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# **The Name Game: The Prespa Agreement and the Macedonia naming dispute on the board**

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## Abstract

The process of dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s was characterized by the independence of the republics of Croatia and Slovenia, followed afterwards by Macedonia. However, the independence of the Macedonian republic started a dispute with Greece because of the use of the name Macedonia, which is also the name of the Greek northern province. Thereby, due to a Greek pressure together with the international community, the Republic of Macedonia had to be officially called as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and the negotiations towards its accession into the EU and the NATO had been hindered by Greece until the Macedonian name dispute be resolved. In June 2018 the two countries signed an agreement near to the Prespa Lake in order to put a stop in almost thirty years of controversy. Nevertheless, each country has to negotiate with their respective domestic groups the agreement's ratification, otherwise the dispute will remain without resolution. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to focus on the negotiations between FYROM and Greece in favor of resolving the Macedonian name dispute, and to analyze the importance of domestic groups to reach this objective. A qualitative methodology is employed for this research, making use of bibliographic research based on books, articles, theses, online newspapers, critical analysis and interviews. The use of the Two-level Game Theory as a theoretical framework is fundamental for a better understanding of the negotiations regarding the name dispute. Lastly, the research concludes that the Prespa Agreement ensures the Hellenic and Macedonian identity, culture and history, besides highlighting the challenges that the two parties still have to face.

## Keywords

Macedonia; Greece; Macedonian name dispute; domestic groups; Two-level Game Theory; Prespa Agreement

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# Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini
BC	Before Christ
Cominform	Communist Information Bureau
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMRO	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization
MPs	Members of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ND	New Democracy
NLA	National Liberation Army
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SDSM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
SYRIZA	Radical Left Coalition
TND	Total National Defense
UN	United Nations
URSS	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VMRO-DPMNE	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity



# Introduction

The dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was characterized by a series of separatist and ethnic movements in the region, counting on several armed conflicts due to the resistance of Belgrade -at that time capital of the Yugoslavia under the command of Slobodan Milosevic - regarding the independence of other Western Balkan autonomous countries and territories.

Soon after the independence of Croatia and Slovenia in 1991, one of the former Yugoslav countries to become independent was Macedonia, named constitutionally as Republic of Macedonia. However, Macedonia is also the name given to the northern province of Greece, whose capital is Thessaloniki. Thus, due to the Hellenic historical-cultural past, the use of the name "Macedonia" has displeased the Greeks.

Greece therefore only agreed to the Republic of Macedonia admission into the UN under the provisional name 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (FYROM), becoming a UN member in 1993. In 2008 Greece vetoed the candidacy of the former Yugoslav country into the NATO, due to security reasons. Greece feared that its neighboring country might claim the Hellenic Macedonian province, as well as appropriate its historical-cultural identity, which includes historical figures such as Alexander the Great and Philip II.

In June 2018 the Prime Ministers of FYROM and Greece signed the Prespa Agreement, whose purpose was to change the name of the former Yugoslav country and to end a 27-year dispute. From then on, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would be renamed to Republic of North Macedonia. Nevertheless, for the purpose of ratifying the Agreement, the Macedonian population had to vote by means of a referendum for or against the change of the name in favor of the Macedonian country integration into NATO and European Union.

However, due to a boycott led by domestic groups opposed to the new nomenclature, the referendum did not reach the majority required for the ratification of the Prespa Agreement, which led the name issue to the Greek and Macedonian parliaments. Therefore, in order to ratify the agreement, the governments of the two countries have to negotiate with their respectively domestic groups, due to controversial political, historical, identity and ethnic issues.

The aim of this research is to analyze the negotiations between Greece and North Macedonia towards the name change, and to answer the following question: How do domestic groups of Greece and North Macedonia influence the negotiations regarding the Macedonian name dispute?

The general objective of the research is to analyze the negotiations between Greece and Macedonia aimed at the conflict resolution regarding the Macedonian name, and to understand how domestic influences impact on the negotiations. The specific objectives aim to:

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- Conduct a historical-cultural analysis in order to highlight the differences between Greek Macedonia and Upper Macedonia, indentifying controversies and disagreements;
- Contextualize the dissolution of the Republic of Yugoslavia and the process of independence of its republics, especially Macedonia;
- Conceptualize Game Theory, especially the Two-Level Games, which is employed as theoretical framework to understand the interactions among Greece, Macedonia and their respective domestic groups;
- Point out the main achievements and challenges following the resolution of the Macedonian name dispute.

The interest about this topic emerged when I was studying in Prishtina and doing internship at a NGO of Kosovo. As I was researcher, one of my duties at the NGO was to follow the relations among Western Balkan countries in the economic, political, diplomatic, environmental and social sphere. Thus I started following the talks between FYROM and Greece, and eventually the signature of the Prespa Agreement in June 2018, which was just waiting for being ratified by the two countries. Since at that point I had to elaborate a dissertation project, I started planning the project about the Macedonian name dispute making use of Game Theory, one of my academic interests.

According to Sprinz and Wolinsky (2002, p. 6) International Relations try to explain a broad range of political interactions among countries, societies, and organizations. Therefore, in order to identify and understand all those interactions, it is necessary to adopt different kinds of approaches according to each situation, actor and environment. In what concerns methodology for this research, a qualitative method was employed due to the need to understand the phenomenon in depth analysis, considering as well the context behind the analyzed content. Thus, it is considered that this method allows us to understand the content of the collected data, so that the entire context and content of the collected documents can be interpreted (Della Porta and Keating, 2008, p. 27-28).

In order to understand the historical background and the transition between the Ancient and the Modern Macedonia from secondary data collected by historians, anthropologists, archeologists, sociologists and political scientists, a bibliographic research is adopted to make use of a largely accessible material based on books, articles, theses, online newspapers and critical analysis, which allows the researcher to become familiar regarding the studied object. In addition, a bibliographic research allows the researcher to access a wider range of facts and phenomena than to a directly research (Gil, 2008, p. 50). However, since secondary data may be mistakenly collected or processed, the content analysis method was chosen in favor of giving a better credibility to the research.

Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use. As a technique, content analysis involves specialized procedures. It is learnable and divorceable from

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the personal authority of the researcher. As a research technique, content analysis provides new insights, increases a researcher's understanding of particular phenomena, or informs practical actions. Content analysis is a scientific tool. (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18).

Regarding the content analysis, the research was divided in two parts. The first part focused on documental analysis, specifically on the Prespa Agreement, in order to analyze the important topics about the Macedonian identity and language; and on the Greek and Macedonian National Constitutions, for the purpose of understanding the political system of each country, and how domestic groups interact with international sphere. For the second part, semi-structured interviews were conducted, so that we can have an empirical perspective of people related to the discussed topic.

According to Krippendorff (2004, p. 139) interviews are limited to people who actually are available to answer questions, which excludes historical figures, people who do not have time to answer detailed questions, and people who prefer to hide behind their writing. Therefore, semi-structured interviews - see Appendix I and II - were conducted with the PhD Researcher from North Macedonia, Biljana Volchevska, whose researches and publications contributed greatly to this dissertation, and with the Deputy Head of Mission/Consul at Liaison Office of the Hellenic Republic in Prishtina, Tania Falierou, who, besides being a public figure from Greece, was born and raised in Thessaloniki, which gives us her perspective as a citizen from the Hellenic Macedonia.

In addition, Two-level Game Theory was chosen as the theoretical framework and applicability model for this research, providing the research a dimension that approaches a quantitative method.

Regarding its structure, the research is systematized in four chapters related to the above-mentioned objectives:

- The Chapter 1 discusses the historical background of the ancient and modern Macedonia, its cultural and linguistic formation due to the rules of several kingdoms and empires, and what differs the Upper Macedonia of the Hellenic Macedonia;
- The Chapter 2 reviews the period of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from its inception to the beginning of the dissolution process, the independence of Macedonia, and with that the beginning of the Macedonian name dispute between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- The Chapter 3, concerning the theoretical framework, presents the understanding of a conflict, the definition of negotiation and Game Theory, together with its variant: the Two-Level Game Theory;
- Finally, in the Chapter 4 a brief summary about the political system of Greece and North Macedonia is made, in order to analyze the Prespa Agreement and its ratification by domestic groups of both countries - the analysis is made according to

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the Game Theory design -, and lastly a discussion regarding post-agreement achievements and challenges is held by means of interviews.

After the research development, regarding the Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, the conclusion is presented in order to answer the research question, and to develop final considerations and possible future perspectives.

# Chapter 1. The Historical Background of Ancient and Modern Macedonia

The word *Macedonia* derives from the ancient Greek adjective *Makednós* (μακεδνός), which can be literally translated to tall or slim. The origin of the terminology is probably due to the distinction of the Macedonians among other Greek tribes by their height, as it often happens to highland tribes compared to tribes of the plains (Andriotis, 1960, p. 143). The relation to the adjective *Makednós* was forgotten after the Macedonians created a mythical ancestor, Macedon, son of Zeus, to account for their ethnic name, as other Hellenic tribes used to do.

Macedonia was not only the portion of the area which belonged to the ancient Greece, but a kingdom that would cover also part of modern Albania, Bulgaria and North Macedonia. Thus, as regional inhabitants, all the Bulgarians, the Greeks, the Albanians and the Serbs in South Serbia, in their respective regions, were called Macedonians (Lomis, 1992, p. 3). Historically and geographically, the Macedonian boundaries changed constantly.



Map 1. Macedonia in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC  
Source: Rossos (2008, p. 4).

## Section 1.1. The ancient Macedonia: the fall of the Macedonian Empire and the rise of the rules

When Philip II ascended the throne of kingdom of Macedon in 359 BC, several reforms towards trade and commerce turned Macedonia into a strong economy in the Eastern Mediterranean, and also modernized the army, with new training tactics and weaponry, for a successful territorial expansion (Coconas, 2015, p. 15). In 336 BC Philip II was assassinated and replaced by his son, Alexander III, who would become best known as Alexander the Great. Alexander had as tutor the great philosopher Aristotle, who taught him about botany, metaphysics, history and ethics. Nevertheless, the quality which enabled Alexander to leave his mark on history was his military talent (Oman, 1901, p. 522).

In several battles, conducted by Alexander the Great between 334-331 BC, the Macedonian army defeated the Persians and expanded the kingdom to the East, thus the Kingdom of Macedon was transformed into the Macedonian Empire. Alexander the Great extended his empire from the Western Balkans to India, and from the Danube River and the Black Sea to Egypt, Libya and Cyrenaica (Pop-Angelov, 2010, p. 26).



Map 2. The Empire of Alexander the Great  
Source: Frank W. Walbank (2019).

In 323 BC Alexander the Great died in Babylon leaving no heirs, and the powerful Macedonian empire began to crumble. The following successors didn't present the same political and military authority as Philip II and Alexander the Great, what allowed the domination of other empires in the region. Macedonia's real competitor for Balkan hegemony was no longer its weak and divided neighbors or the Greek city-states, but the powerful Rome. The Romans, that already controlled the western Mediterranean, wanted to expand eastward and openly courted Macedonia's neighbors and opponents (Rossos, 2008, p. 16).

During the many centuries of Roman rule, the geographic-ethnic conception of Macedonia changed frequently as shifted administrative units. The province originally

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included parts of Illyria, Thessaly, and Epirus. The Roman influence became weaker when Barbarian migrations and invasions started increasing in the region.

In the empire's last centuries, Macedonia experienced the effects of the Barbarian migrations and invasions. In the third-fifth centuries AD, Goths invaded and devastated Macedonia; in the fourth and fifth, the highly mobile Huns did the same. In the sixth century, Slavic tribes began to invade and settle in large and growing numbers. Unlike the Goths and Huns, however, they planned to stay. They gradually assimilated the older inhabitants and altered permanently the ethnic structure of Macedonia. (Rossos, 2008, p. 17)

In the sixth and seventh centuries AD, the Slavs and the Bulgars were invading the Balkans. In the sixth century the Slavs came first to Macedonia, where they found a mainly Greek-speaking population, but under the influence of the Byzantine Empire. In short, the larger Greek-speaking element in Macedonia was fragmented by small Slavic-settled areas, what the Byzantines called *sklavinije* or *sklavinii* (Papavizas, 2006; Rossos, 2008).

In the seventh century the Bulgars followed the Slavs into the Balkans, and in the following centuries started their struggle against Byzantium. Under the leadership of Tsar Samuel, the Bulgars expanded further into present-day Albania and Montenegro. However, Bulgarian successes over the region were primarily because Constantinople was worried with the Arab threat to its possessions in Asia Minor, and just when Constantinople had military victory over the Arabs in the eleventh century, the emperor Basil II could turn his full attention to the Bulgarian problem (Crampton, 2006, p. 20). In the summer of 1018, when Basil II entered Samuel's capital, Ohrid, the four-decades-long struggle was over. The Macedonian kingdom of Samuel was overthrown, and Macedonia would remain under the Byzantine rule for two more centuries since the Slav occupation (Rossos, 2008, p. 32).

During the Byzantine rule, Samuel's empire was split up into themes, the major themes included parts of Macedonia as Skopje, Thessaloniki and Dyrrachium - in the present-day Durrës in Albania. The entire military, administrative, judicial and financial management lay in the hands of the administrators of the themes (Stojanovski, 1979, p. 51). In addition, the development of feudal relations was reinforced.

When Macedonia had been penetrated and pillaged by various conquerors from outside, the peasants themselves had sought the protection of feudal lords and had adjoined their own small holdings to their feuds. Basil II gave special status to the Byzantine Orthodox Church, which was able to become a large-scale feudal property-owner, and the monasteries of Macedonia had at their disposal large feudal holdings and a large tied population (Stojanovski, 1979, p. 52-53).

The Fourth Crusade, which had ended in the taking and sacking of Constantinople, brought in 1204 the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire and the formation of a great number of states, partly Frankish, and partly Greek, of which the former received western European feudal organization (Vasilliev, 1964, p. 446). After the fall of the Byzantine Empire,

Serbs and Bulgars started several military campaigns in order compete for domination of the Macedonian region.

The occupation of Serres in 1345 consolidated Serbian control of Macedonia - except Thessaloniki -, and Stefan Dušan assumed the title *Tsar of the Serbs and Greeks*. One decade after, Stefan pushed his empire's boundaries west and south. He occupied Albania, Epirus, and Thessaly and reached the Gulf of Corinth (Rossos, 2008, p. 40). The Ottoman Turks invaded Macedonia in the fourteenth century, and the battle of Chernomen marked the beginning of the Ottoman conquest over Macedonia, excluding Thessaloniki. Hence, the Ottoman Empire would control the region for about five hundred years until the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)<sup>1</sup>.

## Section 1.2. The modern Macedonia: the multi-cultural formation

After many invasions, and under different governances and influences, Upper Macedonia became a multiethnic and multicultural space. However, many discussions have come to light regarding the Macedonian identity. The language, for example, is no longer related to Greek, due to the Slav, Bulgar and Ottoman influences.

According to Rossos (2008, p. 19) the Slav invasions in the sixth and seventh centuries AD launched a new phase in Macedonia's history. When Slavs settled throughout geographic Macedonia in huge numbers, they largely got mixed with the indigenous local inhabitants, and imposed on them their Slavic speech. However, Martis (1984) had presented another perspective. According to him some Slavic tribes already lived in Macedonia during the Byzantine domain. Small groups of *sklavinijes* were located among the native Greek populations, and were agricultural communities that were influenced by the native populations.

In the seventh century Bulgarians arrived in the Balkans, got mixed with the Slavs, and were culturally affected by them. Due a cultural and ethnic conflict, the Byzantinian emperor Michael III sent two brothers from Thessaloniki, the monks Cyril and Methodius to christianize the Slavs and the Bulgarians and teach them to read and write (Martis, 1984, p. 52).

The brothers Saints Cyril and Methodius created the first Slavic alphabet, and translated Christian scriptures into the language used by the local Slavs. Their disciples Saint Clement and Saint Naum established the first Slavic university, the Ohrid Literary School, in Ohrid's old town. Thus, Saint Clement probably reformed Saint Cyril's alphabet, calling it the Cyrillic alphabet in honor of his teacher (Phillips, 2004, p. 18).

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<sup>1</sup> The Balkan Wars were two conflicts that took place in the Balkan Peninsula in 1912 and 1913. Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria defeated the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan War. In the Second Balkan War Greece, Serbia and Montenegro defeated a dissatisfied Bulgaria. These wars caused the Ottoman Empire to lose virtually its whole grip on Europe (Coconas, 2014, p. 148).

Most of the Bulgarians remained in the northern parts of Macedonia, and those who moved to the southern parts learned the Greek language. Many Greeks were also affected by the Bulgarian language, becoming bilingual - speaking Greek and Bulgarian languages - or monolingual - just Bulgarian (Papavizas, 2006, p. 27).

After the death of Basil II, in 1025, his successors hastened to Hellenize the Archbishopric of Ohrid. However, since the lower clergy was much closer to the people, the Slavic language remained. Therefore, the Slavonic literacy could not be totally destroyed. Hellenism did not succeed in taking any deep roots among the people, who everywhere continued to communicate in their native Slavonic language (Stojanovski, 1979, p. 53).

According to Phillips (2004, p. 16) Macedonians were threatened by 'four wolves' - Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia. Each of the 'wolves' had their own reasons why they should rule Macedonia. The Serbs pointed to aspects of Macedonians' grammar and to their use as proofs of their Serbian origin of the Slava festival<sup>2</sup>. The Bulgarians argued that physiologically the Macedonians were similar to them and that Macedonian language was a Bulgarian dialect. The Greeks stressed that the Macedonians were Orthodox Christians under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, and also claimed that many Slav-speaking Macedonians considered themselves Slavophone Greeks (Phillips, 2004, p. 22).

Regarding the Macedonian language, according to Cowan (2000, p. xv), while the Bulgarians defined it as Bulgarian, the Slav-Macedonians defined it as Macedonian. The Greeks mostly define the Macedonian as 'not a real language' at all, but rather a 'Slavic idiom' or 'dialect'. Yet all these dialects were largely intelligible to speakers of standard Bulgarian, however few ethnic-Greek citizens had the Slavic language as the only medium of communication. Until well into the twentieth century, the Slav Macedonians comprised the largest linguistic-ethnic group (Rossos, 2006, p. 19).

After the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the Macedonian Question emerged during the Ottoman rule, when Russia pressed the Ottoman Empire to allow the formation of a separate Bulgarian Orthodox Church. With this strategy Russia intended to extend her own influence in the Balkans through the Orthodox Church and through support of the oppressed or newly liberated Slav peoples. This step quickly involved Bulgaria in strife both with Greece and with Serbia. It began the three-sided contest for Macedonia, waged first by priests and teachers, later by armed bands, and later still by armies, which has lasted with occasional lulls until today (Barker, 1999, p. 3).

By the end of the nineteenth century these events led to the formation of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) which adopted systems of violence and armed intervention often tolerated by the Ottoman authorities. IMRO, formed in 1893, eventually split between those who wanted to unite with Bulgaria, and those who wanted to establish an independent state uniting Vardar Macedonia (Yugoslavia), Pirin Macedonia (Bulgaria), and Aegean Macedonia (Greek) (Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, 1992; Underdown, 1994).

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<sup>2</sup> The feast of the patron saint of the home or village, monastery or region, traditionally celebrated by Slavs everywhere (Phillips, 2004, p. 22).

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From the early days of IMRO there were always two trends, or two wings, in the movement. The one tended towards closest collaboration with the Supreme Committee, and through it with the Bulgarian War Office and the Bulgarian Tsar. This wing only used talk of Macedonian autonomy or independence as a cloak for its real aim of Bulgarian annexation of Macedonia. (...) The other trend in IMRO was towards genuine autonomy or independence for Macedonia. In the early days of the movement, this wing preached brotherhood of all the peoples of Macedonia, not only Slavs but also Turks, Albanians, and Greeks, and it tried to preserve a certain independence of the Supreme Committee and the Bulgarian War Office. (Barker, 1999, p. 10).

In the 1930s there was a split within the ranks of IMRO. One, more influential wing of IMRO rejected the pro-Bulgarian orientation and proclaimed a distinct Macedonian national consciousness, wishing to combine the three parts into a single united and independent Macedonia. Considering the multi-ethnicity, this national consciousness did not include all Macedonians (Reuter, 1999, p. 30).

Following the Second Balkan War among Serbia, Greece, Romania and Turkey on the one hand, and Bulgaria on the other, Greece and Serbia signed a treaty in 1913 under which Macedonia was largely divided as at present (Underdown, 1994, p. 4). Thus, at the end of the First World War, Macedonia was partitioned into three. A resentful Bulgaria was left with only a small corner - 6,798 square kilometers -; while Yugoslavia, with 26,776 square kilometers, and Greece, with 34,600 square kilometers, each had a large share; and Greek Macedonia then still had a large Slav-speaking population (Barker, 1999, p. 11).



Map 3. Macedonia's division after the Balkan Wars (1913)  
Source: Rossos (2008, p. 119).

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In 1918 Macedonia became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, founded in the same year. And after the Partisan victory in the region, Slav Macedonia - with Skopje as its capital - was annexed by Tito's Yugoslavia in 1945, what contributed to the ambivalent national feeling by the Slav Macedonians. Barker (1999, p. 5) points out that during the last eighty years many Slav Macedonians seem to have considered themselves Bulgarian, or closely linked with Bulgaria, rather than closely linked with Serbian or Yugoslav patterns. However, people of the Skopje region have ever shown much tendency to regard themselves as Serbs.



Map 4. Macedonia in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1944-1991)  
Source: Rossos (2008, p. 215).



## Chapter 2. The Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1991)



Map 5. The Former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia  
Source: Phillips (2004).

### Section 2.1. First Years of the Partisan's Yugoslavia

On 29 November 1945, after the end of the Second World War, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was abolished by the Yugoslav Constituent Assembly. The King Peter II ended up exiled, and who started ruling as prime minister was Marshal Josip Broz Tito, the leader of the communist revolutionary group called Yugoslav Partisans. What was known as Kingdom of Yugoslavia<sup>3</sup> became the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia<sup>4</sup> (Lampe, 2000, p. 233).

The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was composed by six socialist republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia - this covering two autonomous provinces: Kosovo, with Albanian majority, and Vojvodina, with a large

<sup>3</sup> Yugoslavia means "The Land of the Southern Slavs".

<sup>4</sup> Being renamed later as Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963-1992).

Hungarian minority. The official languages were the Serbo-Croatian, and while Serbian was written with Cyrillic alphabet, Croatian was written with Latin alphabet. Besides that, there were also the Slovenian and Macedonian languages, and the acceptance of Albanian and Hungarian as languages of use and teaching in their respective populations (Alves, 2013, p. 59).

The new government of Yugoslavia copied the Soviet socialist model, proceeding with the nationalization of the economy and the collectivization of agriculture. In the secondary and tertiary sectors this transition was not that difficult, because the few industries, banks, mines and other activities were in the hands of people related to the Kingdom, and who were expelled out of the Yugoslav region (Alves, 2013, p. 59).

Cohen and Warwick (1983, p. 67-68) present three factors for the Yugoslav communist fusion strategy. First, many Yugoslav communists believed that social factors must be given priority over national factors despite the need to temporarily and emblematically recognize the multi-ethnic features of the country.

Our communist movement, like the communist movement anywhere in the world, did not ignore the nationalities question. But it did not consider it more important than the social question- the question of how, regardless of the national structure and identification of people, to organize the authority of the people that would carry out socialist goals. (...) It was simply considered that the nationalities question would find its authentic solution by solving the class, social question. (Šušar, 1971, p. 67).

Second, there was the experience of the Soviet Union, which had long been regarded as a sacred model for communists and which was still admired by many of the Yugoslav party leaders and party members. Although the Yugoslav communists were unwilling to emulate the most coercive and manipulative features of the Stalinist system - even not being possible to deny the existence of this inheritance in several social, political and religious sectors.

Finally and closely related to the issue of Soviet influence, another important factor encouraging a fusionist outlook on the national question in this period was the extreme centralization of the state, party apparatus and great concentration of power. Any real possibility for the open political expression of divergent nationality and sectional interests or grievances was lacking, although the top party leaders sometimes functioned - behind closed doors - as ethnic and regional group spokesmen (Cohen and Warwick, 1983, p. 82).

According to Miller (2007) when Yugoslav intellectuals constructed nationalist movements, they did so by continuing the mission of engagement with the new Communist regime of Tito. Tito's regime demonized nationalism after the Second World War. Officially, national identity would retreat following the Communist takeover before a supranational working-class Yugoslav identity.

The 1958 program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia explicitly rejected any suggestion that a new nation was in the making: "This is not a question of creating a new 'Yugoslav nation' to replace the existing nationalities, but of organic growth and

strengthening of the socialist community of producers or working men of all nationalities of Yugoslavia” (Miller, 2007, p. 179).

Even if the Yugoslavia’s Communist system had been influenced by the Soviet model, Tito’s concern was not to allow that Yugoslavia was absorbed into the Soviet Union, as it happened with most of Eastern European countries, and became Soviet satellite states. This because ethnical, political, historical and religious contentions required regional actors to deal with such specific regional issues.

In 1948 occurred the Tito-Stalin Split, a conflict between the leaders of Yugoslavia and Soviet Union, which resulted in Yugoslavia’s expulsion from the Cominform. Hudson (2003) presents three main causes for this split. First, Tito contested Yugoslavia’s border with Italy. In 1945 the Partisans had entered Trieste, in Italy, and even if afterwards they withdrew from the city and agreed a demarcation line with Anglo-American forces, Yugoslavia still claimed Trieste as part of its territory.

Second, Tito wished to forge strong links with neighboring countries in the Soviet sphere of influence, proposing a communist Balkan Federation with Bulgaria and Albania - which Stalin strongly opposed -, and possibly the Hellenic Macedonia, following a hoped-for communist victory in the Greek civil war.

And third, Tito actively supported the communist partisans in Greece against the Anglo-US-supported royalist government. Yugoslavia gave considerable help to the Greek communists, supporting them across their common border, providing a sanctuary from royalist forces as well as a source of supplies (Hudson, 2003, p. 44).

In a document dated on 28 June 1948 - celebration of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 - the Cominform expelled Yugoslavia and "invited" its Communist Party to get rid of Tito and his comrades (Alves, 2013, p, 62). From the same year each Yugoslav republic had a Communist Party and apparatus of its own - process foreshadowed by the formation of autonomous Slovenian and Croatian Communist Parties in 1937, and of provincial or regional Party committees for Serbia, Kosovo, and other districts in subsequent years (Rusinow, 2007, p. 131-132).

## **Section 2.2. Tito’s Yugoslavia**

The dramatic break with Stalin necessitated the development of a distinctly Yugoslav model of communist development, one which would preserve the Marxist lineage of the new political system, and yet distinguish it completely from the "statist socialism" of the Soviet model (Cohen and Warwick, 1983, p. 73).

In 1952 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was renamed the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Reforms were introduced to separate it from direct control of the economic and

political functions of the state - self-management<sup>5</sup>. Tito's intention was to consolidate the departure from administrative command socialism and the name change was symbolic of the break from the Soviet-style party (Hudson, 2003, p. 47). Williams (1998) explains how this kind of working system represents a rupture with the Soviet perspective:

The role of self-management socialism in the legitimization of Yugoslavia lies in this goal of handing power back to the people. This contrasted with the centrally planned Soviet Union whilst still portraying self-management as a better way to achieve socialist goals. This programme could, nevertheless, be seen from the West as including elements of individualism, popular involvement and control. (Williams, 1998, p. 60).

In addition, Yugoslavia's self-management economic system aimed at leveling up economic development throughout the country as well as in absolute terms for the country as a whole. The centralized redistribution of wealth and the direction of investment towards the poorer parts of the country was especially strong during the 1950s. The socialist goal of creating equal wealth and benefits through industrialization and modernization for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Kosovo continued to elude Yugoslavia (Williams, 1998, p. 62).

Throughout his years in power, Tito also attempted with some success to create a genuine and functioning equality between the constituent nations of the federal republic. The most notable characteristic of Tito's Yugoslavia was to provide the better integration among the republics and ethnicities. On the one hand, the new strategy was thought to not allow any nationalist sentiment to rise over the region, and, on the other, that no dispute or contention inside of Yugoslavia's territory be influenced by the interests of external powers (Cohen and Warwick, 1983, p. 74).

In Belgrade in 1961, in conferences, Tito helped to set up the Non-Aligned Movement, in cooperation with India and Egypt, as an alternative to the super-power blocs: United States and Soviet Union<sup>6</sup>. The idea was to keep a neutral position regarding the Cold War's bipolar system, and also to maintain political, diplomatic and economic relations with the two blocs.

Yugoslavia attempted to maintain a balance between economic relations with the west, from which it primarily borrowed capital and bought advanced technology, and with the Soviet bloc, with which it exchanged armaments, manufactured goods and construction projects for fuel. In the early conferences, in Belgrade in 1961, and Cairo in 1963, nuclear disarmament and colonialism had been the main topics, but by the 1970s, in Lusaka in 1970, and Algiers in 1973, the economic needs had become the key issue for developing countries (Hudson, 2003, p. 49-50).

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<sup>5</sup> Self-management is the idea that the workers should run the factories. Workers' councils should be involved in decisions concerning the distribution of investments and profits in an enterprise (Glenny, 2012, p. 575).

<sup>6</sup> In 1955, two years after Stalin's death, Tito's Yugoslavia and Nikita Khrushchev's Soviet Union reconciled, and Yugoslavia was re-admitted into the international brotherhood of socialist states.

## The Name Game: The Prespa Agreement and the Macedonia naming dispute on the board

After the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 by the Warsaw Pact<sup>7</sup>, the military structure that had remained the same since the Second World War was modernized in a doctrine called TND (Faringdon, 1989, p. 227-228). Johnson (1971) explains the role of TND:

Total national defense, while incorporating aspects of the Yugoslav Communists' World War II Partisan experience, represents more than a nostalgic revival of successes twenty-five years old. It is an effort to apply principles of "people's war" (which Tito pioneered, no less than Mao, Ho, or Guevara) to a consolidated, semi-industrialized state faced with the possibility of external aggression by a much stronger enemy, taking into account domestic and international political and economic realities and the state of contemporary military technology. (Johnson, 1971, p. 9).

Tito took over power of Yugoslavia after the Second World War and only in 1971 did he face his first potential domestic challenge, when emotions erupted in Croatia, growing out of largely cultural disputes. The Croatian Spring was a cultural and political movement in which several intellectuals opposed the "unitarism", a sort of standardization of the Serb-Croatian language and culture, because for most of non-Serbs it could be understood as a code word for a Serbian nationalism (Glenny, 2012, 589).

The leading Croatian cultural organization *Matica Hrvatska* published a manifesto in 1967, which demanded changes in the federal constitution to more forcefully protect the cultural values of individuals within Yugoslavia. Demands from the cultural organization eventually came in the form of a document entitled "Declaration on the Name and Position of the Croatian Literary Language," which asked for an affirmation of Croatian culture within the state's legal framework (Niebuhr, 2018, p. 152).

For this reason, the management board of *Matica Hrvatska* decided to form a commission in March 1967, with the goal of formulating Croatian attitudes on the problem of language and publishing them in the form of a declaration. (...) The declaration spoke openly and boldly about the difficulties of everyday use of the Croatian language, which was being discriminated against in public institutions in comparison to the Serbian variant of the joint language. The document was signed by 130 Croatian intellectuals, on behalf of 18 public and scientific institutions. (Batovic, 2017, p. 72).

According to Cohen (2007, p. xvii) the Croatian Spring highlighted the tensions within the republic between the Croats' desire for greater political autonomy from the rest of the federation, and the Serbian minority's desire for closer links with Serbia, and demonstrated the inability of the undemocratic one party system, as well as its liberal republican leadership to defuse national tensions and contain escalating nationalist demands.

The Croatian Party leadership claimed their demands, specifically linked to the changes in the economy. One of the crucial Croatian demands was the foreign currency system reform, which would allow Croatia to retain a large portion of its foreign currency

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<sup>7</sup> A collective defense treaty signed in Warsaw, Poland, among the Soviet Union and seven Soviet satellite states of Central and Eastern Europe in May 1955.

earnings. But one of the most extreme demands was made by a group of Croatian economists in order to demand a Croatian currency with its own independent National Bank (Batovic, 2009, p. 16-17).

A student strike was organized on 23 November 1971 at all Croatian universities. In a matter of days 30,000 students were on strike to support the Croatian leadership in their demands for an extensive political and economic autonomy of Croatia. Zagreb's students also called for their acceptance into the United Nations, and for a separate Croatian army (Batovic, 2009; Niebuhr, 2018).

In December 1971 Tito convened the League of Communists of Yugoslavia to resolve the situation in Croatia. The Croatian Party leaders were accused of promoting nationalism and an unacceptable form of liberalism. They were forced to resign and were replaced by more conservative members of the Party. Matica Hrvatska was abolished, and all student leaders ended up in prison (Batovic, 2009, p. 17-18).

Glenny (2012) points out that the leadership's response to the Croatian Spring and to the Serb liberals was a disaster for Yugoslavia's future. Without external interference, the elites were presented with the possibility of resolving their national problems by a steady democratization of the entire system. However they failed for not adopting a position to welcome reconciliation between the Serbs and Croats. In addition, what could be seen throughout the 1980s was the rising of nationalism and chauvinism in the region.

### **Section 2.3. Post-Tito and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia**

In May 1980 Tito dies in Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia. Yugoslavs of all nationalities showed up to say goodbye, and to pay tribute to their leader. His funeral attracted government leaders from 122 states, the only absence being that of the new American President, Ronald Reagan (Glenny, 2012, 622). At this time Yugoslav economy faced two distinct - but correlated - problems: domestic structural weaknesses and the global economic crisis effects, mainly because of the oil crisis in 1973 and 1979.

Domestically the economy was hampered by insufficient production of raw materials and industrial inputs, which meant that Yugoslavia was highly reliant on imports to facilitate industrial growth. This contributed to the massive balance-of-payments deficit, and necessitated import substitution - but this in itself required further loans to develop the industry to extract the raw materials and produce the inputs. The impact of the increase in oil prices in the 1970s was enormous for Yugoslavia, as she was faced with increased bills for her oil imports, partially offset as she began to develop her domestic coal and hydro-electric resources. (Hudson, 2003, p. 54).

Austerity measures were adopted in 1979 by the Yugoslav federal government in an attempt to cut down domestic consumption of imports and increase exports, but the balance of payments was not noticeably improved. To combat this problem the government was forced to turn to the IMF for loans. Each year, the government had to find new loans merely

to finance the interest repayments. The IMF made a further loan in 1982, on condition of domestic reform, 'an anti-inflationary macro-economic stabilization policy of radical austerity, trade and price liberalization, and institutional reforms to impose on firms and governments monetary discipline and real price incentives (Hudson, 2003; Glenny, 2012).

Woodward (1995, p. 52) points out that prices for gasoline and heating fuel, food, and transportation rose by one-third in 1983, and furthermore all imports were prohibited, including all consumer goods. A lot of firms were obliged to lay off their workers, and consequently unemployment rapidly accelerated, particularly amongst the young. Inflation rose rapidly, incomes dropped sharply, and savings were depleted for 80 per cent of households (Hudson, 2003, p. 60).

A need for change became politically evident, and for the first time Yugoslavia's leadership was facing the perspective of having to review the self-management system. Therefore, a commission was formed by the Yugoslav President Sergej Kreigher, and called Kreigher Commission. Amongst the proposals, a large number of modifications were suggested to increase the power of the market, to liberalize trade and to make the redistributive mechanisms more efficient. Within the commission there was a split between the conservative, orthodox "self-managers", and politicians and experts oriented towards reforms and open market (Crnobrnja, 1996, p. 83-84).

In 1985 another commission was formed, headed by Josip Vrhovec. The previous Kreigher Commission had not closed the floodgates, but had at least made an attempt to stem the economic flow. However, its successor commission destroyed even the small positive bridgehead that Kreigher Commission had established. Instead of modifying the political system in order to implement an economic reform, the Vrhovec Commission criticized the economic commission indirectly by saying that its recommendations were incompatible with the "true socialist self-management system". The thing is that the new commission was not interested in changing the system into a democratic structure that would correspond to the interests of Yugoslav citizens as a whole, but to favor the national-bureaucratic interests of the Yugoslav republics.

Slovenia and Croatia complained about the aid they were channeling toward the less-developed republics, which was draining them of resources, and the less-developed republics reciprocated by complaining about the terms of trade, which favored the developed regions, claiming that the developed republics got more back through trade than they gave in terms of investment. (Crnobrnja, 1996, p. 88).

Croatia and Slovenia were afraid of the direction that Yugoslavia was going towards the Serbian interests. While Serbia sought more centralization, Croatia and Slovenia saw themselves as pieces that no longer fit this puzzle called Yugoslavia. Croatia was trying to reduce the cultural autonomy of Serbs in the Croatian republic, a heritage of the Croatian Spring.

In Slovenia the strategy - and also a huge challenge - was to destroy Tito's reputation. Since the first years of the Republic of Yugoslavia, a traditional "youth relay" was organized

every year to symbolize the unity of the Yugoslav youth. The relay consisted of passing through all the Yugoslav republics with a baton containing a message for Tito inside that would be carried by hundreds of thousands of young runners and to finish on 25 May, Tito's birthday.

This relay tradition continued even after Tito's death, and it was chosen by the Slovenes to reduce the remaining Tito's image. Therefore, in 1986 the youth organization of Slovenia declared that they would no longer participate in the relay, saying the relay is meaningless since Tito is dead (Crnobrnja, 1996, p. 109).

The destruction of Tito's reputation was by now well advanced. A biography about Tito, written by Vladimir Dedijer in 1981, followed as a surgical academic research to reduce the image of the former-Yugoslav leader as a hero. Two years later a book was published on the negotiations with the Germans regarding a possible cooperation against the Allies, in March 1943. Jovanka Broz, who was Tito's Partisan companion, and later on his second wife, was subjected to an official investigation into her inheritance of his enormous assets which were now reclaimed as 'social property' (Benson, 2004, p. 145-146).

In 1986 Slobodan Milosevic, the president of the Belgrade League of Communists City Committee, became President of the League of Communists of Serbia, replacing Ivan Stambolic, and rapidly became hugely popular, mainly because of his declarations in support of the Serbs living in the autonomous province of Kosovo. It was believed the Serbs of Kosovo were being oppressed by the Albanians, which is its majority ethnic group. In this way, Milosevic won considerable popular support through his articulation of Serbian resentment, particularly over the constitutional situation and the position of Serbs in Kosovo, and he mobilized this support effectively, to bring about changes in the republican leadership in line with his own political perspective (Hudson, 2003, p. 71).

In 1988 a new campaign started towards Serbian unification. The Anti-bureaucratic Revolution marked the end of Vojvodina and Kosovo as autonomous provinces, turning them part of Serbian central administration, with their respective government officials being replaced by leaders linked to Milosevic's party. These changes completely altered the national and political balance in Yugoslavia, because from this moment onwards Milosevic and his military backers could count on four out of eight votes on the presidency, what means the federal presidency could hold a formal command of the Yugoslav army (Magaš, 1993, p. 331-332).

After Serbia finished the autonomy of Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro, the scenario had become very threatening to the other republics. Free parliamentary elections were held for the first time in Slovenia and Croatia, in April and May 1990 respectively. The Slovene elections led to the victory of a centre-right coalition and to Milan Kucan, the republic's former communist president, returning to power as the first democratically elected leader within Yugoslavia since 1945. In Croatia the communists were swept from office by the Croatian Democratic Union leader, Franjo Tudjman, which came to power on a wave of nationalist euphoria (Judah, 2009, p. 164).

In December 1990 Slovenia and Croatia announced their intention to become independent, even under threats of Serbian military intervention into both countries. On 25 June 1991 Slovenia unilaterally proclaimed its independence, followed the next day by Croatia, and later by Macedonia in September. In the beginning, the international community was reluctant to recognize the new states, which were firstly recognized as independent states by the Federal Republic of Germany in December 1991, and by the EC in January 1992 (Hudson, 2003; Mrak *et al.*, 2004). And thus, the process of dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began.

## **Section 2.4. The independence of the Republic of Macedonia: the fuse for the Macedonian name dispute**

The end of the bipolar system, represented by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the URSS, influenced independence movements in the former-Republic of Yugoslavia, finishing the last breath left from Tito's heritage. A referendum in Slovenia supporting the independence in late 1990 started a chain of events that led to the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In a similar referendum in 8 September 1991, a large majority in the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia voted in favor of independence, declaring its sovereignty on 17 September 1991 (Floudas, 2002, p. 3). Even though many members of the disgruntled Albanian and Serb minorities boycotted the referendum, there was a turn-out of 75.7 per cent and a 95.3 per cent 'yes' vote (Bideleux and Jeffries, 2007, p. 412).

In preparation for independence, the Macedonian parliament adopted a new constitution on 17 November 1991. The preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia described the new country as the 'national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent coexistence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia'<sup>8</sup>.

Furthermore, according to the Constitution the intention was to establish the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign and independent, as well as a civic and democratic state; to establish and consolidate the rule of law as the fundamental system of government; to guarantee human rights, civil liberties and ethnic equality; to provide peace and co-existence of the Macedonian people with the nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia; and to provide social justice, economic welfare and prosperity in the life of the individual and the community (Sobranie, 2019). However, the Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia is replaced by item 1 of Amendment IV:

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<sup>8</sup> This replaced the previous formulation, which described Macedonia as 'the state of the Macedonian people and the Albanian and Turkish minorities'. Clearly there is a difference in emphasis within these statements and the new constitution can be seen as downgrading the constitutional status of non-ethnic Macedonians within the state (Hudson, 2003, p. 150).

The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people, as well as citizens living within its borders who are part of the Albanian people, the Turkish people, the Vlach people, the Serbian people, the Roma people, the Bosniak people and others, taking responsibility for the present and future of their fatherland, aware of and grateful to their predecessors for their sacrifice and dedication in their endeavors and struggle to create the independent and sovereign state of Macedonia, and responsible to future generations for preserving and developing everything that is valuable from the rich cultural inheritance and coexistence within Macedonia, equal in rights and obligations towards the common good - the Republic of Macedonia - in accordance with the tradition of the Kruševo Republic and the decisions of the Antifascist People's Liberation Assembly of Macedonia, and the Referendum of September 8, 1991, have decided to establish the Republic of Macedonia as an independent, sovereign state, with the intention of establishing and consolidating the rule of law, guaranteeing human rights and civil liberties, providing peace and coexistence, social justice, economic welfare and prosperity in the life of the individual and the community, through their representatives in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, elected in free and democratic elections, adopt. (Sobranie, 2019).

The Constitution made provisions for the recognition and use of non-Slavic languages in primary and secondary schools, according to the Article 48 and the Amendment V, that replaces the Article 7, which says that any other language spoken by at least 20 percent of the citizens is also an official language, written using its alphabet. However, the Constitution made no provisions for the recognition and use of these languages in parliament, in law courts, in centrally provided public services, or in public broadcasting (Bideleux and Jeffries, 2007, p. 413).

When Macedonia became independent in late 1991, Bulgaria was the first country to recognize its independence in January 1992, but refusing to recognize Macedonian identity and language, because the Macedonian identity was seen as a Bulgarian heritage, and the language as a Bulgarian dialect. The Greek government claimed that the very name, Macedonia, had an exclusive Hellenic heritage, related to the empire of Alexander the Great (Glenny, 2012, p. 655-656). According to Greece, the dispute is not only a contestation of historical symbols and heritage<sup>9</sup>, but also a *realpolitik* threat that could result in the claiming of resources and territories (Volchevska, 2018, p. 225).

The Article 3 of the Macedonian Constitution was one of the polemic points regarding the contention with Greece. It says the territory of the Republic of Macedonia is indivisible and inalienable, its borders are inviolable, but they may be changed only in accordance with the Constitution (Sobranie, 2019). Greece feared that the former-Yugoslav country might claim part of the Hellenic territory in the future. In November 1992 the Amendment I was added to justify the controversial Article. The Amendment highlights the Republic of Macedonia has no territorial pretensions towards neighboring states, and its borders can only

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<sup>9</sup> Heritage is a category that is well established in both national and international legislation. Whether material or immaterial, it is almost exclusively treated as an explicitly national category. When viewed as a nationalised representation of the past, heritage often fails to represent the collective remembrance of a certain place by favouring certain histories over others for the purpose of articulating one unifying national narrative. The dispute is an example of a recycled heritage that is driven by contemporary political agendas - one that narrates the past in order to illuminate the present in a specific way (Volchevska, 2018, p. 219-220).

be changed in accordance with the Constitution and on the principle of free will, as well as in accordance with generally accepted international norms (Sobranie, 2019).

Macedonia had been recognized by Russia, China and several European non-European Community countries under its constitutional name, and had filed an application for UN membership. However, the decision for recognition of a state and the decision for the admission to the UN have completely different nature, with the former being purely a political decision and the latter being legal, depending of the fulfillment of specifically numerated criteria in the UN Charter (Bajalski, 2009, p. 5).

Recognition is not normally to be inferred from the fact that both states have taken part in negotiations and signed a multilateral treaty, for example the United Nations Charter. Practice shows that many of the member states or their governments are not recognised by other member states. (...) However, where the state concerned has voted in favour of membership in the UN of the entity in question, it is a natural inference that recognition has occurred. The UK, for example, regarded its vote in favour of UN membership for the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia as amounting to recognition of that entity as a state. Indeed, irrespective of recognition by individual states, there is no doubt that membership of the UN is powerful evidence of statehood since being a state is a necessary precondition to UN membership by virtue of article 4 of the UN Charter<sup>10</sup>. (Shaw, 2008, p. 464).

In January 1993 Greece's new Foreign Minister, Michalis Papakonstandinou, submitted an interesting *memorandum* to the UN. In this memorandum, he opposed the Republic of Macedonia's admission to the UN under the name of the 'Republic of Macedonia', and with a flag bearing an ancient Greek symbol called the *Sun of Vergina* (Kofos, 2005, p. 5).

On 8 April 1993 the Republic of Macedonia was finally admitted as a member of the UN, provisionally referred to for all purposes within the UN as FYROM pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of the State (United Nations, 1993).

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<sup>10</sup> "1. Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations. 2. The admission of any such state to membership in the United Nations will be effected by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council." Article 4, UN Chart. Available in <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-ii/index.html> Accessed on 27 June 2019.



Map 6. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
Source: Phillips (2004).

On 26 February 2004 the FYROM submitted an application for European Union (EU) membership. The European Commission delivered a positive opinion on 9 November 2005, and the following month the European Council decided that FYROM was a candidate country to join the EU, according to the Copenhagen political criteria - rules that define whether a country is eligible to join the EU - and effective implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (Cosilium, 2006, p. 7). However, Greece, which is an EU member since 1981, would grant veto against the FYROM's accession into the European economic union due to the name issue.

The relations between Greece and Macedonia got worse when the conservative government of Nikola Gruevski (VMRO-DPMNE) announced the process of *antiquisation* - well-known as project Skopje 2014 -, which refers to policies of identity that claim that the present-day ethnic Macedonians and the ancient Macedonians are directly related. The term *antiquisation* became one of the most used amongst Macedonian intellectuals, who often judged the newly completed monuments and buildings as distasteful, badly planned and an embarrassment for Macedonians (Volchevska, 2018, p. 226).

An example of these policies is the announcement, late 2006 and early 2007, that the Macedonian international airport *Petrovec*, near the capital Skopje, would be renamed to *Alexander the Great*. The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately reacted negatively to

this position; however the Macedonian government's explanation was that the new name would be easier to pronounce by foreigners (Shkaric et al., 2009, p. 303).

Ethnic Albanians of FYROM saw this project as an effort to exclude them from the demographics of the country. Bulgaria also criticized the policies, because national Bulgarian heroes, like Gotse Delchev and Dame Gruev, were claimed to be Slav Macedonian national heroes. In 2011, a twenty-two meters statue called "A Warrior on a Horse" was erected in the main square of Skopje, which enraged the Greeks, because the statue makes a clear allusion to the figure of Alexander the Great (Coconas, 2014, p. 67).

Cultural heritage, thus, has to do with meaning-giving. Both the tangible and the intangible are meaningless in themselves. It is the (hi)stories surrounding traditions and artifacts that enact them, which is why heritage is a social construction. When, in processes of meaning-giving, objects and cultural expressions are labeled 'heritage', conservation measures might be taken to save them for future generations. (...) As heritage has to do with selecting and neglecting (hi)stories that give meaning to objects and traditions, it is a discursive practice in which some (hi)stories become dominant and institutionalized to the exclusion of others. (Rodenberg and Wagenaar, 2018, p. 2-3)

According to Sofos (2013) the policy of antiquisation was a response to the veto granted by Greece against the accession of FYROM into the NATO at a summit in the Romanian capital, Bucharest, in April 2008. Regarding the FYROM negotiations with the NATO admission, the Bucharest Summit Declaration highlighted the following point:

We recognise the hard work and the commitment demonstrated by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to NATO values and Alliance operations. (...) Therefore we agreed that an invitation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will be extended as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue has been reached. We encourage the negotiations to be resumed without delay and expect them to be concluded as soon as possible. (Declaration, 2008).

The main concern of Greece about the former Yugoslav country joining the Atlantic Alliance is that, after being a NATO member and with a larger military power, FYROM might claim the Hellenic territory, linked to the heritage of the Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great. In the domestic sphere, the Skopje 2014 project contributed to the end of the ten-year rule of the VMRO-DPMNE (2006-2016), and its populist ruling style, paving the way for new directions for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.



# Chapter 3. Understanding conflict, conflict resolution and game theory: theoretical framework

## Section 3.1. Understanding conflict and its resolution

The term conflict is derived from the Latin word *confligere* which means “to strike together”. The initial concept of the term conflict is related to the sense of two or more bodies moving against each other. However, conflict also refers to overt and coercive behavior initiated by one contending party against another - without necessarily the use of physical strength (Bercovitch, Kremenjuk & Zartman, 2009, p. 4). Not every conflict represents something negative, it is also possible to have gains in a transformation scenario.

Although conflicts tend to have negative connotations, not every conflict is harmful if it ultimately produces a creative element for changing societies, while achieving the goals and aspirations of individuals and groups. If the outcome brings about positive changes, as demonstrated by not only apologies and compensation for the past abuse but also future prevention of victimization, that can be considered to be constructive. Non-violent conflict that is aimed at the transformation of oppressive relations is inherently good and serves as a vehicle of liberation, in contrast to the consequences of accepting the superficial harmony of the *status quo*. (Jeong, 2008, p. 14-15).

The definition of conflict has traditionally been relegated to competition for resources or other interests, value differences or dissatisfaction with basic needs. A minority group may seek outright independence, but the state controlled by a majority ethnic group may oppose the aspiration and even suppress rights to ethnic language and religion (Jeong, 2009, p. 5-6).

For example, due to the demand for Albanian to become an official language and to secure the rights as Macedonian citizens, in January 2001 the Albanian NLA raised an insurgent movement, which began attacking the security forces of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The armed conflict only ended when the Macedonian government and the NLA signed an agreement in August 2001. While the Albanian minority agreed to give up any separatist demands, the government pledged greater cultural and educational rights, adopting Albanian as an official language, as well as increased representation of the ethnic group in the government, armed forces, and police (Jeong, 2008, p 101).

Conflicts can be managed with violent responses, where the parties pursue their differences through violence and coercion, such as the NATO intervention during the Kosovo War in 1999, when the international community realized the negotiations to stop the conflict had failed<sup>11</sup> and coercive measures were employed. However, whenever it is possible, the

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<sup>11</sup> "NATO countries were concerned about the alleged human rights violations and feared that a failure to act would at the very least damage their credibility, and at worst allow severe human rights

decision-makers are more interested in non-violent ways of managing conflicts (Bercovitch, Kremenyuk & Zartman, 2009, p. 340).

Zartman (2008, p. 322) characterizes negotiation as synonymous of conflict resolution, and defines it as the process of combining conflicting positions into a joint agreement, being the most common way of preventing, managing, resolving, and transforming conflicts. Therefore, it is important that from different perspectives common narratives be built.

Negotiation can be defined as a process to resolve differences in goals that arise from dissimilar interests and perspectives. In probing to unearth underlying concerns, negotiators share their views in order to establish the areas of common ground and agreement. (...) Negotiation is feasible because parties have not only divergent but also shared interests. In a bargaining relationship, one party has something desired by the other. Identifying competing interests is involved in discussion about the issues. (Jeong, 2009, p. 151-152).

The function of negotiation is to provide a channel for peace and dispute resolution. In the international realm, negotiation is often all that stands between peace and war. Collaborative approaches to negotiation are based on the assumption that it is possible to achieve win-win (non-zero-sum) outcomes, where the result is at least minimally acceptable to all involved (Starkey, Boyer and Wilkenfeld, 2015, p. 7).

It is important to note that any negotiation has four elements. The first element is the *parties* represented by two or more actors in the negotiation. The second is the element of *values*, characterized by interests or demands presented by the parties for the purpose of collective choice. The value may be positive or negative, as benefits and costs, for example. The third is the *outcomes*, the final result of the negotiation, it may be successful or not, depending on the agreed value that has been chosen as the result of the process. And finally, the *mutual movements*, the beginning point in the process, what permits that one party doesn't overlap the other (Zartman, 2007, p. 36).

Thus, parties enter into a negotiation process because they believe that there is a possibility of obtaining a better outcome than getting stuck in an unresolved cycle. Engaging oneself in a negotiation process also implies that one has given up the project of subduing the other as the only way to resolve the conflict mutually (Zartman and Faure, 2005, p. 4).

Diplomacy is not just about bargaining. There is a human dimension to the negotiation game that should not be ignored. The process of reaching negotiated settlements to problems relies on the willingness of all actors involved to sit down together and look for common solutions. Peaceful coexistence in the system of states rests on a notion of mutual recognition (Starkey, Boyer and Wilkenfeld, 2015, p. 85).

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violations to expand unchecked. (...) NATO implemented the bombing campaign in March 1999 and continued it for several months. By May, NATO planners were considering a major ground assault. However, Milosevic capitulated and accepted the Rambouillet Agreement in June after key provisions (several of which had led him to reject it in the first place) had been removed" (Williams and Zeager, 2004, p. 236).

Negotiation has a stage that precedes the negotiation itself, this stage is called pre-negotiation, in which each party determines the level of their commitment to negotiation and gathers information about the negotiability of main differences. This preparation stage consists of the assessment and prioritization of issues, discussion of common interests or differences in goals for a possible agreement, and may also pave way for further discussion (Jeong, 2009, p. 155). Moreover, pre-negotiations may provide political leaders with the opportunity to build and mobilize domestic legitimacy, and to support for a shift toward de-escalation of conflict (Aggestam, 2005, p. 288).

After this brief definition about conflict and negotiation, game theory will be delved into, as it will help us to better picture the structure of a negotiation. Game theory is useful in analyzing the choice of whether to negotiate or not (Zartman, 2007, p. 15).

## Section 3.2. Game Theory

Game theory is based on a rational decision-making process, in which decision-makers know their range of possible choices and understand that these choices can reach certain outcomes according to their preferences. But it also posits that decision-makers act strategically, since they know the existence of other decision-makers, and also their capabilities and interests (Kilgour and Wolinsky, 2002, p. 340-341).

Game theory is an analytical tool used to study situations of strategic interdependence where decision makers' actions affect each other. The application of game-theoretic frameworks to negotiation problems can help to improve and generate explanations and predictions. The improvement comes both in the form of negotiation outcomes as well as refutation or verification of "accepted" insights and explanations. (Druckman, 2007, p. 92).

In social sciences, game theory specifies what happens in a situation where players - each with different or equal strategies, goals, and preferences - are engaged in a game-shaped interaction, and try reaching results that maximize their advantages or minimize losses (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2003, p. 715).

Starkey, Boyer and Wilkenfeld (2015, p. 172-173) present negotiation as a board game, where four elements are considered. The first element is *the negotiation setting* (board), in which before the negotiation it is possible to analyze:

- actors' characteristics, considering the number of players involved, their existing or potential collisions, and their power and capabilities;
- issues' characteristics, taking into consideration the quantity of issues, their linkages among themselves and how these issues can affect the negotiation;
- process characteristics, in view of whether the negotiation is public or private, if there are legacies from previous negotiations that would affect the current one, the intended outcomes, and the procedures that must be followed after an agreement.

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The second element is regarding *the negotiators* (players), which characterizes the types of actors - diplomats, political leaders, groups of states, international organizations or states -, their motivations, their influences and how the culture and identity might play a role in the negotiation.

The third element is regarding *the issues* (stakes), that shows how salient the issues are for each player; how committed the players are to the resolution of the issues; and how the domestic politics influence the negotiation.

The fourth element of negotiation is regarding *the decisions* (moves), which considers the assigned actor's interests; if these interests are common or not; the availability of carrots (rewards) and sticks (punishments) to influence the negotiation; and how the other elements (board, players and stakes) play a role in determining the negotiation strategy.

One of the most fiercely debated thought experiments in the social sciences is called the Prisoner's Dilemma, which can be employed to analyze events as diverse as traffic jams, political power struggles, and global warming (Peterson, 2015, p. 1). In this rational experiment, two suspects, Player A and Player B, are arrested by the police. However, the police does not have sufficient evidence to find the culprit, and having locked up the two suspects in two different cells, starts interrogating both separately and offers them the following prospects: If you confess, and your accomplice does not confess, then you will be convicted for a very short time (1 year). However if you do not confess, and your accomplice confesses, then you will be convicted and sentenced to the maximum term in jail (20 years). If you both confess, then both of you will be convicted, but, since you have cooperated with the police, you two will be convicted to half of the maximum sentence (10 years). If neither confesses, both of you will be framed on a minor tax evasion charge for which a conviction is certain (2 years) (Binmore, 2015, p. 19).

		Player B	
		Deny	Confess
Player A	Deny	-2, -2	-20, -1
	Confess	-1, -20	-10, -10

Figure 1. The Prisoner's Dilemma design  
Source: Peterson (2015, p. 1).

Both players find themselves literally in a dilemma, on the one hand, because it is such a temptation to betray your accomplice to get the lesser penalty, while he will be sentenced to the maximum penalty; on the other hand, each player - even facing the doubt about the other player move - decides to trust in his accomplice and not confess the crime, in order to get freedom for both players after two years of sentence. In a rational perspective,

cooperation - what differs from the conventional sum-zero games - is the best scenario for a more profitable payoff.

Game theory has become increasingly influential in the international sphere and has provided reinforcement to understand strategic interactions in the International Relations field. However, political scientist Robert D. Putnam published in 1988 the article titled *Diplomacy and Domestic Policy: The Logic of Two-Level Games*, in which the author presents a new contribution for the international negotiations.

The politics of many international negotiations can usefully be conceived as a two-level game. At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments. Neither of the two games can be ignored by central decision-makers, so long as their countries remain interdependent, yet sovereign. (Putnam, 1988, p. 434).

In two-level games, international negotiations are part of the Level I, in which a provisional agreement is signed; while negotiations with domestic groups, which would ratify or not the first negotiation, are part of the Level II. The actors of the Level I may be head or representatives of states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and multinational corporations that search for the best results in the negotiations among themselves. The actors of the Level II may represent bureaucratic agencies, political parties, public opinion, ethnic groups, etc.

Diplomatic strategies are constrained by what other states will accept, and by what domestic groups will ratify. Diplomacy is a process of strategic interaction, in which actors try to influence the expected reactions of other actors, both domestically and internationally. The results of international negotiations may depend on which strategies the government representatives choose to influence in their own domestic policies (Moravcsik, 1993, p. 15).

According to Putnam (1988) in order to ratify the agreement successfully, the level II win-sets must be in tune to each part of the agreement. The ratification of the agreement is only possible if these win-sets overlap. Thus, if the win-sets are larger the chances to overlap are also larger. However, with smaller win-sets, the risk of the negotiations failing is higher.

Aggestam (2005, p. 275) cites Stedman (1991), when he highlights the importance of interparty negotiations, and the need to build domestic coalitions towards peace. Thus, political leaders who reach radical changes in policy, from escalation to negotiation, require domestic support as well as a cohesive leadership that speaks with one voice (Stedman 1991, p. 211).

The two-level game can also be employed for negotiations regarding ethnic groups interaction with other ethnic, economic and social interest groups in order to promote interests related to political power, status, resources and protection - as the case of the negotiations between the Macedonian government and the Albanian groups in order to ratify the Prespa Agreement. Leaders must negotiate a common interest within the group before

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engaging in a meaningful bargaining encounter with ethnic patrons at the top of the system (Rothchild, 2008, p. 249).



## Chapter 4. Prespa Agreement and the two-edge negotiation

Before introducing and discussing the Prespa Agreement, it is fundamental that we understand how the political system of Greece and North Macedonia work, especially with regard to the Constitutions of the two republics.

### Section 4.1. Greek and Macedonian Political System

#### Subsection 4.1.1. Republic of North Macedonia

North Macedonia is a parliamentary republic, in which the chief of state is the president and the head of the government is the prime minister. The president is directly elected by absolute majority of the popular vote for a five-year term, with the possibility to be eligible for a second term. The leader of the majority party or majority coalition is usually elected prime minister by the Assembly (CIA, 2019).

The legislative branch is composed by an unicameral Assembly or *Sobranie* with 120 seats, whose members serve four-year terms. There are also three seats reserved for the Macedonian diaspora which are awarded only if the voter turnout was sufficient. The members represent the citizens and make decisions in the Assembly in accordance with their personal convictions, and their mandate cannot be revoked (Sobranie, 2019).

The last election for president was held on 21 April and 5 May 2019, when Stevo Pendarovski was elected president of the Republic of North Macedonia in the second round by the center-left party SDSM. Since 31 May 2017, after a difficult period of political turmoil<sup>12</sup>, Zoran Zaev has been the Prime Minister of North Macedonia and also president of SDSM (Republic of North Macedonia, 2019).

Zaev appeared as a progressive ruler and his speech has been headed towards the country accession into NATO and EU. However, in order to achieve these objectives, besides the domestic reforms, it was needed to reach a resolution with North Macedonia's neighbors regarding historic-cultural issues.

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<sup>12</sup> In February 2015, Zaev started the project "The Truth about Macedonia" by publishing the wiretapped material unveiling the criminal activities of the government led by the former-Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. The resistance towards the autocratic government continued with his and SDSM's active role in the Freedom Camp, which was a protest movement enticed by The Citizens for Macedonia - informal coalition of political parties and non-governmental, civic organizations working jointly to restore democracy in the society and revitalize the public institutions in service of the citizens. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, this movement resulted in a historic protest in Skopje with more than 100.000 citizens in front of the Macedonian Government (Republic of North Macedonia, 2019).

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On 1 August 2017 Zaev and the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Boyko Borissov, signed a friendship treaty in a move designed to end years of diplomatic wrangling, and to boost North Macedonia's European integration (Casule and Krasimirov, 2017). Despite being the first country to recognize the independence of the proclaimed Republic of Macedonia in January 1992, Bulgaria had refused to recognize the existence of a separate ethnic Macedonian nation and a Macedonian language - considered a dialect of the Bulgarian language (Bell et al., 2019).

The Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborly Relations and Cooperation recognizes both countries' territorial integrity, agrees on a research team from both countries to examine the content of school textbooks, and ensures that both parts are committed to protecting the rights of the other country's nationals living on their soil (Marusic, 2017). The Bulgarian Prime Minister highlighted that "for the first time, without mediators or somebody telling us what to do, the two states came to a solution", in a signal that the Western Balkan region is capable of solving its disputes bilaterally (Morgan, 2017).

In January 2018, celebrating the 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia by Bulgaria, the treaty was ratified by the parliament of both countries. With 61 votes in favor, the Macedonian Parliament ratified the treaty on 15 January. In Sofia, Bulgaria, of the 186 members present of the 240-seat legislature, all voted in favor of ratifying the treaty on 18 January (Leviev-Sawyer, 2018).

According to the Amendment X, that replaces the Article 69 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the assembly makes decisions by a majority vote of the Representatives attending, but no less than one-third of the total number of Representatives, in so far as the Constitution does not provide for a qualified majority (Sobranie, 2019). The Article 118 of the Constitution says that agreements ratified in accordance with the Constitution are part of the internal legal order and cannot be changed by law (Sobranie, 2019).

### Subsection 4.1.2. Hellenic Republic - Greece

Greece - officially the Hellenic Republic -, just like North Macedonia, is a parliamentary republic, whose capital is Athens. The chief of state is the president, who is elected by the Hellenic Parliament for a five-year term, with the possibility of being eligible for a second term. The president is responsible for appointing as prime minister the leader of the majority party or coalition in the Hellenic Parliament. Since 13 March 2015 Prokopios Pavlopoulos (ND) has been the President of the Hellenic Republic, elected by the Parliament on 18 February 2015 with 233 out of 300 votes (CIA, 2019).

The prime minister of the Hellenic Republic is the president of the government, presides over the Council of Ministers, and is the second-in-class state institution following the President of the Republic. He or she represents the Government abroad, in contact with leaders and diplomats of other states, in

international organizations, and at the European Council, the meeting of the leaders of the member states of the European Union (Minister, 2019). Since July 2019, the current Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic is Kyriákos Mitsotákis - leader of ND -, and successor of Alexis Tsipras, leader of the Radical Left Coalition, well-known by the abbreviation SYRIZA<sup>13</sup>.

Elected on 25 January 2015, the Prime Minister Tsipras went to the polls in Greece standing against the austerity and with the objective of renegotiating the debts of the country (BBC, 2015). However, seven months after being elected, on 21 August 2015, Tsipras announced his resignation and called early polls to next month, on 20 September.

Tsipras asked for an interim government before the election in September. Thus, Vassiliki Thanou-Christophilou, President of Greece's Supreme Court, served as interim Prime Minister, and even served for a short term. She was the first Greek woman to become a Prime Minister (CIA, 2019). The second Greek general election of 2015, held on 20 September, resulted in Alexis Tsipras' triumph, a second chance to keep his political program.

The legislative branch is composed by an unicameral Hellenic Parliament, consists of 300 deputies who are elected to four-year terms by direct universal vote, and with the power to revise the constitution (Bowman et al, 2019). The Hellenic Parliament decides bills and law proposals by an absolute majority of the MPs present. The absolute majority has to be at least one-fourth of the total number of MPs in the Plenum, i.e., 75 out of 300 MPs (Parliament, 2019).

Regarding international treaties or agreements, the Article 28 of the Constitution of Greece says that a majority of three-fifths of the total number of Members of Parliament is necessary to vote the law ratifying the treaty or agreement (Parliament, 2008, p. 45-46). According to the Article 36 conventions on trade, taxation, economic cooperation and participation in international organizations or unions, no provision can be made without a statute or which may burden the Greeks individually, shall not be operative without ratification by a statute voted by the Parliament (Parliament, 2008, p. 53).

## Section 4.2. The Prespa Agreement and the Two-Level Game

### Subsection 4.2.1. Level I: Prespa Agreement

Twenty-seven years after the declaration of independence of FYROM, which started a new Macedonian question, Greece and the former Yugoslav country reached an agreement that would put an end to the dispute between the two countries.

The Prespa Agreement<sup>14</sup> was signed on 17 June 2018 by the two foreign ministers Nikola Dimitrov (FYROM) and Nikos Kotzias (Greece), in the presence of the respective Prime

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<sup>13</sup> Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás.

<sup>14</sup> Name of the lake that borders the Albanian, Greek and North Macedonian states, and the place that was chosen to sign the agreement between the two countries.

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Ministers Zoran Zaev and Alexis Tsipras, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, and the EU Commissioner for Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn (Satanakis, 2018). The agreement ratification by domestic actors in both countries would pave the way for the former Yugoslav republic to join NATO and eventually the EU, whose talks towards the accession into the two organizations have been blocked by the Hellenic Republic.

The Agreement recalls and emphasizes the principles of the inviolability of frontiers and the territorial integrity of States incorporated in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the relevant Acts of the OSCE. The Article 3 of the Agreement points out that each party confirms the common existing frontier as an enduring and inviolable international border, without any claims to change the frontier or usurp the other counterpart's territory. In addition, each party must respect the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the political independence of the other party (Prespa Agreement, 2018, p. 7).

Regarding the inviolability of frontiers - according to the point III of the Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States - the participating States regard as inviolable all one another's frontiers as well as the frontiers of all States in Europe and therefore they refrain from assaulting these frontiers, and also they will also refrain from any demand for, or act of, seizure and usurpation of part or all of the territory of any participating State (OSCE, 1975, p. 5). To maintain the territorial integrity of States - point IV of the Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States -, the participating States will respect the territorial integrity of each other, and refrain from making each other's territory the object of military occupation or other direct or indirect measures of force in contravention of international law, or the object of acquisition by means of such measures or the threat of them (OSCE, 1975, p. 5).

The Article 1 of the Prespa Agreement presents the new nomenclature to the FYROM, henceforth officially called Republic of North Macedonia, and its citizens may be called and registered Macedonians. The Agreement also makes official the Macedonian language (Prespa Agreement, 2018, p. 3).

The Article 7, one of the most important of the Agreement, highlights the understanding of the terms "Macedonia" and "Macedonians" refers to a different historical context and cultural heritage. The parties note that the official language and other attributes of North Macedonia are not related to the ancient Hellenic civilization, history, culture and heritage of the northern region of Greece (Prespa Agreement, 2018, p. 9).

Before the agreement the Prime Minister Zaev had presented gestures of good faith to show to his Hellenistic counterpart that the resolution between the two countries could be possible. The most prominent example under Zaev's leadership was to launch as a confidence act, announced in February 2018, the renaming of the country's main airport to *Skopje International Airport* and the main highway to *Friendship highway*, because both had "Alexander the Great" in their names. Thus, FYROM was confirming a step toward building friendship and confidence with Greece (Casule, 2018). Zaev had gone to an opposite direction

of his predecessor, the former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and his policy of *antiquisation*, which fueled more the tensions with Greece, and his party, VMRO-DPMNE, was the main national voice against the name change and presented a strong opposition to the Prespa Agreement.

Armakolas (2019, p. 13-14) points out that VMRO-DPMNE had aligned with Russia. The main interest of Russia in the former-Yugoslav territory is to counterbalance the West, and to express its opposition to FYROM's membership into NATO. In addition, Kanet and Larive (2012, p. 76) state that this interest has been a topic on the agenda of Vladimir Putin since he has embodied a new trend to re-impose Russia back to its great power status by reasserting its influence over neighboring states and beyond.

The new step towards the Macedonian name resolution was followed by the rise of protests in Greece and FYROM against the agreement. Protesters staged separate rallies in many northern Greek cities, including Thessaloniki, the capital of the northern province called Macedonia. Many banners were held saying "Macedonia is Greek" or "Respect our history" (Papadimas, 2018). The fundamental disagreement is the use of the term Macedonian to refer to a nationality and language. In Skopje the protests, supported by VMRO-DPMNE, the main opposition party, were also increasing.

A portion of the Macedonian citizens was against the change of the name because it would be a denial to the Macedonian identity and heritage. Since the Slav-Macedonia is not entirely Slavic, the Albanian minority demands to be included in this new phase. They view the name of Macedonia as being territorial without any special ethnic Slav connotations, and do not object to the references to antiquity by the authorities which so infuriate the Greeks. They just object to the exclusive use of Slav symbols and language (Poulton, 2000, p. 187).

### Subsection 4.2.2. Level II: The Prespa Agreement Ratification

Regarding the ratification of the Prespa Agreement, its Article 1 points out some steps that the two parties should follow. FYROM should, without delay, submit the Agreement to its Parliament for ratification. After the ratification of the Agreement by the Parliament, FYROM might notify Greece that its Parliament has ratified the Agreement. Another point is about the possibility of holding a referendum, where FYROM citizens could vote for the ratification. After the ratification, FYROM should commence the process of constitutional amendments and conclude it by the end of 2018. As soon as the constitutional amendments and all its internal legal procedures are concluded, Greece would start the process of the ratification of the Agreement by the Hellenic Parliament (Prespa Agreement, 2018, p. 4).

On 30 September 2018, in order to start the ratification and implementation of the Prespa Agreement, in a referendum, citizens of FYROM had to respond the following question: "Are you for EU and NATO membership by accepting the agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece?". At least a 50 percent turnout was needed for the agreement to be ratified. However, only 37 percent voted, even if 91 percent of the votes

were in favor of the Agreement. The right-wing opposition VMRO-DPMNE had supported a boycott (Trpkovski , 2018). After the referendum fiasco, the second chance for the ratification of the agreement depended on the approval of both the Hellenic Parliament and the Macedonian Assembly.

The referendum failure made the Macedonian government negotiate with the Parliament the procedure on the constitutional changes for the ratification of the Prespa Agreement. According to Article 131 of the National Constitution, the decision to initiate a change in the Constitution is made by the Assembly by a two-thirds majority vote of the total number of Representatives - 80 out of 120 (Sobranie, 2019).

One of the biggest challenges during the talks was to convince the MPs from two ethnic Albanian opposition parties, Alliance for Albanians and BESA Movement to support the amendments. The Albanian parties conditioned their support towards the ratification under the accord of a set of demands designed to state the multi-ethnic character of the country.

The second paragraph of the Amendment X, that replaces the Article 69 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, says that for laws that directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols, the Assembly has to make decisions by a majority vote of the Representatives attending, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives attending who belong to communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia (Sobranie, 2019).

On 11 January 2019 the Macedonian Parliament voted for the final process of ratification of the Prespa Agreement. Most of the MPs from the VMRO-DPMNE party were absent from the session, but the majority required to adopt the constitutional changes was reached and just one more step was left for the FYROM to become the Republic of North Macedonia: the ratification of the Agreement in the Hellenic Parliament.

When Alexis Tsipras re-assumed as Prime Minister of Greece, in September 2015, he and his party, SYRIZA, started focusing on the talks regarding the Macedonian issue. However, most of the Greek parties were against the agreement. Different positions in the Hellenic Parliament regarding the Prespa Agreement are shown in the table below.

PARTY/GROUP	IDEOLOGY	GOVERNMENT OR OPPOSITION	CURRENT NUMBER OF MPs	SUPPORT OR OPPOSE AGREEMENT
<b>Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)</b>	Originally hard left, moving to centre left	Government	145	Support
<b>New Democracy (ND)</b>	Centre right	Opposition	77	Oppose
<b>Movement for Change (PASOK &amp; Democratic Left<sup>1</sup>)</b>	Centre left	Opposition	20	Oppose
<b>Popular Syndesmos-Golden Dawn (GD)</b>	Far right/neo-Nazi	Opposition	15	Oppose
<b>Communist Party of Greece (KKE)</b>	Stalinist left	Opposition	15	Oppose
<b>Independent Greeks-National Patriotic Democratic Coalition (ANEL)</b>	National-populist right	Unitl recently in Government	7	Oppose
<b>Potami (The River)</b>	Centre-left, pro-reformist	Opposition	6	Support
<b>Union of Centrists</b>	Centrist, conservative	Opposition	5	Oppose
<b>Independent MPs</b>	Various	n/a	10	Mixed

Figure 2. Positions of the members of the Hellenic Parliament regarding the Prespa Agreement  
Source: Armakolas (2019, p. 6).

Even under protests by most of the Greek citizens, the Prespa Agreement was ratified by the Hellenic Parliament on 25 January 2019, with 153 votes out of 300 MPs. The fact that SYRIZA had 145 seats in the parliament was fundamental to the ratification of the Agreement. This was the last stage in ending a dispute that lasted for almost thirty years, and now the just named Republic of North Macedonia has began a new phase: the NATO and EU accession process.

### Subsection 4.2.3. Analysis of the Prespa Agreement under Game Theory perspective

Bringing the Prespa Agreement to the negotiation field, we can analyze it initially according to the elements proposed by Starkey, Boyer and Wilkenfeld (2015) and afterwards as a two-level game, while employing the Prisoner's Dilemma.

In the negotiation setting we have to consider generally who the players are and the number of players involved; what their issues are about; the characteristics of the issues; the party's interests and preferences; the strategies towards a better outcome; and which procedures both players must follow after the agreement.

The players - Greece and FYROM - are motivated in two ways. Greece seeks guarantees about the Hellenic history and culture regarding the heritage left by Alexander

the Great and Philip II, besides the non-claiming of its territory by the other party. FYROM, for its part, seeks to have its nationality and language recognized as Macedonian and to have the membership negotiations with NATO and EU unblocked.

Regarding the main issue - Macedonian name dispute - the players are very committed to find a resolution, but the decisions need to be in accordance to find a common narrative for history, culture and identity so that the two parties can reach a satisfactory agreement. However, the players depend on the influence of the domestic politics to ratify the agreement.

Considering the two-level game theory, we can characterize the Prespa Agreement as Level I, a provisional agreement signed by the two parties, FYROM and Greece. The Level II occurs by the negotiation among each party with their respective domestic groups.

The negotiations with the domestic groups on the Level II towards the agreement ratification on the Level I can be pictured as a Prisoner's Dilemma design:

		FYROM	
		Ratification	Non-Ratification
Greece	Ratification	+ +	+ -
	Non-Ratification	- +	- -

Figure 3. The Prespa Agreement's ratification design  
Source: Elaborated by the author.

For the ratification of the agreement, it is needed that the actors of both parties of Level II, together with each party of the Level I, agree with the terms and ratify the accord. However, according to the design above the probability of failure is high, taking into consideration that one party may ratify the agreement and the other not, or if none of the parties ratify the agreement. Thus the probability of failure is 75%, remaining only 25% for a win-win. The 25% represents the *Nash equilibrium*, in which each player's strategy is a best reply to the strategies of the other players in a non-cooperative game (Peterson, 2015, p. 20).

### Section 4.3. What Next?

In an interview conducted by the author Tania Falierou points out that the agreement and the end of almost three decades of dispute define what belongs, cultural and historically speaking, to Greek Macedonia and to North Macedonia. Thus, each country will arrange the education system to teach the history and culture separately according to each society.

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According to Biljana Volchevska - in another interview conducted by the author - while in the Bulgarian-North Macedonia commission the reinterpretation of the past - that has been agreed - is now used to set ultimatums for the North Macedonian EU integration, the Greek government has a similar rhetoric, which claims absolute objectivity over Greek history and negotiation of the past is set not as a dialogue but rather as one way of the educational process of 'fixing' the Macedonian history<sup>15</sup>.

Regarding the challenges after the Prespa Agreement, Volchevska says that the identity politics in Macedonia has taken a shift, and the current government aspires for a more open and transparent negotiation of the past with the neighbors. However, in the past few months after the Prespa Agreement the discussion related to the Macedonian past and heritage has been proven that common historical themes remain highly contested and that although there has been a good start with the creation of the Bulgarian and Greek historical commissions, the exclusive nationalistic narratives are dominating the understanding of the past and the present.

For Volchevska concepts such as common past and shared heritage are still foreign in the Western Balkan region, and ownership claims over the past play a big role in dictating the day to day politics. She also complements that one of the main reasons for the political disputes over history is the direct involvement of politicians who are interested in being directly involved in navigating historical narratives.

Since several ideas and myths regarding Macedonian history were built, Falierou highlights that it is necessary to break down those myths in order to find common narratives that aren't controversial to the agreement - that is to keep the terms and do not distort what was agreed with the Prespa Agreement.

For a successful agreement the parties must follow pillars like good faith, good will, trust building, and it is needed that both sides know their own preferences and common points. Without a resolution, the dispute becomes a waste of time for the states and their interests, and especially for its citizens.

Every agreement involves losses, however, the gains stand out more, according to Falierou. Greece and North Macedonia can become closer partners, and improve their exchanges like tourism, commerce, trade, and even labor power. In addition, besides the bilateral relations between the two countries, Greece may also guide North Macedonia towards the EU integration.

This agreement strengthens good neighbourly relations and sets an example of reconciliation for the region and Europe as a whole. Greece was the first country to ratify the NATO accession protocol, following which the Prespa agreement entered into force in February 2019. (...) Good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation form an essential part of the country's process of moving towards the EU. They contribute to stability, reconciliation and a climate conducive to addressing open

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<sup>15</sup> The Greece-North Macedonia Commission task is to check and improve history textbooks, so that they no longer contain formulations that one or the other side sees as irredentist or revisionist. The focus should be on emphasizing their common history and common suffering during wars, as opposed to presenting history that constantly pits the two peoples as opponents (Marusic, 2019).

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bilateral issues and the legacies of the past. The government has taken a very positive approach to regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations (European Commission, 2019, p. 53-54).

On 5 May 2019 the first presidential elections in North Macedonia under the new name had the victory of Stevo Pendarovski. Well-known for supporting the Prespa Agreement, Pendarovski has emerged as an important actor in order to keep the Agreement terms, and to take forward the talks towards EU accession (Chadwick and Dougkeri, 2019). In an interview to Deutsche Welle, regarding the North Macedonia integration into EU, Pendarovski said “so what we are waiting for is: give us the chance to improve ourselves through this very long and very strenuous process of Europeanization. We are not asking for the full-fledged membership, we are asking for the fair chance to start that very long process” (Deutsche Welle, 2019).

According to the European Commission 2019 report the Republic of North Macedonia is moderately prepared for the obligations of membership, mainly in areas including economic competition, public procurement, transport and energy; and has a good level of preparation in areas such as company law, customs union, trans-European networks and science and research. However further efforts are still needed, such as free movement of workers as well as financial and budgetary provisions. In addition, the country has continued to improve its alignment with the EU declarations and Council decisions on Common Foreign and Security Policy (European Commission, 2019, p. 6).

On 3 June 2019 NATO informed that it is ready to welcome Republic of North Macedonia as its thirtieth member (NATO, 2019). This step is very important not just for North Macedonia, but for the Western Balkan region as a whole. Considering the fact that Albania and Montenegro are already NATO members, North Macedonia’s membership into NATO is an important step in countering Russia’s meddling in the Western Balkans region, besides providing internal and external security to the former-Yugoslav country (Armakolas, 2019, p. 19).

## Conclusion

This dissertation had as its main objective to analyze the negotiations between Greece and North Macedonia in order to find a final solution for an almost thirty-year dispute, whose main controversy was the use of the name Macedonia by the former Yugoslav country. The development of the research aimed at answering the follow question: *How do domestic groups of Greece and North Macedonia influence the negotiations regarding the Macedonian name dispute?*

Therefore, as methodology a qualitative research, supported by bibliographical and content analyses methods, was employed to explore the main topic, from its historical background to contemporary issues. Since the dissertation focused on the Prespa Agreement negotiations, Robert Putnam's Two-level Game Theory was adopted as a theoretical framework, in order to understand the interaction between international and domestic actors.

Chapter 1 had as its objective to analyze the historical and cultural formation of Macedonia, so that we could understand the differences between the ancient and the modern Macedonia. The bibliographical method was fundamental to explore all the Macedonian historic building. The ancient Macedonia is still related to the Alexander the Great Empire, however, there are several controversies regarding the Macedonian territory that should be clarified.

First, the Empire embraced as well the Hellenic Macedonia as the North Macedonia territories. Second, even if the figure of Alexander the Great is considered a Hellenic heritage, it is important to point out that he was not Greek, but Macedonian - not the same concept for nowadays Macedonians - considering the fact that Macedonia was an independent kingdom. Third, after Alexander the Great's death and lack of an equally strong government, for centuries several empires and kingdoms dominated Macedonia, thus borders were constantly changed, peoples with different cultures and languages started living together and mingling between them, what made modern Macedonia so ethnically heterogeneous.

In order to fulfill the second objective, in Chapter 2 I reviewed the period of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia since its beginning, at the end of World War II, until its process of dissolution because of independence movements by its republics. In the Section 2.4 it can be noticed the fuse for the Macedonian name dispute after the Republic of Macedonia's declaration of independence. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that probably because of the mandatory use of the official name 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'; the Albanian NLA insurgency in 2001; and Greece's boycotts regarding the FYROM negotiations towards the EU and NATO membership, nationalist feelings and movements started increasing in the country. In this way, the main Macedonian nationalist party, VMRO-DPMNE, put in practice its controversial project in order to force a historical and cultural affirmation, what put more fuel on the fire with the Greeks.

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In Chapter 3 I introduce the concept of conflict, however, since the focus was on resolution, more attention was given to definitions of negotiation and Game Theory, especially the Two-Level Game Theory. Two-Level Game Theory was chosen as the theoretical framework because, comparing to conventional games - the Prisoner's Dilemma, for example -, it takes into account the interdependence of government representatives on their domestic constituents. Thus, for a successful international negotiation, it is important that the negotiators know not only other states' or international organizations' preferences, but also the preferences of their own domestic groups.

Chapter 4 was divided in three parts. The first part presented briefly the political system of Hellenic Republic and Republic North Macedonia with the purpose of understanding how they are organized and how the MPs vote according to their respective National Constitutions. The second part is about the Prespa Agreement and its ratification, and it is also divided in three subparts.

The first subpart is focused on the Prespa Agreement as a Two-level Game's Level I, with a two-way achievement. On one side, the agreement ensures that the heritage left by the Alexander the Great Empire is part of the Hellenic culture and history, and that this historical and cultural heritage and neither its territory can be claimed in the future by North Macedonia. On the other side, the agreement also ensures North Macedonia the opportunity to affirm its own identity, in which its citizen and language can be officially called Macedonian.

The second subpart discussed the Prespa Agreement ratification as a Two-level Game's Level II, in which the two governments had to negotiate with their respective domestic groups in order to ratify the agreement. However, it is important to highlight that the negotiation among the Macedonian government with Macedonian domestic groups was more complex compared to the Hellenic government with their groups.

North Macedonia has a large Albanian minority that claims to be included in the Macedonian society. Therefore, Albanian people of North Macedonia, in order to support the Prespa Agreement, needed a guarantee that their culture, language and religion would be ensured as part of a Macedonian patrimony, which has been mostly related to a Slavic heritage. Once Albanians are not considered a Slavic people, calling North Macedonia a pure Slavic country is a way of excluding them from an identity national construction.

In addition, nationalist groups were increasingly against the Prespa Agreement. In North Macedonia, political parties, such as VMRO-DPMNE, stood against the agreement ratification, and organized boycotts to put in check what they saw as a threat to the national sovereignty. In Greece, several protests occurred, where people - supported by parties opposed to the agreement - refused to accept the existence of a country that carries out the name Macedonia.

In the third subpart the two levels of Prespa Agreement were analyzed in order to present the process in a dynamic way. A quantitative method, making use of the Prisoner's Dilemma design, was applied for the purpose of checking the probability of failure and

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success. In this way, if just one or none of the parties ratified the Prespa Agreement, the probability of failure was 75%, remaining only 25% for a success. In this scenario, it is substantial that the negotiators know and understand, besides the other states' preferences, the preferences and interests of each of their domestic groups, and deal with them very carefully, otherwise the failure will be inevitable.

Finally, the third part of Chapter 4 discussed about the achievements and the challenges that both Greece and North Macedonia might have after the Macedonian dispute resolution. Therefore, we conducted semi-structured interviews in order to have perspective from experts who are familiar with the discussed topic. Regarding the interviews, some challenges were faced and had to be re-structured. First, finding specialists to talk about the topic. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, in Skopje, was contacted, but the interview was not possible due to several events and appointments scheduled to the first half of 2019. Second, due to her position as diplomatic representative, Mrs. Falierou did not allow the use of recording tools, thus the transcript answers were not so accurate.

Mrs. Falierou, as diplomat and Greek citizen, seemed quite optimistic about the Macedonian dispute resolution, despite pointing out some challenges that both parties might face. The main challenge, that meets Biljana Volchevska's perspective, is to keep the good faith by the politicians of the two countries in favor of finding a common narrative and cooperating with mutual interests.

Lastly, the Macedonian name dispute cannot be compared to other current disputes in the Western Balkan region - like the Kosovo-Serbia issue, for example -, but it gives space for each country to review their own narrative in favor of reaching a resolution in its own context. Therefore, it is necessary to reinforce existing democratic mechanisms - education, justice, media, arts, etc. - in order not to allow the rise of any kind of nationalist discourse.



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## APPENDIX I

### Interview with Mrs. Tania Falierou, Deputy Head of Mission/Consul of Liaison Office of the Hellenic Republic in Prishtina

#### Questions:

- 1) What are the main positive points regarding the Macedonia name resolution?
- 2) How is it seen the North Macedonia entrance into NATO? And how could this contribute to improve regional security?
- 3) What are the expectations regarding the North Macedonia's accession to the European Union?
- 4) Why did a large portion of Greek population oppose the change of name?
- 5) In your opinion, what are the challenges faced by Greece after the name changing?

#### Answers:

- Positive points: The agreement splits what belongs to the Greek Macedonia and what belongs to the North Macedonia.
- In the future (mid-term or long-term) the education will teach history and culture of each country separately, according to the historical building of each society.
- It's not just about a name, but everything what it represents (Mrs. Falierou suggestion: checking the building project called Skopje 2014).
- Challenges: The main challenge is to keep the terms and to not distort what have been agreed with the Prespa Agreement and with its ratification. Every agreement involves losses, but in return it also earns more.
- Population feels ambivalent. Several ideas and myths regarding Macedonia were built, and what it is needed from now it is to break down those myths and find common narratives to overcome the challenges. Thus, both countries can become closer partners and improve their exchanges like tourism, commercial/trade and people. Improving bilateral relations and also support North Macedonia to an EU orientation.
- NATO: To improve the security in the region all of the Western Balkan countries should become members of NATO.
- Kosovo-Serbian issues: It is more complicated to Kosovo and Serbia because their recent events, we cannot compare both disputes/conflicts. But it is also necessary to break down collective myths.

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- Pillars for a successful agreement: good faith, good will, confidence building and, regarding third parts, it is important that both sides know their own preferences and common points.
- Without a resolution, litigation becomes a waste of time for all the interests of the states and especially for its citizens.



## APPENDIX II

### Interview with Mrs. Biljana Volchevska, PhD Researcher

#### Questions:

- 1) What are the next steps for North Macedonia, regarding culture and identity?
- 2) What are the main challenges that the new government - under the new name - will face?

#### Answers:

The identity politics in Macedonia has taken a shift and the current government aspires for a more open and transparent negotiation of the past with the neighbors. However, in the past few months it has been proven that common historical themes remain highly contested and that although there have been a good start with the creation of the Bulgarian and Greek historical commissions, the exclusive nationalistic narratives are dominating the understanding of the past and the present.

Concepts such as common past and shared heritage are still foreign in this region and ownership claims over the past play big role in dictating the day to day politics. One of the main reasons for the political disputes over history is the direct involvement of politicians who are interested in being directly involved in navigating historical narratives.

Thus with the Bulgarian commission for example, the reinterpretation of the past that has been agreed is now used to set ultimatums for the North Macedonian EU integration. Similar rhetoric has the new Greek government which claims absolute objectivity over Greek history and negotiation of the past is set not as a dialogue but rather as one way educational process of 'fixing' the Macedonian history.