WHAT BRINGS THEM TOGETHER?
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES: THE CASE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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Submitted to the Central European University

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary
June 2017

Acknowledgment of Financial Support

Abstract

This thesis investigates the cross-ethnic mobilization in the Macedonian movements Studentski Plenum and #Protestiram. The study also examines the timing of the cross-ethnic mobilization and the cross-ethnic nature of the movements. Because of the lack of typology for social movements in divided societies, I label the two movements as cross-ethnic relying on Horowitz's classification of political parties in divided societies. In answering the research question, I engage in a qualitative study based on focus groups with the movements' activists. In conducting the research, I depart from the concepts of social networks, collective action frames, and political opportunity structures – part of the classic social movement agenda. Nevertheless, given the nature of the qualitative study, I leave the door for new hypotheses for the cross-ethnic mobilization, its timing, and the movements' cross-ethnic nature open.

In analyzing the data, I employ the method of thematic analysis. The analysis revealed that the common grievances of the activists, the pre-existing and newly-established networks, the opportune situations for and organizational learning of the movements as well as their collective identities all affected the cross-ethnic mobilization. In the case of Studentski Plenum, the reported grievances were more diverse but the grievances concerning the corrupted and partisan education. In the case of #Protestiram, the grievances regarding the unjust system in the country overcame. While in the former the overall political context in the country appeared to have activated the cross-ethnic mobilization, the latter seems to have been triggered by concrete events. The analysis disclosed further patterns –socio-economic status of the activists, mono-ethnic networks of mobilization, and the role of the political parties, which need to be additionally examined.

Acknowledgments

In a loving memory of my uncle, Dragan Naumovski, who always believed in me and to my beloved mother, Verica Nikolovska, from whom I learned how to fight for my dreams

I first and foremost want to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Matthijs Bogaards. Without his thought-provoking suggestions, comments, critical reasoning, and confidence in my work, this thesis would not have been the same.

I also want to thank my academic writing instructor, Zsuzsanna Toth, for reading and reviewing my thesis drafts as well as giving me helpful recommendations on how to improve my style of writing in general. I am grateful for the useful suggestions I got from Professor Robert Sata about how to organize and develop my thesis as well as for the immense help I got from Professor Lea Sgier regarding the qualitative analysis. Furthermore, I am thankful to Chiara Milan for sharing her Ph.D. thesis on the social movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina with me. Her thoughts inspired me with creative ideas about how to improve my thesis. I express my deepest gratitude to Kristina Dimovska, Sanja Bogatinovska, Elena Stavrevska, Svetlana Siljanovska, Darko Malinovski, and Misha Maitreyi for helping me with the thesis-writing and conducting the fieldwork research in one way or another. I especially want to thank all the focus groups participants for their cooperation. I am infinitely grateful for the support, care, and love I received from my family in the past two years. Their belief in me and my potentials motivated me to go on in good and bad times.

Last but not the least, I want to thank my friends and colleagues from CEU for making my stay in Budapest pleasant and unforgettable. Thank you Borislav, Ines, Katarina, Dragan, Ivana, Sara, Vlade, David, Jovan, Karlo, Tomaž, Damjan, Jasmina, Nevena, Dunja, Naum, Aki, Jelena, Ana, Branimir, my dear Yugos, but also Sharon, Adela, Apo, Dinara, Luis, Dora, Jelena, Misha, Dragana, Flora, Anahit, Ros, and others! You will always have a special place in my heart.

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Introduction

Civic and social life in ethnically divided societies takes place along rather than across the lines of ethnic division (Nagle and Clancy, 2010, p. 1). The Republic of Macedonia, a society divided along ethnic and religious lines (Ilievski, 2007, p. 4), is not an exception. Because of the great social distance between the ethnic communities in the country, the political life generally occurs within the ethnic cleavages (Minoski, 2013, p. 22). Moreover, Macedonia has a history of ethnic conflict. The relations between the country's majority, the ethnic Macedonians, and Macedonia's largest minority, ethnic Albanians, have been tense since the country proclaimed its independence from Socialist Yugoslavia in 1991. Ten years later, this tension culminated in an armed conflict between the Macedonian authorities and the National Liberation Army, an Albanian paramilitary formation. Owing largely to the international community, the conflict was resolved and the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) was signed. The basic principles of the OFA became part of the country's constitution, therefore, introducing consociational forms of power-sharing (Bieber and Keil, 2009; Daskalovski, 2002; Koneska, 2014).

Nevertheless, the ethnically divided society is not the country's only problem. When exploring contemporary Macedonia, one ought to analyze the unfortunate rise of authoritarianism, populism, and nationalism associated with the government of VMRO-DPMNE[1] and Democratic Union for Integration (DUI).[2] Building upon the work of Levitsky and Way (2010), I define this government as a nationalist and populist competitive authoritarian regime. In the period between 2009 and 2013, several civic initiatives

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[1]The full name of the party is Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (hereinafter VMRO-DPMNE).

[2]The thesis refers to the coalition government between the largest parties of the Macedonian and Albanian political bloc, that is, VMRO-DPMNE and DUI respectively. This coalition was in power between 2008 and 2016.

challenged particular policies and practices of the regime, such as police brutality (see Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016). Yet, these initiatives were short-lived and lacked a greater mobilizing power (Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016). However, the first massive and openly anti-governmental protests started at the end of 2014.

The first cycle of protests started in November 2014 with student demonstrations led by the student protest movement *Studentski Plenum,*[3] which initially objected to the proposed changes in the Law on Higher Education (Marusic and Jordanovska, 2014). However, the overall dissatisfaction with the political situation reached its peak in winter 2015, when Zoran Zaev, the leader of the largest opposition party the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), accused Nikola Gruevski, the former prime minister and leader of VMRO-DPMNE, and his closest allies of illegal wiretapping of more than 20,000 people, including private citizens, key opponents to the regime, civil activists, and foreign diplomats (Baumgartner, 2016). The wiretapping scandal revealed serious crimes committed by the government, such as electoral fraud, corruption, abuse of power, extortion, nepotism, interference in the judiciary, and others.[4]

Thereupon, the second protest cycle took place with the anti-governmental demonstrations led by the anti-governmental movement called #*Protestiram.*[5] The movement initiated the protests in spring 2015, demanding the resignation of the government (Protestiram, 2015a). Nevertheless, in the summer of 2015, a political agreement aiming to overcome the long-lasting political crisis in the country and investigate the illegal wiretapping was signed (European Commission, 2015). The agreement is popularly known as *Pržino Agreement*. The 'political battle' returned to the institutions and the protests were temporarily

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[3]*Studentski Plenum* means student plenum in English. All the translations are mine, unless indicated otherwise. The transliteration scheme of the Macedonian Cyrillic alphabet is presented in Appendix A.
[4]See the Recommendations of the Senior Experts' Group on systemic Rule of Law issues relating to the communications interception revealed in Spring 2015, p. 6.
[5]#Protestiram means 'I protest' in English.

ceased. However, this period of 'ceasefire' did not last for long. One year later, the protests were revived under the slogan *'the colorful revolution.*

The protests started on 13 April 2016 after Ǵorǵe Ivanov, Nikola Gruevski's political ally and Macedonia's incumbent president, decided to pardon 56 politicians who were under criminal investigation for the wiretapping scandal, most of them being high-ranking officials of VMRO-DPMNE, including Gruevski himself (Marusic, 2016). During the second protests cycle, *#Protestiram* demanded the resignation of President Ivanov as well as legal and political accountability of the suspected politicians (Protestiram, 2016). The movement received support from many initiatives, organizations, and other movements including *Studentski Plenum*. Nevertheless, *#Protestiram's* demands were not accepted and the demonstrations ended at the beginning of July 2016. Unlike the movements in the past (Marusic, 2012; Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016), *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* received support from and cooperated with SDSM and other smaller Macedonian and Albanian oppositional parties in the country (Pollozhani and Taleski, 2016; Stefanovski, 2015). In fact, the two movements joined the 17 May 2015 anti-governmental protest organized by *Citizens for Macedonia*, a coalition between SDSM, other oppositional parties, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens (see Stefanovski, 2016, 2015).

The common denominator of *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* was their multi-ethnic nature. These movements comprised Macedonians, Albanians, and members of the other ethnic groups in the country. Furthermore, Macedonian and Albanian language were used simultaneously in the movements' communication with the public. The 2014 massive student protests organized by *Studentski Plenum* were described as the biggest cross-ethnic mobilization in the country's modern history (Petkovski, 2014). It is equally important to note that *#Protestiram*'s managed to bring different ethnic groups together in places that were heavily hit by the conflict of 2001. For instance, in Tetovo – a multi-ethnic town and a

battlefield during the ethnic conflict – Macedonians and Albanians were protesting together, perhaps for the first time in the town's history (Phillips, 2016). In order to better understand their nature and be able to classify them, I contribute to the literature by labeling *Studentski Plenum and #Protestiram* as cross-ethnic movements based on my adaptation of Horowitz's typology of political parties in divided societies.

There is a vast body of literature on social movements and mobilization but little has been written about the movements in the ethnically divided societies and even less about the movements in Macedonia. Hence, given that the cross-ethnic mobilization in *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* represented an alteration in the relations between Macedonians and Albanians, this thesis seeks to understand *how the cross-ethnic mobilization in the social movements came about.* Herein, I also try to answer the following sub-questions: (1) *why the movements were cross-ethnic*; and (2) *why the cross-ethnic mobilization took place in the period between 2014 and 2016 and not before.* Since social movements entail no single but compound actors comprising formal organizations, informal networks, and individuals (Meyer and Whittier, 1994, p. 277), the scope of the thesis had to be narrowed down to informal networks of activists and their perceptions about the cross-ethnic mobilization following the aforementioned questions.

Even though the protests ceased, it seems that the two movements had an influence on the wider socio-political scene in the country. In the early parliamentary elections held on 11 December 2016, Ivana Tufegdžiḱ, a former activist of *Studentski Plenum*, and Pavle Bogoevski, a former activist of *#Protestiram,* were elected MPs as part of SDSM-led coalition ticket (see Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, 2016). Also, the elections were portrayed with a significant cross-ethnic voting for SDSM (Staletović, 2017), which was actively seeking Albanian votes (OSCE, 2017, p. 20). Lastly, after securing a majority in the parliament, SDSM is expected to form Macedonia's new government (Marusic, 2017). Thus,

we can conclude that the movements have contemporary relevance and are worth exploring. Yet, given their unclear development after July 2016, this thesis only focuses on the period between November 2014 and July 2016.

In answering my research question, I engage in an empirical study based on fieldwork research comprising focus groups with the movements' activists. The empirical study relies on a *within-case analysis* (see Paterson, 2010) wherein *Macedonia* is taken as a *case study*, while *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* as *units of analysis and comparison*. As to explain the mobilization in the movements, I employ three theoretical concepts, namely, (1) *social networks*, (2) *collective action frames* (CAFs), and (3) *political opportunity structures* (POS), all part of the *classic social movement agenda,* hereinafter *CSMA* (McAdam et al., 2001). I expect that all three concepts may explain the cross-ethnic mobilization, its nature, and timing. However, given the deep political crisis and the authoritarian political context in which the movements were operating, the concept of *POS* is expected to best explain the cross-ethnic mobilization. Nevertheless, given the aim and nature of empirical studies based on a qualitative analysis, I do not test these expectations and leave the possibility for hypotheses generating and theory-building open (Eisenhardt, 1989). In analyzing the data, I engage in a *cross-thematic analysis* by trying to derive themes that explain the reasons for the cross-ethnic mobilization in the two movements, its nature, and timing (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Rabiee, 2004).

The structure of this thesis is as follows. The first chapter introduces the main concepts with which this thesis operates and state-of-the-art. In the second chapter, I proceed with the theoretical framework and expectations that guide this thesis. The third chapter addresses the case selection, the research methodology, and the process of data gathering. In the fourth chapter, I introduce the qualitative analysis, present the findings, and report the limitations of the research. Finally, this thesis ends with the concluding remarks.

Chapter 1. Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

This chapter presents the core notions of the thesis being the concept of ethnicity, divided society, consociationalism, competitive authoritarian regime, social movements, and mobilization and its key features. It then introduces the literature on social movements in divided societies following the case of the Republic of Macedonia and the Macedonian movements *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram*. The chapter concludes by identifying the gap in the literature.

1.1. Ethnicity

The development of a collective identity, which is going to be recognized and shared, is of prime importance for social movements as one can talk about them only when collective identities develop (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 21). As mentioned previously, the socio-political setting of the ethnically divided societies is based on ethnic divisions (Nagle and Clancy, 2010). Therefore, the identities based on ethnicity are important for comprehending mobilization in divided societies. The notion of ethnicity is based on a myth of common origin of groups of people distinguished by race, language or caste (Horowitz, 1985, pp. 52–53). The specific ethnic identities can be expressed through the use of the ethnic groups' languages, religious and national symbols, and other forms of identification, as these are the attributes that qualify individuals as members of an ethnic group (Chandra, 2006, p. 400).

1.2. Ethnically Divided Societies

Ethnicity is often associated with the exclusion of and hostility toward those who do not belong to a particular ethnic group (Horowitz, 1985, p. 7). Hence, societies can be separated along ethnic, sectarian, religious, linguistic, class, cast, and other lines (Guelke, 2012). The regimes in the ethnically divided societies tend to install, preserve, and extend the ethnic nature of the respective polity, which, in turn, hinders its stability and democratic

capacity (Peleg, 2004, p. 7). Nevertheless, both the political theory and practice have come up with various institutional solutions, such as *consociationalism* or *centripetalism*, aiming to preserve the stability of such polities as well as their democratic nature (e.g. Horowitz, 1985; Lijphart, 1977).

1.2.1. Consociationalism

Consociationalism is an institutional arrangement that is often recommended for societies deeply divided across ethnic societies (McCulloch, 2014, p. 501). The concepts of power-sharing, consociationalism, and consociational democracy are related to the work of Arend Lijphart, the prominent Dutch political scientist. Lijphart (1977, pp. 25–52) described consociational democracy through the following four features. First, the government is formed as a result of a grand coalition of the leaders of the major societal segments (ethnic groups) in the country. The grand coalition government has three additional instruments at its disposal. The mutual veto is one of them and it is used as a protection of the segments' vital interests. Another instrument is the principle of proportionality which includes proportional representation of the segments in the public service and proportional allocation of the scarce financial resources. Last, the segments have autonomous rule over the issues of their exclusive concern. Many divided societies, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Macedonia, Kosovo, Iraq, and others, adopted consociational models of power-sharing (see McCulloch, 2014; McGarry and O'Leary, 2006).

1.2.2. The Republic of Macedonia: A Problematic Type of Consociationalism

The Macedonian model of consociational democracy is described as a model with a "limited amount of power-sharing" (Bieber and Keil, 2009, p. 344). There are several reasons for that. First, even though the formation of the grand coalition governments is not legally binding, these were formed as a matter of convention even before 2001 (Bieber and Keil,

2009; Koneska, 2014). Then, there is no formal veto granted, yet, there are special double-majority voting procedures for certain issues that are of minorities' vital interest (Koneska, 2014). Furthermore, although the concept of segmental autonomy is not present either (Bieber, 2004a), the authority of the local governments, which after 2004 were reorganized on the ethnoterritorial basis, has been increased since that year (Koneska, 2014). Last, the equitable representation of the ethnic groups in the public administration has been satisfied at all levels since 2001 (Amendment VI of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 1991).

Although the Macedonian model of power-sharing applies to all ethnic communities living the country, in practice, it functions as a coalition between Macedonians and Albanians (Siljanovska-Davkova, 2011, p. 23). The key actors of the decision-making process are the leaders of the Macedonian and Albanian community and their respective mono-ethnic parties (Siljanovska-Davkova, 2011, p. 23). Also, the politicization of the ethnic identity increased the distance between the ethnic groups (Bieber, 2004b, p. 117). This political constellation happened to be a fertile ground for nationalist and populist driven politicians and parties to strengthen their positions and eventually come to power. This is especially true in the case of the ruling coalition of VMRO-DPMNE and DUI. The nationalist-driven hybrid regime developed during the tenure of this coalition is crucial for understanding the cross-ethnic mobilization.

1.3. Macedonia as a Nationalist and Populist Competitive Authoritarian Regime

1.3.1. The Rise of Nationalism

Since VMRO-DPMNE and DUI formed a coalition in 2008, the two parties have often played the ethnonationalist card. The nationalist narratives were especially visible in the case

of VMRO-DPMNE. During the 1990s, under the leadership of Ljubčo Georgievski, VMRO-DPMNE promoted itself as a national party of the Macedonian people, advocating for Macedonia to be organized as a national state (Shea, 1997, p. 246). It was also one of the parties that opposed OFA (Bieber, 2004a, p. 17) and has also been known for its albanophobic stances (Frchkoski, 2016, p. 77). When it came back in power in 2006 under the leadership of Nikola Gruevski, the party started with the so-called politics of *antiquization,* by supporting the idea that there is a direct connection between ethnic Macedonians and ancient Macedonians (Vangeli, 2011, p. 13).

1.3.2. The Rise of Populism

The rule of VMRO-DPMNE and its leader Nikola Gruevski has been also described as populist (e.g. Frchkoski, 2016; Petkovski, 2016; Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016). Populism is usually defined as an ideology that presupposes that society is divided into two groups, that is, the "pure people" and the "corrupt elite", which are hostile to each other, and advocates that politics should be an expression of the will of the former (Mudde, 2004, p. 543). These features are present in the case of VMRO-DPMNE as well. The 'enemy' of the people, according to VMRO-DPMNE, is not only the political establishment of SDSM, which is associated with the former communist nomenklatura[6], but also the intellectuals, the critical media, and the liberal and pro-western civil society organizations, furthermore referred as CSOs (Petkovski, 2016, p. 52). Moreover, VMRO-DPMNE's populism is complementary with its nationalism (Petkovski, 2016, p. 64). For example, Frchkoski describes VMRO-DPMNE as a "party that has pretensions to represent itself as an essential expression of the Macedonian people, who are under siege, under threat from outside and from within" (2016, p. 171). Thus, the Macedonian type of populism is described as anti-democratic, anti-liberal,

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[6]SDSM is the legal successor of the League of Communist of Macedonia.

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anti-individualist, and culturally regressive (Frchkoski, 2016; Petkovski, 2016; Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016).

1.3.3. The Return of Authoritarianism

In spite of the fact that the political elites formally opted for a multi-party rule in the late 1980s, during the tenures of the first post-socialist governments (from 1994 to 1998 and from 1998 to 2002), the country was ruled in a somewhat authoritarian manner (see Levitsky and Way, 2010, pp. 124–128). Nonetheless, because of the large Western involvement, the country managed to democratize by the late 2000s (Levitsky and Way, 2010, p. 124). However, this period did not last for long. As mentioned before, Macedonia entered a phase of rising authoritarianism after VMRO-DPMNE assumed office in 2006. The regime has been particularly inimical to democratic values, especially human rights (Frchkoski, 2016, p. 174). Furthermore, it has usurped the civil society by generating loyal and supportive CSOs (Frchkoski, 2016, p. 175). In this context, any form of civic dissent has been seen as ersatz, conspiratory, and staged by the opposition parties (see Marichikj and Petkovski, 2014, p. 35). The freedom of the media declined as well. While the critical media has been under constant attack, the pro-government media has been used to discredited the opposition by presenting them as disloyal to the interests of the state and the nation (Bieber, 2014).

The democratic backsliding has been noted by the Freedom House reports as well. According to the 2017 Nations in Transit report, Macedonia falls into the category of hybrid regimes scoring 4.43 on the scale from 1 − most democratic to 7 − least democratic (Freedom House, 2017a, p. 24). The gradual downfall of the Macedonian democracy presented through seven indicators of democratic progress proposed by Freedom House is presented in Table 2, Appendix B.

1.3.4. Defining the Regime

As contemporary Macedonian politics is characterized by the interplay of nationalism and populism, and authoritarianism (Petkovski, 2016, p. 64), this thesis, relying on the work of Levitsky and Way, defines Macedonia as a *nationalist and populist competitive authoritarian regime*. Levitsky and Way describe competitive authoritarianism as a civilian regime wherein democratic institutions do exist but are abused by the incumbents thus making their position superior to that of their opponents (2010, p. 5). In such regimes, formal democratic competition does exist, but it is unfair (Levitsky and Way, 2010, p. 5). Given the aforementioned, the justification for the undemocratic rule in the case of Macedonia can be found in the regime's claim that its legitimacy derives from the people, defined in ethnic rather than civic terms, whose interests are represented by the regime itself versus the interests of the elites, also perceived as enemies of the nation (Frchkoski, 2016; Petkovski, 2016; Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016). Therefore, we can say that the Macedonian regime has a populist and nationalist rather than a civilian character (Frchkoski, 2016; Petkovski, 2016; Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016). Having described the Macedonian regime, I now continue with the literature on social movements in divided societies.

1.4. Social Movements in Divided Societies in the Literature

Social movements have become one of the main areas of research since the late 1960s, when the world encountered profound changes portrayed by events, such as the emergence of the American civil rights movement, the French student protests in 1968, and many others (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 1). Social movements are usually related to and defined by collective action and contentious politics. In this thesis, I rely on Mario Diani's definition, who defined social movements as:

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> [A] network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity (1992, p. 13).

However, little has been written about the role of social movements in divided societies with power-sharing arrangements, especially about the movements that challenge the dominant ethnonational cleavages. Nevertheless, there are some notable exceptions. John Nagle, Heleen Touquet, Cera Murtagh, and other scholars, have explored social movements and mobilization in divided societies like Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. I use these authors' key concepts and definitions in order to define and classify *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* as well as to understand better the cross-ethnic mobilization that took place in these two movements. Before I introduce their major concepts, I briefly present their work.

John Nagle has extensively written about the movements in Northern Ireland that contested the Catholic-Protestant sectarian cleavages and praised alternative political identities like the Belfast LGBT and peace movements (e.g. Hayes and Nagle, 2016; Nagle, 2016b, 2013, 2008; Nagle and Clancy, 2010). Besides Northern Ireland, Nagle has also recently written about the LGBT, environmentalist, anti-governmental, and other non-sectarian movements in Lebanon focusing on their relationship with consociationalism (e.g. Nagle, 2017, 2016a). Another group of scholars have investigated alike movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Heleen Touquet (e.g. 2015, 2012, 2011), Cera Murtagh (2016), and most recently Chiara Milan (2016, with permission), have written about the anti-governmental and civic protest movements and initiatives in the country and their confrontational approach toward the dominant divisions among Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats.

Little has been published on social movements in divided societies and even less on social movements in Macedonia. Nevertheless, there are some noteworthy exemptions like Stefanovski (2015, 2016) and Petkovski and Nikolovski (2016) who have also written about

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Studentski Plenum or *#Protestiram* but covered other movements and initiatives as well. For instance, Petkovski and Nikolovski (2016) studied other movements, such as the protests against the police brutality in the case of Martin Neškovski,[7] or the protests against the increased electricity and heating prices under the name *AMAN*. However, these protest movements had very specific claims and failed to mobilize the other dissatisfied groups in the society (Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016, p. 176). Moreover, there is no available data on the ethnic composition of the abovementioned initiatives as well as whether they attempted to engage in a cross-ethnic mobilization. Nevertheless, an attempt worth mentioning is the 2012 peace march against inter-ethnic violence, which comprised protestors of different ethnicities (see Marusic, 2012). Unfortunately, this one-day march being short-lived did not transform into a greater cross-ethnic mobilization.

Nonetheless, some of the activists of these movements and initiatives later joined *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* (Petkovski, forthcoming, with permission). Yet, the existing literature mostly focused on their 'anti-regime' nature, mentioning their cross-ethnic character only briefly and descriptively (e.g. Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016; Stefanovski, 2016, 2015). Moreover, no one has ever investigated the cross-ethnic mobilization in *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram*. Having said this, I now proceed with the classification of the social movements in divided societies.

1.5. Classifying Social Movements in Divided Societies: A Cacophony of Terms and Concepts

A plethora of terms and concepts have been used to define and classify the various forms of social movements in divided societies. For instance, some scholars have interchangeably used the term *ethnic movements* with other similar terms in order to refer to

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[7]Martin Neškovski was 22-year-old supporter of VMRO-DPMNE, who was killed on the main square in Skopje, the country's capital, by a member of the special police forces during the celebration of VMRO-DPMNE's victory in the elections of 2011 (see Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016).

various forms of movements in which ethnic identity plays an important role. Such movements are classified as secessionist movements, anti-colonial movements, minority movements and others (e.g. Gingras, 1975; Hooghe, 2005; Huszka, 2013). For example, Huszka (2013, p. 7) argues that secessionist movements use ethnic or nationalist frames in order to mobilize the ethnic groups they allegedly represent, by claiming the separate cultural, historical, and linguistic identities of these groups.

Other scholars have written about movements that recognize the changeable nature of ethnicity. For instance, Touquet talks about *post-ethnic* activism which she defines as "groups that view ethnic identity as an important factor determining the human experience while at the same time acknowledging its fluidity and flexibility" (2012, p. 204). Similarly, Nagle (2013) has used the term *commonists* to define movements that do not challenge ethnicity but endorse joint actions across ethnic lines. On the other hand, there are scholars who write about movements that challenge ethnicity. In her Ph.D. dissertation, Milan (2016, with permission) writes about *mobilizing beyond ethnicity* by referring to the social movements that manage to surpass the supremacy of the ethnic identity by either favoring another identity or by openly refusing the existing dominant ethnic categories. By the same token, John Nagle has used the terms *non-sectarian* (2008, 2013, 2016a, 2017), but also *transformationists, pluralists,* and *cosmopolitans* (e.g. 2013). In the same light, some authors have used the terms '*non-national*' (e.g. Armakolas, 2011) or simply '*civic*' (e.g. Murtagh, 2016).

Besides the scarcity of the literature, another problem that the study of social movements in divided societies faces is the cacophony of "vague" and "amorphous" concepts and terms that hinder their analysis and comparison (Sartori, 1970, p. 1034). Moreover, these terms and concepts focus on the importance of ethnic identity but barely explain these movements' internal structure and its potential role. Therefore, I offer a more structured classification by borrowing Horowitz's typology of political parties. The literature on divided societies

compares political parties by looking at their composition, structure, and platforms (e.g. Murtagh, 2015, p. 545), which provides us with additional tools for analysis and comparison. However, my intention is not to equate social movements and political parties. After all, the structure based on informal networks is what differentiates social movements from the other forms of collective action (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 243).

1.5.1. Ethnic, Multi-Ethnic, Cross-Ethnic, and Non-Ethnic Movements

In one of his seminal books 'Ethnic Groups in Conflict (1985, pp. 298–302)', Donald Horowitz suggests that there are three types of political parties which may appear in ethnically divided societies – that is, ethnic, non-ethnic, and multi-ethnic parties. Horowitz (1985, p. 298) suggests that ethnic parties may comprise members of more than one group, yet ethnic parties tend to be more exclusive in comparison with multi-ethnic and non-ethnic parties.

Ethnic parties usually support the interests of one core group even if they are internally multi-ethnic (Horowitz, 1985, p. 299). Furthermore, ethnic parties may have factions but these consist of individuals from one major group (Elischer, 2013, p. 33). On the other hand, multi-ethnic parties comprise and are supported by members of at least two different ethnic groups (Horowitz, 1985). The ethnic groups in this kind of parties are organized in ethnic factions (Horowitz, 1985, pp. 300-301). The party factions are either led by the chiefs of the particular ethnic groups or by powerful individuals with a base of supporters across the nation (Elischer, 2013, p. 33). Unlike in ethnic and multi-ethnic parties, ethnic identities seem to be less visible and relevant in non-ethnic parties. When Horowitz (1985, p. 300) refers to non-ethnic parties, he describes them as parties that engage in political conflicts of non-ethnic nature (e.g. conflicts over ideology, development, economy). According to him, the internal organization of these parties may not be based explicitly on ethnic factions.

By looking at Horowitz's typology, we can conclude that ethnicity is important in ethnic and multi-ethnic parties but irrelevant in non-ethnic parties. Nevertheless, Horowitz does not offer an 'in-between' option that would recognize the importance of ethnicity and, at the same time, allow the creation of alternative identities. One of the possible points of departure is the concept of *cross-ethnic parties* (Murtagh, 2015). Cera Murtagh defines the cross-ethnic party as a party that tries "to represent all major groups in society and draws its support from across these groups" (2015, p. 545). Fortunately, the term 'cross-ethnic' has also been used in the literature on social movements as to explain forms of mobilization and/or actions of solidarity between two or more ethnic groups wherein the ethnicity remained somewhat relevant but it was not the only form of identification and/or was eventually surpassed (e.g. Campbell, 2012; Cowell-Meyers, 2014).

Thus, departing from Horowitz's typology of political parties, I introduce the concepts of *ethnic, multi-ethnic, non-ethnic,* and *cross-ethnic movements*. Unlike in multi-ethnic and non-ethnic movements, the role of the ethnic identity in the cross-ethnic movements is more complex. While ethnicity is visible and relevant, it does not represent the only mean of identification and it can be transcended. This allows development of collective identities that provide a possibility for "rooting" and "shifting" of the individual ethnic identities in a way that they remain salient but, at the same time, are prone to changes due to overarching interests (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 88). In Table 1, I summarize the key features of each of these movements after which I present and contextualize *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram.*

Table 1: A Comparison of the key features of ethnic, multi-ethnic, cross-ethnic, and non-ethnic movements

Type of movement	Ethnic	Multi-ethnic	Cross-ethnic	Non-ethnic
Composition	Predominantly but not exclusively mono-ethnic	Predominantly multi-ethnic	Predominantly multi-ethnic	Predominantly multi-ethnic
The role of the ethnic identity	The ethnic identity of the movement actors is salient and visible	The ethnic identity of the movement actors is salient and visible	The ethnic identity is visible and relevant but it does not represent the only mean of identification and it can eventually be surpassed	The ethnic identity of the movement actors is irrelevant.
Support	Within the ethnic cleavages	Within the alliance, each ethnic group has its own support	Across the ethnic cleavages	Irrespective of ethnic identity
Level of inclusivity/exclusivity	Prone to ethnic exclusiveness	Inclusive	Inclusive	Inclusive
Interests/issues/conflicts they represent/engage in	Mono-ethnic	Common yet particular ethnic interests enjoy autonomy	Common interests beyond the ethnic cleavages	Non-ethnic
Internal organization	Factions/alliances based on individuals/individual or collective actors belonging to one major ethnic group	Factions/alliances based on individuals/individual or collective actors belonging to different ethnic groups	Factions/alliances formed beyond the ethnic cleavages	Non-ethnic factions/alliances

Source: My own compilation based on the work of Campbell, 2012; Cowell-Meyers, 2014; Elischer, 2013; Horowitz, 1985; Milan, 2016, with permission; Murtagh, 2015; Nagle, 2013; Touquet, 2012; and Yuval-Davis, 1997.

1.5.2. Studentski Plenum and #Protestiram as Cross-Ethnic Movements

Studentski Plenum was a student grass-root movement founded on a horizontal structure with fluid membership and no formal leadership, which functioned on the basis of direct democracy (Studentski Plenum, 2015). The movement arose from the 2014 student protests against the Ministry of Education's proposal for 'state exam'. The proposal envisaged all enrolled students taking the state exam prior to their graduation (Marusic and Jordanovska, 2014). *Studentski Plenum* was questioning the legality of the proposed changes to the law on Higher Education claiming that the proposal was unconstitutional (Marusic, 2014a).[8] The protests were subsequently supported by other civic initiatives and informal groups and grassroots of the university, high school, and elementary school professors, high school students as well as individual citizens.

As mentioned before, the movement received support across the ethnic cleavages. For instance, the protests were supported by the Union of Albanian Students of Macedonia from Tetovo (Stankoviḱ, 2014). The protesters rallied with bilingual slogans (Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016, also Figure 1), and the movements' official communication with the public was bilingual either. However, *Studentski Plenum* was using ethnically neutral slogans, such as "University is the voice of freedom!", "No justice, no peace!", "Autonomy!", and so on (Petkovski, 2014).

#Protestiram, on the other hand, arose from the 5 May 2015 anti-governmental protests, but it soon became an "umbrella movement" (Marusic, 2015a), which encompassed other movements, members of political parties, grassroots, and others. The anti-governmental protests started after SDSM released a taped audio conversation, revealing the Ministry of

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[8]The movement was usually referring to the Article XLVI of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, which sanctions and guarantees the autonomy of the universities (The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 1991)

Internal Affairs' intention to hide Martin Neškoski's murder back in 2011 and avoid responsibility (Protestiram, 2015a).

#Protestiram comprised activists with different ideological backgrounds (Gjinovci, 2016), yet the movement was endorsed by some of the Macedonian and Albanian opposition parties (Pollozhani and Taleski, 2016; Stefanovski, 2015). Although *#Protestiram* was appealing to the wider citizenry (Protestiram, 2016), the ethnic identities were even more visible than in *Studentski Plenum*. For example, Macedonian and Albanian flags were waved side-by-side during the demonstrations (see Figure 2) and Albanian and Macedonian language was jointly used in the official communication (see Figure 3).

To sum up, both *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* had some visible multi-ethnic elements, such as the concurrent use of Macedonian and Albanian national symbols and languages. However, they received support across the lines of ethnic division. What is more, they used ethnically neutral slogans and frames engaging in civic rather than ethnic-based collective actions. Furthermore, neither *Studentski Plenum* nor *#Protestiram* was originally composed of ethnic-based alliances but they rather operated as alliances between ethnically based and non-ethnically based individual and collective actors. It can thus be argued that *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* best fit the definition of *cross-ethnic movements*. Yet, an opportunity to define the movements' nature was left for the activists as well. This is discussed in the methodology and analysis chapter.

1.6. Studying Cross-Ethnic Mobilization – A Gap in the Literature

The study of mobilization in social movements has intrigued scholars for a long time (Milan, 2016, with permission). However, the literature on social movements has not provided a sufficient theoretical framework for studying the specific forms of cross-ethnic mobilization. Actually, the scholars who studied forms of cross-ethnic mobilization usually departed from the main concepts and theories of the social movement studies, such as *social networks* and the *resource mobilization theory*, *CAFs* and the *framing theory*, and *POS* and the *political process theory*, but used them either descriptively (e.g. Nagle, 2017, 2013) or separately (e.g. Cowell-Meyers, 2014; Touquet, 2015, 2012).

For instance, John Nagle (2013) has written about forms of cross-ethnic mobilization which arose from the cross-communitarian networks that the May Day and LGBT movements in Northern Ireland have built over time. Furthermore, when studying the protests in Sarajevo, Bosnia, Heleen Touquet relied on the framing theory and the role of the CAFs. She was investigating the protestors' attempt to create a common identity which is appealing to the wider population but does not relate to the standard ethnic frames used in the Bosnian society (2015, p. 392). Other scholars have relied on the notions of the political process theory and the role of the POS. For example, Cowell-Meyers (2014) has used the concept of POS to explain the role that the Good Friday Agreement had on the progress of the Women's Coalition in Northern Ireland, a cross-sectarian feminist movement and party.

It was only recently that scholars, such as Chiara Milan (2016, with permission), decided to include these concepts in their studies of mobilization in divided societies. Milan (2016, with permission) used these concepts in explaining the variations of the cross-ethnic mobilization across Bosnia and Herzegovina. The employment of these three concepts help us get a clearer picture of the cross-ethnic mobilization in the case of the Macedonian

movements as they are very often interlinked and complementary to each other and cannot explain cross-ethnic mobilization on their own (Milan, 2016, p. 48, with permission). Inspired by Milan's work, in order to overcome the lack of coherent theoretical framework, I rely on these three theoretical perspectives. In fact, these concepts are grouped under the *classic social movement agenda* and represent a major reference for studying mobilization (McAdam et al., 2001). Having addressed the state-of-the-art, I now continue with a detailed elaboration of the theoretical framework.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Perspectives

This chapter presents the key theoretical concepts and research expectations. Herein, I identify and conceptualize the state-of-the-art theoretical notions and definitions explaining mobilization in social movements. After introducing the key theoretical perspectives, I conclude by deriving the expectations that guide the qualitative analysis.

2.1. Contentious Politics, Collective Action, and Mobilization

As mentioned previously, the *political opportunity structures*, the *social networks* as part of the concept of *mobilizing structures*, the *collective action frames*, are part of the CSMA (McAdam et al., 2001, pp. 14–20). Contentious politics is usually defined by the collective actions of "[the] people who lack regular access to institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authorities" (Tarrow, 2011, p. 7). The term collective action is "hopelessly broad" (McAdam, 2007, p. 575), however, in the literature of social movements it usually refers to conflictious actions that aim to endorse or confront social changes (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 21). Given that mobilization represents the most fundamental practice of contentious politics (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 89), the CSMA is indeed a suitable departure point for studying cross-ethnic mobilization and its changes over time. By definition, *cross-ethnic mobilization* in divided society would be *a form of collective action that occurs across the major ethnic cleavages and comprises actors of different ethnic background*. In order to better understand mobilization, the concepts of *social networks*, *CAFs*, and *POS* are explained in detail.

2.2. Conceptualizing Social Networks

In the social movement literature, social networks are usually grouped under the concept of *mobilizing structures*, a part of a larger field of study synthesized in what is known as the *resource mobilization theory*. The *resource mobilization theory* developed in the 1970s

and sought to explain how social movements emerge and pursue their goals by acquiring different types of resources, such as material, human, and organizational resources (see Edwards and Gillham, 2013; Jenkins, 1983; Klandermans, 1984; McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Social networks fall into the category of human resources and they include networks that bring different movements and movement actors together (Tarrow, 2011, p. 124). Social networks, therefore, represent one of the major departure points for understanding mobilization in social movements. In fact, "[n]ew threats or opportunities may create a motive for collective action, but without sufficient organizational resources a sustained opposition movement is unlikely to develop" (McAdam et al., 2010, p. 405).

The networks can be formal or informal (McAdam et al., 1996, 2001) and they include previous groups and movements but also unstructured networks of potential activists (Caren, 2007, pp. 3456–3457). Correspondingly, the previous experiences, connections, and the networks of activists often play an important role in their decision to join social movements' actions (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Passy, 2002). Furthermore, the relationship between social networks and mobilization is bilateral. On the one hand, social networks endorse mobilization and, on the other hand, mobilization either strengthens the old networks or creates new ones (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Edwards and Gillham, 2013). Social networks will herein be referred as *social movement actors' acquaintance with individual or collective actors who belong or used to belong to current or previous movements, organizations, initiatives or informal circles of activists through which they engage in collective action.*

2.3. Conceptualizing Collective Action Frames

The concept of frame is usually associated with the American sociologist Erving Goffman, who defined frames as "schemata of interpretation that allow individuals or groups to locate, perceive, identify, and label events and occurrences, thus rendering meaning,

organizing experiences, and guiding actions" (1974, p. 21). The notions of frame and framing have originally been linked with the *framing theory,* a theoretical framework initially affiliated with the studies of mass communication and the processes of public opinion making (e.g. Iyengar, 1991; Scheufele, 2000). Social movement scholars, on the other hand, have used this concept as to explain the cultural dimension of collective action (Snow and Benford, 1988). Social movements use *collective action frames* in order to define their collective identities (Melucci, 1995; Polletta and Jasper, 2001), detect their problems, express their discontent and make claims, and to offer alternative solutions to the issues at stake (Benford and Snow, 2000; Della Porta, 2014a; Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Tarrow, 2011) as well as to mobilize supporters (Benford and Snow, 2000; Della Porta, 2014a). As mentioned previously, collective identities are crucial for understanding social movements. Melucci defines collective identity as a

> …process [that] involves cognitive definitions concerning the ends, means, and field of action […] thus [referring] to a network of active relationships between the actors, who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions […] *and* which enables individuals to feel like part of a common unity…(1995, pp. 44–45, my emphasis)

It is especially expected from the embryonic fields of collective action to cultivate new cultural frames and to create 'middle ground' identities that, as a result, would bring many groups together (Fligstein and McAdam, 2011, p. 11). The process of framing also includes manipulation with the meaning of the claims that the movements make, which, as a result, facilitates their mobilizing potential (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p. 1215). So as to be successful in this mission, *CAFs* need to appeal to the wider public. Therefore, *CAFs* need to be relevant, meaning that they need to "touch upon meaningful and important aspects of people's lives" (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 81). For the purposes of this thesis, *collective action frames* will be understood as *the ways social movements label their collective identities*

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but also their discontent, actions, claims, and goals, which, in turn, helps them mobilize
supporters.

2.4. Conceptualizing Political Opportunity Structures

Social movements represent a constitutive part of the political system in which they evolve (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Tarrow, 1998; Tilly, 1993) yet they constantly challenge it (Tilly, 1993, p. 7). The question that follows is: under what circumstances do social movements decide to challenge the political system? The *political process theory*, one of the major fields of study in the literature on social movements, has argued that movements engage in collective action as a result of the changes in the *POS* (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Meyer, 2004; Tarrow, 2011). Nevertheless, not all changes in the political opportunities have an effect on the social movements except those which are perceived as salient by the movements themselves (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, pp. 17–18). Moreover, some changes may have negative consequences for the movements and force them to demobilize. For instance, Fligstein and McAdam (2011, p. 15) talk about crises of the fields of action due to external shocks originating from other fields, invasion by other groups of organizations, actions of the state, or large-scale crises such as wars or depressions. Therefore, *POS* can be defined as:

> [C]onsistent − but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements (Tarrow, 1996, p. 54)

However, the concept of *POS* is rather sterile and does not provide answers to the 'what is at stake' type of questions on its own. Some scholars have hence developed various typologies of political opportunities. For example, Tarrow suggested the following five dimensions: (1) the possibility for institutional participation; (2) the (in)stability of the political alignments; (3) the divisions among the elites; (4) the existence of allies; and (5) the

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state's attitude of facilitation or repression (1998, pp. 77–80). Furthermore, as "[political] opportunity variables are often not disproved, refined, or replaced, but simply added" (Meyer, 2004, p. 135), other scholars have come up with further categorizations. For instance, the experiences of previous challenges (e.g. Minkoff, 1997), the public policy changes (e.g. Meyer, 1993), and others (see Meyer, 2004).

For the sake of simplicity, I label *political opportunity structures* as *perceived opportunities for mobilization* and *perceived threats that lead to demobilization.* However, due to the nature of the thesis, I look at *POS* from the perspective of Macedonian consociationalism and competitive authoritarian regime since the very goal of the *political process theory* is to detect and explain the varieties of social movements' actions across time and different institutional settings (Meyer, 2004, p. 127).

2.4.1. Political Opportunity Structures in Divided Societies

Divided societies wherein consociational power-sharing institutional settings are installed do not offer many opportunities for social movements and other social and political actors that do not fit within the dominant ethnic categorizations to emerge and mobilize. Consociationalism has been often criticized for its tendency to politicize ethnicity. For instance, consociationalism motivates politicians to care only about the needs of their respective ethnic group and not the needs of the citizenry as a whole (O'Flynn, 2010). Moreover, consociationalism hinders the emergence of political parties (Murtagh, 2015) and movements (Nagle, 2016b) that in some way dare to confront the major ethnic cleavages. Therefore, the consociational institutional settings seem to be factors of demobilization rather than factors of mobilization for movements that decide to challenge ethnicity in one way or another. However, when faced with common (external) threats, ethnic groups in divided societies can unite. For instance, Lijphart (1996, p. 263) suggests that external dangers

promote internal unity pointing to the Indian struggle for independence. Social movement scholars drive to the similar conclusion by arguing that perceived external threats facilitate groups' cooperation (e.g. Van Dyke, 2003).

2.4.2. Political Opportunity Structures in Hybrids

Hybrid regimes, on the other hand, seem even more complex. The role of *POS* is vital in hybrid regimes (Robertson, 2011, p. 10) since state repression represents one of the key features of these regimes. Repression can be defined as a "[…] physical *and other forms of coercion* of challengers aimed at increasing the cost of collective action, or directly suppress it" (Tarrow, 2011, p. 170, my emphasis). As we could have seen from the case of Macedonia, state repression does not only imply physical coercion but it can also be manifested through the regime's tools of pressure against the opposition, critical media, and the civil society as well as human rights' violation. However, the latter plays a dual role since it can be perceived either as an opportunity for mobilization or as a threat that rather demobilizes social movements (Robertson, 2011). In many hybrids or authoritarian regimes, the repression of the state provoked massive upheavals against the regime, such as the anti-regime and pro-democratic mobilizations against the communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s or the Arab Spring protests in 2011 (see Della Porta, 2014a).

2.5. Expectations

Out of the theory, I derive several expectations based on each of the employed theoretical concepts. These expectations serve as a guidance for the qualitative analysis. However, as it was mentioned before, I do not test these expectations and leave the door for new hypotheses and alternative explanations open. Regarding the reasons for and the nature of the movements, I expect that the *social networks*, *CAFs*, and *POS*, all played a role albeit

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in a different form. In explaining the timing of the cross-ethnic mobilization, I focus on the concept of POS.

Given the ethnically divided socio-political context, I expect that the *cross-ethnic mobilization* took place through *the pre-existing cross-ethnic networks of the movements' activists.* The previous interpersonal or intergroup contacts of the movement actors explain the *movements' cross-ethnic nature* in terms of their composition and internal organization as well (see Table 1).

Echoing on the literature on framing, *I furthermore expect that the cross-ethnic mobilization occurred because the movements addressed the common grievances of the Macedonian and Albanian people, which, in turn, helped them mobilize supporters across the ethnic cleavages.* I argue that *the common grievances of the movement actors also explain why the movements were cross-ethnic* given that the latter engage in conflicts beyond ethnicity (see Table 1). Moreover, I expect that by addressing the common grievances of Macedonians and Albanians, *the movements created collective identity wherein the ethnicity did not represent the only mean of identification or it was surpassed, which explains their cross-ethnic nature as well.*

From a position of participant observer, I expect that the concept of *POS* best explains the reasons and timing of the cross-ethnic mobilization in the case of the Macedonian movements. I concur that both Macedonians and Albanians perceived the undemocratic manifestations of Macedonian regime, which reached its peak with the revealing of the wire-tapping scandal in 2015, as common 'threats' that negatively affect all the citizens of the country regardless of their ethnic origin. In particular, I expect that *the cross-ethnic mobilization was triggered by the controversial changes to the Law on Higher Education* (*changes in policy variable,* see Section 2.4.), a 'a perceived common threat' in the case of

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Studentski Plenum, and *the regime's repressive way of governing* (*repression variable*, see Section 2.4.)*,* a perceived 'common threat' in the case of *#Protestiram*. Having presented the expectations, I now proceed with the methodological framework wherein I explain the major features of the research design.

Chapter 3. Methodological Framework

Due to the lack of coherent theoretical framework, the cross-ethnic mobilization in divided societies is underresearched and undertheorized. Thus, this thesis engages in an empirical study based on a qualitative within-case analysis of the Macedonia by investigating the social movements *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram*. This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research design.

3.1. Case Selection

The empirical study of the Macedonian social movements falls into the category of within-case study analysis where Macedonia is taken as a case study around *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* as units of analysis and comparison. As mentioned before, the thesis focuses on these movements' networks of activists. The within-case analysis is used both for theory-testing (Mahoney, 2007) and theory-building (Eisenhardt, 1989). Due to the qualitative nature of this research, the aim of the within-case analysis is to generate new hypotheses that would explain the cross-ethnic mobilization in the Macedonian movements (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Case study analysis is known for its randomization problem as it deals with a small number of cases aiming to establish a causal relationship across a larger population of cases (Gerring, 2007). Nevertheless, there are several strategies for non-random case selection (Gering, 2007, pp. 89 - 91). In the case of Macedonia, I employed the *deviant case method of selection*. According to Gerring, the deviant case method "selects the case(s) that, by reference to some general understanding of a topic (either a specific theory or common sense), demonstrates a surprising value" (2007, p. 105). Looking from the perspectives of the literature on divided societies presented earlier in this thesis, the choice of this method in selecting Macedonia is more than clear.

Studentski Plenum and *#Protestiram* are the units of my analysis. Given the "magnitude of their human consequences", the movements were selected as cases of "intrinsic importance" (Van Evera, 1997, pp. 86–87) since their success to bring Macedonians and Albanians together represents an important confrontation with the ethnic divisions in the country. As indicated before, this thesis investigates the perceptions of the movement activists regarding the cross-ethnic mobilization and there are three reasons for that. Theoretically speaking, networks represent one of the key channels through which potential activists mobilize (Passy, 2002, p. 24). Because of their horizontal structure both *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* had a fluid base of movement actors. Practically speaking, it was extremely difficult to track all the possible actors involved in the movement activities. Nevertheless, as a participant observer, I had connections with some informal networks of activists. Research-wise, including these networks, unlike bringing unrelated movement actors together, meant deepening the analysis (Della Porta, 2014c, p. 296). In fact, such pre-existing groups of activists are more capable of sharing their experiences as they already have their common identities developed (Della Porta, 2014c, p. 296).

3.2. Why Go Qualitative?

The research on social movements has generally combined qualitative and quantitative methods thus making methodological pluralism prevalent in the field (Della Porta, 2014b, p. 2). Nevertheless, this thesis engages in a qualitative research and there are several reasons guiding this choice. First, the lack of statistical inference to more than several cases and the inability to meet the standard statistical considerations, such as identification, specification, and robustness of data, disables this thesis from engaging in a quantitative research (Gerring, 2007, pp. 90–91). Furthermore, I am not just an independent observer of the movements but closely related to my subject of research as I act from a position of participant observer who was actively involved in the movements' activities (Della Porta, 2014b, p. 7). Last, the study

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of the Macedonian movements is context-bound and requires context sensitivity, which is not the case with the quantitative studies (Della Porta, 2014b, p. 7).

3.3. Data Collection and Research Method

The data was gathered through fieldwork research, which was based on focus groups with the movements' activists. Given that focus groups "aim to discover the meaning behind the position of a certain group, and the collective process through which this collective meaning is formed" (Della Porta, 2014c, p. 290), they are the most suitable research method for studying networks in social movements. Focus groups allow me to analyze the movement activists' perceptions about the emergence of the cross-ethnic mobilization, its timing, as well as the movements' nature. Furthermore, they help me compare the perceptions of the activists of *Studentski Plenum*, on the one hand, and *#Protestiram*, on the other hand. Last, as the participants are encouraged to jointly discuss the issues of interest and even confront each other (Della Porta, 2014c, p. 290), focus groups provide me with an opportunity to examine the differences in the perceptions of the Macedonian vis-à-vis the Albanian activists of the movements.

I conducted two focus groups, that is, one per movement. The focus groups were conducted in Macedonian after which I audiotaped, transcribed, and anonymized them. The transcripts were fully transcribed in Macedonian yet the quotes that are used to explain the themes which derive from the analysis were translated into English (see Appendix D, Section 2). The focus groups were done using a semi-structured topic guide wherein the questions were categorized following predetermined specific topics (Berg, 2009, pp. 107–109).

3.3.1. Snowball Sampling

When researchers choose participants, they can opt for two strategies: (1) either they select participants coming from natural groups existing prior the research; or (2) they select

participants by forming ad hoc groups constructed for the purposes of the research (Della Porta, 2014c, p. 296). My fieldwork research comprised focus groups based on natural groups. In general, the selection of the focus group participants does not follow the criteria of systematic random sampling (Bloor et al., 2001, p. 19). Usually, their selection is done through intermediaries or snowball sampling (Della Porta, 2014c, p. 297). Given that the movements had a fluid base of activists, I opted for snowball sampling as an accurate technique for hard-to-reach populations (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015; Faugier and Sargeant, 1997). Moreover, snowball sampling is a good selecting strategy for exploratory and novel studies (Atkinson and Flint, 2004).

Snowball sampling is a method that "yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981, p. 141). The sampling process starts with the identification of the initial subjects who then suggest other actors (Atkinson and Flint, 2004). As mentioned previously, I had the opportunity to meet some of the movements' activists in person so the initial subjects were easily accessible to me. However, the dynamics of the individuals in the group is crucial to the success of the research (Bloor et al., 2001, p. 19). Thus, the initial subjects were asked to give me names of participants that meet the characteristics related to the nature of the research (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981; Bloor et al., 2001).

Relying on the fact that " [the] composition [of the focus groups] is irrelevant if none of the potential participants turn up to the group" (Bloor et al., 2001, p. 19), additional strategies to secure that the focus groups will not fall apart were used. Hence, in cases where my contacts refused to participate, I asked them to suggest other people as their replacement relying on the same sampling strategy. In preserving the dynamics of the groups, the

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interviewees were asked to fulfill a short questionnaire concerning their demographic data (Appendix C, Section 2).

When choosing the participants, I accounted for the ethnic composition of the groups. I tended to mimic the proportional representation of the ethnic groups in the country. Following the results from the 2002 census (State Statistical Office, 2005, p. 34), I tried to secure participation of at least 25.2% Albanians per group by asking the participants to indicate their ethnicity (Appendix C, Section 2). In the process of sampling, I also took into the consideration the participants' gender (see Appendix C, Section 2). To assure myself that the participants were involved in the movements' activities, at least for some period of time, I tried to recruit participants who were "capable of leading inside the group the broader debates on the nature and the problems of the movement" (Touraine, 1978, p. 196 quoted in Della Porta, 2014c, p. 297). Due to the unsolidified membership as well as the vague leadership of the movements, I decided to mix the more active participants with less active ones.

The vast majority of *Studentski Plenum's* activists were students. However, *#Protestiram* had activists coming from different social statuses (Gjinovci, 2016). Thus, I also accounted for the participants' social status by asking them to indicate their monthly income and highest educational attainment (see Appendix C, Section 2). Last, the student protests have largely taken place in Skopje but there were also some sporadic protests in few smaller towns in the country (Marusic, 2014b, para 6). On the contrary, the protests organized by *#Protestiram* managed to spread across the country (Nova TV, 2016). Therefore, the sampling took into account participants' residence as well (Appendix C, Section 2).

3.3.2. Focus Groups in Practice

The focus group with the activists of Studentski Plenum (F1) took place on December 15, 2016, while the focus group with the activists of #Protestiram (F2) took place the next

day. The interviewees were briefed about the voluntary nature, the topic, as well as the research ethics of the study beforehand (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003, pp. 133–134; Keats, 2000, pp. 48–49, see also Appendix C, Section 4). The participants were asked to sign a written consent for participation as well (Appendix C, Section 4). I initially invited six participants per group, given the fact that a number of participants in focus groups usually varies from six to twelve people (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). Nonetheless, as a matter of precaution, more people were invited (six per group) since there is always a risk that some of the participants will not show up (Krueger and King, 1998; Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). In F1, nine out of twelve invited people showed up. On the other hand, six out of twelve initially invited people participated in F2. The methodological minimum was nevertheless met.

F1consisted of four Macedonians, three Albanians, and two respondents that did not want to indicate their ethnicity or did not define themselves in ethnic terms (hereinafter titular Macedonians or Albanians). All of the participants indicated Skopje as their residence except one participant who indicated a village near the town of Gostivar (Western Macedonia). All participants were students from undergraduate and graduate level of degrees. F2 comprised two Macedonians, one Albanian, two titular Macedonians and one titular Albanian. All of the participants indicated Skopje as a place of residence except one who indicated the city of Tetovo (Western Macedonia). F2 was mostly made of people employed in the private or non-governmental sector expect two respondents who were unemployed. All of them indicated undergraduate or graduate studies as their highest educational attainment.

As for the group dynamics, the participants in both F1 and F2 were giving same or similar answers to the questions most of the time – a feature typical for natural, that is, pre-existing groups (Bloor et al., 2001, pp. 20–36). Nevertheless, there were moments where the focus group respondents expressed dissent opinions mainly concerning the questions related

to the nature of the movements' activism, their goals, and future. Last, the more experienced activists among the interviewees tended to talk more than the less experienced ones.

3.3.3. Constructing the Topic Guide

When constructing the topic guide, I included appropriately worded questions, which meant constructing simple, clear, unbiased, open-ended yet theoretically grounded questions that will make the people talk and provide the researcher with the necessary data (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003, pp. 123–124; Foddy, 1993, pp. 1–11; Keats, 2000, pp. 40–42). Before I went to the field, I pre-tested the questions with people familiar with the subject of the study as to come up with the 'right' and relevant questions (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003, pp. 134–137; Berg, 2009, p. 119). The questions used for the purposes of the focus groups were divided into stages addressing the most important topics of the study including warm-up, core, and cooling down questions (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003, pp. 117–123; Hermanowicz, 2002, p. 489; Keats, 2000, pp. 47–50). Given the semi-structured nature of the focus groups, I did not always follow the order of the questions (Hermanowicz, 2002, p. 494) or asked questions that were not originally included in the topic guide (Berg, 2009, pp. 114–115).

For assessing the role of the political opportunities, I asked the participants about their perceptions of potential political opportunities that led to the emergence of the respective movements. The interviewees were also asked to explain these political opportunities as well as their role in the cross-ethnic mobilization. Questions such as: whether there were opportunities that were recognized by both Macedonians and Albanians or there were some differences; and whether there were opportunities that brought Macedonians and Albanians together, were asked in this part.

Another set of questions focused on the role of social networks. I asked the respondents to tell me about the way they got involved in the movements. The participants

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were asked to talk about their acquaintances with the other people in the movements, especially with the activists coming from the 'other' ethnic group as well as to describe the nature of these relationships. Questions about the role of these connections in the participants' decision to join the movements were also asked.

The rest of the questions addressed the role of the political opportunities. Since 'frame' is an academic term, I had to reframe it in a more simple language. Questions tackling the importance of ethnicity in the two movements were asked in this part. I also wanted to know more about respondents' perception of the mobilizing role of the CAFs. I asked questions such as whether the way the movements represented themselves to the public as well as the way they represented their claims, interests, and goals, helped the movements mobilize Macedonians and Albanians. The respondents were also asked to define the ethnic nature of movements with their own words.

Last, in order to see which factor played the most important role, the participants were asked to point out to a particular reason that they think was crucial for the emergence of the movements and the cross-ethnic mobilization. The full topic guide is available in Appendix C, Section 4.

3.4. Analytic Method

The analytic method of this thesis is thematic analysis. The thematic analysis represents a qualitative analytic method that aims to detect themes and patterns, which "captur[e] something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 82). This analytic method is interested in "the told" that is, it is focused on the content of the gathered data (Riessman, 2008, p. 58). In coding the data, I used a *mixed coding approach* by combining deductive and inductive coding (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp.

88–89; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The preliminary analysis relied on a deductive coding based on the theoretical insights. After I learned my data-set, I proceeded with an inductive coding by looking for themes and patterns that derive directly from the data. During the coding process, I tried to derive both semantic and latent themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp. 84–85). A detailed elaboration of the analysis follows in the next chapter.

3.5. Validity and Reliability of the Data

In qualitative research, "the validity and reliability of data have a crucial bearing on whether any wider inference can be drawn from a single study, of whatever form the inference might take" (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 269). Following the guidelines for safeguarding validity and reliability of the data (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, pp. 263–284), I took the following preventive steps.

In ensuring internal validity, I controlled the groups' dynamics by seeking to avoid over-domination of the groups by particular respondents and encouraging the less confident participants to speak their mind (Bloor et al., 2001, p. 49) yet ensuring that all the respondents are freely expressing their opinion (Bloor et al., 2001, pp. 22–24). Following the literature on qualitative research methodology (see Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 275), I also employed the *approach of constant comparison* by trying to be consistent and accurate during the process of data coding yet to look for and be aware of the differences and variations that appear in the data (Gibbs, 2008, p. 96). By being a participant-observant, I was able to recognize most of the names, events, and places that were brought up during the discussion by the focus group respondents. Yet, I consulted additional sources in order to double-check the trustworthiness of this information, therefore, ensuring the external validity of the data (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 288).

Internal reliability of the data is harder to control when using non-random selection strategies, such as snowball sampling (Cohen and Arieli, 2011; van Meter, 1990). Thus, in order to assure that the sample of respondents really reflects the larger population, I undertook different strategies to make the focus groups as representative as possible, previously explained in the subsection 3.3.1. During the thematic analysis, I tended to construct comprehensive concepts that truly reflect the data as well as avoid over-interpretation and draw evidence-based conclusions instead (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 274).

On the other hand, the external reliability of the data was difficult to control. In avoiding biased data, the literature suggests omitting interviews with people that the researchers personally know from before (Hermanowicz, 2002, p. 494). However, due to my position of participant observer, sometimes it was extremely difficult to comply with these 'rules'. The focus groups comprised participants, some of whom know me or the other participants from before. What also needs to be acknowledged is the potential role of ethnicity. Due to the fact that the focus groups had mixed ethnic composition, the participants might have been motivated to provide me with socially desirable answers as well as inhibit their true opinions (Foddy, 1993, p. 9). As every research is prone to biases and errors and there is no by-the-book solution to their full elimination, the best thing would be to remain self-reflective and transparent about as well as critical of them (Norris, 1997, p. 173).

Chapter 4. Qualitative Analysis

This chapter presents the qualitative analysis of the thesis. The chapter starts by briefly reminding the readers about the analytic technique that leads the qualitative inquiry. It then introduces the themes derived from the analysis and presents the findings. The chapter concludes by summarizing the results of the analysis and reporting the limitations of the research.

4.1. Thematic Analysis

As stated previously, thematic analysis is the analytic method that guides the qualitative study. It was mentioned before that this thesis seeks to understand how the cross-ethnic mobilization in *Studentski* Plenum and *#Protestiram* came about. The research question is followed by two sub-questions that aim to explain why the movements were cross-ethnic as well as why the cross-ethnic mobilization occurred in the period between 2014 and 2016 and not before. For that purpose, I engaged in a cross-case thematic analysis that compares *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* by detecting similar and different perceptions of the reasons for the cross-ethnic mobilization, its timing, and the nature of the movements. The analysis unveiled that the shared grievances of the activists, socio-economic reasons, social networks, and ethnicity all affected the cross-ethnic mobilization albeit in a different form and with a different effect. These patterns represent the themes of my analysis (see also Appendix D, Section 1).

I present the findings by simultaneously reporting the similarities and differences between *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* and summarizing them at the end of the chapter. The quotes that are used to explain the themes deriving from the analysis are translated into English (Appendix D, Section 2). Since focus groups can produce a lot of data (Bloor et al., 2001; Rabiee, 2004), which was the case with the elaborate answers of my interviewees as

well, I present reduced versions of the original quotes. However, I keep the quotations as extensive as possible in order to familiarize the readers with the context of the discussion (Bloor et al., 2001, p. 72).

When reporting the quotes, I include explanatory comments as to fill the information gaps in the interviewees' responses. These are indicated with square brackets and explained in footnotes whenever necessary. While discussing the findings, I add some side-comments and additional insights that are not related to the research question but give a clearer picture about the nature and context of the cross-ethnic mobilization. These comments present thought-provoking information, which can be a departure point for future research on this topic. This being told, I now introduce the themes and findings.

4.1.1. Accumulated Dissatisfaction

In order to understand the reasons and motives behind the cross-ethnic mobilization, we have to look at the accumulated dissatisfaction of the movement activists with the socio-political situation in the country. The majority of the participants in both F1 (*Studentski Plenum*) and F2 (*#Protestiram*) reported that they joined the movements because they were driven by grievances mainly regarding the functioning of the state. The grievances varied between but also within the focus groups, that is, they were more diverse in F1 and more cohesive in F2. Nevertheless, the grievances concerning the partisan and corrupt education prevailed in F1, while the grievances regarding the unjust system prevailed in F2. Therefore, the theme *common grievances* was divided into two sub-themes being 1) *partisan and corrupt education* and 2) *unjust system*.

4.1.1.1. The Education is Corrupt

Interestingly, the cross-ethnic mobilization in *Studentski Plenum* seems to have taken place because of reasons beyond the contention related to the controversial Law on Higher

Education. For example, the grievances concerning the partisan and corrupted higher education seem to prevail among the Albanian interviewees. When explaining what motivated them to join the movement, the Albanian interviewees referred to the corruption in the higher education system emphasizing the discontent of the students with the politicized State University of Tetovo (DUT)[9] – the biggest Albanian-based university in Macedonia.[10] They reported the following:

> *Interviewee 8: We have a [high school] state matura[11] but everyone steals in the state matura. The professors are helping the students [to pass the exams][…]how will the external testing look like [i.e. the Law on Higher Education]? Same, like that [the high school state matura][…]like the main goal was exactly this, that we can do something important for this state[…]for the whole educational system[…]*
>
> *Interviewee 9: The professors [at DUT] are all politicians who threaten the students not to raise their voice[…]looking at that dissatisfied mass of young people, of students, I couldn't remain indifferent and not join [the protests]. Regardless of our ethnicity or religion, we have all strived for something better[…]*
>
> *Interviewee 8: They [the students at DUT] really wanted to join the protests[…]but they were afraid that someone will photograph them and then you know what kind of professors are these[…]all of them members of the former governing parties[…]* **(F1, pp. 8-10)**

Even if we do not take these statements for granted, the party-based hiring practices in the context of the Macedonian public service should not surprise us. Some scholars like Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova 'diagnosed' Macedonia as a particracy claiming that it is hard to distinguish "where the party sphere ends and where the state begins" (2011, p. 16). In the context of the current regime, the employment in the civil service is usually conditioned with

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[9]Tetovo is a town in the Western Macedonia predominantly inhabited by ethnic Albanians (State Statistical Office, 2005, p. 35).
[10]The OFA proposed a creation of a higher education institutions teaching in the language of the communities that make at least 20% of the total population, that is, ethnic Albanians (see Barbieri et al., 2013).
[11]Before officially graduating from their secondary education, the high school students in Macedonia are obliged to pass high school matura, a form of a state-run final exam.

a party membership (Bieber, 2014). This 'diagnosis' applies to the higher education as well. In fact, the core corruption features of the Macedonian higher education are bribery, nepotism, politicization, and even despotism (Hajrullai, 2015, p. 1189). However, DUT students decided to confront the university authorities and joined the student protests during the second student march (F1, p. 8; pp. 12-14). The second student march organized by *Studentski Plenum,* which took place on December 10, 2014, in the capital Skopje, managed to mobilize over 12,000 people (Marusic, 2014a) including many students coming from the Albanian-based universities in the country (Stankoviḱ, 2014).

The rest of the interviewees reported diverse and often abstract grievances as their motivation to join *Studentski Plenum.* These include dissatisfaction with the overall political situation in the country (Interviewee 6, p. 17), the system as such (Interviewee 1, pp. 25-26) but also concrete grievances, such as the authoritarian practices of the Macedonian regime rather than the specific proposal for state exam (Interviewee 2, p. 6, 26). Indeed, when large-scale mobilization occurs as a result of built up tensions, the demands of the protestors may change consequently leading to a shift in the mobilization's goals and development (Bruun, 2013, p. 246). This shift may be done by turning particular grievances into more general ones and transforming the specific struggles into struggles against greater issues, such as corruption, abuse of power, the legitimacy of authorities, certain ideologies or the system as a whole (Bruun, 2013, p. 246). After all, *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* joined the SDSM-led anti-governmental protest *Citizens for Macedonia* held on May 17, 2015 (Stefanovski, 2015).

4.1.1.2. The System is Unjust

In the case of *#Protestiram*, the interviewees, regardless of their ethnicity, provided me with more unified answers as to what motivated them to join the movement. They were

pointing to the political crisis in the country as a reason for the cross-ethnic mobilization. When I asked them what they mean when they that the political crisis was seen as a reason the majority of them referred to the injustices in the system revealed through the 2015 wiretapping scandal. The following quotes serve as an illustration:

> *Interviewee 5: [...]DUI and VMRO are the same party[...]the former talks against the Macedonians, the latter against the Albanians but, in reality, they share everything, so what should I do now? I will look at how they share everything, while at the same time putting me in a position to fight with the others [Macedonians]?*

> *Interviewee 4: I was personally mobilized by the anger with the state[...]there is no rule of law [...]but the abolition [the controversial presidential pardons] was the moment.*

> *Interviewee 6: The abolition was the peak of the anger [...] it [the anger] accumulates from everything you hear and no one reacts, but to pardon so many criminals and to continue with your life as if nothing happened, that must not be allowed!*

> *Interviewee 2: I think that both the Macedonians and Albanians are driven by the revealing of the injustice [i.e. the leaked audio materials][...] the real injustice is not that Macedonians do something to Albanians or vice versa, the real injustice is that Gruevski and [Ali] Ahmeti [the leader of DUI] rig bids, steal money, and similar stuff[...]*

> *Interviewee 1: I think that what you've just said, the strive for justice was the main motivation for mobilization for everyone[...]I believe that it's the same [reason] among the members of the different ethnic communities[...]* **(F2, p. 38-45)**

The reported injustices included the lack of rule of law (p. 31, 38, 41), abuse of power (p. 48), state-assisted organized crime (p. 31, 45) but also the poverty and misery in the country (p. 31, 47). In their opinion, the grievances were framed in a way that they are equally important for all the citizens in the country regardless of their ethnicity (p. 47). These grievances should not be taken as a surprise given the nature and dynamics of the Macedonian

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regime (see section 1.3), as well as the alleged crimes, revealed through the leaked audio materials.

Since corruption, clientelism, weak rule of law, and human rights and liberties violations are common in hybrid regimes (Levitsky and Way, 2010), it can be argued that all of the above-reported grievances were in a way referring to the regime's way of governing. Hence, the expectation that the repressive way of governing of the Macedonian regime was perceived as a common threat, which, in turn, led to the cross-ethnic mobilization seems accurate. Contrary to what I initially expected though, this applies not only to *#Protestiram* but to *Studentski Plenum* as well. The expectation that the movements addressed the common needs and grievances of the Macedonian and Albanian people leading to the cross-ethnic mobilization seems confirmed as well. Last, the expectation that the reported grievances beyond ethnicity explain the movements' cross-ethnic character also appears as true.

4.1.2. Opportunities and Organizational Learning

The grievances with the regime indeed fueled the cross-ethnic mobilization. However, it appears that the timing of the cross-ethnic mobilization was affected by the opportune situations as well as the organizational learning of the movements. Hence, the sub-themes *opportune situations* and *organizational learning* became part of the all-embracing *socio-political reasons* theme.

4.1.2.1. Circumstances Matter

To begin, when asked whether they recognize some opportunity as a result of which the cross-ethnic mobilization occurred, the interviewees in F1 answered:

> *Interviewee 2: Definitely there was [some]. It was politically opportune for the movement to emerge [...] everyone was tired from the everyday political situation*

between the two key political actors in the country [VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM] and nothing new was happening then [...]

Interviewee 1: Like the whole political situation was so bad. Yes, and I think that the young people had it enough [...] because there was no debate [in the country], [the debate] moved to the students [...]

Interviewee2: What was needed was the way of governing of Nikola Gruevski [everyone laughs] **(F1, pp. 23-26)**

In F2, on the other hand, the interviewees referred to more concrete events, which they saw as an opportunity for action. This is demonstrated in the excerpts below:

Interviewee 1: There were moments where certain events made the people take the streets. That was the attempt to hide [the murder of] Martin Neškovski[...]we needed a trigger [...]if there is something emotional like that[...]it makes you take the streets[...]the majority of the students who were protesting [i.e. Studentski Plenum] were not protesting because they knew what the Law on Higher Education envisions, 95% didn't know anything about it. They took the streets because they were unhappy with their life in Macedonia.

Interviewee 4: Because they live in moldy student dormitories[12] [...]

Interviewee 1: Exactly [...] **(F2, pp. 40-41)**

In order to better understand the presented excerpts and get a clearer picture about the opportune situations that led to the cross-ethnic mobilization, we should first look at the time periods that the interviewees were referring to. In the case of *Studentski Plenum*, the interviewees were talking about the period when SDSM decided to boycott the work of the parliament (F1, p. 23-24) as a result of the alleged electoral fraud committed by Nikola Gruevski during the parliamentary elections in 2014 (Casule, 2014). Nevertheless, they denied that the boycott of the opposition was seen as an opportunity for collective action and

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[12]The interviewee probably refers to the Goce Delčev public student dormitory in Skopje. The dormitory was criticized for its bad living conditions. Studentski Plenum organized a protest in front of the dormitory in October demanding its immediate renovation (see Marusic, 2015b).

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indicated the general political situation in Macedonia instead (F1, p. 24). The activists of *#Protestiram* were simultaneously talking about the protests that started in spring of 2015 – the period when the alleged crimes committed by the government, such hiding the murder of Martin Neškovski, as well as the 2016 protests resulting from the controversial presidential pardons (F2, pp. 40-41). Nonetheless, the interviewees pointed out that the dissatisfaction with the whole situation in the country existed a long time before these particular events (F2, p. 40).

Nevertheless, while in *Studentski Plenum* the opportune situations can be analyzed from a perspective of more consistent and general political opportunity structures, such as regime's repression, in *#Protestiram* these were very concrete events, that is, 'triggers'. In fact, the "trigger events" can significantly affect social mobilizations causing outrage or inspiring new types of protest (Bruun, 2013, p. 246). The "moral shocks" deriving from public or private as well as sudden or developing trigger events, can be a stepping stone to social movement actors' recruitment (Jasper, 1998, p. 409). That being said, it seems that the cross-ethnic mobilization indeed came about in the period between 2014 and 2016 as a result of the undemocratic attitudes of the Macedonian regime can be confirmed. However, while my expectation that POS can explain the timing of the cross-ethnic mobilization seems to be true in *Studentski Plenum*, the same cannot be said about *#Protestiram* where the cross-ethnic mobilization was triggered by emotionally charged concrete events.

4.1.2.2. Learning As Well If Not More

Another, perhaps even more important aspect for understanding what brought Macedonians and Albanians together in the period between 2014 and 2016 seems to be the organizational learning of the movements. According to the interviewees in both F1 and F2, previous experiences and mistakes of some of the movement activists, helped the movements

to become more pragmatic, inclusive, and therefore more popular than the previous movements and similar initiatives. This is visible through the following answers:

> *Interviewee 1: And I think it [Studentski Plenum] succeeded mainly because there was a heterogeneity[…]*

> *Interviewee 7: That's why Studentski Indeks [a previous student initiative] did not succeed, it was too anarchistic.*

> *Interviewee 1: Indeed, indeed.*

> *Interviewee 3: Yes, yes[...]* **(F1, pp. 24 – 25)**

While discussing the perceived opportunities for collective action, the interviewees in F1 diverged from the topic and referred to the heterogeneity or the heterogeneous structure of *Studentski Plenum* as a potential explanation for the latter's emergence. Heterogeneity meant two things for the interviewees. First, heterogeneity encompassed the ideologically pluralist base of activists in the movement entailing moderates, left-wingers, and anarchists (F1, p. 18), absent in the previous initiatives and movements. Second, heterogeneity meant a base of activists with diverse professional background and experiences (F1, pp. 18-19). This composition of people helped *Studentski Plenum* recruit more supporters than its predecessors because the more skilled activists shared their knowledge with the less skilled ones while at the same time providing new and creative ideas for mobilization (F1, pp. 18-19). To sum up, the interviewees suggested that the movement was successful because the activists were learning from their previous mistakes in terms of organization, mobilization, and contesting authorities.

Following a discussion about the ethnic dimension of the movement, presented in the last sub-chapter, the interviewees in F2 continued debating about the achievements of

#Protestiram comparing the movement with the earlier less successful movements and organizations. The respondents were referring to the supra-partisan nature of the movement that helped *#Protestiram* surpass the partisan/non-partisan divisions in the previous movements and initiatives and become successful. Indeed, the former movements, such as *Stop for police brutality* or *AMAN*, afraid of being associated with the oppositional political parties in the country, were labeling their activities as 'non-partisan' (Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016, p. 179). This is evident in the following excerpts as well:

> *Interviewee 3: [...] AMAN in 2012 was very interesting. If just there was someone to take a photo of us [laughs] [...]*
>
> *Interviewee 6: The beginnings [sighs]*
>
> *Interviewee 3: Yes[...]Actually it all started then [pause, i.e. the partisan/non-partisan divisions in AMAN] are you a party member? [...] who's this person? Who's that person? [...]*
>
> *Interviewee 4: A lot of prejudices, yes[...]*
>
> *Interviewee 3: We learned the lesson in #Protestiram [...] I don't care if you're a party member, what's your ethnicity, we have a main goal, same problems [pause] and there is really no point in discussing these things [...]* **(F2, 16-17)**

Certainly, it seems that a significant role was played by the movement activists who had previous experiences with popular mobilization. For instance, the movement actors who were previously part of *Studentski Plenum* inspired *#Protestiram* to use the former's communicational strategies, which significantly improved the organizational capacity of the latter (F2, p. 12). The organizational theory suggests that the protest tactics but also ideas, actors, and organizational structures of one movement can have a spillover effect and affect other movements (Meyer and Whittier, 1994, p. 277). Hence, movements not only learn from

each other by adopting well-tried practices but also develop their own novel strategies and organizational features, which can make them more successful than other movements (Wang and Soule, 2012).

However, the interviewees admitted that, due to the ethnic cleavages in the society, they had not known how to reach to the other side or had not had a previous experience of cross-ethnic mobilization prior the 2014-2016 protest cycles (F1, p. 20; F2, pp. 19 – 20). Indeed, as demonstrated in section 1.4., before 2014 there had not been successful attempts for cross-ethnic mobilization. On the other hand, the interviewees argued that their activities had an impact on the inter-ethnic relations in the country. For example, the participants in F1 perceived the cross-ethnic mobilization as a historical junction of Macedonians and Albanians (p. 12. 16). Like in F1, the interviewees in F2 also pointed to the fact that #Protestiram made an important shift in the inter-ethnic relations by bringing the two communities closer to each other (p. 20, 24). Thus, I argue that the cross-ethnic mobilization can be understood by comparing *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* with their predecessors.

It was said before that the demands of the preceding movements were particularistic in nature (Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016). On the contrary, the grievances reported by the activists of *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* were resonating with the wider population in the country. Hence, by building upon on Petkovski and Nikolovski's claim (2016), it could be hypothesized that the *cross-ethnic mobilization took place in the period between 2014 and 2016 and not before because the movements addressed broader grievances compared with their predecessors.*

Another interesting aspect is the movements' cooperation with the political parties in Macedonia, which was not the case with their predecessors (see Marusic, 2012; Petkovski and Nikolovski, 2016). Political parties appear to be the missing puzzle in the cross-ethnic

mobilizations in the other divided societies as well. For instance, some scholars argue that the Bosnian movements declined because they refused to cooperate with the political parties in the country as actors with a greater mobilizing power (e.g. Milan, 2016, with permission; Murtagh, 2016). It appears that *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* avoided this 'trap' by being more pragmatic than their predecessors. The two movements received support from both the Macedonian and Albanian parties in the country (Pollozhani and Taleski, 2016; Stefanovski, 2015). Thus, another hypothesis could be that *the cross-ethnic mobilization did not occur before 2014 because the preceding movements failed to widen the mobilization by not cooperating with the political parties.*

4.1.3. Old and New Channels of Mobilization

Grievances, opportune situations and the movements' organizational learning help us understand the motivation behind and timing of the cross-ethnic mobilization. However, if we want to understand how the latter occurred, we should look at the role of networks. The further analysis uncovered that *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* were not only learning from their predecessors but they were building up upon them as well. Nevertheless, the pre-existing ties and connections of the movements' activists do not fully explain the cross-ethnic mobilization. In fact, it was revealed that the newly-established networks also played an important role. Therefore, both *pre-existing* and *newly-established networks* form the third theme *networks*.

4.1.3.1. Pre-Existing Networks – Setting the Ground for Cross-Ethnic Mobilization

In order to check whether pre-existing networks played a role in the cross-ethnic mobilization, I asked my interviewees to tell me how they found about the movements. The interviewees in F1 gave me these answers:

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Interviewee 3:[...]I was participating in a discussion [...] organized by Otvoren Kufer [a student initiative] but the idea for a student meeting[13] *was random from the people who were there [...]*

Interviewee 5: [...]I found out about Studentski Plenum from my colleagues, I called Interviewee 8 and I remember that after the second march we had a joint statement on TV informing the Albanian students because we thought that they were not informed that Studentski Plenum actually exists [...]

Interviewee 6: I went there accidentally [at the meeting], I saw the poster [for the first meeting] and I went[...]

Interviewee 7: [For me] the idea for Student Plenum was not something new because I was active in Sloboden Indeks, Sokratovci [a student initiative]

Interviewee 1: [...]I was in the library when [name of another activist of Studentski Plenum] called me [and told me]: 'we are organizing something at Elektro[14]*[the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies in Skopje], tomorrow, come [...]*

(F1, pp. 1-3)

The above excerpts demonstrate that the interviewees were part of pre-existing networks. The pre-existing networks had formal nature comprising previous initiatives and organizations. The networks had informal character as well consisting of friends and colleagues. When I asked them what the connection with these initiatives and people was, some of the interviewees pointed out that they personally but also other activists in the movement were part of former student initiatives and organizations like *Otvoren Kufer* or *Sloboden Indeks*, NGOs like the *Youth Educational Forum* but also leftist organizations and movements like *Lenka* and *Solidarnost* (p. 18). For instance, one of the interviewees reported that all of the members of *Otvoren Kufer* joined *Studentski Plenum* because they thought that

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[13]The interviewee is referring to the very first meeting of the new student initiative preceding *Studentski Plenum.*
[14]The Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies was the place where one of the first coordination meetings of the new movements was held.

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the latter has a greater mobilizing power (Interviewee 3, p. 18). The majority of the interviewees, on the other hand, said that they were never part of pre-existing formal networks but learned about the movement from their colleagues and friends instead (p. 1, 2, 17, 19).

The findings in the case of *#Protestiram* are very similar. While explaining the dynamics of the protests, the interviewees very often used to mention names of other activists and initiatives, such as 2011 protests against police brutality, the First Architectonic Uprising, AMAN, other NGOs and initiatives as well as *Studentski Plenum* (p. 5, 7, 12). When I explicitly asked them to explain me the connection with these, I was told that one of the main reasons for the emergence of the movement is the fact that the mobilizing channels already existed (p. 12). According to them, these pre-existing networks built by previous movements and initiatives created a base of activists who were able to mobilize a significant number of people in a short period of time (p. 12). During the discussion, they were also referring to the pre-existing online networks, such as Facebook groups, private chats, and mailing lists (p. 1, 6, 12). This should not surprise us as the internet technologies can, in fact, play an important role in social movements' emergence and mobilization (see Castells, 2015).

4.1.3.2. Newly-Established Networks – Broadening the Cross-Ethnic Mobilization

Contrary to my expectation, the pre-existing networks were cross-ethnic to some extent and cannot entirely explain the cross-ethnic mobilization. When I asked the interviewees in F1 to tell me whether their previous acquaintances comprised members of the other group, I was told that there were some but not too many (p.19). For instance, in the case of *Studentski Indeks* most of the members were Macedonians, while there were some Albanian activists in the leftist movements *Lenka* and *Solidarnost* (p. 20). According to them, the previous initiatives did not know how or did not find a way to relate to the Albanian population due to the divisions in the society (p. 20).

According to the interviewees, the Albanians who study in the Macedonia-based universities in Skopje were more involved in the movement's activities than the Albanians coming from the other towns in the country, such as Tetovo and Gostivar[15] (p. 21). In fact, the data suggests that the majority of the ethnic Albanians joined *Studentski Plenum* through mono-ethnic, newly-established, and rather informal networks, which is partially shown in the presented excerpts as well. The Albanians in F1 told me that they had to personally go and inform the students at the University of Tetovo because, according to them, these students were poorly informed about the proposed changes to the law in general and *Studentski Plenum* in particular (p. 1, 8, 9). The interviewees argued that this ignorance of the Albanian students was partially because the movements' activities were concentrated in the capital (p. 9, 12, 20, 21). In order to understand why this is so, we should look back at the Macedonian segregated education.

The introduction of segregated education after the 2001 conflict, especially separated higher education, increased the divisions along ethnic and linguistic lines (Barbieri et al., 2013, p. 4). Indeed, the groups in the ethnically divided societies live 'separate lives' meaning that although they live next to each other they do not share the same institutions and practices (Nagle and Clancy, 2010). The interviewees themselves acknowledged that these divisions still exist in the society but that *Studentski Plenum* made a step forward in overcoming them (p. 20).

Like in F1, the pre-existing networks were cross-ethnic to some extent in F2 as well (p. 13, 16). When I asked them to tell me whether among these people and initiatives there were members of the other ethnic group, I got answers similar to those in F1. The Albanians who initially joined *#Protestiram* were those who heard about the protests because they knew

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[15]Like Tetovo, Gostivar is a city in Western Macedonia with a predominant Albanian population (State Statistical Office, 2005, p. 34).

Macedonians. After a while, these Albanians started calling their compatriots to join the protests. This is demonstrated in the following excerpts:

> *Interviewee 4: [...] I started protesting with Studentski Plenum [...] I agreed to go together with my faculty colleagues [refers to 2016 protests] and we went out [pause] I don't know [pause] I'm not sure [pause] whether my participation [in the protests] was because I knew Macedonian [pause] Macedonians*
>
> *Interviewee 5: Honestly, I think that's the case [...] after that they [the Albanians who initially joined the movement] started calling [other Albanians] and only then the number [of Albanians] started growing but at the beginning, they were not many* **(F2, pp. 2-3)**

When we went back to this issue later in the discussion, the Albanian interviewees also added that there were more Macedonians than Albanians in the movement and that those Albanians who joined the movement at the very beginning were experienced and well-known activists (p. 13). However, according to the Albanian interviewees, the 'lack of Albanians' in *#Protestiram* was not because of ethnic but class and partisan divisions (pp. 13-14). Having said all of the above, I conclude that social networks did play a crucial mobilizing role. It seems that the pre-existing cross-ethnic networks have indeed put the mobilization into motion. Also, both the pre-existing cross-ethnic networks and newly-established mono-ethnic networks point to the multi-ethnic composition of the movements, which, in turn, unveils their cross-ethnic nature (see Table 1).

Yet, contrary to what I expected, it appears that the mobilization became truly cross-ethnic after new mono-ethnic networks of mobilization were established. Hence, it would be stimulating if one process-trace this mobilization sequence. Thus, another hypothesis for further research could be that *the pre-existing cross-ethnic networks set the ground for the cross-ethnic mobilization but it was the newly-established mono-ethnic networks that broadened it.* This also indicates that the dichotomy between the mono-ethnic and multi-

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ethnic types of organizations – wherein the former is usually understood as more exclusive, while the latter more inclusive – should be reconsidered.

4.1.4. Constructing Identities that Root and Shift

When looking at the cross-ethnic mobilization from a perspective of ethnicity, there are two important findings to be reported. First, the qualitative data suggests that in the interpersonal relations between the movement activists, ethnicity was seen as secondary if not irrelevant vis-à-vis the common identity of the movements. On the other hand, the movements' bilingual communication was perceived as a bridging practice aiming to unite Macedonians and Albanians in the joint 'struggle'. Hence, I derive the fourth theme – *role of ethnicity*, which comprises two sub-themes, that is, *common identity beyond ethnicity* and *bilingualism as a bridging practice.*

4.1.4.1. Individual Ethnic Identities Surpassed

Irrelevance of ethnicity was a reoccurring theme during the discussion in F1. This inspired me to pose a question about participants' understanding of the movement in terms of its *'ethnic dimension'*. I was provided with the following answers:

> ***Interviewee 2:*** *[...] It seems to me that Interviewee 3 has correctly noticed, I remember that we really wanted to initiate [a communication] in Albanian, to reach to the Albanian population. Some would say that we were pragmatic and only wanted to bring people.*
>
> ***Interviewee 3:*** *Nooo!*
>
> ***Interviewee 2:*** *No, the truth is that it was not like that. I think that one of our goals was to establish some kind of a community in a state that is common for all of us [...]*
>
> ***Interviewee 7:*** *The ethnic was irrelevant [...]*

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Interviewee 2: Absolutely! [...] the issue of our ethnicity was never raised during our discussions unless someone was giving a statement in Albanian, which I think is okay, that's better [that is a] culture of dialogue **(F1, p.16)**

I got similar answers in F2. As shown in the previous subchapter, in order to investigate whether the pre-existing networks of mobilization were cross-ethnic, I asked the respondents to tell me whether they knew members of the other ethnic group from before. Initially, the participants deviated from the topic of discussion and answered my question in the following way:

Interviewee 2: I actually think that Protestiram was a sort of a supra-ethnic movement, it was not ethnic at all [...] foreign journalists were asking me 'whether there are Albanians on the protests?' I told them 'how can I know whether someone is Albanian? [everyone laughs]

[...]

Interviewee 1: Even today people who used to come to the protests think I'm Albanian [A Macedonian with an Albanian-like name, everyone laughs]

Interviewee 6: Oh my god, yes!

Interviewee 4: Look, that's a confusion [everyone laughs] **(F2, pp. 13-15)**

The respondents in both focus groups claimed that ethnicity was never an issue. Moreover, the interviewees in F2 argued that the movement is supra-ethnic, which meant that the individual ethnic identity of the activists and protestors was perceived as unimportant vis-à-vis the goals of the movement (p. 23). However, I concur that declaring ethnicity as irrelevant would be a premature conclusion and there are several reasons for that. First, even though in both F1 and F2 there were few participants who did not want to express their ethnicity in the questionnaire, the majority of the interviewees, nevertheless, identified themselves as either Macedonians or Albanians. Second, there were participants who said that they are proud of their ethnicity but what actually mattered is the civic identity and culture,

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which prevailed in *Studentski Plenum* (p. 12). Third, as stated before, the interviewees in both focus groups perceived the cross-ethnic mobilization as an important shift in the relations between Macedonians and Albanians.

Therefore, it can be argued that ethnicity was perceived irrelevant only in the interpersonal relationships between the activists and what really mattered in their opinion was the cause that the movement stood for. After all, even in the ethnically divided societies, there are people who are not preoccupied with their ethnic identity or do not define themselves in ethnic terms whatsoever (Nagle, 2016a, p. 5). What is more, by looking at the claims of the interviewees in F1, it would be misleading to say that ethnicity was completely disregarded given that the intention behind the bilingual communication was not a strategy to bring Albanians in the movement but an attempt to create community between the two ethnic groups. After all, language is among the key features of ethnic identity (Chandra, 2006, p. 400). More on this follows in the last sub-chapter.

Nevertheless, it was previously mentioned that the interviewees in F2 reported that there were a class rather than ethnic divisions in the movement. The data suggests that the movement mainly comprised people with higher education belonging to the upper-middle class (p. 58) and failed to incorporate the poor and less educated. In the interviewees' opinion, these populations tend to be more nationalist because they are manipulated by the governing parties that by politicizing ethnicity diverge the attention from the real problems in the society, such as poverty (pp. 30-34; p. 44, 57). Thereupon, by building upon the existing researches that show a negative correlation between the high socio-economic status and nationalism (e.g. Green, 2007; Solt, 2011), it could be hypothesized that *the socio-economic status of the movement activists mattered.*

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4.1.4.2. Language Important

Looking at the excerpts from the interviewees' discussion in F1, the salience of the bilingual communication seems evident. In fact, during the entire focus group, the respondents were emphasizing the importance of the simultaneous use of the Macedonian and Albanian language in the movement's communication with the public. In their opinion, the latter was not only used to communicate with the Albanian population (p. 15) but to promote community and confront the discourse of the nationalist parties as well (p. 13). In the case of F2, the findings are very similar. While discussing the 'supra-ethnic' character of the movement, the respondents indicated that they always wanted to assure that the communication with the public is "at least in Macedonian and Albanian" (pp. 16-17). They also added that the "if the messages [of the movement] had been only in Macedonian, the protests probably would have been understood as an [ethnic] Macedonian ones" since "bilingualism best resembles supra-ethnicity in the context of our [Macedonian] consociational democracy" (p. 47) and people's connection with their mother tongue is still strong (p. 48).

In Macedonia, language indeed matters. After 2001, the linguistic rights of the ethnic minorities were extended by making the minorities' mother tongues official together with the Macedonian language in the units of local government wherein they comprise at least 20% of the population (Amendment V of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 1991). Being the biggest minority, ethnic Albanians benefited most from this policy. It is also noteworthy to mention that language has been the primary source of identification for both Macedonians and Albanians (see Babuna, 2000; Friedman, 2000). Therefore, it seems that the importance of the language and thus ethnicity was nevertheless recognized by the movement actors. Additionally, it appears that the intention behind the bilingual communication was to promote unity between the two groups.

To sum up. In their interpersonal relations, the movement activists perceived the individual ethnic identities as secondary therefore allowing their shifting to the overarching collective identity of the movements (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 88). However, language was considered as important identifier given that the aim of the bilingual communication was not only to reach to 'the other side' but to recognize it and promote community across ethnic lines. It can be argued that this practice does not erase 'ethnicity' but acknowledges it and even preserves its salience to some extent (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 88). Hence, I can confidently confirm my expectation that the common identities of the movements, wherein ethnicity is visible and important yet it can be transcended, explain why *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* are cross-ethnic movements.

4.2. What Keeps Them Together? Hints for Further Research

The future development of the cross-ethnic mobilization, especially outside *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram*, is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the data raises some interesting questions, which deserve our attention. Namely, the interviewees claimed an impact on the wider socio-political context in the country indicating that the cross-ethnic mobilization endured and became stronger over time (F1, p. 3, 37; F2, p. 54). The respondents were especially referring to the results of the 2016 early parliamentary elections. For example, the interviewees in F1 argued that the cross-ethnic voting for SDSM (considered as an ethnic Macedonian party) during the 2016 elections was an outcome of the cross-ethnic mobilization initiated by the movement two years before the elections took place (p. 12). Even if we do not take their claims for granted, SDSM has indeed shifted its attitude toward the inter-ethnic relations in the country.

Once known for its Albanophobic stances (see Iseni, 2013), SDSM started transforming into a cross-ethnic party (see Murtagh, 2015) given that it sought and received

support across the ethnic lines on the 2016 parliamentary elections (OSCE, 2017; Staletović, 2017). Finally, SDSM is expected to form the new Macedonian government (Marusic, 2017). Hence, it appears that the cross-ethnic mobilization might have indeed influenced the party attitude toward the inter-ethnic relations in the country. On the other hand, it may be argued that SDSM recognized but also utilized the momentum of the cross-ethnic mobilization as well. As a party that represents constituencies across the ethnic cleavages, SDSM may set a new trend in the inter-ethnic relations in the country by preserving the cross-ethnic cooperation initiated by the movements. After all, parties and movements learn from and influence each other (Della Porta and Chironi, 2015). Therefore, further research about this 'relationship' may provide answers to the question what *keeps Macedonians and Albanians together?*

4.3. Summary of the Findings

The thematic analysis disclosed that the accumulation of grievances concerning the practices of the Macedonian competitive authoritarian regime was activists' main motivation for joining the movements. As expected, the common grievances divulged the cross-ethnic nature of the movements as well. The analysis also revealed that the opportune situations perceived by the movements' activists explain why the cross-ethnic mobilization took place in a certain period of time. However, the organizational learning of the movements appeared to be even more important for the success of the cross-ethnic mobilization compared to the previous similar attempts. Furthermore, the analysis uncovered that the cross-ethnic mobilization came into existence not only due to the pre-existing cross-ethnic networks but the newly-established mono-ethnic networks as well. This disclosed the movements' cross-ethnic character as well. The analysis also unveiled that the two movements were indeed cross-ethnic given that they managed to construct common identities that root and, at the same time, shift. Nevertheless, further research is needed to examine the influence of mono-

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ethnic networks, socio-economic status of the activists, and political parties on the cross-ethnic mobilization.

By comparing the two movements, I found out that the grievances of the activists varied more among the activists of *Studentski Plenum* than among the activists of *#Protestiram*. Apparently, the ethnic Albanian interviewees in F1 referred more to the corrupt and politicized education while the rest were indicating more general grievances, such as the functioning of the state as well as the authoritarian regime. On the other hand, the respondents in F2, regardless of their ethnicity, were mainly referring to the unjust system in the country. The analysis unveiled one more difference between the two movements regarding the circumstances perceived as opportune for collective action. While more general political opportunities seem to have put the cross-ethnic mobilization in *Studentski Plenum* into motion, concrete events triggered the cross-ethnic mobilization in *#Protestiram.*

4.4. Limitations

This research has few limitations that ought to be acknowledged. Unlike two or multiple-case studies, single-case studies by definition face the problem of generalizability. Nevertheless, single-case studies may comprise many possible observations relevant for the theory being assessed (King et al., 1994, p. 208) and, at the same time, are good for providing new theoretical insights (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Furthermore, the number of a focus group conducted is a limitation per se. A research based on just two focus groups is unlikely to reach the data saturation point, therefore, covering all the potential insights coming from the field (Ritchie et al., 2003; Rowlands et al., 2016). For example, future research can include more units of analysis, such as conducting focus groups with representatives of formal networks like social movement organizations or political parties but also unaffiliated activists. However, conducting, transcribing, and

analyzing focus groups in general and within a limited time frame in particular, is not only time-consuming but also demanding process (Bloor et al., 2001, p. 24). What is more, the point of saturation is anyway hard to define or to cite McAllister: "[f]urther interviews will always add richness to the data, so identifying the point at which theoretical saturation is reached is not clear-cut" (2001, p. 245).

Last, if I had constructed the focus groups differently by avoiding interviewees that I am or the other interviewees are familiar with, I might have got more objective answers, which would have increased the reliability and validity of the findings. Alternatively, I could have conducted personal interviews with some or all of the focus groups' participants in order to cross-validate the data I was initially provided with (for instance, see Baltar and Brunet, 2012). Notwithstanding the limitations, this thesis presents thought-provoking insights into the dynamics of the movements engaged in cross-ethnic mobilization, which can serve as a ground for further researches.

Conclusion

The poor inter-ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians, the 2001 Macedonian-Albanian conflict, and the great social distance between the two communities have made Macedonia a society separated along ethnic lines. However, in the period between 2014 and 2016, the country witnessed historical cross-ethnic mobilization portrayed by the demonstrations against the undemocratic and nationalist regime of VMRO-DPMNE and DUI. The protests were initiated by the student movement, *Studentski Plenum*, which protested against the controversial higher education bill and continued with the anti-governmental movement *#Protestiram*. Despite the ethnic divisions, the two movements managed to bring Macedonians and Albanians together making an alteration in the country's inter-ethnic relations. Being a participant observer, this inspired me to investigate the perceptions of the networks of activists about the reasons for the cross-ethnic mobilization, its timing as well as the nature of the movements.

This thesis talks to the literature on social movements in divided societies. Given that the movements did not fit in in the existing typology of social movements in divided societies, I, building upon Horowitz's typology of political parties, defined *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* as cross-ethnic movements. In overcoming the lack of a coherent theoretical framework for studying cross-ethnic mobilization, this thesis combined the concepts of social networks, collective action frames, and political opportunity structures, all part of the classic social movement agenda – a major theoretical reference for studying social movements. All three concepts were expected to have an explanatory power although in a different form.

Therefore, I expected that the common grievances addressed by the two movements and pre-existing cross-ethnic networks of the movements' activists, helped *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* bring Macedonian and Albanians together. I also concurred that the

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common grievances, cross-ethnic networks, and collective identities of the movements define them as cross-ethnic. Nevertheless, as a participant observer, I argued that the concept of political opportunity structures best explains the reasons for and the timing of the cross-ethnic mobilization. However, given the qualitative nature of the study, I left the door for new hypotheses open. In pursuit of data, the thesis engaged in an empirical study by conducting two focus groups with the Macedonian and Albanian activists of the two movements.

The analysis revealed that common grievances regarding the functioning of the state in the context of the Macedonian hybrid regime were the activists' major motivation to join the movements. While the grievances among the interviewees in Studentski Plenum were more diverse, the grievances in #Protestiram were more unified and directed to the unjust system in the country. Opportune situations put the cross-ethnic mobilization into motion. However, more general political opportunities seem to have mobilized Studentski Plenum but concrete events triggered #Protestiram. Nevertheless, compared with the previous attempts, the success of the cross-ethnic mobilization vis-à-vis the previous attempts was affected by organizational learning of the movements. It was also unveiled that besides the pre-existing cross-ethnic networks, the newly-established mono-ethnic networks had a mobilizing role as well. Last, the movements were indeed cross-ethnic. Whereas activists' individual ethnic identities were surpassed, the bilingualism of the movements served as a bridging practice between the ethnic groups. This allowed ethnicity to "root" and "shift" at the same time (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 88).

While it is not this thesis' intention to claim new theory, the findings prompt thought-provoking questions that serve as a basis for further research. For example, it would be encouraging to investigate the role of the mono-ethnic networks. It would be also stimulating to see whether the socio-economic status conditioned the participation in the cross-ethnic mobilization. Last, inspired by the organizational learning of the movements, it would be

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motivating to examine whether the broadening of the scope of the demands and cooperation with other political actors, such as the political parties, can affect the scale and sustenance of the cross-ethnic mobilization.

This thesis unveils the factors that explain the short-term success of the cross-ethnic mobilization in Macedonia. Thus, further research is needed for disclosing its sustenance over time. For instance, the insights about the role of SDSM in the cross-ethnic mobilization are more than thought-provoking. What is more, the 'party actor' seems to be the missing puzzle in the movements in the other divided societies, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well. This might explain the short-term success (or the lack thereof) of the cross-ethnic mobilizations in these societies but also hint solutions for cross-ethnic mobilizations' long-term success. Therefore, the 'Macedonian experience' can be a lesson for the alike social movements but also for the political parties in the other divided societies, especially the left-wing ones given their generally more supportive attitude toward the ethnic issues (Bloemraad and Schönwälder, 2013).

Another moral from the 'Macedonian experience' seems to be the role of ethnicity. Keeping ethnicity in the game (at least to some extent) appeared to be a successful strategy for *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram*. This was not the case with the counterpart movements in the other divided societies. The movements in Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Lebanon were generally non-ethnic since they replaced ethnicity with other political identities (see Murtagh, 2016; Nagle, 2017, 2016a; Touquet, 2015). Unfortunately, the non-ethnic movements have a "limited appeal" since "ethnicity continues to endure as […] a powerful source of political mobilization and identification in divided societies" (Nagle, 2016a, pp. 185–186).

On the other hand, the multi-ethnic movements, such as those in Northern Ireland (labeled as commonists by John Nagle), do not necessarily challenge the ethnic identities and are usually short-lived as the ethnic groups mobilize together only when they have mutual interests (Nagle, 2013, p. 80). *Studentski Plenum* and *#Protestiram* did not abandon ethnicity altogether like the non-ethnic movements usually do. Yet, their collective identity transcended the individual ethnic identities, which, on the other hand, is not the case with the multi-ethnic movements. This constellation gives an opportunity to the people for whom ethnicity matters but also to those individuals who do not define themselves in ethnic terms to cooperate over issues of common interest. Therefore, it can be argued that cross-ethnic movements may have a greater mobilizing power across ethnic cleavages than non-ethnic and multi-ethnic movements. Nevertheless, further research is needed to investigate and compare the mobilizing potential of these three types of movements.

I end up with a quote by John Nagle who wrote that "[a]lthough the divided society is a generator of conflict, it is also a dynamic social and political environment where hostile ethnic identities and politics are challenged and even transformed" (2016a, p. 3). That being told, I hope that this thesis has at least raised awareness of the importance of studying cross-ethnic movements and cross-ethnic mobilizations as a first step in overcoming ethnic divisions in divided societies. May the Macedonian experience be a message to the other divided societies that different 'reality' is possible.

Appendices

Appendix A: Transliteration scheme of the standard Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet

Transliteration scheme of the standard Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet		
А, а – A, a	Ј, ј – J, j	Т, т – T, t
Б, б – B, b	К, к – K, k	Ќ, ќ – Ḱ, ḱ
В, в – V, v	Л, л – L, l	У, у – U, u
Г, г – G, g	Љ, љ – Lj, lj	Ф, ф – F, f
Д, д – D, d	М, м – M, m	Х, х – H, h
Ѓ, ѓ – Ǵ, ǵ	Н, н – N, n	Ц, ц – C, c
Е, е – E, e	Њ, њ – Nj, nj	Ч, ч – Č, č
Ж, ж – Ž, ž	О, о – O, o	Џ, џ – Dž, dž
З, з – Z, z	П, п – P, p	Ш, ш – Š, š
Ѕ, ѕ – Dz, dz	Р, р – R, r	
И, и – I, i	С, с – S, s	
Source: Adapted from Friedman, 1993, p. 251		

Appendix B: The Gradual Downfall of the Macedonian Democracy

Table 2: The Gradual Downfall of the Macedonian Democracy

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	**2017**
National Democratic Governance	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.75	**5.00**
Electoral Process	3.25	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.75	**4.00**
Civil Society	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	**3.25**
Independent Media	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.75	5.00	5.00	5.25	**5.25**
Local Democratic Governance	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	4.00	**4.00**
Judicial Framework and Independence	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.50	**4.75**
Corruption	4.50	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.50	**4.75**
Democracy Score	**3.86**	**3.86**	**3.79**	**3.82**	**3.89**	**3.93**	**4.00**	**4.07**	**4.29**	**4.43**

The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest. The Democracy Score is an average of ratings for the categories tracked in a given year. **Source:** Adapted from *Nations in Transit Ratings and Averaged Scores*, Freedom House, 2017b, p. 1.

Appendix C: Focus Group Materials

Section 1: Original Questionnaire (Macedonian Version)

Прашалник

Поради потребите на истражувањето и анализата која ќе следи по него, ќе ми бидат потребни Вашите лични податоци. Вашите лични податоци ќе бидат комплетно анонимизирани и тие нема да се појават во анализата. Поради тоа, најљубезно би Ве замолил да ми одговорите на следниве прашања одбирајќи еден од понудените одговори. Доколку имате потреба за дополнителни информации или имате прашања, Ве молам известете ме.

Име и презиме:_____

ДЕМОГРАФСКИ ПОДАТОЦИ

Пол/Род

1 – Машки
2 – Женски
3 – Друго (наведи): _____
4 – Не би сакал/а да го наведам мојот пол/род

Возрасна група

1 – Помлад/а од 14
2 – 14 - 20
3 – 21 - 30
4 – 31 - 40
5 – 41 - 50
6 – 51 - 60
7 – 61 - 70
8 – Постар/а од 70

Највисок степен на образование

1 – Не поседувам ниту еден степен на формално образование
2 – Основно образование
3 – Средно образование (стручно)
4 – Средно образование (гимназиско)
5 – Вишо образование
6 – Високо образование (додипломски студии)
7 – Постдипломски студии (магистерски/мастер студии)
8 – Докторски студии
9 – Друго (наведи): _____

Моментално занимање

1 – Невработен/а
2 – Учени(ч)к(а)/Студент(ка)
3 – Вработен/а во јавниот сектор
4 – Вработен/а во приватниот сектор
5 – Вработен/а во невладиниот сектор
6 – Самовработен/а
7 – Пензиониран/а

Целосен износ на месечни примања во Вашето домаќинство

Во оваа категорија влегуваат сите примања во Вашето домаќинство како на пример плати, пензии, стипендии, додатоци, социјална помош, хонорари, добивки и сите останати видови на примања

1 – 0 - 10000 МКД
2 – 10001 - 20000 МКД
3 – 20001 - 30000 МКД
4 – 30001 - 40000 МКД
5 – 40001 - 50000 МКД
6 – 50001 - 60000 МКД
7 – Повеќе од 60000 МКД
8 – Не го знам целосниот износ на месечни примања
9 – Не сакам да наведам

Етничка група

1 – Македонец/ка
2 – Албанец/ка
3 – Друго (наведете):_____
4 – Не би сакал/а да ја наведам мојата етничка група
5 – Не се идентификувам себеси во етничка смисла

Место на живеење
Ве молам наведете го населеното место и општината во која живеете/имате трајно живеалиште

_____

Section 2: Questionnaire (English Version)

Questionnaire

Due to the nature of the research and succeeding analysis, I will need your personal data. Your personal data will be completely anonymized and they will not appear in the analysis. Therefore, I would kindly ask you to answer the following questions by picking one of the offered answers. If you need more information or have questions, please let me know.

Name and surname: _____

DEMOGRAPHY

Sex/Gender

1 – Male
2 – Female
3 – Other (indicate): _____
4 – I do not want to indicate my sex/gender

Age group

1 – Younger than 14
2 – 14 – 20
3 – 21 – 30
4 – 31 – 40
5 – 41 – 50
6 – 51 – 60
7 – 61 – 70
8 – Older than 70

Highest educational attainment

1 – No formal education
2 – Primary education
3 – Secondary education (specialized)
4 – High school education (gymnasial/general)
5 – Post-secondary education
6 – Higher education (undergraduate)
7 – Post-graduate (MA/MSc)
8 – PhD
9 – Other (indicate): _____

Current occupation

1 – Unemployed
2 – Student
3 – Employed in the public sector
4 – Employed in the private sector
5 – Employed in the non-governmental sector
6 – Self-employed
7 – Retired

Total amount of your household's monthly income

This category consists of all types of income, such as salaries, pensions, stipends, subsidies, social care, royalties, winnings and other types of income

1 – 0 – 10000 MKD
2 – 10001 – 20000 MKD
3 – 20001 – 30000 MKD
4 – 30001 – 40000 MKD
5 – 40001 – 50000 MKD
6 – 50001 – 60000 MKD
7 – More than 60000 MKD
8 – I do not know the total amount
9 – I do not want to indicate

Ethnicity

1 – Macedonian
2 – Albanian
3 – Other (indicate):_____
4 – I do not want to indicate my ethnicity
5 – I do not identify myself in ethnic terms

Residence

Please indicate the place and the municipality where you permanently reside
_____

Section 3: Original Topic Guide (Macedonian Version)

Бевте повикани да учествувате во фокус група која е дел од истражувањето за мојата магистерска теза со работен наслов: „ *What Brings Them Together? Social Movements in Divided Societies: The Case of the Republic of Macedonia* “. Вие бевте одбрани така што јас првично контактирав неколку луѓе од движењето и ги замолив да ми препорачаат активисти и поддржувачи кои дале особен придонес и кои се во можност да ја објаснат динамиката на движењето. Овој метод е познат и како snow ball sampling.

Целта на оваа фокус група е да се испитаат вашите размислувања и ставови за причините за мобилизацијата на Македонците и Албанците во (име на движењето) во контекстот на етнички поделеното македонско општество. Информациите кои ќе ги добијам од фокус групата ќе се искористат за квалитативна анализа која е дел од истражувањето во мојата теза. Вашето учество во фокус групата е доброволно и можете да се повлечете во кое било време. Иако разговорот ќе биде аудио-снимен, вашите одговори ќе останант целосно анонимни и вашето име како и ваши лични податоци нема да бидат спомнати во анализата. Пристап до аудио-снимката ќе имам само јас. Откако ќе заврши фокус групата, аудио-снимките ќе бидат транскрибирани, а пристап до транскриптот ќе имам само јас и мојот ментор Матијс Богардс. Доколку се јави потреба да се цитираат делови од вашите одговори, тогаш наместо вашето име и презиме ќе се стои еден од учесниците во Фокус група (реден број). Поради тоа, би сакал од вас да побарам писмена согласност за снимање на фокус групите и за користење на информациите кои ќе ги добијам како поткрепа за мојата теза.

Прашањата се од отворен тип. Не постојат точни или погрешни одговори на прашањата кои ќе ви бидат поставени. Затоа очекувам да ги слушнам вашите лични гледишта и размислувања на темата. Се надевам дека ќе бидете искрени дури и ако вашите ставови не се во согласност со ставовите на другите учесници. Би сакал да побарам од вас да

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зборувате отворено, да ги почитувате вашите соговорници додека зборуваат и да не ги споделувате со трети лица информациите кои ќе ги споделат учесниците во фокус групата.

Пред да започнеме исто така би ве замолил да го поплните следниов краток прашалник кој исто така би ми помогнал во анализата на податоци. Податоците кои ќе ги наведете во овој прашалник ќе бидат целосно анонимизирани.

Доколку имате некое прашање пред да започнеме, слободно прашајте ме, јас со задоволство ќе ви одговорам.

ИЗЈАВА ЗА СОГЛАСНОСТ

Јас, долупотпишаниот/ната, ги разбирам горенаведените информации и целосно се согласувам да бидам дел од фокус групата, под условите пропишани погоре.

Име и презиме:_____   Име и презиме: Иван Николовски_____
Потпис:_____   Потпис:_____
Датум и место:_____   Датум и место:_____

ПРАШАЊА ЗА ЗАГРЕВАЊЕ

1. Претпоставувам дека може да започнеме со фокус групата. Најпрвин, би сакал да дознаам нешто повеќе за вас и вашето учество во движењето_____(име на движењето)?

2. Која беше вашата мотивација да му се приклучите на (име на движењето)?

ГЛАВНИ ПРАШАЊА

(Модератор: Преминуваме на една поконкретна тема, доколку имате прашања слободно поставете ми ги)

1. МОБИЛИЗАЦИЈА

1.1. МРЕЖИ

3. Дали во моментот кога му се приклучивте на движењето познававте некој од неговите поддржувачи/активисти?

3.1. Како би го опишале вашето познанство со овие луѓе?

4. Од тоа што можев да го слушнам, можам да заклучам дека сте познавале добар дел од луѓето уште пред да му се приклучите на движењето. Дали можеби меѓу овие луѓе имаше такви кои припаѓаат на другата етничка заедница?

4.1. Како најчесто го поминувате времето со овие луѓе?

5. Дали познанството со овие луѓе одигра улога при вашата одлука да му се приклучите на движењето?

5.1. На кој начин стапивте во контакт со нив, тие ве поканија, вие самите се придруживте или?

1.2. ПОЛИТИЧКИ ПРИЛИКИ

6. Сега би сакал да ги слушнам вашите размислувања за настанокот на (име на движењето). Според вас, зошто настана (име на движењето)?

6.1. Дали можете да ми кажете нешто повеќе за ова?

6.2. А зошто сметате дека (име на движењето) настана тогаш, а не претходно?

7. Дали сметате дека причините кои ги наведовте беа подеднакво препознаени од страна на Македонците и Албанците во движењето?

8. Дали сметате дека овие причини ги поттикнаа Македонците и Албанците да му се приклучат на движењето?

8.1. Дали имаше некакви разлики помеѓу Македонците и Албанците од овој аспект?

1.3. ВРАМУВАЊА

9. Како што можевме да видиме, во (име на движењето) постоеја активисти и поддржувачи со различна етничка припадност. Дали сметате дека етничката припадност играше важна улога во движењето?

9.1. Колку вам лично ви е важна етничката припадност?

9.2. А дали чувствувавте дека имате нешто заедничко со другата етничка заедница?

10. Дали сметате дека начинот на кои се претстави движењето пред јавноста, но исто така и начинот на кои ги претстави своите барања, интереси, цели и проблеми, му помогнаа да мобилизира поддржувачи и активисти Македонци и Албанци?

10.1. Дали може да ми кажете нешто повеќе за тоа?

(Модератор: Сега едно малку посложено прашање)

11. Како ги разбирате поимете етничко, мултиетничко, меѓуетничко и неетничко?

12. Доколку треба да го дефинирате (името на движењето) според горенаведените поими, како би го дефинирале, како етничко, мултиетничко, меѓуетничко, неетничко движење или пак сметате дека постојат други карактеристки за да се објасни неговата природа?

12.2. Зошто сметате дека овој опис е најсоодветен?

2. НАЈВАЖНА ПРИЧИНА ЗА МОБИЛАЗЦИЈА И ПРОМЕНИ ВО МОБИЛИЗИРАЧКАТА МОЌ НА ДВИЖЕЊЕТО

13. Според Вас, која е најголемата причина за меѓуетничката мобилизацијата во (име на движењето)?

13.1. Зошто мислите така?

13.2. Дали оваа причина исклучува други објаснувања за меѓуетничката мобилизација?

14. Според вас, дали движењето успеа да го задржи моментумот (атмосферата) на меѓуетничка соработка?

14.1. Ако да, дали понекогаш стравувавте дека движењето ќе може да се разедини по етничка линија?

14.2. Ако не, што беше причината за тоа?

14.3. Што направивте во врска со тоа?

ПРАШАЊА ЗА КРАЈ

(Модератор: Преминуваме на последниот сет на прашања)

15. Според вас, која би требала да биде улогата на движењето во иднина?

16. Дали сметате дека постои некое прашање за кое не успеавме да поразговараме, а е важно да се спомене?

17. Дали можеби вие би сакале да ме прашате нешто мене?

(Модератор: Ви благодарам!)

Section 4: Topic Guide (English Version)

You were invited to this focus group, which is part of my master thesis research with a working title: „*What Brings Them Together? Social Movements in Divided Societies: The Case of the Republic of Macedonia*". I selected you for this focus group so that I first asked few people from the movement to recommend me other activists and supporters who contributed significantly to the movement's cause and are able to explain its dynamics. This method of selection is also known as snowball sampling.

The aim of this focus group is to examine your opinions about and stances on the reasons for the mobilization of Macedonians and Albanians in the case of (name of the movement) in the context of the Macedonian ethnically divided society. The gathered information will be used for a qualitative analysis, which is part of my thesis research. Your participation in this focus group is voluntarily and you can decide to leave at any time. Although the conversation will be audiotaped, your answers will be completely anonymized and your name, as well as personal data, will not appear in the analysis. I will be the only one with an access to the audiotape. After we are done with the focus group, the audiotape will be transcribed and I and my supervisor, Matthijs Bogaards, will be the only ones with an access to the transcript. If there is a need for citing parts of your answers, your name and surname will be replaced with "one of the interviewees in Focus Group (the respective ordinal number)". Therefore, I would like to ask for your written permission for audiotaping this focus group and using the information I will get as a supporting material for my thesis.

The questions are open-ended. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Hence, I expect to learn about your personal stances on and opinions about the topic. I hope you will be honest even if your stances are contrasting those of the other participants. I would like to ask you to speak openly, to respect your interlocutors, and not to share the information with other people outside the group.

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Before we start, I would also kindly ask you to fulfill this short questionnaire which will help me with the data analysis. The data that you will indicate in this questionnaire will be completely anonymized.

If you have questions before we start, feel free to ask me, it will be my pleasure to answer them.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I, the undersigned, understand the aforementioned information and fully agree to be part of the focus group under the conditions stated above.

Name and surname:_____   Name and surname: <u>Ivan Nikolovski_____</u>
Signiture:_____   Signature:_____
Date and place:_____   Date and place:_____

WARM UP

1. I guess we can start with the focus group. I would first like to hear something more about you and your role in _____ (name of the movement)

2. What motivated you to join_____ (name of the movement)?

CORE QUESTIONS

(Moderator: We will now continue with a more concrete topic, if you any have questions, please let me know)

1. MOBILIZATION

1.1. NETWORKS

3. Did you, at the moment you joined the movement, know some of the movement's supporters/activists?

3.1. How would you describe the acquaintance with these people?

4. From what I've heard I can conclude that you knew quite a few of the movement's activists from before? Were there any activists who belong to the other ethnic community?

4.1. How do you usually spend your time with these people?

5. Did the acquaintance with these people have an impact on your decision to join the movement?

5.1. How did you contact them, they invited you, you decided to join the movement alone, or?

1.2. POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

6. I would now like to hear your opinion about the emergence of (name of the movement). According to you how did (name of the movement) come about?

6.1. Can you tell me something more about that?

6.2. And why do you think that (name of the movement) emerged at that moment and not before?

7. Do you think that the reasons you mentioned were equally recognized by both the Macedonians and Albanians in the movement?

8. Do you think that these reasons motivated Macedonians and Albanians to join the movement?

8.1. Were there any differences between Macedonians and Albanians?

1.3. FRAMES

9. As we could have seen, in (name of the movement) there were activists with different ethnicity. Do you think that ethnicity played an important role in the movement?

9.1. How important is your ethnicity to you?

9.2. Did you feel like you have something in common with the other ethnic community?

10. Do you think that the way the movement represented itself to the public but also the way it represented its claims, interests, goals, and problems, helped it to mobilize Macedonian and Albanian supporters and activists?

10.1. Can you tell me something more about that?

(Moderator: Now I will ask you a more complex question)

11. How do you understand the terms ethnic, multi-ethnic, inter-ethnic, and non-ethnic?

12. If you were to define (name of the movement) with the terms that I just mentioned, how would you define it, as ethnic, multi-ethnic, inter-ethnic, non-ethnic or there are other features that can explain its nature?

12.2. Why do you think this definition is the most suitable one?

2. MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR THE MOBILIZATION AND CHANGES IN THE MOBILIZING POWER

13. According to you, what was the most important reason for the cross-ethnic mobilization in (name of the movement)?

13.1. Why do you think that is the case?

13.2. Does this reason exclude other explanations for the cross-ethnic mobilization?

14. According to you, did the movement managed to keep the momentum of cross-ethnic cooperation?

14.1. If yes, have you ever feared that the movement will disintegrate along ethnic lines?

14.2. If no, what was the reason for that?

14.3. What did you do about it?

COOL DOWN

(Moderator: We will now continue with the last group of questions)

15. According to you, what should be the role of the movement in future?

16. Do you think that there is an important question that was not addressed properly?

17. Do you maybe want to ask me something?

(Moderator: Thank you!)

Appendix D: Qualitative Data

Section 1: Cross-Thematic Analysis Coding Scheme

1. Common grievances

   a. Partisan and corrupted education

   b. Unjust system

2. Socio-political reasons

   a. Opportune situations

   b. Organizational learning

3. Networks

   a. Pre-existing

   b. Newly-established

4. Role of Ethnicity

   a. Common identity beyond ethnicity

   b. Bilingualism as a bridging practice

Section 2: Thematic Map

Thematic Map			
Theme	**Sub-theme**	**Excerpts**	
		Orginal (Macedonian)	Translated (English)
Common grievances	*Partisan and corrupted education*	Interviewee 8: Имаме значи државна матура, но сите крадат во таа државна матура. Студентите се помагаат од професорите […] екстерното тестирање исто [ќе биде] како тоа [државната матура] […] значи основната цел ни беше дека ние можеме да направиме нешто што е многу важно за оваа држава [...] за целиот образовен ситем во нашата држава […] за целиот образовен систем […] Interviewee 9: Професорите [на ДУТ] се сите политичари кои даваат некаква страв на студентите за да не можат тие да го дигнат гласот [...] гледајќи ја таа незадоволна маса на млади, на студенти, не можев да останам рамнодушна и да не се приклучам. Без разлика на етничка припадност или религија сите се стремевме кон нешто подобро […] Interviewee 8: […] тие [студентите на ДУТ] многу сакале да се приклучат на протестите [...] ама биле уплашени дека ако некој ги слика и знаете како се професорите […] сите од партиите кои беа на власт [...] (F1, pp. 8-10)	Interviewee 8: We have a [high school] state matura but everyone steals in the state matura. The professors are helping the students [to pass the exams] […] how will the external testing look like [refers to the proposed amendments to the Law on Higher Education]? Same, like that [the high school state matura] […] like the main goal was exactly this, that we can do something important for this state […] for the whole educational system […] Interviewee 9: The professors [at DUT] are all politicians who threaten the students not to raise their voice […] looking at that dissatisfied mass of young people, of students, I couldn't remain indifferent and not join [the protests]. Regardless of our ethnicity or religion, we have all strived for something better […] Interviewee 8: They [the students at DUT] really wanted to join the protests […] but they were afraid that someone will photograph them and then you know what kind of professors are these […] all of them members of the former governing parties […] (F1, pp. 8-10)
	Unjust system	Interviewee 5: […] ДУИ и ВМРО се од иста партија	Interviewee 5: [...] DUI and VMRO are the same party

| | | […] едните ми зборуваат против Македонците, другите против Албанците, а заедно си делат се`, сега јас што? Ќе ги гледам како тие се` делат и мене ме ставаат на таа позиција да се тепам со другите [Македонците]?

Interviewee 4: Мене лично ме мобилизираше гнев против државата [...] кога гледаш дека владеење на правото немаш никад [...] но аболицијата беше моментот.

Interviewee 6: Аболицијата беше врв на гневот [...] ти се собира од сѐ што слушаш [прислушкуваните материјали], а не се реагира, ама толку криминалци ти да аболицираш и пак да продложиш со секојдневниот живот ко ништо да не било, не може!

Interviewee 2: Па ја мислам дека и Македонците и Албанците се движени од тоа разобличување на неправдата [се мисли на прислушкуваните материјали] […] не е неправдата тоа што Македонците им прават нешто на Албанците или обратно, неправдата е што Груевски и Ахмети се договараат за тендери, крадат пари и слично […]

Interviewee 1: Мислам дека ова што го кажа [се однесува на Interviewee 2], дека желбата за исправање на правдата беше главен мотив за мобилизација кај сите [...] верувам дека кај различните етнички заедници е исто [...] (F2, p. 38-45) | […] the former talks against the Macedonians, the latter against the Albanians but, in reality, they share everything, so what should I do now? I will look at how they share everything, while at the same time putting me in a position to fight with the others [Macedonians]?

Interviewee 4: I was personally mobilized by the anger with the state[…]there is no rule of law […]but the abolition [the controversial presidential pardons] was the moment.

Interviewee 6: The abolition was the peak of the anger […] it [anger] accumulates from everything you hear and no one reacts, but to pardon so many criminals and to continue with your life as if nothing happened, that must not be allowed!

Interviewee 2: I think that both the Macedonians and Albanians are driven by the revealing of the injustice [i.e. the leaked audio materials] […] the real injustice is not that Macedonians do something to Albanians or vice versa, the real injustice is that Gruevski and [Ali] Ahmeti [the leader of DUI] rig bids, steal money, and similar stuff […]

Interviewee 1: I think that what you've just said, the strive for justice was the main motivation for mobilization for everyone[…]I believe that it's the same [reason] among the members of the different ethnic communities[…] (F2, p. 38-45) |

Socio-political reasons	*Opportune situations*	Interviewee 2: Дефинитивно постоеше [прилика]. Беше политички опортуно да се појави такво движење […] сите беа заморени од секојдневната политичка ситуација помеѓу двата клучни политички актери во државата [ВМРО-ДПМНЕ и СДСМ] и тогаш ништо ново не се случуваше […]	Interviewee 2: Definitely there was [some]. It was politically opportune for the movement to emerge […] everyone was tired from the everyday political situation between the two key political actors in the country [VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM] and nothing new was happening then […]
		Interviewee 1: Значи за нигде беше целата политичка ситуација. Да, и мислам дека на младите им стана преку глава […] пошо никаде немаше дебата, [дебатата] се пресели кај студентите […]	Interviewee 1: Like the whole political situation was so bad. Yes, and I think that the young people had it enough […] because there was no debate [in the country], [the debate] moved to the students […]
		Interviewee 2: Беше потребно владеењето на Никола Груевски [останатите се смеат] (F1, pp. 23-26)	Interviewee2: What was needed was the way of governing of Nikola Gruevski [everyone laughs] (F1, pp. 23-26)
		Interviewee 1: Имаше моменти каде што одредени случувња ја истураа енергијата на улица. Тоа беше обидот за заташкување на Мартин Нешковски […] ни треба тригер […] ако има нешто такво посебно емотивно […] те истура на улица […] тоа беа и аболициите […] голем дел од студентите што беа на улица [Студентски Пленум], не беа затоа што знаеа каков е законот за високо образование, 95% појма немаа. Беа на улица затоа што не беа задоволни од нивниот живот во Македонија.	Interviewee 1: There were moments where certain events made the people take the streets. That was the attempt to hide [the murder of] Martin Neškovski[...]we needed a trigger [...]if there is something emotional like that[...]it makes you take the streets[...]the majority of the students who were protesting [i.e Studentski Plenum] were not protesting because they knew what the Law on Higher Education envisions, 95% didn't know anything about it. They took the streets because they were unhappy with their life in Macedonia.
		Interviewee 4: Затоа што живеат во мувлосани студентски домови […]	Interviewee 4: Because they live in moldy student dormitories[…]
		Interviewee 1: Ете така [...]	Interviewee 1: Exactly [...]

		(F2, pp. 40-41)	(F2, pp. 40-41)
	Organizational learning	Interviewee 1: И мислам дека успеа главно поради тоа шо имаше хетерогеност […] Interviewee 7: Затоа Студентски Индекс не успеа бидејќи беше премногу анархо. Interviewee 1: Имено, имено. Interviewee 3: Да, да [...] (F1, pp. 24 – 25)	Interviewee 1: And I think it [Studentski Plenum] succeeded mainly because there was a heterogeneity[…] Interviewee 7: That's why Studentski Indeks [a previous student initiative] did not succeed, it was too anarchistic. Interviewee 1: Indeed, indeed. Interviewee 3: Yes, yes[...] (F1, pp. 24 – 25)
		Interviewee 3: […] АМАН 2012 тоа беше многу интересно. Да имаше некој да не` снима [се смее] […] Interviewee 6: Почетоците [воздивнува] Interviewee 3: Да […] Па таму првпат се судирија копјата [пауза, метафорично] дали си од партија? […] кој е овој? Кој е оној? [...] Interviewee 4: Многу предрасуди да [...] Interviewee 3: После во Протестирам влеговме во суштината […] баш ти е гајле дали си од партија, дали си етнички, имаме главна цел, исти проблеми [пауза] и нема што тука ние многу многу да дискутираме […] (F2, pp. 16-17)	Interviewee 3: [...] AMAN in 2012 was very interesting. If just there was someone to take a photo of us [laughs] […] Interviewee 6: The beginnings [sighs] Interviewee 3: Yes[...]Actually it all started then [pause, i.e. the partisan/non-partisan divisions in AMAN] are you a party member? […] who's this person? Who's that person? […] Interviewee 4: A lot of prejudices, yes[…] Interviewee 3: We learned the lesson in #Protestiram [...] I don't care if you're a party member, what's your ethnicity, we have a main goal, same problems [pause] and there is really no point in discussing these things […] (F2, 16-17)
Networks	*Pre-existing*	Interviewee 3: […] Учествував на дискусија […] организирана од Отворен Куфер [студентска иницијатива], но идејата за собир беше случајна од	Interviewee 3: [...] I was participating in a discussion […] organized by Otvoren Kufer [student initiative] but the idea for a student meeting was random from

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		луѓето што беа таму […] Interviewee 5: […] дознав за Студентски Пленум од колегите, се слушнавме со Interviewee 8 и памтам дека веднаш после вториот марш ние имавме заедничко излагање на телевизии → **continues below**	the people who were there […] Interviewee 5: [...] I found out about Studentski Plenum from my colleagues, I called Interviewee 8 and I remember that after the second march → **continues below**
	Newly-established	да ги информираме и нашите студенти Албанци за кои заедно сметавме дека не беа информирани дека Студентски Пленум воопшто постои […] Interviewee 6: Отидов таму случајно [на средбата], го видов таму плакатот кој што искочи [за првиот собир] и отидов[...] → **continues below**	and I remember that after the second march we had a joint statement on TV informing the Albanian students because we thought that they were not informed that Studentski Plenum actually exists […] Interviewee 6: I went there accidentally [at the meeting], I saw the poster [for the first meeting] and I went […]
	Pre-existing	Interviewee 7: [За мене] идејата за Студентски Пленум бар не беше ново, бидејќи и со Слободен Индекс, Сократовци [студентска иницијатива] [...] бев активен […] Interviewee 1: Мене [друг активист на Студентски Пленум] ми се јави додека бев во читална [и ми рече]: 'да дојдеш утре имаме нешо на Електро' [...] (F1, pp. 1-3)	Interviewee 7: [For me] the idea for Student Plenum was not something new because I was active in Sloboden Indeks, Sokratovci [a student initiative]… Interviewee 1: … I was in the library when [name of another activist of Studentski Plenum] called me [and told me]: 'we are organizing something at Elektro [the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies in Skopje], tomorrow, come […] (F1, pp. 1-3)
		Interviewee 4: […] jac почнав со протестирање со Студентски Пленум [зборува за протестите 2016] и излеговме [пауза] сега не знам [пауза] не сум сигурна [пауза] дали [пауза] дали моето учество [на протестите] беше затоа што знаев македонски	Interviewee 4: […] I started protesting with Studentski Plenum […] I agreed to go together with my faculty colleagues [refers to 2016 protests] and we went out [pause] I don't know [pause] I'm not sure [pause] whether my participation [in the protests] was because I

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		[пауза] Македонци. → **continues below**	knew Macedonian [pause] Macedonians.
	Newly-established	Interviewee 5: Па искрено ја мислам дека тоа беше случајот […] после почнаа тие [Албанците кои првично се приклучиле на движењето] да повикуваат [други Албанци] па после растеше бројот [на Албанците] ама на почеток не беа многу искрено (F2, pp. 2-3)	Interviewee 5: Honestly, I think that was the case […] after that they [the Albanians who initially joined the movement] started calling [other Albanians] and only then the number [of Albanians] started growing but at the beginning they were not many (F2, pp. 2-3)
Role of Ethnicity	*Bilingualism as a bridging practice*	Interviewee 2: […] Ми се чини дека тоа Interviewee 3 добро забележа, се сеќавам дека ние навистина сакавме и на албански да иницираме [комуникација], да допреме до албанската популација. Е сега ќе речат дека сме биле прагматични, сме сакале само луѓе да донесеме. Interviewee 3: Неееe! Interviewee 2: Не, не е таква ситуацијата. Мислам дека една од пропратните цели ни беше да иницираме некаков си вид на заедништво во една држава којашто е заедничка за сите […]	Interviewee 2: [...] It seems to me that Interviewee 3 has correctly noticed, I remember that we really wanted to initiate [a communication] in Albanian, to reach to the Albanian population. Some would say that we were pragmatic and only wanted to bring people. Interviewee 3: Nooo! Interviewee 2: No, the truth is that it was not like that. I think that one of our goals was to establish some kind of a community in a state that is common for all of us […] → **continues below**
	Common identity beyond ethnicity	Interviewee 7: Етничкото беше ирелевантно […] Interviewee 2: Апсолутно! […] во било која друга дискусија никогаш не излегло прашањето од која етничка припадност сме освен ако некој се обраќал на телевизија на албански јазик, што мислам е во ред, така е и подобро … [тоа е] култура на дијалог (F1, p.16)	Interviewee 7: The ethnic was irrelevant […] Interviewee 2: Absolutely! […] the issue of our ethnicity was not raised during the other discussions unless someone was giving a statement in Albanian, which I think is okay, that's better [that is a] culture of dialogue (F1, p.16)
		Interviewee 2: Па јас всушност мислам дека Протестирам беше некакво	Interviewee 2: I actually think that Protestiram was a sort of a supra-ethnic

		надетничко движење, воопшто не беше етничко […] ме прашуваа новинари од странство како дали има Албанци има на протестиве? Викам од кај да знам дека некој е Албанец? [сите се смеат]	movement, it was not ethnic at all […] foreign journalists were asking me 'whether there are Albanians on the protests?' I told them 'how can I know whether someone is Albanian? [everyone laughs]
		[…]	[…]
		Interviewee 1: И ден денес луѓе шо беа на протестите мислат дека сум Албанец [сите се смеат, поради името]	Interviewee 1: Even today people who used to come to the protests think I'm Albanian [A Macedonian with an Albanian-like name, everyone laughs]
		Interviewee 6: Леле да!	Interviewee 6: Oh my god, yes!
		Interviewee 4: Види, тоа е конфузија [сите се смеат] (F2, pp. 13-15)	Interviewee 4: Look, that's a confusion [everyone laughs] (F2, pp. 13-15)
	Bilingualism as a bridging practice	Interviewee 1: Сите објави, сите материјали секогаш биле барем на македонски албански.	Interviewee 1: All the statements, all the materials have always been at least in Macedonian and Albanian.
		Сите: Да, да.	All. Yes, yes.
		Interviewee 2: Тоа сме внимавале, точно.	Interviewee 2: We used to take care about that, true.
		Interviewee 1: На пример ако во Скопје мнозинството на организатори и координатори [на протестите] биле Македонци, секогаш пазеле [прекинат говор од страна на Interviewee 4	Interviewee 1: For instance, if in Skopje the majority of the organizers and coordinators [of the protests] were Macedonians, they always [interrupted by Interviewee 4
		Interviewee 4: Секој имал по еден другар Албанец што може да преведе [објавите на движењето] (F2, pp. 16-17)	Interviewee 4: Everyone had at least one Albanian friend that can translate [the public statements of themovement] (F2, pp.16-17)
		Interviewee 2: Ја мислам начинот на којшто беа комуницирани пораките влијаеше на некој начин на тоа надетничко сфаќање на протестите, затоа што на пример како што кажа некој претходно – сите	Interviewee 2: I think that the way the messages were communicated had in a way influenced that understanding of the protests as supra-ethnic because as someone said before – all the messages,

		пораки, слики, што и да е, беа двојазични, беа и на македонски и на албански. Да беа само на македонски можеби ќе беа сфатени протестите како македонски, вака беа сфатени како надетнички […] мислам дека во нашата ситуација, во нашата консоцијална демократија, тоа е она најблиску до надетничноста […] Interviewee 3: Па и мислам дека многу е логично […] ако сакаш да мобилизираш, ако сакаш да дојдат и другите [Албанците], треба да се обратиш и на друг јазик […] Interviewee 4: Тоа што кажа дека [двојазичноста] е најблиску до надетничко, тоа е точно и не мислам дека ќе се промени и не знам дали некогаш свеста кај луѓето [за] поврзаноста со јазикот некогаш ќе се промени […] (F2, pp. 47-48)	pictures, whatever [mean of communication], were bilingual, in Macedonian and Albanian. If they had been only in Macedonian, the protests probably would have been understood as [an ethnic] Macedonian ones. This way, they were understood as supra-ethnic […] I think that in our context, billingualism best resembles our consociational democracy […] Interviewee 3: Well, I think it's quite logical […] if you want to mobilize, if you want the others [Albanians] to join, you should communicate in other [their] language […] Interviewee 4: What you said that it [bilingualism] is the closest to the supra-ethnic, that is correct and I don't think that the importance of people's connection with the language will ever change […] (F2, pp. 47-48)
Note: The translations of the excerpts are mine			

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Appendix E: Figures

Figure 1: A picture of bilingual slogans used by Studentski Plenum. **Source:** Dzambaski, 2014.

Figure 2: A picture of the Macedonian and Albanian flag waved side-by-side during a protest in front of the government's headquarters. **Source:** Dzambaski, 2015

Figure 3: A picture of bilingual protest flyers used by #Protestiram. **Source:** Protestiram, 2015b

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