Macedonia, Interethnic Relations, and European Union Integration

by

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Abstract

The Republic of Macedonia gained independence in 1991 but historically has had its identity, territory, culture, and people continually contested. A European Union (EU) candidate country since 2005, Macedonia continues to proceed towards membership, fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria and the *acquis communautaire*. While most of the literature on Macedonia centres on the name dispute with Greece, which remains a key barrier to the country's EU accession, identity politics are an under-researched topic in Macedonia's road to accession. This thesis uses identity politics as a theoretical foundation to focus on Macedonian-Albanian relations in the context of EU accession. Management of identity politics in Macedonia can play a role in stabilizing or destabilizing the country, which may affect Macedonia's accession process. The research sheds further light on identity politics in the Balkans, providing an archetype for analyzing contemporary ethnic relations.

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Introduction

The Republic of Macedonia's¹ history is undeniably complicated, periodically exposed to disputes internally and externally, and yet its citizens remain hopeful about the country's future prospects at joining the international community. With Croatia set to join the European Union (EU) in July 2013 and Serbia recently being awarded candidate country status, it would appear that many of the Western Balkan countries are progressing towards international recognition and acceptance. Macedonia received candidate country status in 2005, and has been progressing towards fulfilling the requirements of becoming a member of the EU. However, it has reached a stalemate in its accession process; unable to initiate EU accession negotiations let alone achieve membership. Greece's refusal to accept Macedonia into the EU under the name "Republic of Macedonia" is often cited as the primary reason for its exclusion (Danforth, 1997; Brown, 2003; Cowan, 2000). As Greece calls its own northern province 'Macedonia,' it has accused the Republic of Macedonia of appropriating its Hellenic cultural heritage and implicitly making claims on Greek territory. While this issue has drastically and negatively impacted Macedonia's accession to the EU, the argument presented in this thesis is that there is another, equally if not more important factor to consider when assessing Macedonia's EU prospects. Macedonia has a large Albanian minority² population, which according to the official results of the census of 2002 constitutes 25.17% of the total population (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 567). The 'real' number

¹ From this point forward, the Republic of Macedonia will be referred to as Macedonia, given that Canada has recognized the country under its constitutional name since 2008.

² Albanians in this context refer to the ethnic Albanians of Macedonia, not Albanians who live in Kosovo or Albania. The term Macedonians in this thesis refers to Slavic Macedonians who have lived in the Republic of Macedonia from the sixth century onwards; it does not refer to the Macedonians living in Northern Greece.

of Albanians in Macedonia is a source of dispute between Macedonian and Albanian authorities, as Albanians claim they actually represent 35 to 40% of the population (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 405 & p. 406; Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 567). The topic of this thesis is therefore Macedonian-Albanian interethnic relations in Macedonia, in the context of that republic's EU accession process. Macedonian-Albanian relations since the demise of Yugoslavia in 1991-92 and introduction of the Macedonian Constitution have been problematic, leading to a brief armed conflict in 2001. The international community, in particular the EU, has been instrumental in terms of monitoring compliance with and implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA), which has served as the constitutional framework that helped to end the 2001 armed hostilities. The research question this thesis seeks to answer is the following: do identity politics actually impede EU integration? I will argue that identity politics and their corollary interethnic relations have impeded Macedonia's accession to the EU. The role of the Albanian minority and identity politics have not been thoroughly analyzed as a critical factor in Macedonia's EU integration.

Most of the literature written on Macedonia tends to be biased and tendentious, and revolves around the origins of the Macedonian Question. The Macedonian Question involves the division of its territory among Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria, and is often presented as merely a European or Balkan diplomatic issue (Pond, 2006, p. 169; Rossos, 2008, p. 79). This thesis will analyze the situation in Macedonia and Macedonian politics from a minority rights perspective. The Introduction will set forth the historical context for the thesis, analyzing nationalist movements within historic Macedonia during the 19th century. Additionally, the Introduction will provide working definitions of key terms that

will be used throughout the thesis: ethnicity, ethnic community, ethnic minority, identity, identity politics, and nationalism. However, the thesis will provide a contemporary focus of the last twenty years of Macedonia's history, starting with the recognition of independence from Yugoslavia through a referendum on 8 September 1991. Following its referendum, a Macedonian Constitution was promulgated on 17 November 1991, and Macedonia was declared an independent state on 19 December 1991. Despite these initial steps, and because of its conflict with Greece over the name issue (which will be discussed in detail at a later point in the thesis), it was not until 8 April 1993 that Macedonia was admitted to the United Nations. The following chapters provide a review of the literature on nationalism and ethnicity and their relevance for Macedonia; an exploration of identity politics and its applicability for Macedonia; and, finally, an analysis of EU documents and policies, interviews conducted in Belgium and Macedonia, as well as significant minority rights reports, including international and Non-Government Organization (NGO) reports. With its focus on Macedonia, this thesis will emphasize the importance of minority rights in the context of EU integration.

The following terms require working definitions for this thesis: ethnicity, ethnic community, ethnic minority, identity, identity politics, and nationalism. These definitions have been derived from the works of key scholars in a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, and political science. Each term will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters. These terms form the foundation of the thesis and allow for the theoretical dimension to develop. First, ethnicity and its corresponding concepts, ethnic community and ethnic minority, will be discussed. 'Ethnicity,' according to Barany (2005), "attests to an awareness of collective identity comprised of attributes like shared

history, traditions, culture, and language” (p. 84). The working definition of ‘ethnic community’ or ‘ethnie’ is “a named human population of alleged common ancestry, shared memories and elements of common culture with a link to a specific territory and measure of solidarity” (Smith, 1996, p. 447). Further, the definition of an ‘ethnic minority’ that will be used throughout the thesis “includes anyone who identifies him or herself as part of a group that maintains a distinction in language and/or culture between itself and the majority (mainstream) population” (Browne, 2005, p. 6). The term ‘ethnic’ itself has a long history – it was originally used to refer to “heathen” or “pagan” – but eventually became associated with ‘race’ or ‘nation’ (Schlesinger, 1998, p. 47). A further analysis of ethnicity will be provided in Chapter One as well as its relevance for Macedonia.

The core of this thesis lies in the complicated concept of identity. The definition of ‘identity’ used for the thesis “refers to peoples’ membership in social groups – whether that membership is chosen by them or ascribed to them by others” (Arthur, 2011, p. 4). Given this definition of identity, for the purposes of this thesis ‘identity politics’ are understood as the formal set of policies and discourses pursued by Macedonian state and political actors (the majority) on the one hand and Albanian political actors (the minority) on the other. The thesis assumes that these actors – elected through relatively democratic processes – are generally representative of the identity groups they claim to embody. Admittedly, identity politics do have numerous possible definitions, including philosophical definitions, post-Structuralist, and neo-Marxist. As will be demonstrated through this thesis, identity politics provide the tools to examine how a society is divided

along ethnic lines, and how ethnic groups then use their power to increase their national identity and vie for collective rights.

In Macedonia, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the impact of nationalism has been momentous, and therefore a working definition of nationalism is required (Poulton, 1995, p. 6). This thesis will use Anthony D. Smith's definition of nationalism as "an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population some of whose members deem themselves to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'" (Smith, 1996, p. 447). To reiterate, minority groups use nationalism in an effort to obtain more political rights and recognition within a given society. The aim of nationalism is to "unite all members of a given people on the basis of a putative shared culture" (Poulton, 1995, p. 6). These working definitions outline the concepts used in the thesis.

Statistics and census

The persistent wars in the Balkans demonstrate the impact numbers can have on ethnic conflicts (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 567). If a minority has great numbers, then it is likely that it will try to possess more political power. As Brunnbauer (2004) notes, Macedonia is a clear example where the size of "competing ethnic groups" is extremely significant (p. 567). In the case of Macedonia, "there are few pre-1800 statistics on Macedonians' ethnicity" (Rossos, 2008, p. 3). The statistics available for the 19th century indicate the Ottoman Empire's millet system, where an individual was defined by their religion as opposed to ethnicity (Rossos, 2008, p. 4). Difficulties in providing an ethnographic structure were further complicated following partition, as Bulgarians, Greeks, and Serbians did not recognize Macedonians as a distinct ethnic group or even

nationality (Rossos, 2008, p. 5). The largest single group of Macedonians pre-1913 was located in Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece). Greece's idea of homogeneity and periods of both voluntary and compulsory population movements, otherwise known as expulsions, with Turkey and Bulgaria led to the Macedonian population decreasing (Rossos, 2008, p. 5). Following these population movements, Greece conducted a census in 1928, which presented the Kingdom as "ethnically homogenous" (Rossos, 2008, p. 5).

The Albanians of Macedonia, according to the 1981 census, were shown to comprise 19.8% of the population, indicating a 36% increase since the 1971 census (Poulton, 1995, p. 125). This large increase in population resulted from a high birthrate (Poulton, 1995, p. 125). Compared to Macedonians today, Albanian women still possess a higher birthrate. A census was held in 1991, which was boycotted by not only Albanians but by the Turkish and Roma people as well (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 405). Concerns surrounded the accuracy and validity of the census (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 405). Albanians claimed there were "misleading ethnic options listed on the survey form" and accordingly conducted their own census (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 4). Their results found that Albanians comprised 40% of the population of Macedonia (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 4). After this event, Albanians regularly claimed their population to be around 35 to 40% (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 405 & p. 406; Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 567). The following two censuses held in Macedonia, in 1994 and 2002, resulted in controversy over both numbers and procedure (Courbage, 2003, p. 429). In the 1994 census, the Albanian minority constituted 22.9% of the population (Babuna, 2000, p. 80). Albanians rejected the results of the 1994 census, which was considered a repeat census with international supervision following the boycotted census

of 1991. Although the census of 1994 was conducted with financial and technical assistance from the EU, it was still boycotted by most ethnic Albanians, and to a lesser degree, the ethnic Turkish and Serbian minorities (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 4; Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 406). Both Albanian leaders and other ethnic minorities cited the results as illegitimate as the census was argued to be poorly prepared in addition to not being offered in Albanian (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 4). As a result, the 2002 census was more closely monitored. The 2002 census was delayed for a year in Macedonia, due to the Albanian insurgency (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 567). In this census, Albanians were found to form 25.17% of the population (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 567). As Macedonians had considered the numbers to be less than 20%, this again became a bone of contention. Censuses can thus lead to an extended period of tension between the two groups. Instead of being recognized simply as a minority, Albanians became a central figure in Macedonia's structure. A census was supposed to be conducted in spring 2011 in Macedonia, but was postponed to October 2011, and then further delayed due to rising ethnic tensions. The census perhaps foreshadowed events to come regarding the development of ethnic relations.

Statistics and censuses are not the only bone of contention within Macedonia. Historians today are still debating the origin of Macedonians. Evidence of archaeological, linguistic, toponomic and written form demonstrate the "gradual formation of the Macedonian tribes and a distinct Macedonian identity through the intermingling, amalgamation, and assimilation of various ethnic elements" (Rossos, 2008, p. 11). Disputes and conflicts have arisen in Macedonia, not only over its history, but also over its language, borders, and territory. Macedonia's borders have fluctuated immensely,

which has led to conflicts such as the First and Second Balkan Wars. These conflicts resulted from disputes of ownership of Macedonia between Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Historic Macedonia was part of the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the medieval Bulgarian and Serbian Empires, and, more recently, the Ottoman Empire (Barker, 1950, p. 9). Generally, it is agreed that the independent Balkan states were ‘officially’ created in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin, with the exception of Greece, which became independent in 1830-31 (Karakasidou, 2002, p. 576). At this Congress, Macedonia entered the international political stage, which set the context for Macedonia to become a victim of disputes and at the mercy of other Balkan countries (Lange-Akhund, 1998, p. 9).

Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire, which emerged around 1300 AD, played an important role in Macedonia’s history as the region spent nearly 500 years under Ottoman rule. This impacted Macedonia’s cultural, social, linguistic, and religious development. Through the 14th and 15th centuries, the Ottoman Empire conquered several Balkan countries, including Macedonia, which accounted for one of its first conquests (Rossos, 2008, p. 41). Under Ottoman rule, Macedonia experienced changes with a new political, administrative, and military order (Lange-Akhund, 1998, p. 5). Within the Ottoman Empire, Macedonia did not exist as a distinct administrative entity.

During the Ottoman period Islam was the dominant religion. The Ottoman Empire was an autocratic state that did not acknowledge or value “ethnic, linguistic, racial, and other differences, but emphasized religious divisions” (Rossos, 2008, p. 44). Instead of being divided on categories based on ethnicity or language, people were divided by their

religious community or 'millets' (Rossos, 2008, p. 44). Identity was based on religion (Loizos, 1988, p. 642). As such, religion was considered to be superior to membership in any linguistic or culturally unified ethnic group (Adanir, 1979, p. 43). There were four major administrative divisions (millets): the Orthodox Christian, Gregorian Armenian, Roman Catholic, and Jewish populations (Sfikas, 1999, p. 22). With the millet system, groups were allowed to retain their separate identities and cultures within their religion. For several hundred years the people of the Ottoman Empire lived in relative religious and cultural harmony. For example, many people of all nationalities converted to Islam, intermarriage followed, and ethnic accommodations were provided (Loizos, 1988, p. 642). Different religious groups, including people of Jewish and Christian faith, were accepted (Poulton, 1995, p. 31). As is evident, multiculturalism and tolerance of different ethnic groups was practiced under Ottoman rule. Additionally, freedom and local autonomy in individual daily lives was given to all ethnic groups (Biondich, 2011, p. 5). This independence was generally received positively, as it was uncommon prior to Ottoman rule.

Within the millet system, Muslims were recognized as first-class citizens (Poulton 1995, p. 35). Islam was held to be superior, and the Muslim faith enjoyed special status and privileges. Although there was a degree of freedom for non-Muslims, they still faced "discriminatory political, social, economic, and cultural obligations and restrictions" (Rossos, 2008, p. 44). Yet, it can be argued that under Ottoman rule there existed more freedom than under any previous European rule. According to Rossos (2008), acts of "religious persecution and forced large-scale conversions were rare" (p. 44). However, during this time period, Orthodox culture came to a standstill while Muslim culture

expanded (Rossos, 2008, p. 56). Despite the desire for local self-government, most Muslims wanted to remain with the Ottoman Empire, given their traditional rights were allowed to continue (Babuna, 2000, p. 67).

During Ottoman rule, there was a lack of congruency between the political and territorial compositions and the overall ethnic dimensions of the multiple minority populations. Unfortunately, this did cause tension and problems between the new Balkan states (Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania). In the age of European nationalism and the nation-state, most Balkan states preferred a homogenous population united under one territory and government (Lange-Akhund, 1998, p. 19). Many minorities lived under Ottoman rule, simply waiting for liberation. The historical development of the Balkans from the late 18th century onwards was shaped by three factors: (1) the awakening of national consciousness, (2) the decline of the Ottoman Empire, and, (3) the Great Powers' increasing involvement in the region (Sfikas, 1999, p. 22). The Ottoman Empire was not a cohesive institution as it consisted of a variety of ethnic groups who were self-centred and self-sufficient (Sfikas, 1999, p. 22). Comparatively, the Western nation-state commanded loyalty and allegiance of all of its peoples. The military victory of the Austrians over the Ottoman Turks gave rise to Great Power rivalry in the Balkans; as such, the Ottomans lost some of their supremacy, which led to the success of the Hapsburg Empire (Schafberg, 1983, p. 1). As will be discussed in the next section, liberation and secession came with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and rise of nationalist movements.

Nineteenth-century nationalist movements

The decline of the Ottoman Empire was a result of developing nationalisms in the Balkans and national awakenings in the 19th century. By the 1860s there was “clear evidence of the formation of a distinct Macedonian consciousness and identity, of Macedonian nationalism” (Rossos, 2008, p. 61). The rise of nationalism, and of liberal democratic national ideas, was prevalent among Christians at the time (Rossos, 2008, p. 60). The intelligentsia of the Balkan peoples felt alienated from the Ottoman status quo and as such rejected it (Rossos, 2008, p. 60). The following quote by Rossos (2008) describes the dissent: “Ottoman backwardness and decline provided fertile ground especially for the spread of nationalist ideas, whose acceptance further undermined Ottoman rule and legitimacy in the Balkans” (p. 60). As Western Europe progressed technologically and socially during the Enlightenment, the intelligentsia wished to partake in this revolution. Modernization became the goal, and thus measurable in terms of achieving European levels of civilization (Biondich, 2011, p. 59). The nationalist movements that took place in the 19th century had the goals of liberation and the establishment of independent states (Rossos, 2008, p. 60). Many of the Balkan states were successful: Serbia achieved autonomy in 1815 although independence was not recognized until the Congress of Berlin in 1878 (Lange-Akhund, 1998, p. 21); an independent Greek Kingdom was created in 1830-31, which then claimed all the Orthodox portions of Macedonia (Lange-Akhund, 1998, p. 20); the independent principality of Montenegro was determined in 1857; and, an autonomous Romanian principality was founded in 1861 (Rossos, 2008, p. 60). The 1878 Congress of Berlin declared Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania as independent kingdoms, while Bulgaria obtained autonomy. While the desire for independence of most of the Balkan peoples was

considered and granted at the Congress, Albania was left out as it had no protective power and the existence of an Albanian nationality was denied (Bartl, 1968, p. 117).

After 1878, Macedonia was divided among three Ottoman provinces: Salonika, Monastir, and Kosova. The region had an equally divided heterogeneous population between Muslims and Christians (Biondich, 2011, p. 66). The Congress of Berlin caused more tension as it denied Bulgaria sovereignty to large portions of the region, and would eventually lead to the outbreak of the Balkan Wars (Karakasidou, 2002, p. 578).

Although the Ottoman Empire still retained sovereignty over much of the Balkans after the 1878 Congress, it was limited, reigning only over the centre of the peninsula. These areas included “Epirus, Albania, and Kosovo in the west, Macedonia in the centre, and Thrace in the east” (Rossos, 2008, p. 60).

Macedonian nationalism was unlike other nationalist movements in the Balkans. It developed without the “aid of legal, political, church, educational, or cultural institutions,” in addition to lacking international sympathy, as well as “open and direct diplomatic and military support” (Rossos, 2008, p. 61). Other Balkan nations emerged with assistance from their own state, church, educational and cultural institutions, or from foreign states; they occasionally worked together and received cultural aid in return (Rossos, 2008, p. 83). Macedonia, on the other hand, fought for survival against the Ottoman Empire, as well as its Balkan neighbours (Rossos, 2008, p. 83). Like the Macedonians, Albanians faced challenges with their development and were among the last Balkan nations to form their own national movement. Albanians had difficulties in terms of nation-building; there was no Albanian national church at the time, as most Albanians are Muslim, and no education available in the Albanian language, meaning a

lack of Albanian books (Finger, 2003, p. 135). Their nationalism was marked by the development of the Prizren League in 1878, which aimed to protect Albanian lands from foreign powers and which later challenged Ottoman authority (Babuna, 2000, p. 68). Following the First Balkan War and the Treaty of London, an independent Albanian state was created in 1913, but with nearly half of the Albanian population residing outside of the Albanian borders (Bërxfholi, 2003, p. 33; Babuna, 2000, p. 68). As Albanians and Macedonians developed belated national movements when compared with the other Balkan states, both found their territories and populations being partitioned by neighbouring Balkan states. The disputes between the Balkan states set the stage for future nationalist conflicts, not least of all between Macedonians and Albanians.

The Ilinden Uprising of 2 August 1903 marked a highpoint of Macedonia's nationalism. The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (*Vnatrešna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija*, VMRO) organized this event to establish an autonomous and independent Macedonian state (Rossos, 2008, p. 99). Ilinden eventually became synonymous with the Macedonian national struggle. On an annual basis the community celebrates the Ilinden Uprising in Kruševo on the second of August, marking Macedonia's national identity into the 21st century (Brown, 2003, p. 2). This example of Macedonian nationalism reflects the use of history as not being just a resource used by the nation and the state, but demonstrates that history remakes itself through interactions and conversations between individuals well into the present (Brown, 2003). History can often be used to reflect a national agenda and is a weapon that has been repeatedly used and abused for ideological purposes and political ends. In Serbia, Slobodan Milošević – a former President of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – used Serbian

national dissent for the Kosovo conflict (Ramet, 2008, p. 3). Elsewhere in the Balkans, different nations claim the same historical ancestors as their own, as is exemplified in both Macedonia and Greece, which claim ownership over Alexander the Great, as will be discussed in Chapter One.

The Macedonian national movement, based on the national awakening of the region's Slavic-speaking majority, was late to start and as such trailed behind its neighbours (Rossos, 2008, p. 61). The reasons surrounding this delayed movement include Macedonia's geographic location, considering its lack of direct land contact and lack of common borders with Western European lands (Rossos, 2008, p. 82). Macedonia is bordered by Bulgaria to the east, Greece in the south, Serbia in the north, Kosovo in the northwest, and Albania in the west. Macedonia was considered crucial to the Ottoman Empire, in terms of its strategic geographic location, and, more importantly, the late development of a distinctly Macedonian intelligentsia and merchant class. Historically, most Slavic-speaking elites had developed a Greek or Bulgarian identity. Additionally, Macedonia was considered an integral part of the so-called Eastern Question, which focused on how to manage the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Further, the Eastern Question included the reorganization of the political-territorial relations in the Balkans; and concerns arose over how to fill the power vacuum created by the decline of the Ottoman Empire (Adanir, 1979, p. 1; Babuna, 2000, p. 79). Macedonia was known as a crossroads; its location permitted transit between Europe and the Ottoman world, and would allow both Serbia and Bulgaria access to the sea (Lange-Akhund, 1998, p. 1; Biondich, 2011, p. 64). The region was significant as it "commands the great corridor route that leads from central Europe to the Mediterranean along the Morava and Vardar

valleys” (Rossos, 2008, p. xvii). Further, Macedonia possessed great opportunities for economic wealth, with its agriculture and fertile grounds (Biondich, 2011, p. 64). Following the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and early 20th centuries, this economic value led to Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia continuously vying for Macedonia (Rossos, 2008, p. 73). Given these benefits of possession, whoever controlled Macedonia would thus dominate the southern Balkans.

In the second half of the 19th century Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia each claimed Macedonia on both ethnic and linguistic grounds. These three countries had developed ‘national’ Orthodox churches in the 19th century, which could operate freely in Ottoman Macedonia. Macedonia was unable to set up its own church. Due to this inability, Macedonians were not legally allowed to either conduct or organize any religious/educational activities under their Macedonian name (Rossos, 2008, p. 73). Therefore, a variety of claims ensued: Greece claimed all Macedonians who attended Greek churches and schools; Bulgaria claimed those who belonged to the Exarchate; and, Serbia claimed those who went to Serbian churches and schools (Rossos, 2008, p. 74). The Exarchate refers to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Barker, 1950, p. 7), and has typically been referred to in the literature as the origin of the Macedonian Question – although some claim that the San Stefano Treaty of 1878, where Russia awarded autonomous Bulgaria nearly all of historic Macedonia, originated this question. On ethno-linguistic claims, Bulgaria claimed that the Macedonian language was simply a Bulgarian dialect; Greece argued that many Macedonians considered themselves to be Greek; and, Serbia referred to certain grammar characteristics and their similar ‘slava’ festivals (Rossos, 2008, p. 74). Macedonians celebrated similar festivals as the Serbians,

such as events relating to their Orthodox religion. The weakening of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of a national identity gave way to national movements and led eventually to the Balkan Wars.

Balkan Wars

The two Balkan Wars took place between 1912-1913, with the first Balkan War beginning on 8 October 1912 and lasting until May 1913 (Finger, 2003, p. 148; Sfikas, 1999, p. 34). This war was launched by Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, in an effort to dispel the Ottoman Empire from Europe (Biondich, 2011, p. 75; Sfikas, 1999, p. 34). While this effort was achieved to a large extent, questions remained regarding the division of territory in Macedonia and the Albanian lands, which led to the Second Balkan War. The Second Balkan War took place between 29 June and 10 August 1913, and involved Bulgaria launching an attack on Serbian and Greek positions in Macedonia (Biondich, 2011, p. 77; Sfikas, 1999, p. 34). The Second Balkan War “led to the first violation of Macedonia’s territorial integrity since dynastic states fought each other in the medieval Balkans and the Ottoman Empire conquered the region in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries” (Rossos, 2008, p. 2). Bulgaria was forced to end the war once Serbia and Greece were joined by Romania, Montenegro, and the Ottoman Empire. The signing of the Treaty of Bucharest (10 August 1913) between Serbia, Greece, Romania, Montenegro, and Bulgaria, led to the partition of Macedonia. Greece and Serbia were the clear victors in the Balkan Wars, receiving the largest portions. Greece acquired over half the territory of Macedonia, which was then referred to as Aegean Macedonia; Serbia gained what was known as Vardar Macedonia; and, Bulgaria gained the smallest share, an area known as Pirin Macedonia (Thiessen, 2007, p. 28; Poulton,

1995, p. 80). After World War I, Albania gained part of Western Macedonian territory as well. Today, the borders of the Republic of Macedonia are those of Vardar Macedonia (Thiessen, 2007, p. 29). The result of the Balkan Wars was to put an “end to Ottoman rule in the Balkans” (Biondich, 2011, p. 78).

World War I

With the end of World War I, both the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, having sided with the Central Powers, were the proclaimed losers. The Ottoman Empire collapsed and was succeeded by the Republic of Turkey. Both the Balkan Wars and World War I led to the disintegration of multinational Empires and the creation of independent states in Central and Southeastern Europe (Bërxfholi, 2003, p. 33). The creation of the first Yugoslav state from 1918 to 1929, known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, was based on the idea of uniting all South Slavs under one territory (Biondich, 2011, p. 98). The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes incorporated Vardar Macedonia and Kosovo; Macedonia was described as ‘south Serbia’ and Kosovo as ‘old Serbia’ (Babuna, 2000, p. 68). While Albania survived World War I intact, it became an Italian protectorate in 1939, as Fascist Italy appealed to Albanian nationalism “to win over the support of the Albanians under their occupation” (Babuna, 2000, p. 69; Sfikas, 1999, p. 35). The Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia were not recognized as distinct nations. In fact, Albanians experienced repression at the hands of the Serbian authorities. Conditions were terrible for the Albanian population, the use of Albanian language was prohibited and Albanians were often forced to emigrate (Babuna, 2000, p. 68). Further, with the new boundaries, the territories of both Greece and Yugoslavia were ethnically mixed. For example, Bulgarian minorities were found in Greece and Serbia,

and Greek minorities in Bulgaria and Serbia. Muslim minorities of varying nationality were also found in all three states, which were thought to possess strong sentimental ties to Turkey (Cowan & Brown, 2000, p. 11). Balkan leaders undertook various policies, which led to the movement of people across national borders, both voluntarily and forced. With the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of national states, massive displacements were common (Brubaker, 1996, p. 152). Several million people were uprooted from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thrace, and Western Anatolia.

World War II

During World War II Bulgaria occupied parts of Vardar Macedonia, while the rest of Yugoslavia was divided between the Germans, the Italians, and the Hungarians (Miller & Ivanovic, 1999, p. 314). In 1941 a large part of Kosovo was united with Western Macedonia in an Italian-controlled Greater Albania. Following World War II, socialist Yugoslavia incorporated Macedonia and Kosovo, and the Albanian-inhabited regions were divided among different administrative units (Babuna, 2000, p. 69). Accordingly, Kosovo joined the Serbian Republic while Macedonia became one of the new Yugoslav republics under Federalist Yugoslavia, as will be discussed in the following chapter. As will be highlighted in the next chapter, Macedonia underwent several changes during communist rule.

Conclusion

The situation in Macedonia from the 1878 Congress of Berlin until 1945 was challenging for Macedonians and Albanians. With the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of nation-states, Macedonians were able to further develop their sense of identity. However, opposition by Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia, forced Macedonians (and

Albanians) to fight for their survival (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 583). After 1945, Macedonia experienced communism and rule under Josip Broz Tito. It was through Tito and other influences that Macedonians were fully able to develop a sense of national identity. As will be discussed in the next chapter, with the concepts of ethnicity and nationalism, there is little doubt that Macedonia has its own identity and exists as a nation. Yet, as is exemplified by the ongoing dispute with Greece, conflicts persist over Macedonia's history, territory, and people. With the promising development of other Balkan countries, Macedonia will likely become part of the EU, but when this will happen is difficult to say.

1 Chapter: A review of ethnicity and nationalism in post-1945

Macedonia

The Introduction provided the historical context of nationalist movements in Macedonia from the ‘creation’ of Balkan nation-states in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin to the end of World War II. This chapter will focus on post-1945 Macedonia to contemporary Macedonian-Albanian relations. Following a brief outline of the situation in post-1945 Macedonia, nationalism and ethnicity, as well as the term national identity, will be analyzed. These terms have been continuously redefined in the Balkans and possess relevance for its contemporary character. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989, nationalism and ethnicity have resurfaced in various forms, including acts of violence. Given this resurgence, academics have debated and reassessed the concepts of ethnicity, nationalism, and national identity (Sfikas & Williams, 1999, p. 1). Key theorists in this field that will be addressed in this chapter include Anthony D. Smith, Benedict Anderson, Miroslav Hroch, Craig Calhoun, Rogers Brubaker, Ernest Gellner, and others. Ethnic group, ethnic conflict, and nation are other terms that arose through the analysis and will be given attention accordingly.

Ethnicity has been a preoccupation of disciplines such as anthropology since the 1960s (Eriksen, 1993, p. 1). Nationalism is generally associated with the French Revolution and the 19th century. Ethnicity and nationalism, which had originally been treated as separate terms, eventually converged with the ethnic revival in the West in the early 1960s, with the realization that they were both “as empirical realities and fields of study, intimately related” (Smith, 1992a, p. 1). There has been a parallel development of ethnicity and nationalism in the social sciences and the relationship between them is both

dynamic and complex. According to Calhoun (1993), it is impossible to completely differentiate between the two, and to simply explain nationalism as “a continuation of ethnicity” (p. 212). In the early 20th century, it was believed that nationalism and ethnicity would decrease in importance, yet the opposite has occurred. Despite the influences of modernization, industrialization, and individualism, and the impact of World War II, these terms have instead grown in political importance (Eriksen, 1993, p. 2). Further, following the collapse of communism in the 1990s and with the onset of political turbulence in Europe, ethnic concerns and national identity have moved to the forefront of political theory (Eriksen, 1993, p. 2).

1.1 Communism

The end of World War II saw the formation of a new Yugoslav state under President Josip Broz Tito (Miller & Ivanovic, 1999, p. 314). Communist power became increasingly entrenched in Yugoslavia following the Second World War (Crampton, 2002, p. 12). Yugoslavia was seen as progressing rapidly – with the exception of Albania – more so than any other Eastern European state (Crampton, 2002, p. 26). The communist resistance and its political arm, the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) endorsed a Macedonian nation in 1943 and gave it equal status with other Yugoslav republics (Thiessen, 2007, p. 24). The first session of the Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) in 1944, set up a Macedonian communist government and administration, known as the People’s Republic of Macedonia (Rossos, 2008, p. 204). Tito recognized Macedonia as a political entity in 1945 (Sidiropoulos, 2007, p. 140; Miller & Ivanovic, 1999, p. 314). It was accorded constituent republic status with the other five republics as part of the “second

Yugoslavia.” Acceptance and recognition of Macedonia was part of Tito’s philosophy of a pluralist and multinational Yugoslavia (Miller & Ivanovic, 1999, p. 315). In 1971, Macedonia’s name changed to the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and became part of the communist-led Federal Yugoslavia (Rossos, 2008, p. 2). Yugoslavia’s elites governed eight federal units, including six republics and two autonomous provinces as set out in the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution (Ramet, 2006, p. 341). These units included: Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Croatia, and the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. During the Tito era (1945-1980), the peoples of Yugoslavia enjoyed a certain prestige. Following the Stalin-Tito split (1948), Tito enabled and encouraged national consciousness and identities in each of the republics; under the socialist regime the republics were permitted to speak their own languages. Albanians, after being under Italian-Albanian administration, were reluctant to be under Yugoslav rule, given the discrimination and marginalization they faced between 1912 and 1944. Under communist rule, the Albanians (and Muslims in general) faced an anti-religious agenda, a Macedonian-centred outlook, Serbian influences, and attempts to change the role of women. These repressions led to feelings of alienation and marginalization (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 583 & p. 587). The Albanians suffered worse treatment at the hands of the Macedonian communist authorities in the 1970s and 1980s than the Kosovar Albanians, who in the same period enjoyed relative autonomy (Glenny, 1999, p. 656).

While critics have argued that Macedonia is simply a ‘Titoist invention,’ this is not the case (Shea, 1997, p. 13). Brunnbauer (2004) argues that national consciousness did not exist until 1944 for ordinary people; only communists and the intelligentsia were exposed to the Macedonian national idea (p. 582). According to this argument, it was

only the construction of an ethnic Macedonian administration that enabled identification with the Macedonian nation (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 582). To a certain extent, Tito did allow for the recognition of a Macedonian nationality, but this was a policy common throughout Yugoslavia. The Macedonian national movement had been prominent in the region since the late 1890s, as was demonstrated in the Introduction. Further, the Communist International (Comintern) recognized Macedonian nationality since at least the 1920s. Therefore, it was not necessarily only Tito, who allowed Macedonian (and the other Yugoslav republics') identity and nationality to develop.

Following Tito's death in 1980, Yugoslavia began to unravel. The 1974 Constitution had created multiple communist power centres, which required constant support from the Federation, including national, regional, and financial. This need for support revealed weaknesses and limitations of the socialist regime (Miller & Ivanovic, 1999, p. 315). For Macedonia specifically, the weakening and eventual dissolution of Yugoslavia was disconcerting, as concerns surrounded Macedonia's need for financial help and federal protection from its neighbours. Yet, and perhaps inevitably without Tito, communism started to lose its popularity. Under Tito, nationalism was considered a forbidden concept, as it was contradictory to Tito's slogan of 'Brotherhood and Unity' (Crampton, 2002, p. 122). With the death of Tito, nationalist leaders arose to challenge the official policy of 'Brotherhood and Unity' and overthrow the unity of Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, the breakup of Yugoslavia gave rise to many ethnic conflicts, including the Bosnian War (1992-95), the conflict in Kosovo (1998-99), and the Albanian insurgency in Macedonia (2001).

The disintegration of Yugoslavia had a profound impact on the development of Balkan politics. The Yugoslav collapse provided the international community with an opportunity to grasp the essence of the regional political problem, the question of minorities and nation-states (Glenny, 1992, p. 241). People who were once defined as 'Yugoslavian' suddenly found themselves as representatives of a particular ethnic group (Brunnbauer, 2002b, p. 11). As a result of this adoption of civil identities and citizenship, some people became minorities rather than 'nationalities,' which had been the case under former constitutions during the communist period. As is evident, this set the stage for future clashes as people, who had originally coexisted peacefully under Yugoslavia, found themselves fighting over territory, resources, and power (Brunnbauer, 2002b, p. 11). Macedonian identity itself was slow to develop. For example, a literary language was not adopted until 1947. Further efforts were made to solidify Macedonian national consciousness, including the establishment of an autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences (Crampton, 2002, p. 246). Yet concerns still centred on Macedonia's ability to survive outside of Yugoslavia. Additional concerns revolved around the Albanian minority in Macedonia, and whether it would be able to accept a Slav-dominated independent state (Crampton, 2002, p. 246). If Macedonia was to be destabilized, conflicts over territory could arise between Albania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece. The dissolution of Yugoslavia had the potential of leading to international involvement, threatening regional stability and peace (Crampton, 2002, p. 294).

The issue of minority rights became a prominent concern once these countries declared their independence from Yugoslavia. The ethnic and religious mixture of the

population has created a need for “sovereign land status for the ethnic minorities in these states” (Dent, 2004, p. 33). The Badinter Commission was formed in 1991 as part of the European Community (EC)-led Conference on Yugoslavia. As the Commission was created by the EC, it thus perpetuated a strong influence of international law from a Western European state perspective (Terrett, 2000, p. 119). The Commission provided legal advice on issues relating to Yugoslavia’s dissolution (Terrett, 2000, p. 362). Its primary task was to determine whether the Yugoslav republics satisfied the EC criteria for diplomatic recognition (Engström, 2009, p. 67). One important criterion for recognition was the existence of constitutional guarantees of minority rights. As such, the Commission’s purpose was to determine the degree to which minority rights were protected in each of the Yugoslav republics, as a condition of their international recognition. On 11 January 1992 the Commission declared that Macedonia and Slovenia met the requirements for independence (Engström, 2009, p. 125). However, the Commission was an ad hoc organ, and while it provided advisory opinions, these were not considered binding (Terrett, 2000, p. 362). Though the results for Macedonia reflected a fairly positive assessment, the EC did not extend diplomatic recognition due to political reasons over the name dispute with Greece (Engström, 2009, p. 125). The withholding of recognition led to several negative implications for Macedonia, including the country being prevented from applying to international institutions such as the United Nations, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Council of Europe (Engström, 2009, p. 125). Nationalism, in relation to minority rights, will be covered in the next section as minorities and political leaders often use nationalism in an effort to obtain recognition, self-determination, rights, and acceptance.

1.2 Nationalism

“Politics is about capturing and holding power in the state - and nationalism is an argument for doing so” (Smith, 1996, p. 448).

Nationalism, first prominent in Europe in the 19th century, has often been linked to the French Revolution (Hroch, 1990, p. 105; Kohn, 1962, p. 9). The French Revolution gave the new movement its driving force (Kohn, 1962, p. 9). As such, Europe has been referred to as “the birthplace of the nation-state and modern nationalism” (Brubaker, 1996, p. 1). Although the French Revolution is often considered as having given birth to nationalism, scholars such as Kohn (1962) argue that the French Revolution does not, in fact, refer to nationalism’s time of formation (p. 9). Instead, the French Revolution was simply one of the most powerful factors that contributed to nationalism’s expansion and consolidation (Kohn, 1962, p. 9). Nationalism remains a contentious topic in the literature and debated by several theorists, including Anthony D. Smith, Benedict Anderson, Miroslav Hroch, Craig Calhoun, Rogers Brubaker, Ernest Gellner, and others. Given its popular focus, finding a definition of nationalism, and other terms relating to it (i.e., nation, nationalist movement), is challenging. For the purposes of this thesis, the working definition of nationalism will be “an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population some of whose members deem themselves to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’” (Smith, 1996, p. 447). Most theorists who study nationalism seem to agree that nationalism is a principle that aims to make the political and national (cultural) unit harmonious (Gellner, 1983, p. 1).

With the collapse of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC), and the dissolution of Yugoslavia, national communities had the opportunity to redefine both their borders and their national identities. Democratization led certain societies to develop a sense of statehood and national identity. The goals of nationalists are unity, to create a distinctive individuality, and enable autonomy (Smith, 1992c, p. 61). The nation was a crucial component for nationalism, as it was seen as the highest object of loyalty and the only criterion of government (Smith, 1992c, p. 61). Nationalism still remains central to politics in the newly developed nation-states (Brubaker, 1996, p. 3).

What then is a 'nation'? For Brubaker (1996), the nation refers to a category of practice: nations "are understood as real entities, as communities, as substantial, enduring collectivities" (p. 13). He argues that "to understand nationalism, we have to understand the practical uses of the category 'nation', the ways it can come to structure perception, to inform thought and experience, to organize discourse and political action" (Brubaker, 1996, p. 7). For Gellner (1983), nations are the product of nationalism, which produces a paradox as "nations can be defined only in terms of the age of nationalism" (p. 55). However, scholars such as Hroch (1990) disagree with this statement, claiming instead that "nations were not a consequence of the decisions and activities of a group of intellectuals who turned nation from an 'an sich' group into a 'für sich' group" (p. 112). For Hroch (2000), the origin of the modern nation is considered as the "fundamental reality" (p. 3). Further, nationalism is viewed as a phenomenon, which originated from the existence of that nation (Hroch, 2000, p. 3). Yet, Smith (1996), similar to Gellner (1983), argues that nations are indeed a product of nationalism. For Smith (1996), a

nation is “a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties” (p. 447). By invoking the nation, nationalists are able to mobilize, unify and legitimate their goals in their pursuit for power. Often these elites use historicist ideas as solutions to any perceived alienation (Smith, 1996, p. 448). Further, according to Gellner (1983), nationalist sentiment refers to “the feeling of anger arouse[d] by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment,” and a nationalist movement “is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind” (p. 1). Hroch (1990) takes the idea of a nationalist movement one step further by claiming that it “expresses the purposeful activities of people and which can be internally periodicized and differentiated according to the objectives it pursues” (p. 111). Anderson, another prominent theorist in the field of nationalism, treats nationalism as “a distinct mode of understanding and constituting the phenomenon of belong[ing] together, thus a nation is an imagined political community” (Anderson as cited in Calhoun, 1993, p. 216). Like Smith (1996), Anderson (1991) comes to his conclusions using a historical materialist and a Marxist approach. Nationalists can claim that their nations are given and immutable, rather than examples of a social construction of historical action or even contemporary claims (Calhoun, 1993). Ultimately, as evident from the differing opinions, nationalism and nation are continuously debated and re-evaluated in the literature.

Nationalist and post-communist tradition and democratization are all relevant terms in the discussion of Macedonia. Democratization and the promotion of human rights remain top priorities of the EU in terms of integration. In the current debate on nationalism, many Western scholars have argued that democratization and EU integration

would render nationalism obsolete or at least less potent. With the CEEC adopting more democratic systems and seemingly passing through the transition process, it has been argued that nationalism would decline as a result of this increase in socioeconomic development and democratic consolidation. However, according to Csergo and Goldgeier (2004), it is apparent that nationalism is not declining or fading away. Rather, the new social and political environment has changed the dynamics of nationalism (Csergo & Goldgeier, 2004). Further, the old and new forms of nationalism coexist, reinforce each other, and are mutually challenging. Notwithstanding the modernist and postmodernist theories, Csergo and Goldgeier (2004) argue that EU integration does not cause nationalism to lose its relevance. Also, all nationalisms pursue some form of institutional national reproduction and it is through this reproduction that a new European framework is created. The question is not whether nation-building *will* be influenced by integration but *how* it will be influenced. In addition, how will this new European framework provide room for the different nationalist aspirations? Csergo and Goldgeier (2004) are influenced in their argument by the debate over what institutional form of nationalist reproduction should be used to best serve both individual and minority rights, and international stability. Although current institutions in the EU allow for the protection of minority rights, there is no body of law that accounts specifically for minority protection.

In discussing the relationship between European integration and nationalism, the question is what impact does European integration have on existing nationalisms? This question will be addressed at a later point in this thesis. As seen in the Bosnian War (1992-95), where nationalism was used to create conflict between existing ethnic groups, nationalism has since become very important when considering the future prospects and

integration of any country (Csergo & Goldgeier, 2004). There are legitimate concerns that ethnic relations may become unstable in Eastern Europe. In order to prevent ethnic conflict from reoccurring, international organizations and governments must learn to act quickly and accordingly (Bugajski, 1993).

Nationalism is the preeminent ideology for those attempting to claim rights of self-determination by reference to “the people of the country” (Calhoun, 1993, p. 213). Nationalism is one of the main recurring themes featured in the literature on Macedonia’s modern history. How are minority rights and nationalism related and relevant for this thesis topic? Nationalism and nationalist strategies are important strategies used by minorities to protect their rights or gain more power in the process.

1.3 History and nationalism

History and nationalism are intertwined. According to Smith (1992b, p. 58), nationalism is “profoundly ‘historicist’ in character.” As we have seen in Macedonia, history plays a key role in its relations with Greece as each country claims ownership over historical figures, such as Phillip II of Macedon and Alexander the Great. In the primordialist tradition of national history, historical events, institutions, and individuals belong to a nation as part of its history. Most theories of nationalism stress a modern invention of national identity. Unlike the primordialist view, modernists argue that nations define themselves based upon what they claim as their national history (Frusetta, 2004, p. 110). The Macedonian Question has in no small measure been fuelled by disputes over history. Symbols used in Macedonia are disputed by conflicted historical traditions in bordering countries (Frusetta, 2004, p. 110). For example, tensions heightened between Greece and Macedonia over the latter’s use of the Star of Vergina on

its national flag. The Star of Vergina is the symbol found on Phillip II's larnax, and as a result both countries have claimed national ownership to it. As a result of Macedonia's use of this symbol, in 1994 Greece imposed an economic embargo, only removing it once Macedonia agreed to remove the symbol from its flag. Greece's unwavering opposition to Macedonian independence under its current name caused severe embarrassment to its partners in the EU, particularly since its hostility to Macedonian statehood has led to the revival of its close Orthodox ties with Serbia (Glenny, 1992, p. 240). This example serves to illustrate how Macedonian identity is reinforced through new interpretations of history, as well as by the Macedonian language and the creation of an autocephalous Orthodox Church (Frusetta, 2004, p. 112).

1.4 Ethno-politics

Nationalism can become a negative force not only when it is used in cases of historical ownership, but also when it takes on an ethnocentric bias (Bugajski, 1993). The growth of ethnocentrism, which is the belief that one culture is superior to another, may trigger a nationalist response. Often this growth of ethnocentrism is a result of minority groups seeking protection. According to an early 1998 International Crisis Group report, the main common goal pursued by the Albanians leaders of Macedonia is to obtain more rights for Albanians (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 6). These rights included language, education, an end to discrimination, and promoting equal representation (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 6). Taking a political approach, Bugajski (1993) examines five major variants of ethno-politics in post-Communist Eastern Europe: cultural revivalism, political autonomism, territorial self-determination, separatism, and irredentism. Cultural revivalism refers to leaders demanding both freedom and resources

to rebuild their social, cultural, and religious institutions in order to redefine, reinforce, or revive their identity, language, and history (Bugajski, 1993, p. 89). Political autonomism refers to a type of politics where minority groups possess a history of organized political involvement in previously existing states (Bugajski, 1993, p. 91). Territorial self-determination is where a group forms a relative or complete majority of the population. Separatism is a political tendency that “manifests itself among ethnically and territorially compact populations” (Bugajski, 1993, p. 95). Irredentism refers to separatist movements that wish to join their claimed territory and associated population to another state. These different types of ethno-politics play a role in shaping nationalism. As Bugajski (1993) notes, ethnic minorities which are resistant to assimilation may be seen by majority populations as a barrier to nation-building and/or state integration. However, the term assimilation, while possessing positive connotations in North America, tends to have the opposite effect in Europe, raising issues of ‘force.’ Therefore, as my own research will note, the protection of minority groups becomes essential when a country, such as Macedonia, is seeking EU integration. The question is therefore whether minority populations want to become Europeanized or would prefer, as nationalists might claim, to retain their own political individuality?

1.5 Macedonia and its neighbours

While Greece’s conflict with Macedonia over the name “Macedonia” is not the focus of this thesis, it is worthwhile to provide a brief discussion of the dispute, as it is relevant for Macedonian politics and does in fact play a role with respect to EU accession. Compared with the rest of Macedonia’s neighbours, Greece arguably has the most extreme aversion to Macedonia, as it does not recognize either the nation or

Macedonia itself. Greece claims both historical and territorial rights over Macedonia (Glenny, 1992, p. 71). As such, Greece has blockaded Macedonia's entry to the international arena. As Glenny (1992) notes, "Macedonia has been demonized by its neighbours to such an extent that the innocent visitor may imagine Skopje to be inhabited by sub species" (p. 72). One view in Greece is that Macedonians have been of Greek nationality for 2000 years, and that Macedonia has "always been, and still is, a region of Greece" (Thiessen, 2007, p. 23).

Greece has argued that Macedonia's claims to history are a threat to the security of Greece. The threat involves Greek perceptions of the allegedly expansionist ideas of Macedonia (Shea, 1997, p. 3). If Macedonia's claims were successful and the state was officially recognized as the Republic of Macedonia, then its Slavic people would be known as Macedonians. This presents a problem with the Macedonians in Greece, as they could potentially seek recognition as a minority, interfering with Greece's perceptions of homogeneity. Athens is concerned that Macedonia could claim its co-nationals in Greece, thus posing a territorial threat to Greece. In light of the fact that other minorities were expelled and fled from Greece during the Greek Civil War (1946-9), this could also lead to calls for property reparations. As a result, Greece views Macedonia as a threat to its sovereignty. While the internal Macedonian issues are key to achieving international acceptance, these external relations are important, still remain unresolved and have an impact on domestic politics and interethnic relations in Macedonia.

1.6 Ethnicity

The other important concept in this chapter that requires clarification is ethnicity. A brief outline of the term will be provided and then Macedonian-Albanian relations will

be examined. The first use of the term ethnicity was by Daniel Riesman, an American sociologist, in 1953 (Eriksen, 1993, p. 3). The derivative term itself, 'ethnos,' is from the Greek word *ethnikos*, which was initially used to mean heathen or pagan (Eriksen, 1993, pp. 3-4). It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that it was used to refer to 'racial' characteristics. Using a term such as ethnicity can lead to an elaborate debate, as it is contested both as a theoretical notion and as a label which people use to describe their identity (Cowan & Brown, 2000, p. 15). In using a discourse on ethnicity to study Macedonia, as other scholars have done (Cowan & Brown, 2000), one can see how Macedonians narrate their history and thus construct identifications. As mentioned in the Introduction, the working definition of 'ethnic community' or 'ethnie' used here is "a named human population of alleged common ancestry, shared memories and elements of common culture with a link to a specific territory and measure of solidarity" (Smith, 1996, p. 447). 'Ethnicity,' according to Barany (2005), "attests to an awareness of collective identity comprised of attributes like shared history, traditions, culture, and language" (p. 84). Further, the definition of an 'ethnic minority' that will be used throughout the thesis will "include[s] anyone who identifies him or herself as part of a group that maintains a distinction in language and/or culture between itself and the majority (mainstream) population" (Browne, 2005, p. 6). For this thesis, ethnic identity is not considered as fixed; it can be changed, manipulated, forced, rejected, discarded, gradually fade, or (re)invented (Duijzings, 2002, p. 146).

Ethnicity is a relevant concern for Macedonia as its peoples divide themselves along ethnic lines. Macedonian ethnicity is perhaps the most disputed in the Western Balkans (Phillips, 2004, p. 15). Claims have been made by Bulgaria, which has asserted

that Macedonia is part of great Bulgaria, and that their language is simply a Bulgarian dialect. Greece claims that Macedonia is a part of sacred Greek territory, while Serbia has in the past contended that Vardar Macedonia is 'Southern Serbia' (Phillips, 2004, p. 15). Eriksen (1993) uses the term ethnicity to refer to "relationships between groups whose members consider themselves distinctive and these groups may be ranked hierarchically within a society" (p. 6). Social class can thus play an important role. A social class is defined according to its connection to the society's production process (Eriksen, 1993, p. 6). An important component of ethnicity is its application of systematic distinction between insiders and outsiders, or 'us' and 'them' (Eriksen, 1993, p. 18). This is evident in Macedonia, as there is a clear division along ethnic lines between the two main ethnic groups; a division of 'us' and 'them' is created.

1.7 Macedonians and Albanians

Having outlined ethnicity and nationalism, and the situation in Macedonia after 1945, the analysis will now turn to contemporary Macedonia and its Albanian population. Nearly one-third of Macedonia's Albanians live in its western parts, near the borders of Kosovo and Albania (Ortakovski, 2001, p. 24; Hornstein-Tomić, 2008, p. 45). Albanian ethnic identity is seen as strong, with their primary identification based in ethnonational rather religious characteristics (Barany, 2005, p. 90). However, as will be discussed below, religion is often used as a tool of division between the two ethnic groups. The three main towns where Albanians reside in Macedonia are Tetovo, Gostivar, and Debar, and birth rates have risen considerably in these areas since 1953 (Ortakovski, 2001, p. 25). These Albanian-dominated regions have demanded their share of attention and right to a distinct cultural tradition (Liotta & Jebb, 2004, p. 4). The Albanians of Macedonia

believe that Macedonia should be a dual identity or bi-national state (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 406). Interethnic relations in Macedonia are complicated by the fact that Macedonia defines itself as the state of the Macedonian nation, that is, on an ethnic rather than civic basis, which has thus produced a negative effect on interethnic relations. Not only does this create obstacles to the integration of minorities into the Macedonian state, but it negatively affects the relations of Macedonians with their neighbours (Babuna, 2000, p. 83). The ethnic divide between Macedonians and Albanians is often cited as Macedonia's greatest internal weakness (Crampton, 2002, p. 297). As the EU assesses each candidate country in terms of its ability to meet the Copenhagen political criteria, which include respect for minority rights, Macedonia has yet to achieve full compliance in this area. Therefore, its ability to fulfil these criteria remains crucial for the country's evolution.

The situation in Macedonia remains perhaps more complex than anywhere else in the Balkans. Following World War II, Albanians were recognized as a nationality of Yugoslavia, but not as a nation. This was a result of the Albanian national home being located outside Yugoslavia (Phillips, 2004, p. 44). In addition, Yugoslavia was conceived as the homeland of the South *Slavs*, which naturally does not include Albanians. The relationship between Albania and the Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia is rooted in the Albanian national awakening. Albanian nationalism first emerged in 1878, as a result of partition fears following the Russo-Turkish War. Albanians were not unified, and elites traditionally played on this division (Austin, 2004, p. 237). Albanians have since then been involved in a process of building a 'unified nationalism' that would bind all the territorially divided Albanian communities together (Austin, 2004, p. 236). The national

self-identification of the Albanians has developed considerably and remained relatively solid since then (Poulton, 1997, p. 92). Despite this strong sense of Albanian national identity in Macedonia, according to Austin (2004), it is impossible to speak of a single Albanian nationalism (p. 236). Albanians lived in several lands outside of Albania, in areas such as Kosovo, Northern Greece, and Macedonia, with very different levels of social development (Judah, 2001). While there has been much discussion of Greater Albania as a 'real' threat in the Balkans, Judah (2001) argues that while many Albanians are in favour of Kosovo's independence, few are actually interested in any formal connection with Albania.

Relations between Albanians and Macedonians in Yugoslavia have at times been problematic, especially following the Tito-Stalin break in 1948 (Babuna, 2000, p. 69). Historically, Yugoslavia was organized "on the rocks of ethnic and religious separatism" (Dent, 2004, p. 29). Despite Tito's slogan of 'Brotherhood and Unity,' Albanians felt isolated, as they were forced to accept a Titoist definition of Macedonian identity within Yugoslavia. Not only did the Albanians face political and cultural repression following Tito's death, but also their religion was persecuted, including the demolition of Islamic libraries (Phillips, 2004, p. 43). Often Albanians were treated with suspicion by the communist authorities (Judah, 2001). In socialist Yugoslavia, the Albanians of Macedonia had the worst situation of all the minorities in terms of their limited access to political, social, and economic resources (Barany, 2005, p. 89). They faced greater political restrictions and limitations in the expression of their identity. As a result, their nationalism was more pronounced than that of Albanians in Kosovo or even Albania. The Albanians of Kosovo, beginning in the late 1960s, were allowed to promote their cultural

identity (Koppa, 2001, p. 41). After 1974, Kosovo had broad autonomy and Albanians were encouraged to join the local communist party in large numbers. In the 1980s Macedonian policies placed restrictions on the number of children Albanian families were permitted to have; prohibited them from giving their children 'nationalist' Albanian names; denied them rights to display their symbols; and, increased discriminatory policies in education, employment, and culture (Barany, 2005, p. 89). In short, during the 1980s the Macedonian government adopted repressive policies towards Albanians and any displays of Albanian nationalism were repressed (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 2). Given this discrimination, it is easy to see how a deep psychological and social rift emerged between Macedonians and the Albanians of Macedonia.

The political parties of Macedonia are also divided among ethnic lines. Additionally, there is an increasing importance of nationalist parties on both sides. Macedonia's VMRO-DPMNE has produced high levels of nationalist rhetoric, which has arguably led to deteriorating ethnic relations. Albanians have succeeded in developing political parties, such as the moderate Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) in 1990, leading to the more radical wing of PDP to split from the party in 1996. The Albanian politician Arben Xhaferi and his deputy Menduh Thaci created the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), and are both strong nationalists (Rossos, 2008, p. 275; Barany, 2005, p. 92). The DPA is the radical nationalist Albanian party and has contributed to tension between the two communities (Babuna, 2000, p. 80). Xhaferi has stated that there are two major problems in regard to the Albanians of Macedonia: "The effort to marginalize Albanians in the society is one. The more inherent problem is the Islamization of Albanian culture" (Liotta & Jebb, 2004, p.15). According to Shehu (2011), the

Islamization of Albanian culture was crucial for the definition of their new identity, as it played a role in establishing both their cultural and territorial identity (p. 381 & p. 407). Unfortunately, relations between the two groups are often characterized by “fear, suspicion and demonization of the ‘other’” (Koppa, 2001, p. 39). Even today, with the lack of intermarriage and interaction, there is a clear trend towards inwardness and isolation between the two communities (Koppa, 2001, p. 40). As is evident, nationalism and extremism pose a major threat to Macedonia’s stability (Koppa, 2001, p. 38). Ethnic polarization, prior to 2001, has been extreme, as was evident in the political situation (Koppa, 2001, p. 38). However, since 2001, most governments have been coalition governments of Albanian and Macedonian parties.

In 1994 the municipal councils of Tetovo, Macedonia established a private Albanian language university, which heightened ethnic tensions. Macedonian-Albanian relations further deteriorated in 2001 when the Albanians of Macedonia requested greater rights, such as the recognition of Albanian as an official language. With the risk of spill-over from Kosovo, conflict became a very realistic possibility in Macedonia (Dent, 2005, p. 41). The crisis in Kosovo exacerbated tensions between Macedonians and Albanians (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 2). The insurgency in Macedonia was an armed attack from the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (hereafter NLA, or UÇK in Albanian) and consisted of the rebels capturing Tetovo and attacking Macedonian state security forces. It was believed that the fighting manifested both criminal and political involvement (Laity, 2008, p. 8). According to Laity (2008), the international community was surprised that what at first seemed to be a “semi-criminal battle in a lawless region” turned into a full-blow insurgency under the NLA (p. 9). By August, NLA claimed to

have around 16,000 armed troops; however, other estimates claim there were only 2,000-2,500 full time NLA combatants (Kim, 2001 p. 6). There were casualties on both sides and just as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces were ready to intervene, a compromise was finally reached with the signing of the OFA (Dent, 2005, p. 41).

Between the initial signing of the OFA on 8 August 2001 and the signing ceremony on 13 August 2001 there was an outburst of violence. An ambush took place on 11 August 2001 against Macedonian soldiers, and ten people were killed and eight soldiers died when their vehicle hit a mine (Laity, 2008, p. 48). Over 100,000 people fled their homes during the conflict, with over 70,000 fleeing to Kosovo (Kim, 2001, p. 8). It is estimated that around 100 persons were killed in the conflict – one third were killed during the peace negotiations. The OFA led to a ruling coalition of political parties based on agreed principles to further incorporate Albanians into Macedonian society. Although Macedonian remained the only official language of the government and foreign relations, with this agreement, Albanian won recognition in those administrative districts where Albanians constitute more than 20% of the population. Albanians were to be further represented in the government, army, and police (Paul, 2011). This agreement will be discussed in detail along with other important reports in Chapter Three.

Currently political stability in Macedonia seems to be contingent upon the satisfaction of Albanian grievances (Sokalski, 2003, p. 73). Macedonia survived independence from Yugoslavia during the 1990s with little bloodshed, unlike Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, or Kosovo. Ethnic instability eventually proved challenging as Macedonia had difficulty integrating Albanians into society (Paul, 2011). Albanians insist that they have few historic ties to Slavic Macedonians and only weak political links to the

state (Liotta & Jebb, 2004, p. 4). Macedonians see themselves as descendants of Slavs who settled in the Balkans in the mid-sixth century and represent the dominant majority within the state (Thiessen, 2007, p. 25). Many Albanians refuse to identify with the Macedonian state as a result of their differing religion and culture; Albanians overwhelmingly practice Islam while ethnic Macedonians are predominantly Orthodox (Thiessen, 2007, p. 27). However, there are a few Albanian Orthodox villages around Lake Ohrid and in Gostivar while some Albanians in Skopje practice Catholicism (Koppa, 2001, p. 41). As Albanians are the most numerous minority group in Macedonia, they often consider themselves to be Macedonia's second people (Thiessen, 2007, p. 25).

Other reasons for increasing tensions in the region include a high Albanian birth rate, which is seen as a demographic threat by many Macedonians; the legal and illegal influx of Albanians into Macedonia; and, deep-rooted economic, social and ethnic problems that exacerbate relations (Babuna, 2000, p. 80; Hornstein-Tomić, 2008). Improved ties to relatives living abroad have increased the wealth of Albanians in Macedonia, leading to rising social tensions between the two ethnic groups (Dimova, 2010, p. 863). When Macedonia was part of Yugoslavia, Macedonians saw themselves as being more modern than Albanians, who were considered rural, backwards, and poor. There has been a reconfiguration of the social relations between the two groups. According to some Macedonians, Albanians are getting too close and becoming too similar to Macedonians, and some even blame Albanians for Macedonians losing their dominant social status (Dimova, 2010, p. 863). Despite rising tensions, the lack of historical mass violence between the communities – on a similar scale as the violence

between the Serbians and Croats in the 20th century – may have helped to keep the ethnic tensions managed.

1.8 Conclusion

The political situation in Macedonia is both complex and challenging. Nationalism and ethnicity are two concepts used to understand the current situation in Macedonia and other areas of the Balkans. Historically, they represented separate terms, but over time have converged and are considered as intimately related theoretical and debated concepts. Studying politics and minority issues in Macedonia allows for an in-depth look into the functionality of society, and how the country progresses in its political criteria towards EU membership. As is evident in Macedonia's history, identity politics are at play in continuing to divide the society along ethnic lines, as is demonstrated in the case of political parties. The following chapter will provide an overview of identity politics, analyzing its history, critics, and relevance for Macedonia. Furthermore, a strong correlation will be drawn between identity politics and EU integration.

2 Chapter: Identity politics

In the Introduction and first chapter, an overview of Macedonia's historical background to its contemporary relations was provided and scrutinized. The focus of this chapter will be the theoretical portion of the thesis, where the term identity politics will be explored. As was discussed in the previous chapter, terms such as nationalism and ethnicity continue to be relevant for Macedonia. The use of identity politics will provide a context in which to understand these terms and will allow for the theoretical dimension to develop. Working definitions of identity politics and their corresponding terms (i.e., identity) were initially described in the Introduction to set the structure of this thesis. Identity politics – with adherence to ethnicity and nationalism – have been the most prevalent framework used in studying the Balkans and the events following 1991. Often, they are used to help articulate a claim in the name of a particular group (Bickford, 1997, p. 112). As such, this thesis examines the dynamics of the relationship between two historically marginalized Balkan peoples, the Macedonians and Albanians. As expressed in the Introduction, 'identity politics' are understood as the formal set of policies and discourses pursued by Macedonian state and political actors (the majority) on the one hand and Albanian political actors (the minority) on the other. A thorough analysis will now be provided to help contextualize the term, understand its history, examine its critics, and justify the use of identity to study Macedonia and its interethnic relations.

2.1 History of identity politics

Identity politics have been used in a variety of research in the social sciences and humanities. They include areas such as gender discrimination, liberation and lifestyle movements, ethnic division, civil rights, separatist movements, ethnic and nationalist

conflicts, and youth and countercultural movements (Bernstein, 2005; Calhoun 1994). The politics of identity take no universal form (Aronowitz, 1992, p. 12). While many authors (Coate & Thiel, 2010) cite the 1960s as the conceptual arrival of identity politics with feminist and black movements, others argue that identity politics are not new; rather they emerged in the 19th century with the advent of European nationalism (Calhoun, 1994). Identity politics are a ubiquitous term – and Coate and Thiel (2010, p. 3) would cite them as an overused term – used to describe events in postcolonial Africa and Asia and the former CEEC. Globalization and cultural homogenization have impacted identity politics and served to increase their prevalence within society (Coate & Thiel, 2010, p. 2). Both religion and gender have served as noteworthy categories of identity politics. In fact, women represent the largest contingent of a minority (Coate & Thiel, 2010, p. 7). Further, religion has fundamental implications for both minority and majority populations. As religious identity is considered to be one of the strongest identity markers, it can lead to stability and cohesion or, in other contexts the opposites, instability and division.

As the focus of this thesis is minority groups, it is natural to use theories of identity politics, as identity politics deal with the political implications of minority rights (Coate & Thiel, 2010, p. 5), especially since many minority groups worldwide are facing constant struggles over recognition. Their struggles are manifested in political conflicts, especially in the Balkans at the dawn of the 21st century (Fraser, 1997, p. 11). Why are minority groups so interested in recognition, and what is fuelling their demands? According to Fraser (1997), their struggles have been enforced “under the banners of nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, and sexuality” (p. 11). Identity politics can lead to

conflicts over a majority or leading group's identity, and to a more traditional approach to a community's values (Kenny, 2004, p. 171). Groupings can deploy identity politics as a behaviour and rhetorical approach within a broader repertoire of action that includes other forms, such as lobbying, interest-group activity, and campaigning. As will be demonstrated through this thesis, identity politics provide the tools to examine how a society is divided among ethnic lines, and how ethnic groups then use their power to strengthen their national identity and vie for collective rights.

How is this term used worldwide and what are the differences between identity politics and the politics of identity? In the United States, according to Kenny (2004), the term politics of identity typically applies to age-old tensions between religious groups and the state, as well as separatist movements that include both moral and political struggles (p. 3). Additionally, they are used in response to the understanding of ethnicity and race within politics (Kenny, 2004, p. 3). The terms identity politics and politics of identity are closely related, and are used to refer both to transformations in group behaviour and as a political argument (Kenny, 2004, p. 2). For the purposes of this thesis, I will employ only identity politics, unless referring specifically to the politics of identity in another author's writings (Kenny, 2004, p. 2). Identity politics "reflects a shift away from political alignments driven by individual interest or ideological debate towards a culture in which citizens cluster under the banner of an encompassing group, with its own collective personality and distinctive culture" (Kenny, 2004, p. 1). As in the United States, where identity politics continue to represent struggles, in the case of Canada and Australia, they refer to movements that represent the struggles of indigenous peoples over areas such as land rights (Kymlicka, 1995 as cited in Kenny, 2004, p. 3). In Britain and

Western Europe, they are widely regarded “as the product of political conflicts associated with the clash between the cultural practices of the majority and various immigrant and religious minorities” (Kenny, 2004, p. 3). Clearly, identity politics are a term used to reflect a move from political alignments, and depending on location and minority group in question, can be used to represent a variety of factors (Kenny, 2004, p. 1).

2.2 Identity

Identity is a convoluted and controversial concept; one cannot discuss identity politics without defining the concept of identity itself. The term identity first came into widespread use with Erik Erikson’s psychosocial definition of the term during the 1960s (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 2; Hobsbawm, 1996, p. 38). There is a voluminous literature on identity, from the debate on its definition and construction to its use and overall meaning (Arthur, 2011; Anderson, 1991; Alcoff, 2006). Identity is vital to our survival and is considered infinite; it is the “basic elements of our social life and its reproduction” (Arthur, 2011, p. 6). As identity is considered to be fluid and changing in this thesis, it is thus possible to have multiple identities. According to Mungiu-Pippidi (2004), there is empirical evidence that demonstrates a change of identity is possible at times (p. 17). Therefore – yet infrequently – people can switch from one group to another. Identity can be imposed on a society, at times developing in response to state pressures, classification, stigmatization, or recognition (Wilke, 2011, p. 122). The definition of identity used for the purposes of this thesis, as stated in the Introduction, will “refer[s] to peoples’ membership in social groups – whether that membership is chosen by them or ascribed to them by others” (Arthur, 2011, p. 4). This definition can also refer to gender, ethnicity, religion, language, or any other subgroup. Generally,

identity is accepted as being based upon shared values, norms, and practices (Morisse-Schilbach & Schröder, 2006, pp. 2-3).

Identity is used by scholars in several different forms and across a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, political science, and psychology. Often, identity can be understood as a basis of social and political action. Identity can be defined as a single entity or collective identity. Collective identity develops in dialogue both inside and outside one's applicable identity groups (Wilke, 2011, p. 122). Further, collective identities are often defined negatively, more specifically against others. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) identify identity as a collective phenomenon, a core aspect of "selfhood," and claim it highlights "the processual, interactive development of the kind of collective self-understanding, solidarity, or 'groupness' that can make collective action possible" (p. 8). Further, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue that in objectifying identity, we are deprived of analytical leverage (p. 28). Using qualifications such as "Albanians" or "Macedonians" as if they were sharply bounded and internally homogenous groups in fact weakens social analysis and constricts political possibilities in the region (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 28). Ultimately, they argue that it is not the historical analysis of construction of identity that is problematic, but rather the presumptions about what it is that is constructed (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 30). While Brubaker and Cooper (2000) accept that identity is used as an analytical concept, and admit it does have legitimate and important characteristics, the term itself is "riddled with ambiguity" (p. 34). Given its many adjectives, it is not the best option in which to conduct analytical work; they offer alternative analytical idioms as solutions, claiming that these lack the attendant confusion (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 34). They provide three alternative terms to use instead of

identity: (1) identification and categorization; (2) self-understanding and social location; and, (3) commonality, connectedness and groupness (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 14, p. 17, & p. 19). While debate continues about the use of identity as an analytical concept, given its recognition in the Balkans, this thesis will argue that it is necessary to provide a thorough understanding of the term itself and contextualize it in terms of Macedonian-Albanian relations. The thesis will address the debate in an effort to avoid any of the potential problems associated with the term identity.

Edward Said's (1978) study of Orientalism was one of the first works to bring up the dichotomy of "us" and "them," and introduced the concept of the "other." Often groups define themselves in terms of who they are not, bringing up the idea of "us" and "them." According to Hobsbawm (1996), "'We' recognize ourselves as 'us' because we are different from 'Them.' If there were no 'They' from whom we are different, we wouldn't have to ask ourselves who 'We' were. Without Outsiders there are no Insiders" (p. 40). Group differences are thus often seen as 'otherness.' According to Young (1995), in defining a group as the other, this in fact actually denies or represses the heterogeneity and diversity of social difference. This definition of the other reduces the members of a group to a set of common attributes (Young, 1995, p. 159). Given the importance and salience of ethnicity and identity in this thesis, the dichotomy of "us" and "them" is relevant as Macedonians often define themselves as who they are not; for example, they are not Greek, a definition which can be confusing as Greeks refer to the population of Northern Greece as Macedonians. The same category of 'us' and 'them' can be applied to Albanians, as they may define themselves as *not* being Macedonians.

The topic of language merits discussion as well, as 'nations' have predominately defined themselves in CEEC and Southeastern Europe primarily according to language. Although language is not a primary focus of the thesis, given its position as a vehicle of connecting both personal and collective identity, and that it acts as a social barrier between the in-group and the out-group, it warrants a brief description (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2004, p. 19). Language is the main vehicle of socialization, and is considered to be the most salient ethnic marker. Macedonian and Albanian are two completely different Indo-European languages, the former a Slavic language using the Cyrillic alphabet while the latter is an isolate and uses a Latin-based alphabet. How is language significant for this thesis? People in Central Europe, CEEC, and Southeastern Europe began defining themselves in the 19th century primarily by their spoken language, rather than any civic identity. Language can play a symbolic role; it can indicate a group's status, or provide access to resources. The OFA has played a role in language development in Macedonia. In areas of Macedonia where more than 20% of the population is Albanian, the administrative commune is required to have the Albanian language used as an official co-language on a municipal level. Language is a source of contention between the two groups, as it can often result in job loss, or even lack of communication and thus understanding and acceptance. According to Mungiu-Pippidi (2004), exposure to another language in fact strengthens identity and loyalty to the individual's own ethnic group or language; through this contact individuals are exposed to the differences in their individual selected languages (p. 19).

The integral part of the theoretical debate in ethnic conflict studies is the character of ethnic identity and bonds, whether that character is inherited or developed (Mungiu-

Pippidi, 2004, p. 15). There are three ways as to how identity is understood in the literature: primordialism, instrumentalism (rational choice), and constructivism (Arthur, 2011, p. 5; Hislope, 2007, p. 151). Primordialism argues that identity is something that is inherited and ascribed. Second, with instrumentalism, a person's identity is chosen through strategic calculations. Through this argument, individuals are seen as advancing their own interests (Arthur, 2011, p. 5). Last, the constructivist approach argues that identities are shaped through social relations – individuals do not freely choose them – which is the case with instrumentalism. Constructivism is the most popular form of identity theory, and tends to place emphasis on the “manufacturing of identity” (Hislope, 2007, p. 151). Unlike the arguments listed above for identity, typically the argument for identity politics is rooted in liberalism, which will be discussed at length below. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue that constructivism limits the discussion of identity (p. 1). If identity is seen as fluid, multiple, constructed, and thought to be everywhere, how is it then possible to study contemporary identity politics? In using identity as an analytical category the substance is thus affected by its use and abuse (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 2). However, counteracting this statement, this thesis argues that in giving weight and attention to these problems, this will lead to their avoidance.

How are identity political movements ‘political?’ They are an expression of power and represent struggles that certain groups have experienced or are experiencing. Political identity, in this context, reflects an ensemble of political values and principles that are recognized as a self-defined entity (Morisse-Schilbach & Schröder, 2006, pp. 2-3). Politics play a strong role in identity politics movements; often groups are “refusing, diminishing or displacing identities” (Calhoun, 1994, p. 21). According to Taylor (1992),

contemporary politics can sometimes turn on the need/demand for recognition, which is one of the driving forces behind nationalist movements (p. 25). Therefore, the development of a modern notion of identity has given rise to a politics of difference, in which a new understanding of social conditions developed. Politicized identities are significant for politics, as they help to determine management and distribution of resources. There are three premises which identities are built upon that help them to be understood as politicized identities. First, there are many different types of identities that are not simply limited to the ethnoreligious or ethnonational classifications. Second, politicized identities may be shaped and based on state violence and/or coercion. Third, there are significant differences in the way “identities are shaped, accommodated, or repressed in law and politics” (Wilke, 2011, p. 121). While politicized identities are considered important, they only shape one part of an individual’s life. Other factors include family, socialization, education, class, as well as experience. All of these factors undoubtedly play a role in the development of identity (Wilke, 2011, p. 122). Given the focus of this thesis, identity thus reflects a crucial and high level of importance.

Indeed, identity politics clearly possess strong political implications. Attention should be drawn towards identity and intergroup conflict. Often, conflicts occur within a society as a result of a perceived threat. Two conflicting theories in this field – which debate the perception of threat in intergroup conflict – include social constructivism and realism. In regards to realism, the prominent arguments reflect realists in international relations as well as realist conflict theory in psychology. In realism, the argument that persists is that “asymmetries in power will automatically trigger perceptions of threat and intergroup conflict” (Rousseau & Garcia-Retamero, 2007, p. 744). Alternatively, with

social constructivism, the areas at play include social constructivists in international relations and social identity theorists in psychology (Rousseau & Garcia-Retamero, 2007, p. 744). Social constructivist theorists argue “a shared sense of identity can reduce and in some cases eliminate perceptions of intergroup threat” (Rousseau & Garcia-Retamero, 2007, p. 744). Social identity theory is derived from laboratory experiences and fieldwork. This theory stipulates that groups have a drive to acquire a positive social identity, which is usually obtained by maximizing differences and competition among groups (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2004, p. 17). Identity politics are “founded upon the peculiarities of social identity” (Kenny, 2004, p. 1). Arguably social identity theory holds greater promise for identity and identity politics, especially in the field of political psychology (Huddy, 2001, p. 128).

2.3 Theoretical traditions

Many critics of the theories surrounding identity politics come from the Left (Bickford, 1997, p. 112; Alcoff, 2006, p. 24). Although both sides (Left and Right) at present are burdened by identity politics, given the decline of the great universalist slogans of the Enlightenment, which were synonymous with slogans of the Left, there are few possibilities of forming common interests, thus there is a higher danger of creating a ‘pure alliance of minorities’ on the Left (Hobsbawm, 1996). As such, the Left will be given more attention in this thesis than the Right. Hobsbawm (1996) questioned how the Left relates to identity groups, claiming that identity groups “were certainly not central to the Left.” The Left was held together by great universal causes. Through these causes, each group believed their individual aims could be realized, including democracy, socialism, communism, etc. This thesis will employ Bickford’s (1997) definition of the

Left to define the criticisms of identity politics: “these criticisms stem from a concern with the prospects of democratic politics” (p. 112). Leftist arguments have been made from a variety of perspectives, including feminist, communitarian, poststructuralist, and democratic (Bickford, 1997, p. 112). Many Leftists, especially in the United States, criticize movements that make identity their organizing basis, thus potentially overemphasizing differences, and perhaps reducing other possible factors (Alcoff, 2006, p. 25). Identity politics have produced an exchange of positions between the traditional Right and the traditional Left. The traditional Right has been seen as “particularist, affirming the complex density of life, venerating established institutions, disdaining glittering generalities,” whereas the traditional Left has been seen as universalist (Schlesinger, 1998, p. 152). The introduction of ethnicity and the development of nation-states have led to changing views within these ideologies.

With its relations in both politics and political ideologies, identity politics are referred to as the heir of the New Left, or that they simply arose out of the ashes of the New Left (Farred, 2000, p. 627 & p. 630). The first New Left arose in 1956 and related to two events: the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution by Soviet tanks, and the Suez Crisis of the same year (Hall, 2010). These two events unmasked the violence and aggression hidden in Western imperialism and Stalinism (Hall, 2010). The boundaries and limits of the “tolerable in politics became defined” (Hall, 2010). Most associate the term New Left with 1968, although scholars such as Hall (2010) argue that 1968 was perhaps a ‘second’ or even ‘third’ mutation. The New Left represented the coming together of two related yet different traditions: the first was communist humanism, and the second was the independent socialist tradition. The New Left included both the

British and the American New Left; albeit different, they shared similarities in the processes by which they shaped, influenced, and informed each other. Social forces and intellectual figures assembled under the New Left have played a significant role in shaping and influencing the understandings of the developing politics of identity (Kenny, 2004, p. 20). Further illustrating the New Left relations with identity politics, Farred (2000) argues that “identity politics represents nothing so much as the achievement of minority public ‘voice,’ metaphorically speaking, an enfranchisement of black, female, gay, bisexual, and ethnic communities” (p. 631).

Liberalism and communitarianism are two terms that have been associated with minority rights. As liberalism revolves around individual liberties, its use as a minority rights theory is considerably popular. Communitarianism disputes the conception of the “autonomous individual” and views people as being embedded in social roles (Kymlicka, 2007, p. 27). Liberals argue that individuals should be free to decide their own conceptions. This debate revolves around the priority of individual freedom.

Liberalism first emerged as a philosophy during the Enlightenment and represented institutional checks against government and religious discrimination (Laden & Owen, 2007, p. 8). Based on this historical reference, the ideology of liberalism is a theoretical response to religious diversity. Liberalism involves several characteristics, including the idea of tolerance; strong protection of individual liberties; and, offers a theoretical justification for the protection of individual free thought (Laden & Owen, 2007, p. 8). Its core political values include toleration and personal liberty (Macedo, 1990, p. 9). Personal liberties may include “freedom of conscience, of religious practice, and freedom of association (whether public, private, or intimate), the right to choose

one's occupation or trade, freedom of speech, of discussion, of the press, of literature and the arts, of movement and travel" (Macedo, 1990, p. 9). A quote by Laden and Owen (2007) sums up the rationale behind liberalism

Liberalism's response to religious diversity involves a general theoretical solution to the problem that emphasizes human equality as a result of human similarity, and thus conceives equality in terms of similar treatment, treats religious belief as matter of individual conscience, and advocates state neutrality and the protection of individual liberties as the just response to diversity. (p. 9)

Liberalism has put forth the most support for the recognition of minority rights as it places concern for minorities at the forefront of political theory with its emphasis on human equality (Kukathas, 1995, p. 230; Vladescu, 2010, p. 95).

Many liberals are opposed to groups that practice identity politics because they seem to violate the norms of democracy and equality (Kenny, 2004, p. 5). Many theorists argue that liberalism and identity politics need to be conceptualized as fundamentally antithetical (Kenny, 2004, p. 22). Identity-based groupings endorse a religious and deterministic logic where a person's identity is considered to be a significant element of both their beliefs and destiny (Gitlin, 1995 as cited in Kenny, 2004, p. 23). Therefore, identity politics potentially violate the liberal principle that individuals make their own decisions, and are capable of achieving detachment from and can provide reflection on their communities and therefore their cultures (Kenny, 2004, p. 23). Giving preference and prominence to certain identities, such as race, gender, or sexuality within political theory, they "fail[s] to respect sufficiently the value of individual self-determination" (Laden, 2001, p. 4).

Liberalism has been a key concept discussed in this thesis. Using examples of democratization and interethnic conflict in post-communist states, such as Macedonia, the thesis considers how liberalization could affect the emergence or absence of conflict (Engström, 2009, p. 39). With the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, the main goal was democratization. According to Engström (2009), Macedonia, with its 1991 Constitution, reflects a liberal democratic perspective, as the Constitution includes a long list of civil and individual rights (p. 118).

2.4 Critics of identity politics

The critics of identity politics have argued against its use (Bernstein, 2005; Coate & Thiel, 2010). Both Wendy Brown (1995) and Todd Gitlin (1997) have argued for the termination of identity politics (Farred, 2000, p. 644). Bernstein (2005) argues that identity politics are not a theory of social movements that is equivalent to resource mobilization or political process theories. Identity politics are seen as more descriptive than explanatory; they do not explain the emergence of social movements, or consider other aspects of development (Bernstein, 2005, p. 66). Coate and Thiel (2010) argue that while identity politics are simultaneously social movements, there are differences. For example, identity politics exist independently of “a postulated opportune political structure” (p. 3). Another criticism of the theory is that the number of groups concerned with identity politics is quite large and the term is overused (Coate & Thiel, 2010, p. 3). Leftist and liberal concerns regarding identity politics are similar. For example, both agree that identity politics “fracture[s] the body politic; that it emphasizes differences at the expense of commonalities; and that its [their] focus on identity offers only a reductionist politics, one that would reduce assessment of political positions to the process

of ascertaining identity” (Alcoff, 2006, p. 25). Despite these arguments, identity politics are considered to be neither positive nor negative, and identities are politically relevant (Coate & Thiel, 2010, p. 4).

Despite the differences across the writings of the critics of identity politics, they do share some similarities. There are certain common dangers and themes embedded in identity politics. According to Bickford (1997), these dangers “hamper political action oriented toward radical social change” (p. 112). Subjectivity and community are examples of common themes and dangers. Subjectivity focuses on the production of the self that identity politics produces. Community refers to “the kind of collectivity that identity politics precludes” (Bickford, 1997, p. 112). Both constructions of the self and community encourage and prevent political action (Bickford, 1997, p. 112). Identity politics can be seen as threatening; they have the potential to not only undermine states and overall peace, but they can also ensure an increasingly divided political body, and help deteriorate the fundamental values of democracy (Kenny, 2004, p. 24).

One central problem is that identity politics are almost nowhere defined, and their historical genesis is somewhat unknown. As a result, identity politics are blamed for political acts and theoretical mistakes (Alcoff, 2006, p. 15). Liberals and progressives who believe that identity politics have derailed the development and/or recognition of common interests are blaming the wrong source. Alcoff (2006) argues that they need to acknowledge the inadequacies and shortfalls of the social ontologies and theoretical paradigms that they are trying to apply to identity-based oppression (p. 290).

In the 1990s, with the war in former Yugoslavia, post-Soviet conflicts and the Rwandan genocide, there was a much greater awareness of and a recognized need for

minority rights. These conflicts resulted in fears of secession and minority battles on the borders of Europe (Chapman, 2011, p. 252). Ethnicity and identity have continuously been redefined in the Balkans, which in turn has been crucial in shaping their contemporary politics (Dimova, 2010, p. 859). Although the conception of minority protection may be viewed as a relatively recent phenomenon, during the Ottoman period and after World War I, attention was given to minority rights and protection. This was a result of the neighbouring countries possessing groups, who had ethnic affiliations with minorities, whose homeland was outside the country's borders (Chapman, 2011, p. 251). Illustrating the international community's response to minority groups following World War I, the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919 (Musgrave, 1997, p. 42). This and subsequent treaties attempted to protect national minorities as well as to assure maintenance of basic rights for all inhabitants regardless of citizenship or ethnicity (Musgrave, 1997, p. 42). After World War II, international actors again became concerned with the idea of minority rights. Accordingly the Council of Europe in 1949 raised the issue of minority protection. Given the atrocities committed during the Holocaust, it was important to expand the protection of minorities (Lodzinski, 1996, p. 19). With the onset of violence in Yugoslavia during the 1990s, international institutions had to change their policies and adopt different measures to face the new challenges experienced by the former Yugoslav states. Several new offices, declarations, and frameworks were adopted, including the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities* in 1992, the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities was created by the OSCE in 1992, and

Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was adopted in 1995.

Many authors have examined ethnic or minority groups in relation to self-determination and human rights (Crawford, 1988, p. 57; Farred, 2000). In international law, the principle of self-determination is the most debated (Crawford, 1988, p. 58). Self-determination becomes another significant term to consider in the research on minority rights; it emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries and has exerted an enormous impact on the international community (Musgrave, 1997, p. 1). Self-determination has been a primary force in the dismantling of European multinational empires and colonial regimes, and the emergence of many new states. Because of the difficulties associated with self-determination, identity politics are likely to be focused on the struggle to articulate the minority experience in the public sphere (Farred, 2000, p. 639).

Ethnic conflicts are prominent in areas where there are ethnic minority populations, which exist almost everywhere; one of the main issues is the minorities' right to self-determination, although occasionally minorities are interested in receiving recognition of certain cultural or other rights. It is important to note that not only are minorities normally victims, but since the rights of minorities are intertwined with the rights of majorities, ethnic conflicts may be destructive or detrimental for governments and democracy. According to Engström (2009), in an ethnically divided society where the power structures favour the majority group, the principle of individualism (liberalism) often fails to deliver its goal of a 'just society' (p. 44). Unfortunately, what then occurs is the continuation of the status quo, where majority groups continue to hold a position of cultural hegemony over the minority group(s) (Engström, 2009, p. 44). The politics of

identity and difference in Macedonia cover diverse geographic locations and multiple institutional sites. They are considered multifaceted phenomena. Different approaches can be used to study identity politics, including individual identity formation, relations between groups within and across national boundaries, and relations between a group and a state (Cowan & Brown, 2000, p. 15).

2.5 Relationship with the Balkans and Macedonia

Minority rights activists have the ability to promote and encourage a broader, inclusive definition of citizenship and place pressure on governments for social reforms to facilitate equality (Jenkins & Gottlieb, 2007, p. 2). As a result of the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, identities in the Balkans have become further politicized and boundaries were hardened, especially in the case of ethno-religious identities. Identity politics have complicated a resolution to the national question in Macedonia. As such, they have worked to undermine political stability, even though peace and stability have prevailed as a result of the OFA. The inability of Macedonia – that is, the dominant Macedonians and minority Albanians – to formalize a permanent settlement to ethnic issues undermines the republic's political prospects as a potential EU candidate. When Serbian policy became increasingly anti-Albanian in the 1980s with the rise of Slobodan Milošević, Macedonian leaders followed suit, implementing anti-Albanian policies (Engström, 2009, p. 40). The radicalization of Albanians was influenced by developments in Kosovo and helped to increase Macedonians' negative perceptions of Albanians. Instead of being viewed as victims, the Albanians of Macedonia were perceived to be an impending threat to Macedonia's national and territorial security (Engström, 2009, p. 140). Given the EU's emphasis on minority rights, expressed in the

Copenhagen criteria, identity politics and interethnic relations unmistakably have a bearing on the political criteria that the EU employs in determining a candidate country's eligibility for membership.

Minority rights in Macedonia are a bone of contention between Albanians and Macedonians. Conflicts between the two groups are prevalent in the daily use of language, with Macedonians calling Albanians *Shiptari*³, which is a derogatory term. More than twenty years of post-communist politics have led to tension over cultural issues and symbols, including flags, language, and education (Hislope, 2007, p. 155). In socialist Yugoslavia, Albanians had the worst living conditions in Macedonia, in terms of their limited access to political, social, and economic resources (Barany, 2005, p. 89). Further demonstrating the separation between the two groups, a 2001 UNDP Survey found that 67% of the citizens of Macedonia agreed with the statement that most citizens of Macedonia "are not ready to marry outside their ethnic group" (Hislope, 2007, p. 156). Hislope (2007) argues that since independence, Macedonians and Albanians have never had to convince their respective communities to dislike each other, as the "interethnic animosity is part of the social fabric" (p. 150).

Macedonia is a clear example of an ethnically divided society (Hislope, 2007, p. 154). Historically relations between the two groups, while not overtly hostile, have been periodically exposed to heightening tensions. For example, in the 1980s Macedonia had policies that attempted to limit Albanian birth rates. Additionally, they were forbidden to give their children "nationalist" Albanian names; denied rights to display their symbols;

³ In Serbian and Macedonia, the term *Shiptar* (plural *Shiptari*) is a bastardization of the Albanian term for Albanians, and is used in a derogatory fashion. The correct term is *Albanac* (plural *Albanaci*).

and, exposed to increased discriminatory practices in education, employment, and culture (Barany, 2005, p. 89).

How does the Macedonian government transform its country into a functioning democratic nation? In Macedonia, following the 2001 conflict, the government became more involved in the social management of interethnic conflict. With the OFA, the government had to adopt a policy of multicultural inclusion (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 552). According to Staniševski and Miller (2009), there are three democratic approaches to multicultural problem solving (p. 551). These include majoritarian, consociational, and deliberative (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 552). With a majoritarian society the majority have a superior role over the minority populations. A core characteristic of this category is that, “in a democratic society, in which individuals have a personal prerogative to determine and express their preferences, majority rule is necessary” (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 552). It is through this category that the principle of individual self-determination is maximized. Further, it relies on methodological individualism (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 553). As this category caters to the majority population, it potentially limits and marginalizes minority groups. They are then either forced to assimilate or have their voices isolated. On the other hand, consociational democracy promises to enhance and stabilize culturally fragmented societies through state protection of individual and collective rights (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 554). Deliberative democracies encompass citizen engagement (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 554). They call for political inclusion, and this more direct inclusion of social values allows for long-term diffusion of existing social tensions, otherwise referred to as conflict resolution (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 555). The

OFA itself borrows from consociational democracy with its Badinter principle, which allowed representatives of the minority cultural group to block legislation perceived to be culturally disrespectful (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 559). With deliberative democracy, the OFA represented several features of this category, including the promotion of the development of civil society (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 559). The OFA, while briefly mentioned in this chapter, will be given more focus in Chapter Three.

Although Macedonia does incorporate individual rights in its Constitution, it is clearly an example of a majoritarian type democracy. After the establishment of the democratic (or post-communist) Macedonian Constitution, Albanians possessed certain grievances. They wished to see a consociational approach as opposed to a majoritarian democracy. Albanians sought to have their cultural distinctiveness publicly recognized (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 557). They wanted both state protection of individual rights and protection of collective cultural rights. After the 2001 civil conflict and with the induction of the OFA, cultural recognition, deliberative democracy, and a consociational approach were introduced (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 568).

2.6 Conclusion

In summary, identity politics have played an important role in post-communist Macedonia. Identity politics have risen to the forefront of Macedonian politics. As noted by Engström (2009), identity politics are a hindrance to the consolidation of democratic peace in the country (p. 142). While there is considerable debate surrounding the use of identity politics, in the case of Macedonia they are still relevant in examining Macedonia's history. Macedonia will move further into the international community only after it proves its compliance with minority concerns and thus identity politics. The

following chapter will analyze important primary and secondary documents in the area of minority rights.

3 Chapter: Brussels' and Macedonia's perception of the importance and salience of identity politics

With the widening and deepening of European integration, and the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist countries, minority rights in Eastern Europe, in particular the consolidation of democracy and promotion of human rights, have become prominent concerns on the EU's political agenda. With Macedonia receiving EU candidate country status in 2005, achieving compliance with the Copenhagen criteria remains a key political condition for achieving EU membership. Chapter Three will focus on the methodology of the thesis, given that the historical background and theoretical traditions have already been provided. The methodology consists of a review of the academic literature surrounding Macedonia, public opinion polls, EU, NGO, and international organization reports, in addition to interviews. Due to the limited amount of available resources on this specific topic, a combined methods approach was deemed appropriate. The sources supplement and complement the information found in the interviews, which took place in the summer of 2011 in Skopje and Tetovo, Macedonia, and Brussels, Belgium. The purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into opinions towards Macedonia from individuals of diverse positions. While the interview sample size was not particularly large, the intent was to use them as a tool to enhance the understanding of the dynamics behind how informed individuals construct meaning about the political situation in Macedonia. Participants were selected based on their knowledge and understanding of politics and ethnic relations in Macedonia, in terms of minority concerns, EU integration, and development. The interviews were conducted with a pre-

constructed and semi-structured questionnaire⁴. The interviews provided a practical component and shed light on Macedonian affairs. The international organization reports used in this analysis were from the OSCE/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and the International Crisis Group. These reports helped assess the state of human and minority rights in Macedonia. Legal documents such as the OFA (2001), the Interim Accord (1995), the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) (part of the Stabilization and Association Process, SAP) illustrate the steps the government and the international community have taken to encourage progress in Macedonia. The research conducted with these sources will demonstrate the impact of identity politics on internal Macedonian developments and will measure how international organizations, in particular the EU, have treated minority issues since 2001.

The research question underlying this thesis asks: do identity politics actually impede EU integration? My hypothesis is that identity politics and their corollary interethnic relations have impeded Macedonia's accession to the EU. The research question brings forth two relevant issues: a) whether Brussels' evaluation of Macedonia's progress is strongly influenced by the way it perceives progress on the identity/ethnic factor (I will argue there is a negative evaluation as Macedonia has yet to achieve political reforms in this area that satisfy the Copenhagen criteria); and, b) whether Macedonia's ability to meet EU requirements is affected by identity politics/ethnic relations. Based on the above research question, the dependent variable would be progress towards EU accession and independent variables would be (a) Brussels' perceptions of the importance and nature of identity politics for EU accession; and (b) the

⁴ See Appendix for questionnaire.

obstacles to meeting Brussels' expectations in relation to identity politics in Macedonia.

- An assessment will be provided of the OFA and the amount of legislation implemented since its creation. For the first issue, Brussels' evaluation of Macedonia's progress, interviews were conducted in Brussels with EU officials from the Directorate Enlargement Macedonian Team and with an Independent Diplomat to determine perceptions of the importance and nature of identity politics for EU accession, and what were considered key issues facing Macedonia today. Additionally, the European Commission's Progress reports reflect Brussels' evaluation of Macedonia in terms of its commitment to the Copenhagen criteria and provide recommendations for reforms.

With respect to the second issue, whether Macedonia's ability to meet EU requirements is affected by identity politics, interviews were conducted in Skopje and Tetevo, Macedonia, with a selection of informed persons from NGOs and the Delegation of the European Union to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In its regular reports, the European Commission (2011a) has repeatedly assessed Macedonia's progress towards meeting the Copenhagen political criteria, which "requires stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities" (p. 5). The Copenhagen criteria, created in 1993 at the Copenhagen European Council, decided that "the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the European Union" (European Commission, 2011b).

3.1 Brussels' evaluation of Macedonia's progress

The Western Balkans has been an important focus for the European Commission. According to a Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (2005) Country Program

Macedonia 2005-2008 report, the “implementation of reforms towards EU integration is a core component of the country’s [Macedonia’s] current political agenda” (p. 5). The EU is considered an important instrument in Macedonia’s development. Further, EU membership has often been used to encourage both peace and regional stability in multiethnic candidate states, such as Macedonia (Vasilev, 2011, p. 51). Regardless of the name dispute with Greece, the EU is obliged to give Macedonia the same chance of entering the EU as any other Balkan country (Steppan, 2009, p. 395). The EU has made it known that the door is open to all of the Western Balkan states. It should not be a question of whether the Western Balkan states should be let in, but whether they meet the criteria and when they should join. This is corroborated by the European Commission (2011b) website on accession criteria, which states that “enlargement was no longer a question of ‘if’, but ‘when.’” Given this claim of eligibility, the EU elaborates that “accession will take place as soon as an associated country is able to assume the obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and political conditions required” (European Commission, 2011b). In June 2003 the European Council adopted the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 2). In this agenda, the EU stated

that the pace of further movement of the Western Balkan countries towards the EU lies in their own hands and will depend on each country’s performance in implementing reforms, thus respecting the criteria set by the Copenhagen European Council of 1993 and the Stabilization and Association Process Conditionality. (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 2)

Further, Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, stated that “the integration of the Western Balkan into the ‘European Family’ is one of the last challenges in becoming a democratic and united Europe”⁵ (Kentrotis, 2011, p. 44). Macedonia is affected by a negative evaluation of its progress as a result of its inability to achieve political reforms. Further, as Kentrotis (2011) notes, often the relationship between the Balkans and the EU is characterized by wishful thinking with no definitive plans and expectations without any concrete objectives (p. 44). As will be shown, Macedonia will have difficulty becoming an EU Member State, not only because of its dispute with Greece, but because the European Commission also considers identity politics (in the form of positive ethnic relations) as a key requirement of future membership. Given the geopolitical position of Macedonia and the history of conflict in the Western Balkans, the region itself remains a crucial component of the EU’s strategy of maintaining peace, promoting democracy, and human rights.

How does the EU, and therefore Brussels, evaluate the situation in Macedonia today? This question will be examined through the use of official documents, such as European Commission’s Progress reports, supplementary publications, and the interviews conducted in Brussels. A brief history of Macedonia’s relations with the EU will be provided to examine Macedonia’s progress to date. Macedonia has maintained relations with the European Community in regards to contractual relations since 1996 (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 3). For example, a Cooperation

⁵ As translated from the original German quote: „die Integration der westlichen Balkanstaaten in die ‚europäischen Familie‘ als eine der letzten Herausforderungen beim Aufbau eines demokratischen und geeinten Europas.” (Kentrotis, 2011, p. 44)

Agreement and a Trade and Textile Agreements were signed in 1997, entering into force in 1998 (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 3). Macedonia applied for EU membership on 22 March 2004. Following this application, the former EU Commission President Romano Prodi personally delivered to then Prime Minister Hari Kostov a 300-page questionnaire on 1 October 2004, which contained approximately 3,000 questions on Macedonia's level of preparedness to become an official EU candidate country (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 466). Once the appropriate forms were completed, submitted, reviewed, and debated, Macedonia was given official status of a candidate country on 17 December 2005 (Bokulic & Kostadinova, 2008, p. 23). Despite the excitement in Macedonia at receiving candidate country status, the EU indicated that formal membership negotiations were unlikely to start prior to 2007. According to Bideleux and Jeffries (2007), the delay gave the EU time to observe Macedonia's 2006 Parliamentary election and ensure their regularity and compliance with policies before committing; however, the election was less than ideal and was "marred by substantial violence and intimidation" (p. 466). Considering Macedonia had been one of the poorest of the Yugoslav states, and its unemployment rate was 37.7% in the third-quarter of 2004, achieving EU candidate status was considered a "remarkable achievement" (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 466).

When the EU first became involved in the Western Balkans in the 1990s, it was in an effort to bring peace and stability to the region (Fagan, 2010, p. 2). Once Macedonia achieved candidate country status, this led to the encouragement of other Western Balkan states to further their own accession process. Additionally, it provided Macedonia with access to EU pre-accession funds, enticed foreign investors, and reflected the EU's

concern for the country's importance to the "peace, stability and westward orientation of South-eastern Europe as a whole" (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 466). With the accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, the Western Balkans became completely encircled by the EU. Therefore, the EU has a clear interest in ensuring that any outstanding problems are addressed and that the Western Balkans continues on a clear path towards stabilization (Cameron, 2006, p. 104).

The SAP represented a framework for EU negotiations with Western Balkan countries and is considered the most important political instrument of the EU to candidate countries today (European Commission, 2012; Kentrotis, 2011, p. 46). This process and its conditionalities were defined by the Council on 29 April 1997, which included regional cooperation and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 3). The aim was to prepare the countries for EU accession. According to the European Commission, the goals included: the stabilization of the countries through democratic consolidation, transformation to a market economy, the promotion of regional cooperation, and eventual membership (European Commission 2012; Kentrotis, 2011, p. 46). The SAP allowed for the adoption of a common strategy in the region, leading to the establishment of a stable European order as outlined in the Stability Pact. This would allow both parties to increase "their commitment to respect human rights and the rule of law, including the rights of persons belong[ing] to national minorities, and democratic principles through free and fair elections and a multiparty system" (Council of the European Union, 2001, p. 5). The SAA was a specific agreement of a contractual

relationship between a country and the EU, and the agreement between Macedonia and the EU will be discussed below (European Commission, 2012).

The SAA serves as the basis for regular and consistent political and economic dialogue between the EU and a specific country (European Commission, 2011a, p. 4). Five other Western Balkan countries receive substantial EU support. These countries include Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2005, p. 10). In an effort to advance the reform process in these countries, this support draws them closer to the EU and gradually integrates them into its structures (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2005, p. 10; Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 465). This approach seems to have succeeded in terms of Croatia's progression, as it has been invited to join the EU in July 2013. The SAA represents the EU's first major attempt to facilitate democratization and foster economic development in the Balkans. The SAA allows for the protection of minority populations; it also demonstrates an effort to increase economic activity in the region, thus allowing for the development of trade and investment.

Macedonia was the first country to sign an SAA with the EU on 9 April 2001, during the Albanian insurgency (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 465; Hornstein-Tomić, 2008, p. 45). This agreement entered into force on 1 April 2004 (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 4; Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007, p. 465). According to Macedonia's SAA, the specific aims were to provide an appropriate framework for political dialogue; support the efforts of the country with its economic and international cooperation; promote harmonious economic relations and develop a free trade area; and, to foster regional cooperation (Council of the European Union, 2001, p. 7). In an early

2004 report by the Commission of the European Committees regarding the SAA between Macedonia and the EU, the full implementation of the OFA is considered as essential for the overall SAP (p. 4). This report notes that the OFA has experienced tensions and difficulties as extremists' activities have sought to undermine the country's reconciliation process (Commission of the European Committees, 2004, p. 4).

In terms of the EU's involvement in the region, regular reports have been submitted to the Council and Parliament on the country's progress since 2002 (European Commission, 2011a, p. 3). The most recent European Commission report covers the time period from October 2010 to September 2011. To date, Macedonia's major highlight in its EU accession talks occurred in October 2009, when the Commission recommended to the Council to open negotiations with the country. Recommendations were also made for the country to move forward to the second phase of the SAA implementations.

Unfortunately, progress has been slow since these recommendations were made. Despite this stalemate, the Macedonian government still considers European integration to be its highest priority (International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 2). In 2010, these recommendations were once more reiterated; however, the Council has not yet concluded its deliberations on the Commission's proposal (European Commission, 2011a, p. 3). The other noteworthy achievement in Macedonia's accession talks includes the visa liberalization regime, which was implemented on 19 December 2009 (European Commission, 2011a, p. 4). Thus, 2009 was considered an important year in Macedonia's progress in becoming an EU Member State. Despite the visa liberalization success in Macedonia (and Montenegro and Serbia), this did not translate into higher levels of domestic support for EU accession. In fact, in Macedonia, general support for the EU fell from 62% to 60%

between 2009 and 2010 (Gallup Balkan Monitor, 2010, p. 7). Sixty percent of respondents consider Macedonia's EU accession as a "good thing," which was down from 76% of respondents in 2006. Despite this reduction in support, were a referendum held on EU integration, 82% of Macedonians would vote to join the EU (Gallup Balkan Monitor, 2010, p. 14). One of the interviewees in Macedonia suggested, "EU integration was a catalyst for democratic and human rights reforms in the country. More or less without [the] political support and financial support of the EU, a lot of the progress made, especially in the area of democratic institutions and human rights, could not be achieved" (S. Klekovski, personal communication, August 2011). Although Macedonia does face challenges in joining the EU, most scholars seem to agree that it is still the best route for the country's consolidation of democracy and promotion of human rights.

Similarly to the more recent 2011 European Commission Progress Report, the 2010 European Commission Progress Report on Macedonia states that while Macedonia sufficiently fulfills the political criteria – though its progress since 2009 has been unevenly paced and relatively slow – there are areas in need of improvement (European Commission Report, 2010). The key areas of concern for the EU in the political realm include reform of the Parliament, police, judiciary, public administration (and decentralization), and in the protection of and respect for minority groups (European Commission, 2010). These areas were reiterated in the 2011 report. The 2010 European Commission report claims that with the OFA there is still "an essential element for democracy and rule of law in the country" (European, Commission, 2010). Macedonia's ability to legislate, including passing laws and implementing specific measures in the area of language and language rights has progressed. Other key areas include

decentralization and equitable representation. Despite Macedonia's improvements in these areas there is room for further advancement. One of the impediments to further reforms is the lack of dialogue on interethnic relations resulting from the inability of the parliamentary committee to meet on a regular basis. The parliamentary committee refers to the committee on interethnic relations, and has been cited as insufficient in terms of cooperation between the corresponding committees and relations among communities (European Commission, 2010, p. 7).

Today, the EU's role in the Western Balkans is to act as a multilateral development agency. The other conflicts that have occurred in the Balkans have been a crucial learning point for the EU. With the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the EU was unsure of how to react to the independence of such countries as Slovenia and Croatia. Further, the EU lacked the necessary capabilities to control the crises (Cameron, 2006, p.100). EU policy in Macedonia consists of funding infrastructure, including the building of roads, railways, and hospitals, as well as providing training and education for police officers, civil servants, and doctors. Over €288 million have been committed to Macedonia since 2007 for the implementation of various projects; €92 million were committed in 2010 alone (European Commission, 2011a, p. 4). These funds help to strengthen administrative capacities, including the rule of law and public administrative sectors; tax and custom reforms; local infrastructure improvements; and, Macedonia's ability to assume responsibilities for EU membership (European Commission, 2011a, p. 5). The EU also supports community development through NGOs (Fagan, 2010, p. 1). The EU's interest in Macedonia not only reflects the broad political and economic

realities of the region, but it is also indicative of its ambitions to become a key player in global security and conflict management (Fagan, 2010, p. 4).

Macedonia will only join the EU after the name dispute is resolved with Greece and after it has demonstrated fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria and *acquis communautaire*. The criteria include areas such as democracy, rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities (European Commission, 2011a, p. 5). Additionally, the criteria include but are not limited to the monitoring of regional cooperation and practicing good neighbourly relations with other EU candidate and Member States. The criteria also require compliance with international obligations, such as cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (European Commission, 2011a, p. 5). Under the criteria, one of the areas of concern is language. In terms of minority rights, language remains a top concern in the criteria as it provides other ethnic groups with equal opportunities. Progress has been made in Macedonia regarding the implementation of the Law on Languages and this was corroborated by several of the interviewees, as minority languages can now be used for the work of the Parliament. According to Staniševski and Miller (2009), 70% of the population speaks Macedonia (as their first language); 21% speak Albanian; 3% Turkish; 3% Serbo-Croat; and, 3% other languages (p. 557). The OFA mandates that “any other language [besides Macedonian] spoken by at least 20 percent of the population is also an official language” (Framework Agreement, 2001). The use of Albanian has increased, as documents are translated into Albanian, including draft laws and other motions in the Parliament. Further, Albanian is used in oral procedures in committees and in hearings

(by the chair and the plenary). The parliamentary TV channel provides simultaneous translation into Albanian (European Commission, 2011a, p. 6).

Compared to other countries in the region, the interethnic relations in Macedonia have been relatively stable, and that while there is a stalemate in the accession process, this was mainly the result of the name dispute with Greece. While improvements have been made in Macedonia, most reports note there is still progress to be made (International Crisis Group, 2011, European Commission, 2011). The name issue for many of the interviewees in Brussels was the main problem discussed in relation to Macedonia's accession; however, most agreed that the political problems, including issues with governance, implementation through law and administrative capacity, also needs to be resolved. The entire region of the Western Balkans has been 'relatively stable' since the Kosovo conflict (1999) and the Macedonian conflict (2001). However, Macedonia was the last country to experience violence, and with the outbreak of violence in the country this year, which will be discussed in the following chapter, Macedonia is perhaps arguably just as unstable as any other Balkan country. There has been tension in Macedonia concerning its previous elections in 2008 and 2011. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Four, tensions between ethnic groups are increasing. However, within the last twenty years, there has been overall progress in the development of the political parties and democratic government in Macedonia. The main parties include the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE); the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI); New Democracy (ND); Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA); New Social Democratic Party (NSDP); and, the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM). In 2008, the Macedonian

election was plagued by violence; shootings occurred, six people were injured, and voters were intimidated outside the polling stations (Vasilev, 2011, p. 56). The 5 June 2011 election was generally regarded as positive compared with the 2008 election (International Crisis Group, 2011). This demonstrates progress according to the European Commission (2011) report. However, alluding to potential problems, in January 2011, Macedonia's opposition party, the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), boycotted the parliament alongside a majority of opposition parties and continued to do so until the election of June 2011. The boycott started on 28 January 2011 in response to the freezing of bank accounts of four media outlets, including television stations and newspapers, some of which were known to be critical of the VMRO-DPMNE government (OSCE/ODIHR, 2011, p. 4). Although the boycott lasted several months, it did not prevent the ruling VMRO-DPMNE and DUI coalition from enacting laws (European Commission, 2011a, p. 6). The SDSM coalition did gain more seats during the June 2011 election, increasing from 27 to 42. Despite being re-elected, Gruevski (with VMRO-DPMNE) now has ten fewer seats (International Crisis Group, 2011). While another coalition government was voted in, criticism still surrounds the last government coalition; some claim political dialogue was broken, affecting Macedonian-Albanian relations. Further, the International Crisis Group (2011) has argued that the government "was not doing enough to ensure equitable representation, implement law on languages and oppose cultural exclusion" (p. i). The coalition government in Macedonia is an important part of the country being multiethnic. Pitfalls of the coalition are that parties campaign mainly along ethnic lines, which further divides the population of Macedonia. The election was considered calm regardless of the fact that it did take place during a

boycott and with the government facing increased levels of mistrust from the opposition parties (OSCE/ODIHR, 2011, p. 8).

According to a 2005 Commission of the European Communities report, Macedonia has “stable democratic institutions which function properly, respecting the limits of their competences and co-operation with each other” (p. 4). This report indicates that there are no major problems in the area of respect for fundamental rights (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 4). Clearly, in light of recent events in Macedonia, which will be discussed in Chapter Four, this point is debatable. The report also claims that a high level of protection is provided to the rights of minorities as a result of legislative and constitutional changes (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 4). While this may be the case in terms of the legislation created by the OFA, implementation and further enforcement on many of the issues are still concerns. The 2005 report concludes that Macedonia has generally fulfilled the obligations of the SAA in a satisfactory manner and has implemented the legislative agenda of the OFA and now needs to focus on its monitoring and enforcement (Commission of the European Communities, 2005).

Although the primary focus of this section is to further illustrate the EU’s role in Macedonia and the EU’s impact on identity politics, the most recent international report completed by the OSCE/ODIHR should be taken into consideration as it assesses the political climate of Macedonia. The OSCE/ODIHR (2011) report highlights local perceptions. The OSCE/ODIHR’s Electoral Observation Mission was sent to Macedonia for the 5 June 2011 parliamentary election. Its purpose was to assess the election, in terms of compliance with OSCE commitments and other international standards

(OSCE/ODIHR, 2011, p. 1). The Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, issued on 6 June 2011, concluded that “the early parliamentary elections were competitive, transparent, and well-administered throughout the country, although certain aspects require attention” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2011, p. 1). The report found that the election was both calm and peaceful (OSCE/ODIHR, 2011, p. 3). The most recent International Crisis Group (2011) report also concluded that the election was generally regarded as positive, especially when compared to the June 2008 election, which was widely deemed to be catastrophic.

The June 2011 election resulted in the third consecutive victory of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE)-led coalition (56 seats), followed by the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM)-led coalition (42), the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) (15), Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) (8), and New Democratic Party (NDP) (2) (European Commission, 2011a, p. 7). Noticeably missing from the election campaign were interethnic issues – parties campaigned along intra-ethnic lines. The OSCE/ODIHR (2011) report argues that ethnic issues framed most of the parties’ agendas, which dominated the campaigns (p. 16). The European Commission (2011a) also notes that political parties were divided along ethnic lines (p. 7). Ultimately, the European Commission (2011a) report supports the findings of the International Crisis Group (2011) and OSCE/ODIHR (2011) reports, concluding that progress has been made in the conduct of elections. The election was considered to be both competitive and well-administered throughout the country. The reports commented on the state of ethnic relations, and on the fact that the ruling coalition is Macedonian and Albanian.

The discussion of minority rights inevitably leads to a discussion of human rights and raises very important concerns about representative citizenship rights. Both human rights and the protection of minorities are important considerations for the European Commission. Currently Macedonia lacks in its ratification updates; with respect to human rights “no progress [was] made as regards the ratification of international human rights instruments” (European Commission, 2011, p. 15). The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages has also not been ratified. Further, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) delivered eight judgements claiming Macedonia violated rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights. In general, there has been limited progress on the promotion and enforcement of human rights due to the uneven implementation of the legal framework.

3.2 Macedonia’s ability to meet EU criteria

Macedonia continues to receive media attention and remains the focus of much debate in Balkan literature because of its well-known name dispute with Greece. This dispute has led to the prolonged exclusion of Macedonia from the EU and other international organizations such as NATO. Given this dispute, Macedonia’s relations with its neighbours are considered to be extremely important and relevant for the discussion of integration. The majority of the interviewees in Brussels named the dispute with Greece as being a factor in the country’s prolonged exclusion from the EU. However, as the dispute has been played out so prominently in the media, this was not unexpected. According to the recent Gallup Balkan Monitor Survey (2010), 86% of Macedonians feel that Greece is against their membership in the EU (p. 24). Macedonia has always been at “the crossroads of the various cultures, languages and religions in

South Eastern Europe” (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2005, p. 15). Macedonia’s prosperity depends not only on the EU, but also on the development of the region as a whole, as well as good relations with its neighbours. In response to the question, ‘what do you see as the main obstacles regarding Macedonia’s entry into the EU?’, an interviewee responded:

The political problems are preventing the country from moving forward on the EU track and in dedicating its energies to the EU economy. The political problems need to be resolved first, but then the other economic challenges are just as important, or just as difficult I would say. The main political obstacle is the name process, name issue, with Greece. This is the reason why there isn’t a consensus to start the accession negotiations. Greece has clearly come out and said it would not be in favour of accession negotiations, without a solution to the name issue, that’s the main problem. Until Macedonia can resolve the situation with Greece, it is unlikely that it will move forward in negotiations to join the EU, and other factors, such as its economy may suffer as a result and receive less attention. (M. Dawson, personal communication, May 2011)

Further elaborating on the Macedonian-Greek conflict, the legal document of the Interim Accord (1995) comes into play. The Interim Accord (1995) refers to an agreement made between Greece and Macedonia, ending Greece’s imposed economic embargo on Macedonia. The Interim Accord (1995) has recently gained renewed media attention, as Macedonia launched a case against Greece at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), claiming that when Greece blocked Macedonia from entering NATO at the

2008 Bucharest Summit, Athens had violated the terms of the Interim Accord. This argument is based on Article 11(1), which states that

Upon Entry into force of this Interim Accord, the Party of the First Part [Greece] agrees not to object to the application by or the membership of the Part of the Second Part [Macedonia] in international, multilateral and regional organizations and institutions of which the Party of the First Part is a member; however, the Part of the First Part reserves the right to object to any membership referred to above if and to the extent the Party of the Second Part is to be referred to in such organization or institution differently than in paragraph 2 of United Nations Security Council resolution 817(1993). (Interim Accord, 1995, p. 7)

In December 2011, the ICJ found Greece in breach of its obligation to not block Macedonia's accession to international organizations, as long as the country is referred to as FYROM (EurActiv, 2011). This ruling was welcomed by Macedonia, but is considered to be merely symbolic in nature as it is non-binding. It provides some justification for Macedonians who believe Greece is being unjust with its actions in the name dispute. In terms of Macedonia's EU integration prospects, the Macedonian-Greek relationship is clearly still relevant. It would be impossible to discuss Macedonia's integration without reference to its relationship with Greece and the name dispute. The Interim Accord (1995) represents the international involvement of organizations, such as the United Nations, in an attempt to mediate the situation in Macedonia. On the minorities' perception of the name dispute, Albanians are frustrated with the issue and with the government's inability to resolve the issue (International Crisis Group, 2011, p.

i). The large amount of attention placed on the name dispute gives Albanian issues, as well as other minority concerns, much less consideration.

Both Macedonia and Greece have been very vocal in advocating their positions on the name dispute. Macedonia has taken several symbolic steps; for example, Skopje's airport has been renamed the 'Alexander the Great' airport by Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski's government. Not surprisingly, this has angered several people in Greece, which claims such acts represent the appropriation of Greece's heritage and history. Adding fuel to the fire, as part of Macedonia's "Skopje 2014" plan, a bronze statue of Alexander the Great was constructed and revealed in September 2011. This Skopje 2014 plan focuses on urban development in the capital city at an estimated cost of €250-300 million. This plan consists of constructing buildings of neo-classical style, statues, bridges, and arches in the centre of Skopje. Albanians view this project as an avenue of exclusion from Macedonia's capital city, and reinforces the Macedonian Constitution, which states "Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people" (Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, 2009; International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 3). As a multiethnic state, this reconstruction ignores the existence of other ethnic groups within Macedonia. With the current economic crisis in Europe, it is likely that Macedonian issues may not be seen as important, and perhaps with the turmoil in Greece, Greece may lose its credibility in international politics.

While some reports choose to focus on the wider issue of the Macedonian Question, others focus on how the Macedonian Question has been affected by EU policy (Mavromatidis, 2010, p. 50). Attention has been brought towards the EU's lack of clout to resolve this dispute (Mavromatidis, 2010, p. 56). Greece, being an EU Member State,

has used the EU as a powerful lever against Macedonia. It has adopted a position of ‘no solution, no membership’ towards Macedonia, and will likely continue to use its veto power in this dispute (Mavromatidis, 2010, p. 56).

Despite Macedonia’s obvious issues with Greece, Macedonia must also consider its other neighbourly relations. Albanian nationalists in Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia have often dreamed of a Greater Albanian state, which would unite all Albanians into a single nation-state. This idea was given more support during the Kosovo conflict, when Albanians supported NATO operations in Kosovo; the conflict arguably increased the nationalist desire for a Greater Albanian state. However, no matter how strong the nationalist sentiment among ethnic Albanians for a unified and ethnically homogenous nation, the sentiment was pushed back in favour of European integration (Liotta & Jebb, 2004, p.12). The Kosovo conflict had two main impacts, according to Glenny (1999): the perpetuation of the dream of a Greater Albanian for the Macedonian Albanians; and, a large influx of Kosovar refugees to Macedonia, which affected the country’s “fragile balance” (p. 657). Albanians in Macedonia possess a strong connection to Kosovo; as such, the events taking place there have a large impact on them (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 12). Kosovo also brought a large influx of weapons into the country (International Crisis Group, 1998, p. 14). Although recent surveys suggest that support for this idea has declined in Albania, it has reportedly increased in Kosovo (Gallup Balkan Monitor, 2010, p. 6). In Macedonia, a poll found that two-thirds of the residents of Albanian majority areas in Western Macedonia support the creation of a common Albanian state with Albania and Kosovo. What might further concern the international community is that more than half of those surveyed think it is likely to happen soon

(International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 20). The fear of Albanian secessionism is aggravated by Albanians' higher birth rate and the fact that they live primarily in regions bordering Kosovo and Albania (Brunnbauer, 2002a, p. 9).

The year 2011 was important for Macedonia, as it represented the tenth anniversary of the end of its civil war and the creation of the OFA. Due to this anniversary, opportunities were provided for enhanced dialogue between the two communities. While there are reasons to celebrate this achievement, obstacles remain which hinder improved interethnic relations, such as the Skopje 2014 plan. With its pure devotion to Macedonian history, this plan alienates other communities and essentially counteracts the spirit of the OFA (International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 2). The Skopje 2014 plan has strained interethnic relations and created interethnic sensitivities; critics claim this plan undermines EU accession prospects and interethnic reconciliation (European Commission, 2011a, p. 20; International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 2). Complaints were made about the neglect of other ethnic groups' histories, and mainly centred on the construction of a museum (in the shape of a church) in the Kale fortress. Violence has been reported surrounding this construction project. On 11 February 2011, at least 100 ethnic Albanians and Macedonians clashed at the medieval Skopje fortress over the building of this museum church, which was meant to host artefacts from an archaeological excavation (International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 14). The European Commission (2011a) argues that "continued dialogue amongst all communities is necessary to foster trust, especially in the areas of education, culture and language" (p. 21). The Skopje 2014 plan has prompted civil opposition, accusations of illegal urban planning and lack of transparency. This plan has similarities to the country's promotion

of Macedonian heritage in 2008, when Macedonia's new airport was named after Alexander the Great. These acts blatantly ignore the fact that Macedonia is a multiethnic state. Further, these acts have not done much to encourage sympathy among its European neighbours. During the interviews in Brussels, questions were asked regarding individuals' perceptions of the current state of affairs of interethnic relations in Macedonia. One interviewee responded, with reference to the Skopje 2014 plan, that they are quite stable, they are a functioning multiethnic democracy and there is no crisis. The OFA has been implemented to a significant degree, but at the same time it remains relatively fragile. There is this latent tension I would say, and therefore every now and again there can be a flashpoint. And when there is a flashpoint, there is a risk that it could degenerate further. For example with the incident in the winter in the castle of Skopje, so whilst on paper the country has good interethnic relations, on the ground there is a certain discontent and the climate is not as positive as you would expect from just reading the literature. Often it is the small things (and it is a small country), so it is small things that would tend to have a disproportionate impact. There is a debate about the urban plan for Skopje 2014 with the building works ongoing, to what extent does it reflect the culture of the minorities and are debates about the segregated education in the schools. It seems that the country needs to develop more/strengthen its capacity to resolve these issues, which essentially are about finding a way of living together and respecting each other. (M. Dawson, personal communication, May 2011)

In Macedonia, the OFA is considered one of the most significant documents relating to interethnic relations in Macedonia, and reflects the essence of identity politics. The OFA is comprised of agreed points as decided by the government of Macedonia and Albanian representatives, including the basic principles and the subsequent articles for securing Macedonia's democracy (Framework Agreement, 2001). Signed on 13 August 2001 by the leaders of the four main political parties in Macedonia, the OFA consists of constitutional amendments and sets out specific reforms and protections aimed at strengthening the rights of minority communities, especially the ethnic Albanians (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2005, p. 9). Ideally this agreement was supposed to promote harmony amongst the different ethnic minority populations living in Macedonia. Additionally, the OFA "encouraged citizen participation in democratic life and promoted respect for the identity of communities" (Staniševski & Miller, 2009, p. 559). Its intent was to "promote the peaceful and harmonious development of civil society while respecting the ethnic identity and the interests of all Macedonian citizens" (Framework Agreement, 2001). Demonstrating this point, Article 1.3 states that "the multi-ethnic character of Macedonia's society must be preserved and reflected in public life" (Framework Agreement, 2001).

Macedonia has a Secretariat for the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (SIOFA). The SIOFA's strategic plan "embraces a more comprehensive understanding of different policy aspects deriving from OFA, such as integrated education, use of languages, decentralization, and cooperation with civil society" (European Commission, 2011a, p. 19). The overarching goal of the OFA is to promote the concept of equal citizenship, provide provisions on languages, and have proportional

representation in public administration and state institutions. Additionally, the OFA could be seen as a protection mechanism, with regard to minorities in parliament. One interviewee in Brussels referred to the complicated multiethnic situation by stating that “it’s important not to reduce this to a binary Macedonian-Albanian process, given there are other ethnic groups in the country whose needs are actually rather different” (N. Whyte, personal communication, May 2011). Macedonia consists of a diverse ethnic population, and it can be challenging to focus on other ethnic minorities’ needs when the Macedonian-Albanian issue is constantly in the forefront. Albanians are given more attention at the expense of other minorities, such as the Turks, Roma, and Vlachs. On the Assembly Republic of Macedonia’s website, where the Macedonian Constitution is both provided and described, “Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romanies and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia...” (Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, 2009). It is noteworthy that the Constitution, while acknowledging Macedonia’s other nationalities, avoids referring to them as minorities, likely knowing that this term would anger ethnic groups such as the Albanians.

When the OFA was first implemented, Macedonians were told that the agreement offered the country the possibility of being “another Belgium” (Gallup Balkan Monitor, 2010, p. 6). But given the complicated ways in which Belgium functions and the crises facing Europe, Macedonians now have to ask themselves, do they want to become “another Belgium?” (Gallup Balkan Monitor, 2010, p. 6). The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (2005) notes “the political climate has remained turbulent

but stability – although fragile – has prevailed” (p. 5). The interviewees in both Brussels and Macedonia referred to the importance of the OFA and considered it imperative to enhancing interethnic stability. The EU continues to support the OFA as was demonstrated by Ambassador Erwan Fouéré’s (2010) speech on the “Official Launch of the project Support to the Secretariat for Implementation of the OHRID Framework Agreement (SIOFA) in the process of Implementation of the Strategy for Equitable Representation.” During this speech he claimed the OFA is crucial for “ensuring the interethnic cooperation and political stability in this country” (Fouéré, 2010).

The OFA has reduced discrimination and inequality, and maintained unity. Unity has been a concern in Macedonia, as Gruevski’s government has tried to build a strong state identity based on Macedonia’s ancient history, as demonstrated by the naming of the airport and the Skopje 2014 plan. Unfortunately, these efforts have excluded Albanians. Despite these exclusionary efforts Prime Minister Gruevski remains in power, as Macedonia does reflect the largest ethnic group, and the government does play to Macedonian national identity, which likely gives them more support. Albanians are advocating a highly decentralized federal and bilingual state (International Crisis Group, 2011). Macedonians are threatened by these goals as they believe that, if realized, they would negatively affect the country’s survival. While the OFA ended the 2001 conflict, criticisms surround its slow implementation. Certain areas still require attention, including equitable representation, decentralization, and the Law on Languages (International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 14). In terms of equitable representation, the Macedonian authorities have been unwilling to give Albanians positions of authority. Language rights are considered to be the most difficult issue in the negotiations, and

while achievements have been made, more progress is needed, especially in regards to education (International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 15). The Constitution does allow for both primary and secondary education to be conducted in the ethnic community languages (International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 17). However, this leads to problems of segregation, which could lead to increased tensions. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, youth-integrated education is one potential avenue for increasing interethnic dialogue and exposure to individuals of diverse backgrounds. One of the major challenges facing the country today is decentralization (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2005, p. 5). Decentralization was seen as a main Albanian demand in 2001, and refers to the transfer of powers to the local level. To date, this process has occurred slowly and at an uneven pace. This is likely a result of institutions lacking the necessary tools to facilitate this process, as well as a lack of political will on the part of the Macedonian parties. Decentralization will be further addressed in Chapter Four as a potential solution of continued support and management for identity politics in Macedonia.

Highlighting the concerns over the domestic political situation in Macedonia, a 2010 Gallup Balkan Monitor's survey indicated that Macedonians are the most concerned about a possible return to military conflict, while the vast majority of the other Balkan countries are not (p. 6). In Macedonia, 28% of respondents were most likely to say that it was probable or certain that war would break out in the region (Gallup Balkan Monitor, 2010, p. 9). However, the share of respondents who believed that there was no possibility of another war rose from 55% to 64% in 2010 (Gallup Balkan Monitor, 2010, p. 14). In a report completed by Forum (Irwin, 2002) following the armed conflict of 2001, Macedonians and Albanians were asked to list their views of the causes of the conflict, in

order of significance. The top cause for Macedonians was “activities of Albanian paramilitary groups still operating in Macedonia,” and for the Albanians it was “discrimination against minority ethnic groups in employment, education and language rights” (Irwin, 2002, p. 63).

3.3 Conclusion

As has been demonstrated through this methodology chapter, various reports conclude that Macedonia does deserve to join the EU once it has completed the necessary requirements. Progress has been made throughout the last twenty years, such as the signing of the SAA, the OFA, and the recommendations to start negotiations. The combined methods approach of this thesis was crucial to gaining insight into the current political situation in Macedonia, as most of the academic literature tends to revolve around the name dispute. Interviews, media sources, legal documents, international and NGO reports, all demonstrated and assessed the level of involvement with and recognition of minority rights. Academic sources, in both German and English, have been used in the thesis to reflect the importance of interethnic relations for Macedonia. No specific part of the methodology was considered to be more important over other sections. Each resource contributed to the overall purpose of the thesis, which was to highlight identity politics in the form of interethnic relations in Macedonia. With the recent outbreak of violence in Macedonia, international support has never been more crucial to Macedonian stability. The ICJ judgement last year gave support and validation to the Macedonian people of their right to use their name Macedonia. Interethnic relations remain a critical component of Macedonia’s journey in becoming an EU member. The interviewees remain hopeful that Macedonia will join the EU, but when is the ultimate

question. Other requirements of the Copenhagen criteria and the *acquis communautaire* also need to be resolved, including economic issues. These other issues are often given less attention, as the name dispute dominates the headlines. How Brussels sees the situation in Macedonia today and how Macedonia perceives interethnic relations play a role in the country's development. If Macedonia perceives its interethnic relations as crucial to attaining membership, likely more resources will be given to further enhance interethnic relations. However, as has been evident, most of the attention is directed towards the name dispute. If the name dispute is resolved, perhaps the country will be able to fulfill the rest of the criteria required for membership. Chapter Four will further analyze current interethnic relations in Macedonia, in terms of identity politics.

4 Chapter: What lies ahead for Macedonia, identity politics, and minority issues?

Thus far this thesis has provided a brief overview of the history of Macedonia, an analysis of identity politics, nationalism, and ethnicity, and a discussion of the methodology. This chapter addresses how joining the EU might affect identity politics and interethnic relations for Macedonia. This thesis argues that minority rights will continue to be a focus for officials both in Brussels and Macedonia, not only in terms of Albanians but Roma, Vlachs, Serbians, and Turkish populations. As Macedonia is ethnically diverse, it is impossible for internal and external officials to ignore these minority issues. However, focusing mainly on Albanians – which is currently the case in Macedonia – limits the amount of attention given to other minority groups. This chapter makes a case for using identity politics to study Macedonia's interethnic relations. What direction will Macedonia follow with respect to European integration? How well are identity politics managed today, and will they be better managed once Macedonia becomes an EU Member State? Will the issue of minority rights play a decisive role in EU accession? This thesis has argued that minority rights certainly do play a role in whether the country has sufficiently fulfilled all of the Copenhagen criteria, which is one of the main requirements for achieving integration. Minority rights, more specifically promoting improved interethnic relations, remain an area that continues to require constant supervision and further management in Macedonia. This chapter discusses the potential avenues as to how this constant supervision and management could continue to take place, either by the way of federalism, partition, decentralization, or official multiculturalism, though these are not by any means limited or the only available

formulas.

Although Macedonia has undoubtedly achieved progress in its reforms, as has been demonstrated in the European Commission Progress reports and several of the interviews conducted in Brussels (European Commission, 2011a; European Commission 2010), the EU continues to be concerned about political stability. Several of the reports on Macedonia are concerned about the “political dialogue between the ethnic Macedonian and Albanian communities” (Bokulic & Kostadinova, 2008, p. 24). There has been an increase in political dialogue among the ethnic communities, since the implementation of the OFA, but further progress and implementation of reforms is needed. Most EU members support Macedonia joining the EU; even Greece supports membership, as long as the name dispute is resolved. While scepticism continues to surround the overall future role of the EU, it remains an important player in international relations. Other Balkan countries are clearly interested in becoming EU members, as membership provides political and economic benefits. Politically, joining the EU would allow nation-states to pursue objectives they cannot otherwise reach by themselves, promote and protect democracy, and provide security. The economic reasons to join the EU reflect the increasing economic interdependence and globalization competition. They include access to the largest global market with increasing levels of supply and demand, positive effects on growth, technological progress, investment, price and trade liberalization, competition, macroeconomic stability, and access to the EU budget. However, it has been noted that the economic crisis in Europe, in addition to the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, may have weakened current candidate countries’ or future candidate countries’ political will to comply with EU regulations and requirements

(Koinova, 2011, p. 808). Based on the research conducted for this thesis, it can be stated that although the name dispute continues to affect Macedonia, Macedonia will one-day likely become an EU member. Yet as evident from the research, Macedonia continues to face other problems, and even if the name dispute is resolved in the near future, Macedonia will have to completely fulfill all of the Copenhagen criteria prior to achieving integration. With Macedonia's future in becoming part of the EU, this brings forward other important questions, such as what it would mean for Macedonia to be an EU Member State and adopt an EU persona. How would this affect the country's national identity, if at all? Historically, Macedonia has promoted a strong national identity, especially since its independence in 1991. As a member of the EU – which perpetuates the idea of a 'united Europe' with shared norms and values – it may be inevitable that this will, in fact, have a significant impact on the development of Macedonian national identity. EU membership would presumably weaken the importance of political borders, making Albanians and Macedonians citizens of a larger entity, the EU, and binding them to EU legal norms. Would being part of the EU thus resolve some of the identity issues faced by Macedonians? Becoming a member of the EU is a long sought after goal, similar to their objective of becoming a member of NATO. Joining the EU would give the people of Macedonia validation that they are a distinct nation, recognized by a credible and renowned supranational institution as having their own language, territory, people, and culture. The EU sees the Western Balkans as an integral area for Europe, and Macedonia itself can be seen as crucial to the stability of the region as a whole.

On the national side, in Macedonia, political leaders who perceive the interethnic situation as directly related to future EU accession will ultimately affect the amount of

attention minority rights receive in nationalist policies. For example, the leader of the Albanian Democratic Union for Integration, Ali Ahmeti – the DUI is a member of the ruling government coalition – has stated that “Macedonia’s future as a country depends on good inter-ethnic relations” (Tanjug, Radio Serbia, 2012). Many of the interviewees referred to political will in Macedonia, as it is the will of the government to finally overcome the name dispute, thus allowing the country to focus on other prominent issues. Politicians in Macedonia are motivated by the promise of EU membership. Several of the interviewees, both in Brussels and Macedonia, cited EU accession as a top priority on Macedonia’s political agenda. However, as noted by the International Crisis Group (2004), politicians push forth reform policies and help secure peaceful coexistence, through both the perpetuated rhetoric within the country and the leaders’ willingness to work with other international figures to make the name dispute a top priority on Macedonia’s political agenda (p. 1). Therefore, Macedonian perceptions of the importance of the ethnic identity factor will enable the country to proceed with discussions on the name dispute and provide the country increased support for promoting improved ethnic relations.

The historical and sometimes tumultuous relationship between Macedonians and Albanians hinders the development of improved interethnic relations. Macedonians often refer to the long tradition of Albanian nationalism in their country (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 565). They allege that Albanian extremists in Kosovo intend to occupy the Albanian-populated regions of Macedonia – mainly the western part of Macedonia (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 565). Macedonians thus have fears of Albanian irredentism. In the Balkans, nation-building efforts have traditionally been built upon characteristics of nationhood,

including language, ethnicity, and religion. As a result, it is nationality rather than citizenship that acts as an indicator of membership in the nation (Roudometof, 1996, p. 257). With this understanding, Roudometof (1996) argues that any concern for minorities implies “irredentist activity” (p. 257). Macedonians assume that Albanians do not wish to integrate into Macedonian society and are disloyal to the state, intending to unite with other Albanians (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 565). The conflict with the Albanians is often viewed as part of the Macedonian Question (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 565). The Macedonians regard this question as the age-old struggle of the Macedonian people for national affirmation against the aspirations of other, neighbouring countries, namely, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Albania (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 565). Albanians tend to view the conflict in terms of discrimination against the Albanian minority (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 565). Albanians have felt the disparities since the Ottoman Empire, and specifically during communist rule. As was demonstrated in the discussion of the Constitution in the previous chapter, ethnic Macedonians tend to present the state as ‘exclusively theirs,’ which further deepens the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy (Brunnbauer, 2004, p. 566). Further concerns for the Macedonians include the increasing demographic growth of Albanians; this tends to cause the Macedonians great stress, the latter, according to Brunnbauer (2004), “fear becoming a minority in their own country” (p. 568). In the past, neighbouring countries have vied for Macedonia’s territory, and its borders, language, culture, and identity have been externally contested. Although Macedonia still perceives external threats to its identity and state, it tends to be more hostile toward its own minority groups, and sees any outburst of violent activity as a perceived threat to an identity that has been incessantly challenged.

What are the potential successful formulas for the future management of identity politics in Macedonia? The focus of this thesis has not been on how to resolve ethnic conflicts – as Macedonia has experienced, on a comparative level, less ethnic violence than other Balkan states – but rather to use identity politics as a theoretical foundation to analyze its impact on interethnic relations in Macedonia in terms of future EU integration. Four options for future management will be taken into consideration, namely: multiculturalism, partition, federalism, and decentralization. It is important to note that this does not reflect an all-encompassing analysis of potential formulas or solutions, but rather a selection of the most likely options given Macedonia's history and current situation. Further research could examine how the people of Macedonia view these formulas or potential policies and evaluate which ones they consider to be most probable and sustainable.

First, multiculturalism will be discussed as a potential successful formula for the future management of identity politics. Multiculturalism appeared in the 1970s, in reference to Canadian and Australian policy towards national minority groups (Mills, 2007, p. 89). According to Mills (2007), it refers to an all-encompassing political category (p. 89). As a result, it centres on culture, recognition, and identity politics; therefore, it is a reasonable strategy to take into consideration when examining Macedonia's role in managing interethnic relations. Multiculturalism has been seen both as a state policy and as a minority activist demand (Mills, 2007, p. 89). Multiculturalism can involve the imposition of one culture on another or others, often with an air of superiority (Taylor, 1992, p. 63). Multiculturalism was one of the subjects raised during several of the interviews conducted for this thesis. Interviewees in Macedonia suggested

that there needs to be more of a multicultural aspect incorporated into Macedonian society, not just for Albanians, but for all minorities. Multiculturalism is a contested term in the media, and has come under assault in Europe of late. The current British Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and the former French President Nicolas Sarkozy have claimed that multiculturalism has allegedly failed (Daily Mail Reporter, 2011). How can an ethnically mixed country like Macedonia achieve inner stability when a potential solution – multiculturalism – has seemingly been discredited in Europe? Is multiculturalism a viable option for an ethnically divided country such as Macedonia? Although multiculturalism may differ considerably from Canada to Europe, it should still not be considered a failure in Europe but instead as a basin of hope that could contribute to improved interethnic relations.

Partition is seen as a politically charged topic (Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl, 2009, p. 82) and one that warrants a brief analysis in the context of Macedonia. It has been argued that “partition is probably the best solution for deeply entrenched ethnic conflicts” (Kaufmann as cited in Saideman, Dougherty, & Jenne, 2005, p. 613).

Territorial partition is often proposed when there is instability of power sharing after civil wars (Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl, 2009, p. 82). Moreover, it is a controversial formula for successfully managing ethnic relations; Kaufmann (1996) has advocated for the use of separation with partition and claims that it “reduces both incentives and opportunity for further combat, and largely eliminates both reasons and chances for ethnic cleansing of civilians” (p. 137). According to Dikov (2012), “a pre-emptive division of Macedonia, bold and tough an option as it might seem, could turn out to be the one providing the most sustainable solution.” Partition would have a domino effect, setting a precedent for

other countries that cannot function as multicultural societies. In the case of Macedonia, would partition stop with the Albanians? Would the other minorities in Macedonia want to secede and unite with their homelands as well? This would be impossible for minorities such as Roma, Turks, or Bosniaks. Yet, in the case of Macedonia, the idea of partition could also contribute to the emergence of a Greater Albania. Ultimately, in all likelihood partition is not a realistic idea, though admittedly it is one that is contested, reintroduced, and debated in the media. The debate over whether partition is a feasible option in the case of Macedonia sheds light on other issues such as citizenship and the question of home.

The idea of partition is often put forth as a solution when, after a war, ethnic identities can become hardened, which can make interethnic cooperation difficult (Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl, 2009, pp. 82-83). In addition, the hardening of ethnic identities increases the vulnerability of individuals being attacked due to their group membership (Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl, 2009, pp. 82-83). However, partition is rarely seen as a successful solution as it typically involves violence, mass expulsions, changes to the political boundaries, and ethnic cleansings, as exemplified in India and Pakistan in 1948 as well as in the case of Israel and Palestine. While the idea of partition is not new, it is one that should be addressed. Several other questions are worthy of additional research; such as how Macedonian-Albanians identify themselves and whether they in fact consider Macedonia as part of their identity or can develop a Macedonian civic identity. Despite this ongoing debate, some of my informants remain hopeful that Macedonia could eventually become a role model of a functioning multiethnic state in the

Western Balkans. If the population of Macedonia has lived a rather peaceful existence, why should separation and partition be presented as a future possibility?

Since the post-Cold War era, federalism has emerged as another major issue on the political agenda as a result of the emerging nationalist and ethnic tensions (G. Smith, 1995, p. 1). Federalism has been seen as a way of governance in multiethnic societies (G. Smith, 1995, p. 2) and as such requires some evaluation as a tool to manage identity politics in Macedonia. According to Popovski (1995), federalism refers to the “balance of political power between central and local governments with the aim of preserving both similarities between them and the identities of different units” (p. 181). The former Yugoslavia is an example of a federation of equal states, although they were treated as administrative units (Popovski, 1995, p. 187). Dikov (2012) argues that many ethnic Albanians believe that in twenty, fifteen, or even ten years, they will be in a position to demand the federalization of Macedonia or to secede. Federalism is therefore another feasible option and is not seen as extreme or as drastic as partition.

However, federalism is considered only one of the many ways that identity politics can be managed (Agnew, 1995, p. 300). Federalism, in general, is not an avenue that is eagerly approached. It involves the principle of shared sovereignty between two governments, and thus requires the sharing of both institutions and power, as such it is not a favourable option. According to G. Smith (1995), federalism is “an ideology which holds that the ideal organisation of human affairs is best reflected in the celebration of diversity through unity” (p. 4). Yet, federalism is often recommended as a means for managing interethnic group conflict that might otherwise lead to violence and the proliferation of mini-states (Agnew, 1995, p. 296). It is debatable on the Macedonian end

as to how much support this idea would receive, given the country's reluctance to concede to Albanian demands, which are often viewed as threatening to their nation and state.

Decentralization has been a key focus for Macedonia, particularly since the implementation of the OFA, and remains an area of concern for the EU. Decentralization refers to the transition and distribution of powers from central authorities to local ones. Decentralization affects many sectors, including health care, gender inequality, the environment, interethnic relations, education, public administration reform, and inter-municipal cooperation. For the purposes of this thesis, only interethnic relations will be discussed. The local self-government must be aware of the possibilities of interethnic conflict. Forums that take place in an effort to encourage decentralization should accurately represent and equally respect ethnic identity and the interests of all its citizens (Josifovski, Jakovcevska, Kasami, & Josifovska, 2007). How much emphasis should be placed on the strategy of decentralization as a viable formula for promoting improved interethnic relations? Criticisms and problems surround some of the decentralization process in Macedonia, including a lack of vision in terms of progress or goals. Nevertheless, it is an ongoing process in Macedonia, and more attention could be devoted to it as a continued successful formula for identity politics.

Although four different formulas for continued and future management of identity politics and minority rights have been discussed, the research conducted for this thesis determined another way to promote integration and peaceful existence in Macedonia: through youth-integrated education. Several of the interviewees, both in Brussels and

Macedonia, suggested this approach as an opportunity to ensure cohesion and mutual understanding. One interviewee on the issue of separate schooling stated

language is being used as a means of separation, rather than inclusion. It's not championed; the right to use your own language has been misused, it is used as a means for political control. It is not being used as a means to assert one's right within a country, within an inclusive society. (Someone who understands well the political scene in Macedonia, personal communication, August 2011)

While ethnic communities have the right to be taught in their mother tongue, there should be additional opportunities available for youth to interact with other students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. These opportunities could include basic activities such as sports or theatre. Finding a common ground between the two ethnic groups is key in promoting improved relations. One of the interviewees⁶ in Macedonia suggested that having more mixed school programs and activities would help bridge the gap and both introduce and expose youth to individuals of diverse backgrounds, thus creating a safe and open environment that promotes peaceful coexistence. Another interviewee, (Someone who understands well the political scene in Macedonia, personal communication, August 2011), said "There's a whole new generation of young people growing up there who have no contact across ethnic barriers." The focus, many of the interviewees agreed, should be on integration and cohesion, not assimilation. There are NGOs in Macedonia that already focus on providing integrative lessons; as noted by the informants, it is important for these lessons/activities not to be imposed. Many of the interviewees have argued that the Macedonians and Albanians are leading parallel but ultimately separate lives, and that

⁶ This interviewee remains anonymous due to inability to confirm written recognition of stating identity and affiliation.

there are ways to rectify this, as aforementioned, through integrated education. While this approach could initiate positive interethnic relations, it is not seen as an immediate solution. Integrated education takes time and requires resources, and it would have to be mutually acceptable with both ethnic enclaves. However, a short-term solution could be to introduce pilot projects, as noted by one of the informants (Someone who understands well the political scene in Macedonia, personal communication, August 2011).

4.1 Rising tensions

Extremism “challenges ethnic relationships,” as is evident in the case of Macedonia (Karadaku, 2012). Whether it is a perceived or real difference between certain groups, tensions still exist as a result of poverty, marginalization, and post-conflict efforts, including, but not limited to, decentralization, implementation of the Law on Languages, equal opportunities, and respect for and protection of minorities (Karadaku, 2012). As previously mentioned, a lack of political dialogue does provide some reason for concern. Areas of culture, specifically religion and language divide Macedonians and Albanians, and further illustrate the ways in which each ethnic group is divided by ‘us’ and ‘them’ thinking. Many of the interviewees commented on Macedonians and Albanians living separate and non-interactive lives, as is exemplified in the lack of intermarriage in Macedonia. This division is possibly due to religious and language factors. According to Staniševski and Miller (2009), 65% of the population is Orthodox Christian, while 29% is Muslim (p. 557). One of the interviewees, (Someone who understands well the political scene in Macedonia, personal communication, August 2011) argued “that by learning Albanian and Macedonian, you get access to both scripts [Cyrillic and Latin], access to a script that uses Cyrillic, which is used right across

Eastern Europe. Access to Albanian that [has] roots in languages used elsewhere in Europe, that builds your linguistic skills.” While many Albanians speak Macedonian for business purposes, few Macedonians speak Albanian. Due to business ventures in light of the economic crisis, more interaction between the two ethnic groups has been prevalent, which gives hope to promoting positive ethnic relations. Several of the interviewees in Macedonia noted the benefits of learning more than one language in a society, in terms of business venues and future opportunities in the workforce. Despite these prospects, according to several scholarly sources (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007; Phillips, 2004; Barany, 2005; Brunnbauer, 2004), the major domestic issue in Macedonia remains the political tension between Macedonians and Albanians.

Fears have recently increased in Macedonia over heightened ethnic tensions, which have been discussed by several media sources. This chapter demonstrates how the media currently reviews the situation in Macedonia in light of recent violent episodes. On 29 February 2012, a Macedonian police officer shot dead two young Albanian men in the town of Gostivar (The Sophia Echo, 2012). However, as *The Economist* (2012) notes, this event may or may not have been motivated by ethnicity. The tensions escalated further by 9 March 2012 and resulted in a series of attacks between the two main ethnic groups. At a village carnival, both Muslims and Greeks were mocked, which led to anger on both sides (The Economist, 2012). All political leaders, including Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov, Albania’s Foreign Ministry, and Prime Minister Gruevski called for peaceful coexistence (The Sophia Echo, 2012). Peter Stano, a spokesperson for the EU’s Enlargement Commissioner, said he “deeply regretted the beatings and warned against possible emotional consequences” (The Sophia Echo, 2012). The interviewees in

both Brussels and Macedonia – who were interviewed nearly a year prior to these violent acts – had already indicated there had been isolated incidents of ethnic violence in Macedonia since the implementation of the OFA. One of the informants noted that interethnic relations in Macedonia are not without problems “but there has been a legal framework in place which gives certain security to minorities and gives them access to public offices and so on” (L. Javurek, personal communication, May 2011). As noted by *The Economist* (2012), for some people these violent acts elicit memories of the 2001 conflict. These isolated acts were rapidly resolved, as was the case with the most recent incidents. Despite the government and political leaders condemning these actions in February and early March, relations deteriorated further when, on 13 March 2012 in Burrel (an Albanian-populated town), a Macedonian flag was burned (The Sophia Echo, 2012). In the northwestern part of Macedonia, in Tetovo, more than a dozen people were injured in interethnic clashes in March (France-Presse, 2012). With these increasing tensions, many are concerned over the potential repercussions.

The ethnic tensions escalated in Macedonia when five Macedonians were murdered near Skopje on 12 April 2012 (Pavlevski, 2012). Twenty people were eventually arrested on 1 May 2012 as they were suspected of being linked to the murders and membership in a terrorist group. The twenty people arrested by the Macedonian police are allegedly radical Muslims, most of them with Macedonian citizenship (France-Presse, 2012). The arrests consisted of a mass security operation with 800 police officers and Interior Ministry officials. According to a *National Post* report, Interior Minister Gordana Jankulovska referred to the suspects as “Skopje followers of radical Islam” (France-Presse, 2012). Protesting this arrest, on 4 May 2012, 10,000 Albanians led a

march to demand a fair trial for the people accused of the April murders (Sofia News Agency, 2012). As the majority of Albanians in Macedonia practice Islam, how does this then affect the religious and ethnic divide? Or does it have an effect at all? As we have seen since 9/11, there has been an increasingly negative perception of Islam in the West. Will we begin to see similar developments in the Balkans? While this might be the case, ultimately there are other, more important political factors to consider in Macedonia's accession process.

Macedonian authorities are calling the recent ethnic violence as isolated incidents between Macedonians and Albanians (Tanjug, Radio Serbia, 2012). According to Jankulovska there has been "a clear message that violence will not be tolerated in Macedonia, regardless of its origin and the ethnicity of the perpetrators and victims" (Tanjug, Radio Serbia, 2012). In news reports, Jankulovska has stated that the Ministry has reacted severely and promptly, in terms of settling the incidents in a very short time period. If any more acts of ethnic violence occur, they must be dealt with in a similar manner to avoid any further escalation. Although the international media has speculated about a wider conflict developing in the region, according to one of Macedonia's 'leading security analysts,' "there is no danger of further worsening inter-ethnic relations" (Pavlevski, 2012). These conflicting news reports demonstrate the role that the media plays in terms of highlighting or deemphasizing highly controversial incidents. While violent acts have been prevalent in Macedonia over recent months and have been cited by the media as escalating even further, the attacks themselves have ranged from beatings on buses and flag burnings to murders. It is important to note that the situation has not

developed into a full-scale conflict between the two main ethnic groups and is being managed by political leaders on both sides of the ethnic communities.

Given the focus of this thesis on identity politics, how are these developments relevant in the current situation in Macedonia? In the last twenty years, conflict in the country has been relatively absent, and relatively little violence has taken place since independence in comparison to the large-scale violence in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Macedonian identity politics are not as acute as elsewhere in the region when compared with Bosnia and Kosovo; they are thus less likely to ignite major conflict. Despite their lack of intensity, identity politics still possess the ability to destabilize Macedonia, especially if political leaders and the EU do not carefully continue to manage them. Identity politics have and continue to plague Macedonia's consolidation of a mature democracy and thus the country's EU membership prospects.

4.2 NATO

In addition to joining the EU, Macedonia would like to become a member of the NATO but has been repeatedly denied membership as a result of the name dispute. Macedonia has been involved with NATO in various forms. In 1999, the country was granted a Membership Action Plan to prepare for future membership, and the country has been involved in several NATO-led and United States-led operations; the former in the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, and the latter in Iraq (Foreign Policy Initiative, 2012). Macedonia applied for NATO membership in 2005, and expected to become a member at the 2008 Bucharest Summit. However, due to Greece's opposition to the name 'Macedonia,' the country was refused entry, despite meeting the NATO criteria for membership. As such, there was considerable speculation in the lead up to the 2012

NATO Summit in Chicago over whether Macedonia would be invited to join. Eighty-five percent of the population wanted the country to become a NATO member; these numbers were indicative of the importance of NATO's decision (Taleski, 2012). With the recent spike in interethnic violence in Macedonia, it has been argued that Macedonia should be permitted to join NATO (Somun, 2012). If Macedonia had been accepted four years ago, at the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit, this could have led to further "stability, peace and security in the region" (Somun, 2012). Daniel Server, an expert on the Balkans, stated that

the (Chicago) NATO Summit should issue an invitation for membership to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, or to Macedonia by whatever name Skopje and Athens may agree on. The United States should make it clear to Greece that repeating the mistake of Bucharest is not acceptable, as the ICJ has already said." (Somun, 2012)

Over 100 countries have now recognized Macedonia's constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia. This name is used in bilateral relations by all of the United Nations Security Council members, excluding France, and most NATO member nations, with the exception of Albania and Greece (Somun, 2012). If the stalemate on negotiations was to end, and the EU began the promotion of formal accession talks, this would have two important benefits. First, it may help cement existing reforms that would enhance Macedonia's economy and secondly it may secure political stability in the country (Iris, 2012). Joining NATO would likely provide Macedonians with a further validation of their national identity. Delaying EU and NATO accession could undermine interethnic relations, as the Albanians do not share the same views as Macedonians towards the

name dispute with Greece (Iris, 2012). In fact, many Albanians are frustrated by the lengthy debate over the use of the name Macedonia, as this debate does not involve a conversation of their individual ethnic identity. Accession into NATO would thus lessen the risk of interethnic violence, as accession is desirable by both Albanians and Macedonians alike. This, in turn, would enhance the overall security environment.

The decisions of the 2012 NATO Summit were discouraging for Macedonians. Similar to the 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO members called for a resolution of the name dispute. In NATO's Chicago Summit Declaration (2012), heads of states and governments participating issued the following statement on Macedonia:

We reiterate the agreement at our 2008 Bucharest Summit, as we did at subsequent Summits, to extend an invitation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to join the Alliance as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue has been reached within the framework of the UN, and strongly urge intensified efforts towards that end. An early solution, and subsequent membership, will contribute to security and stability in the region. We encourage the negotiations to be pursued without further delay and expect them to be concluded as soon as possible. We welcome, and continue to support, the ongoing reform efforts in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and encourage continued implementation. We also encourage its efforts to further build a multi-ethnic society. We appreciate the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's substantial contributions to our operations, as well as its active role in regional cooperation activities. We value the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's long-standing commitment to the NATO accession process. (Paragraph 26)

Having been denied membership for a second time, the Foreign Policy Initiative (2012) stated that “the United States and its allies missed an opportunity to renew NATO’s internal vitality and international relevance.” This rejection may now play a role in destabilizing interethnic relations in Macedonia, since this was a disappointment to many, although it is difficult to tell what the future effects may be. Commenting on the NATO Chicago Summit, a disappointed Macedonian Prime Minister Gruevski referred to NATO’s “policy of double standards, unprincipled-ness and moving away from the values they themselves publicly proclaim, I have not seen in a long time as is the case with Macedonia” (Taleski, 2012).

4.3 Conclusion

Does the stability of the Balkans rest on Macedonia or will it be the next country to erupt in conflict? Despite being on the edge of full-blown war in 2001, Macedonia has come a long way. Yet, in spite of its progress towards accession, the country has frequent periods of instability. Regardless of the recent violent acts, the actions of the political leaders of Macedonia make it unlikely that the country’s interethnic relations will deteriorate further. That being said, it does not mean that there should be any less emphasis on continued management or future supervision of interethnic relations by local leaders, the EU, and the international community. Macedonia has been able to succeed without any major violence because of the leaders’ role in managing interethnic relations. However, it is unavoidable that recent events will affect the country’s future accession prospects and inevitably slow down progress – though to what extent is still too early to predict. The international community needs to demonstrate a united front towards Macedonia, which means finally allowing it to become a member of NATO. While it

may not play a significant factor in Albanians' identity, perhaps it would create positive reinforcement and provide some validation for ethnic Macedonians, thus allowing them to focus on creating a positive environment for all of its peoples. Identity politics are continually at play in Macedonia and in the Balkans as a whole. They have the potential to play an explosive role in other areas of the Balkans. If violence were to erupt in Bosnia or Kosovo, events would undoubtedly spill-over into Macedonia. Thus, the EU's interests and efforts in the region must continue, and political leaders in Macedonia must support the country's progress and promote improved ethnic relations, and most notably, agree on a resolution to the name dispute.

Conclusion

The thesis has illustrated the ways in which identity politics, in the form of interethnic relations, affect EU integration. Identity politics have been used as the theoretical foundation of the thesis, and have been understood and reiterated as the policies and discourses pursued and used by the Macedonian state and Macedonian and Albanian political actors. Clearly, as indicated by several reports and the conducted interviews, Macedonia's accession to the EU is a top priority for officials in both Brussels and Macedonia. Interviews with NGOs have also highlighted the importance of EU integration. However, the Macedonian-Greek name dispute remains an obstacle to membership, as Greece has the right as a Member State to veto accession talks. The name dispute in Macedonia continues to remain a high priority for Macedonia's political leaders. While the name dispute has garnered more media attention, this thesis looked beyond the name dispute and considered other, internal possible debilitating factors in joining the EU. The name dispute inevitably affects the country's progress; yet Macedonia has made strides since 2005, achieving several significant benchmarks. In the final assessment of this thesis it is indubitable that Macedonia will become an EU member, but as indicated by several of the interviewees, *when* is the debatable part of the question. Reflecting the complicated situation, one of the interviewees stated (in regards to the timing of EU integration): "It is always 5-10 years, but it was 5-10 years, 10 years ago" (S. Klekovski, personal communication, August 2011). It is thus difficult to predict Macedonia's future with respect to interethnic relations, as it is impossible to foresee its date of future membership; the former is affected by involvement of the EU. Nonetheless, with continued management and support, on the international and local level, either

through any of the aforementioned formulas (multiculturalism, partition, federalism, and decentralization), each ethnic community will ideally continue to coexist in 'relative' peace. The thesis has argued that partition is the least likely and most drastic solution; federalism does not have considerable support, while decentralization is already being implemented through the OFA, though its progress has been slow. Finally, multiculturalism, while seemingly discredited in Europe, clearly remains another viable formula. Arguably what is needed is continued involvement overall and increasing support for improving interethnic relations. Identity politics have complicated the name dispute with Greece and have clearly undermined political stability in the region. With an eye to the future, the conclusion will consider the implications of the research and analyze what lessons can be taken away for identity politics, interethnic relations, and Macedonia.

Since the integration of the CEEC in 2004 and Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, the Western Balkans likely represents the next chapter of EU integration. The conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia have allowed for more attention to be placed on the importance of minority rights. The issue of minority rights is never-ending; in 1992, Glenny (1992) argued that the fighting in Croatia, Bosnia, and Moldova, resulted from the failure to solve the problems surrounding minorities (p. 100). Glenny (1992) had proposed a long-term solution that would include a normative system, which he argued that the international community lacked at the time of the conflicts, and had thus presented a policy of localized solutions in the Balkans (p. 100). It is debatable whether this approach has really changed in the last twenty years, since there have not been any major violent outbursts. Since the emergence of new nation-states with the collapse of the

Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and the creation of the Copenhagen criteria, minority rights have become integral for achieving internal stability. Compared with the rest of the region, Macedonia's route to independence was characterized by relatively stable interethnic relations. The importance placed on democracy has shed light on the inherent dangers that could arise from democratic consolidation, such as the need to create a state in which there exists one national dominant group and perceived minority populations (Glenny, 1992, p. 235). The intent of this research is to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of Macedonia through a different lens, as the political situation in Macedonia is often plagued by the name dispute. The topic of interethnic relations will continue to be important for not only Macedonia, but the wider region as well. Enhancing the overall security environment will likely improve interethnic relations and promote stability in the region. This would also contribute to other avenues, such as increased economic interest, allowing for further investments to take place in the Balkans, creating stable and prospering economies. This would in turn ideally increase the standard of living in Macedonia, which has been a source of contention with all minorities.

While many other minorities are present in Macedonia, the focus of this thesis has been on the Albanian minority, as it represents by far the largest minority in Macedonia. Additionally, the Albanian minority has encountered many internal challenges within Macedonia, including achieving language rights and equal opportunities. The intense focus on Albanian minority issues has often led to the marginalization of other minority groups within Macedonia. Therefore further research should be done on other minorities, such as the Roma, Vlachs, Turkish, and Serbian populations, to determine if they possess any role in identity politics and thus EU integration. Minority issues only receive as much

attention as political leaders place on them. Although the name dispute is typically the primary reason provided for Macedonia's prolonged delay at entering the EU, identity politics are still at play. While identity politics have often been used to study the Macedonian-Greek relationship, this thesis argues that they can be used to study the internal politics of Macedonia as well. The thesis has argued that identity politics are clearly important and significant in Macedonia's democratic consolidation. They play a role in how Macedonians and Albanians define themselves and how political leaders vie for national interests and equal rights. Recent events in Macedonia, as discussed in Chapter Four, provide an insight into the function of identity politics today. Based on the research conducted for this thesis, identity politics still play a role in terms of stabilizing or destabilizing interethnic relations, as they certainly do complicate internal stability in Macedonia, and as a result have the potential to further destabilize Macedonia, which is already faced with external problems over the name dispute.

This thesis has been structured in chronological order, from Macedonia's development under the Ottoman Empire to becoming part of Yugoslavia, then an independent state, and eventually an EU candidate country in the present. The first chapter contextualized Macedonia, in a historical setting, demonstrating the continuous threats Macedonia has felt to its borders, peoples, and territory since the Balkan Wars. This chapter demonstrated the importance of history, as has been evident in the case of Macedonia; history has been used and abused for national purposes. As is the case with the other parts of the Balkans, Macedonia's national identity has been defined by the construction of historical narratives, which has contributed to the development of what Anderson would refer to as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991; Roudometof,

1996, p. 254). Although historical narratives are typically used to explain Macedonia's and Greece's claims to the use of the name Macedonia, it can be attributed to Macedonians and Albanians, as it relates to irredentist claims, and the fact that often the ties to a particular homeland or territory rest upon historical claims (Roudometof, 1996, pp. 284-285). As Macedonia fears threats to its territorial integrity, further research could be conducted to determine if this is indeed a realistic fear or part of Macedonia's perceived threat to its national identity via its territory. As has been evident throughout the thesis, ethnic instability has proved at times challenging for both the Macedonians and Albanians. The threats experienced by Macedonia from its neighbours, namely, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, negatively impact Macedonia's perception of its own minorities; the Macedonian elite sees any domestic or internal challenges to its national identity as a security threat to the state and Macedonia's age old struggle for recognition.

As the chapters have indicated, the creation of Yugoslavia and leadership under Tito, have played strong roles in cementing Macedonia's identity. This thesis has not supported the claim that Macedonian identity was in fact a Titoist invention; rather it has argued that a distinct Macedonian nation has existed since as early as the 1890s. Nationalism and ethnicity will continue to play a role in the development of Macedonia's identity, and as such should be considered important components of further research on the country. In Macedonia a strong state identity for Macedonians has been created along ethnic lines by politicians such as Prime Minister Gruevski, and has been encouraged through nationalist rhetoric, with the reinterpretation of historical ancestors and symbols and their use in contemporary relations, such as the construction of contemporary monuments and buildings. Defining national identities along narrow ethnic or cultural

terms is problematic (Winter, 2011, p. 3). These narrow definitions tend to be homogenizing and preclude ethnic minorities from full participation in society (Winter, 2011, p. 3). As is evident in Macedonia with the construction of the buildings in Skopje's central square, Macedonians faced several repercussions for their exclusion of other minorities.

The use of identity politics as a theoretical tradition allowed for the examination of other relevant terms, including identity, nationalism, and nations, which were addressed thoroughly in Chapter Two. Admittedly, criticisms surround the use and alleged abuse of identity politics; however, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of continuing to use the term today as it is evident that identity politics continue to effect the development of politics with ethnic groups vying for political power and proclaiming their identity along ethnic lines. Identities and borders have become more politicized, thus creating a greater need for studying identity politics in contemporary ethnic relations. The research conducted on Macedonia could be used as a prototype for studying identity politics in other areas, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina or Kosovo, with their history of conflict and pressing need for ensuring adherence to minority right concerns.

The results determined by the thesis, through empirical and analytical research, provided intricate evaluations of the current situation in Macedonia from a variety of informed sources. The use of primary documents such as the Interim Accord, the SAA, and the OFA provided an analysis of the legal setting in Macedonia in terms of the legislation implemented regarding minority rights and the main document surrounding the name dispute. Reports focusing on Macedonia were selected to provide a solid

account of different interpretations of political stability in Macedonia. The assessments contained in the reports were mainly positive; however, most of the research was conducted in 2011, prior to the outburst of violence in 2012. Thus, it is challenging to determine if the informants or the selected reports would now have the same conclusions. The importance of identity politics in Macedonia was questioned in light of the development of the country to date. The political climate of Macedonia at times has been unstable, but as the 2011 election demonstrated, the country is considered to be in compliance with international democratic standards. The EU's continued interest and engagement, not only in Macedonia but in the rest of the region, reflects the importance the EU places on stability in the Western Balkans.

In conclusion, the overall assessment of the thesis regarding the relationship between Macedonians and Albanians and the country's future membership in the EU is both positive and unwaveringly hopeful. Although Macedonia has admittedly been at a stalemate in its accession talks, the ICJ ruling and looming potential of finally joining NATO will likely encourage a faster pace of reforms. The consolidation of democracy, and with it minority rights, are crucial to ensuring overall stability in both Macedonia and the Balkans. Therefore, it remains a critical component of the Copenhagen criteria, and Macedonia's future as an EU member. Ultimately, Macedonia will not be allowed entry until it has successfully fulfilled *all* of the appropriate criteria. Yet, it is apparent that despite threats to its identity from various neighbours over the course of Macedonia's history, Macedonia continues to thrive. Even though the thesis has consistently brought forth examples of the discrimination experienced by Albanians, and argued that the political dialogue remains strained in various areas, overall the situation has in fact

improved since the implementation of the OFA. The recent events, though dispiriting, do not discredit the success and improvements of the OFA. Isolated events of violence may continue to take place, but as long as continued support is provided from both political leaders and international organizations, they should not escalate. As one of the interviewees in Macedonia noted, people have to find a way to deal with each other, as it is very unlikely that the borders will change (S. Klekovski, personal communication, August 2011). The unfolding of the events in Macedonia will further demonstrate how identity politics can either be stabilizing or destabilizing. If managed correctly, identity politics can promote improved interethnic relations. The use of identity politics in the form of studying interethnic relations in Macedonia can serve as an archetype for analyzing contemporary ethnic relations elsewhere.

Appendix

Questions for Interviews

These questions were given in a semi-structure interview, allowing for flexibility and the informant to feel comfortable discussing the proposed questions.

General questions: please tell me about yourself, where are you from, what is your position and how did you come to obtain it?

Subsequent questions: What is your ethnicity, and if you are comfortable tell me about your political views?

1. How do you currently perceive the situation in Macedonia in regards to EU integration?
2. What do you see as the main obstacles regarding Macedonia's entry into the EU?
3. What other steps could be taken to further the process of democratization in Macedonia in terms of minority rights?
4. What are your concerns regarding integrating the rest of the Balkans in terms of minority issues?
5. How close do you think Macedonia is to joining the EU? When do you believe it will be become a member?
6. How has your perception of the internal affairs in Macedonia changed since the EU granted the country candidate status?
7. What is your perception of the current state of affairs of interethnic relationships in Macedonia?

8. How has the Ohrid Framework Agreement changed the relations between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians?

Follow up question: do you find that ethnic tensions still exist in the country?

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