, though it was combination, some of the 11 became constituents of MCIC, but they say after 9 months, it's enough of our presence, you know your problems here the best, and you even know the solutions best. We are here to help with what knowledge is missing and some financial support. So they left us, even leaving us to make some mistakes, because they know we are not perfect. So they let us learn on our mistakes as well, but continue to support different various programs.

So all these agencies in different countries were operating with partners from that country. Usually with that humanitarian organization of the Orthodox church in that country, and in most of the countries it was like that: Serbia, Romania, Albania, and various others. But this was natural partner because the Orthodox Church was a member. In Macedonia, that was not the case because the Macedonian Church is not recognized by its sister churches, so it is not represented there so they had to look for another solution so that is how MCIC came to be. But in 2000 when this evaluation was done and we got the report, there was one interesting sentence saying, "Only Macedonia is ready." Saying that MCIC by 2000 achieved the standards that are expected on the West from one profession NGO, which meant to have annual report every year comprehensive of the whole organization, to have financial report, to have independent audit, and from time to time evaluation of the organization. We had all those before that evaluation, unlike many other countries. So we were assigned as a repercussion of that report, the recommendation was to create three different hubs for peace and reconciliation for rehabilitation and relief and the third one where we were involved was capacity building.

And we were assigned to build capacities of these partners of the World Council of Churches throughout the region so they could withdraw, but MCIC would step in and work with them. What we did, was a bit different approach, since they had left us to develop ourselves, we didn't want to be intruders and teach those organizations from Macedonia, but find similar organizations as MCIC in each of these countries to be our partner in capacity building and that's how the Balkan Civil Society Development Network was created. So in 2001 it started its capacity building hub and slowly, besides the initial composition of this ecumenical organization, started to include typical civil society resource centers. So, slowly we were attracting more bigger and influential organizations from civil society sector to be

partners of this ecumenical. It didn't work everywhere well, but in most cases it did and in some cases it's still the case that we have both partners from each of the countries. There are 14 organization members now from 10 different countries, covering the whole Balkan. We are keen to have partners from Greece and Moldova, and in the meantime some of the ecumenical partners decided to step out, as this developing network focused a lot on civil society issues rather than religious issues, so they went out, but some stayed in and they are contributing to the work. Balkan Network now is one of the most prominent regional networks, especially in Brussels and the EU, because it creates a lot of comparative studies on different issues, a lot linked to civil society itself but also others, and even those studies and reports are taken as a major input for EU progress reports of these countries.

CM: Thank you. Well, I think that's all, since I've already taken enough of you time.

April 20, 2017

Fitim Gllareva, Director of Regional Relations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pristina, Kosovo

CM: So first I was hoping you could tell me a bit about your background, as well as your involvement with the MFA.

FG: Good. Well, my background, I have a German-Kosovo background. I studied and lived in Germany for a long while, almost 13 years. Then, when I was back 2003, I started working for the Prime Minister before we had the Foreign Ministry, and somewhere in March or April 2004, there was an office created under UN administration called the Office for Coordination of International Cooperation and Regional Dialogue - I have always to be careful because it is such a long name. And you have difficulties to be exact. And this was an office that was supposed to be so to say the predecessor to the Foreign Ministry, so we were in a way allowed to deal with foreign policy. I was working there as head of Department for Regional Cooperation and two years later I became head of that office as our then director didn't want it anymore, he went to university.

After the independence we created the Foreign Ministry so I became the first secretary general of the foreign ministry. Before that, we had a group which worked more or less incognito called Future Ministry of Foreign Affairs, created by our then Prime Minister, Mr. Checko, supported by Americans and Brits here in Pristina. And we were working, it came out a project of 160 pages on how the Foreign Ministry will look like and that was the project with which we started the Foreign Ministry, but it was everything was in there: Departments, money, plannings, people, embassies, everything. So I was working with that group for eight months, and after this period we got an approval from the prime minister that he was fine with that project and with that we started the foreign ministry. So, I was then for three and a half years, secretary general of the foreign ministry.

And then July 2011, I was sent to Sofia for a mandate for four years. July 2015, July 14th, I started here in that position which I'm right now. So that's me more or less. What I do now, as the department says, is dealing with regional cooperation, but in a sense, just for you to get it. We cover 11 countries from Slovenia to Turkey, including Romania, and then we have also within the department regional initiatives and organizations. Which is an issues we are discussing now within the ministry because either it will be separate, because, as we are becoming members of several organizations, it's difficult at one department to deal with all these things. So that's what I'm doing right now, the rest, we can just chat during the interview if there's any interest.

CM: Yes, so, first on the subject of some of the initiatives and organizations that you're doing within the region, I saw a KIPRED (Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development) 2014 report on Bilateral Political Relations, and they labeled relations with Macedonia as "very good" as evidenced by their many bilateral agreements, on everything from economics to culture and science. I was wondering if you could speak to some of the most successful collaborations Kosovo has taken part in with Macedonia?

FG: Well, as you have read it, and that's an exact observation KIPRED has made in that time, actually it's a very good report, relations with Macedonia are very good, and it's because it's our first neighbor, of course. Because we have, so to say, this relation because there is this huge Albanian minority in Macedonia, there are links, always have been. But it's also at the level of trade. Macedonia is one of our biggest trade partners, it is because of the

geographical proximity, of course, but also because you have nothing to learn new if you're on the other side. And because, you know Kosovo business was forced until maybe recently to do business here. Now with stabilization associations things have changed a little bit, and it will be also further. But it was also, in a sense, and this was one of the reasons we had this big __ relations with Macedonia, and then also because of the good political relations and the huge number of agreements we had in between, and we are continuing doing that, of course, right now we have a small break because of the political situation on the other side, some things are waiting, but no things we have any doubts in between, only because the procedure cannot be done on the other side.

CM: On that note, I recently read an article in Balkan Insight published in March, in which the president of Kosovo commented on President Ivanov's decision not to offer a mandate to Zaev and the ethnic Albanian parties of Macedonia. I believe he said they were "burying" democracy and the OA and that Albanians in Macedonia should take the fate of their rights into their hands." I was wondering if you could comment a bit on the position of Kosovo about the current situation.

FG: Well, as you will understand, I will not comment on what the president said, of course, but what I can say is that we as Kosovo are expecting Macedonians to elect their own government, the one they are fine with will be fine with us, we will continue cooperating with them. And of course, it is not on us to interfere. If we would have been asked, we would, of course, as good neighbors help on that regard. But it's not on us, it's on the Macedonian politicians, society, to solve the issue, and whatever government they think is fine for them, we will continue working with them, that's what we aim for. But, well, the president is a politician so I'm not going to comment on that. But this is what we also officially think, that they will have to solve this issue within Macedonia. It's up to the political parties there to solve this and we will continue working with whatever government they choose to have.

Claire: Has it been rather surprising, as I understand, there hasn't really been this situation in quite some time that they've had such a break in establishing a government?

Fitim: Well, as far as I understand, it's an issue of first numbers, of course, because according to what the outcome of the elections, Mr. Gruevski would be able, but they have the Ohrid Agreement which you mentioned before, which requires some more numbers, in order to push some agreement. So if he, as I understand it, if he goes for that government with those numbers, he would not be able to do anythig without that agreement. And then, the constitution, which I have been told, two weeks ago I was in skopje, by some colleagues at the Foreign Ministry, there is no definition within the constitution what happens if the first one who won the election is not able to form the government, so. . . But this is a sphere of expertise which I really do not understand because i am not a lawyer. But I have been told that according to the constitution it is quite difficult to say what happens after the first one cannot form the government.

CM: Interesting. So going back more towards Macedonia's specific relations with Kosovo, going back to 2008 when Macedonia did recognize Kosovo, how important would you say the Albanian community was in coming to that decision? As you mentioned earlier, there are a lot of ties between the two countries.

FG: As I mentioned before, there is a very strong link between Kosovars and the Albanian community within Macedonia. And of course they had an impact in making that decision, but

on the other hand, Macedonia was also supporting before the independence, so we were not expecting that they would not recognize Kosovo. So, we didn't have any difficulty with Macedonia. I mean, we had from time to time small issues that neighbors have, but these were not issues which would have an impact on such decisions so we were not expecting that Macedonia would not recognize Kosovo. But in sense of the importance, it was of course very, very important that your first neighbors recognize you and I mean, if Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania wouldn't have recognized Kosovo, it would have been for our lobbying very difficult to convince the others why they should recognize us if the first neighbors do not recognize you. In that sense, it was of course very important that Macedonia recognized Kosovo.

CM: Was it surprising then that it took so long for them to recognize Kosovo, since I believe it took almost 8 months for Macedonia and Montenegro to do so?

FG: Surprising, I wouldn't say it was surprising. But you have to understand that the recognition was an issue which was discussed at other levels which was kind of a plan, because you have one neighbor here which plays that card. And then you have their support of Russia on the other hand. This was a type of issue which had to be solved in a sort of dialogue. Just finding the right moment. It was not only about Macedonia, there were several examples. Our intention was not to create any problems anymore because Kosovo has been a problem in news enough for negative things and we didn't need this now, so it was a sort of planning, but I wouldn't say it was surprising because we were expecting Macedonia would recognize. We were expecting Montenegro would recognize. We were also considering the situation within Macedonia and Montenegro, because it was not easy for them to recognize, especially with Montenegro. Which became independent just several years before from the same state. And having the ethnic composition within Montenegro, for Montenegro it was quite difficult for Montenegro to make that decision, but we are quite happy they did. So, maybe this is this complexity of this recognition decision taken in Skopje, but it was not that we expected that they would not recognize. Because there have been a lot of processes before Kosovo became independent and one of the things was also just checking what would happen with the others after we declared, so it was a kind of evaluation in which direction it will go.

CM: So how do you feel then, because one of the things that I read in the report was that still, because of some of the relations in the region, Macedonia hasn't necessarily done as much for the advancement of Kosovo on the international scene as they might otherwise have.

FG: As mentioned Macedonia is very supportive, also at the regional level, taking initiatives and it's not that, this is a kind of point of view, how do I see this, how do others feel about this, but Macedonia has been supportive. When I think about regional organizations, our attempts to become member I cannot think of any cases when Macedonia was opposing us, so it was only supporting. Of course, when you do multilateral, then there are a lot of interests. It's not only that you can just ask someone to help me because you're my friend, so there are a lot of interests and you have to see also the wider picture. And I will, I cannot exclude any case when Macedonia had first to think of itself and then for Kosovo, but in general they have been very supportive and we are very thankful for that. I mean, just year, last December, we have been in Zagreb at the Adriatic Charter, fighting for finding a solution for Kosovo because regional organizations are made mostly on consensus, so in our case, this means we always have Serbia saying no, so in that moment it became very difficult, even you have convinced everybody, you have one person saying no, so it becomes very difficult. And we were fighting to find a solution on our membership, so we are their only observer, but

how to find a way to put Kosovo on the agenda. So Macedonia was very constructive in that way, because their Foreign Minister was present to take the chairmanship, because they have the chairmanship this year, so he managed that in a very good way, so that we managed to put in the declaration that in 12 months a solution for Kosovo membership will be found. Which was a huge step for us because Serbia was not able to say no or whatever, he closed that issue in such a way that it was put in the declaration. So this is only one of the examples, but Macedonia in general has been very supportive.

CM: So could you speak a bit about Kosovo considering making another bid to join UNESCO.

FG: That's very difficult for me, because I'm not dealing with UNESCO at all, but I can say that there's still no decision that we are going to do that. Because UNESCO, as it proved last time, is very complex. I'm not dealing with UNESCO at all.

CM: I was just curious because again that's another example of how countries like Macedonia and Montenegro. . .

FG: Yes, we had the support of Macedonia and Montenegro. We had some three other countries, which was a little bit surprising for us, that didn't vote for, they were completely out of the region, but Macedonia and Montenegro we had their support. We are asking right now to take the presidency of the SECP (Southeast European Cooperation Process). Slovenia will take over now in June and there's no one else who's asked for that. We have asked for that, also Bosnia, we have support from both Macedonia and Montenegro. It is something about which we are very happy. If you think about Montenegro, you hear all day the issue of demarcation, but that's not really an issue between us, that's an issue here within Kosovo. And, even to Montenegro relations are very good. We will have in the coming days three visitors coming at high level from Montenegro, so it says something about our relations.

CM: What about with Macedonia? On their Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website they have a list of all the significant visits between the two countries.

FG: We have a list, but it's not on the webpage. We have it here within the department, but right now, as I said, things are on a break, because that side, and we were expecting actually to have the foreign minister just some months ago here. But as things turned around, we just postponed that and whoever will be the next foreign minister is already invited to come to Kosovo. We had actually invited Minister Popovski to come to Pristina. We agreed on that, but as it happened. . . so. But whoever will be the next foreign minister, he is already invited. And we are hardly expecting that whoever this is, his first visit will be here, which will be very good. So, we haven't been able to bring Minister Popovski here.

CM: Well, the situation has grown more complicated, certainly. But going back to the recognition, and to the report I mentioned earlier from KIPRED, the mentioned that both Western powers (i.e. EU and NATO member states) and the Albanian community within Macedonia played a role in Macedonia's recognition of Kosovo. So I was wondering, in your opinion, which would you say ultimately played the greater role in Macedonia's decision?

FG: (Laughter) Well, you don't have to think much about this. As I said, recognition was an issue which was discussed very much and wasn't a strict plan, who does it when, but it was a kind of planning in order not to cause any troubles in that way. So, I suppose US was the one

to have that impact, and well, the others, Germans, French, they were all, so to say, fighting for Kosovo, so I could imagine that all of them had discussions with the other side, but I would suppose the US had the biggest impact in that regard. But this is not 100% sure, it's not that I know it, but it's a supposing.

CM: Moving forward, what sort of initiatives are there between Kosovo and Macedonia that are goals for the future?

FG: We have some right now, or before the political situation got complicated, we were looking into opening more border points. We have already some agreements, on our side we have already finished, you know the infrastructure and all those things. We are waiting on Macedonia though, because you cannot open if there is nothing on the other side. There are, there are quite expecting to do that, but as I said, the political situation right now. . . it will happen as soon as there is a government. But there are already agreements, so it's a done deal. And, other things, we are looking forward to discuss with them, we have postponed our political consultations which are also agreed, but we have to wait. There are many things of which I cannot talk, because we have to agree with them, which we will propose to them, and I suppose they have things to propose to us, so we will work on that. But I don't know the other side, so it is unfair to talk about them right now. I'm sorry.

CM: No, no, of course. So are there any specific challenges you foresee moving forward in terms of relations between the two countries, other than this temporary break in Macedonia's government?

FG: No, there are no challenges. The only challenges we have to work on both ends to push things forward. But that's what we for sure will do as soon as we can. There are no challenges which we cannot move forward. I do not see any challenges.

CM: I'm not sure if you can speak to this or not, but how did Macedonia's involvement in the Refugee Crisis of 1999 impact relations with Kosovo?

FG: Well, it's very difficult. But this is more as an outside observer. Of course, Macedonia played a big role, a huge number of Kosovars moving to Macedonia during that time. As it was, Macedonians did what they could and they were themselves in a difficult situation economically, but they were not sending people back, which was one of the main things. Then of course, these relations they have and the huge community we have there was, they played a huge role and everyone was taking people into their homes. I have family members there at that time in Tetovo, which were taking families to spend time until they could come back. So Macedonia played a big role of course. It would have been, I cannot imagine what would have happened if they had closed the borders. I mean, it's easy to imagine what would have happened, but

CM: It's not pleasant.

FG: It's not pleasant at all. That's an emotional issue for me, because I have family members who died during the war. But I was observing that from Germany, so there's not much I can say, at least not at an official level, but. We have thanked them often about that and it has been a very big thing they've done for us.

CM: I was speaking to the director of MCIC a few days ago, and he mentioned that Macedonia was also very involved in the reconstruction process in Kosovo following the war. Can you speak to that at all?

FG: Only in general. After the war, there was a huge flow of international organizations into Kosovo and they are still all around. And they help, they played a very positive role, not only in physical reconstruction, but in people-to-people, and they still do play this role. Because of the composition in Kosovo, often a third party is needed to mediate, so they still do a great job here. I can't speak on this specific organization, but I know that KIPRED has good relations with many NGOs in Macedonia, and even Montenegro, Serbia, so. The do their job and it's something that we appreciate very much, it's still needed unfortunately. But NGOs are always needed, it's something that never ends.

CM: Well, I think that's about all I have for you.

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