

**Collective Memory as a Contributing Determinant of War and Peace:
The Case of Ethnic Relations in Macedonia**

The challenges facing the new former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia must be understood in history's light but can be resolved only by moving out from under history's shadow.¹

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¹ Fromkin, David. "Dimitrios Returns: Macedonia and the Balkan Question" World Policy Journal 10. 1993. 71.

Pearl of the Balkans

There is only one truth
There is only one Macedonia.
Divide her! Tear her to Pieces!
She will still be our most dearly beloved land.²

² Danforth, Loring. The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, USA. 1995; 191.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background: Macedonia?	
Introduction.....	4
Research Questions.....	7
Hypothesis.....	7
Importance.....	10
Motivation.....	11
Methods.....	12
Summary of findings.....	15
History and Background.....	15
Overview of Thesis.....	22
Chapter 2: Literature Review: Connecting Three Concepts	
Collective memory.....	24
Ethnic relations.....	33
Conflict resolution.....	41
Chapter 3: Data: The Interviews	
Introduction.....	48
Data Description.....	49
Data Analysis.....	49
Ethnic narratives.....	50
Ilinden.....	51
Ethnic Albanian Demonstration of 1990.....	55
Referendum of 1991 and Ilirida.....	59
An Albanian University.....	62
Kosovo Refugee Influx.....	66
The removal of Albanian Flags.....	70
The 2001 Violence.....	74
The Ohrid Agreement.....	79
Working Together Events.....	83
Conclusion.....	86
Chapter 4: Summary: Tying It All together	
Historical Solutions and My Solution.....	89
Conclusion.....	92
Future Direction for Studies.....	95
Appendix:	
Figure 1.....	96
Chronology of Events in Macedonian History.....	97
Speech of the President Boris Trajkovski.....	100
2001 Violence Charts.....	104
List and Background of Interviewees.....	106

Chapter 1:

Introduction: Two Separate Interpretations of Ilinden

On August 2, 2003 I found myself in a grand hotel in Washington, D.C. filled with Macedonians all dressed in fancy clothing. They are celebrating Ilinden—their national Independence Day. The event was sponsored by the Macedonian-American Friendship Society, which is a rather small Diaspora community which has maintained a strong feeling of attachment to their home country. I learn that 100 years ago on this day marks what to many ethnic Macedonians was the national awakening of the Macedonian identity. As I meander among the guests I begin to watch a power point presentation on the Ilinden Insurrection and the significance it holds to them. I can see how proud everyone in the room is of the men and women who sacrificed their lives in the most recognized attempt to break the chains of Ottoman rule. As I continue walking around the rooms I wonder if there are any ethnic Albanians attending this event. I approach one of the leaders of the event, Goce³, and after a brief introduction I ask him whether or not ethnic Albanians are in attendance:

Goce: Why would they be?

Me: I just assumed that because they make up such a large percentage of the population of Macedonia that some would be here.

Goce: Well they aren't.

Me: Is there a reason why they are not here?

Goce: (With some frustration) Why are you so interested if Albanians are here? This is a celebration for Macedonians.

Me: I'm sorry; I think I might be confused. Do you mean a celebration for ethnic Macedonians or citizens of the Republic of Macedonia?

Goce: The point is that it is for ethnic Macedonians because Albanians are not true citizens of Macedonia.

Me: What do you mean by that?

³ In this paper I will use Pseudonyms to protect the identity of the individuals being interviewed. However, where important and if given express consent I do use the real name and title because of its relevance to the comment being made.

Goce: You see, Albanians occupy territory in the Western part of Macedonia, but they do not care about Macedonia. They have no stake in the country. They are not true Macedonians. They are more attached to Kosovo and Albania. They only cause trouble in Macedonia.⁴

After this short interaction, for the first time I am able to see the divide that plagues this country. As an American I tried to imagine attending a Fourth of July celebration where only White Protestants were “allowed” to come. Other minority groups were not invited because they were simply on *our land*, and they cared nothing for America. I was quite taken aback by this conversation but wanted to see if other opinions were in evidence.

Towards the end of the event a speech was read by a leader of the Macedonian diaspora, which was the speech given earlier that day in Macedonia by the current President, Boris Trajkovski. Below are excerpts from the speech which is reproduced in full in the Appendix:

The Republic of Krushevo, the foundation of our contemporary statehood, reposes on three pillars: republicanism and democracy; religious and ethnic tolerance, and social justice. The splendour of the Macedonian epos has a different dimension: this was not only a fight for freedom and independent state, but also for religious and interethnic tolerance – a unique phenomenon of the Balkans not only in that time, but many years after, and remained a distinctive Macedonian feature until present time.

This generation of revolutionaries-visionaries, fighters and reformers saw Macedonia as a free and progressive society and common fatherland and democratic state of all of its citizens, regardless of their religion, ethnic origin and social status. Precisely this generation, in the course of the Insurrection, through the Krushevo Republic demonstrated for what kind of state it was fighting and to what society were the Macedonian people aspiring to. If there is a date, which unites us, all, not only as historical heritage, but as a future bond for Europe and as a basis of our common European patriotism and respect of universal human values, that date certainly is 2 August 1903.

What is the common interest of the Macedonian people today, no matter where they live, their social status and ethnic or religious background? Dear friends, this

⁴ Interview with Goce conducted at a hotel in Washington DC, on August 2, 2003.

is the natural and simple human wish to provide well-being, decent life, spiritual fulfillment and peaceful sleep for their children. Let us unite over those things which bring us together; the differences have always existed and will exist and they should be settled through confrontation of ideas and productive competition in the spiritual sphere, and not allow them to become the apple of discord among the members of different ethnic communities or political parties. The celebration of Ilinden should contain a message, which will call for unity and say that Ilinden does not pertain only to the Macedonians but to all the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia and that we have all the right to celebrate it equally.

As President of the Republic of Macedonia, today, while we are celebrating the Centenary of the Ilinden Insurrection, I would like to convey again a message to each of our citizens, to each home in Macedonia, to all those who bear Macedonia in their hearts: the Republic of Macedonia is the state of all those who live in it; the differences should draw us closer, not divide us; we should turn to what enables us to live, not to enclose ourselves by obsolete concepts rejected by the progressive world; we should settle any argument through dialogue and mutual understanding, within the institutions of the system and by respecting the democracy and human rights. This is a free country and the freedom of each citizen is limited only by the freedom of other citizens.⁵

At the same celebration I was hearing two radically different perspectives on the “Albanian question.” In my interview it appeared that Goce did not believe Albanians were even “true citizens” of Macedonia, and would thus not participate in an event that was really for “ethnic Macedonians.” On the other hand, the speech by the President seemed to be making an effort to bring together the ethnic groups, and unite them through a recounting of the common history of the Krushevo Republic. In his speech, the President was trying to convey that “Macedonia is the state of all those who live in it” and not simply a state for ethnic Macedonians. President Trajkovski was using Ilinden to emphasize the mutual cooperation and desires of the founders of the Krushevo Republic to look beyond ethnic identity because of their commitment to regard all inhabitants as equal citizens of Macedonia.

⁵ Speech by President Boris Trajkovski on the occasion of the centenary of the Ilinden Insurrection and Macedonian statehood. August 8, 2003. Reproduced on the President’s homepage: <<http://www.president.gov.mk/eng/info>>

As I left the celebration I could not help but contemplate these two views. They were diametrically opposite, and yet they were based on the same information. Granted that they were targeting different audiences, but these disparate perspectives convinced me that there must be some significance to the way past events get reworked and viewed by the present generation. I realized that there is an ongoing war being waged for the minds and hearts of Macedonian citizens. One of the most important battles is over the collective memory of the citizens. This battle will in large part determine the fate of the Republic of Macedonia; whether the future will be one of ethnic violence and hatred, or one of peace, tolerance, and mutual cooperation.

Research Questions:

Is collective memory one of the many mechanisms that can help to explain current ethnic tension in Macedonia? I am specifically concerned with how do—if at all—differences in collective memories play a role in developing violent relations between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians living in Macedonia? I wanted to know whether or not the exclusionary and negative ways certain historical events become emphasized in the collective memories of these two communities are essential in determining their present mutually hostile and oppositional attitudes? Finally, I am interested if it is possible to change these conflictual collective memories and would this then lead to reducing the current ethnic tensions to a more peaceful co-existence?

Hypothesis Proposed:

The central aim of this work is to explain and show preliminary evidence that suggests collective memory plays a role in the current relations of Macedonian citizens. My thesis is that these memories can either create tension thus leading to violence, or

build an atmosphere of tolerance thereby leading to peace. As has been noted previously, there is a large ethnic Albanian population residing within the borders of Macedonia, where the majority population are ethnic Macedonians. The first part of my hypothesis is that the existence of separate, hostile memories within each group and the way each group views key past events contribute to present ethnic tension. The second part of my hypothesis is that if different, more positive shared memories are cultivated across groups, this could result in improving ethnic relations. Part one of the hypothesis is tested in this research. In the absence of existing positive collective memories shared by ethnic Albanians and Macedonians, it is currently impossible to test part two of the hypothesis. However, I speculate about how such positive memories could be developed, and where they might lead in the Discussion section of this paper. The hypothesis in its entirety is generated from the theoretical model illustrated in Figure 1 (pg. 96), which is discussed in detail below.

Starting with a hypothetical Macedonian citizen (either ethnic Macedonian or Albanian) two developmental options are possible regarding the influence of collective memory on conflictual versus harmonious social outcomes. The left side of the chart, referred to as the “Exclusive Scenario,” begins with incompatible versions of collective memory (stage 1). This means that the memories being emphasized in the socialization process of any given group are ones that do not agree or differ in some sense from the memories of other groups. Following the “Exclusive Scenario,” my theory that these separate and incompatible memories will inevitably lead to isolation and an ensuing division between ethnic groups (stage 2). Living parallel lives, with little or no interaction between groups, it only follows that suspicion and distrust will begin to

appear (stage 3). The suspicion, in turn, will begin to produce negative feelings of resentment, anger, and even hatred (stage 4). Given the right conditions, these emotions will result in physical violence being perpetrated on the other ethnic group (stage 5). Finally, the culmination of this sequence is that this violence leads to the formation of new incompatible collective memories (stage 6). It is important to realize one implication of this model is that the present will soon be the past and thus recent violence soon becomes cause for new violence. The cycle of violence is now complete and as time goes by, it becomes harder and harder to create peace. Originally, this sequence of feelings and actions comprised the total of my original model. But, upon further reflection I realized for the same reasons one kind of memory could lead to violence, different type of memories could conceivably help to promote peace.

This led to the right side of the diagram, or the “Inclusive Scenario.” The first box comprises an integration of various collective memories (stage 1). By this I mean something to the effect that the state, through educational and other social mechanisms, emphasizes favorable memories, and presents history in a more neutral or inclusive light. It is my contention that an integrative approach to building collective memories will lead to unity and will promote positive interaction between the ethnic groups (stage 2). This positive interaction will likely lead to trust and bonds being formed that would otherwise never occur (stage 3). Developing a solid foundation of trust between the ethnic groups should lead to mutual feelings of tolerance and compassion (stage 4). These positive emotions will create an atmosphere of peace, where violence based only on the ethnicity of the “other” is unlikely (stage 5). Finally, this sequence will create a cycle that can

strengthen the outcome of toleration and peace and, like its negative counterpart, is also difficult to change (stage 6).

Both the “Exclusive Scenario” and the “Inclusive Scenario” are self-reinforcing. Whichever path is chosen, it becomes more and more difficult to change the psychological attitudes that become deeply inculcated into citizens. Finally, it should be noted that, although the model focuses on collective memory, these memories are obviously not the only factors influencing the likelihood of peace or violence in Macedonia. However, my model argues that collective memory is an important contributing factor to the quality of ethnic relations in Macedonia.

Importance of Hypothesis:

My hypothesis is important because little work has been done on relating collective memory to ethnic reconciliation or resentment. By this I mean there is a huge amount of literature on collective memory and the role it has played in shaping the present generation’s beliefs, but a bridge has not yet been created between this and the literature on conflict resolution. It is my aim to show that collective memory must be taken into consideration when trying to promote peace or explain a conflict under certain circumstances. I want to show a people’s historical collective memory must be taken into consideration when trying to resolve conflicts. Much of the current work being done to bring hostile groups together inevitably overlooks this aspect, yet it is one that I believe is absolutely central to creating lasting peace. Without dealing with the issues that are ingrained in a people’s collective memory, conflict resolution is only a dream with no real hope. I thus believe by demonstrating the importance of collective memory in contributing to and perpetuating conflict and how it can be overcome will advance the

way in which the international community and domestic organizations deal with conflict when trying to bring “enemies” together.

One of the driving factors behind this work is remembering what happened in Kosovo in the early 1990’s demonstrating the ability of the past to profoundly effect the present. Here, Slobodan Milosevic used what had become a narrative of Serb defeat to the Ottomans 600 years before at the Field of Blackbirds to promote a devastatingly divisive memory for ethnic Serbians.⁶ Milosevic’s inflammatory speech on this same location appealed to Serbian collective memory of this tragic event and used their fear to set in motion the ethnic cleansing of Albanians living in Kosovo. This historical event underlines the importance of my hypothesis in that it demonstrates the potentially ruinous outcomes inherent in cultivating negative collective memories. I hope this work will bring to the forefront of people’s consciousness the influence of collective memory in shaping current conflicts, and suggest how the kind of ethnic violence promoted by nationalists like Milosevic may be avoided, and peace and stability made more feasible.

Motivation:

This project started out with an independent study class directed by Professor Wertsch, at Washington University in the Spring of my Junior year. During this semester I was introduced to the term “collective memory.” I became fascinated by how collective memory plays a role in the social relations in contemporary societies. In particular I was interested in how collective memory is used—if at all—in creating or ameliorating conflicts. While trying to design a case study to investigate the relationship between collective memory and conflict, I was offered an internship with Search For Common Ground (SFCG), working on their Macedonia project. I had found my case study.

Methods:

Like most Westerners, I had little knowledge of Macedonia (I did not even know where it was). I thus began my research by reading much of the published literature on Macedonia either written in or translated into English. These works spanned the disciplines of anthropology, political science, history, sociology, psychology, and even memoirs. Once I began to feel more comfortable with the history and other background factors concerning Macedonia, I then narrowed my reading to the relations between the ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, as this was to be the focus of my study.

During the Summer of 2003, I accepted the internship offered working in Washington D.C. with SFCG. I quickly became a researcher for the organization gathering information about the ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians. I was responsible for collecting newspaper articles and other reports regarding the current ethnic relations and general state of affairs in Macedonia. Further, as the representative from SFCG I was able to attend a conference titled “Macedonia: Will the Peace Last?” held by the United States Institute for Peace (USIP). I gained invaluable contacts and much useful information regarding Macedonia during this internship with SFCG. A large section of this paper on conflict resolution in Macedonia comes directly from my education and documents obtained while interning at SFCG. While working with SFCG I was able to interview the Director of SFCG Macedonia project, stationed in Macedonia, the program manager of the Macedonia project located in Washington D.C., and a few other individuals working on Macedonia related issues in Washington D.C. However, I had still not been able to break into a circle of Macedonians, whom I wanted to interview for this project.

⁶ Williams 170

Then, one day a co-worker asked me if I was still writing my thesis on Macedonia and wondered if I would like to speak with her Macedonian friend. I was quite excited and this became my first interview with someone from Macedonia. After the interview I was invited to the Macedonian American Friendship celebration of Ilinden. Here I gathered a few more interviews and gained more contacts that I was to use later in conducting additional interviews. While I was the obvious outsider at this event, everyone spoke freely and tried to educate me about what Ilinden was and what it meant to Macedonians. However, a few days after the event I e-mailed the head of the Macedonian American Friendship, as I believed she could put me in touch with other Macedonians in the U.S. who were willing to be interviewed. I was surprised that, although she would try to help, she also stated, “I do not believe that you will get any responses because in general Macedonians do not like to talk with Western researchers. They feel that what they have to say gets misrepresented to cast them in a negative light.”⁷ While at first I was taken aback, because of this advice I was extremely cautious when talking to Macedonians, letting them know my intention of writing a thesis, and making clear that if they chose I would not use their names, and would be careful to represent them in a truthful light.

Each interview conducted was tape recorded and later transcribed—sometimes in its entirety and other times only certain portions. During this three month period I was able to interview four Macedonians in person. In each of these interviews I did not have any set questions that I read from but, after introductions and small talk, I began each interview by asking the subject about his or her view on the ethnic relations in

⁷ E-mail correspondence with Zoya ?, President of the Macedonian American Friendship Association. August 15, 2003.

Macedonia. From this point, every follow up question was predicated on responses the subject gave.

When I returned to school I met another Macedonian student studying at Washington University whom I was able to interview. This was to be my last in-person interview. I next used my contacts to attempt to interview Macedonians by e-mail or over the phone. I had one more interview with a Macedonian individual over the phone and sent e-mails to another fifteen, of which eight responded that they were willing to be interviewed by e-mail. E-mail interviews proved to be a difficult process because until this point I had conducted all my interviews in person and was able to ask a minimal number of questions and simply listen to what the interviewees had to say. However, I did come up with a list of standard questions to ask each of the ten respondents who were willing to help.⁸ I felt that conducting these interviews over e-mail was more leading than in person because I had to bring up topics right from the start, as opposed to letting them naturally arise over the course of a conversation.

Finally, I began to contact professors whose books I had read about Macedonia. I contacted seven researchers and five responded that they were willing to help. All but one of these interviews was conducted over e-mail, which was much easier with these academicians than with lay people. The one interview not conducted over e-mail was done over the phone and later transcribed in its entirety. In total I conducted 21 interviews.⁹

Throughout this entire interviewing process I continued to look for articles related to Macedonia. I searched all British Broadcasting Company (BBC) news articles related

⁸ These are included in the Appendix

to Macedonia from 10/24/1997 to 7/16/03 to ascertain how Macedonia was portrayed in the international community. I also read over the Constitution of Macedonia and conducted internet research.

The above summarizes the research and data collection I conducted over the last year for this project. One point of importance is that during the summer I was supposed to travel to Macedonia to conduct interviews with both ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians, but due to a family emergency was not able to make this journey. This became important as I was never able to locate ethnic Albanians from Macedonia to interview. This issue is discussed in detail in the section on direction for future study.

Summary of findings:

The conclusion of this study is the past of Macedonia plays an important part in the lives of both ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians through their separate and diverging collective memories. Throughout my interviews many events which occurred in recent history, still play a prominent role in the ethnic relations in Macedonia. The left side of Diagram 1 (see page 94) appeared to hold up in explaining a contributing factor to violence in Macedonia. As will be shown in greater detail many events, in which ethnic Macedonians cited as causing discordant relations, were not experienced first hand, but had been read about, learned in school, or their peers and parents contributed to the strong and deeply held views many expressed.

⁹ Please see the appendix for the breakdown of the different groups I interviewed and very brief background on each one.

History and Background:

“[Macedonia] lies at the heart of the Balkans, a region whose very changeable and complicated history has contributed significantly to the current unrest in the area.”¹⁰

In this section I will briefly sketch the history and provide general background information on Macedonia. While the term Macedonia can refer to the Ancient Kingdom of Macedonia, a loosely defined territory that encompassed parts of Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia, I will be using the term to refer to the new Republic of Macedonia¹¹. The origins of this small country arose out of much larger empires trying to expand their borders and in so doing control this region. Before 1912 Macedonia was at one time or another under the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the medieval Bulgarian and Serbian Empires, and the Ottoman Empire.¹² Later it was to become part of Yugoslavia (1944) and finally its own independent republic (1991).¹³ The location of the present day Republic of Macedonia is in South Eastern Europe.¹⁴ The territory bounded by Macedonia is about the size of Vermont, with mountainous terrain, huge valleys and basins, and a population of a little more than two million.¹⁵ The mountainous terrain has resulted in chronic communication difficulties within the country, which has led to compartmentalized rather than unified communities. To understand Macedonia requires an understanding of its past, especially as historically it has been referred to as the “apple of discord in the

¹⁰ Beska, Violeta Petroska. “NGOs, Early warning, and Preventive Action: Macedonia,” published in *Vigilance and Vengeance: NGO’s Preventing Ethnic Conflict in Divided Societies*, edited by Robert I. Rotberg. Brookings Institute Press, Washington, DC, 1996. 133

¹¹ This study is concerned only with the former Yugoslav republic known officially as the Republic of Macedonia but recognized by most states and the United Nations as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). This does not imply the adoption of a position in Greece’s dispute with FYROM over the name “Macedonia.”

¹² Barker, Elizabeth. “The Origin of the Macedonian Dispute” Originally published in *Macedonia—Its Place in Balkan Power Politics*, London 1950. Reproduced in Pettifer, James. *The New Macedonian Question*. St. Martin’s Press, INC., New York, NY, USA. 1999. 4.

¹³ Poulton 9

¹⁴ Please see maps located in the Appendix

Balkans.”¹⁶ As with any nation, in the Balkans, history is an important aspect that drives the present.

To begin to understand the ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians, one must first examine the history of the Ottoman Empire, then proceed to Tito’s Yugoslavia, and finally consider the present-day Republic of Macedonia. The Slavs who are now considered ethnic Macedonians came to Macedonia in the sixth century, where they found a mainly Greek speaking population.¹⁷ The Ottoman Turks ruled Macedonia from the end of the fourteenth century until the Balkan wars in the early twentieth century. The Ottomans brought with them Islam, and throughout their empire there were many who adopted the religion of the new rulers. In Macedonia, these converts were mainly Albanians.¹⁸ The Ottoman state was thus an Islamic one, with the population divided into “millets,” or groups, based solely on religions affiliation. This meant that Albanians and others who converted to Islam were viewed as first class citizens, whereas all other “peoples of the book were organized into separate millets. Faith and not ethnicity or language was the differentiator.”¹⁹ While both ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians look back upon the time spent under Ottoman rule as unwelcome and oppressive, most scholars agree the repressive measures affected ethnic Macedonians to a larger degree because of their Greek Orthodox religious beliefs.

¹⁵ The World Factbook: Macedonia, The Former Yugoslav Republic. 2002. Online edition <<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mk.html>>

¹⁶ Williams, Abiodun. Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, Lanham, Maryland, USA. 2000. 17

¹⁷ Barker, Elizabeth. “The Origin of the Macedonian Dispute” Originally published in Macedonia—Its Place in Balkan Power Politics, London 1950. Reproduced in Pettifer, James. The New Macedonian Question. St. Martin’s Press, INC., New York, NY, USA. 1999. 70.

¹⁸ Poulton, Hugh. Who are the Macedonians? Hurst and Company, London, United Kingdom. 1995.26

¹⁹ Poulton 35

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, uprisings against Ottoman rule began in Macedonia. During this period “a more genuinely Macedonian body was formed: the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), led by two Macedonians both nationalist-minded school-teachers, Damian Gruev and Gotse Delchev.”²⁰ The most important of these uprisings against Ottoman rule was Illinden (St. Elijah’s day), which occurred on August 2-3, 1903. This was the “biggest uprising and one which occupies a leading place in Macedonian mythology;” however, despite the revolutionary rhetoric, this revolt was yet another failure for IMRO. As will be discussed later, this event holds a highly significant position in terms of differing collective memories and fractious ethnic relations in Macedonia

While these uprisings were largely unsuccessful, in the first Balkan War, 1912-1913, the countries of Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia broke the yoke of Ottoman control, and expelled the occupiers from the region. This resulted in the Treaty of London signed on May 30th where the territory was split between the various parties. Bulgaria felt that they were entitled to much more land than they received and subsequently attacked Greek and Serbian lines. This began the second Balkan War, 1913, in which all parties allied against Bulgaria, which was “soundly thrashed.”²¹ Ironically, once the area of Macedonia was liberated none of the Balkan states that participated—Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia—thought Macedonia would be independent or autonomous, but rather expected this area to simply be divided among the various nations. The territory in this region and the demarcation between the various countries remain highly contentious and a source of much hostility in the region.

²⁰ Barker 10

²¹ Poulton 74

After the first and second Balkan wars, Macedonia was brought into Joseph Bronz Tito's Yugoslavia on August 2, 1944 to commemorate the Ilinden uprising. Tito had thus laid the groundwork for a national commemorative holiday that still exercises an important hold on Macedonian national consciousness. Ethnic relations were strained under Tito, who took special efforts to ensure peaceful coexistence among various groups, at least on the surface. He espoused a national ideal of "brotherhood and unity" between all peoples, but had to back this policy with an iron fist: "People convicted of sowing ethnic hatred went to jail."²² While Tito always dealt harshly with ethnic nationalism, upon his death in 1980 the ethnic issues that had been trapped under a "pressure cooker" finally blew.²³ Warren Zimmerman, the last ambassador to Yugoslavia, reported to Washington that if Yugoslavia broke up, violence would inevitably follow.²⁴ His prophecy was fulfilled because of players like Milosevic and Tudgman, "ethnic entrepreneurs" who exploited the tensions between different groups to gain power.²⁵ As Zimmerman predicted, the breakup of Yugoslavia ended in violence, except in Macedonia, which was the only republic to leave the federation without a single shot being fired.

Macedonia remained part of Yugoslavia until 1991, when a referendum was held and ethnic Macedonians voted overwhelmingly for independence.²⁶ There is no nation as contested as Macedonia. From the people who inhabit it to the territory bounded by the present borders, nearly all aspects of the country are disputed by the surrounding nations.

²² Zimmerman 39

²³ Zimmerman 41

²⁴ Zimmerman 41

²⁵ Ethnic Entrepreneur is a term that was coined by Joseph Rothchild. *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework*, New York, 1981 pg. 2-3. Reproduced in Troebst, Stefan. "IMRO + 100 = FYROM? The Politics of Macedonian Historiography."

²⁶ Ethnic Albanians boycotted this referendum, which has always been a source of ethnic tension.

Even the simple question “Who is a Macedonian?” becomes a controversial issue that led to the title of Hugh Poulton’s book: Who are the Macedonians? The search for identity in Macedonia plays a critical role in the relationship ethnic Macedonians hold to their minority groups. The boundaries surrounding Macedonia have been and sometimes are still “claimed by all four of its neighbors—Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, and Serbia.”²⁷ The ambiguity of Macedonia’s territorial boundaries led a cartographer to assert that “its borders have been and continue to be defined very differently by mapmakers with different agendas.”²⁸

Even the name ‘Macedonia’ is contested, mainly by the Greeks who claim that Macedonians are trying to steal ancient Greek customs and identity. This has led to the United Nations admitting this country with a temporary name, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (shortened to FYROM), as its 181st member.²⁹ Latent in these disagreements and contestations is the idea that Macedonia’s borders have never been set in stone, but rather can be changed purely for political reasons. The issues of boundaries also play a major role in fueling the fire of suspicion and ill-will among the various ethnic groups, an issue I will address later. While the new nation is contested and has had many obstacles involving both internal and external factors, nevertheless it has continued to exist in this unstable region.

According to the latest census, which is disputed by all ethnic groups, ethnic Macedonians comprise 66.6% of the population, with ethnic Albanians totaling 22.7%,

²⁷ Zimmerman, Warren 1996. Origins of a Catastrophe. Times Books a division of Random House, Inc. New York, USA. 34. Sometimes these nations are referred to by ethnic Macedonian as the “Four Wolves” a story I will delve deeper into later in this paper.

²⁸ Wilkinson, H.R. 1951 Maps and Politics: A Review of the ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia. Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool. 8

²⁹ Troebst, Stefan. “IMRO + 100 = FYROM? The Politics of Macedonian Historiography”, Reproduced in Pettifer, James. The New Macedonian Question. St. Martin’s Press, INC., New York, NY, USA. 1999. 60

Turkish 4%, Roma (Gypsy) 2.2%, Serb 2.1%, and Other 2.4%.³⁰ Macedonia has always been regarded as one of the more multi-ethnic nations in this region. This extreme heterogeneity led one French diplomat to coin the phrase “le macedoine,” meaning fruit salad, to describe the multitude of ethnicities he saw.³¹ The ethnic Albanians residing in Macedonia continue to live mainly in the West of the republic bordering on Albania and Kosovo, while there are also many Albanians living in the capital—Skopje.

Much of the social tension in the country has been attributed to Macedonia’s extremely weak economy. When Macedonia broke away from Yugoslavia in 1991, it was the least developed of the republics, producing only 5% of the total federal output. With an unemployment rate that usually hovers around one third, and 24% of the population below the poverty line, Macedonia is wreaked by poverty.³² During its formative years as an independent republic, Macedonia has been plagued by external factors that did not allow the country’s economy to reinvigorate itself. First, with the disintegration of the Yugoslav federation, Macedonia lost an internal market of some twenty-three million consumers. Next, the UN sanctions against Milosevic’s Serbia from 1992 to the end of 1995 disrupted Macedonia’s economic interests with its most important trading partner.

Finally in 1994 Greece imposed an economic embargo over the name and flag dispute, blocking the port of Thessaloniki, which is the gateway for the bulk of

³⁰ Each ethnic group maintains higher numbers for themselves while at the same time lower numbers for other ethnic groups. However, this census is the most accurate representation of the true population of Macedonia as it was carried out by numerous international organizations with many monitors making sure it was fair and accurate.

³¹ Cowan, K. Jane Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference. Pluto Press, copyright 2000, Sterling, VA, USA. 8.

³² World Factbook

Macedonia's imports and exports.³³ Unfortunately Macedonian "industry is neither modern nor competitive. Agriculture is dominated by a monoculture—tobacco" which is plagued by high levels of tar and stands no real chance on the European market.³⁴

Economically it is difficult to see growth potential for this state, and as will be seen, this leads to an escalation of already tense ethnic relations.

In sum, "as territory and as name, Macedonia can be seen as a site where different rhetorics—of civil society, multiculturalism and international cooperation, as well as ethnic tensions, ancient hatreds and national security—intersect."³⁵ As can be seen, Macedonia stands at the crossroads of various critical economic, political, religious, and ethnic factors in this volatile region, but in this study I will be mainly concerned with factors that affect the relationship between the ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians living in Macedonia.

Overview of Thesis:

Chapter 1 began with an introduction to the topic of ethnic relations in Macedonia. I set up my research question and spelled out my hypothesis. I then discussed why I believe it is an important question to be asking and subsequently provided a summary of findings. I then took the reader through the methods and motivations of how I went about studying the topic of ethnic relations in Macedonia and conflict resolution. I then ended Chapter 1 with a brief background and history of the country of Macedonia. Chapter 2 brings three seemingly disparate literatures—collective

³³ Williams, 33

³⁴ Reuter, Jens. "Policy and Economy in Macedonia", originally published in *Balkan Forum*, volume 1, number 3, Skopje, Macedonia. June 1993. Reproduced in Pettifer, James. The New Macedonian Question. St. Martin's Press, INC., New York, NY, USA. 1999. 39.

³⁵ Cowan, 2.

memory, ethnic relations, and conflict resolution—together and demonstrates the importance of each one to the questions I set out in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3 presents the interviews and other primary source data I collected in trying to disprove my hypothesis. It begins with a presentation of how and why I collected the data I did, and continues by presenting the ethnic narrative of both Macedonians and Albanians. Following the ethnic narrative of each group I present nine events which came up during the course of my interviews. Each of these in some way ties back into the ethnic narrative and allows the reader to understand the position taken by ethnic Macedonians towards ethnic Albanians. I conclude Chapter 3 with a discussion of the importance of understanding how the collective memory of these events must play a prominent role in advancing peace in Macedonia.

Chapter 4 provides a few historical solutions to other conflicts where the past has greatly influenced the present generation's belief of the "other." I follow this discussion by providing my solution of what needs to occur in Macedonia to start creating new memories of peace and toleration. I then conclude Chapter 4 by trying to tie all of the information I presented into a coherent discussion of what it all means. I look at the interviews and the literature review in order to discuss the need for further research in bringing these important fields together.

Chapter 2:

Literature Review:

The following literature will first explore theoretical and research articles on collective memory. Then it will consider the academic literature on ethnic relations generally, as well as specific discussion of relations between various groups of Macedonian nationals. Finally, it will examine relevant literature on conflict resolution and transformation, and how this has been applied in Macedonia, as a way of indicating possible solutions to ethnic tensions fed in part by competing and hostile collective memories. This section will conclude with a discussion integrating these three literatures with specific application to the situation in Macedonia.

Collective Memory:

Collective memory is a term that has opened a large amount of new research, spanning the fields of history, sociology, and political science. My conception of collective memory and the definition used in this study, which follows earlier definitions, is an active and thus selective “remembering” of the past that is preserved by members of a specific group. Collective memory is a powerful instrument, and how it is wielded by a society will have important consequences for future generations. The main issue then is how citizens of a state remember their shared past and for my purposes how this can lead to tension or cooperation between ethnic groups within that same state.

There are many approaches to the study of collective memory. One of the major avenues posits the “needs, concerns and interests of the present are the most important factor in remembering the past.”³⁶ This interpretation believes the past is simply socially

³⁶ Ben-Yehuda, Nachman. The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel. The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin, USA. 1995. 273.

constructed to fit the needs of the present generation, and thus requires much fabrication on the part of the state. This is the dominant view held by scholars of collective memory.³⁷ Another approach is rooted in the belief that “it *is* the past that enables, indeed shapes, our understanding of the present.”³⁸ Under this belief there is thought to be a solid continuity between past and present.

In this paper I will be using the first conception of collective memory as I see the fluid nature of society dictating which events are emphasized and which are relegated to closets. While it appears many times that the past shapes perceptions of the present, I would argue that this is because someone has shaped what we remember about the past to fit the exigencies of the present. What tools we actively use to remember are in fact a social construction of the present and more backward looking than a mutually influencing continuity between past and present. As Wertsch aptly stated, “One of the hallmarks of collective memory is that, despite claims to the contrary, it changes over time.”³⁹ It is this fluidity and social constructionism is at the root of collective memory.

Further, the relationship between the past and the present is not as definite as many would like to believe. As Zerubavel eloquently articulates: “Despite the conventional grammatical distinction between *the past* and *the present* tenses, the past and the present are not entirely separate entities. The notion that we can actually identify a point prior to which everything is ‘then’ and subsequent to which everything is ‘now’ is an illusion.”⁴⁰ The past quickly merges with the present perceptions of the recent past. The significance of this point is it demonstrates how influential the past is in shaping

³⁷ Ben-Yehuda 273

³⁸ Ben-Yehuda 273

³⁹ Wertsch, 76

⁴⁰ Zerubavel 37

perceptions of the future. While it is easy to think of these as two separate entities with little crossover, they are actually quite intertwined and play off each other as it fits the needs of elites. Orwell seeming to understand this point perfectly, wrote in his novel *1984*, “those who control the present control the past, and those who control the past control the future.”⁴¹

The most important aspect of defining collective memory for my purposes is the idea that it is highly selective. While all of history is subjective, collective memory usually follows a powerful exclusionary cultural narrative, where the past is incorporated and used only when it fits a socially desirable version according to a particular group. To accomplish this end, people activate “a process that involves selectively using, and often distorting or deleting, pieces of information that do not contribute to the overall picture they are reconstructing.”⁴² The idea that collective memory is highly selective in what it includes drives home the point that collective memory is used to socialize a specific group into a shared narrative, for a specific purpose. Further, for better or worse, “people depend on others to help them decide which experiences to forget and which to remember and what interpretation to place on an experience.”⁴³ Understanding that people will inevitably remember what they are socialized to remember is an important factor in understanding how memories play a role in creating present day society. Realizing that present social perceptions are strongly influenced by collective memory provides a powerful tool which can easily be manipulated for reprehensible ends, but in the same fashion can also be structured for the betterment of society.

⁴¹ Orwell, George. *1984*. Signet, Reissue edition May 1990.

⁴² Wertsch, James. *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. 2002. 8.

The socialization process that transmits collective memories is important to understand in order to get at the roots of this process. Gregory Stevens elaborates how this process works:

If the construction of identity is a political process, implicating a range of social, economic, and cultural practices and locations, it is a deeply historical one as well. For not only are social identities transformed over time, but they are also grounded in social relations, experiences, and commitments that endure through time. People recollect and rework the past through social practices of memory that bring the meanings of the past to bear on conditions in the present. These practices of memory shape the formation of collective identities.⁴⁴ (13)

The importance of this political socialization process is critical to understanding why and how the transmission of collective memory takes place. As Professor Evtatar Zerubavel asserts, “acquiring a group’s memories and thereby identifying with its collective past is part of the process of acquiring any social identity, and familiarizing members with that past is a major part of communities’ efforts to assimilate them.”⁴⁵ The process of making sure each member of a collective has a shared identity is key to creating a sustainable community, where each member feels a part of something larger than themselves.

For the state, the successful transmission of collective memory becomes a massive socializing factor. Thus, it is not surprising one finds collective memory at almost every turn in any given society. A few examples of the mechanisms for the transmission of collective memory can be found in museums, memorials, national textbooks, public speeches, television shows, calendars, tombstones, folk legends, parades, Halls of Fame, and newspapers, just to name a few. This list is in no way

⁴³ Thelen, David. In Memory and American History,. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, Indiana, USA, 1990. xii.

⁴⁴ Gregory, Steven. Black Corona: Race and the Politics of Place in an Urban Community. Princeton University Press; Princeton, New Jersey, USA, 1998. 13.

⁴⁵ Zerubavel, Evtatar. Time maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past. The University of Chicago Press, Copyright 2003 Chicago USA. 3.

exhaustive and in fact only begins to uncover the iceberg of what creates collective memories. These and similar institutions have a profound ability to “shape public perception even in cases where their proclaimed past lacks any connection to real historical events.”⁴⁶ For this reason, it is these cultural tools that must be analyzed when studying collective memory. The abundance of sites and sources which promote and convey collective memory allows the researcher to choose particular mechanisms on which to concentrate. However, it also poses a difficulty when considering how to create solutions to ethnic conflict that involve changing a major collective memory because it is so deeply imbedded in many different layers of society.

The idea of a national narrative is central to the conception of how the state creates a collective memory in its citizens. With such a large barrage of information being transmitted at so many sites, it is important that the citizen does not become overwhelmed and confused by the information. Thus, as opposed to “learning a long list of specific narratives about the past as separate items, there may be a tendency to construct the means used in textual mediation out of a few basic building blocks.”⁴⁷ By using a set of “basic building blocks” events and stories become fitted to this central narrative, thereby allowing for a simplistic account of history that can usually be summed up in only a few sentences.

Why is collective memory so important to the state? I believe Wertsch has given an accurate answer as to why states have such a stake in what their citizens remember and what is forgotten:

⁴⁶ Roudometof, Victor. Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question. Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT, USA. 2002. 13.

⁴⁷ Wertsch 62

States have a strong interest in seeing their version of official history being accepted by citizens in such a way that they become a loyal imagined community. The intent is not simply for students to know the official history, but to believe it, to take ownership of it as a usable past, and this suggests that collective memory rather than historical memory is involved.⁴⁸

To create a “usable past” is important for the state because without it, to borrow Benedict Anderson’s much quoted phrase, the “imagined community” does not exist and the development of a nation becomes impossible.⁴⁹ The past thus becomes a decidedly important matter because “many groups see in the past, or tradition, their roots and the basis for legitimizing different social, political, religious, and territorial issues, claims and disputes.”⁵⁰ The past becomes a place where each group looks to settle long-standing or new disputes, and the importance of what is remembered becomes correspondingly even more significant.

The importance of collective memory to my study on ethnic relations in Macedonia is apparent because of the idea that within a single state there can exist two (or more) different narratives of the same events. As Ben-Yehuda observes, “Different collectives will, of course, remember different pasts. Moreover, it is not too difficult to understand that within a pluralistic society, different groups may remember different, not necessarily overlapping, pasts.”⁵¹ When groups do not share “overlapping pasts” this can have a tremendously problematic effect on their current relations. The importance of these differing narratives must be taken into account when trying to bring the two ethnic groups together. Further, realizing the creation of collective memory is a highly

⁴⁸ Wertsch 85

⁴⁹ Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. Revised Edition ed. London and New York: Verso, 1991, pp. 5.

⁵⁰ Ben Yehuda 272-273

⁵¹ Ben-Yehuda 272

politicized process should at once be a clue that it has vast potential to further polarize a society which is already divided.

Trying to change collective memories is difficult for a number of reasons. First, collective memory is not viewed as collective memory by group members. The information which they have absorbed is regarded as the truth, and the only truth.⁵² In an interesting article dealing with changing the collective memory in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Stephen Van Evera writes that each group has “clung to false historical narratives in an effort to bolster support for their struggle both at home and abroad.”⁵³ While Van Evera’s analysis of the narrative to which each group “clings” is quite astute, and his solution for a new narrative is probably historically accurate, he seems to imply that it is an easy thing to change collective memory and thus a solution to ethnic conflict may be effortlessly attained. Unfortunately, while collective memory is fluid and does change over time depending on the evolving requirements of the present political situation, it is still deeply ingrained in society. It would take a massive effort for the state and the international community to tackle a project of this magnitude, something Van Evera never takes into consideration. However, later in this paper I will suggest that such change is exactly what is needed and how it might be accomplished in the case of Macedonia.

There are many schemas, from which a particular memory is derived, floating around ripe to be picked when they appear to fit a certain situation. While we have seen that the state has a strong incentive to promote specific narratives, we should be

⁵² The idea of one truth is exemplified in the introductory poem “Pearl Of the Balkans.”

⁵³ Stephen Van Evera, *Memory and the Israeli Palestinian Conflict: Time for a New Narrative*. Paper presented at the “Memory and War Conference” held at MIT. Dec 23, 2002. Online version <http://web.mit.edu/rpeters/papers/abstract_van_evera_israel-palestine.pdf>

aware that various elites within a society also have incentive to espouse the formation of collective memories that advance their cause. Given an “existence of multiple elite factions, we often see competing elites promoting competing schemas. Thus, violence-oriented schemas often compete with peace-oriented schemas. The question is which of these competing schemas will win out.”⁵⁴ While ideally a society should attempt to obtain a multifaceted schema and not one that takes a single position, it is important to realize that there are many competing schema vying for position among the masses at any given point in time.

A distinction needs to be made between how collective memory differentiates itself from both history and individual memory. The difference between history and collective memory lies in the fact that history is supposed to be an objective account of past events, while collective memory is not judged by its historical accuracy. In trying to make this distinction clearer, Wertsch states:

On the one hand, we judge memory by its accuracy, and we raise objections when inaccurate representations of the past are put forth as truthful. On the other hand, memory functions to provide a usable past for the creation of coherent individual and group identities.⁵⁵

We cannot then judge collective memory as we would history. While collective memory may employ or exploit history, they are separate phenomena and must be judged accordingly.

The other important distinction is between collective memory and individual memory. The importance of collective memory is just that: it is collective and thought to be learned by all members of society. For example, in the United States, the fairytale

⁵⁴ Peterson, Roger D. 2002. *Understanding Ethnic Conflict: Fear Hatred and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom. 66.

⁵⁵ Wertsch 31.

story of Cinderella and her rags-to-riches story is deeply embedded in our society. Everyone knows the story and references to the “modern day Cinderella” persist. Individual memories may be purely idiosyncratic and the property only of a given individual. The difference then is that “rather than a mere aggregate of the personal recollections of its various members, a community’s collective memory includes only those shared by its members as a group.”⁵⁶ Collective memory thus invokes a common past which each member is aware of and able to incorporate into their lives.

Understanding that history has many nuances and cannot be approached in a straightforward manner is important to integrating different versions in any account of a historical memory held by an entire group of people. In a brilliant summary of what I have been discussing Loring Danforth concludes:

Many students of nationalism have remarked that the process of nation formation requires a collective remembering, the construction of a shared past, a shared history, that will united people in a national community. However, equally important are historical error, shared amnesia, and a collective forgetting. One simple, straightforward, and unambiguous national history must be written from the many complex and contradictory regional or ethnic histories that had previously been told.⁵⁷

Going beyond a simple straightforward narrative of specific events is what is needed for something as difficult and seemingly contradictory as history. At the heart of these mnemonic battles is the national narrative of each group. National narratives tend to be biased, one-sided accounts, as they are created to promote a political objective. What is needed is a more “dispassionate, nonpartisan, and therefore impartial, historical account that would require some willingness to consider multiple narratives, which

⁵⁶ Zerubavel 4

⁵⁷ Danforth, Loring. *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, USA. 1995. 19.

inevitably imply the possibility of entertaining multiple perspectives on the past.”⁵⁸ It is only by looking at national narratives together that we can begin to construct a complete picture of a multifaceted and complicated past.

Ethnic Relations:

*We have problems on our borders, but our biggest problem is the Albanians living here*⁵⁹

*Why should I be a minority in your state when you could be a minority in mine?*⁶⁰

In this section I will discuss the specific relations between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, but first will briefly describe some of the literature on ethnic violence generally. Here I follow Roger Petersen’s thinking regarding ethnic tension and how emotions play a pivotal role in spawning violent conflict. By defining an emotion as a mechanism that triggers action to satisfy a pressing concern, Peterson believes that logically this is the mechanism that must be analyzed to comprehend how and why violence erupts. He first posits “emotion-based narratives show how common experiences provide a collective understanding of the ‘justness’ of violence and the specification of a target.”⁶¹

It is the four emotions of fear, rage, resentment, and hatred which drive ethnic conflict. Specifically applicable to my case study is the idea that “day-to-day experiences of subordination (emotion) can lead to powerful collectively held desires for changes and

⁵⁸ Zerubavel 109

⁵⁹ Kamm, Henry. “Macedonia Sees Its Albanians as Its ‘Biggest Problem,’ ” New York Times. May 5, 1994. Column A4. Quote by a Macedonian official in parliament.

⁶⁰ Zimmerman 212. Vladimir Gligorov, son of the last president of Macedonia asked this question ironically and the point is still important today.

⁶¹ Petersen, Roger D. 2002. Understanding Ethnic Conflict: Fear Hatred and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom. 4.

reversal of group status.”⁶² The idea here is that these emotional traumas can motivate group violence. Similarly, Alice Ackermann asserts:

Massive violence, bloodshed, and the expulsion of one group by another result in intense feelings of victimization, demonization of the “other,” psychologically rooted trauma, and the need for revenge, making future violent conflicts much more likely.⁶³

What emerges from this process is a national narrative or schema reworked to fit perfectly into society that uses intense negative emotion to identify individuals outside the group as an untrustworthy, threatening, and dangerous “other.”

The idea of ancient ethnic hatred based upon historical grievances held by one group against another has been dismissed by many academics because they assume this model would imply uninterrupted ethnic warfare or a pervasive hatred constantly consuming people’s thoughts. And if this is their definition of ancient hatreds then I agree it does not exist. However, if “hatred is conceived as a historically formed ‘schema’ that guides action in some situations, then the conception should be taken more seriously.”⁶⁴ Realizing the schema need not be active every second of someone’s life allows for a more realistic concept of a hatred that is activated only at certain times under certain circumstances.⁶⁵ Extremely important for my research as well is the path-

⁶² Petersen 50

⁶³ Ackermann, Alice. *Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Violent Conflict in Macedonia*. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, New York, USA. 2000.

⁶⁴ Peterson 63

⁶⁵ An excellent discussion of this point is found in Sherry B. Ortner’s “Patterns of History: Cultural Schemas in the Foundations of Sherpa Religious Institutions,” Stanford, California, Stanford University Press 1990, p. 84. “A primary debating point among social science disciplines concerns the ‘distance between the actors themselves and their cultural models. Those using a ‘thin rational view’ posit an actor whose immediate and personal economic or political goals dominate the murkier culture frame and push its significance to the background. Along this line of thinking, culture is more likely to be viewed as a resource than as an unconscious constraint. Following this view, culture might help produce a set of roles, but the individual is relatively free to choose among them. Other scholars see the cultural frame as heavily constraining, or even programming, the individual’s choices. Roles are not chosen, but rather accepted.” Ortner takes an intermediate position where “actors may internalize a schema under certain conditions and

breaking work by Donald Horowitz. In his book *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, Horowitz provides case studies, in which he asserts that historical practices provide ample evidence for the “role of historical memory in violent behavior.”⁶⁶

Macedonia is a perfect example of the dangerous implications of conflicting historical memories. While in the Introduction I briefly touched upon multiple factors related to why Macedonia is such a contested nation, the largest threat to political and social stability is an armed uprising by the ethnic Albanian population.⁶⁷ Currently, this is the main source of tension in Macedonia. Despite the officially declared multiethnic character of Macedonia, ethnic coexistence is constantly being challenged.⁶⁸ While many claim that the ethnic hostilities are a recent phenomenon in Macedonia, in fact “such a rosy view of the past is unfounded and the legacy of mistrust and hostility, unfortunately, has a longer history.”⁶⁹ The two communities “have existed separately for generations, largely in mutual incomprehension and suspicion.”⁷⁰ This has led to a long history of distrust and animosity between both ethnic groups. Cited as proof of this claim is the sociologist Dr. Ilija Josifovski’s study of the marriage rates between Macedonians and Albanians in 1974. His findings are startling: 95 percent of parents would not let their sons marry a member of a different ethnic group, and this number was even higher for

thus may be constrained by its forms, but under other conditions may reestablish a distance between themselves and the schema.”

⁶⁶ Horowitz, Donald. *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*. University of California Press, Los Angeles, CA, USA. 2001. 157. The best of the supporting cases is that of Sri Lanka and the conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils. The collective memory of the Sinhalese paints a picture of the Tamils as invaders who are the long standing enemy, even though this is not the case. Both groups used to trade, inter-marry, and generally exchanged cultures in a peaceful and cooperative manner. However this myth has persisted in popular history for centuries leading to animosity and conflict (158-159).

⁶⁷ Chomet, Julian. 1995. *Macedonia: The Next Bosnia?* First Run/Icarus Films New York, New York. 27 minutes, ColorVHS. American University Media Services reference 3560.

⁶⁸ Schwartz, Jonathan M. “Blessing the Water the Macedonian Way: Improvisations of Identity in Diaspora and in the Homeland.” 105. Reproduced in Cowan, K. Jane Macedonia: *The Politics of Identity and Difference*. Pluto Press, copyright 2000, Sterling, VA USA

⁶⁹ Poulton 133

daughters.⁷¹ The ethnic cleavages are extremely deep, and remain deeply ingrained to this day in Macedonian society.

Under Tito's Yugoslavia, the Socialist Republic (SR) of Macedonia introduced harsh repressive measures trying to curtail ethnic Albanian nationalism. Many of the repressive policies were "tried out by the Titoist police before they were put into action on a wider scale in 1989 in Kosova."⁷² For example, in 1981 the Macedonian Assembly's Commission for Inter-National Relations demanded a "revision of syllabuses and textbooks" aimed at stemming the rising nationalist tide of ethnic Albanians.⁷³ The Commission went on to declare that "publishers had been insufficiently vigilant in preventing the penetration of Albanian nationalistic, irredentist and counter-revolutionary tendencies through printed textbooks and other literature."⁷⁴ The fear of ethnic Albanian nationalism in Macedonia historically has always exacerbated tensions and measures have continuously been aimed at preventing its spread.

A Macedonian newspaper *Borba* in 1986 published an article in which it criticized a public official for attending a wedding in which Albanian "expressions of nationalist euphoria" had occurred.⁷⁵ Another article detailed that out of over 1,000 songs played on the radio, over 260 had "nationalistic or national-romantic" content for Albania.⁷⁶ This article went on to enumerate the dangers of allowing these types of songs to be played on radio stations, especially in the cities of Tetovo, Kumanovo, Gostivar and

⁷⁰ Williams 18

⁷¹ Poulton 132

⁷² Vickers, Miranda and James Pettifer. *Albania: From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity*. Hurst and Company, London, England. 1997. 166. Albanians place an 'a' instead of an 'o' as part of their languages naming of Kosov 'o'.

⁷³ Poulton 127

⁷⁴ Poulton 127

⁷⁵ Poulton 127

⁷⁶ Poulton 128

Kicevo (all western cities that border on Albania and Kosovo). Taking these measures further, the Macedonian authorities turned their attention to Albanian names. It was reported in 1986 that a registrar in Tetovo was dismissed for registering names “which stimulated nationalist sentiment and adherence to the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania.”⁷⁷ The offending names included Fljamue (Albanian flag), Ljiriduum (we want freedom), and Alban (Albania).⁷⁸

Another issue that still has the potential to become explosive in Macedonia is that of religion. The ethnic Albanians largely converted to Islam under Ottoman rule, while the ethnic Macedonians have their own Orthodox Church. During the Tito period, “severe repression of Islamic religion and religious institutions by the state, with vandalism and destruction of important Islamic libraries and buildings”⁷⁹ was common. The communists even went so far as to build roads over Muslim cemeteries in western Macedonia.

In 1988, in an effort to curb the higher birthrate of the ethnic Albanians, Macedonians tried to pass a law that would require families to pay for medical services for any child above the ideal number of two, and would actually impose a financial penalty for extra children.⁸⁰ These measures were only to be introduced in the towns of Gostivar, Debar, and Tetovo, Albanian strongholds. Finally, in SR Macedonia, a law to ban the sale of property to ethnic Albanians in the western part of the republic [to prevent ethnic Albanians from buying out ethnic Macedonians and creating ethnically pure territories] was passed in 1988. All of these examples point to the fact that although the

⁷⁷ Poulton 128

⁷⁸ Poulton 128

⁷⁹ Pettifer, James. “The Albanians in Western Macedonia After FYROM Independence”; 138. Reproduced Pettifer, James. *The New Macedonian Question*. St. Martin’s Press, INC., New York, NY, USA. 1999.

communists espoused the ideology of “brotherhood and unity” and “despite safeguards for minority rights, SR Macedonia was effectively a state run by the Macedonians for the Macedonians.”⁸¹

This historical discrimination, while largely taken off the books and out of the laws, continues to be a problem in Macedonia in many respects. There are many legitimate complaints held by the ethnic Albanians that need to be addressed if there is ever to be a real and lasting peace in this republic. According to the perceptions of most ethnic Albanians, immediately after the founding of the new republic, they supported the aspirations of President Gligorov, “postponing their own legitimate grievances inherited from the Tito years in the general interest of securing FYROM’s future.”⁸² For this generosity, ethnic Albanians feel they have received little or no return. On the other hand, ethnic Macedonians feel as though the ethnic Albanians have never tried to become true citizens of the state and are only concerned with gaining more and more minority rights. These differing points of view have manifested themselves throughout Macedonian society and are embedded in the collective conscience of each ethnic group.

An interesting article that helped me understand how deep the divisions in Macedonia remain was “Suck My Nation—Masculinity, Ethnicity and the Politics of (Homo)sex” by Sasho Lambevski. In this extremely candid account of the homosexual scene in Macedonia, Lambevski writes about seeing an attractive man:

However, at the very moment my eyes met his, I turned my gaze, filled with guilt, sorrow, frustration, and incomprehensible anger, away from him. In a fleeting moment, I understood that this could not happen, ‘must not happen’,

⁸⁰ Poulton 128

⁸¹ Poulton 143

⁸² Vickers 172

because the man was Albanian. Although I had never seen or talked to this man before, I knew immediately that he was Albanian.⁸³

The author goes on to say that as soon as he recognized the man was an Albanian he had to assume the role of a ‘good Macedonian.’ The depth of the division between different ethnicities in Macedonia will be constantly strained until barriers like these are broken down so that people see each other as individuals rather than belonging to a particular group.

Politically Macedonia is also an extremely divided country where voting takes place along ethnic lines. There are a few factions within each ethnic group, some being more nationalistic than others, but unfortunately the more nationalistic usually equates with more success at the polls. As Violeta Beksa explains:

In order to strengthen their political power and overtake the supreme position among the members of their ethnic groups, these extremely nationalistic political parties have exaggerated their ‘need to get more,’ on the one hand, or their ‘need not to give anymore’ on the other.⁸⁴

The issue of ethnic nationalism in the political arena is one that needs to be watched and hopefully removed in the future.

Socioculturally, in Macedonia there is a pervasive mutual mistrust and hostility that each ethnic group holds towards the other. This mistrust has led to a complete separation of both ethnic groups. There is hardly any interaction or communication between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians. The isolation begins at an early age where ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians attend different schools; even when they are housed under the same educational roof, they are in different classes owing to

⁸³ Lambevski, Sasho, *Suck My Nation—Masculinity, Ethnicity and the Politics of (Homo)sex*, *Sexualities*, SAGE publications, London; 1999. 398.

⁸⁴ Beska 136

language differences.⁸⁵ Further, when disputes arise between students, they are always “regarded as having an ethnic dimension.”⁸⁶ As Macedonian citizens mature, the isolation continues. Ethnically mixed audiences are rarely seen at art openings, music festivals, sporting events, clubs, etc.⁸⁷ Even the thought of attending a restaurant of an ethnic Albanian for someone who is ethnically Macedonian is absurd. As discussed earlier, the fact that the media have a particular audience and are only read on an ethnic basis also contributes to the mistrust and isolation.

In a fascinating study conducted by Violeta Beska on personality traits and violence in both ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians, she discovered interesting qualities in each. First it was revealed that both groups possessed traits of “non-aggressiveness,” meaning that neither group was necessarily violence-prone.⁸⁸ However, and more importantly, each ethnic group perceived the other as inclined toward violence, and their ethnic group as the more peaceful of the two.⁸⁹ The conclusion of this study is important in assessing the relations between the two ethnic groups, since much of the hostility and mistrust stems from *perceived* rather than *actual* traits.

In sum, as Cowan explains, “Macedonia represents a case where state agencies...have sought to assimilate, expel or otherwise control those citizens who represent divergence from the national ideal.”⁹⁰ Ethnic Macedonians have felt from the very beginning that they must present a strong national identity because they have always been a contested nation. However, in this sense, constructing this strong identity is at the

⁸⁵ Beska 137

⁸⁶ Beska 138

⁸⁷ Beska 138

⁸⁸ Study cited by Ackermann 64

⁸⁹ Ackermann

⁹⁰ Cowan, K. *Jane Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference*. Pluto Press, copyright 2000, Sterling, VA USA. 9.

expense of integrating the ethnic Albanians. In the end, the more the ethnic Macedonians “assert their cultural identity, the more ethnic Albanians feel the need to assert theirs, leading to a vicious circle.”⁹¹ As can easily be seen, this state of affairs leads to a zero-sum game with no winners; thus the payoffs must be changed to foster inter-ethnic harmony. A major difficulty arises then in determining how to approach the difficult task of nation-building. As many fledgling nations believe regarding minorities, “Their history is not part of the nation’s history; it must be suppressed. Their culture is not part of the national culture; its existence must be denied.”⁹² The ultimate goal then is to construct a nation-state that incorporates the views of the minority without delegitimizing the existence of the state.

Conflict Resolution and Transformation:

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”

The purpose of this section is to familiarize the reader with what a conflict is and how it gets resolved. The field of conflict resolution has blossomed in the last thirty years. While originally a fringe movement, it has begun to gain prominence around the world, and is now being taught in undergraduate and graduate university programs nationwide. Much of my knowledge and the information that will be provided about conflict resolution is taken directly from internal and external documents provided by Search for Common Ground (SFCG). It was during this three month internship that I was exposed to this field, and developed an understanding of its core principles and theory.

I would first like to make a distinction between conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The former seeks to “resolve incompatibilities of interest and behavior

⁹¹ Ackermann 66

that constitute the conflict by addressing underlying issues and establishing a relatively harmonious relationship.”⁹³ Conflict resolution thus involves trying to reach a mutually acceptable agreement or solution to a specific problem. Conflict resolution is the current main buzz word in this field, but slowly it is giving way to conflict transformation.

Conflict transformation aims at shifting how “individuals and communities perceive and accommodate their differences in general, away from adversarial win/lose approaches toward collaborative problem-solving.”⁹⁴ Transforming a conflict is a long-term process that engages society on multiple levels to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that empower people to coexist peacefully. The difference then between these two important concepts is that conflict transformation takes a long-term approach to empowering people to solve their own conflicts, whereas conflict resolution is geared toward short-term solutions to immediate crises.

There are five basic principles that drive the SFCG approach to conflict transformation. The first concept is simply overlooked by most people and that is “conflict is a natural part of life.”⁹⁵ Everyone in the world has different needs and different wants and thus conflict will always emerge. Accepting this premise will enable people to become aware that inevitably conflict will arise, and that they have a choice about how to respond to it. The second core principle is “conflicts are neither positive nor negative in themselves.”⁹⁶ The way the situation is dealt with and how you treat the other party will determine the consequences of any conflict. Conflicts do not have to be

⁹² Danforth, Loring. The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, USA. 1995. 22.

⁹³ SFCG Internal Document 1, “Commonly Used Terms and Definitions at SFCG.” Document created 2003.

⁹⁴ SFCG Internal Document 1

⁹⁵ SFCG Internal Document 2, “Search for Common Ground Core concepts.”

⁹⁶ SFCG Internal Document 2

destructive, if viewed in this light. The third principle states “There is no instant method for causing conflict transformation—it is a process, not an event. It must be created over time.”⁹⁷ To really shift a conflict situation it is necessary to make a long-term commitment to working with people on the ground, providing them with the many tools used in conflict resolution. The fourth principle is “listen and learn.”⁹⁸ In any conflict each party wants to be heard, and more importantly, understood. Asking questions until you truly understand the other’s point of view allows for a dialogue that sticks to the main issues, and avoids going off on tangents based on false perceptions and stereotypes. The fifth concept, and where the name Search for Common Ground originated, is “Find common ground. This does not mean settling for the lowest common denominator. It is about generating the highest.”⁹⁹ The critical message of this concept is that when we think of compromise we think of meeting in the middle, where neither party feels good about the solution. But the point here is to create a new, “highest common denominator” to which both parties want to aspire.

Numerous books and articles have been written on the subject of conflict resolution and transformation. However, the most accessible and widely known is Robert Fisher and William Ury’s *Getting to Yes*. This book brought abstract concepts of conflict resolution to the general public. By giving rather common, basic examples of conflicts, such as haggling over the price of a car, or a teenager who wants to have a later curfew and a mom who is already worried, this book brings to conscious awareness that negotiation is a part of everyday life. There are a few issues raised in this book that were

⁹⁷ SFCG Internal Document 2

⁹⁸ SFCG Internal Document 2

⁹⁹ SFCG Internal Document 2

not discussed in the above principles, but that are nevertheless important for this paper. I will mention these briefly below.

One of the most important and valuable lessons in this book is to “separate the people from the problem.”¹⁰⁰ Too often in negotiation people focus on their emotions and allow them to cloud their judgment, with the result that the actual problem they are supposed to be addressing is never addressed. The participants “should come to see themselves working side by side, attacking the problem, not each other.”¹⁰¹ This concept is particularly applicable in Macedonia where many times bringing together ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians simply turns into shouting matches. Another important concept in negotiation is “focusing on interests, not positions.”¹⁰² In any negotiation there are underlying interests that drive certain positions. As people defend, and argue for their particular position, many times the real interests are lost, while the participants become increasingly entrenched in the positions. Understanding this and looking towards the root causes of what the other party is truly interested in is important in successful negotiation.

A final, and extremely important tactic, which has been implemented many times in Macedonia, is insisting “on using objective criteria” to determine a fair solution.¹⁰³ Realizing each side will have different data supporting its claims, and that many times creating a solution is rather arbitrary, it is important to use neutral criteria on which all sides can agree. For example, the highly contentious census in Macedonia was carried out by the international community because ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians

¹⁰⁰ Fisher 11

¹⁰¹ Fisher 11

¹⁰² Fisher 11

¹⁰³ Fisher 12

could not agree on a way for it to be done fairly on their own. Using a party in this case that did not have a stake in the outcome allowed for a fairer census than could have been implemented by either ethnic Macedonians or ethnic Albanians.

I would now like to briefly outline a few of the many programs SFCG is running in Macedonia, so as to demonstrate how the concepts above are put into practice. All of the programs listed below should theoretically follow the right hand side of my collective memory hypothesis diagram. Because education in Macedonia is segregated by language and thus ethnicity, children often grow up with little or no contact with other ethnicities. SFCG began a program called Mozaik, a multilingual, multicultural preschool program in public kindergartens. Currently there are six programs in five cities, where both ethnic groups are socialized to become familiar with the “other” in a “tolerant environment where everyone is valued equally.”¹⁰⁴ Mozaik is able to socialize young kids in a different manner which promotes understanding and begins to find common ground among the various ethnic groups. The immense success of these pilot programs has forced the Macedonian education authorities to look into transforming all kindergartens in Macedonia along similar lines of tolerance and inclusiveness.

Media has become the trademark of SFCG around the world, but especially so in Macedonia. As the country has two major languages, Macedonia suffers from an ethnic divide in the inability to access objective media coverage and thus, ultimately, media itself fans the flames of ethnic tension. One program to combat this division supports two multi-lingual journals: Karavan and Multiethnic Forum. Karavan is a free thrice-annual magazine published by journalists and thinkers from all surrounding countries, in each country’s language. Its goal is to bring these countries closer together by increasing

cooperation and communication. Multiethnic Forum is also a free, quarterly magazine written by ethnically diverse journalists and thinkers, and published in Macedonian and Albanian. It deals with sensitive topics in each community but is well received by a heterogeneous audience because it is known for its honesty and impartiality.¹⁰⁵ These magazines are able to create common ground by remaining neutral, not making one side wrong, listening to all perspectives with respect, separating people from the problem; and using objective criteria.

Finally, and considered by many to be the most successful program run in Macedonia, is *Nashe Maalo* (Our Neighborhood). This is a children's television program promoting intercultural understanding, conflict transformation, and conflict resolution. When I watched a few episodes it seemed like an entertaining show, but it took me awhile to grasp just what an important contribution *Nashe Maalo* makes in promoting intercultural understanding and harmony in Macedonia. Initially, to me, all the actors just looked like kids playing, getting into trouble and fights, and finding solutions. However, by talking with SFCG media productions, I learned that the actors were of different ethnic groups, the issues regarding tension were always about real stereotypes from the community, and finally that this show was watched by nearly 80% of the children growing up in Macedonia.¹⁰⁶ Further, many studies have been done which show a lessening of stereotypes and a breaking down of cultural barriers with children who watch *Nashe Maalo*.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ SFCG External Document 1, "Search For Common Ground in Macedonia: Program Overview"; 2002.

¹⁰⁵ All the details of *Karavan* and Multiethnic forum were taken from SFCG External Document 1

¹⁰⁶ Personal communication with Lisa Scholte, SFCG Media Director.

¹⁰⁷ SFCG External Document 2, "Lessons from *Nashe Maalo*: A Research Report on what Macedonian, Ethnic Albanian, Roma, and Turkish Youth Learned from Watching *Nashe Maalo*."

In assessing the viability and success of preventive diplomacy, including conflict resolution and transformation, Alice Ackermann stated, “If the underlying sources of conflict are to be remedied, conflict prevention must include more long-term preventive policies such as the reduction of power inequalities, the amelioration of economic and social conditions, and the enhancement of shared identities.”¹⁰⁸ These concepts are at the heart of the Search for Common Ground projects currently being carried out in Macedonia.

The connection between these three topics is quite important. Collective memory, as will be shown, is a contributing factor to ethnic tensions in Macedonia. In an attempt to resolve the conflict, it is necessary to understand how collective memory contributes to the ethnic tensions. The next step is then to use this knowledge to resolve the conflict in a non-violent and peaceful way. It is this approach I use in the context of problem solving in Macedonia.

¹⁰⁸ Ackermann 20

Chapter 3:

Introduction:

In this chapter I will begin by describing the ethnic narratives of both Macedonians and Albanians. I will then delve into the events that came up during the course of my interviews with thirteen ethnic Macedonians and eight professionals with expertise on Macedonia and will finally tie these events back to the ethnic narratives. It is my contention that there is a reason these events seem to fit so neatly into the ethnic narratives which is by no means a coincidence. In fact, it is these basic building blocks for the construction of ethnic identities that begin to shape the way each ethnic group perceives itself and importantly its relationship to the “other.” I will examine ten important “collective memories” of key recent historical events shared by the ethnic Macedonians I interviewed and confirmed by my professional experts. These memories were selected based on the frequency with which they emerged spontaneously in interviews. Although there is some variability within each memory, in general they all conform to a certain pattern that solidifies ethnic Macedonian virtue and noble motives, and expresses fear and distrust of ethnic Albanians. In each example, I will show how the way each historical incident is remembered by the ethnic Macedonian group contributes to ongoing tension and skepticism toward ethnic Albanians. In my concluding chapter, I will briefly speculate about how such events might be used to construct more positive, inclusive memories that conceivably could result in less division and more cooperation between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians.

Data Description:

All interviews were set up at times and locations suggested by the interviewees so as to be conducive to a friendly and comfortable environment. All phone interviews were conducted while the interviewee was at home, and e-mail interviews were given at least 3 weeks time to respond. In so doing I tried to create an optimal, relaxed setting, of the informant's choosing. While there was no fixed time limit, in-person interviews tended to last approximately forty five minutes to an hour. Telephone interviews tended to be shorter, usually around twenty to thirty minutes. Finally, e-mail interviews were usually involved 3 to four sentences per question with a few that were substantially longer.

As I briefly touched upon earlier, I used contacts from Search for Common Grounds Macedonia project to break into a circle of ethnic Macedonians living both in the U.S.A. and in Macedonia. Once this initial list was gathered, I began using contacts, both friends and family, of the original interviewee and kept expanding my list of people willing to participate. I gained access to professionals again from working in Washington D.C., but also contacted researchers working on Macedonia who were always willing to be interviewed for this study. I stopped looking for interviews after twenty one of them, partly for a pragmatic reason: my thesis had a set due date and I had to begin the writing process. However, by the time I stopped actively looking for more subjects to interview I realized I was achieving "theoretical saturation"—by this I mean I was hearing the same views from the informants.

Data Analysis:

All interviews conducted in person or on the phone were transcribed and I tried to pull out the events and common themes which emerged. I concluded that in general the

people in my sample saw the events discussed very similarly. Finally, I tried to “triangulate” the information I obtained from oral and written interviews with the primary and secondary sources I read as part of my literature review; and with the perspectives expressed by professional experts.

Ethnic Narratives:

An ethnic narrative is the story of origins and identity formation shared by a people or a group. Ethnic narratives usually incorporate key collective memories of the group. As discussed earlier, these narratives become the basic building blocks of socialization for a particular community. Again, it is my contention that narratives may be used to promote ethnic conflict or harmony, depending on their content.

The ethnic Macedonian narrative starts as “the long, heroic struggle of the Macedonian people for freedom and independence. It is the history of the struggle of oppressed Macedonians to preserve their common national identity and culture in the face of forced assimilation.”¹⁰⁹ While this quote from Professor Loring Danforth touches on important elements of the ethnic Macedonian narrative, in its present form the narrative has assumed a somewhat different emphasis. Rather than accentuating the threat of assimilation, the current narrative is concerned with the territorial struggle for a unified Macedonia. Stressing this aspect of the narrative incorporates the historical Macedonian fear of the “four wolves,”¹¹⁰ or the states surrounding Macedonia; Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Albania. This fear goes back to 1913 when Macedonia’s borders were redrawn by the Great Powers, severely shrinking the size to that of the present territory. This narrative—fear of the break-up of their territory—dominates the thinking by the

¹⁰⁹ Danforth; 46

¹¹⁰ Pettifer; 17

current generation of ethnic Macedonians because the nation is so contested by the surrounding states that if the territorial integrity begins to falter the entire nation will cease to exist. As will be seen in most of the events that emerged from my interviews, territory and the fear of losing it become central to how the ethnic Macedonians approach their relationship with the ethnic Albanians.

As I was not able to interview ethnic Albanians, and did not discover any references to an ethnic Albanian narrative in the literature I reviewed, I had little idea of what such a narrative might look like. To shed some light on this question, I wrote to Professor Danforth, who responded as follows: “I am quite sure that Albanians would not accept the Macedonian version of history and have their own [ethnic] narrative in which they are the oppressed victims fighting cruel assimilation by the Macedonians.”¹¹¹ Although the limitations of my research only allow me to make inferences regarding an ethnic Albanian narrative, I believe the events discussed below hint at just such a construct of oppression and victimization.

Ilinden:

The event of Ilinden (St. Elijah’s Day), both how it is remembered and how it is celebrated currently, is important in understanding the relations between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. The Krushevo Republic, declared on August 2 (Ilinden), 1903 when the Macedonians revolted against the Ottoman rulers, has become the national independence day for Macedonians. It has been stated that the “Krushevo Republic called on all the people of Macedonia, Moslems [Albanians] and Christians [Vlachs] alike, to join them in fighting for an independent Macedonia.”¹¹² There is no

¹¹¹ Personal correspondence with Professor Loring Danforth

¹¹² Danforth; 51

other event that holds so much significance and importance for Macedonians. However, reality and what is portrayed differ starkly. In many of my interviews with ethnic Macedonians, the event was portrayed as an inclusive uprising of mutual cooperation and assistance, in which all ethnic communities participated. However, in my academic interviews I learned a different story of what Ilinden means to each ethnic group.

Meto declared, “Ilinden is the beginning of the Macedonian national conscience. It is the first time the Macedonian people tried to gain their independence from Ottoman rule.”¹¹³ Without my asking any questions Meto continued, “In the Ilinden uprising all nationalities worked together, and the independent Krushevo was formed.”¹¹⁴ The importance of this being remembered as an inclusive event that involved other minorities struck me as quite interesting. Later I was to find the same pattern in a few of my other interviews.

Kimlintina, for example, told me that in the “Ilinden uprising, all nationalities worked together to form the independent Krushevo.”¹¹⁵ Again, in my interview with Zlatco while discussing the political party VMRO (which is the group responsible for the Ilinden uprising and an ethnic Macedonian political party) he asserted, “Although [ethnic] Macedonians having taken the name VMRO for their political party this should not be the case.” Zlatco continued, “But it is important to note that it was not just Macedonians, but Albanians as well who took part in this uprising. The town of Krushevo was one third Macedonian, one-third Albanian, and one third Vlach, so it was really three groups fighting together.”¹¹⁶ Therefore, he felt ethnic Macedonians should

¹¹³ Interview with Meto

¹¹⁴ Interview with Meto

¹¹⁵ Interview with Kimlintina

¹¹⁶ Interview with Zlatco

not usurp the name VMRO because it excludes the other minority groups who participated in the revolt.

A final interview worth noting was with Jansen, a thirty year old Macedonian living in Skopje. While generally speaking he agreed with the collective narrative, he appeared to question it more than the others. Jansen first told me “In the Ilinden uprising, Albanians, Vlachs, and [ethnic] Macedonians all participated to rid ourselves of Ottoman rule.”¹¹⁷ However when we began discussing the Ilinden celebration that takes place every year on August 2, Jansen’s experience differed from those of my other Macedonian informants.

Me: Do you celebrate Ilinden every year?

Jansen: Yes. There is a huge gathering in Skopje every year. Thousands and thousands of people come every year.

Me: Do ethnic Albanians attend this celebration?

Jansen: To be honest, I never see them there. However, you may not know that most ethnic Albanians live in the western section of Macedonia, and Skopje is quite far.

Me: But isn’t there an ethnic Albanian population in Skopje, even if the numbers are smaller than the western territories?

Jansen: This is true, but I have never seen an Albanian at this celebration. Maybe they go to a different place or stick together, so I never see them. What is strange is I’ve never thought about Albanians coming or not. But looking back I haven’t ever seen one.

While the basic narrative of ethnic Macedonians regarding Ilinden is one of inclusiveness, based on this comment I began to suspect that the reality of the Ilinden celebration might be more one of exclusiveness. As will be seen, ethnic Albanians do not feel the same passion about this day, because to them it does not hold the same significance.

My first encounter with an account of Ilinden that differed from the ethnic Macedonian account was from Daniel Serwer, director of the United States Institute of Peace Balkan Initiative. While discussing ethnic relations, he stated “They grew up in

parallel, antagonistic societies. Macedonians and Albanians are rarely exposed to each other. For example, Macedonians just celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Ilinden uprising, and I have to wonder how Albanians feel about that. I am not sure of the answer but I assume it means very little if anything to them.”¹¹⁸ While unsure of how ethnic Albanians actually felt, Mr. Serwer was rather confident Ilinden would not hold the same significance to ethnic Albanians.

However, I did not fully comprehend the situation until Professor Victor Friedman, a linguist at the University of Chicago and the leading expert on Macedonia in the United States, elucidated how ethnic Albanians felt on this day. In his account, “Ilinden is certainly presented as a Macedonian uprising that tried to be inclusive of other groups.” He continued,

[Ilinden] is viewed as the founding of the Macedonian State. Albanians therefore do not view it as theirs because it was in fact simply trying to establish a Macedonian state for Macedonians. So, when you have the celebration on August 2 the Albanians do not participate. In Tetevo they [ethnic Albanians] would never celebrate Ilinden because it does not mean anything to them.¹¹⁹

Thus, while initially it appeared that I had identified an event which could provide the foundation for a positive collective memory of cooperation and good-will, in the end I had to concede it only further cemented divisions in Macedonian society. While ethnic Macedonians learn about Ilinden as an inclusive event, ethnic Albanians feel they have no stake in celebrating this day because the Macedonian state was set up for ethnic Macedonians. Unfortunately, no matter how hard the state tries to make all groups feel included in this event, it is unlikely to be successful. To build an effective inclusive

¹¹⁷ Interview with Jansen

¹¹⁸ Interview with Daniel Serwer

¹¹⁹ Interview with Professor Friedman

collective memory, both groups must have a similar stake in the event which will begin to build mutual understanding and support.

Ethnic Albanian Demonstration of 1990:

Even before Macedonia was an independent nation, an event occurred that was to carry with it ramifications for both ethnic Macedonians as well as ethnic Albanians. On February 1, 1990, 2,000 ethnic Albanians marched through the center of Tetovo demanding this territory be granted independence and absorbed into a greater Albania.¹²⁰ This protest was quickly dispersed by the Macedonian paramilitary troops with very few casualties and no deaths.¹²¹ This event revived the radical movement in the ethnic Albanian community, and caused the Macedonians much anxiety over the future stability of the Republic. While this event was mentioned in only two of my interviews, it still seemed to strike at the heart of the ethnic Macedonians' fear of the Albanians living in Macedonia.

During the course of my interview with Lazar, a 25 year old Macedonian born in Skopje, we had an interesting exchange during which this event arose.

Me: Do you believe any actions by ethnic Albanians are for political rights, or do you feel they are mainly concerned with gaining territorial autonomy?

Lazar: Are you familiar with what happened in 1990?

Me: No...

Lazar: The Albanians who mainly live in the western section of Macedonia held a huge rally. There were thousands and thousands of Albanians who turn out for this event. And you know what the rally was for? It was to break away from Macedonia. Steal our territory and become part of larger Albania. You must understand that Albanians only want our land and are not interested in being part of our society. I was only 12 at the time but I remember watching the events with my mother on the television. I was scared then as I am scared now.

Me: What were you afraid of?

Lazar: My State!

¹²⁰ Vickers; 172

¹²¹ Pettifer; 138

I wanted to push him further on this topic so I inquired whether present demonstrations also demanded this territory be granted autonomy for the ethnic Albanians?

Lazar: Well, not since that demonstration, but even if they are not as forward about their objective or motivation as they were back then, I know what they are really after. You see, how do I trust the Albanians now? Maybe they are not as open anymore, but nothing has changed from when they demanded this territory. You must understand that is all they care about.

Me: You mentioned there were a couple thousand that attended this demonstration, do you think they were speaking for all the ethnic Albanians living in Macedonia?

Lazar: I can not speak with certainty, but unfortunately yes. I believe even the Albanians who did not attend this demonstration felt the same way. After watching the demonstration I felt I understood Albanians, and realized they could not be trusted. It is a sad but true situation we must constantly deal with.¹²²

This portion of my interview with Lazar really allowed me to better understand the power this event still held for him, even though nearly fourteen years had passed since this demonstration occurred. Lazar carried a strongly held conviction that ethnic Albanians did not really want to be part of Macedonia, but rather only wanted the territory where they were a majority as an autonomous entity. The demonstration, which occurred in 1990, became in his mind an irrefutable fact and, further, a cornerstone of his belief system. While it is quite true that this demonstration was to gain territorial autonomy for the western section of Macedonia, times have changed and there has not been another demonstration of this nature to date. Significantly, however, Lazar now viewed any and all actions taken by ethnic Albanians as being motivated by their desire for a greater Albania.

Further, this interview revealed the real and important emotion of fear. Lazar stated that when he saw the events on television with his mother he was fearful, and even at a mature age of twenty-five, his fear remained. But it was not fear for his life, or other

¹²² Interview with Lazar

harm to friends and family; it was only for “My State.” I found this answer quite intriguing, as I began to understand that what he feared was the dismemberment of the Macedonian State. Finally, I found it troubling that Lazar was so easily able to project what 2,000 ethnic Albanians had decided to do twelve years ago on the entire Albanian population of nearly 500,000 currently living in Macedonia. This generalization from who was involved in the actual demonstration to all ethnic Albanians was startling and scary, but it also provided a perfect illustration of how easily one such small, discrete event could have significant negative consequences for ethnic relations on both sides. From this single incident, it appeared Lazar had come to the conclusion that he “understood” what ethnic Albanians were about, and realized that he could not trust them. Unfortunately this interpretation does not leave room for the fluidity necessary for constructing a positive collective memory but rather will contribute toward keeping ethnic relations in a constant state of turmoil.

The only other interview in which the 1990 demonstration was brought up was with Karolina, a 39 year old Macedonian from the city of Prelip. While I was questioning her about her belief about the motivation behind the Albanian reaction, she responded, “I know because I remember what happened in February of 1990.” She continued:

The situation that confronts Macedonia today is not about political rights—because they [ethnic Albanians] already have them—the issue is the boundary lines that demarcate the division between Macedonia and Albania on one hand and the border between Macedonia and Kosovo on the other. The Albanians in 1990 showed their true face and it is only a matter of time until we see it again. There will not be peace in Macedonia until the Albanians decide to live peacefully with the Macedonians without a desire to be part of a greater Albania.

Karolina could not believe that, from the ethnic Albanian perspective, the ongoing struggles in Macedonia have been and continue to be about political rights. Rather, in 1990 she was convinced she had witnessed the “true face” of the ethnic Albanians. The passion with which she spoke of this event made me realize how alive and real it was to her, as if it had only occurred a few hours before we spoke. Her memory of this event will inevitably continue to dictate the view she holds of ethnic Albanians in general, unless a dramatic shift occurs to replace or at least to stand next to this memory.

Unfortunately the 1990 demonstration did occur, and the demands made by the ethnic Albanians were real and heard throughout the country. There is no denying these facts. However, we do not live in a world of stasis and immutability. Quite the contrary, societies are fluid, in flux, and change with great ease. This is especially true in Macedonia, where the past twelve years have brought major changes, such as independence, more political rights for ethnic Albanians, and soon integration into the EU and NATO. The difficulty arises in both ethnic groups’ recognizing the changes that have taken place and being willing to place the demonstration of 1990 in the context of such changes. What occurred in 1990 only expressed the desire of a group of 2,000 radical ethnic Albanians then, and it may well be the case that their views of the situation have dramatically changed, or that the views they espoused were not representative of the majority of ethnic Albanians. But so long as ethnic Macedonians cling to an exclusive negative collective memory of this event, they will never be able to move beyond this single episode, thereby reinforcing the left side of my hypothesis diagram.

Referendum of 1991 and Ilirida:

Two closely related events, which I will be discussing together, are the original referendum for independence and the subsequent referendum held by the ethnic Albanians a year later. Subsequent to the violent break-up of Yugoslavia, Macedonia declared its independence on September 8, 1991, with a referendum in which its citizens overwhelmingly supported an autonomous Macedonia as opposed to remaining part of a larger federation tied to Yugoslavia.¹²³ Unfortunately, the ethnic Albanians believed it was in their best interest to boycott the referendum for Macedonian independence and held their own referendum in 1992. The outcome of the ethnic Albanian referendum showed that “nearly all Albanians wanted a form of autonomy within what they believed would almost certainly become a greater Albania.”¹²⁴ Instead of supporting Macedonian independence, they were seeking both territory and political autonomy through the formation of their own state, the “Republic of Ilirida.”

Stories began to circulate in the media that the ethnic Albanians intended to act on this referendum and were acquiring guns with the aim of instigating a violent secession. Although further investigation revealed that, in fact, the Republic of Ilirida was something of an exaggeration contrived by the media, nevertheless its ramifications for relations between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians proved all too real. As Poulton maintained, “This [Ilirida], however, proved something of a hoax and seemed to be based on supposed statements, subsequently denied, by an Albanian deputy. Hoax, or not, the ramifications from it continued.”¹²⁵

¹²³ Danforth 12

¹²⁴ Vickers 171

¹²⁵ Poulton 136

In a few of my interviews these two events came up—always simultaneously—and I began to view them jointly as the watershed in modern Macedonian history that most clearly illustrates the depth of the division between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. The importance to each group of the implications of either supporting or opposing the referendum for autonomy is central to understanding the current and possibly future state of ethnic relations in Macedonia. In his interview, Professor Keith Brown brought up the referenda for independent Macedonian and ethnic Albanian states. He stated, “The referenda of 1991/92, effectively split along ethnic lines, was the very foundation of the sovereign independent Macedonian state (and its original constitution-writing) which potentially divides Macedonians and Albanians.”¹²⁶ As Professor Victor Friedman astutely observed, from this point on “you have two very different perspectives. Macedonians now see the Albanians as wanting special privileges, or wanting their own territory, thus breaking up Macedonia. The Albanians see it as a matter of being equal, as opposed to second class citizens.”¹²⁷ These two related events mark the historical divergence in how each group perceived the other which is directly related to the ethnic unrest currently plaguing Macedonia.

Many of the ethnic Macedonians I interviewed brought up the referendum simply to justify why they were unable to trust ethnic Albanians. However, the interview with Kimlintina provided me with the most insight into the significance of the referenda, and thus I quote her at length below. I had asked her generally about ethnic relations in Macedonia over the years and her reply intrigued me:

For centuries the Macedonians and Albanians worked together, lived together, and there was hardly any violence. But when the Republic of

¹²⁶ Interview with Professor Keith Brown

¹²⁷ Interview with Professor Victor Friedman

Macedonia was formed in 1991, the Albanians did not participate. I feel as though this was a major turning point in the ethnic relations. From then on there seems to be only tension and mistrust. I just don't understand why they [Albanians] would not be happy for the formation of an independent Macedonia, where they were to be welcomed as equal citizens.¹²⁸

I then asked her, "What if they were not going to be treated as equal citizens, would it have been appropriate to boycott the referendum?"

I believe this would have at least helped me understand why they would not participate. But Macedonia is a state where citizens are all treated equally, no matter their ethnicity, and all protected under the rule of law. I would feel safer if I believed that Albanians wanted to be true citizens of Macedonia. But I do not after the Macedonian referendum, and then holding their own. Awful, it is just awful.

Through this interview I gained greater appreciation for the way ethnic Macedonians think about this event and the very serious implications this thinking has for the future. First, ethnic Macedonians do not understand why the Albanians boycotted the 1991 vote. They do not understand why ethnic Albanians would not share their joy of having a newly formed Macedonian state. Further, for ethnic Macedonians, to think the original boycott and the subsequent Albanian referendum were over political rights is nearly unfathomable. Finally, Kimlintina's comments helped to illuminate the ever-present fear ethnic Macedonians carry with them that Albanians do not want to be part of the Macedonian state, under any circumstances.

One final important point regarding the referenda is illustrated through a comment made by Daniel Serwer during our interview. He stated:

The reason Albanians didn't participate in the referendum was because they saw the Macedonian State as only having a negative effect on their lives. They feared the change from the Yugoslav years to the unknown. This goes back to what independence meant to each ethnic group then and now.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Interview with Kimlintina

¹²⁹ Interview with Daniel Serwer

Dr. Serwer's observation reminds us that in order to gain a better understanding of ethnic Albanians' strong reaction to the 1991 referendum, it becomes important to look beyond their action (or lack of action!) to its root cause. The ethnic Albanians lacked the basic confidence that, under a newly constituted Macedonian state, their lot would be at all improved in comparison to their experience in the Yugoslav federation. The whole situation became even more intensified because after the Macedonian government made the allegations of Albanian agitation for a Republic of Ilirida, many of the individuals supposedly involved went missing, or were arrested and later went into exile.¹³⁰ These events occurred despite the fact that no real evidence had emerged demonstrating ethnic Albanians were actually plotting a violent uprising. Thus the legacy of the referendum for independence, which should have united the various ethnic groups who shared the newly emerging Macedonia, only increased fear and mutual suspicion.

An Albanian University:

One of the most contentious and divisive issues plaguing Macedonia today is the entire educational system including higher University level schooling. The High Commissioner on Ethnic Minorities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Max van der Stoel, understood the importance of education and curriculum development. He maintained,

[Education] is a central means of forming and transmitting identity within a cultural group, particularly as regards language, history and culture. As a result, debates over education often become the battleground for broader questions of identity.¹³¹

Van der Stoel went on to say,

¹³⁰ Pettifer; 140

¹³¹ Kemp; 128

Because the university is the highest level of education, it becomes the locus of symbolic power and an embodiment of the national ideal. Therefore, even where the minority represents a significant percentage of the population, central governments which are worried about the disintegration of the State are hesitant to allow for the creation of minority universities.¹³²

In Macedonia, the case was no different and soon after Macedonia became an independent republic ethnic Albanians began to demand a University that would cater to Albanian students, in terms of both course work and language. However, a study commissioned by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations found an “outdated and one-sided curriculum” remained, especially in the subjects of “history, music, and literature” and the Albanians felt that their wishes for a curriculum that would pay “sufficient attention to their own history and culture” were completely ignored.¹³³ In the early 1990’s an illegal university was opened in the town of Tetovo to serve ethnic Albanians who wanted to obtain higher education. In my interviews the issue of higher education and more specifically this university arose again and again, as Macedonians expressed their concerns and fears arising from the opening of this university.

The question I posed to most Macedonians and all professionals was simply “Are the history textbooks used by ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians the same?” I received a range of varied answers, including some I did not expect.

First I will summarize the responses of the professionals. Professor Victor Friedman answered as follows:

The official textbooks are the same. However, Albanian teachers met in 1992 in Tetovo to discuss the fact that the official history textbook did not

¹³² Kemp; 128

¹³³ Velde, Jenne van der. “Education in FYROM with special reference to the Albanian national minority.” Report of a pilot study commissioned by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations. Hague, Netherlands, 1995; 27

give enough coverage to Albanians living in Macedonia. They agreed it was largely biased and completely one-sided.¹³⁴

As Eran Frankel, Director of Search For Common Ground in Macedonia declared,

Even if the textbooks are the same, teachers would never present a Slav [ethnic Macedonian] historical figure, such as Tsar Samuil, as someone of any importance to the Albanians, anymore than presenting Skenderberg as someone important to the Macedonians.¹³⁵

Finally, I began to better understand the matter when Professor Daniel Serwer explained,

Through high school, public education is the same for Albanians and Macedonians. But what is interesting—and here we see the fear on the Macedonian side—is at the University level there is no requirement for what must be taught. The Albanians would have a green light to teach radically different views in a University, which can only occur in this type of setting.¹³⁶

From these three professional interviews I learned that ethnic Albanians see the curriculum as extremely one-sided, portraying the history, culture, and arts of ethnic Macedonians, while only briefly if at all touching on the Albanian identity. Further, there is a real divide in what each group learns even when the textbooks are the same because of how teachers present the material and what they tend to concentrate on. Finally, University education for ethnic Albanians is a real and dangerous worry to ethnic Macedonians, who fear that, if given the opportunity to teach whatever they like, ethnic Albanians will use this pulpit to express views at odds with the State.

Through my interviews with ethnic Macedonians, I came across a few additional patterns when discussing education and the University of Tetovo more specifically. One theme had to do with the impartiality and even-handedness of the Macedonian educational process. When asked about textbooks, Lazar declared,

¹³⁴ Interview with Victor Friedman

¹³⁵ Interview with Eran Frankel

¹³⁶ Interview with Daniel Serwer

We all learn official State History which I can say is non-biased, it is fair, it is not discriminatory. Maybe it is not as broad as it should be, but everyone has freedom to find himself more sources so he can learn more if he wants to, it is not forbidden.¹³⁷

Much along the same lines, Boris seemed almost offended that I had asked a question about textbooks, and appeared to think it was his duty as a Macedonian to inform me of the equal and unbiased nature of education in Macedonia. He told me,

While history and other education is written mainly by [ethnic] Macedonians, it is fair, impartial, and portrays situations in a just way. You must not believe Albanians are forced to learn only about [ethnic] Macedonians, and cannot learn about their own culture and identity. This is not the way it is.¹³⁸

Both Lazar and Boris became surprisingly defensive when education was brought up even in a rather roundabout way. I felt as though they perceived me as questioning the fairness of the educational system in Macedonia, and they had to prove to me that everything was perfect, and above all I should not be concerned about the learning opportunities available to ethnic Albanians.

In these two interviews as well as my interview with Marina, the issue quickly turned from general education to the illegal University founded in Tetevo. In this way, I discovered a second pattern, namely that ethnic Macedonians fear that an Albanian-oriented university might serve as a hot-bed promoting ethnic unrest. Boris himself brought up the University at Tetevo, stating “I do not understand this. We have a State University that does not discriminate against Albanians and allows them to enter like any other student. Why do they need their own University?”¹³⁹ He expressed the view that there was no need for such an institution, since all higher educational needs were already

¹³⁷ Interview with Lazar

¹³⁸ Interview with Goce

¹³⁹ Interview with Goce

being adequately met by the official state university. Marina took a more moderate approach to the situation when she explained,

While I understand the usefulness of a University that teaches in Albanian, I believe because we are a democracy they [ethnic Albanians] should use the process to gain a University. In this way everyone will be happy. The way the Albanians are currently going about it makes us fear because they are willing to break the law. Citizens should not break the law.¹⁴⁰

However, even Marina was suspicious of the Albanians for the illegal manner in which they had formed the university of Tetevo. Finally, Lazar asserted the need not to allow this university to continue at all because “it further divides society into two separate worlds. I don’t even know what they teach there. Maybe they are telling the students to start revolution. Soon we will have another Kosovo here, and I am sure you know how that turned out.”¹⁴¹ Speaking to these ethnic Macedonians I understood not only their desire to maintain the status quo in the current educational curriculum, but also their misgivings of what could be taught at the university level, and where it might lead.

Kosovo Refugee Influx:

With the ethnic cleansing that began in Kosovo under Milosevic, the ethnic Albanians had to flee their homes, and a great many turned towards their southern neighbor, Macedonia. There was a massive influx of refugees in 1991 which further worsened the already tense ethnic relations in Macedonia. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner on national minorities, Max van der Stoel, greatly feared the result of this massive influx. Issuing his first Formal Early Warning, he declared, “The increase of the population of the FYROM of more than 10 percent within a few weeks, resulting in a major change of the interethnic balance, is

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Marina

¹⁴¹ Interview with Lazar

proving to be too big a burden for the country.”¹⁴² In addition to this influx, there are other ongoing territorial issues, namely the borders with all four of Macedonia’s neighbors and the comparisons constantly being made between the Western territories in Macedonia and what happened in Serbia’s province of Kosovo. The influx of refugees from Kosovo, and Kosovo more generally became a focal point during my interviews when discussing ethnic relations, and as will be seen later, the close connection the Kosovo refugees had to the violence that erupted in 2001 (at least in the minds of ethnic Macedonians).

While I knew about the ethnic cleansing that occurred in Kosovo, this was first time I heard of the significant ripple effects this event had in Macedonia. Boris explained the situation to me as follows:

During the Kosovo conflict Macedonia sheltered around 400,000 Albanian refugees from Kosovo. Albanians in Macedonia were not happy with the conditions of living for the refugees. Macedonians maintain that 400,000 refugees is too much for a country like Macedonia (Macedonia's total population is 2,000,000) and that the best help possible was provided for these people. Macedonians are irritated by the fact that Albanians in Macedonia complained about the treatment of the refugees instead of expressing an appreciation for the situation.¹⁴³

Boris saw ethnic Macedonians as providing a beneficial humanitarian service to the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo, who were in dire need of a refuge from the brutal Milosevic regime. However, ethnic Albanians living in Macedonia did not see their fellow Albanians from Kosovo being treated in a just manner. Unfortunately, the refugees in this case were Albanians whom the ethnic Macedonians already feared because of their large representation in the population

¹⁴² Kemp; 191-192

¹⁴³ Interview with Goce

of Macedonia. In either case this event led to much more turmoil and ill-will than ever could have been expected.

Two interviews that elucidated the feelings of ethnic Macedonians regarding the Kosovo influx were those I had with Meto and Ljupco. Meto related to me in a melancholy voice the following account: “Here we are, we gave bread and water and shelter to these people during the Kosovo crisis and here they are returning it to us with guns and bullets in our heads. And that is really sad.”¹⁴⁴ I could see Meto felt strongly about what he perceived was a good deed done by the Macedonians and how it only came back to haunt them with the 2001 violence. In my interview with Ljupco, he firmly stated that “Macedonians and Albanians lived together peacefully, until the import of foreigners—I mean the refugees from Kosovo—this is when the true violence started.”¹⁴⁵ Both Meto and Ljupco insisted that ethnic relations deteriorated noticeably when the Kosovo crisis occurred, and went so far as to say that the 2001 violence in Macedonia could be directly tied to the Kosovo crisis. Whether or not this analysis is accurate is irrelevant, as it is firmly believed, and the pain of feeling betrayed is quite real to the ethnic Macedonians.

While discussing ethnic relations in general with Kimlintina, I was surprised when she brought up Kosovo. In her opinion, “If you are living in one country you must consider yourself a citizen of that country.” She continued:

That is not to say Albanians should forget their Albanian origin, but they also must realize that they are part of this country. I think so much of the tension arises in that Albanians just want to see themselves as Albanians, and do not care to become part of the Macedonian society. I just don’t think Albanians are making an effort to incorporate themselves as Macedonian citizens, and

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Meto

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Ljupco

they are happy to keep creating separate institutions, just like what happened in Kosovo.¹⁴⁶

At the time the importance of this statement did not strike me until I read it over much later. What happened in Kosovo was a gradual shift in the political rights and ideology of the people. Slowly, as the Albanian population grew in Kosovo, they began demanding separate institutions and finally, wanted to break away from Serbia, as they saw themselves as a distinct homogenous population. The fear Kimlintina expressed was based on a nearly identical situation in the Western section of Macedonia. It would not take much for this area to become the next Kosovo, a development which ethnic Macedonians greatly fear.

The final issue regarding Kosovo which causes tension in Macedonia is that of the border. In my interview with Daniel Serwer he astutely observed:

The biggest single problem in Macedonia is the border with Kosovo. That border didn't exist until 1991. The Albanians see that border as a tremendous loss—they are separated from their fellow Albanians in Kosovo. Macedonians see it as a great thing because it solidified the borders, helping to create the Macedonian borders, which are always a contentious issue.¹⁴⁷

In the minds of ethnic Macedonians, the issue of the border being secure and well defined is part of creating and solidifying the Macedonian nation, and protecting it from encroachment by a “greater Albania.” During my interview with Zlatco, when I asked him if he feared a greater Albania, he responded, “This fear is constantly in the minds of Macedonians. I fear the final solution of the Kosovo crisis might precipitate a conflict in Macedonia over the current borders.”¹⁴⁸ As Daniel Serwer understood, Zlatco was expressing his fear that Kosovo can easily become the pretext of a conflict in Macedonia

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Kimlintina

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Daniel Serwer

between the two ethnic groups. Along the same lines Professor Friedman wanted to make it quite clear “The events in Kosovo echo in Macedonia.” The fate then of Kosovo is directly tied to the peaceful existence of the Macedonian peoples. Until understanding exists to the point where both groups feel a mutually satisfactory compromise over the border issue has been achieved, the memory of the Kosovo crisis and the implications it had on the Macedonian state will always have the potential to cause tension between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians.

The Removal of Albanian Flags:

An event which is vividly remembered by both ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians was the incident that occurred July 9, 1997, when rioting erupted in the Western territories in Macedonia. The cause of the rioting was that for several months the Mayors of both Gostivar and Tetovo (cities predominantly inhabited by ethnic Albanians) had been flying the Albanian flag next to the Macedonian flag. The Albanians argued that under the old “Yugoslav constitution it was possible for the Albanians and other national minorities to fly their flags on certain specific public occasions,” but the post-communist government did not extend this right to ethnic minorities.¹⁴⁹ This issue was brought before the Constitutional Court in Macedonia, which ruled in favor of the Macedonians, asserting that flying another national flag in Macedonia was in violation of the Constitution.¹⁵⁰ The police were ordered to remove the flags, and during the early morning of July 9 they complied. However, later in the

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Zlatco

¹⁴⁹ Pettifer, James. “The Albanians in Western Macedonia After FYROM Independence”, Reproduced in Pettifer, James. *The New Macedonian Question*. St. Martin’s Press, INC., New York, NY, USA. 1999.; 57

¹⁵⁰ Kemp, Walter A. *Quit Diplomacy in Action: The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities*. Kluwer Law International, Hague, The Netherlands. 2001; 188

day rioting broke out in protest of the flag issue. Two Albanians were shot dead, while one policeman and eight civilians were wounded.¹⁵¹ As a result of my research on what flying the Albanian flag meant to Macedonians, I came to realize how this seemingly trivial issue was latent with social and political implications for both ethnic groups.

I first became aware of this contentious incident when interviewing Daniel Serwer. While discussing the difficulty of ethnic relations in a state that takes its name from only one of the ethnicities, Mr. Serwer began to discuss the flag issue: “For example, if an Albanian wants to fly a flag that represents him, he flies the double headed eagle of the Albanian flag. Unfortunately this ‘ethnic’ flag is also the flag of the country Albania which has led to much conflict in Macedonia.”¹⁵² He went on to say “In reality, the Albanians are not demonstrating their desire for independence, but only trying to express their ethnicity. It is sad people had to die over this event.”¹⁵³ It appeared that, at least from his point of view, the flag-flying affair in 1997 was not an attempt by the ethnic Albanians to secede from Macedonia, but merely a statement of ethnic pride. Unfortunately, because of the way it is viewed by ethnic Macedonians, no lessons were learned from this misunderstood case.

Kiro Gligorov, The first President of the Independent Macedonia, conducted an interview with *Belgrade Weekly*, in which he was asked to assess the Albanians’ refusal to take down the flags in Gostivar and Tetovo. In what struck me as a fascinating response, Mr. Gligorov replied as follows:

You must bear in mind that a law has been passed banning the flying of alien flags on public institutions. What is at issue here is to turn part of

¹⁵¹ Kemp; 189

¹⁵² Interview with Daniel Serwer

¹⁵³ Interview with Daniel Serwer

Macedonia's territory into an autonomous region to approach the ultimate goal of independence and secession from our state.¹⁵⁴

Interestingly, Mr. Gligorov has been praised for his middle-of-the-road approach to the ethnic relations in Macedonia, but at least in this case he quickly shifted the focus from more rights and self-expression for ethnic Albanians to a recapitulation of the Macedonian belief that the Albanians will not be satisfied until they have broken away from Macedonia to join a greater Albania.

The reporter must have realized this was an extremely hard-line answer and thus followed his original question up with "I presume the Albanians had their own draft Law on Flags. What did they suggest?"¹⁵⁵ The former President responded to this question in much the same way as the first:

Their leader, Mr Djaferi, suggested that all nationalities fly the flags of their states in the municipalities they run, that Macedonians have their own flag and that there is a separate, common state flag! Accepting such a proposal would mean allowing the existence of seven or eight official flags in Macedonia. This would cause great confusion on which flag is the state flag. All this was thought up to introduce the flag of the state of Albania as the official one in our state.¹⁵⁶

Mr. Gligorov again answered this question by emphasizing the widespread underlying fear of having the Macedonian state evaporate under pressure from the Albanians and various other national minorities. The last sentence of his answer is particularly helpful in understanding the Macedonian viewpoint on this sensitive issue. Mr. Gligorov concluded his response with the unsupported assertion that ethnic Albanians living in Macedonia only wanted to fly the flag so as to advance the possibility that it would

¹⁵⁴ Gligorov, Kiro. "The Unrealistic Dreams of Large States", first published in the Belgrade weekly *Ekonomiska Politicia*, 25 August 1997. Interview conducted by Vladimir Golikov. Reproduced in Pettifer, James. *The New Macedonian Question*. St. Martin's Press, INC., New York, NY, USA. 1999; 98

¹⁵⁵ Gligorov; 101

¹⁵⁶ Gligorov; 101

ultimately become the one and true flag of the state. Revealingly, he used the phrase “our state.” I cannot help but wonder if his statement included ethnic Albanians as full-fledged members of the state, or rather implied that they were now simply unwelcome and unwanted inhabitants of a state really intended only for ethnic Macedonians?

In an interview I conducted with Meto, a first generation Macedonian living in the United States who is extremely involved in Macedonian politics, I gained a better understanding of how Macedonians viewed the flag issue. I had asked Meto about the ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians, and with no further prompting he proceeded to monologue on this issue for over two hours (he obviously had a lot to say). He brought up the flag issue as one of his points and asserted,

In the Tetovo, Gostivar areas you will not find a Macedonian flag. No, you will not find this, and that is what I’m against. The mayor is Albanian and so he flies an Albanian flag. How are you a mayor of a city in Macedonia? That does not make sense.¹⁵⁷

I could sense the anger and frustration when he spoke on this topic. To Meto, the issue was that an Albanian flag was being flown in a Macedonian village, which symbolized that the inhabitants were not loyal members of the state, but had a connection to another state. He continued to rant about the absurdity of this situation and directly questioned me: “Josh, how would you feel if a member of Congress with Spanish ancestry was to fly the flag of Spain and not the American flag in Congress? No way in hell would this happen.”¹⁵⁸

While at first I agreed this was an attractive analogy, upon reflection I concluded flying the Spanish flag would not bother me if this member of Congress did so simply as an expression of his or her nationality. I tried to understand more carefully the anger and

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Meto

frustration Meto was trying to convey, and finally realized that it was driven by fear. The reason I could not relate to his analogy was I did not fear that flying the Spanish flag would jeopardize the legitimacy and territorial integrity of the United States. Meto and other ethnic Macedonians, on the other hand, actively feared that Macedonia, which has always been contested, would be even more so if such flag-based diversity were permitted. The result of such deeply rooted fear was anger and hostility directed towards Albanians simply for attempting to express their cultural identity.

The 2001 Violence:

The only event which came up in every single interview I conducted was the 2001 violence, which took place in the western territories of Macedonia. This was the first time in Macedonia in which ethnic relations erupted into violence on a large scale. The actual fighting occurred in a relatively short period of time with limited deaths on either side.¹⁵⁹ However, this event polarized the country as nothing previously had. The ethnic Albanians claimed to be fighting for equal rights and fair representation in Macedonia. Ethnic Albanians saw the conflict as a fight of territorial autonomy which called into question the existence and legitimacy of the Macedonian state. Among ethnic Macedonians, the fear of a 'Greater Albania' emerged as well as the widespread belief that this was the real cause for which ethnic Albanians were willing to fight and die. While the 2001 violence was interpreted in different ways by ethnic Macedonians, they all held a general belief about its deleterious implications for relations between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Meto

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix for an overview for a complete chronology of the 2001 violence

In my interviews, respondents considered the 2001 violence to be the most important event in recent Macedonian history in terms of explaining how ethnic relations are currently thought of and defined. My two academic interviews with Professor Victor Friedman and Professor Alice Ackermann confirmed this perception. Professor Friedman stated, “The 2001 violence contributed to the already negative stereotypes. This has made it difficult for ordinary Macedonian and Albanian citizens to live together.”¹⁶⁰ Professor Ackermann agreed with this observation asserting, “I would predict that the 2001 conflict would eventually become something that will be recited as an example why Macedonians and Albanians can't live together.”¹⁶¹ Both professors believed this event has contributed significantly to the present difficulties between the two ethnic groups, and will continue to do so.

The consequences of the 2001 violence became even clearer during my interview with Luben. He declared, “The result of the armed conflict in Macedonia was that a well armed minority has succeeded in obtaining unprecedented political status by violence.” Importantly, as many other informants also attested, Luben believed the 2001 violence was the beginning of the ethnic conflict in Macedonia, and that “This conflict is and will be a cause for tension in many years to come. It is gullible to think that things will be better after what happened. The result is an inefficient ethnically divided state.”¹⁶² Unfortunately, many others also believed the 2001 conflict will be an extremely troubling collective memory that will continue to complicate ethnic relations in the country for many years to come.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Professor Friedman

¹⁶¹ Interview with Professor Ackermann

¹⁶² Interview with Luben

Through the interviews I conducted, I learned of the ethnic Macedonian belief that it was not actually ethnic Albanians living in Macedonia who instigated the violence, but Albanians who were part of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Ljupco told me that, in fact, “Macedonians and Albanians lived well, in cooperation before the conflict but after the import of ‘foreigners’—the KLA—the conflicts started.”¹⁶³ It was the belief of Ljupco and all the other ethnic Macedonians I spoke with that the real “trouble-makers” emerged after the Kosovo crisis. This belief, then, allowed ethnic Macedonians to not take seriously the ethnic Albanian claim that the fighting was over ethnic rights, but rather that the real issue was an attempt to create a “Greater Albania.”

Boris was one of the few ethnic Macedonians who knew the ethnic Albanian perspective and presented it correctly: “As a fight for more human and civil rights.” However, when he began discussing the ethnic Macedonian perspective, he showed he obviously thought the ethnic Albanian viewpoint was not a real issue. He asserted,

[Ethnic] Macedonians refute this suggestion because even before this event Albanians had rights in excess of the international standards: a full time twelve year education in Albanian...quotas for enrollment in the University, programs in Albanian on TV each day, Albanian radio programs, an Albanian newspaper, Albanian political parties, and cultural and religious freedom.¹⁶⁴

Interestingly, Boris had already prepared in his mind a long list of why the ethnic Albanian claim of more rights could not possibly be correct and thus was sure they must have had other motivations for using violence.

In Kosovo, before the ethnic cleansing of ethnic Albanians instigated by the Serbs, there were real grievances held by the latter against the former. In much the same way Martin claimed, “In 2001, to some degree, there had been a systematic ethnic

¹⁶³ Interview with Ljupco

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Goce

clearing out of Macedonians in many parts of western Macedonia.” He asserted this was accomplished “in some cases by buying off land, in other cases by systematic harassment and threats topped with good money offers.” Because of this he exclaimed, “They [ethnic Albanians] have no loyalty to us and they don’t hide it.”¹⁶⁵ It was this belief which Martin thought was behind the 2001 violence. Martin and many other Macedonians held the belief that like Kosovo the Albanians were fighting for an autonomous region in Macedonia which could later be connected with a greater Albania.

In my interview with Meto, he discussed the 2001 violence for most of the interview. Below I use many of his quotes at length because I believe the themes that need dealing with are presented in an open and honest way. He began by referring to the 2001 violence as “the situation,” as if he were trying to avoid the mention of deaths and violence. Meto continued:

Everyone had equal rights under the Yugoslav years. My mother use to tell me that they lived side by side with Albanians, and that her godmother was even Albanian. But ever since the situation occurred, Macedonians living in predominantly Albanian villages had to leave because of the fear.

He went on to say,

After the events of 2001 I started to have a different opinion about Albanians. Not every single person—I don’t stereotype or generalize—but after what happened I started to generalize. It is hard not to. In one incident eight soldiers were killed and the Macedonian soldiers went on a rampage, basically burning every Albanian owned business. I don’t promote it, but you really can’t blame the people. You really can’t blame the people. These people were very angry. How would you feel if your brother or sister were killed?

This led to his resentment of the aftermath of the violence in 2001. As he expressed it,

I am not in favor of Ali Ahmeti [leader of the PDP and main figure in the ethnic Albanian resistance] being in office. Look, he was a terrorist and now

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Martin

is a leader of the country. He was responsible for many Macedonian deaths and now he is in Parliament.

Finally, Meto articulated the perception of ethnic Macedonians as the peaceful defenders of their land, while ethnic Albanians were terrorists trying to take the land forcefully when he stated:

I am not sure what you know about Macedonian people but they are very peaceful and hospitable. We were presented as the aggressors when terrorists were attacking us. We were only defending on State.¹⁶⁶

This interview importantly brought to light many of the issues ethnic Macedonians endorsed about what occurred in 2001. The main shared perceptions were as follows:

- 1) ethnic relations were satisfactory, even amicable, until the 2001 violence
- 2) feelings of anger, followed by resentment, were considered normal, and even reasonable responses to the uprising
- 3) although in fact comparatively few ethnic Albanians actually took up arms, it seemed reasonable to generalize these feelings of anger and resentment to the whole Albanian population, and finally
- 4) ethnic Macedonians were only defending their land from terrorists, usually thought of as the KLA, but nevertheless Albanians, and presumed to be fighting for a Greater Albania.

Perhaps Kimlintina summed up the entire event by suggesting the ramifications which were to follow for some time to come. She told me,

The 2001 violence was awful. Macedonia is a country of only 2 million people. People are very interconnected and know many other people. All the families who lost members or friends, they will not easily forget this tragedy. What happened was horrible and was a sad day in Macedonian history. And for what? A greater Albania...maybe...I still don't know why.¹⁶⁷

This statement suggests the feelings of at least one ethnic Macedonian when her anger had left her and she began to search for ways of thinking about – and remembering – this

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Meto

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Kimlintina

event. The confusion which Kimlintina expressed was also present in other Macedonians who thought maybe the violence was for a greater Albania, but were not sure and were still looking for the real motivations.

No other ethnic Macedonian that I interviewed was able to reflect on the conflict as impartially and justly as Marina. While she was not sure which side was right, she knew both sides and was sympathetic to both. She believed:

The clashes in Macedonia in 2001 came about as a result of different views and ideals. The Albanians (not all of them) acted as if they were treated as second class citizens and discriminated against, whereas the majority (not all) Macedonians believed that the reason for this uprising was the longing for Big Albania and federalization of Macedonia.¹⁶⁸

This was a fair portrayal of each perspective, and she followed this statement with, “But I don’t know where the truth lies. I usually hear Macedonian version and so I am inclined to believe that.” Despite Marina’s leaning toward the version propagated by her own ethnic group, I thought I detected a willingness to listen to other points of view, and therefore a reason to hope that here at last might be a possible foundation for consensus-building. She had not closed the door on what was fact and what was contrived by politicians and the media for their own ends. Perhaps other ethnic Macedonians could develop a similar open-mindedness.

The Ohrid Agreement:

The conclusion of the 2001 violence was brokered by an international agreement at the lakeside resort of Ohrid, Macedonia. This agreement was to have a lasting impact on how ethnic relations in Macedonia are viewed. In the Ohrid Agreement, the Macedonian government agreed to expand the “official usage of the Albanian language, agreed to a minimum of minority votes for passing legislation in the parliament, and

accepted the principle of increased Albanian representation within the police force.”¹⁶⁹

The Albanians agreed to turn in their arms, and refrain from continuing violence. In my interviews, the issue of what the Ohrid Agreement meant to each ethnic group was central to the respondent’s view of what is likely to happen regarding current and future relations between different groups in Macedonia.

In the conference I attended at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Ali Ahmeti, chairman of the Democratic Union for Integration (BDI) and a leader of the 2001 violence, declared:

What is important today is that we have the Ohrid agreement. However, there was a high cost to bring about this peace. Many Macedonians and Albanians have been killed in Macedonia. But now both Macedonians and Albanians are working together for the same goal—implementing the Ohrid agreement—because it is beneficial to both sides.¹⁷⁰

He believed that, at least on paper, the goals motivating the 2001 violence had been accomplished and now the ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians could move forward to a better future. Along the same lines, Bob Frowick, the U.S. ambassador to Macedonia, echoed these sentiments when he exclaimed, “I too was shocked that violence occurred in 2001, but I believe that it is now water under the bridge and that the framework agreement has people moving in the right direction at last. We have to stick with it.”¹⁷¹ This rosy conceptualization regarding the aftermath of the Ohrid Agreement at first led me to believe that the situation had improved significantly as a result of the

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Marina

¹⁶⁹ Carr; 193

¹⁷⁰ Macedonia: Will the Peace Last?” conference, July 1, 2003, held at the United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C.

¹⁷¹ Macedonia: Will the Peace Last?” conference, July 1, 2003, held at the United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C.

accord. During other interviews, however, I heard a less “diplomatic” and more realistic view of how each ethnic group perceives the framework agreement.

My first exposure to a different and more negative perspective occurred during my interview with Professor Victor Friedman. He nearly burst into laughter when I expressed the opinion that the framework agreement would be able to bring peace to the republic. He told me, as I was later to confirm from my other interviews, “Albanians view the Ohrid agreement as a step forward, while the Macedonians see it as a step backward. These perspectives are wholly incompatible with a lasting peace.” It appeared the ethnic Albanians had everything to gain, and the ethnic Macedonians everything to lose, from the concessions embodied at Ohrid.

In my interviews with ethnic Macedonians two major themes emerged. The first was that the Ohrid agreement was unnecessary as it gave the ethnic Albanians unparalleled rights for a minority. The second issue was the impact the agreement would have on the aspirations of other minorities living in the country. In my interview with Luben, he described the Ohrid agreement as a “political perversion” and continued: “If this is to be considered the basis of this country’s future, I am fearful of where this will lead us.” When I asked him to further explain his misgivings, he retorted:

Albanians have all the rights given to any other minority in any other country. How come we must give them more? Soon there will be no Macedonia but only a greater Albania. The Ohrid agreement gives too many rights to a minority that already has more than sufficient rights.¹⁷²

In many of my other interviews this theme of too many rights was also evident. Even Karolina, who had been quite reserved during the majority of the interview, became agitated while discussing the Ohrid Agreement. She bemoaned what she believed to be

¹⁷² Interview with Luben

its deleterious consequences: “What has happened to our valuable democracy when a minority can rule the state? They were treated just like everyone else and yet they want more.” In Karolina’s interpretation, Ohrid was a terribly disappointing conclusion to the 2001 violence. It appeared, as a result of the agreement, that Karolina had given up hope of any meaningful reconciliation with the ethnic Albanians.

The other theme to emerge was what the Ohrid Agreement communicated to other minorities, especially in terms of how it was achieved. Igor told me, “While I don’t like the framework, I like even less how it was achieved. What message does this send to the other minorities living in Macedonia? Maybe it will be the Roma [Gypsies] or Vlachs next.”¹⁷³ Like other ethnic Macedonians, Igor was not in favor of the Ohrid agreement, but even more disastrous in his view was the implications that a violent uprising would be “rewarded” by the granting of additional rights and privileges. Igor was convinced the Ohrid Agreement gave other minorities a ‘green-light’ to use violence to achieve their political aspirations. This perception, which was widespread among my informants, was responsible for intensifying their fear that Macedonia was chronically susceptible to internal chaos and dissolution at the hands of its untrustworthy and disloyal minorities.

Finally, my interview with Jansen illustrated the view that Ohrid would result in negative repercussions for both present and future ethnic relations in Macedonia. Jansen asserted, “With the framework, other ethnic groups will get the idea that even if they are treated perfectly, why not start a little violence and then they will be treated specially. It puts us in a bind. How are we to respond, to protect Macedonia, when minorities can

¹⁷³ Interview with Igor

claim they are not being treated fairly and then when we protect ourselves, we look like the aggressors? It is an awful situation, and I don't see how it will ever be fixed.”¹⁷⁴

Like Igor, Jansen saw nothing valuable and only future trouble stemming from the Ohrid agreement. While professionals, at least publicly, emphasized the great strides toward ethnic harmony that were to occur under Ohrid, the people who most need to accept this point of view instead seemed to think of it as a step backward. In all likelihood, Professor Friedman was correct when he stated ethnic Albanians see Ohrid as a positive development. However, unless ethnic Macedonians feel similarly about the accord, and believe they too are gaining something, it will be doomed to failure before it is given a chance.

Working Together Events:

When I originally began this work it was my belief that I would describe about half of the events referred to me by my informants as issues that contributed to an atmosphere of violence and half as examples that led to an atmosphere of peace. However, after completing all my interviews and reading much of the available literature I was amazed and rather saddened that I had been unable to unearth many memories of events that brought these two ethnic groups together. Below I provide all of the events that have some potential to contribute to the peace. As the brevity of this section shows, more of these events must be identified if there is to be lasting peace in Macedonia.

I first realized I would not be including many events that showed the resolve of the two communities to work together when during my interview with Professor Friedman, he told me, “You know, I can't really think of a single event which is viewed

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Jansen

similarly by both Macedonians and Albanians.”¹⁷⁵ I was surprised to hear this response because of the amount of time he spent recounting memories or narratives of historical events that led to distrust, fear, and finally conflict. Also, during my interview with Andrew Loomis, the Program Manager of the Macedonia project at Search for Common Ground, he reaffirmed what Professor Friedman stated when he said, “Albanians, Macedonians, Bulgarians, Roma [Gypsy] all have an ethnic memory of the past. More important to the groups is their individual ethnic narratives, and thus every event is viewed through an ethnic lens.”¹⁷⁶ During the course of my interviews with ethnic Macedonians I would come to see how accurate these observations were. Throughout all of my interviews only one example was mentioned of an event that is viewed positively by both ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians. This is the integration of Macedonia into the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In a hopeful voice tone, Marina related to me the following observation: “I hope that the citizens of Macedonia, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, would share a common view of Macedonian future. I think all of them want to see Macedonia in NATO and EU. So, this goal should lead to cooperation.”¹⁷⁷ Similarly, Jansen referred to the only hope for lasting peace as being achieved through “the desire of each group for Macedonia to become part of the EU and NATO. Through these alliances each ethnic group sees a healthier and more prosperous Macedonia.”¹⁷⁸ However, even this apparently shared perspective may be based on different reasons for each group, i.e., the ethnic Macedonians believe EU and NATO membership would help secure their borders while

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Professor Friedman

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Andrew Loomis

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Marina

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Jansen

ethnic Albanians believe they would be given more rights. It remains to be seen whether in fact this membership will begin to build a foundation for mutual understanding or will be viewed as an act of mutual selfishness taken strategically to satisfy the desires of each ethnic group.

A second possibility, which I saw as having great potential to bring the two ethnic groups together, was music. During the course of my interview with Meto he began speaking of a concert held in Skopje that interested me greatly. The musician performing was Kiro Griefski, who is an ethnic Macedonian but plays music that is not seen as exclusively ethnic Macedonian. Meto explained Griefski's "music is quite popular, both in the Albanian and Macedonian communities. The music is phenomenal. He plays music of the area—not Macedonian or Albanian alone. He mixes everything together so it is a tradition of the geography."¹⁷⁹ This concert was able to bring both ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians together, to listen to music, enjoy themselves, and even associate with the "other." I believe these types of events are critical and should become a larger part of the Macedonian socialization process to begin to break down the stereotypes of mistrust which only lead to fear and resentment.

The only other symbol about which both ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians agree is the name of the country— both groups endorse the name Republic of Macedonia. During my interview with Daniel Serwer, he asserted,

With Albanians accepting the fact the Republic should be called Macedonia—not just accepting it but advocating it. It is really interesting in fact that the Macedonians perceive the Albanians as the greatest threat to Macedonia, but the Albanians are the only ones in the region who do not have a problem with the existence of Macedonia. The Greeks, the Bulgarians, the Serbs don't think that an independent Macedonia should

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Meto

really exist. But Albanians generally accept the Macedonian State and desire the name Republic of Macedonia.¹⁸⁰

To promote trust and harmony, ethnic Macedonians must accept this assertion that ethnic Albanians should really be viewed as one of their few allies in the region. Not only do ethnic Albanians support the name Republic of Macedonia but they also are one of the few people in the region to believe in the legitimacy of the State.

Finally, during my research on Macedonia I came across an interesting, but largely forgotten, fact (or one that is downplayed in Macedonian history). As Hugh Poulton wrote in *Who Are the Macedonians*, “Since both Albanians and Slav Macedonians were faced with the same state-sponsored repressive assimilation policies, there was naturally much in common with their positions, and in 1920 Protogerov for VMRO and Hasan Bej Prishtina for the Albanians signed an agreement for the ‘liberation of Macedonia in her ethnographic and geographical frontiers.’”¹⁸¹ This event should not be trivialized or ignored as it marks a historic commitment of cooperation by ethnic Albanians to the Republic of Macedonia, and quite importantly to the boundaries of the State. In fact, this is the type of event could easily become a positive and inclusive collective memory for ethnic Macedonians and Albanians alike.

It can be seen that while there are a few examples of events in which cooperation between the ethnic groups exists, they are little known or not well developed and are definitely not emphasized in the socialization process of Macedonian citizens. It will take many more events of this nature to bring the two communities together and hopefully one day live side by side as equal citizens of Macedonia.

Conclusion:

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Daniel Serwer

¹⁸¹ Poulton; 92

As we can see, the events discussed during my interviews demonstrate that the collective memories of the ethnic Macedonians about key recent historical events were distorted to fit their particular ethnic narrative. The problem is “events are portrayed with a clear bias toward one side or the other, with each side defending the actors that are members of its own ethnic group and attacking and blaming the members of the opposing ethnic group.”¹⁸² Even in the interviews I conducted the interviewees noted this one-sided bias. Glen Camp, a Macedonian professor, told me “everybody—to some extent—in the Balkans views events differently based on their ethnicity.”¹⁸³ In another extremely candid comment Ljupco explained, “Every event that happens in Macedonia is viewed through the scope of ethnic prejudices. Ethnic Albanians think their rights are jeopardized and ethnic Macedonians think the others try to take their land and destroy the Macedonian nation.”¹⁸⁴ I even had a chance to speak with the Ambassador from Macedonia, his Excellency Nikola Dimitrov, who asserted “You must realize there is no clarity in Balkan history. There are no uniform positions when ethnicity is involved.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, the way events become portrayed is through an ethnic lens which helps lead to conflict.

However, because each of these groups has chosen an ethnic narrative there exists the possibility for a national narrative to emerge. A national narrative differs from an ethnic narrative because it has the ability to be inclusive, one which uses shared memories by all members of the community. Such a narrative would be based on mutual cooperation among the various ethnic groups to create a Macedonian state; would involve

¹⁸² Beska; 138

¹⁸³ Interview with Glen Camp

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Ljupco

all citizens living together in peace; would not plant seeds of anger and resentment; and finally, would focus on accomplishments, cooperation, and collaboration between the various ethnic groups. Of course, this is a difficult process, which would take the commitment and dedication of the people of Macedonia and the international community. However, because, all societies, including that of Macedonia is fluid and ever-changing, this vision of a shared national narrative remains a realistic possibility which would contribute to the peace and security of the Macedonian State.

In sum ethnic Macedonians have collective memories of recent historical events that tend to exacerbate ethnic tensions and conflicts. Specifically, they ...

- 1) Tend to view themselves as fair, just, and even-handed in their dealings with the ethnic Albanians.
- 2) Have great fear and mistrust that ethnic Albanians lack a commitment to the Macedonian state, and instead will use any excuse to agitate for a Greater Albania (referendum in support of Republic of Ilirida).
- 3) Have a fear of being overpowered numerically either because of the higher Albanian birthrate or because of immigration (such as happened after Kosovo) or both.
- 4) Perceive Albanians as greedy, demanding, unappreciative, and willing to resort to violence to get what they want (Ohrid Agreement).
- 5) Tend to minimize legitimate Albanian issues such as concern over rights and desire to express ethnic pride.
- 6) Tend to generalize from the actions of a minority of radical Albanians to the ethnic Albanian population as a whole.

¹⁸⁵ Conversation occurred during the conference “Macedonia: Will the Peace Hold” on July 1, 2003 at the United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C.

Chapter 4:

Historical Solutions and My Solution:

This section presents my ideas on starting to create a more peaceful Macedonia. While what I present below is by no means an exhaustive solution to the current ethnic troubles of the Republic, I believe these ideas could begin to move ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians in a more amiable direction. While I appreciate the complexity involved in resolving the deep distrust between these two ethnic groups, I truly believe with time and effort on each side the chasm separating these two communities could be bridged.

What I see needing to happen before anything else is a public dialogue regarding the events and issues discussed earlier. All of these events (excluding EU and NATO integration) have long since passed, and yet they continue to seriously affect any future possibility of peace between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. The type of public dialogue I have in mind should include two main objectives. The first would be to try to reach consensus on contentious issues. The next step would be to apologize for wrongs caused and forgive for wrongs done. It is my belief that by openly trying to resolve some of these past grievances, all Macedonian citizens will be able to begin to look to a future of inter-ethnic harmony.

Two historical examples are useful in demonstrating why such a dialogue needs to occur. One of the painful chapters in the history of Ukraine-Poland relations occurred between 1943 to 1944. During this time, historians estimate somewhere between 80,000-100,000 Poles and approximately 20,000 Ukrainians were murdered during WWII

atrocities.¹⁸⁶ This event was viewed quite differently by each group, which conceptualized the other side as the aggressor. Both Poles and Ukrainians routinely underestimated the numbers of people for whose deaths they were responsible, while greatly magnifying the atrocities committed by the other. However, in 2003 more than 50 years later both governments agreed to participate in a process of reconciliation. The Presidents of both countries saw the necessity of moving on from this war time tragedy which plagued the relations between the two countries. President Kuchma of Ukraine expressed the hopes of both people when he stated, “By bowing our heads to yesterday we look to tomorrow. Ukraine and Poland have a great potential of trust that will allow our nations to come to complete historical reconciliation and remember those who were tragically killed.”¹⁸⁷ The Pope also saw the necessity of moving beyond an event which had become so divisive. In a letter he wrote to both Presidents he asserted, “It is even more urgent when one considers the need to raise young generations in the spirit of reconciliation and building the future without the burdens of history, distrust, prejudice and violence.”¹⁸⁸ This public process of reconciliation and forgiveness is putting both countries on the path to improved relations.

The other case worth mentioning is the Truth and Reconciliation Trials which occurred in South Africa after the end of apartheid. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 1995 as part of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, number 34. As Mr. Dullah Omar, former South African Minister of

¹⁸⁶ Kyiv Post, “Pope calls on Poles and Ukrainians to reconcile over World War II massacres,” July 9, 2003. <<http://www.kyivpost.com/top/16856>>

¹⁸⁷ Kyiv Post, “Ukrainian, Polish presidents lead thousands in commemoration of WWII massacres,” July 14, 2003. <<http://www.kyivpost.com/top/16962>>

¹⁸⁸ Kyiv Post, “Pope calls on Poles and Ukrainians to reconcile over World War II massacres,” July 9, 2003. <<http://www.kyivpost.com/top/16856>>

Justice, believed, “A commission is a necessary exercise to enable South Africans to come to terms with their past on a morally accepted basis and to advance the cause of reconciliation.”¹⁸⁹ The point of the public hearings was for individuals on both sides of the apartheid to admit guilt for crimes of murder and rape, and to ask forgiveness from the bereaved families. If individuals engaged in this process, no prison sentences were issued. This was the first major public display of apology in South Africa for the horrible atrocities committed under the apartheid. While many skeptics doubted such actions could bring communities closer together, today it is widely accepted that the Truth and Reconciliation hearings had a major impact on allowing former enemies in South Africa to come together and live together peacefully.

The solution I would propose in the case of Macedonia would be to bring memories which lead to anger (flag incident, university, Kosovo, 2001 violence, etc.) out into the open and discuss them publicly with the goal of developing mutually agreed-upon versions that will lead to trust and cooperation between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians (as what happened in the Ukraine and Poland, and in post-apartheid South Africa). Regarding several of these events, such as the 2001 violence, many Macedonians are truly confused about why Albanians were demanding more rights and were suspicious that the real issue was a desire for a greater Albania. Such suspicions and fears should be discussed in an open and public way so both sides can begin to understand the other group’s motives. Even if a consensus cannot be reached on all of the events, it would still be possible for each side to forgive so as to move on to create a peaceful and prosperous Republic of Macedonia. The successes experienced by Ukraine, Poland, and South Africa in revisiting and reforming bitter memories make it imperative

¹⁸⁹ Truth and Reconciliation official homepage, accessed January 12, 2004, <<http://www.doj.gov.za/trc>>

that the government of Macedonia and the international community begin a rehabilitation of the country's contradictory collective memories on a massive scale. If this is not done, Macedonia will remain in a constant state of fear, and eventually violence will erupt again.

Conclusion:

Throughout the course of this study I have tried to bridge many theories and disciplines in analyzing the case of ethnic relations in Macedonia. In so doing, I believe I have only touched the tip of a much larger and complex iceberg. The literature on collective memory is quite extensive and so too is that of conflict resolution. However, the overlap, which appears so critical to me, is nearly non-existent in the literature. The way in which the past is remembered and reconstructed over time will inevitably have a massive impact on the present and future generations.

One of the major goals of this study was to show how past events are still alive and well and affect the present generation. While for the most part the incidents cited in this study were negative, which exacerbated the already tension-filled ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians, my research in fact helped me to see how fluid society is, and encouraged me to believe that it is possible to focus people's minds and memory on creating ethnic harmony. While most people fear change, the following passage summarizes quite well the benefits to be obtained:

The only constant is change. Change facilitates growth, breaks limiting patterns and fixed perspectives, ignites the creative spirit, and brings necessary opportunities and challenges. The presence of change is often announced by the creative tension we generally call conflict.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Arrien, Angeles, "Change, Conflict and Resolution from a Cross-Cultural Perspective" a Benefit Workshop. Advertisement in the Inquiring Mind Sept 2002.

At the start of my study, I wanted to get to the root of the conflict between the ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians. Importantly, as the interviews progressed, I saw there were very few of these critical, nodal events in which ethnic Macedonians living today had actual contact with the Albanians. Nearly all of the events described were not experienced first hand by my interviewees. However, I also realized that ethnic Macedonians were unlikely to formulate an alternative opinion about these happenings because they had no contact with ethnic Albanians. It becomes easy to tell stories and relate negative events to each successive generation if and only if the generations remain aloof of the other. On the other hand, if real and positive interactions occur between the two ethnic groups, it will be difficult for these past events, which create so much suspicion and ill-will, to have the same degree of influence.

From the data I collected, I have presented information which provides preliminary support for my original hypothesis: that negative, fearful collective memories lead to mistrust and ill-will, while positive, inclusive collective memories can serve to help reconcile antagonistic people to one another. As I listened to the interviewees, I could easily trace their thoughts and feelings down the left side of my collective memory diagram.

In my view, the future of Macedonia is quite uncertain. However, this is a human problem and thus humans have the ability to solve it. As was stated in the Russell-Einstein Manifesto of 1954:

There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a

new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.¹⁹¹

A decision of conscience must be made and only Macedonian citizens can take the next step. Only Macedonians together are able to decide if they want to live in a peaceful and prosperous Macedonia. Only the Macedonian people can choose to engage in a process of reconciliation and forgiveness that leads to the construction of acceptable, inclusive, and unifying collective memories. Until this happens, there is little hope for lasting solutions to the ethnic tensions which plague Macedonia. The international community can only avert civil war for so long through diplomacy and peace-keeping operations, and inevitably will find it is unable, on its own, without the support of the Macedonian people, to destroy the root causes of suspicion and hate which lead to violence and war.

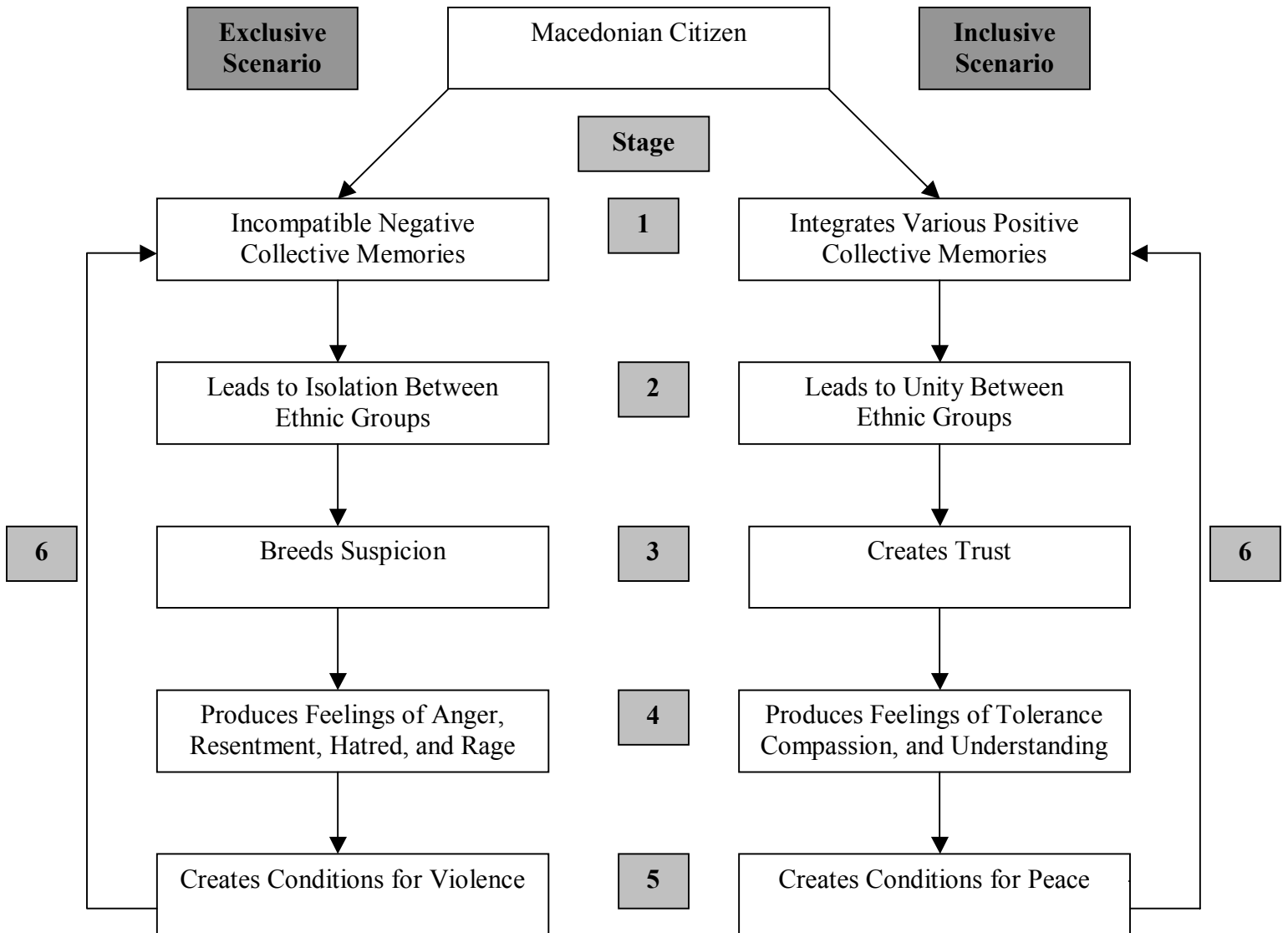
Future direction for studies:

As stated above, this study only touched on the possibilities for understanding how negative memories fuel stereotypes and lead to conflict. Referring back to the model I have developed to explain how collective memory can contribute to violence or peace (see Figure 1, pg. 96), it is essential for others to further test its main hypotheses. Specifically, more evidence is needed to validate the left-hand side of the chart (i.e., the contributions of negative collective memories to mistrust and violence). Likewise, since almost all of my interviews and data dealt with the left-hand column leading to the outcome of violence, it is particularly important for future research to examine the right hand side of the model, which theorizes that positive, inclusive collective memories can lead to positive, healing outcomes. Reconciling peoples of different ethnicities, religions, and cultures is a global problem and in seeking answers we cannot afford to leave any

¹⁹¹ Proclamation of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, Presented at a Press Conference in Caxton Hall,

stone unturned. I hope this study has taken a step in turning up the stone of collective memory, to suggest how it can be an important tool for reducing ethnic conflict and bringing people together.

Figure 1: Flow Chart for How Collective Memory Can Be Used



A chronology of key events in Macedonian history, 1870-2003^{192, 193}

- 1870 Ottoman Turkey allows the formation of the Bulgarian Exarchate.
- 1872 The Bulgarian church acquires the eparchies of Skopje and Ochrid, with majority support claimed among local Christians.
- 1893 Foundation of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO).
- 1895 Foundation of the Macedonian Supreme Committee in Sofia. Ex-Bulgarian PM Stambulov assassinated by Macedonians.
- 1903 Ilinden Rising in August 1903 in Macedonia against Ottoman Turkish rule. The Macedonian uprising is cruelly suppressed by the Turks.
- 1908 The Young Turk Revolution
- 1912-13 The Balkan Wars. Defeat of Turkish forces in first Balkan War. In the Second Balkan War, Macedonia is contested by the victorious forces of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria.
- 1913 By the Treaty of Bucharest, Macedonia is divided between Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria.
- 1914-18 First World War. Serious fighting on the Macedonian front after Bulgaria occupies much of Macedonia. After the end of hostilities, north Macedonia is awarded to Serbia, and becomes part of south Serbia within the first Yugoslavia, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Greece retains Aegean Macedonia, much of which is settled with Christian refugees from Asia Minor. Macedonian political organization is banned by the Serbian monarchist state. IMRO begins terrorist campaign against Yugoslavia.
- 1934 Suppression of IMRO in Bulgaria. Assassination of King Alexander in Marseilles by Chernozemski, a member of IMRO.
- 1941 German occupation of Yugoslavia. Bulgaria annexes much of Macedonia. Yugoslav Macedonia is divided by the Bulgarians into two provinces, one based on Skopje, the other, Bitola (Monastir).
- 1943 Anti-Axis Partisan warfare begins in Macedonia, controlled by Tito.
- 1944 Proclamation of a Macedonian People's Republic on August 2.
- 1944-8 Discussion between the Yugoslav and Bulgarian communist parties about the possibility of solving the Macedonia problem through a Balkan Federation.
- 1944 Liberation of Greece
- 1945 A Macedonian People's Republic is formed within the second, socialist Yugoslavia, with its capital at Skopje.
- 1946 First Congress of the Macedonian People's Front in Skopje. Removal of the bones of Gotse Delchev, IMRO's most popular leader, from Sofia to Skopje.
- 1947 The first 'Macedonian National Government' is established.
- 1948 Break between Tito and Stalin.
- 1949 Closure of the Greek-Macedonian border. End of the Greek civil war.
- 1955-75 Gradual industrial and touristic development of Yugoslav Macedonia.
- 1990 Multi-party elections held.
- 1991 Kiro Gligorov becomes President in January 1991. In September 1991, the citizens of the ex-Socialist Republic of Macedonia vote for independence as the Republic of Macedonia, and leave the Yugoslav Federation. In November 1991, the new Constitution approved.
- 1993 Deployment of UNPROFOR United Nations Preventative Peacekeeping Force in Macedonia, FYROM joins the UN.
- 1995 Assassination attempt on President Gligorov in Skopje. Agreement with Greece over redesign of FYROM flag.
- 1997 Serious disturbances in western Macedonia in July with four Albanian fatalities. Imprisonment of the ethnic Albanian Mayors of Tetovo and Gostivar.

¹⁹² The Years 1870-1999 were taken from Pettifer, James. *The New Macedonian Question*. St. Martin's Press, Inc., New York, NY, USA. 1999. xviii-xiv

¹⁹³ The Years 2000-2003 were taken from the BBC timeline of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1410364.stm> Accessed July 14, 2003.

- 1998 Announcement of impending retirement of President Gligorov. Parliamentary elections, which result in the victory of an Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-led coalition, and gains for ethnic Albanian parties.
- 1999 NATO reinforces FYROM, in preparation for military intervention in Kosova Joint NATO-Greek military exercises in the region. Bulgaria signs military agreement with FYROM leaders, and donates tanks and artillery to the FYROM army.
- 2000 Macedonian troops on high alert on border with Kosovo because of increasing violence.
- 2001 (February) Nato's KFOR peacekeeping troops in Kosovo promise to step up border patrols to control movement of supplies and people after incidents near frontier.
- 2001 (March) Nato urges government not to use force against militants occupying Tanusevci near Kosovo border. Further incidents of violence. Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and US back use of force against guerrillas. Border with Kosovo closed. Macedonian army backed by KFOR launches offensive to flush out guerrillas from Tanusevci. National Liberation Army (NLA) emerges, demanding equal rights for ethnic Albanians and voicing support for militants at Tanusevci. Democratic Party of Albanians stages mass rally in Skopje against violence. Tetovo town square hit by shells, fighting spreads. Mass demonstration in Skopje urging tougher action against rebels. Tanks enter Tetovo, rebel positions hit by mortar fire. Government gives rebels ultimatum to surrender or face all-out attack. Refugee agency UNHCR says 22,000 ethnic Albanians have fled fighting.
- 2001 (May) Main Macedonian parties form government of national unity under PM Ljubco Georgievski which pledges to address minority grievances. Fighting continues.
- 2001 (June) Ethnic Albanian shops and a mosque in the southern town of Bitola torched in riots before the funerals of Macedonian soldiers killed by guerrillas. Rebels take Aracinovo just outside Skopje. Days later NATO evacuates but does not disarm them. Armed protesters besiege parliament in Skopje, angry at what they see as leniency towards ethnic Albanian rebels. President Boris Trajkovski makes a national appeal for peace.
- 2001 (August) Government and rebels sign western-backed peace agreement involving greater recognition of ethnic Albanian rights in exchange for rebel pledge to hand over weapons to NATO peace force.
- 2001 (September) NATO carries out month-long Operation Essential Harvest to disarm rebels, exceeding target of collecting 3,300 weapons.
- 2001 (October) Government announces amnesty for former members of the National Liberation Army days after it disbands. Macedonian police begin entering villages formerly controlled by ethnic Albanian guerrillas.
- 2001 (November) Parliament approves new constitution incorporating reforms required by August peace deal. It recognises Albanian as an official language and increases access for ethnic Albanians to public-sector jobs, including the police. Moderate Social Democrats leave government coalition.
- 2002 (January) Parliament cedes more power to local government to improve status of ethnic Albanians.
- 2002 (March) Parliament amnesties former ethnic Albanian rebels who handed in their arms during NATO-supervised weapons collection. International donors pledge more than \$500 million in aid to help Macedonia recover from last year's fighting.
- 2002 (June) Parliament passes new laws making Albanian an official language.
- 2002 (September) Elections see voters put nationalist Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski out of office. Social Democrats under Branko Crvenkovski become largest party in parliament. Well over half of Albanian voters back the Democratic Union for Integration under former Albanian rebel fighter Ali Ahmeti.
- 2003 (March) EU takes over peacekeeping duties from NATO.

**Speech of the President Boris Trajkovski on the occasion of the centenary of the
Ilinden Insurrection and Macedonian statehood**
02.08.2003

Krushevo, 2 August 2003

Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, dear compatriots,
Excellencies, Distinguished guests, dear friends,

Today the Republic of Macedonia and all its citizens celebrate the Centenary of the Ilinden Insurrection, together with all our compatriots living in the neighbouring countries, across our common home Europe, and overseas, in Australia and New Zealand, Canada and America; in all the places where the winds of war, poverty or the dream for better life scattered people from their land of birth.

The Republic of Krushevo, the foundation of our contemporary statehood, reposes on three pillars: republicanism and democracy; religious and ethnic tolerance, and social justice. These three principles, articulated in the Manifesto of the Republic of Krushevo in 1903, when the Balkans knew only of monarchies, genocidal chauvinism, and utmost social poverty, represented a positive civilizing shock. The visionaries of the Republic of Krushevo do not have their match in the Balkans neither in the depth of their statehood philosophy, nor in the scope of the time horizon encompassed in their vision. Even today, after one hundred years, we are still very passionate when we talk about democracy, tolerance and social justice. That is why this should forever remain not only the foundation of our state, but our way of thinking in the future.

Standing today here in front of you, I would like to share with you, a single feeling that comes over me when I evoke this historic act in which many generations have invested their precious lives, from Karposh and Kresna, through the Gemidzii, the legendary Ilinden epopee, the glorious War for National Liberation, the Antifascist Revolution of Macedonia and ASNOM, up to this centenary of Ilinden in the sovereign and independent Republic of Macedonia, equal and respected member of the international community. This feeling, my dear fellow citizens, translates into the word – hope, which together with charity and faith, I believe have the power to unite us all in this mythical town of Krushevo, which today on 2 August 2003, with pure heart and mind, can be proclaimed capital of the European idea of democracy on the Balkans. However, the splendour of the Macedonian epopee has a different dimension: this was not only a fight for freedom and independent state, but also for religious and interethnic tolerance – a unique phenomenon of the Balkans not only in that time, but many years after, and remained a distinctive Macedonian feature until present time.

The ten days of the Krushevo Republic, as a crown of the Ilinden Insurrection, have become a symbol of the Macedonian dream for an independent state. However, at the same time, the Republic of Krushevo also symbolises the dream of all the peoples in the Balkans, the dream for ‘European orientation’. Here, in Krushevo, though only ten days, the Macedonian republicanism was put into practice, inspired by the great ideas of liberal democracy, which understand equality, brotherhood and freedom for all citizens.

Opposed to the reality in the Balkans of that time, where monarchism implied creation of single nation states, the Macedonian republicanism, declared in the Krushevo Manifesto,

fought for common human values.

The ideas presented in the Manifesto do not differ from those of the visionaries of modern Europe, Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, which sound as if they were written precisely that morning of Ilinden 1903. On the way from Ilinden to Europe, in the visions and deeds of the apostles Goce Delchev, Nikola Karev, Gjorce Petrov, Krste Petkov Misirkov and many others, Macedonia was conceived as a common home for all, regardless of people's ethnic or religious background, where all those who dream about the world being a field for cultural competition among nations will find their place.

The Ilinden Insurrection is the missing link in the chain of efforts and sacrifices of our citizens for freedom and the creation of an independent Macedonian state. This Insurrection was neither a coincidence nor an episode in this process. The Insurrection was a result of the systematic hard work of the spirit of freedom of the Macedonian people on the side of the second generation of Goce's Macedonian revolutionaries, who created the respected secrete Macedonian Odrin Revolutionary Organization – Internal Macedonian Odrin Revolutionary Organization.

This generation of revolutionaries-visionaries, fighters and reformers saw Macedonia as a free and progressive society and common fatherland and democratic state of all of its citizens, regardless of their religion, ethnic origin and social status. Precisely this generation, in the course of the Insurrection, through the Krushevo Republic demonstrated for what kind of state it was fighting and to what society were the Macedonian people aspiring to.

If there is a date, which unites us, all, not only as historical heritage, but as a future bond for Europe and as a basis of our common European patriotism and respect of universal human values, that date certainly is 2 August 1903. Celebrating the hundred years of Ilinden, all citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, should truly know and believe that upon the example of the rest of the European states and peoples, we may have thousands of yesterdays but that we are all bonded by the single tomorrow which is called Greater Europe, where we naturally belong.

However, I would like to single out here that we cannot enter Europe without identity and dignity. The great truth that has started here in Krushevo on 2 August 1903, hundred years ago, will culminate when the whole world will recognize our right for identity, our name the Republic of Macedonia. This is the only way to set the foundations for a true partnership among the nations and the states. Otherwise, Greater Europe will be founded on principles that will not be essentially European.

Esteemed citizens, dear friends,

When I speak of hope in the way in which I conceive Ilinden, not only as a memory, but also as a future, I inevitably see Macedonia within the universal cultural and spiritual frame of values to which it has belonged and persisted for centuries. Today, the shared values of the peoples go beyond the narrow frames of national and state borders, imposing the question of humanistic values as a universal Temple from where the future is conquered. This is the key issue and a challenge for us and for the neighbouring countries, to which we have to find a modern solution.

At the same moment we will face the legitimate question of each citizen: how shall we access Euro Atlantic integrations with such a burden of accrued economic and social problems, with still a fragile security, with thousands of unemployed? This people knew how to fight for and obtain their own state; all the citizens of our country fight every day

for a stable civil society, give contribution to the functioning of the legal state, eradication of corruption and all other sorts of deviant phenomena that impede the progress of the society and do not allow the economy to recover. Those to whom the citizens have conferred political legitimacy and the trust to manage the issues of common interest should be in the front lines of this fight. Our every day work in view of achieving better and happier life for our people will determine whether we will be able to face the future generations, our children. We must not allow political differences, ambitions to dominate and personal interests to prevail over the common interest and human dignity. Esteemed ladies and gentlemen, dear guests,

Here, from this site, where one hundred years ago, the first Republic on the Balkans was created, I would like to convey to the Macedonian public, to all the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia the following message: let us join all our forces together and direct them at conquering European and world markets; let us transform Macedonia into a country attractive to foreign investments; let us bring back to our country our intellectual potential which is invaluable and irreplaceable; let us invest all our forces into restarting the abandoned manufacturing and production plants and into opening new ones, into developing information society, where digital economy and service providing sector will be the bases to the future economic development; let us produce healthy food of European quality; let us unveil the natural beauties of Krushevo and Mariovo, Ohrid and Prespa, Shara Mountain and Polog, Kozhuv and the Maleshevo region to the world travellers! For this purpose the Republic of Macedonia has to create new generations of people educated by global standards, generations able to make the Macedonian product competitive at the world market.

What is the common interest of the Macedonian people today, no matter where they live, their social status and ethnic or religious background? Dear friends, this is the natural and simple human wish to provide well-being, decent life, spiritual fulfilment and peaceful sleep for their children. Let us unite over those things which bring us together; the differences have always existed and will exist and they should be settled through confrontation of ideas and productive competition in the spiritual sphere, and not allow them to become the apple of discord among the members of different ethnic communities or political parties. The celebration of Ilinden should contain a message, which will call for unity and say that Ilinden does not pertain only to the Macedonians but to all the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia and that we have all the right to celebrate it equally.

Today Macedonia needs open horizons. We should be honest, first of all, with ourselves and destroy the artificial barriers, which are dividing us. We should realise the fact that we all share the same destiny and that the world does not value us for the language we speak, nor for the political party we belong to, but for what we do: whether we are conscious citizens of Europe, or provincial national romantics or prisoners of our parties and ideologies.

Only without new divisions and sufferings, Macedonian citizens will have all the arguments to maintain a continuous economic and cultural communication with European and world capitals, with all the peoples that have reached well-being at the moment when they put aside their differences from the past and united themselves on the basis of their visions and prospects for common future. Let us not allow ourselves to remain on the margins of the best journey in the history, which all European peoples entered together

for the first time. This is something that future generations would never forgive us. In this respect, it is necessary to stay on the path of the new political philosophy of regional cooperation and relations with our neighbours in which we must not see, as in the past, only people or governments that can hardly wait to dismantle Macedonia, but see friends and partners with whom we share the same values and objective. Although in each society there are people with dishonest intentions and ideas, the new political reality and the integration processes will reject their unconvincing tendencies as anachronous and will marginalize them totally. Against the antagonisms of the past, sharing the common history and living in the new time, the spirit of cooperation and friendship can be felt across the region. In this respect, I would like to express my appreciation for the decision of the Turkish state to land us the legendary cherry wood canon, which today in Macedonia is not a symbol of someone's victory or defeat but a symbol of shared European values and future of both countries.

This openness towards the future directs by itself the course of our country's foreign policy, where the full integration in European and Euro Atlantic processes remains the utmost priority. This presupposes strong internal engagement, most of all through the realization of necessary reforms. The Republic of Macedonia belongs with the European Union and NATO. Therefore, the consolidation and the future development of our strategic partnership with the EU and USA is of utmost importance. Euro-Atlantic integration and cohesion provided to the United States and Europe the longest period of peace and well-being in their history. The Macedonian citizen and our state itself undoubtedly identify themselves with the system of values which are the basis of Western democracy. In its actions as a sovereign and responsible member of the international community, the Republic of Macedonia starts from its national and state interests, which consist in stability, security, respect of law, development of democracy, economic prosperity and progress. These objectives and commitments will be accomplished in the most appropriate way within the frame of the EU and NATO. The most difficult part of the task remains: the work that we have to complete here on our own, by raising the levels and the standards in all fields of life in our society. I have faith in the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia; I am sure that together we will achieve what the history, even more, the future demands from us.

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen, dear guests,

In this moment of national enthusiasm, I feel the need to mention the historical turmoil of the people inhabiting this land. Today we celebrate the Macedonian statehood, Ilinden 1903, but also ASNOM 1944, and the history wanted it for the Independence Day, 8 September, to be close to these dates as well. Mentioning these three pillars of Macedonian statehood, this symbiosis of the three important dates founding our state and, reminiscing with piety all those who paid with their lives their love for their country and for freedom, I voice my hope that there will be never again need for new sacrifices.

The greatness of this day makes us remember the exceptionally difficult and painful 2001. In the name of all the young and wasted lives, in the name of all the mourning mothers, I would like to appeal to conscience, wisdom and understanding, to turn the historical pages filled with unhappiness and suffering, because fortune can not be built on someone else's misfortune. Even in the first ten days of its existence as Krushevo Republic, the Republic of Macedonia was a home to all its citizens, regardless to their national or religious background. During the most difficult days of wars and massacres

across the territory of former Yugoslavia, Macedonia has succeeded to maintain internal peace, so that an article in a well known European newspaper, commenting the events from 2001, was headed by “Macedonia or the threatened ideal”. We found ourselves on the edge of the abyss, but we managed to pull out thanks to this people’s wisdom and the stability of the state institutions. With the help of the international community, we signed the Framework Agreement which finally excluded the option for territorial solution to the ethnic issues and definitely did not open the door to the disintegration, as some are prone to believe or desire; to the contrary, it opens real prospects for harmonious development of the inter-ethnic relations without jeopardising the state’s integrity. The Agreement fortified the foundation of a unitary, multiethnic Macedonia, and by rejecting violence it set the political framework for restitution of stability, thus giving a chance to peace and cohabitation, but also to the joint responsibility for the Republic of Macedonia. By its essence, it is a European agreement, which with its basic idea of authentic and real integration follows the subtle thread of the Krushevo Manifesto which, as we can conclude today, did not lose anything of its relevance even if it was published a whole century ago.

Esteemed guests, dear friends,

As President of the Republic of Macedonia, today, while we are celebrating the Centenary of the Ilinden Insurrection, I would like to convey again a message to each our citizen, to each home in Macedonia, to all those who bear Macedonia in their hearts: the Republic of Macedonia is the state of all those who live in it; the differences should draw us closer, not divide us; we should turn to what enables us to live, not to enclose ourselves by obsolete concepts rejected by the progressive world; we should settle any argument through dialogue and mutual understanding, within the institutions of the system and by respecting the democracy and human rights. This is a free country and the freedom of each citizen is limited only by the freedom of other citizens.

Our duty is not only to fully realise this concept, but also to affirm it in the world as an authentic Macedonian model of living and to show to others the historic truth of the Macedonian cosmopolitanism where everyone has found a place under the sun and feels at home. We should share our ideal with others in order to persuade ourselves and the world how grand is our contribution to the universal treasure of common human values.

The universalism and humanism are Macedonia’s fate. It is not by accident that, by the end of this month, in the ancient city of Ohrid, the large regional forum on the “Dialogue among civilisations” will be held. With its history and tradition of tolerance among religions and cultures, but also with its current policy, the Republic of Macedonia contributes to the understanding among peoples. Following the messages and experiences of Ilinden, we have an exceptional opportunity to learn what Macedonia represents today and to understand how it should be tomorrow. On the basis of a broad political, inter-ethnic and social consensus, we ought to make ourselves worthy of the challenges of the new millennium and face them with a strategy for the next hundred years without fearing for the survival and future of our people and state; to commemorate with dignity the second century of this great event.

Congratulations for Ilinden!

Long live the Republic of Macedonia!

Late January

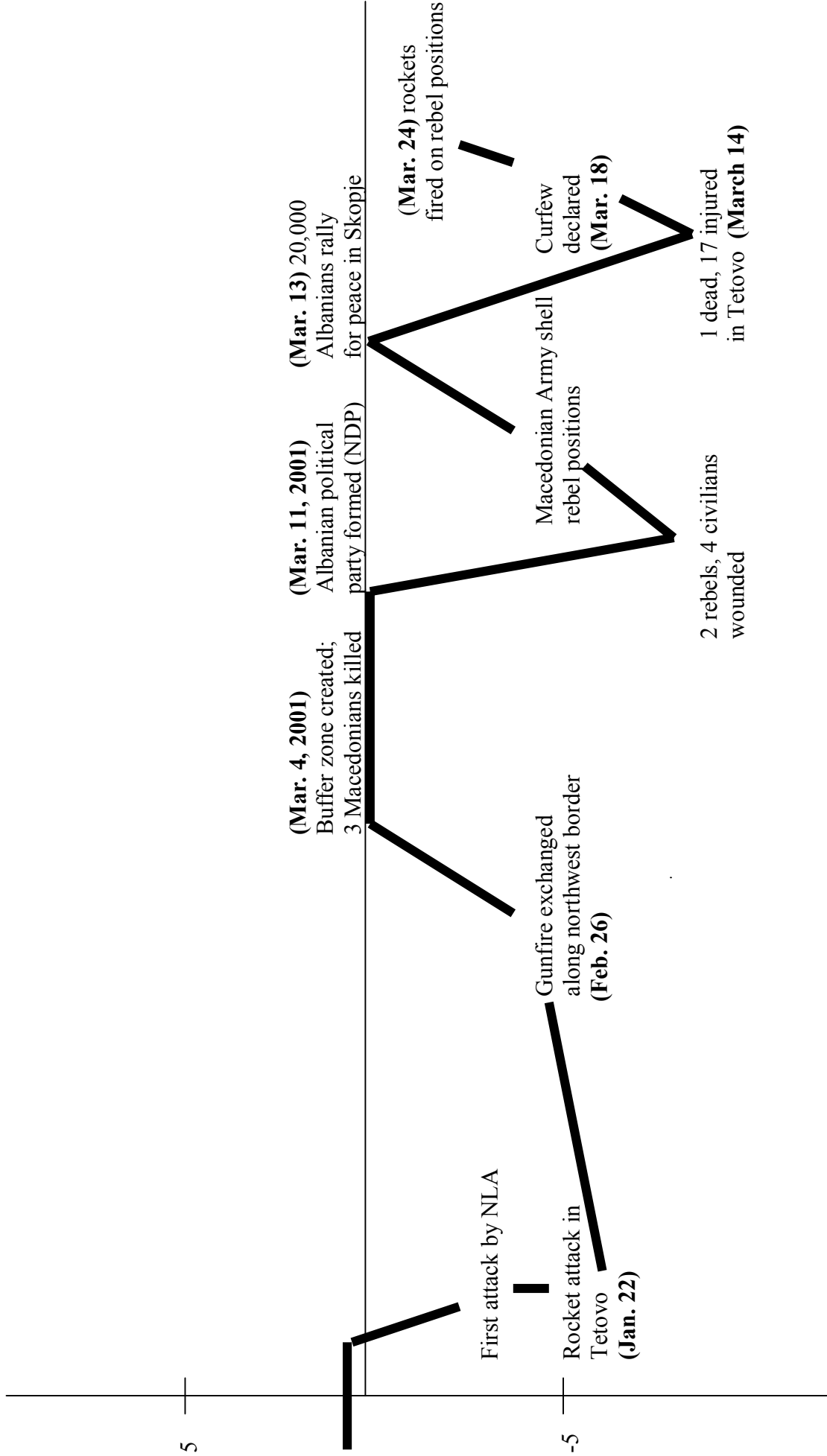
February

March 1, 2001

Degree of Stability
10

5

-5



Late April

June

July →

NLA outlines demands to UN, EU, NATO & U.S. (**April 23**)

Gov't of national Unity formed

Ceasefire (**June 11**)-until June 27, 2001 Guerrillas offer for peace if NATO deploys troops and brings leaders into negotiations

President Boris Trajkovski addressed nation in plea in of peace; Skopje is calm (**June 25**)

Anti-Albanian violence erupts In Bitola

6500 villagers have fled to Kosovo (**May 8**)

10,000 civilians estimated to remain in villages

Rebels open fire at Army checkpoints

NLA forces take control of Aracinovo; threat to take capital (**May 10**)

8 soldiers killed; riots ensue (**April 28**)

The gov't for national unity meets with Macedonia's president (**June 15**)

Macedonian Interior Minister Ljube Boskovski resigns as overseer of the peace process

3500 refugees evacuated Aracinovo; 20,000 people have fled Macedonia

Government helicopters attack rebel positions ending an 11-day ceasefire (**June 22**) after Macedonia's president called off talks.

(**June 24**) European envoy secures agreement for the Macedonian government to stop attacks on rebels in exchange for EU monitored withdrawal of rebels to a location farther from Skopje
Armed rebels leave Aracinovo by NATO escort; Thousands of Macedonian nationalists storm Parliament demanding Trajkovski to resign

Background of Interviewees

Name	Location	Length (minutes)	Age	Background
Macedonians				
Goce	Washington D.C.	30	40	Active leader in the Macedonian diaspora in the U.S.
Meto	Phone	120	22	Student and first generation Macedonian living in the U.S.
Kimlintina	St Louis	45	24	Student who has lived her whole life in Macedonia
Zlatco	Washington D.C.	60	25	Student from Prelip
Jansen	E-mail		30	Has lived in Skopje his whole life
Lazar	E-mail		25	Has lived in Skopje his whole life
Karolina	Phone	45	39	A western educated professional, now living in Prelip
Boris	E-mail		40	Has lived his whole life in Prelip
Marina	Washington D.C.	35	29	Student in Macedonia
Ljupco	Phone	50	20	Professional working in Skopje
Luben	Phone	25	32	Professional who lives and works outside skopje
Martin	E-mail		34	Has loved in Skopje his whole life
Igor	E-mail		37	Lives in the Western territories of Macedonia
Professionals				
Professor Loring Danforth				
Daniel Serwer	Washington D.C.	45		Director of the Balkans Initiative at the United States Institute of Peace
Professor Victor Friedman	Phone	60		Professor of Linguists. Reputed as the leading researcher on Macedonia
Professor Keith Brown	E-mail			Professor of Sociology specializing in ethnic relations in the Balkans
Eran Frankel	Washington D.C.	20		Search For Common Ground Macedonia Project
Professor Alice Ackermann	E-mail	30		Professor of conflict resolution specializing in the Balkans
Andrew Loomis	Washington D.C.	60		Search For Common Ground Macedonia Project
Glen Camp	E-mail			Professor of Hisotry in Macedonia