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"Europeanization" of the Macedonian National Identity

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Abstract

The subject of discussion in this paper is national identity and the question is whether national identity is a form of identity that can sustain a political community of the state and/or a union of states. The effectiveness of a political community, whether the nation, the state or the European Union, relies on the legitimacy derived from its members. We are in the realm of collective identities and particularly cultural identity which brings this discussion about new forms of identity in contemporary Europe into the area of nationalism studies. European identity, at this stage in history, cannot be cultural, for culture being historically constructed is too contested. "Europeanization" means a construction of a new collective identity, a new understanding of identity and its dissociation from the ethnically dominated territory of the nation-state. With this in mind, this article turns to concepts of identity as the term is employed in national discourses and argues that political integration of culturally diverse communities requires a form of identity beyond the boundaries of standard vocabulary of nationalism even in its civic form. This study is supported by the case of the Republic of Macedonia on two matters, Macedonian-Albanian relationships in the country and the relation between Macedonia and Greece on the "name issue" in order to draw implications for "Europeanization" of the Macedonian national identity.

Key Words: national identity, ethnic identity, civic identity, "Europeanization"

Introduction

The most striking element of national identity is its preoccupation with the past. Even more striking are the variations in the conclusions that nations and their elites draw from those pasts (often similar pasts), in order to determine a way forward and serve the articulation of national interest.

The rhetoric used to construct the narrative of the nation, whether by politicians or academics, appears to be fixed in another era: an era when sovereignty of the nation was the ultimate recognition of the nation. The reality of the present is different. Democratization of the new postcommunist regimes has become

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synonymous with European integration. The shift from candidate-state status to fully-fledged membership in the European Union is nearly impossible without the resolution of minority issues and tells us more about the international status of the state than its sovereignty. The rhetoric of national sovereignty is an empty one without the full inclusion of its minorities. The postcommunist citizen needs to reconstruct his/her national identity in the face of major systemic, institutional and normative changes. Such a reconstruction and redefinition of national identity is not well served by the old vocabulary of "ethnic nation", finally in control of its national destiny, and other well-known phrases that populate national rhetoric.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia was a shock to the majority of its population. So, what happened? After having considered various reasons mostly connected to the rise of nationalism in post-communism, an obvious gap appeared in this explanation. Something more substantial was happening. The country split because seven decades of the Yugoslav nations coexistence in the common state failed to create a sense of common purpose, or what Bhikhu Parekh called a "commitment to continuing existence" of the political community (Parekh, 2000). The systemic insecurities and political entrepreneurship associated with postcommunism put enormous pressure on the historically evolved constitutional arrangements within Yugoslavia (Wiberg, 1998). When these needed readjustment to the new situation, the most important factor - the conviction about the future of the common state was absent and the state was sacrificed to a bloody solution because all ethnic nations were inspired by their ethnic identities. The elite manipulations, the rise of nationalism, the use of historical events as a justification for the mutual resentment were merely tools in nationalist politicians' tool box.

The general sadness that accompanied that particular breakup of the state was a disappointment of "multinationality test" failed. I have argued that the new democracy was actually a stimulating factor for the rise of nationalism which in no way diminishes the fact that sustaining political unity in multinational conditions remains difficult. The price for national self-determination of Yugoslav nations has been extremely high. My question here is whether there are lessons to be learned from the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Macedonian-Albanian relationship in the context of European integration? If economic, political and cultural interdependence

is not enough to forge political unity, what is? What is it about national identity that makes the past seem if not more than at least as important as the future? More pertinently, how can the narrative of the nation, and thereby national identity, be constructed in such a way that its foundations involve a common future rather than a common past? The following attempts a normative approach that may answer these questions.

I. National Identity: Looking Forward to the Past?

The contention here is that there is an urgent need among academics, politicians (and populations themselves) to find a new vocabulary by which had dress the issues of the nation and its identity (Wiberg, 1998). In the Balkans, the seeds of current misperceptions can be found in the past. The tripartite split of Macedonia that emerged after the Second Balkan War (1913) survived two World Wars up to the present day: Aegean Macedonia went to Greece; Pirin Macedonia went to Bulgaria; and Vardar Macedonia went to Serbia (succeeded by Yugoslavia, then by the Republic of Macedonia). Historically seen, during the interwar period, Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians were united in denying a Macedonian identity. Bulgaria designated Macedonians their own, Serbia claimed them "South Serbians", while Greece named them "Slavophone Greeks". Societies very often try to define their identity in a negative context, through distinction "from" or comparing "with" neighbors. Who we are very often means who we are not. As a result of longstanding pressure and process of assimilation by their neighbors Macedonian have an acquired "societal security need" to deny that they are not Serbians, Bulgarians or Greeks

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and Macedonian's independence brought Macedonians into an insecure situation. First of all, they were no longer citizens of a big, respected and militarily powerful country, but henceforward rather a weak and poor state. Their existence as a nation was still not accepted by all neighboring states, with Bulgaria refusing to recognize the Macedonian language and nation, the Serb Orthodox Church refusing to accept the autonomy of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, and Greece voicing strong opposition to the self-styled name of the new state and hence delaying its international recognition.

In the new independent Macedonian state Albanian minority has succeeded to change the preamble to Constitution in order to reflect the situation in state: a multicultural state with a sizeable Albanian national group (25 percent) and other minorities (10 percent), not the state of the Macedonian people as the former preamble suggests. The reason for seeking the changes in the preamble to the Constitution was not to undermine the Macedonian national identity, but to strengthen the identity of Albanian national group within the state. When such a move is opposed, the assumption is that national identity is a valuable national resource whose value can be diminished simply by the recognition of another identity whose members may then presume an equal status within the state. Identity begins to represent security and prestige in a logic which suggests that more recognition of one group means less recognition for the other. Following this logic would mean that one group' s identity is purchased at the expense of lesser recognition of another group' s identity, which can only mean insecure nationhood feeding off a weak identity (Slaveski, 2003). In the case of the Macedonian-Albanian relationship, at least two damaging elements work against in this sense of threat: the historical memory and the insecurity of the new state. Whichever way, this is not a situation that can sustain a multicultural society comprising of different cultures, whether it is within a state or society of states.

When looking at the connection between national identity and foreign policy-making, it becomes clear that national identity helps to define the parameters of what a polity considers its national interests at home and abroad (Prizel, 1998). This is based on a collective memory, which is hardly a reliable source in the case of South East Europe states which are all, to a greater or a lesser degree, multicultural. It is precisely this past-inspired view of Albanians as a danger to the Macedonian nation that was at the heart of disputes between the Macedonian majority and the Albanian minority in the newly independent Macedonia. It is the exploitation of the still in-secure Macedonian identity that provides a platform for the forces opposed to post-2002 government who, in contrast to the previous administration, has secured the Macedonian candidature for the admission to the European Union. There is no doubt that the future of the new Macedonian state is not well served by national identity steeped in painful experiences of the past. Moreover, it is an identity wholly

inappropriate to the future expectations which lie in democracy, in Europe and with the Albanian minority. Identities are not divorced from institutions, they may not be politically constituted in their essence, but they can be reconstituted by political arrangements.

II. Differentiating: The Nation and Political Community

What was at the heart of disputes between the Macedonian majority and the Albanian minority in the Republic of Macedonia? The intolerance claimed by both sides is a result of a certain dynamic, which Brubaker calls a "triadic nexus involving three distinct and mutually antagonistic nationalisms" - that of a minority and the newly nationalizing state where they live and the external national home - land to which they belong (Brubaker, 1996). Although Brubaker does not deal with the Albanian minorities in this context, it can be argued that the role of the external homeland is well exampled by Albania, which has some 2 million of its ethnic kin spread all over the neighboring territories, namely Macedonia (500 000) and Kosovo (1,5 million) as a result of the historical processes after the Balkan Wars. The issue to explore is that of dual affiliations (Waltzer, 1992) civic and ethnic and the situation when they conflict; when a minority feels more loyalty to the "external" homeland, or is perceived not to attach enough loyalty to the state of residence and citizenship.

When do we speak of a minority? This is a political issue, not simply an issue of a different language and the adherence to different customs from that of dominant nationality. A minority, which enters a political arena, is characterized by at least three elements: a) the public claim to membership of an ethno cultural nation, different from the dominant one; b) the demand for state recognition as a minority group; c) the assertion of rights based on such recognition, which involves certain collective rights, cultural and/or political (Brubaker, 2001). In sum, a minority in the political sense of the word, is not a given by virtue of existing, but by virtue of a decision to represent itself as such and this is where dual affiliation comes to be viewed as a threat to a state or vice versa. Minority nationalism too carries a political agenda: formulation and articulation of its demands, which may involve sustaining an unfavorable vision of the state, in order to remain credible. If the state does not respond to demands from minorities, the perception of mutual threat increases. The

minority comes to view the state as not worth the emotional commitment, thus confirmed in its not-belonging, whilst the majority is justified in its view of the minority as not committed to the state which it consistently views as its own. This is of course the worst scenario, but its dynamics became very visible in Macedonia from 1991 to 2001. In the present context it is important to note that since the Ohrid Framework Agreement has been reached the "Albanian issue" has been losing its significance in domestic politics. There are two interrelated reasons for this positive development. First, the circle of mutual mistrust has been slightly, even if not sufficiently, broken up by the new partnership and the pursuit of mutual accommodation in the common venture. Second, the main objective of Macedonia, its Albanian minority and Albania as an integral part of this "triadic nexus" has become the European integration which requires all sides to reassess their strategies and seek compromises. In that sense, the European Union, by promoting political conditions in which new identities can be reconstructed has become an important and active actor - arguably, a fourth element to complement the old "triadic" relationship.

Fundamental to democracy are equal political rights, which in principle are guaranteed by citizenship, but it is important to note that awarding citizen-ship is not a guarantee of full inclusion and participation. The problems faced by the Albanian minority in Macedonia are not about being denied citizenship. Ethnic Albanians felt that they were being denied an equal political status and a share in the governance of the state. Currently, the main focus for the Albanian representatives is to enhance their newly achieved political status and safeguard greater autonomy for their minority.

III. Ethnic/Civic Distinction: Blurring the Boundaries

In conclusion to these clarifications of concepts that monopolize studies of multiculturalism, it is perhaps important to say something about the well-established distinction between ethnic and civic nations. The literature on nationalism is replete with the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalisms, and suggestions that ethnic nationalism by defining its nation as a community of descent is inherently collectivist, illiberal and contradictory to inclusive citizenship, thus a considerable challenge to democracy. Civic nationalism then is opposing in

character, prone towards an inclusive definition of the nation as a community of equal citizens, hence its benign character, providing it maintains this inclusive quality it can be complementary to democracy. In other words whatever the objectives of ethnic nationalism maybe (improvement of political or cultural conditions, or dominance in the state), their achievement seeks to accommodate only one particular group, whose membership is defined by their ethnicity and not open to "others" , whereas civic nationalism can extend the membership of the group to all people inhabiting a given territory.

The modern state has for a long time rested on social and cultural homogeneity, hence the perception that unity means homogeneity. In multinational (multiethnic or multicultural) states the process of homogenization can be conflicting, mostly due to the assumption by the dominant nation and its nation-building elites that the state is their own nation-state which implies the exclusion of other cultures from ownership of the state. Civic identity tends to miss a chance as soon as there is a disagreement about political unity affirming policies. Ethnic nationalism is as much a consequence of the failure to establish political unity, as it is its cause, for the disintegration of the state, the loss of its legitimacy, diminishes civic affiliation and leaves the field open to ethnic mobilization.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia changed the civic identity of the Albanian minority, who found themselves citizens of a new state they were less than enthusiastic about. The result manifested itself on two interrelated levels: the minority was presented as a potential threat to the territorial and national integrity of the state, and the state, in the eyes of the minority, became to be perceived as a serious threat to their existence as a distinct national group. The result was the narrowing of both identities, the Macedonian and Albanian, in the sense that they became defined in purely ethnic terms. Similarly, the mobilization of Macedonians within Yugoslavia could not be done on the basis of civic identity, for the state that should have inspired that identity was being questioned - in both cases the state failed to create a political nation and lost to an ethnic one.

The concept of civic identity in Macedonia is still extremely weak, and many ethnic Macedonians therefore resented the proposed change of the constitution's

Preamble because they were afraid of losing the state for whose recognition they had to fight so hard. Politicians and intellectuals voiced concerns that, if the Macedonian people were not explicitly mentioned in the preamble to the constitution, the very existence of the Macedonian nation would be in danger. This view resonates with the widespread notion among ethnic Macedonians that they, as a nation, have fought for centuries for their own national state, which they now do not want to lose. Ethnic Macedonians still perceive Macedonia as their "natural" state, and involuntarily make more "space(s)" for the Albanians (Atanasov, 2004). There is still resistance for the Framework Agreement, which is especially emphasized among the ethnic Macedonians and which is often labeled as damageable for the Macedonian state (Gocevski, 2003).

IV. The Limists of Shared National Identity

The importance of national identity, it is argued, lies in culture, in language and a "story", all of which provides us with a moral agenda. That agenda may, however, be dubious - it seems to extend mostly to our compatriots, and thus seeks to define the boundaries of its "moral obligation". The political significance of shared national identity is rooted in the belief that it fosters solidarity and a sense of belonging to a polity and that this sense of belonging makes the functioning of a democratic state more effective.

I stress democratic, because the advantages attached to national identity, i.e. respect and stability of its institutions, the realization of the common good and the establishment of trust are not considered to be necessary conditions for a non-democratic state (Miller, 1995). Notwithstanding, communist regimes have always engaged in an indirect promotion of national identity, also in pursuit of commitment from their citizens. Hence, we are assuming that: a) belonging is essential to commitment, and commitment is essential to the functioning of the state institutions, regardless of the level of democratic experience; b) the solidarity inspired by a shared national identity is the "right kind" of solidarity to foster the sense of belonging. The contention here is that the assumptions about national identity (i.e. the shared common past) may not answer fully the "right kind" of solidarity necessary for contemporary societies, meaning either a multicultural state, or larger political unit such as the European Union.

Political communities are culturally divided and have to meet cultural demands of more than one group. How this is done, in theory and practice, depends often on how these various cultures are labeled. David Miller distinguishes three kinds of social divisions: ethnic cleavages (i.e. American Italians), rival nationalities, each seeking to control all or part or the territory of the state (a classic example would be Northern Ireland, Serbs and Croats in Bosnia), and finally "nested" nationalities, meaning two territorially based communities within a single nation, e.g. Belgium, Spain, Britain (Miller, 2000). This latter and preferable case, according to Miller, is the one where people belong to two communities (smaller and the larger), but share national identity in the sense that they share common history over a considerable period of time.

The first thing to note is that in Miller's writing a "single nation" actually stands for a common state; second, that some "nested" nationalities have been "rival" nationalities before their histories became "interwoven" over the course of several centuries. Moreover, not all social divisions can be classified into categories: the interwoven history of the Macedonians and Albanians led to rivalry. The point I am making is, that rivalry does not exclude future cooperation, that social divisions can be overcome and that ethnic cleavages can result in "nested" nationalities. All in all, attaching political consequences to differences deriving from cultural membership on the basis of historically determined classifications remains suspect.

Hence, the attempt to construct a national identity through an historical perspective does not bring us closer to the aim of this article which is to seek foundations upon which identity-related differences can be overcome in our world, and our time. It seems that the best foundation for such an identity is the emphasis on a shared political future, rather than shared national past.

What does a shared identity mean? Here I wish to distinguish between culturally-based identity which suggests that there is something special about a group of people who can be grouped together because they have certain things in common, usually expressed in terms of a distinct language, religious practice, or the history. The second notion of identity is belonging to a polity (polity-based) and that for at least two reasons: first, as a place of residence, and second because one

identifies with some aspects of this polity. The latter notion, "polity-based" identity does not mean that one identifies with all aspects of it, and with every other member of the polity. The membership in the polity (citizenship) does not entail an absorption in it, but participation, compliance with its rules, cooperation and commitment to its institutions. Here, paradoxically, liberals, democrats and nationalists all tend to share the same fear that citizenship, thus described, is too "cold" and abstract to actually bind the community together in a more meaningful way.

Being a part of a political community may indeed not satisfy the more subjective elements of belonging, but does not exclude cooperation and political willingness. By the same token a passionate sense of identification with one's nation may bring about a sense of dissatisfaction with its current form and institutions. In the case of the Republic of Macedonia the Albanian minority is much more committed to cooperation within the post Ohrid Macedonian governments than it was before. According to Framework Agreement "the parties invite the international community to monitor and assist in the implementation of the provisions of the signed agreement" and request such efforts to be coordinated by the EU in the cooperation with the Stabilization and Association Council. In other words, implementation of the Ohrid Agreement has been set up as a precondition for integration of the country into Euro-Atlantic structures.

Under these circumstances, EU integration and NATO membership appear all the more important as they rank among the few projects on which members of the majority and the other communities agree. To various degrees, ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians are persuaded that only the Atlantic Alliance can protect Macedonia from external as well as domestic threats, thereby guaranteeing peace in the country. Consensus on membership in the European Union is even stronger. Most citizens of Macedonia feel it holds the key to a significant improvement in socio-economic standards and to a better future. In Europe without borders Albanians will be closer to their fellows in other states and ethnic Macedonians will establish close relations with Macedonians that live in the neighboring countries. So, in the long run, the European option will make less important the demands of ethnic collectivity.

On the other side, it is clear that the EU demands on democratization and human rights protection in Macedonia are very important and in fact the EU membership is seen as the only incentive for reforms. The country has formally adopted the new legislation, introduced national strategies in order to synchronize the different institutions responsibilities and role towards the protection of certain vulnerable groups or set of rights. Overall, the country lacks human rights culture, where the civil society should play a significant role. The civic sector is mostly concerned with following trends in international donations, without in fact initiating forum for public debate and with no capacity to bring social changes. If the EU is to guide Macedonia on its way towards consolidation of democracy and system providing human rights protection, it would finally need to assist the creation of a lively and coherent civic sector what would certainly shift the process from formal meeting of the EU criteria to Europeanization of the Macedonian society (Novakova, 2006).

The future admission of the Republic of Macedonia into the European Union will not be due to the efforts of Macedonian nationalists, but in actual fact a victory over them. The political cooperation in this case is not based on a sense of belonging to a particular culture, but is motivated by a common political aspiration, by belonging to a political community and sharing its fate together. The pragmatism and the willingness to compromise in order to direct the common fate in the best possible direction can be preferable to culturally-based identity which is prone to block compromise in the face of conflicting interests. At the heart of political unity is the accommodation of conflicting interests, whatever their nature, whilst unity based on cultural homogeneity is not a guarantee to either political unity or political cooperation.

V. Securitization of the "Name Issue": New Government's Policy

When ethno nationalism is on the rise in response to a perceived external threat in a particular state, the ethnic identity of the groups in that state will also rise to counteract the "loss" of identity space. The greater the intensity of the external threat, the greater the intensity of ethno nationalism and the stronger the mobilization of ethnic groups will be. The Framework Agreement lacks devices for

"societal peace-building", in particular for addressing the societal security needs of the ethnic Macedonians. In addition, at the international arena identity of the ethnic Macedonians is also challenged.

Greek's hypersensitivity on the name "Macedonia" has multiple origins, among others: the issue of Hellenic cultural heritage, the Greek civil war in which ethnic Macedonians supported the communists and the long-term vulnerability of Greece's northern border to irredentism. This background may help to explain Greece's perception of threat from the Republic of Macedonia. Macedonia's relations with Greece have been overshadowed since independence by dispute over Macedonia's official name. In April 1993 Republic of Macedonia joined the UN as the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (FYROM). This name was intended as a temporary compromise for international use, allowing the Republic to gain recognition from most EU countries and to try to come to terms with Greece, which had reacted furiously to its request to be recognized as the "Republic of Macedonia". Greece claimed that the name implied a territorial claim on the Greek province of Macedonia, and it was further infuriated when the republic's flag featured the 16-pointed star of Vergina, an emblem of ancient Macedonians and Alexander the Great (Slaveski, 2003).

Claim of the Republic of Macedonia to use its constitutional name in the international arena is interpreted by Greece as a threat to its own identity. However, the Macedonian claim is not exclusive. Macedonia depends on the name "Macedonia" as the designation of both its state and its people. In other words, only the Macedonian identity is threatened. For Macedonians the name issue is a matter of identity and their existence: Macedonians do not have another "matrix" state to secure their identity; their identity is challenged by other neighbors and the provisional name implies a provisional status of the state. The applicability of a societal security dilemma in this case steady rests on the presence of the concept's essential element, misperception and "illusory" incompatibility.

Beside the fact that the feeling of national identity cannot be judged by others, the Macedonian government is aware of the reality and accepted negotiation about the name of the country. However, both sides are not capable to solve the problem by bilateral negotiation, especially due to the fact that Greece is a member of

NATO and the EU, two organizations that are the goal of Macedonian foreign policy in terms of membership. The United Nation' mediation role in the Greek-Macedonian dispute is a sustained effort to establish communication in reaching an agreement which will resolve the misperception and avoid a potential dynamic of a societal security dilemma. However, negotations to resolve the dispute have not yielded a solution.

In this context, a credible EU and NATO commitment remains the best guarantee that Macedonia will look to the future rather than allow itself to be pulled back to the past. However, the name issue has been plaguing the country's relations with Greece (and, consequently, with the EU and NATO) since the early 1990s (Roudomentof, 2002). Macedonia has already made it clear that it agrees to join NATO under the provisional name of "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" as it was settled in the Interim Agreement. Moreover, in the run-up to Bucharest, under US pressure to come to solution, Macedonia for the first time agreed to a different name for international use. It accepted UN mediator Matthew Nimetz's "final proposal": "Republic of Macedonia (Skopje)" as its reference for international use. However, Greece flatly rejected it. and broke down the Interim Agreement. So, NATO unwittingly strengthened the Greek position at Bucharest.

Supporting the Greek nationalism and telling Macedonia that it should find a solution to the "name dispute" is among others telling Skopje to accept changes of its name and identity and that there is a danger that the public opinion will turn against EU and NATO. There is a real danger that nationalism and ethnocentrism will be on the rise. In this situation ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians have a diametrically opposite views on a crucial question for the future of the country, regarding the changes to the name of Macedonia in order to get a NATO membership.

Consequently decisions taken at Bucharest Summit brought a huge disappointment among Macedonian citizens of all ethnic groups. The failure to enter NATO was a special disappointment for Albanians, for whom the American-led alliance holds both a security and emotive attraction. Many now not like having to pay the cost to protect name of the country that mean "nothing to them, but mean

everything to the country's majority". A disappointment on NATO accession has an immediate impact on the credibility of EU perspective as well, leading to the "disintegration of the Euro-Atlantic integration myth" that has sustained shaky Ohrid peace.

The problem is that with its support to the Greek objections to the Macedonian name the leverage of EU on Macedonian politics is decreasing and the possibilities for further soft mediation of Macedonian-Albanian political disputes will diminish. There is a risk that both Macedonian and Albanian nationalism will grow. Supporting the Greek position signals to nationalist around the Balkans that Macedonia is not yet a "normal" country, a state that has a secure and prosperous future in the EU.

Owing to the severely degenerated security situation over the past years, additional measures aimed at redressing the polarization of Macedonian society would be needed. These would have to centre on coining strategies for the strengthening of Macedonia's fundamental attributes of statehood, on concentrating international donor efforts on development cooperation (rather than on humanitarian assistance to boost the country's industrial capacities), and on realistically engaging the country's political élites from both ethnic groups in the grand European integration processes.

It is not merely unfortunate that Macedonia did not get an invitation to join NATO at Bucharest; rather, it throws into question the entire basis for Macedonia's internal cohesion. But there is a fundamental difference in approaches in the two countries: Greece objects to the Macedonian claims to the legacy of Alexander the Great, but Macedonia does not object to corresponding Greek claims. What is more, Greece requires change of the name of the country even for domestic practice and challenges the existence of Macedonian nation and its societal security requirements (such as Macedonian language, Macedonian culture, etc). For the ethnic Macedonias this is unacceptable. Name of the country is considered by many ethnic Macedonians essential for preserving their national identity. In sum, the name dispute is largely asymmetrical, with Greece laying exclusive claim to the Macedonian identity. Exacerbating the problem is another asymmetry: EU and NATO member Greece is substantially richer and more powerful than Macedonia (Stefanova, 2003).

In theory of ethnic relations if an identity is under threat logical response is to strengthen its societal capacity. This can be done by using cultural means to reinforce social cohesion and distinctiveness among the group and to ensure that society reproduces itself effectively. In this sense, consequently, culture becomes security policy. This is exactly point of departure of the new Macedonian strategy to preserve the endangered national identity of the ethnic Macedonians. In such a situation, "Macedonian nationalism grows not so much from pride, but from desperation to survive" (Brunnbauer, 2002). The Albanian rebellion of 2001 could not but intensify among Macedonians the feeling that their national existence was threatened. This feeling is enhanced among Macedonians by Greek's blockade for integration of the country into NATO.

Few had ever engaged in an open debate on Macedonian identity and ethnic Macedonian nationalism. Under these circumstances, some kind of repercussion was to be expected, as it is now a renewed search for self-confidence and pride (Slaveski, 2009). However, the real question is: How long can ethnic Macedonians stand on this position? And, what consequences can produce this policy, integration or isolation of the country? Macedonia is facing to strategic choice and changes in Strategic Culture. Whether it will be "fine tuning", compromise and integration in Euro-Atlantic structures or "fundamental change" in security policy goals is still tentative?.

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, let me return to the Macedonian-Albanian relationship within the Republic of Macedonia. Now, the situation is different than before the conflict and coexistence is a more realistic option than separation. However, not even the most optimistic state-builder in the Republic of Macedonia envisages a sense of shared identity between Macedonians and Albanians in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, it would appear that the historically troubled relationship is beginning to settle into a political community identifying with the new state. The pre-condition of the successful continuation of this process is the belief that each group's future is best safeguarded within the state's current institutions. Should the part of the population which does not identify with the current

institutions wish to destabilize them, the easiest way to do so would be through the exploitation of national sensibilities. These are rooted in history and largely depend on the extent to which mutual mistrust can be overcome. In each case it would appear that the emphasis on the identity of the political community and its future is a better safeguard for the coexistence of culturally diverse groups within one state than the emphasis on the national identity with its inescapable and unchangeable past.

Regarding "the name issue" only a fair compromise, one that protects the Macedonian identity while addressing the Greek demand for a name for international use serves the cause of European stability. There is pressing need to link Macedonian identity with other European identities and organizations. Membership in NATO, for example, now appears to be a cultural marker of inclusion end economic attractiveness as much as a security guarantee. Macedonia cannot achieve success on its own. If the major players who will most affect the outcomes in the Balkan region (the EU, NATO and the US) cannot find some means of mutual accommodation and agreed to strategy to help the country, than the future of Macedonia will be in uncertain.

The main aim here has been to make plausible the idea that the stability of a political community is better served by constructing a polity-based identity which looks towards the common future, than by a shared national identity. My argument has been that the extent to which national identity with its cultural content and preoccupation with the past can inspire political unity is limited. Its limitation lies in its inherent ethnic emphasis which does not easily extent from "one" nation to "more" nations. The character of contemporary Europe is best described as "more" nations, whether inside the states or between them; consequently, the nation needs to be re-defined, if it is to address cultural diversity and offer an answer to political unity. The suggestion here is that the new definition of "the nation", the one which can give substance, direction and purpose to political unity and successfully sustain the project of European integration, is that of a political community with a sense of shared political future, but not necessarily a shared national identity.

If the nation is an "imagined" community, then the imagination of its identity needs to extend beyond the exclusiveness of national identity in order to cooperate and communicate with all peoples with whom it shares the same interest,

and the same future. It is the state, not the cultural nation to which we must look for the inclusion and recognition of different cultures. This may mean that the concept of national identity, as we know it, is also in need of re-definition, if not in need of abandonment. If one accepts that our world, previously defined by nationalism and the political dominance of nation- states is changing, in favor of a more politically integrated and culturally diverse world, then the tool with which nationalism has captured and maintains its grip on politics - national identity - must change too.

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