DEMOCRATISATION AND THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT CONFLICT IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE: THE CASES OF BULGARIA AND REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement
of the PhD in International Relations,
London School of Economics and Political Science,
University of London

2004

UMI Number: U198819

UMI

Dissertation Publishing

ProQuest

Abstract

This thesis critically examines the common notion that the process of democratisation in multiethnic societies is directly linked with the emergence of ethnic nationalism and violent inter-communal conflict. Whereas generally assuming a positive relationship between democracy and the absence of violent conflict on the national as well as international level, academic studies maintain that this positive correlation does not apply to the actual process of democratisation, which, it is thought, may heighten interethnic tension and increase the risk of armed conflict in divided societies. Exposing the flaws in this argument, this thesis offers an alternative account of the relationship between democratisation and interethnic relations, suggesting that the former can in fact help to prevent violent conflict in societies divided along ethnic lines. Drawing on literature from democratisation theory and peace and conflict studies, and applying it to two case studies, Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia, this thesis shows that the development of democracy − albeit flawed − helped to moderate inter-communal tension between the ethnic Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, and the ethnic Macedonian and Albanian communities in Macedonia. Comparing the experiences of Bulgaria and Macedonia in the 1990s, this thesis further suggests that the existence of unresolved issues over the gratification of certain fundamental human needs such as identity, security and recognition, amongst ethnic communities in heterogeneous societies must be resolved outside of the liberal democratic process, since needs are non-negotiable and as such cannot be bargained over through the democratic process. Furthermore, without some measure of national/political unity that is inclusive of ethnic communities, peaceful democratisation will be seriously undermined. Additionally, an aspect that has not been adequately accounted for in studies on democratisation in ethnically plural societies is the way in which the external security environment influences the domestic process of democratisation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACRONYMS

ADP	Albanian Democratic Party
ASNOM	Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia
AVNOJ	Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia
BCP	Bulgarian Communist Party
BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DAHR	Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania
DP	Democratic Party
DPA	Democratic Party of Albanians
DUI	Democratic Union for Integration
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union
IIDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
JNA	Yugoslav National Army
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MARF	Alliance of Reform Forces of Macedonia-Liberal Party
MP	Member of Parliament
MRF	Movement for Rights and Freedoms
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDP	People's Democratic Party
NLA	National Liberation Army
NORDBAT	Swedish-Norwegian-Finnish battalion within UNPREDEP
NMSII	National Movement Simeon II
NSF	National Salvation Front
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDP	Party for Democratic Prosperity
PR	Proportional Representation
SDS	Serbian Democratic Party
SDSM	Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia
SEE	South East Europe
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SRM	Socialist Republic of Macedonia
UDF	Union of Democratic Forces
UMO-Ilinden	United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden
UN	United Nations
UNPREDEP	United Nations Preventive Deployment Force
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
US	United States
VMRO	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation
VMRO-DPMNE	International Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity

INTRODUCTION

Conventional wisdom has it that the end of the Cold War saw a radical change in the character of violent conflict, demonstrated in particular by the apparent shift from interstate wars to intrastate, armed conflict and the emergence of a host of new wars. Yet, this perception is partly erroneous for, as Caroline Kennedy-Pipe wisely observes, the Cold War system and the overriding concern about the threat of nuclear war, resulted in Western observers' oblivion to the plethora of, either existing, brewing, or temporarily suppressed conflicts beyond the borders of the First World.[1] Whilst the Cold War and military competition between the United States and the Soviet Union bankrolled many of the proxy wars in the Third World, it also served to contain, sideline or co-opt the interests and grievances of communal groups within the communist bloc.[2] Many of the conflicts that emerged after the fall of communism, therefore, were not new but the manifestation of unresolved, protracted conflicts dating back to the pre-communist, nation-building era in Eastern Europe. Some conflicts, such as the inter-communal conflict in Bulgaria, which is addressed in Chapter Four, were a direct result of perverted communist policies. Similarly, the Macedonian-Albanian conflict, portrayed in Chapter Five, owed much of its complexities both to communist-era politics as well as to Great Power politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

What the period from 1989 until today acutely illustrates, is the futility of exercising coercion, power politics and outright suppression, to resolve conflicts. At best, such means only bring about a temporary settlement of a conflict, without

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[1] Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, 'Security Beyond the Cold War: An Introduction', in Clive Jones and Caroline Kennedy-Pipe (eds.), *International Security in a Global Age: Securing the Twenty-first Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 1.
[2] Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, 'From Cold Wars to New Wars', in Clive Jones and Caroline Kennedy-Pipe (eds.), *International Security in a Global Age: Securing the Twenty-first Century*, p. 16.

having actually resolved the underlying issues at the heart of the conflict. For conflicts that are deeply rooted and whose core revolves around individual as well as a community's need for identity, security, recognition and control, are bound to resurface and demand attention time and again, unless and until they are satisfactorily resolved.

The premature suggestion that the 'end of history'[3] had arrived, following the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the disintegration Soviet Union, and that the imposition of capitalism and liberal democracy in post-communist societies would eventually result in a politically and economically homogenous European continent, has obviously not been borne out by fifteen years of post-communist experience. Yet, the establishment of Western-style capitalist democracy nonetheless continues to be seen as the most effective guarantor of international security in the twenty-first century. This attitude, in turn, stems in large part from a Western belief in the superiority of the so-called democratic peace theory,[4] according to which democracies are less likely than other regimes to go to war with one another, or to experience armed conflict within its own borders.

Reflecting the changes in the international system since 1989, the academic focus shifted in the 1990s from interstate wars to intrastate, inter-communal conflicts. In the debate on the relationship between democracy and inter-communal conflict, two opposing theories were articulated. On the one hand, democracy is regarded as the political system (in existence thus far) most capable of effectively and peacefully

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[3] Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History', *The National Interest*, Summer 1989, pp. 3-18.
[4] Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (eds.), *Debating the Democratic Peace* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997); Miriam Fendius Elman (ed.), *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997); Bruce M. Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

preventing and managing violent conflict.[5] Typical characteristics of fully democratic systems include broad political participation, toleration of opposition, equality before the law and the protection of human rights – features that provide democratic systems with peaceful means of channelling conflict and grievances. The fulfilment of human needs, such as freedom, security and protection of identity, in a democracy, also helps to promote peaceful relations between diverse communities on the national as well as international level. Accordingly, it is presumed that democracies are relatively better at managing conflict than are authoritarian regimes, as they contain mechanisms for addressing disputes that arise. In fact, we can say that inherent in the democratic system of government are mechanisms for conflict regulation that help to channel competing interests non-violently. The more democratic a society is, therefore, the greater should be the likelihood that ethnic groups and other identity groups will express their dissent non-violently.[6] Authoritarian systems, in contrast, tend to either suppress conflict and grievances – forcefully if necessary – or manipulate the interests of ethnic minorities to serve the ambitions and interests of the regime itself. They typically deprive citizens of civil and political rights, as illustrated by the experience of Eastern Europe during the communist period.

The opposite view, on the other hand, is classically represented by John Stuart Mill's argument that democracy is unlikely in ethnically (or nationally) plural societies,[7] and that to the extent that democracy is pursued, it may exacerbate conflict in heterogeneous states, as political parties tend to form along ethnic lines, which in

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[5] Peter Harris and Ben Reilly, *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998), p. 16.
[6] Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), p. 104.
[7] Adam Przeworski, *Sustainable Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 19.

turn deepens communal divisions.[8] The democratic principle of majority rule, it is argued, is thus transformed into a 'tyranny of the majority', in which the majority and minority remain fixed, thereby perpetuating a volatile state of asymmetric power relations. Hence, the existence of inter-communal divisions can make democracy hard to realise. It is therefore suggested that democracy is in fact ineffective and inappropriate in societies divided by ethnicity, language and/or religion, and that majority rule, political party competition, and an open political system may cause further deterioration of interethnic relations.

Whilst *democracy* refers to a consolidated political regime, *democratisation* is understood as the process whereby such a regime is established. Even those who claim that democracy is conducive to peace often maintain that democratisation is not. The argument is that democratisation may generate or intensify violent conflict, as this nascent political process allows politicians to manipulate ethnic and communal conflicts for their own intents and purposes, which in turn may increase the probability that ethnic and/or other identity groups will mobilise to advance their own interests. Thus, the democratic process itself can weaken the unity of the state, create conflicts over the allocation of resources, and make the development of fair, just and efficient government more difficult. Others also argue that democratisation fosters ethnic nationalism which in turn may generate violent conflict, within as well as between states.[9]

Whereas a great deal of attention has been given to the relationship between democracy and conflict, there is a gap in the literature on the relationship between *democratisation* and interethnic conflict. In the last decade, however, it has become

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[8] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), p. 291.
[9] See in particular, Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000).

apparent that more attention to the impact of democratisation on inter-communal conflict is necessary. Hence, this thesis aims to contribute to the broadening of this field of research. Despite the fact that the majority of post-Cold War conflicts have been intrastate rather than interstate, and mostly inter-communal in character, relatively little focus has been given to the effects of democratisation on intrastate security and interethnic relations. This, however, is an area in which further study is important not only for political scientists but also for scholars of international relations, as the boundaries between the domestic and international are becoming increasingly blurred in a world where, what have traditionally been considered domestic issues are transcending borders and assuming a transnational character. Intrastate conflicts take on international dimensions as well, through for example, refugee flows and spillover effects of one conflict into another state (see the conflicts in Liberia/Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo/Rwanda/Uganda, Bosnia/Kosovo and most recently, Kosovo/Macedonia), which in turn contribute to a heightened sense of insecurity on the regional and international level. As Kalevi Holsti suggests, the classical formula that stipulated that international peace and security was the condition necessary for domestic politics to "unfold untroubled by external disturbances" has now been reversed so that "[t]he problem of contemporary and future international politics...is essentially a problem of domestic politics."[10] Similarly, democratisation influences and is influenced by the dynamics of the international system. A prime example of this is the democratisation processes in Eastern Europe in the 1990s. The onset of these was determined largely by the end of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe and the assumption in the West that democracy was the only choice for states emerging from the Soviet bloc. Hence democratisation

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[10] Kalevi J. Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 15.

assumed an international dimension as the spread of democracy was popularly held to be the best guarantee for peace and security in the international system.

Establishing democracy is of course a momentous undertaking in any society. According to Jack Snyder and Donald Horowitz,[11] democratisation in ethnically divided states becomes problematic as it tends to be accompanied by aggressive ethno-nationalism that in turn may well increase the risk of armed conflict. This dissertation, however, takes another look at the relationship between democratisation in heterogeneous states and the risks for conflict, focusing in particular on South East Europe, and exposes the flaws in the claim that democratisation is unlikely, and may even be harmful to peace and security in ethnically mixed states. Although it is often argued that the process of *democratisation*, as opposed to *consolidated democracy*, increases the level of conflict in ethnically heterogeneous societies, this thesis suggests otherwise.

The *hypothesis* set out here and subsequently supported, can be divided into two parts. First, it is argued that it is a mistake to attribute interethnic conflict to democratisation per se and, second, it is maintained that democratisation – not just consolidated democracy – does have potential to serve as a medium for conflict prevention[12] in ethnically heterogeneous societies. Yet, as will become clear in this thesis, the ability of the democratisation process to mediate interethnic relations non-violently is indeed conditioned by the behaviour of political elites, the institutional features of the democratic system that is being developed and, perhaps most importantly, the type of conflict present between different communities sharing the

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[11] Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000); Donald L. Horowitz, 'Democracy in Divided Societies', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 4, no. 4, October 1993, p. 18; Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985).

[12] An explanatory note on the meaning of 'conflict prevention' is offered at the beginning of Chapter Two.

same territorial and political space. The present study sets out to identify the main misconceptions about the relationship between democratisation and interethnic conflict, with a particular focus on Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia. Whilst there is a tendency to attribute interethnic conflict to the process of democratisation per se in ethnically plural, post-communist societies, this study seeks to challenge this view and instead suggests that in order to properly understand the emergence of violent interethnic conflict in post-communist societies, we must look at the initial transition phase following the breakdown of the communist regime and which precedes the initiation of democratisation (or other type of regime, for that matter). Another important factor to consider in the explanation of interethnic conflict in Eastern Europe is the legacy of the communist state and its ambiguous and inconsistent attitudes toward ethnic identities. In order to understand the relationship between interethnic conflict and democratisation, the nature of a given conflict must also be explored. For, as we will see, whether a conflict is mainly interest-based, or needs-based, will have important implications for the capacity of democratisation to act as a conflict-preventive agent in a society divided along ethnic lines.

The fall of communism in Eastern Europe gave way to the assumption that liberal democracy constitutes the only legitimate form of political system in the post-Cold War era; that democracy had won against communism.[13] The goal was to democratise, thereby stabilising the post-communist states of Eastern Europe in as short a period as possible. The eruption of war in the former Yugoslavia, however, soon became grounds for arguing that democratic principles and institutions, if at all established, were likely to have destructive consequences for countries harbouring inter-communal grievances amongst different ethnic groups. This last contention

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[13] Ghia Nodia, 'Nationalism and Democracy', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.),
Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994),
p. 3

brings us straight back to the hypothesis, for it is this argument that this thesis examines.

Two case studies, Bulgaria and Macedonia, serve as illustrations of the hypothesis. The choice of these two states located in the Balkans[14] may not seem obvious at first glance, and thus warrants a more detailed explanation. Clearly, Bosnia has been the main locus of post-Cold War conflict in the Balkans and although peace formally prevails there today, and democratisation efforts since the Dayton agreement have been extensive, Bosnia nevertheless appears to be holding together chiefly as a result of international pressure and a NATO military presence. Despite a significant democratisation apparatus in place, democracy has made very little progress. One reason for this is the fact that the Bosnian state lacks the most basic precondition for democracy, that is, 'national unity', or sufficient agreement on who is to be a member of the Bosnian democratic polity. Moreover, Bosnia today is a de facto international protectorate and domestic politics is ultimately controlled by the office of the United Nations' High Representative, who holds a veto on legislative power.[15] It is doubtful, therefore, whether Bosnia could be said to be undergoing a genuine process of democratisation. Serbia and Montenegro, previously known as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY)[16], had until the overthrow of Slobodan Milsošević in 2000, made virtually no progress in terms of democratisation, and in fact seemed to be moving in quite the opposite direction. Although democratic government has since emerged, it is still at a very early stage and thus an assessment of its outcome is much too premature. In Croatia, democracy was effectively undermined during most of the

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[14] Also referred to as South East Europe. Throughout this dissertation, 'the Balkans' and 'South East Europe' will be used interchangeably.

[15] David Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), p. 2.

[16] In February 2003, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was formally replaced with Serbia and Montenegro, a loose federation under a new constitution. Kosovo remains, formally, a part of Serbia, although in practice it is under UN protection. Source: *The Book of Rule: How the World is Governed* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2004), p. 183.

1990s by the nationalist leader Franjo Tudjman, whose means of addressing the country's 'ethnic problem' was to expel a majority of its minority Serb population by the mid-1990s. Slovenia, today the most democratic and economically developed of the former Yugoslav republics, was always the most homogenous Balkan state and thus has experienced little if any ethnic tension since its independence. Whether or not Slovenia is at all a Balkan country is itself a contentious issue.[17] Albania, too, is generally regarded as an ethnically homogenous state, although the Greek government has clashed with the Albanian government on numerous occasions in regards to the small Greek community within Albania's borders. In Romania, regime transition was an exceedingly violent affair, and the democratic outcome remained precarious for many years following the overthrow and execution of Romania's communist dictator, Nicolae Ceauşescu. Whereas academic work in Balkan studies has tended to focus on Bosnia and the disintegration of Yugoslavia, less attention have been paid to Bulgaria and Macedonia. One of the aims of this thesis, therefore, is to illustrate the important place that Bulgaria and Macedonia inhabit in the political arena of South East Europe. Macedonia is also particularly interesting as it is the only former Yugoslav republic that managed to secede peacefully from the Yugoslav federation.

Specifically, the experiences of Bulgaria and Macedonia serve to highlight some of the flaws in the argument that democratisation poses a threat to peaceful interethnic relations, particularly in the Balkans. Both states managed to take important steps toward the establishment of a democratic system during the 1990s, and did so without provoking violent interethnic conflict. Even the breakdown of peace in Macedonia in the spring of 2001 does not invalidate the use of Macedonia as

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[17] For an account of Slovenia's peculiar geographical and cultural position in Europe see, James Gow and Cathie Carmichael, *Slovenia and the Slovenes: A Small State and the New Europe* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), pp. 2- 4.

a case study for this dissertation, as subsequent armed confrontation between Macedonian security forces and the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA) cannot be explained simply in terms of intrastate divisions between the Macedonian and Albanian communities, or as a consequence of the process of democratisation. Rather, the crisis is linked to the conflict about the future status of Kosovo. In fact, the extent to which the democratic system in Macedonia managed to operate during the early phase of the 2001 crisis is noteworthy. Although this thesis focuses on the ten years following the breakdown of communism in Eastern Europe, it also considers the causes and development of the armed confrontation in Macedonia, and addresses the question of what went wrong and why, and how this relates to the hypothesis set out in this study.

During the 1990s, Macedonia was often cited as a rare example of relatively peaceful coexistence between different ethnic communities, a peace that eventually was to be undermined by the spring 2001 armed attacks on Macedonian forces by ethnic Albanian guerrilla groups operating mainly around the Kosovo/Macedonia border. Contentious issues in interethnic relations were primarily the questions of minority language and educational rights, the legal status of the Albanians who demanded recognition as a constitutive nation, and discriminatory employment practices.[18] Macedonia is officially a constitutional democracy and since its independence several rounds of multiparty elections have been held. According to the constitution, all citizens of Macedonia are protected by a broad range of human rights including those civil and political rights that are crucial to the functioning of a democratic process. Since the early days of the transition from communism to democracy, the ethnic Albanian community has had political representation on the

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[18] See Chapter Five for a comprehensive account of outstanding issues between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians.

national as well as municipal level. For example, the Western Macedonian town of Tetovo, whose local government has included representatives of both Albanian and Macedonian parties since the beginning of Macedonia's democratisation process, has elected an ethnic Albanian mayor, as has the neighbouring town Gostivar.[19] From the beginning of Macedonia's democratisation process, therefore, ethnic Albanians played an important role in the political domain. But in spite of progress in democratisation, Macedonia remained a fragile state throughout the 1990s, and its unity depended in large measure on the commitment of its Albanian population to the integrity of the Macedonian state. It was all too apparent to the ethnic Macedonian majority that if the Albanians were to withdraw their support, the survival of the Republic of Macedonia would come under severe threat. Nonetheless, Macedonia had managed to withstand pressure imposed on it, directly or indirectly, from the crises in Bosnia and Kosovo. As the 1990s drew to an end, it was becoming increasingly evident that the future and viability of a multiethnic Macedonia depended in no small part on developments in neighbouring Kosovo. It was popularly assumed that the fact that Macedonia managed to stay together was largely due to the leadership of the Macedonian president at the time, Kiro Gligorov, and the presence of a United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), whose continued mandate was vetoed in 1999 by China, as punishment for Macedonia's decision to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan.[20] Proposing, however, that neither Gligorov's leadership nor the UN-force can adequately account for the relative absence of violent conflict, the objective of this dissertation is to look at the role that democratisation

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[19] Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), pp. 189-190.
[20] Henryk J. Sokalski, *An Ounce of Prevention: Macedonia and the UN Experience in Preventive Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003), pp. 202-203.

played in keeping the country at least on the level of 'negative peace'.[21] It may be tempting to view the confrontations between ethnic Albanian armed groups and the Macedonian military during 2001 as evidence that democratisation does not work in multiethnic states. However, careful scrutiny of these events clearly indicates that the violence in 2001 was to a considerable extent 'inherited' from Kosovo.[22]

Bulgaria, in turn, has often been overlooked in discussions about interethnic relations, despite the fact that it is home to an ethnic Turkish minority that accounts for between nine and ten percent[23] of the total population. Other ethnic minorities in Bulgaria include an extensive Roma population, second in size only to the Turks, as well as a smaller group of ethnic Bulgarian Muslims. In addition, claims have been made for the existence of an ethnic Macedonian minority, although the Bulgarian authorities deny this. Since the end of communist rule, Bulgaria's democratisation process has made significant advances and the treatment of ethnic minorities has improved substantially since the days of the authoritarian Zhivkov regime, under whose leadership the suppression of ethnic identities culminated in a violent campaign to forcibly assimilate the Turkish minority. As the communist regime in Bulgaria crumbled towards the end of 1989, there were ample grievances among the Turkish population to lead Bulgaria down the same route as Bosnia and Kosovo. Such a scenario, however, was avoided as Bulgaria set about the process of

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[21] 'Negative peace' is defined in realist terms simply as the absence of war, i.e. the cessation of direct violence. 'Positive peace' is a concept advanced by Johan Galtung, and refers to a social condition in which structural violence – the indirect form of violence caused by structural inequalities in society – is eliminated. Sources: David P. Barash and Charles P. Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 6; John W. Burton, *Conflict Resolution: Its Language and Processes* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996), p. 42.

[22] John Phillips, *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 166-167.

[23] According to Bulgaria's 1992 population census, the Turkish population represented 9.7 percent of Bulgaria's total population. The most recent census, held in 2001, indicated that the proportion of Turks in Bulgaria had fallen to 9.4 percent. Sources: Ali Eminov, 'The Turks in Bulgaria: Post-1989 Developments', *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1999, p. 33; 'Bulgarian Statisticians Unveil 2001 Census Results', Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline, vol. 6, no. 224, 2 December 2002.

democratisation, albeit not without its share of trouble and managed to incorporate its ethnic Turks into Bulgaria's political life. The fact that Bulgaria was relatively successful in integrating its Turkish population by means of the democratisation process had profound effects on the stability of the country as a whole in the post-communist period.

Macedonia and Bulgaria both illustrate the central point of this thesis that democratisation, far from leading to greater insecurity and aggressive confrontation between ethnic groups, can have a stabilising effect on states that are divided along ethnic lines. Sceptics may point out that the Roma population in Bulgaria has not been as fortunate as the Turkish minority, and will also note that this thesis does not include the Serb, Turkish, Roma, Vlach and other ethnic minorities in Macedonia in its analysis. This is a necessary omission; for pragmatic reasons, such as limited writing space, the focus here will be on the relationship between the Bulgarians and ethnic Turks on the one hand, and Macedonians and ethnic Albanians on the other. Another reason for this choice is the fact that the Turks in Bulgaria and the Albanians in Macedonia are sufficiently organised on the national political level to facilitate an analysis. Additionally, Turks in Bulgaria and Albanians in Macedonia represent the largest minority groups in their respective countries. Whilst the theoretical foundation is primarily drawn from democratisation theory and from the field of conflict analysis, the thesis also considers factors other than democratisation that may have influenced the relatively peaceful interethnic relations in Bulgaria and Macedonia. This is necessary in order to assess the impact of democratisation – relative to other factors – on interethnic relations. In particular, the role of UNPREDEP is addressed. Although proponents of UN peace operations often claim that the presence of this force was instrumental in ensuring that armed conflict did not break out in Macedonia

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during the 1990s[24], this thesis suggests that UNPREDEP had more symbolic than real meaning. Turkey's influence – direct and indirect – on interethnic relations in Bulgaria is also assessed. Furthermore, factors common to Bulgaria and Macedonia's post-communist experience are identified in order to facilitate a comparative analysis of the case studies.

The thesis is divided into six chapters and a conclusion. Chapter One provides the first part of the main theoretical backbone for further analysis, that is, a theoretical overview of the concepts and ideas of democracy, democratisation and transition. Crucial distinctions between these concepts are drawn, and the difference between democratisation and liberalisation – two concepts that are often confused with each other – is also highlighted. Subsequently, Chapter One addresses causes and modes of democratisation, as well as the question of whether or not specific preconditions for democratisation can be identified. The role of international actors in promoting democratisation is also discussed. The chapter then addresses some of the main concerns in regards to institutional aspects of democratisation. The final part of the chapter provides an overview of the particularities of democratisation in post-communist states, including the legacy of the communist past and the challenges associated with the twin processes of democratisation and economic transformation.

Chapter Two focuses on specific issues related to democratisation in multiethnic societies. It begins with a critical review of the relationship between democratisation and inter-communal relations in ethnically plural societies. After providing a critique of various scholars' claim that the democratisation process is likely to undermine peace and security in heterogeneous states, the chapter outlines a more plausible source of causation other than democratisation, found in the previous,

non-democratic regime, and the power vacuum created by regime breakdown. Subsequently, Chapter Two introduces John Burton's theory on the relationship between human needs and conflict, which as will become apparent, is of particular relevance to the present study. Thereafter, the phenomenon of ethnically aligned politics is addressed, followed by an account of the relationship between on the one hand, democratisation and on the other, human rights (individual versus collective). Finally, issues of international security in multiethnic states are considered.

Chapter Three looks at transition and democratisation in South East Europe as a whole; first highlighting the interconnectedness between communism and nationalism in the region. Subsequently, the chapter examines the post-communist experiences with democratisation and interethnic relations in each of the countries in the region. Chapters Four and Five tell the story of the experiences of Bulgaria and Macedonia, respectively, in the decade following the collapse of communism. The focus of Chapter Six is a comparative study of the two case studies, with the aim of identifying the points of convergence as well as those of divergence between the experiences of Bulgaria and Macedonia in order to better understand what enabled, and what obstructed, the path to democracy and peace in these two countries. Chapter Six also connects the two case studies back to the theories of democratisation and interethnic conflict addressed in Chapters One and Two, and engages in a deeper exploration of the relationship between human needs theory and inter-communal conflict, relating to the case studies. Finally, the Conclusion seeks to assess the prospect and limitation of democratisation as a medium for peaceful cohabitation in ethnically plural societies.

Research for the present study included extensive field visits to Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia between 2000 and 2002, during which interviews were

conducted with politicians, representatives of numerous local and international non-

governmental organisations, policy institutes, media representatives and academics.

CHAPTER ONE

Building Democracy in the Post-Cold War Period: A Theoretical Overview

1.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical foundation for further analysis of the impact of democratisation on relations between ethnic majorities and minorities in Bulgaria and Macedonia. To this end, the task here is to critically assess the concepts of *liberalisation, transition, democratisation* and *democracy*. First, working definitions of these terms are established, highlighting the importance of making a distinction between the different concepts. In particular, this chapter asserts that any definition of democracy that does not extend beyond the feature of competitive elections is strictly insufficient for understanding the essence and function of democracy. It is also necessary to consider civil and political rights as being intrinsic to the democratic process, without which democracy would be effectively meaningless. This thesis therefore employs a broader, more comprehensive definition of democracy. The difference between liberalisation and democratisation is also clarified as these two concepts are sometimes confused with each other, resulting in faulty analysis. Second, this chapter surveys the main theories of democracy's causation, distinguishing broadly between modernity-related explanations and agency-centred explanations for the emergence of democracy. Although numerous preconditions for democratisation have been put forth by scholars, it is argued here that the only prerequisites for democratisation that can be convincingly ascertained are, first, an agreement on which people(s) are to be included in the demos and, second, a will to democratise that is sufficiently strong to ensure a continuous commitment to the democratic process. The role of external actors is also addressed,

suggesting that democratisation is never a wholly domestic process, but one that has increasingly become internationalised since the end of the Second World War. Subsequently, a discussion of the institution-building aspects of democratisation shows that the choice of institutional structures is of vital importance and can strongly influence the success or failure of democratisation.

In the second section of the chapter, we first look at the influence of the communist legacy on democratisation; the difficult task of establishing rule of law as a foundation for democracy; state-sanctioned corruption; and the general mistrust of state institutions amongst the people. Subsequently, we address some of the problems facing post-communist societies in simultaneously transforming their political and economic systems; that is, pursuing democratisation at the same time as making the transition from communist command economy to capitalist market economy. The democratisation process is thus highly intertwined with, and dependent on, the impact that economic reform has on the electorate. Economic reform however, particularly in South East Europe, has been – and continues to be – an arduous process hampered by numerous obstacles including corruption. Economic development, or the lack of it, has become intimately associated with the success or failure of democracy in such a way that, economic hardship has threatened to undermine the faith of the masses in the democratic process.

1.2. Theories of Transition, Democratisation and Democracy

Democracy

Before addressing the two concepts of primary concern to this study – *transition* and *democratisation* – it is necessary to begin by defining what we mean by *democracy*. The fundamental basis of the democratic concept rests, first, on the assumption that human beings are morally autonomous agents and as such capable of self-government[1]; and second, on the "idea of intrinsic equality", that is, that all humans are by nature equal.[2] As a normative ideal, notes Bhikhu Parekh, "democracy means political equality. Not only should all those affected be nominally included in decision-making, but they should be included on equal terms."[3] The idea that human beings should, to the extent possible, be self-governing, is also inherent in the term 'democracy' which literally means 'rule by the people' and derives from the Greek *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule). Today's concept of democracy, however, is qualitatively distinct from ancient Athenian democracy, which employed the principle of direct democracy but was at the same time a highly exclusive system in which only a small portion of the city-state's inhabitants had the right to participate.[4] In its modern form, in contrast, democracy has been understood as being representative rather than direct, and commonly translated into a system of government that is at a minimum characterised by a multiparty system with free and fair elections, or what is defined as *electoral democracy*.[5] Samuel Huntington notes that, "[the] central procedure of democracy is the selection of leaders through competitive elections by

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[1] Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 91.
[2] Ibid., pp. 84-85.
[3] Bikhu Parekh, 'The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy', in David Held (ed.), *Prospects for Democracy: North, South, East, West* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 157.
[4] Jean Grugel, *Democratization: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 14; David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 23.
[5] David Held, 'Democracy: From City-States to a Cosmopolitan Order?', in David Held (ed.), *Prospects for Democracy: North, South, East, West*, p. 18.

the people they govern."[6] Narrowly interpreted, democracy refers to the regulation of

conflicting interests by means of competitive elections. Georg Sørensen, however,

takes the definition of democracy further and argues that the essence of democracy

contains three fundamental dimensions: competition, participation and civil and

political rights. Yet, at the same time he concedes that "...[a] more precise definition

[of democracy] is difficult because democracy is a dynamic entity that has acquired

many different meanings over the course of time."[7] Indeed, there is no general

consensus amongst scholars as to how democracy ought to be defined. Whereas a

classical Schumpeterian[8] definition limits the understanding of democracy to that of a

system characterised by competitive elections, hence, *electoral democracy*, it is

strongly maintained throughout this thesis that elections alone do not make a political

system democratic. For the purposes of the present study, therefore, we employ a

more extensive conception of democracy, in line with the definition suggested by

Sørensen and the one adopted by the International Institute for Democracy and

Electoral Assistance (IIDEA). According to IIDEA,

> For a system of government to be considered democratic, it must
> combine three essential conditions: meaningful *competition* for
> political power amongst individuals and organized groups; inclusive
> *participation* in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through
> free and fair elections; and a level of *civil and political liberties*
> sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and
> participation.[9]

David Beetham, in turn, argues that "[at] the heart of democracy...lies the right of all

citizens to a voice in public affairs and to exercise control over government, on terms

of equality with other citizens. For this right to be effective, requires on the one

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[6] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OA: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 6.
[7] Georg Sørensen, *Democracy and Democratization* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 23-24.
[8] See, Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1947).
[9] Peter Harris and Ben Reilly, *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998), p. 19.

hand.... political institutions...[and on] the other hand...the guarantee of those human rights which we call civil and political..." [10] Thus, Beetham maintains that democracy be viewed as more than an aggregate of institutions; for it is a system which embodies a set of ideas and values, of popular self-government, autonomy, and political equality.

When speaking of *civil rights* we refer to "those rights which are necessary for the establishment of individual autonomy, including liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to enter into contracts, and the right to be treated equally with others before the law."[11] *Political rights*, in turn, constitute "those elements of rights which create the possibility of participation in the exercise of political power as a member of a political association, or as an elector of the members of such an association."[12] Beetham argues that human rights – of which civil and political rights are of primary concern here – are a necessary part of democracy, "because the guarantee of basic freedoms is a necessary condition for people's voice to be effective in public affairs, and for popular control over government to be secured." Therefore, the relationship between democracy and civil and political rights can be defined as being intrinsic rather than extrinsic.[13] David Held, in turn, refers to rights as 'empowering rights', or 'entitlement capacities', "because they are integral to the possibility of democracy itself."[14] Democracy, therefore, cannot be separated from civil and political rights. Giovanni Sartori further highlights the connection between democracy and civil and political rights when

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[10] David Beetham, 'Democracy and Human Rights: Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural', in Janusz Symonides (ed.), *Human Rights: New Dimensions and Challenges* (Brookfield, VT: UNESCO and Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1998), p. 73.

[11] David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 67.

[12] Ibid., pp. 67-68.

[13] David Beetham, *Democracy and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), p. 93.

[14] David Held, *Democracy and the Global* Order, p. 223.

pointing out that "[w]e say that elections must be free. That is indeed true, but it may not be enough; for opinion too must be, in some basic sense, free. Free elections with unfree opinion – that is, with no public opinion – express nothing."[15] In sum, a democratic regime with the proper institutions (a legislative, executive and judicial branch) and that carries out multiparty elections on a regular basis, cannot be considered genuinely democratic unless citizens enjoy full civil and political rights which permit them to choose their political representatives in a society that allows for a free media, access to alternative sources of information, and freedom of thought, expression and association. As Beetham wisely argues, democracy without civil and political rights "would be a contradiction in terms, since the absence of freedoms of speech, of association, of assembly, of movement, or of guaranteed security of the person and due process would make elections a façade and render any popular control over government impossible."[16] Whilst conceding that rights constitute an inherent part of a democratic system, Peter Jones, however, employs a more narrow approach to the relationship between rights and democracy. He maintains that not all such rights can be legitimately claimed as necessary for, and intrinsic to, the democratic process. Jones thus makes a distinction between on the one hand 'democratic rights' and, on the other, 'non-democratic rights', and argues that while the former category refers to rights that are "essential constituents of the democratic process", the latter consists of rights that are not.[17] Although Jones's distinction provides a more qualified analysis of the relationship between rights and democracy, his definition of what constitutes a democratic right is perhaps too restrictive. For example, whilst recognising the right to vote as a primary democratic right, he fails to consider as democratic those rights that are necessary to make the right to vote meaningful in

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[15] Giovanni Sartori, *Democratic Theory* (London: Praeger, 1962), p. 74.
[16] David Beetham, *Democracy and Human Rights*, p.114.
[17] Peter Jones, *Rights: Issues in Political Theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 173.

practice. According to Jones, the right to freedom of worship, or the right to own property, are not democratic rights as they do not "form part of the democratic process and...rest upon concerns other than democracy." Hence, they "must be justified independently of democracy."[18] Whilst accepting that the right of freedom of expression and the right of freedom of association may be democratic rights, Jones maintains that, "not every 'expression' nor every 'association' constitutes a form of participation in the democratic process. Nor do those freedoms matter only as constituents of a democratic process."[19] Yet, as he readily acknowledges, it is very problematic to try to separate rights according to whether they are 'democratic' or not, "partly because almost any matter *may* find its way into the democratic agenda, and partly because people's freedom to do or to say a particular thing may be important for both democratic and non-democratic reasons."[20] In the end, as a general category, civil and political rights must reasonably be considered intrinsically linked with democracy.

Democratic institutional design may vary from one country to another, depending on the particulars of any given state, including size, history, degree of homogeneity, societal divisions, and so on. Democracy, as Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl note, "does not consist of a single unique set of institutions. There are many types of democracy, and their diverse practices produce a similarly varied set of effects. The specific form democracy takes is contingent upon a country's socioeconomic conditions as well as its entrenched state structures and policy practices."[21] Such variations aside, Robert Dahl suggests that modern democracy,

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[18] Ibid., p. 174.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, 'What Democracy Is...And Is Not', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 50.

whatever form it takes, requires elected officials, free and fair elections on a frequent basis, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, associational autonomy and inclusive citizenship.[22] These requirements, in turn, all reflect a set of values and ideas associated with civil and political rights. Despite the range of definitions from electoral democracy to Dahl's more extensive concept which he defines as *polyarchy* ('rule of the many'),[23] in order to render a critical account of democracy useful, and indeed, for democracy to be properly understood as a *political system*, we need to adopt a more comprehensive definition of democracy. For even a minimalist definition of democracy presupposes (if only implicitly) the existence of conditions that enable people to make free and informed choices on the day of elections. Finally, central to the modern idea of democracy is that it is a system that, contrary to non-democratic regimes, regulates power and imposes limitations on that power. Thus, in a democracy, rather than exercising total power, elected representatives share power with other segments of society.[24] This latter point is intimately linked with the 'liberal' conception of democracy, and it is necessary to here acknowledge how liberalism, with its focus on the individual rather than the community, has come to represent the premise and foundation of modern democracy in the West.[25] As Kimberly Hutchings points out, "...the apparent triumph of liberal democracy as the only viable polity after the end of the Cold War has confirmed the already present tendency in western social science to identify certain basic requirements of the liberal democratic state with democracy *per se*."[26] Yet, *liberal*

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[22] Robert A. Dahl, *On Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 85.
[23] For more in-depth information on Dahl's concept of 'polyarchy' see Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
[24] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OA: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 10.
[25] Bhikhu Parekh, 'The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy', p. 157.
[26] Kimberly Hutchings, 'Modelling Democracy', in Hazel Smith (ed.), *Democracy and International Relations: Critical Theories/Problematic Practices* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 39.

democracy is a relatively recent concept, which as Parekh notes, arrived "on the scene nearly two millennia after the disappearance of its Athenian cousin."[27] In its essence, liberal democracy is "basically a liberalized or liberally constituted democracy; that is, democracy defined and structured within the limits set by liberalism."[28] Our current understanding of democracy, as being intrinsically linked with individualism, is thus distinctly different from the ancient Greek conception of democracy, "which took the community as their starting point and defined the individual in terms of it..."[29]

The Western conception of liberal democracy imposes a restriction on the state's authority over its citizens, by virtue of its focus on individual rights. As was noted earlier, however, civil and political rights need not merely be viewed as intrinsic to a particular form of democracy but are inherent to any modern democratic system, since without them the democratic principle would be effectively non-functional. In a much cited article in *Foreign Affairs*, and later developed in his book *The Future of Freedom*[30], Fareed Zakaria warns of the emergence of what he calls "illiberal democracies", which are "routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms..."[31] He further distinguishes between on the one hand, democracy, and on the other, constitutional liberalism and argues that the latter is characterised by "the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property", which he argues are distinct from democracy, which in turn is defined

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[27] Bhikhu Parekh, 'The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy', p. 157.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).
[31] Fareed Zakaria, 'The Rise of Illiberal Democracy', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 6, November/December 1997, p. 22.

primarily by free and fair multiparty elections.[32] But, as was pointed out earlier in this chapter, a definition of democracy that does not incorporate rule of law and civil and political rights and freedoms, is insufficient and expresses little. For, to define democracy as representing nothing more than multiparty elections, renders the term democracy meaningless since democracy – rule of the people – cannot be put into practice unless people's voice is protected by human rights. In conclusion, Zakaria's distinction between liberal and illiberal democracy is in fact nothing but a distinction between democracy and non-democracy.

A discussion on democracy must also grapple with the question: who are 'the people', that is, the *demos*, designated to rule themselves in a democratic polity; and is majority rule an inevitable characteristic of democracy and as such is it a justifiable principle? In modern democracies 'the people' normally refer to the citizens of that state. This, however, begs the question: *who* is a citizen? In the modern nation-state system, citizenship has been defined as either based on descent (blood), or location of birth. Thus, we distinguish primarily between an ethnic concept of citizenship and a civic understanding of the term. A third principle of determining who is included in 'the people' involves "the doubly voluntaristic acts of asking for and be granted citizenship", thus becoming known as a naturalised citizen.[33]

A central feature of democracy, as it is commonly understood today, is majority rule. However, as unanimity is a rare if impossible occurrence in large societies, there is always a minority whose interests are sacrificed for the good of the many. Defenders of a majoritarian decisional rule, however, maintain that in democratic decision-making based on majority rule, the principle of political equality,

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[32] Ibid.
[33] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 28.

which is so fundamental to democracy, is secured over time since majorities and minorities are bound to trade places in the long-term, which means that today's winners will become tomorrow's losers, and vice-versa. As Beetham points out, this argumentation presumes a functioning principle of reciprocity, so that "I agree to be bound by a decision which goes against me in return for your being bound when it goes in my favour and against you."[34] Such an arrangement may work sufficiently well in a culturally homogenous society, but when the majoritarian decisional rule is applied to states with deep ethnic divisions, and where politics is ethnically aligned, there is a considerable risk that the electoral majority and minority becomes identical to the ethnic alignments in society. Consequently, majorities and minorities become permanent, thus violating the principle of political equality since the minority is permanently on the losing side of the political game. In defence of criticism raised against the majoritarian decisional rule, Alain Touraine, however, suggests that because the idea of democracy is intrinsically connected to the idea of rights, democracy cannot simply be reduced to majority government.[35] Hence, the defining characteristic of democracy, Touraine argues, is "a respect for individual or collective projects that can reconcile the assertion of personal liberty with the right to identify with a particular social, national, or religious collectivity."[36]

The issue of *power* is one that is of central importance to the functioning of a democratic system. For although political equality is defined as the normative foundation of the democratic principle, and human rights provisions are meant to ensure that the equality principle is not violated, in practice effective democracy is compromised by the fact that power is by no means evenly distributed throughout society, and equality of opportunity is thus undermined. It is of course rather

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[34] David Beetham, *Democracy and Human Rights*, p. 20.
[35] Alain Touraine, *What is Democracy?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), p. 23.
[36] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

paradoxical that liberal democracy should be so intimately linked with capitalism today, as the democratic credentials of the market system are highly suspect. The concentration of wealth in the hands of the few has effectively skewed not only economic power but also political power in their favour. Economic inequality has a direct bearing on political equality (or the lack thereof), in that economically disadvantaged segments of society are effectively restricted from participating fully in the democratic system because of structural obstacles. Hence, for democracy to be working at an optimal level, there needs to be a redistribution of power, which is a very difficult undertaking as long as the market is dominated by a few. As Jean Grugel points out, "[d]emocracy is a political, not an economic, order. However, economic entitlements (or the lack of them) affect political entitlements."[37] There is thus an uneasy relationship between democracy and market economy. Capitalism is not necessarily a democratic force; in fact it can undermine political democracy in so far as the market generates an uneven distribution of economic power, which in turn affects the real distribution of political power.

Finally, it is important to remember Schmitter and Karl's assertion that there are indeed many different types of democracy.[38] Without going into a broader survey of different forms of democratic governance, I do wish here to contrast the predominant understanding of Western-style liberal democracy, whose core function is to mediate conflicting interests by means of *competitive* elections, with two other concepts: that of *consociational* democracy, and what is termed *deliberative* democracy. The deliberative model of democracy, according to Iris Marion Young, emphasises practical reason and dialogue, and "[p]articipants arrive at a decision not by determining what preferences have greatest numerical support, but by determining

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[37] Jean Grugel, *Democratization: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 5.
[38] Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, 'What Democracy Is...And Is Not', p. 50.

which proposals the collective agrees are supported by the best reasons."[39] Although the deliberative form of democracy does not require decision-making by consensus, it is nonetheless expected that participants enter a discussion with the specific aim of reaching an agreement. In contrast to the liberal model of democracy, which centres on competition of interests, the deliberative model thus views democracy as an inclusive, consultative form of governance.

Developed chiefly by Arend Lijphart, consociationalism is characterised by the following features: government by grand coalition; mutual veto, which serves to protect minority interests; proportional political representation; and a considerable degree of autonomy for each community, or segment, to conduct its own internal affairs.[40] The main conceptual distinction between Western-style liberal democracy based on competitive elections, and the consociational form of democracy is that the latter seeks to promote cooperative relations between political attitudes and behaviours amongst political parties in a plural society characterised by centrifugal tendencies.[41] Consociationalism is thus premised on the understanding that democracy is not necessarily defined by competition, but can also include a style of political leadership that is coalescent and cooperative.[42] Variations of consociational democracy have typically been tried out – with varying degrees of success – in societies with deep ethnic and/or religious divisions, including Malaysia, Lebanon, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland. As a type of democracy, the option of consociationalism and other forms of democracy with institutionalised power-sharing

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[39] Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 23-23.
[40] Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977), p. 25
[41] Ibid., p. 1.
[42] Ibid., p. 25.

arrangements have tended to be explored in multiethnic societies with a history of inter-communal conflict.[43]

Transition vs. Democratisation

Democratic transition, as the term is used here, refers to the first multiparty elections held since the breakdown of the previous non-democratic regime, and is therefore a relatively short phase. *Democratisation*, in turn, is defined in the present study as the process following the initial transition towards a democratic system. Specifically, democratisation entails the introduction and regular recurrence of free and fair elections, the establishment, evolution and deepening of democratic structures (i.e., a legislature, executive body, electoral system, and an independent judiciary), civil and political rights, and the development of a democratic culture, that is, norms and behaviour congruent with a democratic polity. More precisely, the emergence of a democratic culture represents the internalisation of the democratic system in a society.

Despite the conceptual distinction between transition and democratisation, scholars and policy-makers often use the terms interchangeably. For clarity, however, this thesis is careful to distinguish between the two, which is necessary in order to form an accurate understanding of the dynamics of democratisation. 'Transition' is in itself an ambiguous term as it can mean two fundamentally different things. When discussing transition, it is vital to make clear whether we are referring to transition *from* a regime, or transition *to* a regime. This differentiation is crucial, since a transition from an authoritarian or totalitarian regime does not necessarily lead to a transition towards a democratic government. For example, in several countries in the

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[43] Peter Harris and Ben Reilly, *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*, pp. 139-146.

Soviet bloc, particularly in the Caucasus and Central Asia, transition from communist

rule led not to democracy but to new forms of authoritarian government.[44] Hence,

there was a transition, but not towards democracy. Consequently, the path from

authoritarianism to democracy, may involve not one but two political transitions: the

first from the authoritarian/communist regime to a state characterised by a temporary

power vacuum, during which a power-struggle is played out in order to determine the

nature of the subsequent regime; and second, the transition to a process of

democratisation (or other, non-democratic political system). In order not to confuse

the two, this thesis will refer to the former as *transition*, and the latter as *democratic*

transition. The significance of this distinction will be highlighted in the following

chapter where the dynamics of democratisation and interethnic conflict are analysed.

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan offer a useful distinction between democratic

transition and democratisation. They consider democratic transition as being complete

> when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures
> to produce an elected government, when a government comes to
> power that is the direct result of free and popular vote, when this
> government *de facto* has the authority to generate new policies, and
> when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the
> new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies de
> *jure.*[45]

Less specific in his definition of what constitutes a completed transition process, Di

Palma regards the transition from non-democratic to democratic rule as finished when

"an agreement on democratic rules is successfully reached..."[46] However, it must be

stressed that such an agreement does not necessarily mean that democracy has been

consolidated; rather, it implies that sufficient institutional/procedural change has

taken place to allow for an effective democratisation process to proceed.

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[44] Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr, 'Disillusionment in the Caucasus and Central Asia', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 12, no. 4, October 2001, pp. 49-56.
[45] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and* Consolidation, p. 3.
[46] Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), p. 109.

Democratisation, in turn, can be viewed as a longer process involving at least two core stages; beginning with the establishment of democratic structures, and followed by *democratic consolidation*, which requires the existence of effective players, that is, political parties. It is often said that a democratic system is consolidated when it is taken for granted,[47] or when it is "the only game in town"[48], that is, when the democratic process has become routine and its existence is no longer questioned. David Beetham offers a more precise definition of consolidated democracy by proposing that "democracy can best be said to be consolidated when we have good reason to believe that it is capable of withstanding pressures or shocks without abandoning the electoral process or the political freedoms on which it depends, including those of dissent and opposition."[49] Yet even this definition of consolidated democracy is far from perfect, as it relies more on subjective reasoning that empirical tests. According to Richard Sakwa, in turn,"[t]wo key questions establish the parameters of democratic consolidation: are the institutions in place; and are the democratic reforms irreversible? The central question is the degree to which a functional set of institutions can be established that are independent of personalities."[50] The difficulty in appraising democratic consolidation leads to the question whether democracy is quantifiable in the first place, as there is no satisfactory consensus about the criteria for a regime to be identified as democratic. For the purposes of the present study it is also of interest to inquire, what facilitates and/or obstructs democratic consolidation in multiethnic states? In an effort to answer this question, Linz and Stepan suggest that "in a multinational setting, the chances to consolidate democracy are increased by state policies that grant inclusive and equal

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[47] David Potter, David Goldblatt, Margaret Kiloh and Paul Lewis (eds.), *Democratization* (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with the Open University, 1997), p. 524.
[48] Georg Sørensen, *Democracy and Democratization*, p. 40.
[49] David Beetham, *Democracy and Human Rights*, p. 71.
[50] Richard Sakwa, *Postcommunism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), p. 51.

citizenship and that give all citizens a common 'roof' of state-mandated and enforced individual rights."[51]

Rather than concentrating on the consolidation phase of democratisation, the present study focuses on the period following non-democratic regime collapse, including the transition to multiparty politics, competitive elections, as well as democratic institutional development. A regime that has not yet reached the point at which we can say that it is firmly consolidated can perhaps be referred to as an *immature democracy*. In such states there is no longer an immediate danger of a return to authoritarian rule, but democracy is not yet taken for granted, as a democratic culture has not yet to be established. In order to facilitate an analysis of the impact of democratisation on ethnic relations and inter-communal conflict, a minimum number of defining characteristics of democratisation are identified: political party development, free and fair multiparty elections, and the development of a rights regime that includes civil and political rights. It is perhaps self-evident that the creation of a multiparty political system is an essential part of any democratisation process, as multiparty democracy necessitates the existence of at least two major political parties. The regular occurrence of free and fair elections, in which all adult citizens have the right to choose between at least two independent political parties, is also generally accepted as a fundamental and indisputable component of a democratic system. For reasons discussed at length in an earlier section of this chapter, civil and political rights must also be considered necessary for any democratic system to be effectively realised. In addition to these minimum characteristics of the democratic process, this thesis works on the assumption that with the initial regime transition

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[51] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, p. 33.

towards democratic government, legislative, executive and judicial institutions are created, as a requisite for the furthering of democratisation.

Democracy as Process, or Democracy as Outcome?

Whether democracy should be seen as a process or as an end-state, is a much-debated question amongst scholars of democracy theory. This issue is fundamentally linked to another issue, that of justice.[52] As Dahl points out, a just process of democratic decision-making may result in an unjust outcome. But on the other hand, "the insistence that substantive results take precedence over processes becomes a flatly antidemocratic justification for guardianship and 'substantive democracy' becomes a deceptive label for what is in fact a dictatorship."[53] It could also be argued that the democratic process in itself constitutes a form of justice in so far as it is "a just procedure for arriving at collective decisions."[54] Mary Kaldor and Ivan Vejvoda note that whereas attempts to implement a substantive version of democracy in the twentieth century have resulted a modern political form of totalitarianism, the procedural character is indeed indispensable to democracy, but it is by no means sufficient.[55] What, then, is the solution to this apparent dilemma of democratic politics? Kaldor and Vejvoda suggest that in order to obtain a balance between process and substance, a set of minimal conditions for democracy must be: inclusive citizenship, rule of law, separation of powers, elected power-holders, free and fair elections, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, associational

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[52] John E. Roemer, 'Does Democracy Engender Justice?', in Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordón (eds.), *Democracy's Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 56-57.
[53] Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, p. 163.
[54] Ibid., p. 164.
[55] Mary Kaldor and Ivan Vejvoda, 'Democratization in Central and East European Countries: An Overview', in Mary Kaldor and Ivan Vejvoda (eds.), *Democratization in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: Pinter, 1999), p. 4.

autonomy, and civilian control over the security forces.[56] The implication, then, is that in addition to a procedural understanding of democracy, the development of a democratic culture is essential for democracy to function effectively. Democratic culture, in turn, can be said to be established when norms and values associated with democracy have become accepted as givens and hence are no longer questioned. Democratic behaviour – such as parliamentary debating, representation of, and accountability to, the electorate, as well as respect for the independence of the judiciary and media – in turn reflects democratic culture. Democratisation thus involves not just the establishment of the appropriate institutions and rules, but also a learning process for political decision-makers. It is the 'democratic learning' on the part of individuals that eventually leads to the formation of a democratic culture. In sum, whereas institutions can be established or replaced in a relatively short period of time, much more time is needed to alter individual political behaviour. Until such change occurs, however, the effectiveness of democratic institutions is often compromised, which in turn may have an adverse effect on the credibility of the democratic process itself.

How to actually measure democratisation is, however, a highly problematic question. Whereas we have sought to define the border between transition and democratisation and between democratisation and consolidated democracy, how we assess the degree to which democratisation is itself evolving is a different matter. Can democratisation be measured at all? One way in which democratisation can be measured is to examine whether a state has moved away from a purely electoral form of democracy towards a more comprehensive democratic system that includes the

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[56] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

protection of civil and political rights and the extent to which civil society is able to operate without state-imposed restrictions.

In a discussion on what he calls 'democratic audit', David Beetham suggests that the two foundational principles of democracy, popular control and political equality, must constitute the yardsticks by which the democracy and/or democratisation is measured.[57] Further recognising that democracy should be viewed as a continuum, where states are more or less democratic, Beetham suggests that in an effort to measure democracy and democratisation we are best served by asking questions in comparative terms, such as "to what extent...? How far...?, etc."[58] In the end, however, the main problem with trying to measure the extent to which a polity is democratic is compromised by the fact that while some indices of democracy, such as elections, may be readily evaluated in quantitative terms, most others can only be measured quantitatively which in turn means that the outcome of any measurement is bound to be both subjective and contested.

Thus, some would argue that democratisation should be measured in terms of the degree to which political decision-making as well as elections in a new democracy results in democratic outcomes. The argument is that a democratic system is not only democratic to the extent that process follows democratic criteria, but also the output, what people get, should be democratic. Democracy, however, is not about people always getting what they want, but is, as stated, a system whose main function is to negotiate many different and competing interests and to do so in as fair and inclusive manner as possible.

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[57] David Beetham, 'Key Principles and Indices for a Democratic Audit', in David Beetham (ed.), *Defining and Measuring Democracy* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 28.
[58] Ibid., p. 32.

Democratisation vs. Liberalisation

In order to define what democratisation is and is not, it is also necessary to clarify the distinction between *democratisation* and *liberalisation*, as the two are sometimes confused. According to Sørensen, liberalisation can be defined as "the process of increasing the possibilities for political opposition and for competition for government power... [and involving the improvement of] the possibilities for open public debate, [and] allowing criticism of the authoritarian regime, and... open oppositional activity."[59] Thus, liberalisation entails the "partial opening of an authoritarian system short of choosing governmental leaders through freely competitive elections."[60] But liberalisation, Peter Burnell argues, does not necessarily mean that an authoritarian regime will move towards democratisation, as the authoritarian leaders may have "no intention of bringing about a situation in which the identity of the governors is not predetermined."[61] Nonetheless, West European history shows that liberalisation tends in the long run to lead to the development of a democratic political system.

While distinguishing between democratisation and liberalisation, Linz and Stepan note the relationship between the two as democratisation "entails [liberalisation] but is a wider and more specifically political concept. [Democratisation, in contrast] requires open contestation over the right to win control of the government, and this in turn requires free competitive elections, the results of which determine who governs."[62] According to Marc Plattner, "...countries that hold free elections are overwhelmingly more liberal, in the political sense of the term, than

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[59] Georg Sørensen, *Democracy and Democratization*, p. 159.
[60] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, p. 9.
[61] Peter Burnell, 'Democracy Assistance: The State of the Discourse', in Peter Burnell (ed.), *Democracy Assistance: International Co-operation for Democratization* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), p. 23.
[62] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, p. 3

those that do not, and countries that protect civil liberties are overwhelmingly more likely to hold free elections that those that do not." This relationship then, is no coincidence but in fact points to the relationship between liberalism and democracy, as civil and political rights are necessary for free and fair elections to be possible.[63] Burnell, however, contends that liberalisation is not a prerequisite for "democratic opening, which can come about in a number of ways, both from 'above' and from 'below'."[64] Indeed, Burnell's argument is confirmed by recent experiences with democratisation in Eastern Europe.

In Western Europe, liberalisation generally preceded democratisation, where the latter eventually developed as a consequence of the former. Taking the Western experience as a model, some have therefore argued that rather than insisting on democratisation in states that have not yet liberalised, there should be a focus on liberalisation before the process of democratisation is initiated (see, for example, discussion of Jack Snyder's arguments in Chapter Two of this study). Nonetheless, in Eastern Europe, liberalisation and democratisation have been implemented simultaneously, following the breakdown of the communist regimes. Thus, whereas West European states had the 'luxury' of gradually developing liberal values and democratic institutions, post-communist states were expected to adopt a 'ready-made' package – including both liberalisation and democratisation – and were under pressure to deliver success within an unrealistically short period of time. In reality, the outcome has been mixed. Although liberalisation need not be a prerequisite for democratisation, experience from Eastern Europe indicates that democratisation in the absence of past liberalisation can complicate the former, and prolong the process

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[63] Marc F. Plattner, 'Liberalism and Democracy: Can't Have One Without the Other', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, no. 2, March/April 1998, p.173.
[64] Peter Burnell, 'Democracy Assistance: The State of the Discourse' in Peter Burnell (ed.), *Democracy Assistance: International Co-operation for Democratization*, p. 23.

towards democratic consolidation. This is especially true given the need for new democracies to develop a democratic culture. For whereas the establishment of democratic institutions does not require any pre-existing liberalisation, the development of a democratic culture and democratic behaviour becomes less problematic if there exists a liberal past. Further, in respect to post-communist states, it is possible that a liberal past that precedes the decades long communist regimes, might be 'revived' following the breakdown of the totalitarian past, or may even have survived during communism in the form of underground protest movements. If that were the case, we would expect democratisation to have been less problematic in post-communist states with a relatively active dissident movement (Poland) than in those without it (Romania). In short, we can say that although not a prerequisite for the initiation of democratisation, past experience with liberalisation is likely to facilitate the consolidation of democracy. Finally, we might want to ask whether perhaps it is the presence a communist legacy, rather than the absence of a history of liberalisation, that has had a strong influence on the, sometimes, problematic democratisation processes in Eastern Europe.

1.3. The How, When and Why of Democratisation

Students of democratisation theory broadly distinguish between two main sets of theories about the *cause* of democratisation: *modernisation* theory and *agency-centred* theory[65]. Modernisation theory posits that democratisation will come about as a result of globalisation or Westernisation. Modernity itself is "equated with the processes of change which had occurred in the nineteenth century in the Atlantic

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[65] Jean Grugel, *Democratization: A Critical Introduction*, p. 46.

societies of Britain and the United States and, to a lesser extent, within Western Europe generally."[66] Accordingly, democratisation is viewed as a result of capitalist development, as the latter supposedly creates favourable conditions for the emergence of the former. A prevailing assumption amongst modernisation theorists is that there exists a positive causal link between economic prosperity and democracy.[67] However, while there may be a significant correlation, illustrated by most Western democracies, there is no evidence pointing to a causal link between the two and we can cite several examples of states that are either economically well-developed and non-democratic (e.g., Singapore), or democratic yet poor (e.g., India). Hence, the argument that there exists a positive causal relationship between economic development and democracy remains unconvincing. Furthermore, if one insists on interpreting the relationship between economic development and democratisation as being causal in nature, a question that inevitably arises is, which one is the cause of the other? As will be discussed further in a later section of this chapter, it is possible that policies aimed at economic development may in fact undermine democratisation, just as economic well-being may well decline once democratisation has begun, which was the case in post-communist Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania, to name a few. While this asymmetry may even out in the long-term, it nevertheless poses a problem in the short-term, which may well threaten to undermine the development of democratisation.

According to an agency-centred theory of democratisation, in contrast, democracy is not the natural outcome of an inevitable historical process, but rather a product of political crafting. According to Giuseppe Di Palma, 'crafting' describes four main aspects of democratisation:

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[66] Ibid., p. 47.
[67] Ibid.

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(1) the quality of the finished product (the particular democratic rules and institutions that are chosen among the many available); (2) the mode of decision making leading to the selection of rules and institutions (pacts and negotiations versus unilateral action); (3) the type of 'craftsmen' involved (the alliances and coalitions forged in the transition); and (4) the timing imposed on the various tasks and stages of the transition.[68]

It follows that democratisation is always a conscious, and often strategic, undertaking. But does a state need democrats in order to democratise? Not according to Attila Āgh, who suggests that, "[d]emocrats are not the preconditions but the results of the democratization process. The general and local elections…play a decisive role in the political learning of both the masses – the party constituencies – and the elite – the party leaders – from election to election."[69]

'Diffusion' is sometimes cited as an important factor in democratisation processes. Di Palma, for example, suggests that

democratisation may be helped by suppliers (advanced democracies, regional or global powers) as much as by the consumers. Similarly, it may also be helped by the attractiveness of the imported product and the consumer's willingness or need to become worthy of the product as much as by some inborn fitness of that consumer. New democracies are thus less the result of cumulative, necessary, predictable, and systematic developments than of historical busts and booms, global opinion climates, shifting opportunities and contingent preferences.[70]

However, that is not to say that global circumstances are decisive in determining whether or not democratisation takes place. Whereas it might determine the fall of a non-democratic regime, it does not necessarily lead to democratisation, which as stated, is a deliberate process.

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[68] Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 8-9.
[69] Attila Āgh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and in the Balkans* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1998), p.19.
[70] Giuseppe Di Palma, To Craft *Democracies*, pp. 12-15.

As with theory in general, one alone is rarely sufficient to explain the causal link to democratisation. Moreover, each theory must be situated in both time and space, and cannot therefore always be effectively employed in analyses of cases outside their original analytical sphere. Thus, whereas modernisation theory was constructed largely as a means of explaining the development of democracy in the West, its applicability to later 'waves' of democratisation in Eastern Europe and the developing world, is limited. Focusing on post-communist democratisation in South East Europe, this thesis assumes the joint influence of agency and structure in the development of democracy. As will become clear in Chapters Four and Five, the introduction of democracy in Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia was indeed agency-driven, albeit influenced by developments on the international scene.

According to Gerardo L. Munck and Carol Skalnick Leff, the *mode* of transition from non-democratic rule has an important impact on the resulting regime and the degree of democratic consolidation, because it influences the pattern of elite competition that emerges, as well as the institutional rules that are crafted and, crucially, political actors' acceptance or rejection of the new, democratic, rules of the game.[71] Five modes of democratisation are identified by Munck and Leff: revolution from above, reform from below, reform through rupture, reform through extrication and reform through transaction.[72] Their conclusion, based on a number of case studies, is that reform from below (Chile), characterised by a broad opposition movement, tend to generate 'restricted democracy', while reform through transaction (Poland), that is, through negotiations between the rulers and opposition, seem to produce less restricted democracy, as negotiated reforms "generate political openings

[71] Gerardo L. Munck and Carol Skalnick Leff, 'Modes of Transition and Democratization: South America and Eastern Europe in Comparative Perspective', in Lisa Anderson (ed.), *Transitions to Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 195-196.
[72] Ibid., p. 197.

for elite competition and subsequently create a stake in the new system for both old and new elites."[73] Reform by way of extrication (Hungary) also appear to generate less restricted democracy, while reforms through rupture (Czechoslovakia) "...break dramatically with the past and allow the opposition to impose its demand for unrestricted elections, "thereby making the transition relatively unproblematic.[74] Revolution from above, however, allows the ruling elite to control the transition by reforming itself sufficiently to maintain its legitimacy. The main problem associated with this kind of transition, according to Munck and Leff, is that "[t]he lack of an effective counterbalance to the elite that oversees the transition impedes routinization of competition and acceptance of the concept of loyal opposition." Hence, they regard revolution from above as the mode of transition less likely to lead to consolidated democracy.[75] Whereas the mode of transition may significantly affect the short-term outcome, it seems unclear whether it actually determines the success or failure of democratic consolidation. In particular, Munck and Leff fail to consider the possibility that changes in pattern of elite competition may take place *after* the transition phase, that is, during the democratisation process. Their study is ultimately more about the character of the democratic regime that might emerge, than an examination of what modes of transition are more likely to yield consolidated democracy than others. Thus they fail to make a convincing argument that the mode of transition actually determines whether or not consolidation occurs. An absolute relationship between mode of transition and democratic consolidation seems implausible since, as just noted, changes are likely to take place during the longer democratisation process and these, in turn, are likely to have a significant impact on the final outcome. Furthermore, it should be noted that Munck and Leff identify

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[73] Ibid., p. 210.

[74] Ibid., p. 211.

[75] Ibid., p. 212.

Bulgaria as an example of revolution from above. Yet, as Chapter Four will show, subsequent developments in Bulgaria since the publication of Munck and Leff's article in 1997, clearly pose a challenge to their assumptions.

Democratisation and the Demos

Who is democracy for? In the Athenian city-state democracy was of a highly exclusive nature, the privilege of a small, male, elite and as such excluded the large majority of people, namely women, children, foreign-born residents and slaves, who were not considered citizens and thus enjoyed limited, if any, rights in the self-governing community.[76] For the 'founding fathers' of the United States likewise democracy meant equal rights only for adult white males and, until the 1960s, democracy applied only to white men and women.[77] In Switzerland, the democratic process did not include women until 1971, when suffrage was finally extended to the other half of the adult population.[78] Today's democrats, however, typically regard democracy as being by definition inclusive of the entire citizenry. As was noted earlier, according to a modern understanding of democracy, all people have a right to govern themselves, at least indirectly by means of representation. That claim, however, immediately begs the question of how to define a 'people', and how to define 'govern'. It might be concluded that if all peoples are to govern themselves, they will need to do so within the realm of their own, sovereign state. However, the right to self-determination, to rule oneself, does not, as history and international law indicate, necessarily translate into a right to for every self-identified 'people' to

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[76] David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 23.
[77] David Goldblatt, 'Democracy in the "Long Nineteenth Century", 1760-1919', in David Potter, David Goldblatt, Margaret Kiloh and Paul Lewis (eds.), *Democratization*, p. 48.
[78] Laurence Whitehead, *Democratization: Theory and Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 11

establish their own independent state.[79] Indeed, if this was the case, logic predicts that the world would become dangerously fragmented, leading to instability and, most likely, worldwide war. International law, too, remains ambiguous about the legal implications of the principle of self-determination. What might, nevertheless, be argued, is that all peoples have the right to rule themselves, if only indirectly, at some level of society, be it through local, cultural, linguistic or social autonomy. The point, however, is that it is necessary to define, in unambiguous terms, who is to be included in a democratic polity, i.e., for what people(s) democratisation is meant. This question is imperative particularly in heterogeneous states where more than one national, religious and/or ethnic group is potentially subject to (or excluded from) the democratisation process. As discussed below, the failure to clarify the question of who is the people to democratise, can lead to severe tensions between different groups which in turn can undermine the democratisation process, and possibly lead to violent conflict.

Preconditions for Democratisation?

When is the right time for a state to embark upon the course of democratisation? Some argue that democracy is difficult, or even impossible, to implement unless the (pre)conditions for democracy are 'favourable'. Such conditions have often been thought to include, foremost, a modernised society, a significant middle-class, a market-economy, and a relatively homogenous and unified society. Barrington Moore, for example, argued that the existence of a bourgeoisie was a necessary

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[79] For an extensive review of the principle of self-determination in international law, see W. Ofuatey-Kodjoe, 'Self-Determination', in Oscar Schachter and Christopher C. Joyner (eds.), *United Nations Legal Order*, Volume 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 349-389.

precondition for democracy.[80] However, this thesis must be refuted as, historically, no case can be made for the argument that the bourgeoisie was more favourable towards democracy than towards any other type of regime. Others have argued that without a powerful working class, democracy is not possible, but again this argument is proven false as Britain is a good example of a state where democracy developed in the absence of a strong working-class.

In *The Third Wave*, Samuel Huntington lists a number of different factors that potentially lead to democracy, such as economic wealth, equal distribution of income, high levels of literacy, social pluralism, low levels of civil society etc., but concludes that "[no] single factor is sufficient to explain the development of democracy in all countries or in a single country," and that neither is there one single factor that is necessary for democracy. More importantly, Huntington asserts that the factors that affect the development of democracy may often be different from the factors that lead to the consolidation of democracy.[81] Hence, although various conditions have been proposed by scholars since the writings of Moore, "...[for] every factor seen as conducive to democracy, counterexamples can be put forward."[82] Some might argue that democratisation requires the pre-existence of a civic culture, a suggestion that however is convincingly discarded by Philippe Schmitter who poignantly notes that the fact that citizens in consolidated democracies profess their allegiance to civic values, does not mean that such values were present at the time when these democracies were first founded. In fact, he argues that the "chain of causation" most likely went in the other direction, that is, only after a considerable experience with

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[80] For more on Barrington Moore's theory, see his book, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993, reprint edition).
[81] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, pp. 37-38.
[82] Georg Sørensen, *Democracy and Democratization* p. 27.

democratic practice, would civic values emerge. Hence, "[w]hat had been prescribed as a prerequisite could be better described as a product."[83]

It appears, therefore, that although different social, economic, political and historical factors can be said to have influenced the emergence and development of democratic regimes in various states, it is not possible to point at any given set of conditions that are indispensable for democracy to take root. There are, I maintain, nonetheless two exceptions. As noted above, before democratisation can be initiated, an issue that must be resolved is, who are the people? That is, "[who] are the nations that are going to democratize?"[84] According to Sørensen and Dankwart Rostow, a certain degree of national unity is in fact a precondition, and the only one, for democratisation.[85] Beetham lends further support to this proposition by pointing out two reasons why democracy requires national unity: to begin with, in conditions that allow for freedom of expression and association, democratic government is thus dependent upon popular consent. This implies that if people are unwilling to agree on a framework for cohabitation, "the only alternative to secession or civil war is the imposition of some form of authoritarian rule." [86] The other reason national unity is absolutely essential is the divisive nature of electoral competition. Adversarial party politics leads politicians to "exploit those bases of popular mobilization that will most readily deliver the numbers to ensure them political office." [87]

The term 'national unity' is highly problematic though, as it seems to presume the existence of single-nation-states, rather than multiethnic, multinational states. Few

[83] Philippe C. Schmitter, "Democracy, the EU, and the Question of Scale", in Marc F. Plattner and Aleksander Smolar, *Globalization, Power, and Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 47.
[84] Ibid., p. 41.
[85] Dankwart A. Rostow, 'Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model', reprinted in Lisa Anderson (ed.), *Transitions to Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 25, and Georg Sørensen, p. 41.
[86] David Beetham, *Democracy and Human Rights*, p. 82.
[87] Ibid.

states, however, can be said to be authentic nation-states, and those who may qualify, often had to resort to force in order to attain the status of nation-state. In Eastern Europe, and particularly the Balkans, most, if not all, states are far from mono-national or mono-ethnic, and thus speaking about 'national unity' makes little sense and can even be potentially harmful. The predominance of an ethnic rather than civic conception of nationalism in the Balkans has often served to sharpen the divisions between different communities, which in turn, has some times resulted in armed conflict. Rather than defining 'national unity' along ethnic lines, a more constructive understanding of the term would be one that champions the civic meaning of national unity, that is, one that equates it with unity of a political community, defined by citizenship, rather than national identity.

Finally, it may be argued that a second precondition for any democratic system, one which is often neglected in discussions of democracy, is the existence of popular *will* to democracy; that is, the various subgroups of the population must agree that democracy is desirable, and to commit themselves to the democratic process, and to the rules inherent in it. Contrary to authoritarian systems of governance, democracy cannot function effectively unless there is an overall consensus that democracy is the preferred choice, and any attempt at democratisation in an unwilling domestic environment is bound to fail. Thus, the legitimacy and viability of a democratic regime rests on such a *will* to democracy. Bosnia is a case in point, where it is becoming increasingly clear that without the active consent and participation of the Bosnian political representatives (and the Bosnian people in general), consolidated democracy appears to be heading towards failure.[88]

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[88] For a full account of Bosnia's experience with democratization since the Dayton Accords see, David Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton* (London: Pluto Press, 1999).

Care must be taken, however, to distinguish between *preconditions* and *explanatory factors* of democratisation. For, although it may be fruitless to try to establish the existence of certain preconditions for democratisation, it is less difficult, and more useful, to attempt to identify different factors or conditions that *help* to bring about and consolidate a democratic regime, such as for example, socio-economic development, literacy, and social cohesion. In discussing the preconditions or explanatory factors associated with democratisation it is also necessary to make a distinction between democratic *transition* and democratic *consolidation*. Thus, whilst no particular and universal preconditions – aside from the two mentioned above – may be discerned with respect to democratic transition, the question of what, if any, preconditions are necessary for democratic consolidation, is a different one. Although countries like Bulgaria and Macedonia may refute the claim that democratic transition is impossible without significant wealth and development, it is still too early to make a final assessment as to whether they will also invalidate the argument that democratic consolidation necessitates wealth and development. Arguably, political development in Bulgaria is already indicating that even this last proposition might be eventually rejected.

Even if not a prerequisite for democratisation, the existence of some degree of active civil society is important for the successful evolution and consolidation of democracy. Typically, the development of civil society takes place after the democratic transition has begun.[89] The significance of civil society for democracy lies in the fact that it constitutes "the space between the public and private spheres where civic action takes place."[90] As such, civil society consists of structures and

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[89] Philippe C. Schmitter, 'Civil Society East and West', in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu and Hung-mao Tien (eds.), *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Themes and Perspectives* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 242.
[90] Jean Grugel, *Democratization: A Critical Introduction*, p. 93.

organisations that function as intermediaries between the public and private spheres of society.

1.4. The International Dimension of Democratisation

Democratisation is not an exclusively domestic phenomenon, independent of political, economic and historical events outside state border but, quite to the contrary, often strongly influenced by events and actors on the international scene. As Thomas Carothers points out, although international actors "...cannot expect to graft a political system onto another country by training some elites, writing a constitution, supervising an election, constructing some government buildings, and declaring democracy established" (as is, arguably, currently attempted in Bosnia-Herzegovina), democratisation is more often than not influenced by external factors as well. In short, "[d]emocracy is not exported like a computer chip or a car, but neither is it grown from within in pristine isolation from the rest of the world."[91] Western democracies, most notably the United States, engage in so-called democracy assistance and promotion as part of their foreign policy agenda, and although the effectiveness of such activities is questionable, it does play a role in influencing the development of democratic systems in other parts of the world.

The European Union (EU) also plays a potentially effective role in encouraging the development of democracy in Europe. According to Huntington, the European Community (EC) was instrumental in aiding the consolidation of democracy in Greece, Spain and Portugal, where "the establishment of democracy was seen as necessary to secure the economic benefits of EC membership, while

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[91] Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), p. 63

Community membership was in turn seen as a guarantee of the stability of democracy."[92] Since the end of the Cold War, the European Community/Union has also begun to influence democratisation processes in the post-communist states of Eastern Europe, and as Geoffrey Pridham suggests, "[The European Union's] influence is...one of persuasion through the link between democratic conditionality and the attractive prospect of membership."[93] Conditionality, as applied by the EU, refers primarily to political conditionality, which "entails the linking, by a state or international organization, of perceived benefits to another state (such as aid), to the fulfilment of conditions relating to the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles."[94] According to Karen Smith, the European Community/Union hoped that its use of conditionality would encourage the post-communist states in Eastern Europe implement reforms and, in turn, "prevent a return to communist rule. The success of the reforms was [thus] considered crucial for ensuring long-term stability and security in Europe."[95] One problem with EU conditionality is its inconsistent use, especially in South East Europe. The perceived EU favouritism of countries like Croatia and Slovenia has been keenly recognised by Macedonia, for example, which in turn has developed a rather cynical view of the intentions of the West. Nonetheless, according to Jacques Rupnik, "NATO and the European Union have become the only game in town [in Eastern Europe]" and "[j]oining both institutions have become identified in most of postcommunist Europe

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[92] Samuel P. Huntington, 'Democracy's Third Wave', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 5.
[93] Geoffrey Pridham, 'The International Dimension of Democratisation: Theory, Practice and Inter-regional Comparisons', in Geoffrey Pridham Eric Herring and George Sanford (eds.), *Building Democracy? The International Dimension of Democratisation in Eastern Europe* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994), p. 23.
[94] Karen E. Smith, 'The Use of Political Conditionality in the EU's Relations with Third Countries: How Effective?', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 3, issue 2, 1998, p. 256.
[95] Ibid., p. 260.

as the prime foreign-policy goal of the transition..."[96] This is important since both the

EU and NATO claim democracy as a prerequisite for membership, although NATO's

criteria are less stringent than those of the EU. In the Baltic states, for example, it

appears that the prospect of EU membership has had a moderating effect on domestic

politics, and has led to an increased concern for the rights of the Russian minorities in

all three countries. Hence, incentives to democratise and liberalise have been

influenced by the state's efforts to 'return to Europe'. However, while retaining a

certain measure of optimism about the beneficial influences of international

institutions such as the EU and NATO, it is nonetheless important to recognise that

"[d]emocratic conditionalities will create a positive dynamic of 'democratic

contagion' only if the prospects for integration remain credible – that is, if they are

seen as moving forward."[97] With the 2004 EU expansion into Eastern Europe, EU

membership is likely to remain a credible carrot to those countries still waiting to join

the European club.

Critically assessing international democracy promotion, Hazel Smith,

however, notes that whilst institutions such as the European Union promote

democratisation projects that emphasise the civil and political rights aspect of liberal

democracy, they fall short of any promotion of the participatory aspect of democracy.

What she is in fact suggesting is that that the rationale for an emphasis on the liberal,

rights-aspect of democracy at the expense of popular participation, is that it is heavily

biased towards market interests, as it helps "to put in place secure and stable

environments for European business."[98]

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[96] Jacques Rupnik, 'Eastern Europe: The International Context', in Marc F. Plattner and Aleksander Smolar, *Globalization, Power, and Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 70.
[97] Ibid., p. 76.
[98] Hazel Smith, 'Why is There no International Democratic Theory', in Hazel Smith (ed.), *Democracy and International Relations: Critical Theories/Problematic Practices*, p. 29.

Ultimately, however, external democracy promotion can only be as effective as the target countries allows it to be, in the sense that without that necessary requisite of a 'will to democratise', carrots and sticks offered by international actors will have little positive impact.

1.5. Democratisation: The Institutional Dimension

The institution-building aspect of democratisation is undoubtedly crucial to any successful democratisation process. Especially in multiethnic states the choice and character of political institutions can make or break the consolidation of a peaceful democratic society. The first question to address is the choice between presidentialism, parliamentarism or a mix of the two. On the one hand, a presidentialist system may create strong leaders and unifying institutions, but on the other hand it may result in power becoming personalised, leading to a rigid system operating under the rules of a zero-sum game, and a polarised party-system. It may also serve as an obstacle to genuine democratisation and democratic consolidation, if the country in question becomes effectively ruled by one person enjoying the freedom to appoint and dismiss cabinet members and other political officials as he pleases. Russia is a case in point. Serbia and Croatia are examples of semi-presidential systems where power rested primarily with a president who in turn (ab)used his power to seek to weaken political opposition, effectively undermining the development of democratic government. A parliamentary system, by no means an ideal system, nevertheless generally stands a greater chance of fostering democratic behaviour among politicians and is also a better system in pluralist societies, where there are many different interests (e.g. those of various ethno-political and religious-

political groups) to take into account. The downside with the parliamentary system, however, is that it runs the risk of creating weak governments as power is diffused rather than centralised, especially if the principle of proportional representation is employed.

Referring to the 'perils' of presidentialism and the 'virtues' of parliamentarism, Juan Linz argues that one of the key problems with a presidential system is that its operative principle is zero-sum, or "winner-take-all", which is only likely to feed conflict. Hence, he views parliamentarism as the more preferable of the two systems, for whilst parliamentary elections are no guarantee against absolute majority for a single party, "they more often give representation to a number of parties. Power-sharing and coalition-forming are fairly common, and incumbents are accordingly attentive to the demands and interests of even the smaller parties."[99]

A further positive feature of the parliamentary system is that it allows for the accumulation of knowledge and experience amongst cabinet members, as they, and the premier himself, are likely to have served in previous governments and "and the system benefits from the accumulated political and administrative experience of the executive ministers. In most presidential systems, that experience is likely to be lost with a change of presidents, since each chief is likely to select those persons in whom he has personal confidence."[100] A reasonable counter argument to this, however, is that a presidential system has the benefit of bringing in fresh, relatively uncorrupted politicians on a regular basis, while parliamentarism tends to 'recycle' the same politicians over and over, making constructive and, at times much needed, change unlikely.

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[99] Juan J. Linz, 'The Perils of Presidentialism', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996 second edition), p. 129.

[100] Juan J. Linz, 'The Virtues of Parliamentarism', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, p. 159.

Seymour Martin Lipset, among others, expresses doubts about Linz's conclusions and while accepting that "presidencies make for weak parties and weak executives, while parliaments tend to have the reverse effect, certainly affects the nature of and possibly the conditions for democracy", he argues that "much of the literature wrongly assumes the opposite: that a president is inherently stronger than a prime minister, and that power is more concentrated in the former."[101] Lipset further points to cultural, religious and economic factors as elements that affect the stability of political systems and he maintains the significance of the fact that a majority of long established democracies are to be found among the wealthy and Protestant states.[102]

Another critic of Linz' view on parliamentarism versus presidentialism, Donald Horowitz points to the numerous failed parliamentary democracies in post-colonial Africa as evidence that parliamentarism is not as virtuous as Linz contends. More interesting, however, is Horowitz's suggestion that the problem with failed presidential democracies in Latin America and failed parliamentary democracies in Africa, lies not so much with the constitutional system per se, but "with two features that epitomize the Westminster version of democracy: first, plurality elections that produce a majority of seats by shutting out third-party competitors; and second, adversary democracy, with its sharp divide between winners and losers, government and opposition."[103]

As Horowitz notes, the choice between presidentialism and parliamentarism is not the sole factor determining the stability of a polity. Also important is the choice of electoral system which, combined with the constitutional system, can have a strong

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[101] Seymour Martin Lipset, 'The Centrality of Political Culture', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, p. 151.
[102] Ibid., p. 152
[103] Donald L. Horowitz, 'Comparing Democratic Systems', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, p. 149.

impact on the stability of the political system. As Lijphart notes, "the type of electoral system is significantly related to the development of a country's party system, its type of executive (one-party vs. coalitions cabinets), and the relationship between its executive and legislature."[104] While the system of proportional representation (PR) tends to foster multiparty systems, a balanced executive-legislative relationship, and consensus building, the majoritarian system that employs plurality voting is intimately connected with two-party systems, one-party governments and dominant executives.[105] The choice of electoral system can thus have a strong impact on the character and stability of the emerging democratic regime, and can potentially determine the success or failure of democratisation. Whereas most northern European states have adopted proportional representation (PR), the British system, also referred to as the Westminster model, employs the majoritarian system, while yet others use a combination of the two. The PR system can be further divided into 'pure' PR and 'moderate' PR, where the latter "limits the influence of minor parties through such means as applying PR in small districts instead of large districts or nationwide balloting, and requiring parties to receive a minimum percentage of the vote in order to gain representation..."[106] The Scandinavian countries all employ the moderate PR system while Italy uses the pure variant. Critics of the PR system maintain that it allows for disproportionate influence of fringe parties, whereas the majoritarian system tends to foster more moderate, middle-of-the road two-party politics. Guy Lardeyret opposes the use of the PR system, particularly in heterogeneous societies because, he argues, it generates potentially destructive conflict in an already divided

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[104] Arend Lijphart, 'Constitutional Choices for New Democracies', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, p. 162.
[105] Ibid., pp.162-163.
[106] Ibid., p. 162.

society as it gives extreme parties a greater chance to obtain seats in parliament.[107]

Lardeyret, however, seems to draw his conclusion based on the application of pure PR which, admittedly, can have an unduly divisive effect. While he praises the homogenising and supposedly moderating effect of the majoritarian system, it is difficult to see how such a system would be accepted in a heterogeneous society where many different groups vie for influence. In such an environment, moderate PR would be the only reasonable option despite its shortcomings, a fact recognised by most East European countries.

The moderate form of proportional representation is arguably a fairer system than the majoritarian, as it tends to give a larger number of political parties, including smaller ones, representation in the legislative bodies, "almost invariably require coalition government and encourage cross-party compromise and consensus-building as a normal way of life."[108] Hence, the risk of harmful fragmentation is offset by the tendency towards coalitions and consensus seeking. At the same time, the PR system might lead to inefficiency in the legislature, that is, a weak government, as the heterogeneous nature of the legislature and executive bodies make decision-making a less straightforward process than it would be in a homogenous political environment. Compromise is a positive feature only to a limited degree. Taken to an extreme, however, it results in diluted and ineffective policy-making. At the same time, the majoritarian system is inevitably more exclusive, favouring the two largest political parties while excluding smaller, yet significant, parties. Such a system, where 'the winner takes all', may work in states with a high level of homogeneity, but, as suggested above, it is particularly problematic in heterogeneous states where minority parties are effectively barred from government. Such a system effectively limits the

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[107] Guy Lardeyret, 'The Problem with PR', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, p. 177.
[108] David Beetham, *Democracy and Human Rights*, p. 84.

democratic polity as it permanently excludes a minority of the citizenry, thereby weakening the legitimacy of the regime. Hence, a moderately proportional system of representation is arguably the better, and possibly the more democratic, choice for states with more than one ethnic, religious or linguistic community.

Finally, evaluation and choice of constitutional and electoral systems need to take into account the fact that "[e]ach national case is highly circumstantial and reflects both history in all its manifestations and, more specifically, the consequences of particular patterns of political mobilization."[109] Thus, every case is unique and models should be recognised as no more than generalisations, and outcomes as merely approximate.

1.6. Democratisation in Post-Communist Societies

The Communist Legacy

While it is debatable whether democratisation is in fact necessarily any more problematic in post-communist societies than in other states in transition, there are certain aspects of the communist legacy that put a distinguishing mark on the process of democratisation. Following Lenin's assertion that representative government is exploitative and thus needs to be replaced with a system of proletarian democracy, many communist states declared themselves to be 'people's democracies.'[110] They argued that communism was democracy in the sense that it provided equally for all its citizens, that is, there was democracy of distribution. Paradoxically, citizens in communist states were often obligated to vote in elections where the only available

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[109] Ken Gladdish, 'The Primacy of the Particular', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, p. 195.

[110] Paul Barry Clarke and Joe Foweraker (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Democratic Thought* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 661.

choice was the Communist Party. As one author notes, "[t]o the extent that a political system restricts or forbids competition among groups representing differing political ideas (for example, by permitting only a single political party to exist), this lack of political competition subverts the link between popular participation and rule by the people."[111] Thus, 'democracy' in communist societies was nothing close to democracy as defined in the West, that is, rule by the people. Membership in the communist party was often necessary in order to get a good job or for other instrumental reasons. On the one hand it was a privilege to join the party, towards one had to strive, yet at the same time party membership was an obligation.[112] Political 'participation' in the form of party membership was thus imposed on people by the state, and as such citizens "were not free to decide for themselves whether to take an interest in politics. Political awareness was an obligation in a party-state with a totalitarian vocation."[113] This in turn continues to affect post-communist democratisation processes in so far as people harbour a deep sense of suspicion towards political parties and negative associations with the term 'party' often compelled a post-1989 political grouping in Eastern Europe to refer to itself not as a party but as a movement, organisation or forum.[114]

Second, modernisation under communist rule was nothing less than perverted modernisation for it created "the body of modernity, but [killed] its soul. The communists laid down roads, erected hydroelectric plants, and the like, but they killed

[111] William R. Reisinger, 'Choices Facing the Builders of a Liberal Democracy', in Robert D. Grey (ed.), *Democratic Theory and Post-Communist Change* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 31.
[112] Richard Rose, William Mishler and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and its Alternatives: Understanding Post-Communist Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 145.
[113] Ibid., p. 149.
[114] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 247.

(or tried their best to kill) the human capacity for autonomous action"[115] This has important implications for post-communist democratisation as the very concept of democracy presupposes that individuals are autonomous agents.[116] Linked to the autonomous agent is the right of the individual to hold property. Referring to Hegel's claim that private property is associated with human personality, Ghia Nodia maintains that by abolishing the right to private property, communism effectively destroyed the human personality of individuals. This, again, affects the autonomous quality of human beings.[117] In short, while providing for its citizens, the communist state stripped away the autonomous agency of individuals, thereby making them wholly dependent on the state. In a capitalist democracy, on the other hand, individuals are to a considerable degree left to provide for themselves, although the state offers a limited form of safety net for its citizens. Thus, as communism gave way to capitalism and democratisation, people found themselves in a new and unknown socio-political environment in which they could no longer rely on the state to provide for them but had to take responsibility for their own lives. Moreover, the "actions of the [c]ommunist regimes created distrust of major institutions of society."[118] This, in turn, complicated the development of democracy as the latter relies heavily on political and social institutions for its functioning.

A key principle of democratic politics is that elected representatives are accountable to their constituents. In a communist or other totalitarian regime, however, political leaders need not answer to the people and effectively rule without the consent of the citizens. Hence, one of the challenges in a post-communist democratising regime is to establish a relationship between the elected and the voters.

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[115] Ghia Nodia, 'How Different Are Postcommunist Transitions?', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 7, no. 4, October 1996, p. 24.
[116] Ibid., p. 25.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Richard Rose, William Mishler and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and its Alternatives*, p. 66.

Again, this is complicated by popular distrust for political institutions. Decision-making based on multiparty debating of issues is another characteristic of politics in a democracy. In a communist state, by contrast, there was only one party, and thus only one political elite who made decisions unilaterally. Hence, the concepts of peaceful opposition and parliamentary debate were largely foreign to political life in a communist regime. This in turn constitutes a problem in immature post-communist democracies where the old elite continues to take part in political life, and where the temptation to make decisions the 'old' way is often too strong to resist. Thus, while the establishment of democratic institutions in a post-communist state is a relatively straightforward task, making them effective is a different matter, which depends on the extent to which a democratic culture is developing. Yet, for such a culture to evolve requires a change in attitude and behaviour amongst politicians and citizens alike, in order to 'reverse' the socialization process that they underwent under the communist regime. Changing human behaviour, however, can take a very long time, thus posing a significant challenge to the success of democratisation.

Totalitarian states are characterised by the complete absence of the rule of law, and this was particularly the case with the communist regimes of the Soviet bloc in which the communist party was the sole determining power. In a democratic polity, on the other hand, rule of law is a requisite without which the democratic process is discredited and incapacitated. As John Reitz notes, certain elements are requisites for a state to be governed according to the rule of law, including: first, a constitutional guarantee on basic civil and political rights; second, court jurisdiction that encompasses civil and criminal matters as well as constitutionality of executive and administrative authorities; third, an independent judiciary; and a societal

acceptance, which includes the country's politicians as well, that the law must be obeyed.[119]

Experience from Eastern Europe in the post-communist period, however, illustrates the difficulty of consolidating the rule of law in societies where political leaders once regarded law as simply an instrument of politics, has left the post-communist world with a legacy of so-called "legal nihilism", which is characterised by the notion that the law is there to serve the political interest and as such can be manipulated to suit particular political ends.[120] Although the necessary institutions required for the rule of law are in place, their effectiveness may be ineffective due to the persisting, communist-style, notion that law is subservient to politics.[121]

Twin Transitions: Political and Economic Transformation

As noted, post-communist transitions distinguish themselves from many processes of democratisation elsewhere – be it in Southern Europe, Asia, or Africa – in one particularly important way, specifically they involve not merely a political transformation but also a fundamental change of economic system as well, as the highly centralised communist command economy was to be replaced by a capitalist market economy. The combined pressure of political and economic transformation thus posed a heavy burden on the social cohesion of post-communist societies. The notion of these countries undergoing two simultaneous transitions, however, may be somewhat misleading. For while the political and economic transitions shared a starting point, the respective timeframes for each transition differ in a significant way. Whereas the formal implementation of democracy, that is, establishment of

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[119] John Reitz, 'Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law: Theoretical Perspectives', in Robert D. Grey (ed.), *Democratic Theory and Post-Communist Change* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 130.
[120] Ibid., p. 120.
[121] Ibid.

democratic political structures, is in many cases a relatively straightforward and speedy process, the transformation of the economic system is a considerably more time-consuming process. For "[i]t takes more time to privatise the bulk of the state-dominated economy than to organize free elections and at least some rudiments of political parties."[122] Thus, the two processes of political and economic changes soon assume different speed so that a new sequence is produced whereby democratisation is implemented first, a functioning market economy second. As a consequence, "market-oriented reforms, which must be exceptionally comprehensive because of the socialist economic legacy, have to be introduced under democratic, or at least pluralistic, political arrangements."[123] In this respect, post-communist democracies differ from those in Western Europe that became capitalist before they democratised.

The implications of the sequence in Eastern Europe is important in so far as implementing austere economic reform by democratic means tends to slow down the implementation of economic reforms. For when economic reform results in diminished economic security, the democratisation process is put at risk. As Eric Herring notes, economic insecurity is a key threat to democratisation in the post-communist states of Eastern Europe. Specifically, the previous, communist, regimes "provided important basic necessities and full employment. Now people in Eastern Europe have no confidence in their access to those conditions, and many people throughout the region have seen their living standards crash."[124] One consequence of post-communism with its components of political and economic liberalisation has been the accumulation of extreme wealth in the hands of a few, and the

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[122] Leszek Balcerowicz, 'Understanding Postcommunist Transitions', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 5, no. 4, October 1994, p. 76.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Eric Herring, 'International Security and Democratisation in Eastern Europe', in Geoffrey Pridham, Eric Herring and George Sanford (eds.), *Building Democracy? The International Dimension of Democratisation in Eastern Europe*, pp. 86, 87.

impoverishment of the population at large. A problematic economic transformation in conjunction with financial as well as material insecurity as a consequence of economic reform may undermine the democratisation process either because public confidence in the new political regime is diminished by economic crisis, or because political leaders use the deteriorating economic situation as an excuse to bolster their own power.

According to Adam Przeworski, the economic transformation in post-communist societies does in fact mirror the communist project. For, both seek to implement an "intellectual blueprint", both are radical in their approach, and both are "intended to turn upside down all the existing social relations."[125] Despite these similarities, economic transition from a command economy to a market-oriented system tends to have significant social and political implications and thus can make or break the democratisation process. In the short run, at least, capitalist economic reforms are likely to result in higher inflation, unemployment, a "temporary fall in aggregate consumption [and are thus] socially costly and politically risky...[They] hurt large social groups and evoke opposition from important political forces. And if that happens, democracy may be undermined or reforms abandoned, or both."[126] There are two main strategies for the implementation of economic reforms in post-communist societies. The effects of the radical approach, the so-called 'bitter pill', are described above. When a more gradual process is employed, "consumption falls slowly, does not diminish as much as under the radical strategy, and returns to the initial level later. Once the initial level has been reached again, marking the end of the transition, the economy grows at the same rate under the two strategies."[127] Which

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[125] Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 7.
[126] Ibid., p. 136.
[127] Ibid., p. 162-3.

strategy is undertaken is often a matter of political decision-making, and although the economic outcome is ultimately the same under both strategies, the social costs are more pronounced under the radical approach, which tends to result in a severe drop in public support as social costs rise, even if the majority of the population initially supported the introduction of radical reforms. Public protest, in turn, may be discerned in public polls, or demonstrated in elections, strikes, and even violence. When public confidence in the political elite and government institutions is worn down, any attempt by political leaders to push through further reforms is often tantamount to committing political suicide.[128]

Leszek Balcerowicz suggests that post-communist transitions initially experience a brief period of so-called 'extraordinary politics', in which political leaders and citizens "feel a stronger-than-normal tendency to think and act in terms of the common good."[129] This, however, soon gives way to 'normal politics', characterised by competitive, antagonistic politics.[130] Therefore, Balcerowicz argues, quickly launching a radical economic reform package during this early phase of transition enhances the chances of severe economic reform initiatives being accepted by the population. In contrast, a delayed radical programme or a more gradual reform programme would most likely be met with public opposition once the transition period moved into the more competitive phase.[131]

Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman call attention to an important point when noting that whilst most new democracies have managed to endure political deadlock and poor economic performance for a fair amount of time, there is a difference between political survival and political consolidation. Whereas a prolonged

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[128] Ibid., p. 167, 169.
[129] Leszek Balcerowicz, p. 85.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., p. 86.

period of economic stagnation may not lead to the collapse of the democratic regime, it may well weaken the "social foundations and institutional vitality" of young democracies. In the event of recurring economic crises, however, it is doubtful that democracy would be able to survive.[132]

Political protest over economic hardship may set economic development back, as political leaders are afraid of political destabilisation due to economic reform. According to Beverly Crawford, "[w]eak democracies...impede the project of economic liberalization, because society will not accept the painful effects of price reform, a reduction in welfare benefits, and the inevitable massive social dislocation."[133] The difficulties associated with democratisation and economic reform thus reinforce each other: a democratising state in need of radical economic reform is less likely to effectively implement such a reform programme when the population protests against its diminishing economic security. A new and weak democratic regime might thus slow down the economic reform process in order to avoid political rebellion that would undermine political stability, and hence democratisation. Yet, the consequent absence of sufficient economic reform in turn increases people's dissatisfaction with political leaders, as economic standards remain intolerable, and so on. Therefore, in democratising post-communist states economic prosperity tends to be perceived as a "central feature of liberal democracy, but...the severe hardships inflicted on many persons by economic reform may ultimately sharpen disillusionment with democracy – especially if these hardships are accompanied by

[132] Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), p.16
[133] Beverly Crawford, 'Post-Communist Political Economy: A Framework for the Analysis of Reform', in Beverly Crawford (ed.), *Markets, States, and Democracy: The Political Economy of Post-Communist Transformation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), p. 4.

rapidly increasing disparities of income and extensive corruption."[134] Democratisation, therefore, is sometimes evaluated not on political criteria but according to the success and failure of economic development, which in turn creates a distorted image of the democratisation process. Consequently, economic insecurity is blamed on democracy. If economic reforms were initiated and led by an anti-communist government, popular disillusionment may result in the return of ex-communists to power, (although, now calling themselves 'socialist' or re-launched as social democratic parties), as the case of Romania illustrates, where the Social Democratic Party won the 2000 parliamentary elections. Poland is but another example of a post-communist country where ex-communists have been voted back into office.[135]

Stephen Holmes points to an "inherent paradox in using democratic means to create a government that will reform the economy, since democracy gives ultimate authority to an electoral majority that, in turn, will be most harmed in the short term by the pain and dislocation of economic reform."[136] The challenge for post-communist states of Eastern Europe is to build a government capable of implementing effective reforms "while maintaining public confidence and remaining democratically accountable."[137] The problem is that an emerging democracy is almost by default going to be a weak state, as institutions, political culture and political behaviour are all subject to radical transformation. As such, the democratising state's ability to implement economic reform without alienating a population that has yet to

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[134] Bruce Parrott, 'Perspectives on Postcommunist Democratization', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 25.
[135] Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl and Amanda Schnetzer (eds.), *Nations in Transit 2003: Democratization in East Central Europe and Eurasia* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 479, 455.
[136] Stephen Holmes, 'Conceptions of Democracy in the Draft Constitutions of Post-Communist Countries', in Beverly Crawford (ed.), *Markets, States, and Democracy: The Political Economy of Post-Communist Transformation*, p. 71.
[137] Ibid., p. 76.

be convinced of democracy's 'virtues', is likely to be limited. For even if democratic structures are in place, the population may not be wholly enthusiastic about the democratic experiment. As Holmes puts it: "[t]he source of legitimacy in a democratic system is success in competitive elections. But an electoral victory does not necessarily bring deep public confidence in countries with a tradition of compulsory voting in fake elections."[138] Consequently, a consolidated democracy stands a better chance of effectively implementing economic reform without jeopardising political stability than does a newly democratising state, as the former already enjoys the political legitimacy that the latter is still striving to achieve.

Taking a more positive attitude towards the interdependent relationship between the processes of democratisation and economic transformation in post-communist societies, Robert Grey suggests that "[s]uccessful conversion [from command to market economy], resulting in increasingly prosperous citizenries, is likely to generate increasing elite and mass attachment to political democracy, however unreasonable it may be to make the linkage between democracy and economic prosperity. That makes the economic conversion vital to the fate of democracy."[139] While economic reform does have important implications for the success or failure of the democratisation process, recent experience shows that most countries in Eastern Europe have experienced considerable problems whilst working to transform their economies, hence the potentially positive link between economic transformation and democratisation has largely been lost.

Whilst the effect of economic reform on the democratisation process has been highlighted here, there are other ways in which economic reform influences political

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[138] Ibid., p. 77.
[139] Robert D. Grey, 'How to Understand the Probable Political Future of the Formerly Communist States', in Robert D. Grey (ed.), *Democratic Theory and Post-Communist Change* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 17.

development. Joan Nelson, for example, identifies four areas in which the relationship between economics and politics is of particular importance: effects on the credibility and popularity of the government; effects on poverty and inequality; effects on relations between state and economy; and effects on relative power and coalitions.[140] All of these, of course, in turn influence the democratisation process, if only indirectly and weigh heavily on the socio-political stability of the new regime.

Privatisation of state-controlled assets became a crucial part of post-communist economic transformation. As previously noted, communism strived to abolish private property altogether, thereby also undermining human personality.[141] The privatisation of state property thus carries both political and economic meaning in a post-communist context. It is politically significant because human personality, characterised by the individual as an autonomous agent, is crucial for the successful development of democracy. Economically, privatisation constitutes an essential part of the transformation from a state-controlled to market-controlled economy. Privatisation has, however, been a slow process in several post-communist states, in large part due to the reluctance of political elites to give up state assets from which they might benefit. Privatisation brings with it a mixed bag of costs and benefits. As noted, it is necessary as a means of giving back to the people their right to property and, of course, for market economic reasons it is a crucial aspect of economic reform. Politically, privatisation is essential in order to bolster popular confidence in the democratisation process and to redress past injustices when private property had been seized by the state.[142] Yet, by the same token, excessive privatisation means that the state sells off most, if not all, of the institutions that served the purpose of providing

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[140] Joan M. Nelson, 'Linkages Between Politics and Economics', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 5, no. 4, October 1994, p. 57.
[141] Ghia Nodia, 'How Different Are Postcommunist Transitions?', p. 25.
[142] Claus Offe, *Varieties of Transition*, pp. 114-115.

for the people. Hence, the state effectively removes its obligation to care for its citizens. This, in turn, results in heightened insecurity on the part of the latter, and when people perceive the state as being incapable of providing some measure of socio-economic service and protection, they resort to alternative sources of protection.

Whilst not unique to them, corruption and organised crime, therefore, constitute another problem for post-communist democracies. Veton Latifi notes that, "[in] a stable democracy with a healthy economy, corruption can do untold damage. In a 'fledgling' democracy...the effect is even more corrosive."[143] Partly a consequence of the weak state's inability to manage the transition from command to market economy without causing a severe deterioration in living-standards, corruption and organised crime pose a threat to successful democratisation to the extent that politics is affected by them. Aleksandar Fatic attributes the growth of corruption in the Balkans to the fact that "[t]he governments of the region were poorly adapted to the new market realities, they were unused to autonomous policy design, which had used to be dictated from a single 'block' center, and their policies have involved a great deal of loss of energy of the population and the economy as an integrated infrastructural system."[144] Consequently, corruption emerged as the primary, if not only, means of survival for the population as the state was incapable of guaranteeing sufficient economic security for its citizens. Organised crime in the Balkans today transcends state borders and constitutes both a serious security threat and an obstacle to advanced democratisation. As stated, corruption and organised crime thrive were the state is weak and unable to provide security for its citizens,

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[143] Veton Latifi, 'Macedonia Mired in Corruption', *Balkan Crisis Report*, no. 183, 6 October 2000, Institute for War & Peace Reporting.
[144] Aleksandar Fatic, 'Stability and Corruption in Southeastern Europe', Belgrade: The Management Center, 2000, http://www.management.org.yu/korupcija.php p. 2.

which is the case in many East European states. The problems of corruption and democratisation in states undergoing economic transformation thus reinforce each other as the defeat of corruption requires the presence of a strong government, and the legitimacy of a government, in turn, is weakened by the widespread presence of corruption in society. Rather than viewing socio-economic stability as the precondition for the eradication of corruption, Fatic contends that such stability must be present before corruption can be eliminated, for a stable social and economic environment is a necessity for the introduction of transparent mechanisms that facilitate the monitoring, assessment and control of corruption. Yet, "such circumstances will be introduced only where the state and the society are sufficiently strengthened to take on and fulfill their roles and duties towards the citizens adequately."[145] This, in turn, means that political stability, that is, a sufficiently strong democratic regime, needs to be in place before corruption can be effectively fought. However, this brings us back to the challenge of reconciling democratisation with economic reform, a problem found in all countries of Eastern Europe.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter sought to achieve a number of interrelated aims. First and foremost it provided an introduction of the concept of democratisation via a critical engagement with democratisation theory. In doing so, it first outlined working definitions of the terms *liberalisation*, *transition*, *democratisation*, and *democracy*, in order to clarify some of the central concepts analysed in this thesis. It was argued that making clear distinctions between these terms is crucial as the definitions determine the outcome of

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[145] Ibid., p. 3.

analysis. Then followed an outline of essential questions surrounding these terms, including the causes and modes of democratisation as well as a discussion of the demos, posing the question, who is democracy for? Furthermore, it was argued that the only preconditions necessary for democratisation are first, the existence of a general consensus on the political community, that is, of 'national unity', and second, a commitment to the democratisation process. At the same time, the importance of distinguishing between preconditions and explanatory factors was pointed out. For while the notion of preconditions for the democratic process was generally – albeit with two exceptions – dismissed, the existence of important explanatory factors for democratisation was acknowledged. It was also noted that no democratisation process is exclusively a domestic phenomenon as a number of international factors play a role in encouraging the development of democracy in a given state.

Thereafter followed a discussion on the importance of selecting institutional structures of a new democratic regime. Particularly highlighted was the choice between a presidential and parliamentary system and between majoritarian and proportional representation. It was suggested that in ethnically heterogeneous states a parliamentary system with proportional representation is more likely to be effective than a presidential system that employs majoritarian principle, since the former tends to promote cross-party coalitions, compromises and consensus-building.

The second section of the chapter sought to provide an overview of some of the central challenges associated with democratisation in post-communist societies. In particular, we noted the importance of rule of law was emphasised, and the ambiguous attitude towards political parties and societal institutions. Perhaps the most important factor affecting post-communist democratisation, however, appears to be the process of economic transformation. For in contrast to other democratisation

efforts, those in Eastern Europe have been further complicated by the near-simultaneous transformation of the economic system from command to market economy. It was argued that the complexities surrounding economic transformation can have serious consequences for the democratisation process, and possibly serve to undermine the newly established democratic regime as popular dissatisfaction with the democratic government increases along with diminishing economic security. Thus, the success or failure of democracy becomes linked to the success or failure of economic reform.

In the following chapter, we turn to the second part of the theoretical foundation on which this study is based, namely interethnic relations, and in doing so we offer a critical evaluation of some common conceptions and misconceptions about democratisation and inter-communal conflict in multiethnic societies.

CHAPTER TWO

Democratisation and Conflict in Multiethnic Societies

2.1. Introduction

Having sought to clarify the conceptual distinctions between *transition, liberalisation, democratisation* and *consolidated democracy* in Chapter One, as well as having surveyed the prevalent scholarly theories of democratisation, we now turn our attention to the impact of democratisation on interethnic relations in heterogeneous societies. First, this chapter critically reviews different theories on the problems of democratisation in ethnically plural states, and particularly challenges the notion that democratisation in ethnically divided societies necessarily increases the risk of violent conflict. It is further suggested that the process of democratisation can be effective as a means to prevent violent conflict in ethnically mixed societies. As will be shown, it is not the process of democratisation per se that poses a threat to interethnic peace; instead, in order to understand the emergence of interethnic conflict we need to look at the previous, totalitarian regime, and the initial transition phase following the breakdown of that regime, along with the history of interethnic relations in each particular case.

Second, this chapter introduces John Burton's concept of human needs theory and its application to conflict, which will then be developed further in Chapter Six. Subsequently, this chapter addresses the issue of ethnically aligned politics, a phenomenon that is commonly seen as a threat to democracy. Thereafter follows an overview of the tension between individual and collective rights and their relationship to democracy, issues that frequently arise in multiethnic societies. Finally, the significance of security in relation to democratisation is addressed.

Before moving on, however, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of two concepts: *interethnic conflict* and *conflict prevention*. Throughout this study the term *interethnic conflict* is used in reference to conflicts between different ethnic groups. This does not, however, imply that the present study shares the perspective of those who regard interethnic conflict as rooted in primordial ethnic hatreds. To the contrary, far from locating the source of conflict in ethnic differences per se, this study takes the view that whilst so-called ethnic conflicts, or interethnic conflicts, manifest themselves on the level of ethnicity, their root causes are to be found elsewhere. Conflict between ethnic groups is here identified as an example of *identity conflict*. Another type of identity conflict, whose features are in many ways similar to those of interethnic conflict, is class conflict: in both instances, we are dealing with an identity group of persons who are confronting the same problems of deprivation and/or discrimination. In such a case, the identity group, whether it is class-based or ethnically-based, is perceived by its members as providing a measure of security, hence loyalty to the identity group is promoted.[1] As such the term *interethnic conflict* in this study is merely employed to indicate conflicts that manifest themselves on the level of ethnicity, but whose root causes are to be found in a melange of competing interests and unmet needs. An alternative reference to such conflicts, and which will also be used in this study, is the term *inter-communal conflict*.

Conflict prevention is, as noted by scholars in the field, "...a misnomer, since it is clearly impossible to prevent conflict from taking place. It would also be undesirable, for conflict is a creative and necessary means of bringing about social change."[2] In this study, therefore, the term conflict prevention is defined as "those

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[1] John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Provention* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), p. 138.
[2] Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), p. 96.

factors or actions which prevent *armed* conflicts or mass violence from breaking out."[3]

2.2. Democratisation in Ethnically Divided Societies: A Road to Violence or a Means of Peaceful Cohabitation?

It is often claimed that ethnic heterogeneity makes democratisation difficult if not unlikely and even harmful. More specifically, it is commonly believed that whereas consolidated democracy is indeed conducive to interstate as well as intrastate peace, the democratisation process itself has an unfortunate tendency to increase the risks for violent conflict in ethnically divided societies. Jack Snyder[4] and Donald Horowitz,[5] among others, have suggested that the introduction of democratic government can in fact be both ineffective and inappropriate in societies that are divided by ethnicity, and that majority rule, competitive party politics, and an open political system may lead to further deterioration of interethnic relations.[6] Such a position is based on the premise that the democratic process may generate or even intensify violent conflict, as democratisation allows populist politicians to manipulate ethnic divisions for their own gain, thus increasing the probability that ethnic groups will act in their own narrow interests, as opposed to the general interest of the political community as a whole, the state. The phenomenon of ethnic politics – the formation of political parties along ethnic lines, and the pursuit of political agendas limited to the protection

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000).

[5] Donald L. Horowitz, 'Democracy in Divided Societies', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 4, no.4, October 1993, p. 18; Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 296, 298.

[6] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), p. 291.

of the interests of one's own identity group – with its emphasis on collectivist principles sits uneasily with Western liberal democratic principles of individualism.

A strong element of ethnic politics in incipient democracies is seen as a stepping-stone towards an accelerating spiral of conflicting interethnic interests that eventually may culminate in violence between ethnic groups occupying the same territorial space. In such instances, the democratisation process is bound to undermine the unity of the state, provoke conflicts over the allocation of political, economic and social resources, and make fair, just, and efficient government more difficult.[7] It is commonly held that, when introduced in ethnically heterogeneous societies, democratic processes feed conflict and potential violence, which may eventually result in such a rise in the level of inter-communal conflict that "any belief in democracy as a peaceful lever of change is extinguished in the competition which it encourages."[8]

However, much of the scholarly literature tends to concentrate on the relationship between consolidated democracy and peaceful coexistence, whilst studies focusing on the impact of democratisation on interethnic relations are more rare. Those who do turn their attention towards the impact of democratisation on interethnic relations tend mostly to highlight the negative relationship between the two.[9] This thesis, however, sets out to investigate the relationship between democratisation and interethnic relations anew, suggesting that their relationship is not simply a negative one, but that, on the contrary, democratisation can have a

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[7] Robert L. Rothstein, 'Democracy and Conflict', in Edy Kaufman and Shukri B. Abed, *Democracy, Peace, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), p. 27.
[8] Dennis Austin, and Anirudha Gupta, 'The Politics of Violence in India and South Asia', in Peter Janke (ed.), *Ethnic and Religious Conflicts: Europe and Asia* (Brookfield, VT: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, 1994), p. 267.
[9] Donald L. Horowitz, 'Democracy in Divided Societies', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 4, no. 4, October 1993, pp. 18-38; Adam Przeworski, *Sustainable Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 20.

beneficial influence on interethnic relations in societies where tensions between ethnic communities have been brewing.

One of the arguments brought forth in this thesis is that in cases of dramatic surges in inter-communal tension in newly democratising societies, such tension must be understood in the context of the authoritarian system that was in place prior to regime change. More specifically, during communist rule in Eastern Europe, non-conformity to the highly centralised communist regime, such as expression of ethnic and religious identities, was effectively, and many times forcefully, suppressed by the state, or actually appropriated by the communist leadership to further their own agenda. Later on, the breakdown of communist systems often led to the re-emergence of previously repressed, or 'forgotten' ethnic identities which, when in conflict with other interests, at times resulted in a heightened level of inter-communal conflict.[10] This is what happened in Bosnia, and to a lesser extent in Bulgaria and Macedonia. Despite the presence of heightened tensions between ethnic communities in Bulgaria and in Macedonia, these two states managed throughout the 1990s to avoid full-blown internal conflicts and to advance their democratisation processes. At the same time it needs to be pointed out here, that the resurgence of nationalist politics was by no means a feature unique to South East Europe, but also featured elsewhere in the former communist block, including the Baltic states, where conflict arose between the on the one hand Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, and on the other, the Russian minorities residing in each Baltic state.[11] Other examples include Czechoslovakia, which split along national lines, and Russia, where nationalist movements emerged in Chechnya and elsewhere.

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[10] Larry Diamond, *Promoting Democracy in the 1990s: Actors and Instruments, Issues and Imperatives* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict), p. 5.
[11] Walter A. Kemp (ed.), *Quiet Diplomacy in Action: The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2001), pp. 141-165.

One problem with the argument that democratisation increases the risk of violent conflict, is that its proponents commonly fail to adequately specify what kind of conflict they are referring to, whether it is a political conflict, interest-based conflict, needs-based, inter-communal conflict or other. Hence, whilst democratisation might increase the *manifestation* of conflict for the simple reason that it *allows for* conflict to be expressed, in contrast to the preceding non-democratic regime in which grievances and conflicts were often suppressed, it is by no means evident that democratisation is the cause of elevated interethnic conflict per se. That conflict should become more apparent in a democratic system of government is, after all, not surprising since, as Chapter One showed, the very essence of modern democracy – liberal democracy – is the manifestation and negotiation of competing interests.

Another weakness to be found in the argument that democratisation exacerbates conflict in ethnically heterogeneous states is the relative lack of substantive empirical as well as analytical research in support of such a thesis. When democratisation and interethnic conflict emerge simultaneously in one place, we may be easily tempted to draw conclusions about a causal relationship between the two, when in fact a deeper investigation would show such an explanation to be simplistic and misleading. If we look at states that suffered significant interethnic violence during the process of democratisation, it becomes clear that they are in fact relatively few in relation to those who were not beset by interethnic violence. A critic might suggest that the reason for the relatively low number of violent democratisations in the modern era is explained by the fact that such a calculation excludes the number of failed democratisations. These are rightly excluded, however, as they were never examples of genuine democratisation to begin with. As Chapter One noted, the

introduction of multiparty elections alone is not a sufficient criterion for categorising a country as democratising. As Marc Plattner points out, whilst it is not uncommon for political demagogues to "use electoral campaigns to appeal to voters' worst instincts, including ethnic or religious intolerance...the number of new democracies in which candidates have succeeded on the basis of such appeals is far fewer than might have been expected..."[12] Indeed there is a lack of systematic evidence to suggest that ethnic and national mobilisation within states are more common occurrences in democratising states that in other polities. Moreover, the fact that ethno-nationalist revivals have taken place in Quebec and Flanders, both located in countries with stable democracies seems to indicate that it is not democratisation per se that leads to political mobilisation of ethnic and national groups.[13] Rather provocatively, Adam Przeworski argues that there is a fundamental theoretical problem with the notion that ethnically plural societies offer an inhospitable environment for democratic rule, namely the inherent assumption that ethnicity is a primordial given[14] and that "...despite a generation of research discrediting primordialism as applied to Africa and Asia, the collapse of Soviet hegemony and the rise of nationalist movements brought primordialist arguments back into respectability."[15]

Jack Snyder is a prominent adherent to the view that democratisation deepens ethnic cleavages, as the open political environment paves the way for aggressive ethnic nationalism. He argues that "[d]emocratization gives rise to nationalism because it serves the interests of powerful groups within the nation who seek to harness popular energies to the tasks of war and economic development without

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[12] Marc F. Plattner, 'Liberalism and Democracy: Can't Have One Without the Other', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, no. 2, March/April 1998, pp. 178-179.

[13] Adam Przeworski, *Sustainable Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 21.

[14] Ibid., p. 20.

[15] Ibid., p. 32.

surrendering real political authority to the average citizen."[16] He further suggests that "[m]ost of the states undergoing bloody ethnic conflicts…[in the]1990s experienced a partial improvement in their political or civil liberties in the year or so before strife broke out. Most of these conflicts occurred in states that were taking initial steps toward a democratic transition."[17] One initial, but highly significant, problem with Snyder's argument is that he fails to make a clear distinction between *transition* and *democratisation*, instead using the two concepts interchangeably. Based on the definitions laid down in Chapter One of this dissertation, it appears that when Snyder is talking about democratisation, he is in fact referring to the brief transition period that immediately precedes the actual democratisation process. Thus, what he really seems to be saying is that transition, not democratisation, increases the risk of nationalist conflict. But it does not follow from the observation that because some states embark on an ethno-nationalist route rather than on a democratic, it is democratisation per se that gives rise to exclusionist nationalism.

It is, furthermore, important to ask whether it is transition *to*, or transition *from*, a particular political system that gives rise to inter-communal confrontation. For, as was pointed out earlier, democratising post-communist states – as well as other formerly authoritarian/totalitarian states – go through not just one, but two transitions. In Eastern Europe the first occurred when the old communist regime crumbled and broke down in 1989-1990, and the second constituted the transition towards a democratic political system. In between the two transitions, however, there existed a power vacuum characterised by a high degree of uncertainty at all levels of society. It is in such a volatile environment, however brief its period may be, that the future of the country is to a considerable degree determined.

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[16] Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*, p. 36.
[17] Ibid., p. 28.

Uncertainty, perhaps better defined as insecurity, was further exacerbated by the fact that when communism collapsed, it was not merely a political regime that broke down, but an entire economic system was also discredited. It is in this period of political, economic and institutional vacuum that the risk of conflict is most serious. A more accurate understanding of interethnic conflict in post-communist societies is that post-communist transition and democratisation processes have been linked with a resurgence of ethno-nationalist aggression, as a direct consequence of regime collapse, ideological breakdown, social disintegration and political instability. In a society fraught with fear for personal safety, social insecurity, uncertainty about what the future holds, and a general sense of lack of control, it is not difficult to understand why widespread feelings of frustration, suspicion and "a decline in personal and social constraints against socially dysfunctional behavior" emerge. And, as the previously imposed civic bonds of the communist state begin to crack, "social, ethnic, and economic differences...become the bases for both discrimination and group cohesion. [18] Hence, it is the effects of the unravelling of the previous authoritarian regime and the consequent implications of that, rather than democratisation per se, that foster a climate in which ethno-nationalism and extremism gain momentum. We also should be reminded that communist ideology was, in theory at least, internationalist, and when discredited, the shift towards the opposite extreme, that of ethnic nationalism and particularist ideology, "with its fiction of kinship, intragroup loyalty, and service to a greater good, 'the nation'"[19] begins to make sense. The logical counter-reaction to communism, particularly as ethnic, religious or nationalist expressions had been expressly prohibited under the communist regime. There are

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[18] Lee Walker, 'Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet Transition', in Leokadia Drobizheva, Rose Gottemoeller, Catherine McArdle Kelleher and Lee Walker (eds.), *Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet World: Case Studies and Analysis* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. 10-11.
[19] Ibid., p. 10.

numerous examples of communist-era politicians who after 1989 refashioned themselves as nationalist leaders in order to retain power.

The atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity that normally accompanies regime collapse follows from a loss of rules and norms that governed the previous regime. In such an environment, the elites of the old regime, fearing revenge and punishment for past actions by the next regime to emerge, are compelled to act out of self-preservation by seeking to maintain their positions of power. At the same time, new, competing political formations emerge that each seeks to gain control over decision-making power.[20] In particular, it is in this phase, during which there is great uncertainty due to the power vacuum that the danger of extremism and conflict rests. It is the initial transition period, therefore, not the democratisation per se, that poses a threat to interethnic peace and security.

Ronald Francisco highlights three factors that explain the emergence of interethnic conflict in post-communist societies. First, in a number of East European countries, interethnic rivalries had been a feature in the earlier parts of their histories, pre-dating communist rule, but the expression of potential conflicts had been repressed effectively along with ethnic identities by communist policy. Second, with the end of the Cold War and the Soviet Red Army no longer acting as constraint on potential ethnic revolts. Lastly, in an effort to retain their power in a post-communist regime, old communist leaders sought to capitalise on existing ethnic divides and historical memories of conflict.[21] Although the last certainly was the case in several post-communist states, and particularly in the former Yugoslavia, it would be a mistake to suggest that the end of communism in Eastern Europe simply meant that a 'lid' was lifted off old, deep-seated and primordial grievances between different

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[20] Ronald A. Francisco, *The Politics of Regime Transitions* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), p. 2.
[21] Ibid., p. 49.

ethnic groups. It can, nevertheless, be argued that authoritarian systems, and in this case, communist regimes, both generated and suppressed interethnic conflict. Bulgaria is a case in point, where the communist regime periodically chose to deny ethnic Turks their identity by blatantly claiming them to be nothing but ethnic Bulgarians who had been converted forcibly to Islam by the Ottomans. Thus, with the removal of the totalitarian system and the subsequent liberalisation of society, conflicts previously suppressed or created by the communists, were allowed, and sometimes encouraged to emerge by power-seeking politicians. It is particularly worth noting here, the impact that 'Sovietization' had had on communist societies throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Although often different in terms of culture and historical experience, all the countries within the Soviet bloc, were "shaped by Soviet institutions, most notably the monopoly of political power by a single political party and, in almost all instances, ethnically based federalism."[22] Hence we can discern a direct link between newly emerging interethnic conflict and the old, communist regime.

In Eastern Europe, moreover, the breakdown of structures is an important factor to take into consideration along with the resulting power vacuum and weakened state. As was alluded to earlier, during communist rule people were provided for by the state but when the regime collapsed and later was replaced by an infant form of capitalist democracy, people were left to fend for themselves with little support from the state. Hence, as Przeworski suggests, "if people within a polity emphasize their cultural differences and engage in ethnic outbidding, it is more likely a consequence of institutional failure rather than a cause of it."[23]

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[22] Lee Walker, 'Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet Transition', p. 9.
[23] Adam Przeworski, *Sustainable Democracy*, p. 21.

Seeking to demonstrate his point by referring to a specific example, Snyder wrongly attributes the wars of the former Yugoslavia to democratisation.[24] His assumption constitutes not only a grave simplification of these conflicts, but also fails to take into account the aforementioned economic and security interests in the explanation of the causes of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. In the former Yugoslavia, nationalism preceded democratisation, although Tito vehemently suppressed any nationalist tendencies during his rule. As Tito's death in the early 1980s led to a power vacuum, nationalism began to re-emerge in the context of a growing power struggle, thus clearly preceding democratisation in the political agenda of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, et al. This is a point that will be further explored in Chapter Three of this thesis. Looking beyond Yugoslavia at consolidated democracies around the world, there are plenty of examples of states that democratised without bloodshed, although non-violent conflict was present during the democratisation process. But since democratic government is defined by competition and negotiating conflict, this tension was considered normal.

Snyder further maintains that "variations in the pattern of nationalist conflict are explained by differences in the conditions in which the early phase of the political *transition* [emphasis mine] took place: i.e., differences in the level and historical timing of the state's economic development, in the nature of the challenge to elite interests and in the institutional legacy from communism."[25] This very sentence suggests that Snyder is not looking at the effects of democratisation but on the preceding transition phase. He correctly points out that the legacy of communism plays a role in the development of conflict, which further undermines his stated argument that democratisation is the root cause of nationalist conflict.

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[24] Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*, Chapter 5.
[25] Ibid., p. 191.

Moreover, Snyder argues that "[t]he gradual development of the rule of law, and impartial bureaucracy, civil rights, and a professional media, followed by the holding of free elections, should be able to create a civic national identity that trumps 'ancient hatreds.'"[26] In effect, he calls for liberalisation first, then democratisation, which is the order in which many Western democracies developed. The problem is that today, states undergoing a transformation from non-democratic rule are given much less time to develop a functioning democracy than were Western democracies. Thus, while England took some two hundred years to reach its current level of consolidated democracy, countries in Eastern Europe, for example, are expected to achieve the same in less than twenty years. As Ghia Nodia points out, Snyder's suggestion that liberalisation should precede democratisation implies that we should support "autocratic rulers against local democrats [which] would remain morally incompatible with Western democracy and would undermine its foundations, which are as much moral as they are narrowly rationalistic."[27]

In the context of democratisation and interethnic conflict, particularly in post-communist states, it is appropriate to consider how liberalisation might affect the emergence or absence of conflict. This question becomes particularly pertinent in light of Snyder's thesis. Having already pointed out that much of his reasoning reveals a general confusion about the distinction between regime transition and democratisation, one may wonder whether instead of referring to *democratisation* in his argument, Snyder ought to substitute *liberalisation* as defined in Chapter One. While democratisation involves the development of a new political order and institutions, liberalisation is less structured (if at all), and the seemingly ambiguous nature of liberalisation could potentially further the development of conflict, as

[26] Ibid., p. 41.
[27] Ghia Nodia, 'Nurturing Nationalism', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 11, no. 4, October 2000, p. 173.

political goals remain unclear and lack structure that allows for the maintenance of a societal order. In fact, we might even suggest that liberalisation in the absence of democratisation poses a risk to societal peace and stability. While they allow for the relaxing of restrictions and increases the freedoms of people, democratic institutions, no matter how nascent they might be, are also needed as instruments through which liberalisation can be channelled peacefully. In a weak state where political institutions are unstable and ineffective and where, consequently, people are compelled to look beyond the state structure for security, liberalisation is likely to activate socio-political forces that cannot be easily channelled peacefully and constructively and hence threaten to spiral out of control, resulting in violence and extremism. Sceptics might counter by pointing out that in Western Europe liberalisation generally preceded democratisation and this did not lead to interethnic conflict like those seen in Eastern Europe. But such an argument fails to consider that contrary to the East European states, none of the ones in the West had experienced nearly five decades of totalitarian rule that left a considerable socio-political as well as psychological legacy and, although West European monarchs often ruled by authoritarian means, their regimes cannot be qualitatively compared to the very unique experiences of communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

In *Minorities at Risk*, Ted Robert Gurr studies the occurrence of interethnic conflict in old and new democracies, as well as in autocracies and transitional regimes. Gurr's data suggest the results are mixed, especially in post-communist states in Eastern Europe. He posits that, "[e]thnic rebellions increased in almost all post-communist democracies, but the magnitude of their increase was three times

greater in failed and partial democracies...than in successful ones."[28] These data suggest that factors other than democratisation play an important role in generating and/or preventing violent conflict. An interesting observation made by Gurr is that "[e]thnic warfare in the postcommunist states was specific to new states...", which leads him to suggest that "[t]he formation of new states in heterogeneous societies is the primary risk factor for serious ethnopolitical conflict not the formation of new democracies per se."[29] He attributes this to several factors relating to new states and their weakness: first, that a political system often is yet to be determined and consolidated; second, the legitimacy of the regime has not yet become rooted; and third, power struggles are destabilising the newly formed state and violence and extremism is a serious threat. Gurr further notes that whilst interethnic tension often increased in new, post-communist, democracies in Eastern Europe, such tension tended to decline in new Third World democracies.[30] This further begs the question whether democratisation really is the main factor causing an increase in inter-communal tension. Rather, it seems that the emergence of interethnic tension is related to the old, communist regime. While an impressive account of inter-communal conflicts, Gurr's study lacks a thorough interpretation and analysis of the data produced, resulting in few questions actually being answered about the relationship between interethnic conflict and political regimes and regime transition. Whereas the data may thus show certain patterns of correlation, they tell us little about causality.

The argument that democratisation in ethnically plural societies is liable to promote violent conflict thus remains unpersuasive. A somewhat more balanced view

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[28] Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000), p. 162.
[29] Ibid., p. 163.
[30] Ibid., pp. 156-157.

of the relationship between democratisation and interethnic relations is presented by Renee de Nevers, who suggests that democratisation can serve to either mitigate interethnic conflict or exacerbate it, depending on a host of factors including: how speedily ethnic issues are recognised, the extent to which interethnic tension was already present at the start of the democratisation process, relative size and power of ethnic communities, the ethnic distribution of power in the previous regime, the political stance of major ethnic leaders, the presence of ethnic kin in neighbouring countries, as well as the ethnic composition of the army.[31] He emphasises the importance of establishing a system of power-sharing that includes all major ethnic groups within state borders.[32] Such arrangements are typically features of consociationalism, which was discussed in Chapter One. If, however, one takes democracy to be synonymous with political competition, as is the prevailing norm in democratisation literature, power-sharing arrangements such as grand coalitions and the mutual veto may appear to be in direct conflict with democracy, as they inhibit political competition and also tend to eliminate the existence of an opposition, a seemingly crucial feature of democracy as it is commonly perceived today. Yet, there is nothing in the definition of democracy – 'rule by the people' – that suggests that democracy is intrinsically connected with competitive party politics. The fact that consolidated democracies such as Belgium and Switzerland have a tradition of consociationalism, does in no way make these countries less democratic. By allowing for the establishment of an inclusive means of government that takes into account the diversity of interests and needs of all ethnic groups, democratisation does have the potential to help mediate interethnic tension.[33]

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[31] Renee de Nevers, 'Democratization and Ethnic Conflict', in Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 61.
[32] Ibid., p. 63.
[33] Ibid., p. 75.

As de Nevers notes, "[b]ecause in most cases democratization includes a negotiating phase, there is an inherent opportunity in the process to address issues raised by ethnic tensions", and that "[f]or democratization to reduce ethnic tension, the inclusion of all relevant groups in the negotiating process is required; in addition, there must be a willingness by all parties to work for, and then accept, a mutually beneficial agreement."[34] Much of his argument seems to imply that democratisation be negotiated as part of a larger peace-making package following the cessation of a violent conflict. Hence, it is debatable whether many of his suggestions are applicable to democratisation processes in multiethnic post-communist states. According to de Nevers, democratisation can exacerbate ethnic tension under certain conditions, but the examples provided – such as the existence of old grievances, the relative size of the different ethnic groups, the ethnic distribution in the previous, authoritarian, regime[35] – are not so much associated with the democratisation process per se, but more with already existing conditions. Thus, de Nevers does not locate the source of the (positive/negative) impact of democratisation on ethnic conflict in the actual democratisation process, but rather in 'extra-democratic' factors, which may be present even in the absence of democratisation. A well-developed mechanism for conflict management is a requisite for a functioning democratic regime, irrespective of its ethnic composition.[36] But are these mechanisms to be located in extra-democratic tools and institutions or are they in fact intrinsic to the process of democratisation itself? If democracy is a system for the peaceful management of conflicting interests, is not the process of democratisation also a process of developing peaceful mechanisms for managing conflicting interests?

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[34] Ibid., p. 65.

[35] Ibid., pp. 71-73.

[36] Vicki L. Hesli, 'Political Institutions and Democratic Governance in Divided Societies', in Robert D. Grey (ed.), *Democratic Theory and Post-Communist Change* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 201.

Returning to the concept of consociational democracy and its role in mediating interethnic relations, I would here like to relate it to John Gray's concept of *modus vivendi*. In a critique of liberal toleration, Gray identifies two distinct understandings of what liberal toleration entails. From one perspective, it is viewed as "the ideal of a rational consensus on the best way of life. From the other, it is the belief that human beings can flourish in many ways of life."[37] It is the second view of liberal toleration that allows for peaceful cohabitation in ethnically (as well as religiously, linguistic etc) plural societies, by promoting the ideal of *modus vivendi*. As defined by Gray, *modus vivendi* effectively means "liberal toleration adapted to the historical fact of pluralism."[38] Consociational systems of democracy, in turn, may present a useful means through which the principle of *modus vivendi* can be established and allow for peaceful coexistence in diversity. Gray himself notes that "[w]here different communities are commingled in the same territory, consociational institutions allow each to maintain a separate identity while interacting to mutual benefit with the rest."[39] Furthermore, a significant aspect of consociational democracy is that it has to balance both rights of the communities and rights of individuals, a point to which we will return below. Suffice it to say at this point that, as long as there is an overall consensus amongst the different communities making up the demos, consociational arrangements would thus allow for the simultaneous expression and tolerance of different cultures and value systems.[40]

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[37] John Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p. 1.
[38] Ibid., p. 6.
[39] Ibid., p, 128.
[40] Ibid., p. 129.

2.3. Conflict and Human Needs

As suggested in the previous section, the democratic system is essentially a process

for peaceful mediation of conflicting *interests*. As such, therefore, it seems reasonable

to expect democratic politics to have a positive influence on inter-communal

relations. Yes and no. If a particular conflict between communities is over competing

interests, the democratic process may well help to peacefully mediate inter-communal

relations in an ethnically divided society. However, if a conflict is not over interests

but instead rooted in *needs*, the capacity for democratic politics to promote peaceful

relations across ethnic lines becomes more problematic. In order to clarify what is

being suggested here, it is helpful to turn to John Burton's extensive study on conflict

and human needs theory, which, as will become apparent later on in the thesis, is

particularly helpful in understanding the relationship between democratisation and

interethnic conflict in Bulgaria and Macedonia. According to Burton, conflicts can be

divided between those that are interest based (which he prefers to call 'disputes') and

those that are rooted in human needs.[41] Needs are "those conditions or opportunities

that are essential to the individual if he is to be a functioning and cooperative member

of society, conditions that are essential to his development and which, through him,

are essential to the organization and survival of society."[42] Needs are thus understood

as being ontological rather than cultural and therefore the individual is conditioned by

biology to pursue them. Accordingly, "unless [needs are] satisfied within the norms

of society, they will lead to behavior that is outside the legal norms of the society."[43]

To assert that needs are universal rather than cultural, does not preclude the

possibility that needs satisfiers – the strategy we use to meet our needs – may be

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[41] John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Provention* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), p. 2.
[42] John Burton, 'Human Needs Versus Societal Needs', in Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati (eds.), *The Power of Human Needs in World Society* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1988), p. 38.
[43] John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Provention*, pp. 36-37

culturally determined. Hence, whereas we all have a need for identity and recognition, the strategies we employ to meet those needs may vary from one place to another, as well as across time.

Interests on the other hand are not universal, but situational, cultural and may change over time. Hence they are amenable to negotiation. By interests we mean "the occupational, social, political and economic aspirations of the individual, and of identity groups of individuals within a social system."[44] Whilst needs are an inherent part of the human individual, interests are not. However, as Burton notes, "[i]nterests influence policies and tactics in the pursuit of needs…"[45] In between needs that are non-negotiable and interests that can be bargained over, are *values*, which can be defined as "those ideas, habits, customs and beliefs that are a characteristic of particular social communities."[46] Accordingly, they are acquired and can be changed and negotiated, albeit at a lesser degree than interests.

In the long term, avoidance as a strategy for dealing with needs-based conflicts must be seen as a futile course of action, as individuals are bound to pursue their needs in some way or another. To the extent possible, the individual will thus seek to meet their needs within socially and legally established norms in society. But, if societal norms hinder rather than enable him to pursue his needs, then, "subject to values he attaches to social relationships, he will employ methods outside the norms, outside the codes he would in other circumstances wish to apply to his behaviour."[47]

Although human needs theory takes the individual as the primary unit of analysis, needs such as recognition, security, control and identity also apply to groups, and when these needs are manifested on a group level, they tend to be

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[44] Ibid., p. 38.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., p. 37.
[47] John Burton, 'Human Needs Versus Societal Needs', in Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati (eds.), *The Power of Human Needs in World Society* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1988), pp.52-53.

understood as freedom struggles, ethnic and nationalist conflicts. Hence, Burton argues, human needs are "the navigation or reference points, not only for psychologists, but no less for sociologists, and students of politics and international politics."[48] When seeking to understand the complexities of the relationship between democratisation and interethnic relations it therefore becomes imperative to consider the dynamics of human needs and their impact on society. Having only briefly introduced Burton's theory on conflict of human needs here, we will return to it in Chapter Six, relating it in particular to the two case studies outlined in Chapters Four and Five.

2.4. Ethnically Aligned Politics: An Obstacle to Democracy?

A challenge to democratic development in ethnically plural societies is the tendency for the emerging party system to form along ethnic lines, thus undermining the liberal democratic principle of citizenship based on civic ideals. Western observers, therefore, tend to view ethnic politics as fundamentally contrary to democratic norms of inclusion and equal rights. Donald Horowitz, for example, warns that in societies divided along ethnic lines, "there is a tendency to conflate inclusion in the government with inclusion in the community, and exclusion from government with exclusion from the community."[49] Consequently, party politics only serve to reinforce ethnic divisions, thus rendering democracy harmful to interethnic peace and stability. Before we assent to such a view, however, we need to remind ourselves of the definition of democracy and democratisation spelled out in the previous chapter. For, once we recognise the intrinsic connection between democratic rule and protection of

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[48] Ibid., p. 42.
[49] Donald L. Horowitz, 'Democracy in Divided Societies', p. 18.

human rights – particularly those referred to as civic and political rights – the apparent danger associated with the introduction of democratic government in ethnically divided societies becomes less acute. According to Horowitz, the "overall mission [of an ethnic party] is to foster the interests of the group it represents", and thus "[e]thnic parties make the mediation of group interests difficult, [which] helps to explain why ethnic party systems are so often conflict prone."[50] But there is in fact little evidence that ethnically based party systems are any more conflict ridden than non-ethnic party systems. In some cases a party system based along ethnic lines may be the only reasonable possibility – see, for example, Macedonia in the 1990s[51] – and such a system can in fact work well. For, as we will see in subsequent chapter, the cases of both Bulgaria and Macedonia illustrate that over time, as democracy evolves, ethnically party systems tend to engage less in exclusivist ethnic politics, while increasingly making deals across ethnic lines. On the other hand, whilst party politics become de-ethnicised over time, such a trend may or may not have a similar effect on society at large.

Furthermore, in a democratic system that employs the principle of proportional representation, parties are likely to end up in multiethnic coalitions that include two or more ethnic parties. This, in turn, will further increase the degree of inclusion, thereby mitigating potential interethnic confrontation. Hence, the banning of ethnically based parties does not necessarily promote peace and democracy. In fact, a constitutional ban on political organisation along ethnic lines, may itself be a manifestation of ethnic politics, "as it privileges the majority ethnic group and denies the minority the right to organize along ethnic lines by not even acknowledging its

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[50] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 296, 298.
[51] See Chapter Five for more information.

existence. Both the recognition of difference and the refusal to recognize (or allow the political representation of) difference can be manifestations of ethnic politics."[52]

In multiethnic societies, socio-political interests are bound to be more complex than in homogenous states, and party formation along ethnic lines may be largely inescapable. However, as long as regime transition was accompanied by broad-based, cross-cutting consensus on the new, democratic, rules of the game, the formation of ethnic parties need not be incompatible with democracy. In fact, we may question the democratic values of a state in which ethnic or religious parties are prohibited. The existence of ethnically based parties in consolidated democracies is by no means unknown. One of the more successful examples is that of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland (known as 'Finland Swedes') who have been politically organised in the Swedish People's Party since 1906, a liberal party, which due of its promotion of a nation-wide agenda it has attracted not only Swedish speaking voters but also members of the Finnish-speaking majority.[53] Concentrated mainly in three counties as well as on the island of Åland, Finland Swedes today make up approximately six percent[54] of the total population of Finland, yet despite its relatively small size, the Finland Swedes have had, and continue to, have an influential, and above all peaceful and constructive, role in Finnish politics. The Swedish People's Party has for example served in the majority of the post-1945 government coalitions.[55] It is also worth noting here, that the Swedish language is recognised as an official national language, alongside Finnish, by Section 17 of the

[52] Claus Offe, *Varieties of Transition: The East European and East German Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 53.
[53] For an in-depth account of the Finland Swedes' and their role in Finnish politics, see Max Engman, 'Finns and Swedes in Finland', in Sven Tägil (ed.), *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), pp. 179-216.
[54] *Financial Times World Desk Reference*, fifth edition (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2003), p. 250.
[55] Source: 'National Minorities of Finland', by Frank Horn, University of Lappland, for Virtual Finland, an internet-based information site administered by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Culture Department. http://virtual.finland.fi/finfo/enlgish/minorit1.html.

Finnish constitution, and according to Section 51 of the constitution, parliamentary work is conducted in both the Finnish and Swedish languages. Other examples of ethnic minority parties in democracies are the political parties of the Slovene minorities in Austria and Italy, as well as that of the English speaking minority in French-dominated Quebec, and the German minority in Poland.

As demonstrated by the successful participation of the Swedish People's Party in Finland, ethnically based parties in and of themselves do not necessarily present a contradiction to the principles of democracy, and neither does the fact that a party's electorate is ethnically based have to result in its adoption of a narrow political agenda limited to the preservation of the interests of its own ethnic group. Yet, as examples from Eastern Europe and elsewhere indicate, this is still what often happens. This begs the question, what conditions or circumstances compel an ethnically based party to move beyond the narrow, ethnic, agenda, and instead embrace a broader political platform at the state level? I will suggest here that security of one's group (ethnic, linguistic, etc) identity, both of the majority and the minority ethnic groups, as well as socio-economic security, play a significant part in shaping the political agenda of ethnic parties, in so far as a high level of security experienced by an ethnic community, the perceived need to pursue a narrowly defined, ethnocentric, political platform, will be weaker. In the case of the Finland Swedes, for example, the constitutional provisions for the use of the Swedish language in public affairs, as well as for the protection of the culture of the Swedish speaking minority, along with the provisions for education in the Swedish language at all levels (including university)[56], arguably helps to promote a secure climate of inter-communal tolerance and mutual acceptance and recognition. Hence, the high level of

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[56] Ibid.

security experienced by the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland has allowed them to pursue a broader, more inclusive political agenda in Finnish national politics.

Whether or not – or to what extent – an ethnically based party limits itself to a narrow, ethnic chauvinist political agenda is likely to be influenced by its sense of security and recognition within the larger society it inhabits. In particular, it is important to consider how attitudes and behaviours on the part of a minority are to a considerable extent shaped by the attitude and behaviours of the majority vis-à-vis minority interests. Conversely, majority attitudes and policies vis-à-vis minorities are at last partly shaped by the attitudes and behaviours of the minorities, so that their mutual relationship becomes one of reciprocity. Trust is a reciprocal good, so that trust is rewarded with trust, whereas repression is more likely responded to by protest and antagonism. Perceptions play a significant part here of course. Sometimes it may be that the majority perceives the minority to be a threat, or vice-versa, irrespective of factual evidence that support such a view. Perceptions, of course, are crucial in so far as they influence the information base on which people form their beliefs and create 'truths'. They influence "both what things are seen as facts, and what significance these 'facts' carry...", and they 'vary according to where the observer is located in relation to the thing viewed..."[57]

A further point to consider, especially in regards to societies in post-communist Europe, is whether the resort to ethnic party politics was seen as attractive and perhaps even necessary and rational. For as the old political order fell apart in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, so did the social security system, however restrictive, that had been set up by the communist regimes. Almost overnight, people who had previously been provided for by the state were now expected to assume

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[57] Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear* (Harlow: Longman, 1991), p. 343.

responsibility for their own survival. In the ensuing climate of social, economic and psychological turmoil, one's ethnic kin presented the "final, unshakable, or 'bottom-line' guarantee." [58]

A critic's reservation to the idea of introducing democratisation in heterogeneous states may be that the outcome would necessarily be a 'tyranny' of the majority, as an ethnically based party system effectively means that majorities are always majorities and minorities are always minorities. Yet, there is good reason to believe that such a situation can be avoided by choosing an electoral system that is as inclusive as possible of the many segments of society, that is, a system of proportional representation (PR). Such an electoral system maximises inclusion, allowing for minority interests to be represented as well. Good examples of how such a system can work to mitigate conflict is provided by the two case studies of Bulgaria and Macedonia which will follow in Chapters Four and Five. As suggested by Robert Dahl, however, 'tyranny of the majority' is not inherently worse than 'tyranny of the minority', that is, the privilege of a minority to veto the will of the majority. [59] Indeed, the democratic quality of minority veto is dubious.

An issue that may arise when a society moves from totalitarian rule to democratisation is that of defining who is a member of that state (and nation). In some cases an authoritarian regime may have forcibly incorporated a religious/ ethnic/national group within its borders; a group which does not consider itself a voluntary resident of that state (e.g., East Timor under Indonesian rule, Namibia under the apartheid regime of South Africa, and Kosovo under Milosevic's regime). When the old regime disintegrates and the country moves towards a regime not

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[58] W. Raymond Duncan and G. Paul Holman, Jr., 'Ethnic Nationalism in the Post-Cold War Era', in W. Raymond Duncan and G. Paul Holman, Jr. (eds.), *Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Conflict: The Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), p. 6.
[59] Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 156.

defined by force, the issue of membership is bound to arise. If at that point the question of who is a member/citizen remains unresolved and national unity elusive, conflict is likely. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that such a conflict is a direct cause of democratisation. Rather, its cause lies in the politics of the preceding authoritarian regime and in events and circumstances preceding democratisation.

2.5. Rights Regimes in Divided Societies: Individual vs. Collective

The tendency in post-communist societies to favour the adoption of an individualist rights regime can perhaps be seen in part as a reaction against the collectivist elements inherent in communism. For, a salient feature of the individualist approach to human rights is that the rights of an individual must never be violated in favour of the collective good. Unsurprisingly, therefore, whilst minorities in the region have persisted in their demands for collective rights designed to protect their interests, the majority ethnic groups insist on maintaining an individual rights regime, pointing out in their defence that such rights are in fact in harmony with liberal democracy. Paradoxically, the international community's response to recent interethnic conflict in Eastern Europe, and the Balkans in particular, is that Western democracies, although themselves founded on individualist principles, have tended to encourage the protection of collective rights in their Eastern neighbours. But, critics of such policies argue that the combination of democratisation and the promotion of collective rights, particularly in the Balkans have in fact worsened the divisions between ethnic groups, which in turn, have made peaceful democratisation problematic.[60]

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[60] Interview with Dr Ognyan Minchev, Director, Institute for Regional and International Studies, Sofia 29 August 2000.

As pointed out in Chapter One, the provision for those human rights that fall under the categories of civil and political rights must be recognised as an integral part of a democratic system, for without them democracy would be effectively meaningless, in so far as citizens would not be guaranteed the freedoms needed to participate fully in the political process. In ethnically divided states, however, the issue of human rights becomes complicated by the demand from some ethnic minorities for group rights. Hence arises the issue of whether individual rights – a concept intimately linked with liberal democracy – are sufficient in societies where a minority perceives its freedom and survival to be threatened. According to Jack Donnelly, democracy and human rights rest on theoretical and moral foundations that are often very different and in opposition to each other. Democracy, Donnelly suggests, is "a fundamentally collectivist political theory that answers the question who should rule. Democracy empowers the people and seeks to realize their collective good." Human rights, in contrast, are founded on "an individualistic political theory that addresses how governments should rule."[61] But while democracy is arguably collectivist in principle, the actual practice of democracy requires an individualistic approach as well, as illustrated by the necessity of civil and political rights, which are essentially individual rights. In Western liberal thought democracy is directly linked to citizenship, which in turn is about civic individualism, not collectivism. Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman note that "[m]inority rights usually involve some form of differentiated citizenship status: they grant certain groups or their members rights or opportunities not available to other groups or citizens."[62] Can such rights be reconciled with liberal democracy? According to Kymlicka and Norman, the claim "that minority rights are inherently in conflict with the very concept of citizenship

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[61] Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), p. 154.
[62] Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 31.

[and hence with liberal democracy], is untenable...[because] [v]irtually every modern democracy recognizes some form of group-differentiated citizenship."[63] Yet even though we would be hard pressed to find a democratic state that does not allow for some measure of collective rights, a liberal approach to democracy would insist that by putting the primacy on individual rights, liberal democracy ensures maximum inclusion in the polity, whereas a rights regime based on collectivist principles would result in the establishment of boundaries between different groups/communities, thereby reinforcing the concept of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' and thus promoting ethnic segregation. A defender of individual rights, Peter Jones maintains that

> group rights will encourage group fragmentation, the dissolution of a community into a number of separate and hostile factions, and that form of disintegration may be no more acceptable than social atomism [which may be the result of individual rights]; indeed, it may be more dangerous, If rights foster egoism, group rights will foster group egoism and, again, it is not clear that group selfishness is morally superior to, or practically more tolerable than, individual selfishness.[64]

According to this perspective, therefore, an emphasis on collective rights runs the risk of promoting ethnocentricity and discrimination, which in turn may exacerbate inter-communal tension and possibly result in violent confrontation between different groups claiming rights for themselves. Yet, a similar scenario is also possible under an individualist rights regime. For, in a society characterised by power-asymmetry between different ethnic communities, a focus on individual rights is likely to reinforce that asymmetry, and consequently work in favour of the interests of the dominant ethnic group. In this context, therefore, individual rights become de facto collective rights, but serving only the interests of the ethnic majority, at the expense of the minority.

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Peter Jones, *Rights: Issues in Political Theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 210.

It is thus imperative to ask the question whether the guarantee of individual rights is a sufficient means of protection in societies where an ethnic or religious minority perceives its freedom, and perhaps its survival, to be under threat. Individualism may be an effective guarantor of negative freedoms such as, for example, freedom from fear of persecution. But as the experience of individualist-centred societies in Western Europe are increasingly showing, an individualist approach to rights protection may well be inadequate as a guarantor of positive rights and freedoms, such as the right to receive education in one's mother tongue. Johan Galtung notes that '[h]uman rights become individual rights to the extent that individuals are the norm-objects, the units of which the norms are related in which they are ultimately fulfilled. This [then] excludes collective rights such as peoples' rights and other group rights."[65] But it is often the very same groups that are excluded from protection in a individualist rights regime that are in need of special rights to protect their group identity. Collective rights, therefore, "become a matter of urgency the moment the group as a whole wants something different from what can be granted to the sum of individuals..."[66] According to Michael Freeman, collective rights can sometimes be deemed legitimate "by the grounding value of the interest that individuals have in the quality of their own lives."[67] Viewed from this perspective, collective rights need not be incompatible with individual rights but in fact the former may be necessary in order to protect the latter. Hence, whereas the interests and needs of individual members of a collective may well be sufficiently protected by the

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[65] Johan Galtung, *Human Rights in Another Key* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 16.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Michael Freeman, 'Are There Collective Human Rights?", in David Beetham (ed.), *Politics and Human Rights* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), p. 38.

implementation of an individual rights regime, there interests and needs of minority groups may indeed necessitate some protection of collective rights.[68]

The conflicting views about the virtues of individual versus collective rights are by no means easily reconcilable, yet suffice it to say that any state undergoing a process of democratisation must at a very early stage reach a decision concerning on what rights principles the democratic polity should be built. Such principles are usually codified in the constitution and, in order for democratisation to be successful the people must be in basic agreement about the role of individual versus collective rights within the state. As will be shown in the case of Macedonia covered in Chapter Five, failure to reach a consensus on rights in an ethnically divided state can generate communal divisions so deep that they bring about severe conflict between ethnic groups.

2.6. Security in Multiethnic States

As has been suggested in this chapter, democratisation is not only possible in ethnically divided states but can in fact have a positive effect in terms of helping to mitigate interethnic conflict. That said it is important to consider aspects of security in and around states striving to develop democracy, especially in regions where multiethnic communities are a common feature. On the one hand, democratisation may be a route towards increased domestic and international/regional security. On the other, an insecure regional and domestic environment can have a severely adverse effect on efforts of democratisation in ethnically divided states. More specifically, in the face of regional instability, the conflict mitigating influence of democratisation is

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[68] Ibid.

likely to be compromised. For democratisation to have a chance to function as a conflict-mitigating agency in ethnically divided societies, it is therefore important that the external environment is sufficiently secure. If, instead, the borders of a democratising state come under attack, the capacity of the democratic process is likely to be undermined severely.

Events and circumstances in the international, and particularly regional, arena therefore play an important part in the democratisation process of individual states. Specifically, Eric Herring points to the importance of considering the international dimension of security when analysing democratisation efforts in Eastern Europe, as the latter are "strongly influenced by, and strongly influences, events, attitudes, values and policies elsewhere."[69] Thus, Herring argues that "[t]he international security environment is having many important effects on attempts to build democracy in Eastern Europe:…international economic insecurity is a severe threat to democratisation in East-Central Europe, while international insecurity in both military and societal terms has already seriously undermined democratisation in the Balkans."[70]

Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder argue that democratisation can have serious implications for international security as democratising states are more likely to go to war than are consolidated democracies and autocracies. They maintain that this is a result of "a rocky transitional period, where democratic control over foreign policy is partial, where mass politics mixes in a volatile way with authoritarian elite

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[69] Eric Herring, 'International Security and Democratisation in Eastern Europe', in Geoffrey Pridham, Eric Herring and George Sanford (eds.), *Building Democracy? The International Dimension of Democratisation in Eastern Europe* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994), p 81.
[70] Ibid., p. 83.

politics, and where democratization suffers reversals."[71] The most basic problem with Mansfield and Snyder's thesis that democratising states are particularly war-prone, is their definition of a democratising state: they "consider states to be democratizing if, during a given period of time, they change from autocracy to either anocracy or democracy, or if they change from anocracy to democracy."[72] This definition is so broad and ambiguous that it includes just about any variant of a regime that is not either a mature democracy or an autocracy. Furthermore, the definition fails to discriminate between successful and failed transitions, yet from the examples provided by Mansfield and Snyder it appears that the common factor of their 'democratising' states was in fact failed *transition towards* democracy, as the term is defined in Chapter One. Moreover, as noted earlier, holding one or two elections is by no means a sufficient indication that a country is indeed democratising.

Mansfield and Snyder further argue that "[o]ne of the simplest but most risky strategies for a hard-pressed regime in a democratizing country is to shore up its prestige at home by seeking victories abroad."[73] Such a scenario, however, is by no means limited to democratising states, but a quick glance at recent international history shows that such tactics are pursued by consolidated democracies as well. Bulgaria and Macedonia are but two examples that point towards a rather different conclusion than that of Mansfield of Snyder; namely, that democratising states are in fact unlikely to engage in international confrontation exactly because they are too preoccupied with the challenges that domestic politics bring on them to afford to seek confrontation with another state.

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[71] Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, 'Democratization and the Danger of War', in Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (eds.), *Debating the Democratic Peace* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), p. 301.
[72] Ibid., p. 305.
[73] Ibid., p. 329.

Based on the exceedingly loose definition of democratisation employed by the authors, and the examples used to illustrate their point – Serbia, Croatia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia – it appears that it is in fact not democratising states that are more prone to armed conflict, be it internal or international, but states that have failed to make the transition *towards* democratic rule, not merely the transition from the previous authoritarian regime. There is however no compelling reason to expect democratising states to be more war prone. Looking at Eastern Europe there appears to be a rather clear relationship between successful democratisation and peace on the one hand, and failed democratic transitions and violent conflict on the other. It is in fact odd that while Mansfield and Snyder's data covers the period 1811-1980[74], thus excluding the period in which the post-communist states of Eastern Europe democratised, they nonetheless include these states in their analysis. If their thesis were correct, however, we would have expected to witness more wars in post-communist Europe than we actually have, and with respect to those wars that did break out in the region after 1989, such as the ones in the former Yugoslavia, it has already been noted that they were not a result of democratisation.

Finally, Mansfield and Snyder draw their conclusions from a series of statistical tests, but one of the main problems with the use of such techniques in the fields of political science and international relations is that statistical data only indicate, at best, a correlation between two phenomena, whilst remaining unconvincing as a means of identifying a causal relationship. This is certainly the problem with Mansfield and Snyder's study as well as with research by Horowitz, Gurr and Snyder mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter. Thus, it is perhaps worth nothing that these and other scholars critical of the effects of democratisation

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[74] Ibid., p. 304.

on peace and security, base their conclusions on statistics, whilst failing to provide adequate interpretation and analysis of the data at hand. Mansfield and Snyder's test results further appear skewed in favour of their hypothesis by making the category of 'democratising' states much too broad and ambiguous. As stated earlier, one election alone does not set a state on the course of democratisation. Hence, the proposition that democratisation undermines international security by promoting war remains unconvincing.

While Mansfield and Snyder's study focuses not on intrastate conflicts but on the more 'traditional' interstate wars, it is nonetheless relevant when considering intrastate wars as well, as the factors identified by the authors as constituting the main cause of war fought by a democratising state – weak political institutions and parties, flawed electoral procedures, social change[75] – ought to apply equally to such a state's propensity to fight a war within its borders.

In Chapter One, the role of international actors and institutions in promoting democratisation was acknowledged. Such actors, particularly the European Union and NATO, also play an important role in promoting a secure environment for the emerging democracies in Eastern Europe. As Jacques Rupnik points out, "[d]emocratic transitions are unlikely to be consolidated if they do not establish proper socioeconomic foundations by integrating into Western economies and institutions. That, however, requires...security."[76] For the post-communist states in Eastern Europe, NATO membership thus became a top-of-the-list priority early on, often preceding that of EU membership. Distinguishing between the functions of NATO and EU membership in promoting "democratic security", Rupnik observes

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[75] Ibid., pp. 318, 322.
[76] Jacques Rupnik, 'Eastern Europe: The International Context', in Marc F. Plattner and Aleksander Smolar, *Globalization, Power, and Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 70.

that NATO has a "curative" function in so far as its military capacity enables it to intervene in conflicts that are either threatening to turn violent or that already have developed into armed confrontation. The value of EU membership, on the other hand, rests mainly in the potentially "preventive" function of the Union. By establishing new, and deepening already existing relationships of interdependence between member states, armed conflict, it is assumed, becomes increasingly a far-fetched possibility. The prevailing perception, therefore, is that

> Just as the EU was the fruit of Franco-German reconciliation, it should now provide the impetus to consolidate Polish-German or Czırâmfêwork ıor ouáièráı or 'tegun also provide the proper fraproblem off national minorities.[77]ıl efforts to deal with the problem oıf national mınontıes.´´

2.7. Conclusion

Having exposed some of the weaknesses in the argument that democratisation is likely to exacerbate interethnic tension in heterogeneous societies a critical question that needs to be addressed and investigated is, what is the impact of democratisation processes on multiethnic states? As stated earlier, this thesis not only refutes the claim that democratisation feeds interethnic conflict, but also argues that democratisation can have a positive influence on relations between different ethnic communities. Yet how does democratisation accomplish this? As the case studies will show, the main features of democratisation – the formation of a multiparty system, regular and free elections, and civil and political rights – render possible the political organisation of previously suppressed peoples, thus allowing for maximum degree of inclusion in society. The prospect and limit of democratisation in promoting peace in ethnically divided societies, however, depends in part on the extent and depth of the

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[77] Ibid., p. 73.

democratisation process. Just as a strictly electoral democracy could hardly be considered as a natural peace promoter, a democratisation process that does not extend beyond elections to include multiparty development and the provision, albeit imperfect, of civil and political rights, is unlikely to have much positive impact on interethnic relations. Additionally, the relative strength or weakness of a state is crucial in determining the success of democratisation and the absence or emergence of violent conflict.

Whether or not violent conflict emerges in democratising states is thus plausibly determined mainly by factors other than democratisation, including the policies of the previous regime, the nature of the power vacuum that arises in the initial transition phase, the occurrence of liberalisation without democratisation, any new state formation, and spillover effects from conflicts in neighbouring countries. As noted above, non-democratic regimes, and communist regimes in particular, tend to inhibit pluralist expression and to demand conformity and homogeneity. Where homogeneity does not exist, the regime is likely to forcibly 'create' it, as was done in Bulgaria in the 1970s and 80s when the communist regime forcibly changed the names of its Turkish minority, denying the existence of any non-Bulgarians within their state. Later, as communist rule in Bulgaria disintegrated, the recent memory of the state's repressive actions towards its minorities threatened to develop into violent conflict. Tension rose, but rather than being a result of democratisation its root cause appeared to lie in the past regime's policies.

As will be demonstrated in later chapters, democratisation – rather than promoting interethnic conflict – was helpful in mediating relations between Bulgarians and the Turkish minority. Thus, the relationship between democratisation and interethnic relations is not inevitably a negative one, but can, perhaps

surprisingly, be beneficial for the maintenance of inter-communal peace. The relationship between democratisation and interethnic relations is complex, however, and in Chapter Six, we return to a more in-depth analysis of this phenomenon, by linking it to Burton's conception of human needs theory.

The next chapter addresses the specifics of democratisation and interethnic relations in the Balkans, drawing from the theoretical framework outlined in Chapters One and Two.

CHAPTER THREE

Post-Communist Politics in South East Europe

3.1. Introduction

Since the early twentieth century, the Balkan peninsula has been subject to Western

stereotyping[1] as characterised by cultural backwardness, tribal rivalries and bloody

turmoil. The term 'balkanization', a product of modern European history, emerged

out of these Western stereotypes of the Balkans as a region awash with primordial

rivalries amongst nations, as exemplified by the two Balkan wars of 1912-1913. As a

concept, 'balkanization' "implies that any breakup of a political unit leads to disorder

and violence."[2] It also became "a synonym for a reversion to the tribal, the backward,

the primitive, the barbarian."[3] It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, to note that in the

West, the wars of the former Yugoslavia have often been stereotypically and

generically labeled as 'Balkan' wars, thus implying that they can be explained in

terms of "Balkan ghosts, ancient Balkan enmities, primordial Balkan cultural patterns

and proverbial Balkan turmoil..."[4] The generalization of the Yugoslav wars as

'Balkan' has also had a negative impact on the West's perception of those countries

in the Balkans that remained at peace throughout the 1990s.

In an effort to move away from the negative images associated with the

'Balkans', and to recognise the region as a part of Europe, scholars and policy-makers

have began to refer instead to the region as South East Europe (SEE). The designation

South East Europe, furthermore, is less contentious, than is the 'Balkans', as Slovenia

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[1] See, Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe: The Balkans, 1789-1989: From the Ottomans to Milošević* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 1-2; Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers* (London: Granta Books, 1999), pp. xxi-xxvi; Mark Mazower, *The Balkans* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), pp. 4-5.
[2] Branimir Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide* (London: Hurst & Co., 1999), p.149.
[3] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 3
[4] Ibid, p. 186.

and Croatia today resent being referred to as Balkan countries, insisting instead that they belong, geographically as well as culturally to Central Europe.[5] Having said this, the present study will for editorial reasons only alternate between the two terms, South East Europe and the Balkans, yet no particular political or cultural values should be implied in this, which is merely a practical decision.

In comparison with the states of East Central Europe, the countries of South East Europe initially attracted little attention from the West following the collapse of communism in 1989. It was only with the eruption of warfare in Yugoslavia that the West again turned its attention to the Balkans, as the vision of this southeastern part of the European continent as a "permanent, or 'natural,' source of instability" was once again revived in the minds of Western politicians.[6]

Rejecting the common stereotypes about the Balkans cited above, this chapter is intended as a more reflective survey of the political developments in the region in the aftermath of communist rule. Furthermore, the aim is to identify to what extent the literature on democratisation and inter-communal conflict presented in Chapter One and Two, is supported by the specific experiences of the Balkan states. The central argument running in this chapter is that post-communist experiences in South East Europe do not back up the popular perception that democratisation in ethnically divided states is bound to result in violent inter-communal conflict. As will be shown, throughout the 1990s neither FRY (i.e. Serbia and Montenegro) nor Croatia qualified as democratising states. Although having completed the first transition *from* communist rule by holding multi-party elections in the early 1990s, neither state made progress towards a functioning democracy thereafter; rather, upon seizing

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[5] The dominant religion in Slovenia and Croatia is Roman Catholicism, and their languages – Slovenian and Croatian – are written in Roman letters rather than Cyrillic.

[6] Vesna Goldsworthy, 'Invention and In(ter)vention: The Rhetoric of Balkanization', in Dušan I. Bjelić and Obrad Savić (eds.), *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), p. 27.

power, both leaders of Serbia and Croatia, Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tudjman consolidated their hold on power by qualitatively un-democratic means, effectively stifling political opposition[7] as well as civil liberties and political rights of citizens.[8] Throughout the 1990s, Serbia in particular developed features not of nascent democracy but of a semi-authoritarian political system, whereas the democratic credentials of Franjo Tudjman's Croatia were marginally better. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the democratisation process too was halted after an initial round of multi-party elections, upon which the Muslim-dominated government of Alija Izetbegović, voted in favour of Bosnia's secession from Yugoslavia, thus provoking a war that would devastate the country for years until finally, on 21 November 1995, the US-brokered Dayton Agreement brought the war to an end. [9] Thus, it is partly erroneous to regard South East Europe as a typical illustration, and warning, of the violent consequences that democratisation can have in ethnically plural states.

Furthermore, the post-communist experiences of the countries of South East Europe lend support to Di Palma's thesis that democracies are *crafted*, a process that in order to be successful, requires the consistent deliberate preference for the democratic choice on the level of the political elite. A closer look at the region shows that only in Slovenia and Bulgaria, and to a lesser degree in the Republic of Macedonia, did such a process of crafting take place in the early years of the 1990s.

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[7] Attila Ágh, The Politics of Central Europe (London: Sage Publications, 1998), pp. 176 -77; Lenard Cohen, 'Embattled Democracy: Postcommunist Croatia in Transition', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power and the Struggle for Democracy in South-Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 109, 111; Nicholas J. Miller, 'A Failed Transition: The Case of Serbia', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power and the Struggle for Democracy in South-Eastern Europe*, p. 179.
[8] In 1991-92, Croatia received a 3 (political rights) ,4 (civil liberties) Partly Free rating by Freedom House, which in subsequent years dropped to 4,4 Partly Free. It was only with the end of Tudjman's regime that political rights and civil liberties in Croatia rose to 2,3, and the country was classified as Free. Whilst Yugoslavia was rated 5,4, Partly Free in 1990-91, the remnants of the federation, Serbia and Montenegro, was rated between 6,5 Not Free (1991-92) and 5,5 Partly Free (1990-00). Source: www.freedomhouse.org
[9] Steven L. Burg, 'Bosnia Herzegovina: A Case of Failed Democratization', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power and the Struggle for Democracy in South-Eastern Europe*, p. 122.

The fundamental importance of political will and a common political identity, or common political community, that includes all citizens irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliation, is also supported by the experiences of South East Europe in the decade following the collapse of communism. In the case of Serbia and Croatia, it is clear that political will to democracy was absent in the minds of their leaders of the time, and divisive ethnic chauvinism further eroded the conditions necessary for democracy to develop.

3.2. Communist and Post-Communist Politics: The Logic of Nationalism

Far from being each other's ideological opposites, communism and nationalism did to some degree co-exist in the Balkans in the period following the Second World War and communist rulers in the region at various times sought to appropriate nationalism.[10] It is therefore not difficult to see why nationalism proved to be so influential in the Balkans following the collapse of communist rule, as nationalism was in fact growing out of the collectivist nature of communist ideology. According to Andrew Michta, although communism was purportedly internationalist in outlook, "its residual impact on communist states in Europe has been to reaffirm the primacy of the group over the individual and group allegiance over individual rights, contributing to the ease with which nationalism replaced communism."[11] Furthermore, as Noel Malcolm points out, the suggestion that communism might have had a useful disciplinarian impact on any nationalist tendencies is plainly false. Communist leaders either whipped up nationalist sentiments only to manipulate them

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[10] Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991), p. 2.

[11] Andrew A. Michta, *The Government and Politics of Postcommunist Europe* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), p. 2.

for their own personal gain, or they allowed nationalism to "fester and become more virulent by creating a politically frustrated and alienated population; or, frequently, they did both."[12]

The leader of he Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), Josip Broz Tito, had on the one hand sought to suppress Serbian and Croatian nationalism and to promote a Yugoslav national identity. On the other hand, however, he also had encouraged the development of a Macedonian national consciousness.[13] In the early 1970s, furthermore, Tito had elevated Bosnia-Herzegovina's Muslim population to the status of a nation, distinct from the Serbian and Croatian nations.[14] Arguably, Tito's policies with regard to the Muslims and Macedonians were guided not by any genuinely felt nationalist sentiments but rather by political strategy, aimed at neutralising any Serb or Croat claims on Macedonia or Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Although Tito's slogan of 'Brotherhood and Unity' aimed at the development of an overarching Yugoslav identity by promoting the concept of 'Yugoslavism', ethnic questions nonetheless resurfaced in the 1960s.[15] In 1968, disorder broke out in Kosovo, when its ethnic Albanian majority voiced their demands for Kosovo being granted republican status, and for the ethnic Albanian community to be upgraded to the status of *nation* rather than mere *nationality*, the Yugoslav term for national minority. Though their demands were ultimately denied, Kosovo did nevertheless obtain an increased measure of autonomy through the 1968 amendments to the Yugoslav constitution.[16]

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[12] Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. xx.
[13] Duncan Perry, 'Conflicting Ambitions and Shared Fates: The Past, Present and Future of Albanians and Macedonians', in Victor Roudometof (ed.), *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2000), p. 271.
[14] Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, p. 199; Mark Mazower, *The Balkans* (London: Phoenix Press), p. 125.
[15] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War* (London: Longman, Pearson Education, 2002), p. 122.
[16] Ibid, p. 129.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Tito's Yugoslavism was challenged by a Croatian cultural and political renaissance.[17] The so-called 'Croatian Spring' of 1971 was prompted by the revival of Croat national sentiments, which had been provoked by Croatian perceptions of their nation being under threat from Serbian domination in the political, linguistic and cultural spheres. The revival of Croatian nationalism had first begun in 1967, when a group of Croatian intellectuals voiced their discontent over the publication of a new Serbo-Croatian dictionary, which they argued, favoured the Serbian form of the language. Consequently, they called for an amendment to the Yugoslav constitution to distinguish Croatian from Serbian.[18] Having failed to bring about a moderation of the nationalist Croatian agenda, Tito resorted to the elimination of the national elements within the Croatian communist party in November 1971, jailing Franjo Tudjman and others.[19] The purge of the party effectively silenced all political opposition in Croatia and, as Alex Bellamy notes, for the next twenty years, until the first democratic elections were held, Croatia was known as the "silent republic".[20]

The revival of Serbian nationalism within SFRY was to a large part provoked by Tito's decision to extend greater autonomy to the Serbian provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina, an act that was perceived by Serb intellectuals as distinctly anti-Serb discrimination.[21]

The 1974 Yugoslav constitution had devolved much power from the federal to the republican level and upon Tito's death in 1980, the power of the republics and

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[17] Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804*-1999 (London: Granta Books, 1999), p. 590.
[18] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe: The Balkans, 1789-1989* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 231-232.
[19] Ibid, p. 232.
[20] Alex J. Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-Old Dream?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 55.
[21] Ibid, p. 245.

their party bureaucracies were further strengthened vis-à-vis the federal authorities.[22]

This development thus opened up the space for intensified rivalry between the Yugoslav republics. [23] The process of decentralisation sanctioned by the 1974 constitution meant that each republic and province within the federation was granted "theoretical 'statehood'". [24] Tito's policies vis-à-vis Yugoslavia's Albanian population in the 1970s "was one of measured appeasement designed to give the Albanians a stake in the Yugoslav federation without provoking a Serbian backlash over concessions to the Kosovars."[25] In practice this meant that the Albanian and Hungarian minorities that populated Kosovo and Vojvodina respectively, were given greater rights vis-à-vis the Serbian republic.[26] This, however, immediately provoked resentment amongst the latter, who maintained that Tito's federal arrangement, which was premised on republican equality, discriminated against the Serbian nation. For, by depriving the Serbian republic of territory, approximately one-third of the total Serbian population was left outside the boundaries of Serbia (i.e., in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia etc).

For much of the 1970s and 1980s, Kosovo Albanian demands for republican status were met with growing Serbian assertiveness, which in turn only helped to reinforce Albanian claims vis-à-vis the Serbs. Croats, Slovenes and other national communities in Yugoslavia, in turn argued that it was in fact the Serbs who were dominating the federation at their expense, and that the latter were effectively seeking the restoration of a 'Greater Serbia' in the Balkans.[27] The same nationalist trend

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[22] Misha Glenny, *The Rebirth of History: Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 119.
[23] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe*, p. 229.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Janusz Bugajski, *Nations in Turmoil: Conflict and Cooperation in Eastern Europe* (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1995), p. 134.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid, p. 102.

amongst Serbs that emerged in the 1980s – and on which Milošević capitalised from the beginning of his rise to power in the second half of the 1980s – would later continue to rule Serbian political affairs for the entire 1990s.[28]

In the early 1960s, the Romanian regime also began to appropriate nationalism for political use,[29] a trend that became more apparent under Ceauşescu's rule from the mid-1960s, when Romania's minorities came under increased pressure. Amongst other things, a policy of 'Romanianization' was launched in Transylvania in the mid-1970s.[30] And in Bulgaria, the regime under Todor Zhivkov's oppressive rule increasingly appealed to nationalist sentiments, with ominous consequences for the country's non-ethnic Bulgarian minorities.[31] In particular, "nationalism was invoked by the [Bulgarian] regime in order to distance the population from unwelcome realities and enable the party to claim to be the living embodiment of the continuing independence struggle."[32]

In Enver Hoxha's Albania nationalism too was intertwined with communist policy. In his effort to turn Albania into an atheist country, Hoxha famously remarked that "The only religion for an Albanian is Albanianism"[33], and as Paul Lendvai observed in the 1960s: "The continuity of the defiant spirit of nationalism, which seeks inspiration from the past and takes a fierce pride in the country's achievements under communism, however modest, is the single most important trait in Albanian

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[28] Lenard Cohen, 'Balkan Politics in Transition: Nationalism and the Emergence of Ethnic Democracies', in Jane Shapiro Zacek and Ilpyong J. Kim (eds.), *The Legacy of the Soviet Bloc* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 125
[29] Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the* Balkans, p. 34.
[30] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War*, pp. 194-195.
[31] See Chapter Four for an in-depth account of ethno-nationalist policies against Bulgaria's ethnic minorities.
[32] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe*, p. 254.
[33] Paul Lendvai, *Eagles and Cobwebs: Nationalism and Communism in the Balkans* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1969), p. 205.

politics."[34] Albanian nationalism was also a contributing factor in the breakdown of relations between Albania and the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. In Hoxha's view, the Soviet leader at the time, Nikita Khrushchev, was in fact going against the world Communist movement by "suppressing individual nationalisms..."[35]

In each Balkan state, elites would resort to nationalism when their own policy objectives were running thin and whenever they sought to neutralise dissent and "obtain acquiescence for austerity programmes..."[36] As a consequence of the appropriation of nationalism by leaders such as Tito, Ceauşescu and Zhivkov, "national conflicts within the individual Balkan countries and between them...both widened and sharpened, even where – as in Yugoslavia – an attempt was made to tackle problems in a more fundamental way."[37] Eventually, however, communist manipulation of nationalism for political ends backfired throughout the region in the late 1980s, as "their own people turned on them in the name of the very same patriotism that they had been preaching."[38] In short, rather than being a malign outgrowth of democratisation, nationalism had been a force even within the communist system.

To appreciate the logic and rationality of nationalism in post-communist South East Europe, it is necessary to be reminded of the fact that contrary to Western Europe and large parts of East Central Europe, the development of the Westphalian nation-state system had been halted in the Balkan peninsula, owing to imperial rule and the complex ethnic and national mosaic that characterised the region, and which made the delineation of homogenous nation-states problematic. This process was

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[34] Paul Lendvai, *Eagles and Cobwebs: Nationalism and Communism in the Balkans* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1969), p. 205.
[35] Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), p. 189.
[36] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe*, p. 227.
[37] Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans*, p. 42.
[38] Ibid.

further obstructed by historically conflicting claims to territory and national identity in the Balkans. The unresolved conflict over Macedonia's ownership and national identity, as well as complex Albanian question resulting from the fact that the Albanian population was spread across several sovereign states in the region, are only two examples.

An important factor that contributed to nationalism's appeal in post-communist Balkan states was the sense of insecurity and threat perceived by Serbs, Croats, Albanians and others. Whilst NATO membership as well as a US military presence in Europe since the end of the Second World War has ensured a sense of security for most West European nations, the end of communist rule led to the re-emergence of a plethora of hitherto unresolved issues over national identity language and historical rights to territory throughout the Balkans.[39] Even in comparison with East Central Europe, the Balkan people were haunted by a "profound sense of insecurity"[40]; in Central Europe ethnic homogenisation had been achieved some five decades ago, thus facilitating the process of nation-state building.[41]

Issues of security, particularly concerning protection and recognition of national identity, which linked in with perceived threats to national survival were present and still remain across the nations of the Balkans, the Macedonian Question being the most obvious one (see Chapter Five). Owing to the region's complex history of national rivalries, imperial rule, and state formation, it is not surprising that issues around security and national survival linger in the national psyche of the Balkan peoples. The link between national insecurity and the manifestation of nationalist sentiments was such that whilst Serbian aggressiveness stirred feelings of fear in the

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[39] Ibid, p. 7.
[40] Ivan Krastev, 'The Balkans: Democracy Without Choice', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no.3, July 2002, p. 43.
[41] Jacques Rupnik, 'The Postcommunist Divide', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 10, no. 1, January 1999, p. 61.

other national and ethnic groups of Yugoslavia, the Serbs themselves were also hostage to a deep-seated fear, which manifested itself in their outward aggressiveness. Their fear "reflected the insecurity of a people dominated by a foreign civilization for five centuries, who enjoyed their own fully sovereign nation-state for only forty years between the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and the entry into the ill-fated Yugoslav union in 1918."[42] Despite its decades-long reign in the Balkans, communism was thus never able to replace nationalism as a popular ideology.[43]

Political leaders who sought to secure their own power-base resorted to the manipulation of popular insecurities around national identity, the existence of which is largely explained by the fact that in the Balkans "...many nations feel that their identities have been violated because their territories have been continually transgressed by other nations."[44] In such an environment, democratisation became a problematic enterprise. The link between security of national identity and democratisation, which was touched upon in the previous chapter, is illustrated by the fact that those Balkan countries that were relatively more successful in establishing functioning democratic polities – Slovenia and Bulgaria – were also comparatively more secure in their national identities and also experienced a less antagonistic external security environment. Having escaped largely unscathed from its brief confrontation with the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) in 1991, following its declaration of independence on 25 June 1991, Slovenia did not experience any particular threat from its external environment thenceforth. Its relations with neighbouring Italy, Austria and Hungary were largely non-aggressive despite some diplomatic tensions, and any possible threat from Croatia was "far outweighed by

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[42] Branimir Anzulovic, *Heavenly* Serbia, p. 109.
[43] Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans*, p. 5.
[44] George W. White, *Nationalism and Territory: Constructing Group Identity in Southeastern Europe* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 6.

other factors, most notably the relationship of both countries with the West."[45] As will be further explored in Chapter Four, finding itself largely free from external threats of aggression in spite of the instability plaguing the region due to the Yugoslav wars, Bulgaria too was able to benefit from a relatively secure environment to undertake the process of establishing a democratic political system.

The re-emergence of nationalism following the end of the Cold War was by no means limited to Eastern Europe, but resurfaced in the West as well. In Italy, the northern separatist leader Umberto Bossi "used the contemptuous language about southern Italians that parts of the Belgrade elite reserved for Albanians and then Croats...[and] [t]he invective of the French neo-fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen towards immigrants was also cruder and more overt than that of national communist leaders towards their minorities." [46] In Austria and Denmark, furthermore, right-wing, xenophobic political parties gained increasing popularity during the latter part of the 1990s.[47] But whereas the existence of a firmly democratic political culture in Western Europe has meant that large-scale xenophobic expressions have been largely contained,[48] nationalist resurgence in post-communist Europe, and in the Balkans in particular, was sustained by the fact that many of the national issues stemming from the political agreements concluded at the time of World War I remained unresolved.[49] Yet, at the same time, to the extent that expressions of aggressive nationalism presented an obstacle to efforts aimed at conciliation with the West for the benefit of

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[45] James Gow and Cathie Carmichael, *Slovenia and the Slovenes: A Small State and the New Europe* (London: Hurst & Co., 2000), p. 192.
[46] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe*, p. 273.
[47] Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, 'Right-Wing Tide Surges Straight to the Heart of Europe', *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 April 2002,
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2002/04/22/wpen222.xml
[48] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe*, p. 273.
[49] Andrew A. Michta, *The Government and Politics of Postcommunist Europe* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), p. 217.

political and economic support, they were subject to suppression by moderate political leaders in the region, notably in Bulgaria, Slovenia, Albania and Macedonia.[50]

As would become evident soon after his death, Tito made a serious mistake at the end of the Second World War in failing to publicly address the past conflicts between the different nations and to strive towards reconciliation between them. Instead of providing the answer to the resolution of the conflicts between the various peoples of Yugoslavia, "the Titoist system subdued or balanced them and provided temporary relief through cultural, religious, and economic outlets."[51] Had these painful issues been dealt with rather than swept under the rug, it is possible that Yugoslavia may have been less vulnerable to violent disintegration.[52]

As noted previously, nationalism and communism are both collectivist-centred ideologies, whereas democracy and liberalism champion the rights of the individual. In many ways the shift from communism to nationalism was a logical and rational action. For all its repressive politics, communism still provided a certain degree of security for its people; its totalitarian nature effectively took away from the citizens a sense of individual responsibility, a feature that is integral to a democratic political system. In times of uncertainty and insecurity, and with communism de-legitimised, nationalism thus emerged as a 'safe' alternative. Additionally, just as economic decline and recession have often been accompanied by a rise in ethno-nationalist and xenophobic sentiments in Western Europe and elsewhere in the world, so was the case in the communist Balkans. Moreover, the collapse of communist regimes left the Balkans with an ideological vacuum. For although socialism had ultimately proved a failure, no alternative "blueprint for social and political salvation"[53] existed. Given the scarcity of democratic precedence in the region, the collapse of communism

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[50] Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans After the Cold War*, p. 211

[51] Janusz Bugajski, *Nations in Turmoil*, p. 100.

[52] Branimir Anzulovic, *Heavenly* Serbia, p. 99.

[53] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World* War, p. 343.

scarcity of democratic precedence in the region, the collapse of communism meant that there was "little in terms of helpful historic memory to fall back upon."[54]

3.3. Political Liberalisation and Beyond

Chapter One highlighted the importance of distinguishing between 'transition', 'democratisation' and 'liberalisation', which becomes increasingly clear when analysing political development in South East Europe. For, while all the countries in the region underwent transition away from a communist party state, not all of them can be said to have made the transition to democracy in the first half of the 1990s. Thus we must be careful to distinguish between transitions from communism and transitions towards democracy,[55] and to recognise that the former process does not by any means ensure the subsequent implementation of the latter.

With the exceptions of Romania and Albania, the various states in South East Europe had experienced some measure of political liberalisation in the late 1980s. In socialist Yugoslavia, communism had arguably been of a 'softer' kind than that of the Soviet Union and its satellites and Yugoslav citizens had thus been allowed to travel abroad and to own property. In Romania, in contrast, there was virtually no liberalisation of politics prior to the bloody 'revolution' that overthrew President Ceauşescu, and had him assassinated along with his wife on Christmas Day 1989. Until the very end of Ceauşescu's rule Romania had remained a Stalinist country of a sui generis sort, where any organised resistance had long been suppressed and there was but a handful of dissenters who took the risk of speaking out against the regime. Thus, the Romanian totalitarian project had been more successful than any other in

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Bruce Parrott, 'Perspectives on Postcommunist Democratization', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-Eastern Europe*, p. 5.

communist Europe, and "the state and society had almost become one."[56] As no

alternative political elite existed, the so-called revolution came not from below but

from the old political elite, who were to remain in power under the guise of

democratic rule for the first half of the 1990s.[57] Albania was the last of the Balkan

states to experience the onset of political liberalisation, as its totalitarian leadership

appeared intransigent until it was forced, following the contagious impact of the

turbulent changes in Romania, to introduce cautious reforms. These proved

insufficient, however, in placating the Albanian people, and as a result the political

leadership was forced to begin the process of democratisation.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Jack Snyder among others maintains that

democratisation has an ominous tendency to foster aggressive nationalism in

ethnically plural societies, but this chapter suggests that the experiences of the Balkan

peninsula since the late 1980s do not lend particularly solid support to his argument.

When communist regimes began to crumble in the region, political elites were faced

with essentially two choices. Either they could opt for the 'Western' way, that is,

crafting of political democracy based on liberal principles of individual rights; or they

could renounce communism yet seek to maintain a firm grip on political power by

paying lip service to democratic principles whilst effectively transforming the state

into a hybrid regime whose political structures contained a mixture of authoritarian

and democratic features.[58] Slovenia being the most obvious exception, the latter

choice turned out to be the more popular one. Nonetheless, where genuine – albeit

flawed – attempts to introduce democratic government took place ethnic chauvinism

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[56] Alina Mungiu Pippidi, 'Romania: From Procedural Democracy to European Integration', in Mary
Kaldor and Ivan Vejvoda (eds.), *Democratization in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: Pinter,
1999), p. 135.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Attila Ãgh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans* (Cheltenham: Edward
Elgar, 1998), p. 10.

was largely kept under control, as the examples of Slovenia, Bulgaria and Macedonia demonstrate.

Elsewhere, states tended to develop systems of what Robert Hayden terms 'constitutional nationalism' or, what Marina Ottaway calls 'semi-authoritarian' regimes. By constitutional nationalism is meant "a constitutional and legal structure that privileges the members of one (ethnic) nation over those of any other resident in a particular state."[59] Thus, in contrast with liberal democracy's emphasis on the equality of each individual citizen, constitutional nationalism "envisions a state in which basic sovereignty resides with a particular nation (narod), the members of which are the only ones who can decide fundamental questions of state form and identity."[60] Throughout the 1990s, Croatia and Serbia both manifested the tendencies associated with constitutional nationalism. In the Croatian case, the preamble to the constitution of December 1990 asserted the historical right of the Croatian nation to state sovereignty.[61]

The preamble to the 1991 Slovenian constitution as well as to the 1991 constitution of the Republic of Macedonia also explicitly referred to the (historical) right of the Slovenian and Macedonian nations to establish their own sovereign states. In the case of the latter two constitutions, and in contrast with the Croatian constitution, the preamble's emphasis on the ethnic nation was however significantly counterweighted by several references to minority rights. For example, Article 64 of the Slovenian constitution specifically addressed 'Special Rights of the Italian and Hungarian Ethnic Communities in Slovenia'.[62] According to Hayden, "Serbia

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[59] Robert M. Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided: The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 68.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid, p. 70.
[62] These rights included education in their own language, the right to display their own national symbols, political representation on the local level as well as in the National Assembly. Significantly,

presents a more covert form of constitutional nationalism, since the Serbian constitution of 1990 defines the Republic of Serbia in explicitly nonethnic or national terms...However, the preamble also makes reference to 'the centuries-long struggle of the Serbian people' and to their determination to 'create a democratic State of the Serbian people.'"[63]

Croatia and Serbia under Tudjman's and Milošević's rule could also be described as examples of what Ottaway calls 'semi-authoritarian' regimes. Such systems "are not imperfect democracies struggling toward improvement and consolidation but regimes determined to maintain the appearance of democracy without exposing themselves to the political risks that free competition entails."[64] The distinguishing feature of semi-authoritarian regimes is their deliberate nature: "Semi-authoritarian regimes are not failed democracies or democracies in transition; rather, they are carefully constructed and maintained alternative systems. If semi-authoritarian governments had their way, the system would never change."[65] Hence, they are semi-authoritarian by design, not by accident.[66] To speak of Serbia and Croatia as democratising countries during the 1990s would be a misconception, for even though resistance to Tudjman's and Milošević's authoritarian, personality-styled rule did exist in both countries, the lack of unity amongst the pro-democratic opposition meant that they were unable to garner enough strength to have any real impact.

Article 64 also stated that "The rights of both ethnic communities and of their members shall be guaranteed without regard for the numerical strength of either community." For information about the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, see Chapter Five.
[63] Robert M. Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided*, p. 72.
[64] Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), p. 3.
[65] Ibid, p. 7.
[66] Ibid, p. 9.

Political liberalisation in the second half of the 1980s eventually paved the way for multi-party elections. In fact, competitive elections became largely unavoidable after the political changes in East Central Europe "exposed the extent of political decay in Yugoslavia."[67] Growing social and national unrest within the Yugoslav federation further convinced the communist party of the necessity of holding competitive elections in each republic.[68]

In 1990, all Yugoslav republics held their first free elections since the World War Two, resulting in victory for nationalist parties in each republic.[69] The emergence of nationalist parties throughout Yugoslavia was a direct consequence of the republican-wide liberalisation process that had been underway since the death of Tito. Nationalist victory in Yugoslavia's first multi-party elections however presented the political leaders with a dilemma. For, as Robert Hayden so poignantly shows, recognising "'democracy' was the shibboleth for leaving 'Eastern Europe' and joining 'Europe', meaning the European Community, NATO, and all other putatively good things," each Yugoslav republic publicly declared itself democratic.[70] Yet, on the other hand, the newly elected governments had all "based their electoral appeal primarily on chauvinist grounds, promising to deal firmly with the local scapegoat minorities and to institute programs that would confirm the identity of the republic as the nation-state of the dominant (ethnic) nation (*narod*)."[71]

Before multiparty elections were introduced, Bosnia had been widely regarded – at home and abroad – as a model of peaceful multicultural co-habitation and, as illustrated by Noel Malcolm in his historical study of Bosnia, for most of the period

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[67] Misha Glenny, *The Rebirth of History*, p. 123.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Robert M. Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided* p. 67.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.

after 1878, it different ethnic and religious communities had lived together peacefully, interethnic violence being the exception rather than the rule.[72]

Bosnia's first freely competitive elections resulted in an overwhelming victory for the nationalist-minded politicians among Serbs, Croats and Muslims alike. The elections thus turned out to be a devastating defeat for politicians campaigning on a liberal democratic platform.[73] Although the three victorious nationalist parties joined forces in an uneasy governmental coalition, democratic institutions had barely been set in place before conflict arose between the three political factions, each of which was seeking to protect itself against potentially aggressive behaviour from the others. Hence, the tripartite coalition failed to perform any "aggregative, integrative functions" aimed at stabilising a nascent democratic polity, and there were furthermore, conflicting views on the "rules of parliamentary procedure and governmental decisionmaking... Indeed, the very shape of those institutions remained in dispute, as the [Serbian Democratic Party...] continued to demand the establishment of a parliamentary chamber of nations in which each nation might exercise a unilateral veto."[74]

Democratisation in Bosnia thus remained possible only during the brief period from early 1990 until the declaration of independence in October 1991. And as Steven Burg notes, during this period, the leaders of the three ethnic parties "remained significantly more nationalist than their constituencies."[75] The blatant unwillingness of the three parties to engage in democratic-minded cooperation and

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[72] Noel Malcolm, Bosnia: *A Short History*, p. xxi.
[73] Steven L. Burg, 'Bosnia Herzegovina: A Case of Failed Democratization', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South Eastern Europe* p. 122.
[74] Ibid, p. 138.
[75] Ibid, p. 136.

compromise for the benefit of the whole population of Bosnia thus proved one of the main reasons for descent into war.[76]

Croatia, in turn, held its first multi-party elections in April 1990, which was won by the newly formed Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), a conservative political organisation led by the Croatian nationalist Franjo Tudjman. Whilst all the parties that competed in the elections had declared their commitment to democracy, "Tudjman's HDZ was distinguished by its pledge to establish a democratic and capitalist country on the basis of Croatian national and religious values, [and] its promise to eliminate the strong influence of Croatia's Serb minority in political life..."[77] In reality, however, Tudjman's pledge to honour democratic principles, soon turned out to be nothing but empty rhetoric, and the post-communist Croatian regime turned out to be nothing more than a façade democracy,[78] with Tudjman manipulating constitutional change so as to increase his own power. More than anything, Tudjman thus came to resemble "many self-proclaimed 'democrats,' who have demonstrated records of struggle against oppressive one-party regimes, but who, once in power, are not necessarily ideologically or temperamentally inclined to foster pluralistic political development."[79] Croatia's Serb minority in turn were alarmed by the HDZ's nationalist programme and consequently voted heavily against it in the 1990 elections, favouring either the communists or the nationalist Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), which had been established in the beginning of 1990.[80] Upon taking office, HDZ also implemented changes to the Croatian national flag as well as to the constitution, the coat of arms and the national anthem, often borrowing heavily from

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Lenard Cohen, 'Embattled Democracy: Postcommunist Croatia in Transition', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South Eastern Europe*, p. 78.

[78] Attila Ágh, *The Politics of Central Europe* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), p. 176.

[79] Lenard Cohen, 'Embattled Democracy: Postcommunist Croatia in Transition', pp. 84-85.

[80] Ibid, p. 80.

the old Croatian national symbols used by the fascist Ustaša regime, a Croatian puppet state set up by Nazi Germany.

In 1986 Slobodan Milošević had assumed the chair of the Serbian League of Communists, which would set him on the straight path to the top. He did not waste any time before setting in motion a purge of the Serbian communist party, after which his political tactics became more populist in character as he mobilised thousands of Serbs in a push to remove the party leaderships of Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro as well.[81] In May 1989 the Serbian national assembly elected Milošević president of Serbia, a position he later consolidated as a result of the December 1992 federal, republic and presidential elections, reported by Serbian as well as international media as being fraught with widespread voting irregularities.[82] As the 1990 Serbian constitution limited Milošević's hold on the presidential office to two terms only, in 1997 he secured his unmitigated power by changing office, ensuring that the federal parliament elected him President of the FRY.[83]

In spite of the holding of competitive elections, it soon became evident that the old communist order had bequeathed a political culture that increasingly had become unfavourable to democratisation. To begin with, economic policy had been based on "crude political grounds at the expense of economic rationality...[and] social engineering policies had created dependent groups, largely made up of former peasants, who were trained solely for unskilled tasks and who had little immediate future outside the heavy industry sector. The social constituency for minimal change was thus much larger in the Balkan communist states than in other satellites."[84] And as the leaders of Croatia, Serbia and Romania would demonstrate in the first half of

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[81] Nicholas J. Miller, 'A Failed Transition: The Case of Serbia', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-Eastern Europe*, p. 154.
[82] Andrew A. Michta, *The Government and Politics of Postcommunist Europe*, p. 114.
[83] Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans After the Cold War*, p. 195.
[84] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe*, p. 272.

the 1990s, there are certain conditions – some of which were present in the Balkans –

under which "a competitively elected government is capable of behaving in a despotic

fashion toward large number of its citizens or inhabitants, especially when those

persons belong to a distinct ethnic or religious minority."[85]

If democracy is understood as an "attempt to reconcile private liberty and

social integration...", then "...democracy is a choice, and in every situation the

opposite, antidemocratic choice is always possible..."[86] Thus defined, multi-party

elections and majority rule are insufficient criteria for democracy, a political system

that also necessitates respect for diversity, which can be interpreted as respect for

minorities (including ethno-political). In other words, there can be no democracy

"...without a recognition of the diversity of beliefs, origins, opinions and values."[87]

From this perspective, neither Serbia nor Croatia in the 1990s could be regarded as

properly democratising, since political will for democracy was plainly absent in the

hearts and minds of Tudjman and Milošević. Furthermore, in the absence of firmly

established civil and political rights, the fundamental democratic principle of respect

for diversity would be violated. For, if civil and political rights are absent, citizens are

effectively deprived of political choice, a core feature of diversity, and as a result

democracy would be rendered meaningless. Consequently, it would be a grave

mistake to assume that once the Balkan countries had carried out their first

competitive, multiparty elections, they had thereby achieved a successful transition to

democracy or indeed that they were democratising. Although every Balkan state held

multi-party elections throughout the 1990s, not all of them qualified as democracies.

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[85] Bruce Parrott, 'Perspectives on Postcommunist Democratization', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-Eastern Europe*, pp. 4-5.
[86] Alain Touraine, *What is Democracy?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), p. 16.
[87] Ibid, p. 13.

Given the integral relationship between democracy and human rights, a glance at Freedom House's ratings in regards to civil and political rights in the Balkans in 1990s, is illuminating. Accordingly, data indicate that for the 1992-93 period, only Bulgaria and Slovenia rated as *Free* (i.e. consolidated democracy); Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) rated as *Partially Free* (i.e. a mixture of democratic and authoritarian elements), whereas Bosnia was assessed as *Not Free* (i.e. authoritarian). Towards the end of the 1990s, the number of Free countries in the Balkans had grown by one (Romania) only. For the 1998-99 period, Yugoslavia was rated as Not Free, Croatia still only as Partially Free, along with Bosnia, Albania and Macedonia.[88]

Once elected, Tudjman and Milošević both took measures aimed at strengthening their power vis-à-vis the parliament as well as the political opposition. The fragmented nature of the Croatian and Serbian opposition forces, combined with their lack of professionalism ensured that neither Tudjman nor Milošević had much by way of serious competition to fear.[89] Hence, although formal democratic structures were introduced in both Serbia and Croatia they did not function in practice and elections were "…rigged or flagrantly manipulated to ensure the desired outcome."[90] Neither did a proper separation of powers exist in either country as, in practice, the President controlled the judiciary and, furthermore, "[m]inistries were populated by officials whose key priority was to serve the ruling few rather than protect the wider public good."[91]

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[88] Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World Country Ratings, 1972-73 to 2001-2002', www.freedomhouse.org Freedom House's annual survey is based on the scale of political rights and civil liberties enjoyed by the individuals of a country.
[89] Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans After the Cold* War, p. 197.
[90] Ibid, p. 194.
[91] Ibid.

By assuming overwhelming control over the state media, which became an important propaganda tool for the President's office, Tudjman and Milošević were able to deflect any potentially threatening political opposition for large parts of the 1990s. The imposition of political, economic and judicial pressures on the independent media was particularly vicious in Tudjman's Croatia.[92] The two regimes "used very similar methods to entrench themselves in power and prevent opposition expressing itself in the normal democratic way. These were hybrid political systems that fell short of being outright dictatorships, but ones in which authoritarian practices made a mockery of any pretensions about being democratic."[93] Most destructive to the development of democracy, however, were the policies of "homogenising nationalisms which had little or no place for ethnic minorities...or indeed liberals from the dominant nationalities who questioned the strategy of building ethnically pure states."[94] Tudjman furthermore used the wars in Croatia and Bosnia as a pretext for withholding genuine democratic reform. Having secured the power to pass legally binding decrees in the case of war or national emergency, Tudjman was in effect given the prerogative vis-à-vis parliament to legislate, even if the decrees had to be formally approved by the latter.[95]

Whilst characterising Tudjman as an "ethnic exclusivist", Warren Zimmermann, the last American Ambassador to Yugoslavia, describes Milošević as "an opportunist rather than an ideologue, a man driven by power rather than nationalism." In his struggle to the political top of the communist party, Milošević was "in search of a legitimation less disreputable than communism, an alternative

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[92] Lenard Cohen, 'Balkan Politics in Transition: Nationalism and the Emergence of Ethnic Democracies', in Jane Shapiro Zacek and Ilpyong J. Kim (eds.), *The Legacy of the Soviet Bloc* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 124.
[93] Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans After the Cold War,* pp. 207-208.
[94] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe,* p. 267.
[95] Andrew A. Michta, *The Government and Politics of Postcommunist Europe,* pp. 112-113.

philosophy to help him consolidate his hold on Serbia, and a myth that would excite and energize Serbs behind him. He calculated that the way to achieve and maintain power in Serbia was to seize the nationalist pot that Serbian intellectuals were brewing and bring it to a boil".[96]

Yet for all the upheaval in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s what is remarkable, as Richard Crampton notes, is the fact that outside the former Yugoslav border, violent turmoil was actually relatively limited.[97] He further draws a poignant comparison between the dire economic situation in the Balkan lands by the end of the twentieth century and the similar circumstances that could be found in the German Weimar Republic, whose democratic system had collapsed into authoritarianism under Adolf Hitler. It is therefore a testament to a "political sophistication and a social forbearance" amongst the Balkan peoples, a sophistication and forbearance that went largely unnoticed by the political leaders in the West.[98]

3.4. Developing New Political Structures

It is worth reminding ourselves that in those Balkan countries – Slovenia, Bulgaria and Macedonia – where a parliamentary system was chosen, democratisation progressed relatively peacefully throughout the 1990s, whilst those countries where power became vested – *de facto* or *de jure* – in the office of the President – Croatia, Serbia, Romania and Albania – democratisation either was stopped in its tracks at an early stage by political leaders inclined towards authoritarianism (Croatia and Serbia), or struggled in a political environment fraught with tension between democratic progress and authoritarian conservatism (Romania and Albania). Tudjman and

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[96] Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 1996, 1999), p. 25.
[97] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War*, p. 238.
[98] Ibid, p. 344.

Milošević both sought to use their positions to weaken the political opposition, effectively undermining the development of democratic government. Post-communist Balkans thus lend support to Linz's proposition – as outlined in Chapter One – that parliamentarism is more conducive to non-violent democratic rule, as it is more likely to promote cooperation across party-lines, whereas presidentialism turns politics in a zero-sum game, which increases the risk of sustained conflict.[99]

The extent to which political power is centralised also affects interethnic relations. Although power tended to be highly centralised in every Balkan state throughout the 1990s, those adhering to parliamentarism nonetheless were on the whole less centralised than those in which power was vested in a strong president. At the same time, countries with a dominant parliamentary system – Bulgaria in particular – saw governments rising and falling at a sometimes exceedingly high rate, something that might be viewed as an indication of political instability. Yet, the fact that transfer of governmental authority took place peacefully, and roughly according to the democratic rules of the game can also be regarded as evidence of the resilience of democracy in these states.

Economically more advanced, and without a significant ethnic minority, Slovenia was undoubtedly the most successful in its transition from communist authoritarianism to capitalist democracy. More than in the other Yugoslav republics, (and certainly more than in Romania, Bulgaria and Albania,) "civil society and media pluralism in Slovenia had flourished significantly during the five years before the state's independence, largely owing to the relatively liberal policies of Slovenia's reform communists."[100] Slovenia's democratic transition and subsequent consolidation was aided by the strong degree of consensus that had characterised

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[99] Juan Linz, 'The Perils of Presidentialism', in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 129.
[100] Lenard Cohen, 'Balkan Politics in Transition', p. 129.

Slovene politics since the mid-1980s.[101] The issue of the Slovene identity and language was an important factor in this convergence of political actors, although it merged with issues of democracy, economic development and future aspirations within the European sphere.[102]

Although engaged in a ten-day long military confrontation with the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) following its secession from the Yugoslav federation, Slovenia escaped relatively unharmed, owing in part to the fact that it had no significant Serb population, whose interests Milošević could be said to be protecting. Slovenia did however have some outstanding territorial issues to be resolved with Italy and Croatia. Despite the fact that Slovenia made substantial progress both politically and economically throughout the 1990s, and has since been admitted as a member to both NATO and the European Union, the 1990s also saw an increase in ethnic chauvinist and xenophobic tendencies in the Slovene society, a phenomenon experienced elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe.[103]

Following the violent overthrow of Ceauşescu in Romania in December 1989, power was seized by the National Salvation Front (NSF), led by Ion Iliescu, who had been a member of the communist nomenklatura. Thus, despite the official end of communist regime, there was little change in terms of leadership as it was practically the same nomenklatura that governed after the revolution as before.[104] Although the new regime abolished the most extreme policies of Ceauşescu's totalitarian rule, granted civil rights to all Romanian citizens and eased the restrictions on the media[105], it was by no means a democratic government. From the outset, the NSF monopolised political power and refused to negotiate with other political parties.

[101] James Gow and Cathie Carmichael, *Slovenia and the Slovenes: A Small State and the New Europe* (London: Hurst & Co., 2000), 135.
[102] Ibid, p. 150.
[103] Sabrina P. Ramet, 'The Slovenian Success Story', *Current History*, March 1998, p.116.
[104] Attila Ăgh, *The Politics of Central Europe*, p. 180.
[105] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World* War, p. 325.

political power and refused to negotiate with other political parties. Instead, it resorted to violence in order to subdue any opposition forces.[106] Iliescu himself largely governed as an authoritarian populist, establishing much the same kind of personal rule as Milošević had done in Serbia. His powers were further consolidated through the adoption of a new constitution in 1991, which established Romania as a semi-presidential system.[107] Over time, the role of parliament was significantly curtailed, and between 1993 and 1996, Romania was governed mostly by government decrees.[108] Thus, by 1996 real power rested with the President rather than with the government or parliament.[109]

In Albania, Sali Berisha of the Albanian Democratic Party (ADP) was elected president in 1992, and over time established his own personal rule, much like Iliescu and Milošević. The ADP regime was authoritarian in character, and there was little legitimate space for the opposition and minorities.[110] Human rights groups called attention to "numerous cases of human rights violations, interference with the judiciary, reprisals against the media, and even violence against the political opponents of the ruling [ADP]."[111]

In 1997, controversy arose around failing pyramid schemes in which large portions of the population had invested, prompting parliament to put a freeze on assets, thus leaving many Albanians fearing they might lose their savings altogether. Riots broke out in Tirana and the parliament moved to grant Berisha special powers. After further rioting, the President declared a state of emergency and called in armed

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[106] Attila Ãgh, *The Politics of Central Europe*, p. 183.
[107] Ibid, p. 184.
[108] Vladimir Tismaneanu, 'Romanian Exceptionalism? Democracy, Ethnocracy, and Uncertain Pluralism in post-Ceauşescu Romania', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power and the Struggle for Democracy in South-Eastern Europe*, p. 407.
[109] Ibid, p. 426.
[110] Attila Ãgh, *The Politics of Central Europe*, p. 185.
[111] Fabian Schmidt, 'Upheaval in Albania', *Current History*, March 1998, p. 128.

police and special military units to restore order.[112] In the midst of total chaos, criminal gangs filled the power vacuum as Berisha's government collapsed, "unleashing a reign of terror on the civilian population and looting the weapons facilities of the demoralized Albanian army."[113] Although the immediate cause of the 1997 crisis was the collapse of pyramid schemes, the failure of the government to advance democratic development and the rule of law was also an important source of the unrest. An OSCE-mediated agreement was concluded between Berisha and the opposition on 8 March 1997, which provided for the formation of a government of national reconciliation. However, when the new government requested the deployment of a multinational force to stabilise Albania, both NATO and the Western European Union turned down the request. Thus authorised by the UN Security Council, Italy took it upon itself to organise a stabilisation force to which Austria, Denmark, France, Greece, Romania, Spain and Turkey contributed forces as well.[114]

3.5. Minority Issues Before and After Regime Change

Although a certain amount of political choice did exist in the Balkan states after 1990, it was often characterised more by conflict than by cooperation and consensus building.[115] Rather than committing themselves to the political crafting of democracy, some leaders clearly preferred "the utilization of historical legacies for nationalist

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[112] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World* War, pp. 304-305.
[113] Misha Glenny, *The Balkans*, p. 654.
[114]Fabian Schmidt, 'Upheaval in Albania', p. 129.
[115] Geoffrey Pridham, 'Democratization in the Balkan Countries: From Theory to Practice', in Geoffrey Pridham and Tom Gallagher (eds.), *Experimenting with Democracy: Regime Change in the Balkans* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 10.

designs, notably on the part of former communists seeking a new political message."[116]

In each state, ethnic parties were established once the monopoly of the communist party was abolished. Bosnia has already been mentioned, where the ethnic alignment of political parties led to a sharp polarization of the republic's three dominant ethnic communities. Kosovo's Albanian population, in turn, refused to participate in Serbian national elections from 1990 onwards, which worked in Milošević's favour, as it won him some extra, uncontested, seats.[117] Tom Gallagher, however maintains that had the Kosovar Albanians instead chosen to take part in Serbian elections, Milošević would have been forced to either do away with his democratic pretence and instead impose an overt dictatorship; or it might have paved the way for a transfer of power to the Serbian opposition. Furthermore, Gallagher suggests that Albanian participation in Serbia's political domain may have worked in their favour, as the West would have had to pay them more attention.[118] Yet, even if political power had indeed been transferred to the opposition parties in Serbia, such a change would not necessarily have brought about a repudiation of nationalist policies, as most opposition leaders themselves supported Serbian nationalism. It is noteworthy that when anti-Milošević protests took place in Serbia, the rallies were led by an opposition that was in fact nationalist itself, and whose main disagreement with Milošević was about tactics rather than the end goal, a Greater Serbia.[119]

In contrast to Kosovo Albanian refusal to engage in Serbian politics, the ethnic Hungarians who predominate in the Serbian province of Vojvodina, chose to participate in the political arena, seeking to safeguard their minority rights within the

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[116] Ibid, p. 10.
[117] Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans*, p. 69.
[118] Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans After the Cold War*, p. 195.
[119] Ibid., p. 65.

Serbian state. To this effect, the Hungarian minority has refrained from demanding independence and instead called for autonomy and decentralization within Vojvodina.[120] Meanwhile, in Croatia, of the effects of the manifestation of constitutional nationalism was the relegation of Croatia's Serb population from the status of a nation to simply one of several minorities. Amidst growing tension between Croatia and Serbia, the 600,000 strong Serb minority in Croatia boycotted the Croatian referendum for independence on 18 May 1991[121], having previously, on 25 August 1990, proclaimed a Serb parastate in the Krajina.[122] The Krajina Serbs' defiance of the Zagreb regime came to a violent end in August 1995, however, when Croatia launched a large-scale military offensive against the parastate and swiftly regained the territory, with the exception of eastern Slavonia.[123] Tudjman's nationalist policies and the Croatian-Serbian conflict meant that many Serbs left Croatia and by 1995, Croatia's Serb minority had been reduced to an all-time low of no more than five percent.[124]

In 1991, as the Yugoslav crisis was deepening, the European Community set up the Badinter Commission whose primary task was to determine whether the Yugoslav successor states satisfied the EC criteria for diplomatic recognition. One of these criteria was a constitutional guarantee of national minority rights.[125] The Commission eventually ruled that whilst both Slovenia and Macedonia satisfied the all the criteria, Bosnia had not, and it "reserved judgement on Croatia due to

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[120] Hugh Poulton, *Minorities in Southeast Europe: Inclusion and Exclusion* (London: Minority Rights Group International, 1998), p. 28.
[121] Alex J. Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-Old Dream?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 3.
[122] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe*, p. 266.
[123] Lenard J. Cohen, 'Embattled Democracy: Postcommunist Croatia in Transition', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe*, p. 103.
[124] Ibid., p. 105.
[125] Jennifer Jackson Preece, *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 45.

deficiencies in domestic minority provisions."[126] Despite the opinions expressed by the Badinter Commission, the EC/EU extended diplomatic recognition to Croatia, whilst refusing to offer the same to Macedonia. The reasons were of course political. Germany had unilaterally taken the decision to recognise both Slovenia and Croatia before the final verdict of the Commission had been made public. Greece, in turn, intervened to prevent the new Macedonian state from obtaining diplomatic recognition.[127]

During Ceauşecu's dictatorial rule the Romanian state resorted to increasingly oppressive measures aimed at the Romanianization of ethnic minorities, particularly the ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania. The Hungarians, however, resisted, and in an effort to quell their rising opposition to the state-sponsored assimilation campaign, Ceauşecu set up two officially recognised Hungarian-majority counties in 1968, but simultaneously made sure that their economic development was suppressed.[128] Interestingly, the beginning of the end of Ceauşecu's dictatorship became apparent after an incident on 16 December 1989, involving an ethnic Hungarian pastor in Timişoara who refused to evacuate his parish house on the Romanian police's demand. A demonstration broke out and when the protesters refused to disperse, the police and army opened fire. The following day, thousands of people took to the street to protest against Ceauşecu's dictatorial rule. Again, the protests led to a massacre of civilians.[129] Following regime change, Romania's Hungarian minority was free to organise itself politically, and formed the Democratic Alliance of

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[126] Ibid, p. 47.
[127] For more on the Greece-Macedonia dispute, see Chapter Five.
[128] Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans From Constantinople to Communism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 414.
[129] Vladimir Tismaneanu, 'Romanian Exceptionalism? Democracy, Ethnocracy, and Uncertain Pluralism in post-Ceauşcu Romania', p. 416.

Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), which was based solely on the ethnic vote.[130] Inter-ethnic tension did not, however, end with the demise of Ceauşecu. In the spring of 1990, conflict about the grievances of the Hungarian minority was brewing in Transylvania, leading to violent clashes between Romanians and Hungarians in March 1990.[131] Upon assuming power, the NSF relaxed anti-minority policies of the communist era and extended special rights to the Hungarian minority in the spheres of education and media.[132]

In sharp contrast to the ethnic mosaic that characterises its Balkan neighbours, Albania is one of Europe's most homogenous states, with Albanians comprising more than 95 percent of the total population. The Albanian nation itself is divided into two linguistic groups, the Tosks and the Gegs. The small number of ethnic minorities in Albania is made up mainly of ethnic Greeks and Macedonians, who began to assert their rights within the Albanian state in the 1990s, leading to periodic rise in interethnic tension. The Greek-Albanian dispute has centred largely on the treatment of the country's Greek minority and on the issue concerning representation of the Greek Orthodox Church in Albania, regarded by some Albanians as the leading force behind nationalist activities among the Greek minority.[133] In 1993, tensions between Albania and Greece rose dramatically when the Albanian government expelled a Greek Orthodox priest on the grounds that he was seeking to Hellenize Albanians. The following year, relations between the two countries deteriorated yet further, prompting the diplomatic intervention of Germany who at the time held the EU

[130] Attila Ãgh, The Politics of Central Europe, pp. 183-184.
[131] Vladimir Tismaneanu, 'Romanian Exceptionalism? Democracy, Ethnocracy, and Uncertain Pluralism in post-Ceauşcu Romania', p. 431.
[132] R.J. Crampton, The Balkans Since the Second World War, p. 326.
[133] Nicholas Pano, 'The Process of Democratization in Albania', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), Politics, Power and the Struggle for Democracy in South-Eastern Europe, p. 331.

presidency.[134] The growing tension between Macedonians and Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia during the 1990s has also resulted in an increase in claims made by Albania's Macedonian minority vis-à-vis its host-state.

3.6. Past Legacies: Imperial Rule and Communist Dictatorship

Analyses of post-communist Balkans have often made a point of referring to the region's imperial legacy – Ottoman vs. Habsburg – as an explanatory factor for some of the political and social turmoil that has befallen its people. One interpretation suggests that the Ottoman legacy in particular posed a hindrance to the development of liberal democratic principles in the region. In contrast, it is argued that those Balkan nations under Austro-Hungarian imperial rule were more likely to be successful in their efforts to build modern, liberal democracies. Yet, as John Gray notes, although the Ottoman empire with its system of millets, where the Muslim community was seen as superior to all other religious communities, was by no means a liberal regime, it was a "regime of toleration", that respected diversity of religions and where ethnic affiliations were not yet a political issue.[135] Referring back to Gray's concept of *modus vivendi*, outlined in Chapter Two, it would in fact not be amiss to suggest that both the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires did during large periods of their history apply a basic form of modus vivendi, which, although by no means democratic or liberal in the Western sense of the term, they did allow for the coexistence of diverse ways of life.

How seriously then should we take the imperial legacy as a factor in explaining post-communist development in the Balkans? Whilst not disregarding the

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[134] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War*, p. 301.
[135] John Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, p. 109

significance of historical experiences, it seems that the imperial legacy is not particularly convincing in this case. For, in spite of their Ottoman legacy, both Bulgaria and Macedonia were relatively successful in making the transition to a functioning – albeit flawed – democracy. And, whereas Slovenia, formerly incorporated into the Habsburg empire, developed into a liberal democracy much like its Western neighbours (Austria and Italy), Croatia, also a former Habsburg subject, saw the emergence of an exceedingly illiberal regime under the authoritarian rule of President Tudjman. One factor that appears to have strongly affected post-communist politics in the Balkans, however, is the absence of stable state traditions and clearly defined borders, something which is perhaps not so much a feature of the Ottoman legacy as that of Great Power interference in the region in the 19th and 20th centuries.[136]

Distinguishing between the Ottoman legacy as *continuity*, and the Ottoman legacy as *perception*, Maria Todorova maintains that the Ottoman legacy in the political sphere "extends from the beginning of autonomous or independent statehood in the Balkans until World War I, which ended the Ottoman political presence in the Balkans."[137] Thereafter, the only real legacy that remained was that of attitudes towards minorities.[138] In regards to the Ottoman legacy as *perception*, Todorova points out that this was – and still remains – to a great extent the product of historians, writers, poets, journalists and politicians.[139] She thus concludes that in the political, social and economic spheres, there was a definite break with the Ottoman legacy at the time of national independence across the Balkans. Only in the cultural

[136] For an in-depth historical account of Great Power intervention in the Balkans, see Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers* (London: Granta Books, 1999).
[137] Maria Todorova, 'The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans', in L. Carl Brown (ed.), *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 55.
[138] Ibid., p. 56.
[139] Ibid, p. 70.

and demographic spheres can a lasting Ottoman legacy plausibly still be discerned today.[140] The political break with the Ottoman legacy was primarily manifested in the new states' adoption of political systems modelled on those in Western Europe. Interestingly, Todorova suggests that rather than being attributable to some particular Balkan essence, the turbulent developments of the 1990s may in fact be "the ultimate Europeanization of the Balkans."[141]

As was highlighted in Chapter Two, a particularly troubling consequence of communist rule on society was its negative impact on the human capacity for autonomous action. In a communist society, individuals were made fully dependent on the state, which provided for its citizens, who in turn were effectively deprived of their autonomous agency. Whilst this legacy of communism would apply to all post-communist states of Eastern Europe, it seems that South East Europe has suffered in particular in this regard, which may be partly due to the fact that none of the Balkan states really had much by way of democratic tradition to fall back on once communism collapsed. And in a society where people have to a greater or lesser degree lost their autonomous capacity, and where the future appears uncertain in the face of a transition that has opened up a power vacuum, it is perhaps not surprising that nationalism has tended to re-emerge so strongly as it did in some of the Balkan states. Post-communist societies are in many ways deeply wounded societies, and though institutions may be easily constructed, healing the psychological wound of an entire population is something that is bound to require a prolonged period of time. Thus, throughout the Balkans, the authoritarian legacies inherited from the communist system, continued to make its mark in the post-communist period, and it may well be argued that "[a]s to authoritarian legacies, mentalities and practices are

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[140] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 12.
[141] Ibid, p. 13.

more important than institutional forms, for the latter may be dismantled in a relatively short time."[142]

3.7. East-West Relations Before and After Regime Change

As was shown earlier, the rise of ethnic nationalism in Yugoslavia was well under way in the 1980s. Yet the West largely failed to take such developments seriously, thus missing an important opportunity to use diplomatic pressure in an effort to prevent nationalist hardliners from consolidating their power in the different Yugoslav republics.[143] The West also chose to overlook the ruthless policies of the Ceauşescu regime, as the United States in particular welcomed Romania's nonconformist position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.[144] In contrast, Albania remained firmly isolated from the international community from the second half of the 1970s until the death of its leader, Enver Hoxha in April 1985. Once in power, Ramiz Alia, Hoxha's successor, sought to bring about an end to Albania's isolation by making efforts to establish contacts in Europe. By 1991, Albania had re-established diplomatic links with the United States and Britain and thus achieved its return to the international community.[145]

The break-up of Yugoslavia and the consequent wars in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and later on in Kosovo, were by no means determined solely by intra-Balkan politics, but also significantly affected by the actions (or lack thereof) and attitudes of external agents. The international community – in this case represented by the United States and the European Union (previously the European Community) – also bears

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[142] Geoffrey Pridham, 'Democratization in the Balkan Countries: From Theory to Practice', p. 12.
[143] Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe*, p. 274.
[144] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World* War, p. 196.
[145] Ibid, p. 165.

some responsibility for post-communist political development in the Balkans. Not only did the international community fail to intervene to prevent Yugoslavia from collapsing into destructive warfare, but it also chose to turn a blind eye to the undemocratic tactics of Tudjman and Milošević whenever the cooperation of these two strongmen was desired. Thus the Serbian president was held up as a 'peacemaker' at the time of the Dayton talks, and there was little Western opposition to Croatia's August 1995 military offensive against the Serb parastate in the Krajina, regaining control of the territory and prompting a massive flow of Serb refugees out of the country. What is perhaps more troubling is that Western diplomats and policy makers seemed to have bought into the myth about 'ancient ethnic hatreds' being the cause Yugoslavia's dissolution and the ensuing wars. Consequently, the European Community, the UN and the United States effectively accepted the "world-view of nationalism...as they sought to broker various peace agreements."[146]

Germany's unilateral decision to recognise Slovenia and Croatia as independent states proved detrimental to Balkan peace. In particular, German recognition of Croatia as an independent state – with its considerable minority Serb population – undoubtedly served to heighten Croatian-Serbian tensions. Furthermore, the failure of the Dayton Agreement to make any substantive reference to the future status of Kosovo was also a mistake that would lead both to the Kosovo crisis of 1999 and also influence the internal security situation in Macedonia.

With regards to Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, the West paid little attention to the political developments in these three countries, and it was only at times when their assistance and cooperation was deemed necessary – such as when NATO launched its military operation against Yugoslavia in 1999 – that any positive

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[146] Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans After the Cold War*, p. 214.

international attention was extended. All three countries had been highly dependent on Serbia as a commercial partner and also as their main trading route to northern Europe.[147] When the international community imposed sanctions on the Belgrade regime, therefore, Albania, Bulgaria and Romania would come to suffer substantial economic losses. Their loyalty to the international community in upholding the embargo, however, went largely unrewarded. As a result, the sanctions imposed on Serbia contributed to the decline in economic development throughout the Balkans.[148]

In regards to the regime transitions in the Balkan states, Crampton notes that due to the West's preoccupation with the Gulf war at the time, as well as concerns regarding the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the European Community's process of further integration, political developments in the Balkans did not receive as much attention and support as needed.[149] Particularly, the countries outside the former Yugoslavia – Albania, Bulgaria and Romania – were left largely on their own to sort out their difficult political and economic transitions. The West also had a deplorable tendency to shy away from any concerted efforts to promote pluralist safeguards in Croatia and Serbia until the latter half of the 1990s. Nevertheless, Croatia became a member of the Council of Europe in 1996, despite international awareness of its poor human rights record. In spite of this, "membership of an organisation conferring democratic respectability was not challenged when these irregularities increased."[150]

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[147] Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999*, p. 639.
[148] Ibid.
[149] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World* War, p. 344.
[150] Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans After the Cold War*, pp. 198-199.

3.8. Conclusion

The purpose of this survey of post-communist politics in South East Europe has been to show that there is in fact little to support the notion of a causal link between the onset of democratisation and the rise of ethnic nationalism and violent conflict across ethnic and religious lines. Rather, there is reasonably strong reason to presume, based on the evidence put forth in this chapter, that there exists a positive correlation between the absence, or curtailment, of democratic development and the emergence of nationalist conflict. In particular, the lack of political will amongst political leaders such as Milošević and Tudjman to follow through with the implementation of democratic reforms, along with their firm hold on the police and media, helped them secure their increasingly authoritarian power-base. There was therefore a lack of democratic 'crafting' in the majority of the Balkan countries. Even though putatively democratic institutions were introduced in each country, they were not necessarily given a chance to function properly, but were instead intended as superficial manifestations of a democratic order that in fact did not exist. Chapter One outlined the importance of embracing a definition of democracy that goes beyond the classically defined minimum requirement of competitive multi-party elections. That such a limited definition of democracy is nothing but meaningless is made apparent by an overview of post-communist politics in South East Europe. For as I have sought to show here, elected leaders often did away with democratic practices as soon as they had gained power, and sought to retain their positions by resorting to a mixture of authoritarian, nationalist and populist methods. Thus, whereas formally democratic institutions were established, political behaviour often continued to be anti-democratic.

Rather than being an outgrowth of attempts to introduce democracy in multiethnic societies, the emergence of nationalist politics was very much a product of the previous regime, where communist leaders often manipulated nationalist sentiments for their own purposes. Furthermore, the collectivist nature of both communism and nationalism made the appeal of the latter understandable; for in a political and economic environment fraught with insecurity following the collapse of communist regimes, nationalist politicians were often seen as the safer option for a deeply scarred population who after decades of living in a communist society had lost much of their capacity to act as autonomous agents. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the politicians elected in the first multi-party elections were significantly more nationalist-minded than their constituencies, and as a result the rise of ethnic nationalism was largely a top-down approach, a pattern replicated in most other Balkan states.

Another lesson to be drawn from the experience of the Balkan states in the decade following the collapse of communist regimes is that the presence of outstanding issues concerning territory, national belonging, security, state-building etcetera, the democratic project becomes excessively difficult to realise. Furthermore, if by majority rule is meant rule by one ethnic or national group over another, then the conventional definition of democracy as being equal to majority rule must be rejected. Democracy does not equal, or justify the 'tyranny of the majority'.

Additionally, the Western proclivity for cultural stereotyping and Eurocentric chauvinism often led it in the course of the 1990s to dismiss the Balkans as backward, both politically and civilizationally, which in turn had a negative impact on international policies towards the region at the beginning of the 1990s, which was a time when incipient democracy movements in the Balkans were in dire need of

political as well as economic and moral support from their Western neighbours. Yet time and again, the West – the United States and European Union in particular – chose diplomatic expediency before explicit pressure on authoritarian regimes to implement democratic reforms. Indirectly, therefore, the West – however unwittingly – did in fact contribute to Tudjman and Milošević's hold on power. And in regards to international efforts to broker a peace agreement between the three warring factions in Bosnia, the failure of the West to recognise the falsehood of the myth of historical ethnic hatred in Bosnia, popularly espoused by Western journalists such as Robert Kaplan[151], effectively served to legitimise nationalism in the former Yugoslavia. Had Western powers instead challenged their own cultural prejudices towards the Balkans, and been able to acknowledge that contrary to the idea that there exists some particular Balkan essence owing to the Ottoman legacy, the political developments in South East Europe over the past century have in fact been consistent with the traditions of European nation-state building.

In the chapters that follow, we will turn our attention to the post-communist experiences of Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia, neither of which had any democratic legacy to speak of and both of whom were faced with internal as well as external insecurities at the time of regime transition. Despite the many factors that worked against their successful transition to democracy, Bulgaria and Macedonia stand out as examples of ethnically diverse societies that managed a peaceful and relatively successful transition away from communism and towards a democratic political system that although flawed in many ways, proved notably resilient throughout the 1990s.

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[151] Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993).

CHAPTER FOUR

From Moscow Toward Brussels: Bulgaria's Road to Democracy and Interethnic Peace

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to telling the story of the Bulgarian experience with democratisation and interethnic relations in the decade following communist regime collapse. This is necessary in order to allow for a critical analysis of the application of the theories discussed in Chapters One and Two. After similarly detailing Macedonia's experience in Chapter Five, we return, in Chapter Six, to a critical analysis of the theories of democratisation and interethnic conflict in the light of what we have learned from the two case studies.

Although the Bulgarian experience with democratisation shares some features with those of other South East European countries, there are also some important characteristics of the Bulgarian experience that sets it apart from them. Most importantly, the interconnectedness between democratisation and the restoration of minority rights for the Turkish population stand out as a distinguishing feature of the Bulgarian case. Despite the introduction of a constitutional ban on ethnic parties and the strict adherence to individual rights only, Bulgaria managed to avoid the divisiveness of ethnic politics that featured in other Balkan states. Bulgaria was also the only country in the region to establish a national roundtable in order to hammer out the terms of the transition process from communist rule to democracy. During the course of the 1990s, Bulgaria's political development passed through several phases of the democratisation process: the transition from communist rule followed by the transition to democratic governance was a fairly speedy process once it was begun; thus, within a few years Bulgaria had achieved a rather resilient, albeit turbulent, form

of procedural democracy. The main challenge for post-communist Bulgaria appears to have been in fostering a democratic culture, a task that has been critically undermined by the high level of corruption that has been a strong feature of post-communist Bulgaria.

At the time of the communist bloc's breakdown in Eastern Europe in 1989, Bulgaria was faced not only with regime crisis but also with a potentially explosive interethnic situation, resulting from the forced assimilation campaign carried out by the Bulgarian state against its Turkish minority during 1984-85. The fall-out of the campaign was a heightened level of inter-communal tension between 1989-91, which threatened to develop into a wider, violent conflict. The forced emigration of more than 300,000 ethnic Turks from Bulgaria in the summer of 1989 also put a severe strain on relations between the Bulgarian and Turkish states who were still divided along ideological Cold War lines. As this chapter shows, the emergence of a pro-democracy movement in the 1989 was closely intertwined with restoration of rights for the Turkish minority, so that taking a stance in favour of minority rights became a defining feature of a democrat, whereas opposition to the restoration of minority rights for the Turks was intimately associated with being a communist. Furthermore, throughout the 1990s, the process of democratisation facilitated the reconciliation of relations between ethnic Bulgarians and the ethnic Turkish minority as well as relations between Bulgaria and Turkey. Hence, Bulgaria's relative success in moderating interethnic relations during the 1990s was made possible by the inclusion of the Turkish minority in the process of democratisation, which helped pave the way towards a tacit recognition that the Turkish minority constitutes part of the Bulgarian *political* nation.

Bulgaria's success in managing a peaceful democratic transition despite the presence of inter-communal tension, thus offers a challenge to arguments by Jack Snyder, Donald Horowitz and Ted Robert Gurr, as outlined in Chapter Two. Although the nationalist element was not wholly absent in Bulgaria's transition period, post-communist Bulgaria is an illuminating example of a case in which the process of democratisation in fact helped to alleviate interethnic tension, thus avoiding a violent conflict from erupting, and further contributed to intrastate, as well as regional security and stability.

More specifically, this chapter makes the following points: First, the integration of the Turkish minority into the political sphere of post-communist Bulgaria – through the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) – helped defuse inter-communal tension arising from the forcible assimilation policies pursued by the Zhivkov regime. Second, the success of the MRF notwithstanding, the transition from a communist to democratic political system has not necessarily translated into a broader inclusion of other minorities in Bulgarian political and social life, as the experiences of the Roma and the non-recognised Macedonian minority clearly illustrate. Rather, as this chapter argues, the successful integration of the Turks through the participation of the MRF in Bulgarian politics is more accurately described as being driven mainly by a perceived need to remedy past wrong doings, to prevent violent conflict, and to ensure Bulgaria's integration into Europe and the broader international community. Third, the process of democratisation and development of a minority rights framework in Bulgaria has been significantly influenced by international institutions such as the Council of Europe, and by Bulgaria's ambition to become a member of the European Union. Fourth, in contrast with minorities and 'kin states' elsewhere in the Balkans, the Turks of Bulgaria, and

their kin state, Turkey, have both played an important role in defusing ethnic tension in Bulgaria since the late 1980s. Turkey has generally adhered to a cautious attitude vis-à-vis its Balkan neighbour, which in turn has reflected positively on relations between the Bulgarian state and its Turkish minority, the latter of which has remained relatively moderate in its claims vis-à-vis the Bulgarian majority. As a result, ethnic Bulgarian perceptions of the Turkish minority as constituting a potential threat to Bulgaria's national security has been greatly diminished.

Scholars writing on the Balkans have tended to focus rather more on Yugoslavia and its successor states than on Bulgaria, which is somewhat paradoxical given that from a geographical point of view Bulgaria represents the very heart of the Balkan region. The name 'Balkan' is derived from a colloquial Turkish word denoting a forested mountain,[1] but it is also the name of the mountain chain running across Bulgaria. The lack of academic interest in Bulgaria is perhaps due in part to the fact that, on the surface, this small country seems rather insignificant and lacking the kind of dynamism popularly associated with many other Balkan countries. Furthermore, having been spared from the wave of interethnic violence that swept the former Yugoslavia, there seemed to be little reason to devote any deeper analysis to Bulgaria.

At first glance, Bulgaria gives the impression of being a relatively homogenous nation-state, situated amongst much more ethnically, religiously and linguistically diverse neighbours. Yet, Bulgaria is anything but an ethnically homogenous nation-state; its population is made up of an eclectic mix of ethnicities, religions and languages. Even the origins of the ethnic Bulgarians is assumed to be

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[1] Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans From Contstantinople to Communism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p.2.

the assimilation of two peoples, one Slavic and the other Turkic.[2] From the late

fourteenth century to 1878 the territory of present-day Bulgaria constituted part of the

Ottoman Empire and, as a result, the modern Bulgarian state has always included a

Turkish minority that according, which currently accounts for between nine and ten

percent of the of the total population[3], as well as a community of ethnically Bulgarian

Muslims, or Pomaks as they are colloquially referred to as Pomaks are generally

believed to have been Christian Orthodox Bulgarians who converted to Islam during

the Ottoman era.[4] Furthermore, Bulgaria is home to a Roma population, which

according to the 1992 census, constitute 3.7 percent of the total population of

Bulgaria, a figure which is thought to be much higher in reality, approximating

perhaps as much as seven percent of the total population.[5] The Roma in turn are

divided between Islam and Christianity. Adding to the ethnic and religious

complexity of Bulgaria is the contentious issue over the existence of a small ethnic

Macedonian minority in Pirin Macedonia, a Bulgarian region adjacent to the Republic

of Macedonia. According to official Bulgarian policy, however, there is no such thing

as a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, since, according to Bulgarians, Macedonians

themselves are nothing else but ethnic Bulgarians. This last issue, part of what is

known as the Macedonian Question, however falls outside of the scope of this thesis.[6]

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[2] R.J Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 8-9.

[3] According to Bulgaria's 1992 population census, the Turkish population represented 9.7 percent of Bulgaria's total population. The most recent census, held in 2001, indicated that the proportion of Turks in Bulgaria had fallen to 9.4 percent. Sources: Ali Eminov, 'The Turks in Bulgaria: Post-1989 Developments', *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1999, p. 33; 'Bulgarian Statisticians Unveil 2001 Census Results', Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline, vol. 6, no. 224, 2 December 2002.

[4] R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, p. 36.

[5] Krassimir Kanev, 'Minority Protection in Bulgaria', in *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection* (Budapest: Open Society Institute & EU Accession Monitoring Program, 2001), p. 77.

[6] The Macedonian Question was born in 1870 when, on the behalf of the Bulgarian nation, persuaded the Ottomans to permit the establishment of a Bulgarian Orthodox Church, or Exarchate, separate from the Greek Orthodox Church. The authority of this newly established Exarchate was to include parts of Macedonia, then an Ottoman province, but this was contested by Greece or Serbia who also sought to extend their influence over Macedonia. Following the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913, geographical

The Bulgarian Turks primarily inhabit the northeast and southeast of the country;[7] the Pomaks reside mainly in the Rhodopi mountains in southern Bulgaria,[8] whilst the Roma tend to live in the slum districts of cities, towns, and villages throughout the country. Whereas the Turks as a group have been largely integrated into the Bulgarian state and society, the Roma have not, and continue to live in the periphery of Bulgarian social, political and economic life.[9] Whilst acknowledging that Bulgaria's population is made up of a diverse mixture of ethnic and religious communities, the present study focuses specifically on the relationship between the ethnic Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority. The reason for this is practical – limited space – as well as methodological; the Turks as a category is more coherent and more politically organised than other minority groups in Bulgaria, and therefore better suited for analysis. Moreover, the political impact of the Turkish experience in post-communist Bulgaria is also more significant than those of other minorities.

4.2. Bulgaria and its Minorities: A Tradition of Tolerance?

A popular, albeit erroneous, perception amongst Bulgarians today is that they inhabit a society traditionally more tolerant of ethnic and religious differences than those of their Balkan neighbours, as demonstrated by the observation that Bulgaria is one of

Macedonia was divided, with Greece and Serbia taking the majority of the territory and Bulgaria being left with a minor part. It was not until the end of World War II and the creation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – which incorporated the Socialist Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – that the Macedonian Question appeared to have been finally settled. For further information on the Macedonian Question, see Elisabeth Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (London, Royal Institute of International Affairs 1950); Victor Roudometof, Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002); Victor Roudometof, ed., *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* (Boulder, CO, East European Monographs, 2000).
[7] Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities of Bulgaria* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), p. 80 (map).
[8] Ibid, p. 101.
[9] Krassimir Kanev, 'Minority Protection in Bulgaria', pp. 77-82.

few Balkan countries to have managed to sustain interethnic peace in the post-Cold

War period. This self-image on the part of the Bulgarians is further bolstered by two

proud events in Bulgaria's history: first, Bulgarians provided a sanctuary for

Armenians fleeing Turkish aggression in the early twentieth century and, second,

Bulgaria's Jewish population survived the Second World War intact as a result of a

concerted effort by members of the Bulgarian society to prevent their deportation,

which is a significant event considering that Bulgaria was allied with Germany during

the war and thus came under pressure from the Nazi regime to purge its Jewish

population, whose number according to a 1934 census was 48,400.[10] On the other

hand, a total of 11,343 Jews from Macedonia and Thrace, areas that at the time were

occupied by Bulgaria, were deported to Auschwitz, an act for which the Bulgarian

authorities, including King Boris, were largely responsible. Only twelve people

survived.[11] There has since been much debate as to who deserves the credit for the

saving of the Bulgarian Jews. Communist propaganda in the post war period largely

attributed this heroic Bulgarian act to the communists themselves, a claim that was

later to be challenged by the theory that it was King Boris himself who had saved the

Jews. Also controversial is the question as to why the Jews were saved; was it for

humanitarian reasons or were the motives mainly political?[12] Whatever the prime

motivation for Bulgaria's refusal to deport its Jewish population to the concentration

camps in Poland, Bulgarian anti-semitism appears to have been for much of the

country's modern history, and continues to be, rather more latent than in many other

East European and Balkan countries, and the remaining Jewish population of

approximately 3,000 (the large majority of Bulgarian Jews had emigrated to Israel by

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[10] Tzvetan Todorov, *La Fragilité du bien: Le sauvetage des juifs bulgares* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), p. 12.
[11] Ibid., pp.13-17.
[12] Ibid, pp. 23-35.

1955) is today well integrated into mainstream Bulgarian society.[13] Traditionally, Jews and Armenians have been better accepted than Turks and other Muslim minorities in Bulgaria, partly because in contrast with the latter, Jews and Armenians tend to live in cities, be professionals and middle class, which has facilitated their integration. Additionally, they have not been perceived as a potential political threat since they do not, in contrast with the Turkish minority, have a neighbouring kin state that might intervene on their behalf to protect their interests. Bulgarian attitudes towards the Turkish minority are also shaped by history, that is, having been subjected to Ottoman rule for nearly five centuries, and the consequent perception that the Bulgarian nation was under constant threat by Turkish domination and repression.

In regards to Bulgarian attitudes and policies towards the Turkish minority, the record is a mixed one and the reality rather complex. On the personal level people in Bulgaria tend to have good neighbourly relations across ethnic boundaries. But on a broader, societal, level, relations between Bulgarians and Turks are not necessarily those of 'good citizen relations'.[14] In contrast with pre-war Bosnia, intermarriage between Bulgarians and Turks has been a relatively rare occurrence and in "...mixed communities there is a tacit but almost insurmountable rule of resisting and even forbidding intermarriages."[15]

At this point it may be helpful take a closer look at the very meaning of the concept of 'tolerance'. A standard dictionary defines the verb 'tolerate' as "allow[ing]

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[13] With the establishment of a government coalition in 2001 between the Simeon II National Movement (NMSII) and MRF, Mr Solomon Passy was appointed as the country's first Jewish foreign minister.

[14] Interview with Mr Mihail Ivanov, former Advisor to the President of Bulgaria on Ethnic and Religious Issues (1990-97); Founder and Secretary of the Committee of National Reconciliation (1989-1991), Sofia 10 October 2001.

[15] Antonina Zhelyazkova, 'Bulgaria's Muslim Minorities', in John D. Bell (ed.), *Bulgaria in Transition: Politics, Economics, Society, and Culture After Communism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), p. 183.

the existence or occurrence of (something that one dislikes or disagrees with) without interference."[16] Hence, tolerance carries a negative connotation in the sense that it does not presume acknowledgment, approval of something or someone. Rather, "[w]e are genuinely tolerant of others only when we disapprove of them, or of their actions and beliefs, but nonetheless refrain from imposing our own view."[17] Furthermore, interethnic tolerance does not necessarily result in the integration of ethnic minorities in majority-dominated social and political life. Neither is a tradition of tolerance a guarantee for interethnic peace, as Nazi Germany and the wars of the former Yugoslavia illustrate. In pre-war Germany, Jews had enjoyed a relative measure of personal liberty, and in socialist Yugoslavia, Serbs, Croats and Muslims cohabited peacefully in Bosnia. The notion that the Bosnian war sprang from 'ancient ethnic hatred' has by now been largely discredited by historians and other scholars who point not only to the existence of a tolerant past, but to a tradition of mainly peaceful inter-ethnic co-existence in places such as Bosnia and Macedonia. In Bulgaria, even a putative history of interethnic tolerance failed to prevent recurring attempts by the communist regime to forcibly assimilate its Turkish, Muslim and Roma minorities, with little protest from the ethnic Bulgarian majority. Hence, 'tolerance' alone cannot explain the relative absence of interethnic conflict in Bulgaria. Prior to democratisation, interethnic peace had been primarily contingent upon the absence of radicalism in the Turkish community, thus generating little by way of threat perception. It is perhaps ironic that although the popular perception of Bulgaria is that of a society with a longstanding tradition of interethnic tolerance, the 1991 constitution does not use the term 'minority' and thus replicates the deliberate

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[16] Judy Pearsall (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 1506.

[17] Susan Mendus, 'My Brother's Keeper: The Politics of Intolerance', in Susan Mendus (ed.), *The Politics of Toleration: Tolerance and Intolerance in Modern Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 3.

exclusion of the term 'minority' of the 1971 constitution.[18] Furthermore, it is highly

questionable whether Bulgarian tolerance extends to the Roma minority as well as to

some of the so-called new religious movements that have emerged in post-communist

Bulgaria.

Ethnic tolerance aside, Bulgaria's often cited 'ethnic model' is tarnished by

the country's failure in respect to two minorities in particular. First, the Roma

population in Bulgaria continue to live on the fringes of Bulgarian society,

discriminated against in employment and education, as well as subject to racist

attitudes by ethnic Bulgarians, and to some extent by other minorities as well.[19]

Second, for the past fifty years the Bulgarian state has persistently refused to

acknowledge the existence of a Macedonian minority within its borders.[20] This is in

line with the prevalent view amongst almost all segments of Bulgarian society that

there is no such thing as a Macedonian nation, and that those who call themselves

(ethnic) Macedonians (including the Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia) are

nothing else but 'lost' members of the Bulgarian nation, inhabiting a territory that

was unlawfully taken from the Bulgarian nation in the 1878 Treaty of Berlin.[21]

Accordingly, the Bulgarians consider the Macedonian language to be a mere dialect

of Bulgarian. In this regard, Bulgarians, Macedonians as well as other Balkan people

fail to consider the notion that "nations exist in time, [...] are shaped by temporal

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[18] Lilia Petkova, 'The Ethnic Turks in Bulgaria: Social Integration and Impact on Bulgarian-Turkish Relations, 1947-2000', *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, vol. 1, no. 4, June 2002, p. 42.

[19] Krassimir Kanev, 'Minority Protection in Bulgaria', in *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection* (Budapest: Open Society Institute & EU Accession Monitoring Program, 2001), pp. 75-120.

[20] Bonka Stoyanova-Boneva, Stephan E. Nikolov and Victor Roudometof, 'In Search of "Bigfoot": Competing Identities in Pirin Macedonia, Bulgaria', in Victor Roudometof (ed.), *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2000), pp. 239-240.

[21] The Berlin Treaty, imposed on Bulgaria by the Great Powers, superseded the San Stefano Treaty of 3 March 1878, which established the modern Bulgarian state following its liberation from the Ottomans by the Russians. According to the San Stefano Treaty, the Bulgarian state included Macedonia, but Great Power fears that an enlarged Bulgarian state would result in Russian domination of the region, led to a revision of the borders at the Berlin Congress in the same year.

processes and thus have temporal components."[22] Hence, a nation can emerge, and it can also disappear. Instead, nations are popularly perceived as fixed categories that either existed in the past, and hence exist today, or did not exist in the past and thus cannot be said to exist in the present. Although Bulgaria was the first country to extend diplomatic recognition to the Republic of Macedonia in 1992, the Bulgarian President at the time, Zhelyu Zhelev, explicitly stated that Bulgaria recognised the Macedonian state but not the nation, remarking that from a Bulgarian point of view, 'Macedonia' was only a geographical term and not the name of a nation.[23]

During Bulgaria's communist period there were several attempts from the late 1950s onwards – commensurate with the rise of the arguably more nationalist-minded Todor Zhivkov as the leader of the Bulgarian communist regime – to assimilate, forcibly if necessary, the Pomak, Roma and Turkish minorities.[24] Hence, rather than dismissing the 1980s' campaign against the Turks as a 'political mistake' – as Zhivkov's successors and others have been tempted to do – the events of 1984-85 and 1989 must be regarded as nothing less than the culmination of a continuous effort spanning several decades, to assimilate non-ethnic Bulgarians so as to create the illusion of a mono-ethnic nation-state. Hence, socialism in Bulgaria contained a distinct nationalist element as well.[25]

In the early years of the communist regime, the Bulgarian Communist Party sought to gain the loyalty of the Turkish minority by sanctioning their expression of their ethnic, albeit not religious, identity, the purpose of which was to create a

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[22] George W. White, *Nationalism and Territory: Constructing Group Identity in Southeastern Europe* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 15.
[23] 'Greeks Fear Bulgaria's Backing For Macedonia', *The Independent*, 17 January 1992, p. 11.
[24] Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities of Bulgaria*, p. 8.
[25] Ibid, pp. 4-23. See also, Paul Lendvai, *Eagles in Cobwebs: Nationalism and Communism in the Balkans* (London: Macdonald & Company, 1969), pp. 206-261.

"socialist Turkish minority".[26] But from the late 1950s onwards, at the time of the

collectivisation of Bulgarian land, some of which was owned by ethnic Turks, the

Zhivkov regime became more restrictive towards the ethnic and religious minorities,

and repeatedly implemented anti-Turkish/Muslim policies. The intention clearly was

to drive out as many Turks as possible and to assimilate the rest. The expulsion of

Turks was due in part to the fact that with the onset of the Cold War, Turkey, as an

ally of the West, came to be regarded as an enemy of Bulgaria; and in part to "a

continuation of the strategy of ridding the country of 'alien' ethnic groups which had

been pursued by Bulgarian governments for decades."[27] By the end of the 1950s,

Turkish-language education had been abolished and Muslim and Turkish cultural

activities restricted. From the early 1960s, the regime's attitude towards minorities

had become that of complete assimilation, and the "long-term goal...was to make

Bulgaria a single-nation state with a homogenous population."[28] First, the names of

Muslim Roma began to be changed and in the early 1970s and in the period 1972-74

the Pomaks became the target of a name-changing campaign.[29] At the same time, the

Communist Party sought to foster mistrust and fear amongst ethnic Bulgarians

towards the Turkish minority through an intensive propaganda campaign, which

accused the Turks of being "terrorists", "a fifth column", and "Turkish agents".[30] As

propaganda was spread throughout the country, it effectively became part of popular

'knowledge' and as such had a strong negative impact on public consciousness.[31] The

level of mistrust against the Turks grew as ethnic Bulgarians increasingly perceived

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[26] Wolfgang Höpken, 'From Religious Identity to Ethnic Mobilisation: The Turks of Bulgaria Before, Under and Since Communism', in Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (eds.), *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), p. 64.
[27] Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 24-25.
[28] Antonina Zhelyazkova, 'Bulgaria's Muslim Minorities', p. 168.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., p. 169.
[31] Ibid.

their country to be under threat from Turkish separatists. The propaganda served the purpose of creating a popular anti-Turkish sentiment so as to limit opposition against the planned assimilation programme of the Turkish minority.[32] In 1984-85, the Bulgarian government thus embarked on an intensive assimilation campaign against the Turks[33], which included the forcible change of Turkish names to Bulgarian names, prohibition on the use of the Turkish language in public, as well as a ban on traditional Muslim clothing.[34] An investigative report by Amnesty International indicates that over 100 ethnic Turks may have been killed by Bulgarian security forces during the campaign.[35] Whilst many ethnic Bulgarians objected to the use of force against the Turks, they nonetheless were led to believe that the assimilation process was necessary in order to preserve the peace and security of the country.[36] Popular perception amongst Bulgarians today is that the assimilation process of the mid-1980s was almost exclusively the work of a very small minority within the Communist Party, led, of course, by Zhivkov himself. But as Bulgarian journalist Tatiana Vaksberg shows in her documentary film *Technology of Evil*, the forced assimilation process was indeed a thoroughly orchestrated campaign, and one that was carried out largely in secret.[37] Millions of Leva[38] were spent on creating new documents for people whose names were changed, and the Belene concentration camp, which had been closed down years before, was reopened in 1985 for the purpose of interning those Turks who resisted assimilation. In order to carry out the

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[32] Interview with Dr Ilona Tomova, Research Fellow, Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 25 October 2001.
[33] For a comprehensive account of the assimilation process of 1984-85, see, Vesselin Dimitrov, 'In Search of a Homogenous Nation: The Assimilation of Bulgaria's Turkish Minority, 1984-1985', *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 23 December 2000.
[34] Antonina Zhelyazkova, 'Bulgaria's Muslim Minorities', p. 168.
[35] 'Bulgaria: Imprisonment of Ethnic Turks. Human Rights Abuses During the Forced Assimilation of the Ethnic Turkish Minority', Amnesty International, AI Index: EUR/15/03/86, April 1986, p. 13.
[36] Interview with Dr Ilona Tomova, Sofia 25 October 2001.
[37] Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities of Bulgaria*, p. 86
[38] The name of the Bulgarian currency is *Lev* (sing.), *Leva* (plur.).

plan, the Bulgarian army, police and fire brigades were mobilised in the ethnically mixed region of Kurdjali.[39] The forceful actions against the Turkish population were justified by the regime's the claim that in Bulgaria there were no Turks, only Bulgarians who had been led to believe that they were Turks during the time of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the assimilation campaign was called a 'revival' or 'regeneration' process, in which people 'had come to understand that they were not Turks but Bulgarians' and that, therefore, their 'original', that is, Bulgarian, names were now being returned to them.[40]

Resistance against the forcible assimilation process emerged in the spring of 1985 as Bulgarian Turks organised themselves underground with the aim of regaining their cultural rights.[41] Four years later, in May 1989 a wave of protest spread throughout Turk-inhabited areas, primarily in the southeast. Bulgarian Turks resorted to hunger strikes, demonstrations, sit-down strikes, thus leading to clashes with the Bulgarian authorities. Increasingly, during this period, the Turkish minority received support from a group of Bulgarian pro-democratic intellectuals, and alongside the call for the restoration of minority rights there eventually emerged a general public protest against the government.[42] According to three authors, the period between 1985 and 1989 were nothing less than "a period of 'cold war' in ethnic relations", which eventually escalated to an openly manifested interethnic conflict.[43]

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[39] 'Technology of Evil', a documentary on the 1984-85 assimilation campaign against the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, by Ms Tatiana Vaksberg, journalist with Radio Free Europe, Sofia, 2001. See also, Krassimir Kanev, 'Law and Politics on Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Bulgaria', in Anna Krasteva (ed.), *Communities and Identities in Bulgaria* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1998), p. 77.
[40] Krassimir Kanev, 'Law and Politics on Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Bulgaria', p. 77; Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities of Bulgaria*, pp. 15-16.
[41] Borislav Tafradjiski, Detelin Radoeva and Douhomir Minev, 'The Ethnic Conflict in Bulgaria: History and Current Problems', in Kumar Rupesinghe, Peter King and Olga Vorkunova (eds.), *Ethnicity and Conflict in a Post-Communist World: The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 215.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

Faced with mounting resistance from the Turkish community, Zhivkov appeared on Bulgarian television, declared that the Turks were free to leave Bulgaria and asked Turkey to open its borders for them. Thus some 350,000 ethnic Turks were effectively expelled from Bulgaria between May and August 1989. The exodus, however, sparked resentment amongst the Bulgarian majority in the ethnically mixed regions where the mass departure of Turks meant that factories and plants lost workers, prompting ethnic Bulgarian workers to see themselves as victims of Turkish mass emigration.[44] The crisis continued as approximately 150,000 Turks returned to Bulgaria a few months later, following the Communist Party's ousting of Zhivkov. The new rulers within the Party quickly put an end to any assimilation efforts and the name changes were reversed. Yet, only days after the government had repealed the name changing policy, Bulgarians in ethnically mixed regions took to the streets to protest against the government's decision in regards to the Turkish minority. In response, the Turkish community staged its own counter rallies in defence of their rights.[45] The Bulgarian-led rallies were mostly organised by local Party members, who saw their positions threatened by the change of Party policy. Hence, "[p]artly to reaffirm...[their] belief in the correctness of the assimilation campaign, but mainly to avoid retaliation, ...[they] started to organize public protest actions against the new trends, first on the local level and later in Sofia."[46] But there was also a genuinely felt fear amongst ethnic Bulgarians, especially in the Kurdjali region, that the Turks might seek revenge on them for their sufferings.[47] At the same time, amongst the Turks who had left Bulgaria in the summer of 1989 and who later returned to find their Bulgarian

[44] Interview with Mr Mihail Ivanov, Sofia 10 October 2001.
[45] Borislav Tafradjiski, Detelin Radoeva and Douhomir Minev, 'The Ethnic Conflict in Bulgaria: History and Current Problems', p. 217.
[46] Krassimir Kanev, 'From Totalitarianism to a Constitutional State', in Jacques Coenen-Huther (ed.), *Bulgaria at the Crossroads* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 1996), p. 54.
[47] Interview with Dr Deyan Kiuranov, Programme Director, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia 17 December 2001.

neighbours treat them with hostility, there was a growing feeling that while it had

been the Communist Party that had implemented the repressive policies against them,

it now appeared that the Bulgarian people at large resented them. The state-controlled

media further spread negative propaganda against the Turks, brandishing them as

traitors who sought to destabilise Bulgaria, and ethnic Bulgarians, on their part, were

easily manipulated due to fear and the spreading of misinformation. Consequently,

relations between Bulgarians and Turks deteriorated.[48]

Between 1989-91, Bulgaria experienced an unprecedented level of ethnic

tension, and several Bulgarian as well as foreign observers at the time feared that

Bulgaria was inching closer towards violent ethnic conflict. In fact, at the end of the

1980s it was Bulgaria rather than Yugoslavia that was identified by the international

community as a potential hotspot. There was a significant concern that ethnic tension,

fuelled in part by nationalist elements within the old communist cadre, might obstruct

the process of democratic transition. Contrary to popular perceptions, therefore, the

wind of nationalism did not escape Bulgaria entirely, and "...the backlash against the

expansion of political democracy and human rights was inspired by nationalism.

Therefore, the situation of minorities, both ethnic and religious, became...the main

indicator of democratic development."[49]

4.3. Bulgaria's Transition – Democratisation by Default?

For much of its communist period, and in contrast with for example Poland, Hungary

and Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria lacked an organised dissident movement, and under the

leadership of Todor Zhivkov Bulgaria remained a loyal Soviet satellite. In fact, the

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[48] Interview with Dr Ilona Tomova, Sofia 25 October 2001.
[49] Krassimir Kanev, 'From Totalitarianism to a Constitutional State', p. 68.

political elite in Sofia was so closely tied to Moscow that Zhivkov once proposed that Bulgaria be made a proper Soviet republic.[50] Bulgaria's positive attitude to the Soviet Union can be at least partly attributed to the historical memory of Russia as the 'liberator' of the Bulgarian nation from the Ottoman 'yoke' in 1878, and to the linguistic and cultural similarities between the two nations.

As Bulgaria followed Moscow's lead with little questioning, the introduction in the Soviet Union of *glasnost* and *perestroika* by Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s, effectively meant that the same policies were adopted in Bulgaria, although Zhivkov was reportedly ill at ease with the politics of Gorbachev. The Bulgarian experience thus differs from that of other former Soviet satellites "in the fact that a political campaign in the hegemonic state – Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika policies in the USSR – created the basis for the first open opposition to the communist regime in Bulgaria since the 1940s."[51]

It was only in the late 1980s that Bulgaria saw the emergence of organised dissident groups, but because of the lack of a popular anti-communist movement, the downfall of Zhivkov on 10 November 1989 was the result not of pressure from below but of a 'palace coup' within the Communist Party. Thus Bulgaria's road toward democracy "began not as a result of internal evolution but rather as a part of an attempt by some of Zhivkov's colleagues to save their power at a time when the communist bloc was collapsing around them."[52]

In the absence of popular opposition to the communist regime in Bulgaria until the late 1980s, one of the first challenges to the Communist Party came from the Turkish minority's protests – primarily in the spring and summer of 1989 – against

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[50] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War* (London: Longman, 2002), p. 172.

[51] Kyril Drezov, 'Bulgaria: Transition Comes Full Circle, 1989-1997', in Geoffrey Pridham and Tom Gallagher (eds.), *Experimenting with Democracy: Regime Change in the Balkans* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 199.

[52] Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition*, p. 35.

the Bulgarian state's violation of their human rights. Whereas it would be an exaggeration to suggest that the fall of the communist regime in Bulgaria was a direct result of the crisis that followed from the forced assimilation campaign, it can nonetheless be argued that the emergence of an interethnic crisis at the end of the 1980s forced political elites to address the ethnic, or national, issue as a component of the transition, and helped pave the way for political pluralism. As Krassimir Kanev notes, "The fall of the communist system in Bulgaria was initiated by the removal from power of...Todor Zhivkov on 10 November 1989. From the very beginning, this process was parallel to attempts at healing the wounds in interethnic relations opened during communism."[53] The link between on the one hand, the anti-Turkish policies of Zhivkov's regime and the protests that they incurred and, on the other, the palace coup in November 1989, is supported by the fact that immediately following the Party-led ousting of Zhivkov, the new communist leadership stopped the repressive actions against the Turkish and Muslim minorities and on 29 December 1989, the State Council and the Council of Ministers declared that all names forcibly changed would be restored.[54] Ultimately, of course, the palace coup was carried out by members of the Party elite who sought to retain their power as communism was beginning to crumble in Eastern Europe.[55] Yet, according to Antonina Zhelyazkova, once Bulgaria's communist regime had collapsed, "the attempts to restore the rights of the Turks and the Pomaks were the first manifestations of democracy..."[56]

By the autumn of 1989, Bulgaria found itself isolated from the international community because of its treatment of the Turkish and Muslim minorities; the Bulgarian economy was in a state of crisis, which in turn was partly a consequence of

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[53] Krassimir Kanev, 'Law and Politics on Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Bulgaria', p. 80.
[54] Krassimir Kanev, 'From Totalitarianism to a Constitutional State', p. 54.
[55] Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition*, p. 35.
[56] Antonina Zhelyazkova, 'Bulgaria's Muslim Minorities', p. 174.

the fact that so many Turks had fled the country in the previous months, thus straining the agricultural sector as well as the industry; there was growing tension within the country, particularly in the ethnically mixed regions; and the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, had distanced himself from the Zhivkov regime, in part because of the forced assimilation campaign.[57] All of these factors undoubtedly contributed to the decision made by members of the Bulgarian Communist Party to remove Zhivkov from power, and to introduce policy changes that would eventually lead to a regime transition.

The lack of any organised anti-communist movement in Bulgaria also helps to explain the relatively weak forces of democratisation within the country before and during the transition period and the consequent influence of international institutions in promoting the development of democratic political structures in Bulgaria. Thus, whilst the initial changes in Bulgaria were brought about as result of the new policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the 'parent' state, the Soviet Union, later developments were to be largely influenced by pressures from Western Europe, as Brussels came to replace Moscow in terms of parental influence on the political leaders in Sofia.

4.4. The Road from Interethnic Crisis to Democracy

As noted, Bulgaria's record with regards to the recognition and protection of minority rights is a mixed one, and whilst the transition towards democracy resulted in the integration of the Bulgarian Turks into the new political structures, democratisation has not led to an all-encompassing integration of ethnic minorities, as the continued discrimination of the Roma and the non-recognition of a Macedonian minority clearly

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[57] In an interview in the Bulgarian newspaper *Standart* (May 2001), Mikhail Gorbachev claimed that, contrary to what Todor Zhivkov had led his Party colleagues to believe, Gorbachev never gave his consent to the 1984-85 assimilation campaign.

illustrate. The success story of the Bulgarian transition, and the basis for the popular notion that there exists a particular Bulgarian 'ethnic model', is the improved situation of the Turkish minority and its political integration. At the start of the transition, democratisation was taken to be almost synonymous with minority rights, that is, in the context of restoring the rights that the Turks and Muslim had previously been deprived of. But once the names had been returned, minority rights were seen as having been sufficiently protected; there was little thought of issues such as access to the labour market for minorities, etc.[58]

In 1990, Ahmed Dogan, an ethnic Turkish intellectual who had been imprisoned by the communist regime during the second half of the 1980s, established the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), a predominantly ethnic Turkish political organisation, which had emerged from the illegal Turkish National Liberation Movement in Bulgaria, established in Varna[59] in 1985 by Bulgarian Turkish intellectuals to protect the rights of the Turkish minority in the face of state-sponsored repression.[60] However, because Article 11:4 of the 1991 Constitution expressly prohibits political parties on ethnic, racial, or religious lines, the legitimacy of the MRF was to become a matter of controversy in the next couple of years. Both the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP, the renamed Bulgarian Communist Party) and the anti-communist Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) sought to use the MRF for their own political purposes, namely to defeat one another, and hence tacitly condoned the existence of a de facto ethnic party. On the one hand, UDF saw MRF as an anti-communist ally on which it could rely on for support. On the other hand, BSP

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[58] Interview with Dr Andrey Ivanov, Political Consultant, Sofia 18 December 2001.
[59] A Bulgarian town on the Black Sea coast.
[60] Ibrahim Tatarli, 'Dvishenie za Prava i Svobodi, Faktor za Demokratsia, Razbiratelstvo i Sigurnost v Stranata i na Balkanite' ('Movement for Rights and Freedom, Factor of Democracy, Understanding and Security in the Country and in the Balkans'), unpublished paper, Sofia, 2000, p. 11; Albert P. Malone, *Creating Parliamentary Government: The Transition to Democracy in Bulgaria* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1998), p. 197.

reckoned that the presence of MRF would in fact weaken the opposition by splitting the vote.[61] Nonetheless, in 1991 a number of BSP deputies launched a legal bid to have the MRF declared unconstitutional. Yet, in April 1992, failing to reach a majority vote on the legal status of the MRF, the Constitutional Court effectively confirmed the MRF's legal right to exist.[62] The fact that MRF has been allowed to function although it is commonly perceived of as an ethnic party, has led some to suggest that the restriction imposed by Article 11:4 has become largely irrelevant and as such does not constitute an effective violation of the freedom of association – which is guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights, both of which Bulgaria has ratified. Yet at the same time, Bulgaria has evoked Article 11:4 as a justification for preventing the registration of the United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden (UMO-Ilinden), on the grounds that it is an ethnic party with separatist pretensions. UMO-Ilinden subsequently took the case to the European Court of Human Rights, which in October 2001 ruled in its favour.

Article 11:4 originated as part of a political compromise reached at the time when Bulgaria was being afflicted by heightened interethnic tension; when nationalist rallies ensued following the restoration of the rights of the Turkish minority, the government convened special roundtable talks on the 'national' issue, at which an agreement was signed by representatives of the BSP and the UDF, declaring that the names of the Turks and Muslims must be restored as well as their minority rights. But as a compromise, to placate nationalist elements in society, Article 11:4 was established. Arguably, the overall intention was to prevent minorities from organising politically. As noted by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Article 11:4 has been

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[61] Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition*, p. 44.
[62] Ibid., p. 58.

enforced "only against some ethnic minorities, but not against mainstream parties based on or calling themselves 'Christian Democratic.' They would normally be enforced against a minority party having the name of the minority in its title or aiming at protection of some minority interest, but not against a party that has in its name 'Bulgarian' (as many parties do) or aims at [the] protection [of] the specific interest of Bulgarians as an ethnic group (as some parties do)."[63]

According to communist propaganda of the 'revival' process in the second half of the 1980s, no Turks existed within the borders of Bulgaria, only ethnic Bulgarians who had been converted to Islam by the Ottomans. With the fall of the communist regime, the reversal of the assimilation process and the initiation of democratisation thus came an official acknowledgement that there were indeed Turks living in Bulgarian lands. This official recognition on the part of the political elites, came as somewhat of a shock to the Bulgarian public, which was to be followed by a yet another shock when the MRF, a predominantly Turkish party, was lawfully registered in the Sofia court in 1990.[64] At this point, it was no longer possible to ignore the ethnic issue in Bulgaria, a realisation that was far from politically convenient for the ethnic Bulgarian elites. The registration of the MRF as a political party can be seen as tacit recognition that Bulgaria's citizenry included ethnic minorities as well. Thus, the initiation of a democratic political system was accompanied by – and arguably consolidated by – the (sometimes reluctant) recognition within the Bulgarian society of 'the other', i.e. non-ethnic Bulgarian citizens. The importance of this should not be underestimated, as fundamental to

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[63] Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, 'The Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: Bulgaria', Sofia, September 1999, p. 25.
[64] Interview with Mr Dinko Draganov, Editor, *Balkanite*, a magazine on Balkan affairs, Sofia 23 August 2000.

democracy is the existence, tolerance and acceptance of differences; that is, the recognition of 'the other' is a vital requisite for democracy.[65]

Partly in response to nationalist sentiments and the consequent fear on the part of the UDF that a more liberal stance on minority issues would result in lost votes, and partly because the UDF thought of itself as representing all anti-communist formations, the MRF was not included as an official representative at the National Roundtable talks, conducted between January and May 1990, with the purpose of establishing the rules and principles of the democratic transition. Furthermore, any attempt to initiate a discussion on the ethnic issue at the Roundtable talks was suppressed, although the Committee for National Reconciliation did have a number of representatives present at the talks, as part of the UDF quota. This Committee had been set up in 1989 by members of the Bulgarian intelligentsia in response to the emerging interethnic crisis. Its purpose was to promote tolerant interethnic relations and minority rights, premised on the idea that the Bulgarian nation constituted a 'citizen nation' rather than 'ethnic nation'. The concept of nation was thus interpreted as *political* nation, "i.e. as a community of people united by the idea of [a] common state." As such, Bulgaria was perceived by the members of the Committee as a "uninational (in the sense of political nation) state of ethnic, religious and language diversity."[66] The Committee's membership was made up of Bulgarian citizens of different ethnic, religious as well as political affiliation. During its existence, from 1989 to 1991, the Committee played an active role in calling for the restoration of the rights of the Turkish and Muslim minorities in Bulgaria, and served as the moral

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[65] Interview with Professor Georgi Fotev, Director, Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 28 August 2000.

[66] Mihail Ivanov and Ilona Tomova, 'Ethnic Groups and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Bulgaria'. Paper presented at the German-Bulgarian Journalistic Seminar, organised by Bertelsmann Foundation in cooperation with the Faculty for Journalism and Mass Communication, Sofia University and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bankya 26-30 August 1993, p. 7.

voice of the Bulgarian intelligentsia.[67] It ceased to function after the MRF has been founded and most of the Turks who had been members of the former chose to join the Movement.

The democratic opposition in Bulgaria – spearheaded by the UDF – has tended, with some justification, to regard itself as having played an important role in alleviating ethnic tensions brought about by the Zhivkov regime's forceful policies towards the minorities. According to Zheliu Zhelev, president of Bulgaria from 1990 to 1997, had there not been a democratic opposition, Bulgaria would have suffered a violent interethnic conflict. Hence there was a direct link between the pro-democracy movement and the restoration of minority rights. Similarly, Ahmed Dogan, the leader of the MRF, claims that without the establishment of a Turkish/Muslim minority party in 1990, Bulgaria would have slid towards civil war.[68] Furthermore, Antonina Zhelyazkova, a former advisor to President Zhelev on ethnic and religious questions, suggests that because of the forcible assimilation campaign of the late 1980s, the emerging pro-democracy movement in Bulgaria became intimately linked with the rights of the minorities in the sense that being in favour of minority rights became synonymous with being a democrat, whilst being against the restoration of rights for the minorities effectively meant being a communist.[69] Hence, given the interethnic crisis that developed as a consequence of the Zhivkov regime's increasingly repressive measures against Turks and Muslims, the prevention of violent conflict became a necessary component of the democratic transition in 1989-91. The inclusion of Turks in the democratic political structures was therefore a means to avoid conflict and to make up for past repression and the tacit public acquiescence to the

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[67] Interview with Dr Ilona Tomova, Sofia 25 October 2001.
[68] Interview with Mr Ahmed Dogan, Leader of the MRF, Sofia 1 November 2001.
[69] Interview with Dr Antonina Zhelyazkova, Director, International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, Sofia 17 December 2001.

assimilation process, as many Bulgarians experienced a "feeling of collective shame that no attempts had been made to save the Pomaks and the Turks in the way that an earlier generation of Bulgarians had defended the Jews during the Second World War."[70] Paradoxically, the assimilation campaign may have contributed to the development of a more ethnically inclusive democratisation process – in contrast with developments in other Balkan states – in so far as it resulted in a heightened level of sensitivity and guilt complex amongst the ethnic Bulgarian majority, compelling them to be more 'generous' towards the Turkish minority in terms of political inclusion than they might otherwise have. The relative non-aggressive reactions from the Turkish community in Bulgaria as well as from Turkey during and after the assimilation campaign, also contributed to a diminished perception that the Turkish minority constituted a threat to the integrity and security of the Bulgarian state and the ethnic Bulgarian majority. The mobilisation of a pro-democratic civil society in Bulgaria thus "took place under the slogans of 'democracy,' 'human rights,' and 'equality for minorities'."[71] The Bulgarian 'success story' – in terms of peaceful inter-ethnic co-existence – is perhaps arguably better explained by circumstances rather than as the direct consequence of a unique tradition of ethnic/religious tolerance. Whilst the Yugoslav leader Josep Broz Tito sought to appease most of the ethnic communities that made up the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), Bulgaria's Zhivkov embarked on a chauvinistic campaign against a minority whose kin-state was then a member of the ideological enemy. The communist association with the anti-Turkish policies in turn enabled Bulgarians and, to a more limited extent, Turks to 'solve' the problem simply by disassociation from

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[70] Antonina Zhelyazkova, 'Bulgaria's Muslim Minorities', p. 175.
[71] Ibid., p.174.

communism. The litmus test, however, was to be the successful political integration of the Turkish minority in a democratic Bulgaria.

4.5. Toward a Bulgarian Ethnic Model? The MRF, National Politics and Interethnic Relations in the 1990s

Although widely considered to be an ethnic party, the difference between the MRF and most other ethnically based parties in the Balkans, is that its political agenda was never ethnocentric but national. Whilst the MRF's political platform in the first multi-party elections did contain some degree of confrontation, as the memory of the assimilation campaign was still very palpable, as was the fear of Turkish rights being violated again in the future, in subsequent elections the MRF's discourse was increasingly guided by the politics of civic ideas rather than by the politics of ethnic identity. This was indeed evident in the 1994 elections, when the MRF's slogan was "Bulgaria for All!"[72] Since its establishment, the MRF has sought to present itself as a national and as a liberal party.[73] Yet at the same time, the party is compelled to orientate itself to the left in order to protect the interests of its voters, many of who are amongst the most economically vulnerable in Bulgaria today. According to Ibrahim Tatarli, a former MP and intellectual from the Turkish community, the politics of the MRF are guided by the following principles and beliefs: anticommunism, liberal democracy, a constitutional state, market economy, socially

[72] Antonina Zhelyazkova, 'Bulgaria's Muslim Minorities', p. 178.
[73] In December 2001, the MRF was accepted into the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, which is home to most of the European liberal parties. Source: 'The Bulgarian Ethnic Experience', Conference report, 29-30 June and 18 December 2001, Sofia, Project on Ethnic Relations, p. 1.

oriented politics and the protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens from all ethnic and religious communities.[74]

Since its inception, the MRF has pursued a non-ethnic, but national political agenda, and although it has worked towards the restoration of previously denied minority rights, it has never entertained an irredentist agenda, or advocated any form of territorial autonomy for the Turkish minority. On the contrary, Ahmed Dogan has categorically distanced himself from such ideas, and instead firmly declared his – and the party's – commitment to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Bulgarian state.[75] Hence, the MRF's claims have been limited to that of cultural autonomy for the Turkish and Muslim minorities. Three factors in particular appear to have condition the moderate behaviour of the MRF in Bulgarian politics during the first decade of democratisation: first, the introduction of Article 11:4 in the 1991 constitution effectively forced the MRF to take a moderate stance so as not to be accused of engaging in ethnic politics, which in turn could jeopardy its continued legitimisation as an active participant in Bulgarian politics. Second, continued emigration of Turks from Bulgaria since 1989 has resulted in a decrease in the size of the MRF's constituency, so that the MRF has found itself in danger of not passing the four percent threshold required for parliamentary representation, a situation that arose in the 1994 elections.[76] Since the mid-1990s the MRF leadership has sought to compensate the loss of Turkish emigrants through attempts at soliciting voters beyond the Turkish and Muslim minorities. By 2001, it is claimed, a full ten percent of the approximately 50,000 strong membership of the MRF is made up of ethnic

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[74] Ibrahim Tatarli, 'Obshtonatsionalna partija, factor za demokratsijata v stranata' ('Nation-wide Party, Factor of Democracy in the Country') *Prava i Svobodi* (*Rights and Freedoms*), 5 March 1998, p. 10.
[75] Ibid., p. 9.
[76] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War* (London: Longman, 2002), p. .313; Hugh Poulton, 'Turkey as Kin-State: Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Turkish and Muslim Communities in the Balkans', in Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (eds.), *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State* (London: Hurst & Co., 1997), p. 210.

Bulgarians, many of whom live in northern Bulgaria.[77] Third, the Turkish state's generally cautious stance vis-à-vis their kin in Bulgaria over the past decade, meant that the MRF could not rely on overt support from Turkey for any ethno-politically motivated purposes.

Whilst there have been plenty of speculation as to whether the MRF was in fact deliberately set up by the Bulgarian Communist Party to serve its interests, the fact remains that the existence of an ethnically Turkish party like the MRF, and particularly the leadership of Ahmed Dogan, significantly contributed to the peaceful development of democracy in Bulgaria at a time when most its neighbours fell victim to nationalist violence and war. The very existence of the MRF and its active participation in parliament since the beginning of the democratisation process effectively aided the integration of the Turkish community at a time when recent repression against this minority remained a potential threat to interethnic peace in the country. For the Turkish minority, the first sign of democratisation in Bulgaria was not the change of political leadership but the decision to restore the names of Turks and Muslims. The second sign, in turn, was the creation of the MRF, an important gesture in so far as it showed the Turkish community that the democratisation process was indeed genuine. The emergence of the MRF as a political representative of the Turks also helped to restore their confidence in the Bulgarian state.[78]

At the first multi-party elections held in 1990, the MRF won 23 seats in the parliament, and thus established itself as the third largest political party in Bulgarian politics, after the BSP and UDF. A year later it increased its representation to 24 seats, and as neither the UDF nor the BSP was able to win a majority of the seats, the MRF became the balancing party in the middle, whose nominally liberal profile

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[77] 'The Bulgarian Ethnic Experience', Conference report, 29-30 June and 18 December 2001, Sofia, Project on Ethnic Relations, p. 19.
[78] Interview with Ms Tatiana Vaksberg, Journalist, Radio Free Europe, Sofia 12 November 2001.

enabled it to support either a BSP- or UDF-led government, thus consolidating its significance in Bulgarian politics.[79] Since the beginning of the democratisation process, the MRF has therefore played an important part in Bulgarian politics and by adopting a moderate, non-ethnic party platform, it has managed to persuade an initially wary public opinion that it is a responsible and trustworthy national Bulgarian party.[80] The increased acceptance in the Bulgarian society of the MRF as a legitimate force in Bulgarian politics has arguably also reflected well on Bulgarian attitudes towards the Turkish community in general. As Vesselin Dimitrov notes, the transition to democratic rule has brought about "increased awareness and toleration of ethnic diversity."[81] If indeed, as many suggest, Bulgaria has a unique ethnic model, than that model exists in part because of the attitudes and behaviours of the MRF. In contrast to, for example, the Albanian parties in Kosovo during the 1990s, the MRF (as well as other minority parties in Bulgaria) never refused to take part in political life. Instead it has sought to influence political development in Bulgaria through active participation.[82]

It is also important to note that since its establishment, the MRF has had virtual monopoly on the political representation of Turks in Bulgaria, and any attempts during the 1990s to set up an alternative Turkish party was effectively obstructed. The lack of internal competition and fragmentation within the Turkish community in Bulgaria helped to consolidate its power on the Bulgarian political scene, by ensuring that the MRF solicited the maximum Turkish vote to secure its representation in parliament.

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[79] Krassimir Kanev, 'From Totalitarianism to a Constitutional State', p. 64.
[80] Interview with Professor Antony Todorov, Head of the Department of Political Science, New Bulgarian University, Sofia 22 November 2001.
[81] Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition*, p. 63.
[82] Interview with Professor Antony Todorov, Sofia 22 November 2001.

In the early 1990s the Bulgarian public was generally wary of the emergence of an ethnic Turkish party and although the MRF consolidated its position within Bulgarian politics early on in the democratisation process, the idea of appointing ethnic Turks to important political positions was still out of the question. When in 1992 the MRF withdrew its support for the UDF-led government, leading to its defeat in a vote of no confidence by the parliament, the MRF was given the task of nominating candidates for a new government to be formed. The resulting 'expert' government under the politically unaffiliated Lyuben Berov, was thus mandated through the MRF, yet including no ethnic Turk on the MRF posts.[83]

The MRF's important position in Bulgarian politics during the 1990s, doubtlessly facilitated the restoration and further development of minorities' right, especially those of Turks and Muslims, in so far as the MRF was able to put pressure on either the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) or the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) to restore the rights of Turkish pupils to study their mother tongue in school. Although the government had declared that Turkish language instruction would be reintroduced in areas with a substantial Turkish population, nationalist objections from ethnic Bulgarians led to a delay in the implementation of Turkish language studies in municipal schools, prompting the MRF to rally its voters in protest, resulting in a Turkish parents refusing to send their children to school for several months. According to representatives of the MRF, however, it has never been the party's policy to press for schools offering teaching *in* the Turkish language, as much as teaching *of* the language[84]. Rather than demanding the establishment of all-Turkish schools, the MRF "prefers students to attend Bulgarian schools to study English as

[83] Albert P. Malone, *Creating Parliamentary Government: The Transition to Democracy in Bulgaria* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1998), p. 204.
[84] 'The Bulgarian Ethnic Experience', Conference report, 29-30 June and 18 December 2001, Sofia, Project on Ethnic Relations, p. 29.

their foreign language...with Turkish language courses taking third place in the schools or left for the home."[85]

Bulgaria's handling of issues pertaining to ethnic and religious minorities since the regime transition has also been affected by which party that has been in power, the BSP or the UDF. For example, the second UDF government, in power from 1997 to 2001, sought to project a pro-European profile, and as such more sensitive to international pressure on Bulgaria's human rights and minority rights issues.[86] It was also under this administration that the National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Affairs was set up as a consultative body responsible for proposing and developing strategies to protect the rights of Bulgaria's minorities and to promote interethnic tolerance.

Although the 1991 constitution defines Bulgaria as a parliamentary democracy with only limited powers for the President, Zheliu Zhelev, the first leader of the UDF, elected President by the Grand National Assembly in 1990 and re-elected in a direct, popular vote in 1992, the president's office offered a measure of continuity and stability in a period of political turbulence as Bulgaria saw one government administration after another emerge and fall within the first few years of democratic rule. A former dissident and defender of the rights of the minorities in the country, Zhelev set up within his office an advisory group on ethnic and religious relations, which came to participate in all OSCE activities as members of the official Bulgarian delegation, thus helping to move the position of Bulgaria from a very restrictive country in terms of minority rights, towards the middle of the spectrum.

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[85] Ibid., p. 1.
[86] Interview with Mr Emil Cohen, President, Tolerance Foundation, Sofia 26 October 2001.

Furthermore, the advisory group openly admitted to the existence of discrimination against minorities in Bulgaria.[87]

A positive effect of the transition from a totalitarian to a democratic political system and the integration of the MRF into Bulgarian politics, was the lessening of the taboo on Bulgaria's ethnic and religious composition, thus helping to increase awareness amongst Bulgarian citizens of the multiethnic nature of their country. One illustration of this change was the re-instatement in the 1992 Bulgarian census of the right of respondents to ethnic self-identification.[88] This decision was not without controversy, however. In parliamentary discussions preceding the census, nationalist MPs stated their opposition to the inclusion of questions pertaining to ethnicity, religion and language, arguing "that since the 1991 constitution did not recognize the existence of national minorities in the country, questions about the ethnic characteristics of the population were not needed or useful or that such information can only 'serve foreign interests'..."[89] The official results of the census indicated that approximately 85 percent of the total population identified themselves as Bulgarians, and 9.7 percent as Turks. The percentage of the population identifying themselves as Muslim approximated 12.7 percent.[90]

Neither the UDF nor the BSP openly embraced nationalism as an official party policy, in contrast with for example, the marginal right-wing Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (VMRO).[91] As the successor to the Bulgarian Communist Party, the BSP was however associated with anti-Turkish

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[87] Interview with Mr Mihail Ivanov (second meeting), Sofia 6 November 2001.
[88] Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition*, p. 63.
[89] Ali Eminov, 'The Turks in Bulgaria: Post-1989 Developments', *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1999, p. 34.
[90] Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition*, p. 63.
[91] Today's VMRO is inspired by the original VMRO, which was established in 1893 as a militant political movement aiming to liberate Macedonia from the Ottomans, with the help of terrorist tactics The movement split into two factions, however, one of which advocated the incorporation of Macedonia into Bulgaria, and the other which sought to establish an independent Macedonian state.

attitudes, thereby making the MRF a potential ally of the UDF, whose anti-communist coalition it had attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to join in 1990.[92]

In spite of Bulgaria's relatively good record in terms of human and minority rights for much of the 1990s, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that the country successfully developed a 'model' of ethnic relations. More than a decade after the forcible assimilation campaign, ethnicity and religion remain sensitive issues in Bulgarian politics and society. The Turkish question is considered 'solved' through the participation of the MRF in national politics, and the problems of the Roma community are generally regarded not as issues of human and minority rights protection to be politically handled, but rather as being of a socio-economic nature. The Turkish experience – via the MRF – represents not a model that has become a generally accepted blueprint for minority participation in the political affairs of the country, but is more accurately viewed as a particular outcome of particular political and historical circumstances.

Following a banking crisis in 1996, which led to a period of hyperinflation, public support for the government fell sharply and in January 1997 mass rallies were staged in a bid to bring about new elections. On 1 July 1997, a currency board[93] was finally introduced in an effort to stabilise the economy and appease the population. As a result, hyperinflation came to an end and by 1999 foreign direct investment had risen to three times the level of 1996.[94]

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[92] Interview with Professor Antony Todorov, Sofia 22 November 2001.
[93] Under the currency board, annual inflation was reduced to 13% by mid-1998, and by the end of 1998 it had fallen to 1%. During the same period, foreign exchange reserves rose from less than $800 million to more than $3 billion. The Bulgarian National Bank's basic interest rate fell from a high of 200% to 5.2% by the end of 1998. Source: Anne-Marie Gulde, 'The Role of the Currency Board in Bulgaria's Stabilization', *Finance & Development*, September 1999, p. 39.
[94] M. Steven Fish and Robin S. Brooks, 'Bulgarian Democracy's Organizational Weapon', *East European Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 3, Summer 2000, p. 68.

Yet, in spite of severe economic difficulties and a substantial amount of political infighting during the first few years of Bulgaria's democratisation process – due largely to the immaturity of the new political system and politicians' inexperience with democratic politics – Bulgaria managed to establish a procedurally democratic system in the early 1990s in contrast to most other countries in the region, and was, according to Freedom House's ratings, the second Balkan state (following Slovenia) to be classified as 'Free'.[95]

4.6. The Role of Bulgaria-Turkey Relations in Moderating Bulgaria's Interethnic Relations

As the communist regime in Bulgaria sought to implement its assimilationist policies against the Turkish and Muslim minorities, Turkey, a country with strong military tradition and also a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and as such an ideological enemy, was demonised by Bulgaria, a member of the Warsaw Pact.[96] Whilst there have been suggestions (mainly from the Bulgarian side) that Turkey and Bulgaria nearly found themselves in an armed confrontation due to the latter's treatment of its Turkish minority in the late 1980s, a closer look at the situation indicates that this is unlikely to actually have been the case. At the time, the Warsaw Pact was still intact, which meant that if Turkey had gone to war with Bulgaria, such an act of aggression would in all likelihood have been interpreted by

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[95] Freedom House, Freedom in the World Country Ratings, 1972-73 to 2001-2002, www.freedomhouse.org Freedom House's annual survey is based on the scale of political rights and civil liberties enjoyed by the individuals of a country. From 1972 to 1990 Bulgaria was classified as 'Not Free', measuring 7,7 for political rights and civil liberties, on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 represents the highest degree of rights and liberties and 7 the lowest. Following the fall of Zhivkov, Bulgaria was rated 3,4, 'Partially Free' for 1990-91. From 1991-92, Bulgaria has continuously been classified as 'Free' with political rights reaching a score of 1 and civil liberties measuring 3 by 2001-02.

[96] Interview with Dr Ilona Tomova, Sofia 25 October 2001.

Moscow as an attack on the Soviet Union as well.[97] Furthermore, as a NATO member and a close ally of the United States, Turkey would have had to clear any armed attack with the United States. Bearing in mind that Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* had eased the tension between the two superpowers by the late 1980s, it appears very unlikely that the Americans would have approved of a Turkish attack on Bulgaria.[98] Nonetheless, relations between Bulgaria and Turkey were strained by the Zhivkov regime's repressive actions against the Turkish minority.

Whilst the initial reaction amongst Turkey's leaders to the forced name-changing campaign of 1984-85 was one of caution, the Turkish public – and particularly those with relatives in Bulgaria – reacted very strongly. As a result, demonstrations were organised, and Turkish television broadcast pictures of masses of Bulgarian Turks fleeing from their homes towards the Turkish border.[99] Responding to the outrage of the public, the Turkish Prime Minister, Turgut Özal, appeared at one of the rallies in Istanbul, making "empty threats of marching on Sofia."[100]

The end of the Cold War and the East-West division meant that relations between Bulgaria and Turkey became normalised. Since Bulgaria's political regime transition the Turkish state has exercised influence over the relations between Bulgarians and ethnic Turks in so far as a friendly Turkish policy towards Bulgaria has reflected positively on the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.[101] Had Turkey's position towards Bulgaria been aggressive, on the other hand, it would most likely have

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[97] Interview with Professor William Hale, Department of Politics and International Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London 3 May 2002.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Hugh Poulton, 'Turkey as a Kin-State: Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Turkish and Muslim Communities in the Balkans', in Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (eds.), *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State* (London: Hurst and Company, 1997), p. 208.
[101] Interview with Mr Mihail Ivanov, Sofia 10 October 2001.

reflected negatively on the attitudes of Bulgaria's Turkish population vis-à-vis the ethnic Bulgarians, and vice versa. Amicable political relations between Bulgaria and Turkey in the 1990s were synchronised with Bulgarian attitudes towards its Turkish minority.[102]

By and large, Turkey's attitude to post-communist Bulgaria was influenced by the policy introduced by Kemal Attatürk, modern Turkey's founding father, to maintain good relations with Bulgaria. For Turkey, the road to Europe goes inevitably through Bulgaria, its western neighbour. Just as for Bulgaria, it is important for Turkey to be regarded as European.[103] Hence, there is a convergence of Bulgarian and Turkish interests - European integration - that in turn has a positive effect on the situation of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria. Since Bulgaria became an EU applicant, Turkey's wish to nurture friendly relations with Bulgaria is likely to have increased, in so far as Turkey perceives its own chances of eventually joining the EU to be helped by good relations with Bulgaria.

As a general principle Turkey's policy towards its kin in the Balkans and elsewhere (with the notable exception of Cyprus) "has been characterised by caution. This is in line with Attatürk's dictum of 'peace at home, peace in the world'..."[104] Turkey's position, therefore, has generally been that while it "continues as a potential home for kin-groups in times of extreme hardship, it would be better if they remained as citizens of their respective states and act as a link to Turkey."[105] Overall, in spite of a protracted conflict with Greece over Cyprus as well as Muslim minority in Greece, Turkey has sought to maintain a restrained and non-confrontational policy

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[102] Interview with Dr Plamen Pantev, Director, Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS), Sofia 15 October 2001.
[103] Second interview with Mr Mihail Ivanov, Sofia 6 November 2001.
[104] Hugh Poulton, 'Turkey as Kin-State: Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Turkish and Muslim Communities in the Balkans', p. 200.
[105] Ibid.

towards its Balkan neighbours. In the case of Bulgaria and Macedonia in particular, Turkey's positive bilateral relations with each country have been reflected in inter-communal relations between the Turkish minorities and the ethnic majority in these two countries. For Turkey, perhaps the main question during the first half of the 1990s in regards to its position in the Balkans, was 'how did Turkish power in the Balkans collapse?' The answer could be found in the traditional alliances between Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria. Turkey therefore sought to build an entente with Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania so as to prevent these Balkan countries from forming an alliance with Greece in the post-Cold War period.[106] All the same, Turkey's relations with its friends in the Balkans have since become of secondary importance to those of Greek-Turkish relations and Turkey's relations with the European Union.

Turkey's own troubling conflict with its Kurdish minority must also be taken into account as a contributing factor to the relatively low-key Turkish position in regards to the Bulgarian Turks in the post-Cold War period. Turkey strictly maintains the principle that international borders are inviolable and hence it would never support a Turkish secessionist movement in Bulgaria, aware of the implications that would have for Kurdish irredentism at home.

Turkey's generally friendly position towards Bulgaria and non-interference in Bulgaria's policy towards its Turkish minority throughout the 1990s can perhaps also be explained by the fact that at the time Turkey had more pressing concerns, such as its troubled relations with neighbouring Greece, Iran and Iraq, all of which were perceived as potentially explosive security threats and thus demanded more attention than did the question of the Bulgarian Turks. Following the disintegration of the

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[106] Interview with Professor William Hale, London 3 May 2002.

Soviet Union, and the establishment of five independent republics[107] in Central Asia, Turkey's backyard, also meant a shift in its foreign policy priorities away from the Balkans towards Central Asia.[108] During the course of the 1990s, another priority for Turkey was the fostering of good relations with Israel, which was partly influenced by their shared concerns over Syria.[109]

It is interesting to note that the Turkish communities inhabiting the Balkans tend to be significantly loyal to the states in which they live, and the Turkish minority in Bulgaria is a case par excellence, along with the Turkish community in Macedonia which has tended to be very loyal not only to the Macedonian state, but also to the dominant Macedonian nation rather than to the Albanians, with which they share the same religion. This high level of loyalty, in turn, has arguably helped to limit interethnic tension. Whilst some may argue that the explanation lies in the relatively small percentage of Turks in each of these countries, it seems that the attitude of Turkey vis-à-vis the Balkans and the Turkish minorities there is of significance in explaining the relative lack of tension between minority Turks and other ethnic groups in the region.

For post-communist Bulgaria, tolerance towards its Turkish minority was also been important for the sake of state security as well as for advancing the Bulgarian aspiration of NATO membership, a foreign policy goal that was finally achieved in the spring of 2004. Turkey is not only a much larger and more militarily powerful state than Bulgaria, but it is also an influential NATO member and traditional ally of the Americans, with whom Bulgaria also seeks to maintain good relations. Hence, Bulgarian political leaders have a strong incentive to maintain good relations with the Turkish minority, especially as there is a concern amongst politicians that Bulgaria

[107] Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.
[108] William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 297-288.
[109] Ibid., pp. 296-297.

might be left behind in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration. Hence, whilst Turkey has historically been regarded by Bulgaria as its enemy, and the memory of Ottoman domination remains strong in the Bulgarian psyche, the end of the Cold War and the convergence of Bulgarian and Turkish interests have contributed to much improved relations between the two countries. This in turn has arguably had a positive affect on Bulgarian attitudes, and acceptance, of the MRF as a political force in Bulgaria.[110]

Since the early 1990s, Bulgarian and Turkish interests in, and policies towards, the Balkans have also converged, compelling the two states to maintain good bilateral relations. For example, both countries support the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Macedonia and thus were among the first states to officially recognise an independent Macedonian state in 1992.

4.7. Democratisation and Minority Rights in Bulgaria: The External Dimension

International institutions – the Council of Europe and the European Union in particular, but also the European Court for Human Rights – had significant impact on Bulgaria's respect for minority rights during its first decade of democratic rule. Bulgaria's efforts to (re)integrate into Europe meant that the country was generally responsive to international pressure to improve human and minority rights. Whilst this was a common phenomenon across the former communist bloc, it had particular implications for Bulgaria in the light of the severe repression of its Turkish minority in the period leading up to regime change. Seeking, in the first instance, to obtain membership in the Council of Europe, Bulgaria was required to harmonise its human rights framework with European standards, as well as ensuring protection of minority

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[110] Interview with Professor Antony Todorov, 22 November 2001.

rights. In the early 1990s, membership in the Council of Europe was an important step towards Bulgaria's "return to Europe", which was from the outset of the democratic transition, the highest priority of Bulgarian foreign policy.[111] In particular, it conferred legitimacy onto the Bulgarian state as a member of the international community. This was significant given the discriminatory policies carried out by the Zhivkov regime against the Turkish minority as recently as the late 1980s. Thus, accession to the Council of Europe offered Bulgaria a way out of its isolation from Europe and the international community previously brought on by decades of communist rule, which eventually culminated in an interethnic crisis. In a sense, membership in the Council of Europe was a good indicator that Bulgaria was in the process of redeeming itself from its past political errors, notably its repressive policies towards ethnic minorities. Moreover, The process of becoming - and remaining - a member has required the adoption of laws in accordance with the Council of Europe, thus resulting in the development of a human rights framework for Bulgaria.[112] Accession to the Council of Europe was, however, not without obstacles. In particular, the Council voiced its criticism of Article 11:4 of the new Bulgarian constitution, which banned the formation of ethnic and religious parties. Bulgaria was finally admitted to the Council of Europe in May 1992, because "in the opinion of the Council, Bulgarian authorities would be flexible in the application of this article."[113] The Bulgarian Central Election Commission also took action to prevent the MRF from participating in the October 2001 parliamentary elections, but

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[111] Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition*, p. 93.
[112] Second interview with Mr Mihail Ivanov, Sofia 6 November 2001.
[113] Kyril Drezov, 'Bulgaria and Macedonia: Voluntary Dependence on External Actors', in Jan Zielonka and Alex Pravda (eds.), *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe: Volume 2 – International and Transnational Factors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 430.

after diplomatic intervention from the European Union and the CSCE, the ban was withdrawn.[114]

In the latter part of the 1990s, the Council of Europe's leverage over Bulgaria was replaced largely by that of the European Union. In 1993, Bulgaria signed an association agreement with the EU and, hoping to receive an invitation to start accession talks, began the process of adapting its legislation to comply with European Union standards, but was faced with a disappointing rebuff in when it became clear in July 1998 that Bulgaria would not be included amongst the fast-track accession states. In December 1999 Bulgaria was however invited to begin accession talks with the EU.[115] Bulgarian accession to the EU has since become a cornerstone of Bulgaria's political and economic agenda, regardless of which party is in power. Hence, the accession criteria set by the European Union have left Bulgaria with no option but to adapt its political and economic system in accordance with EU standards, including those pertaining to minority rights. One of the reasons for the EU's considerable leverage over Bulgaria, and the former's stabilising impact on the interethnic relations in the latter is due to the fact that Bulgarian-EU relations developed faster than did Bulgaria's human rights framework. Hence, Brussels was able to exert significant influence by nurturing a positive relationship with Bulgaria. The influence of the EU on Bulgarian affairs is also illustrated by the observation that since the EU started negotiations with Bulgaria on the issue of accession, it has become impossible for the latter to choose the path of ethnic violence, since it is well understood that such a course would put an immediate stop to Bulgaria's ambition to join the EU.[116]

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[114] Ibid.

[115] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War*, p. 321; Emil Giatzidis, *An Introduction to Post-Communist Bulgaria: Political, Economic and Social Transformation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 137.

[116] Interview with Professor Georgi Fotev, Director, Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 28 August 2000.

Eager to be accepted as a European nation once more, Bulgaria signed and ratified a host of international documents pertaining to the protection of human rights in the early 1990s, including amongst others, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. One of the most significant achievements in terms of Bulgaria's development of minority rights protection was the 9 October 1997 signing of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The decision by President Petar Stoyanov to sign the Framework Convention on behalf of Bulgaria was not without controversy, however, as segments of the country's political elite maintained that Bulgaria has no national minorities. According to the 1991 Constitution, Bulgaria is envisaged as a unitary nation-state, and there is no mention of the term 'minority' in the Constitution, which merely refers to "citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian" (Article 36:2) and to "ethnic belonging" of Bulgarian citizens. Hence, Bulgaria is seen as a mono-national, albeit multi-ethnic, state.

Despite Stoyanov's signature, the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was delayed as "...[political] debates revealed a mixture of unfounded and xenophobically motivated opposition, generated by broad public circles, but mainly among circles of the Bulgarian Socialist Party and [VMRO], to the actual idea of recognising the existence of minorities in the country."[117] In May 1999, the Bulgarian Parliament finally ratified the Convention, issuing an accompanying declaration:

> Confirming its adherence to the values of the Council of Europe and
> the desire for the integration of Bulgaria into the European
> structures, committed to the policy of protection of human rights and
> tolerance to persons belonging to minorities, and their full
> integration into Bulgarian society, the National Assembly of the
> Republic of Bulgaria declares that the ratification and

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[117] Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, 'Human Rights in Bulgaria in 1998', Annual report, Sofia, p. 14.

implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities do not imply any right to engage in any activity violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the unitary Bulgarian State, its internal and international security.[118]

The declaration was thus intended to signal to the Turkish minority that any attempts on their part to seek territorial autonomy would be taken as an act of aggression on the territorial sovereignty of Bulgaria. In light of the deeply felt apprehension that Bulgarians had for extending special rights to the country's ethnic minorities, it is unlikely that minority rights protection would have advanced in the 1990s without the active influence of international institutions on Bulgaria's development of democracy, human rights and minority rights provisions that met European standards. According to the 1991 constitution, all international instruments that have been ratified by the Bulgarian parliament not only become part of domestic law but also supersede any domestic legislation. Hence, the doctrine of the supremacy of international law had had an important stabilising effect on Bulgaria's young democracy.[119]

4.8. Conclusion

Contrary to popular views in Bulgaria, a tradition of ethnic tolerance does not adequately explain why and how the country managed to prevent the interethnic crisis that emerged in 1989 from turning into a violent conflict. Whilst a tolerant past undoubtedly was a contributing factor, although not a sufficient one, this chapter has sought to highlight the connection between on the one hand, the regime transition and

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[118] See 'List of declarations made with respect to treaty no. 157 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities',
www.hri.ca/fortherecord2001/euro2001/documentation/conventions/fcpnm.htm
[119] Krassimir Kanev, 'From Totalitarianism to a Constitutional State', p. 59.

subsequent process of democratisation and, on the other, the peaceful management of interethnic relations in Bulgaria, and the significance of the international dimension. As noted in Chapter One, one crucial prerequisite for successful – and peaceful – democratisation, according to classical democratisation theory, is the existence of 'national unity', or a general, popular, agreement on who the 'demos' is, that is, who are the people to (be) democratise(d). Paradoxically, because of the assimilation process of the mid-1980s, and the guilt complex it incurred, Bulgaria was pushed into accepting a broader, non-ethnically exclusive, definition of the democratic 'demos', thus incorporating the Turkish minority – through the MRF – into the new, democratic, system. Hence Bulgaria 'benefited' from being able to blame past repression of minorities on the communist regime of which all citizens, irrespective of ethnic and religious affiliation, had been victims. Particularly, the emergence of a de facto ethnic Turkish party, the MRF, and its concerted effort to avoid playing the ethnic card, helped to moderate the views on both sides of the ethnic divide. By committing itself to a national political agenda the MRF proved to the ethnic Bulgarian majority that it was a responsible, trustworthy and thus legitimate actor in the political life of Bulgaria. The stabilising role played by the MRF in Bulgaria's fragile democratisation process has also reflected positively on the Turkish community as a whole and twelve years after the first democratic elections – and considering the fact that the MRF is today junior partner in a government coalition – it is perhaps not unreasonable to suggest that over the course of the last decade the Turkish community has become tacitly accepted as part of the Bulgarian political nation, or the Bulgarian *demos*.

The development of a peaceful interethnic situation in Bulgaria has further been influenced by the positive role played by the Council of Europe and the

European Union in aiding the emergence of a minority rights framework for Bulgaria as part of the overall process of democratisation. Finally, the generally cautious and friendly position adopted by Turkey vis-à-vis post-communist Bulgaria has been an important factor in so far as good neighbourly relations between Bulgaria and Turkey has reflected positively on the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

CHAPTER FIVE

Democratising for Peace and Security: The Case of Macedonia

5.1. Introduction

This chapter charts Macedonia's struggle for survival in the 1990s in an insecure region, and argues that the eruption of armed confrontation in 2001 did not mean that all efforts to build peace and democracy in Macedonia had failed in the end. The fact that the war was relatively brief and not nearly as destructive in terms of interethnic relations as the ones in Bosnia and Kosovo, can at least in part be attributed to the decade-long experience of developing a democratic system, although the regime that did emerge over these years was, like most other post-communist democracies, in many ways beset with problems. In comparison with numerous other multiethnic countries undergoing transition from communist rule in South East Europe, Macedonia succeeded above expectations to develop democratic institutional structures and a human rights framework that, on paper at least, met Western standards. Some key characteristics of Macedonian's democratisation process are worth emphasising. To begin with, it was the only ex-Yugoslav republic to manage its regime transition as well as separation from Yugoslavia peacefully. Second, in an otherwise turbulent region, Macedonia's leaders were relatively successful in avoiding the nationalist temptations that were so apparent in Bosnia and elsewhere. Third, left with no army to defend it following the departure of the Yugoslav National Army from Macedonian territory in 1992, democratisation and international integration became main priorities for Macedonia. Yet, while the democratic transition was largely peaceful, and democratic institutions were put in place, by the

end of the 1990s Macedonia had not yet reached the point of democratic maturity where it was possible to discern the emergence of a democratic political culture.

For ten years following its peaceful secession from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), Macedonia defied sceptics' predictions that this small, newly independent country would suffer a similarly violent interethnic war as Bosnia and Kosovo. As late as the summer of 2000, the popular mood in Macedonia remained that of cautious optimism. Having weathered many storms, domestic as well as international, in the years following its declaration of independence, Macedonia was somewhat naively held up as a token island of peace in an otherwise volatile Balkans, and second to Slovenia, it scored the highest of the Balkan states on the index of political freedom and democracy.[1]

Throughout the 1990s, the relationship between Macedonians and Albanians remained tense, resulting in the occasional violent confrontation. Nevertheless, in contrast to Kosovo and Bosnia, a full-fledged armed conflict was avoided. Even at the height of the Kosovo crisis, which led to a massive flow of Albanian refugees into Macedonia and put a severe strain on the country's resources and interethnic peace, Macedonia still managed to avoid the emergence of large-scale violence.

In the spring of 2001, however, Macedonia seemingly ran out of luck, witnessing a six-month long armed confrontation between the Albanian-led guerrilla, the National Liberation Army (NLA), and the Macedonian security forces. Did this mean that Macedonia had finally become another Bosnia, or another Kosovo? Had conflict prevention and democratisation ultimately failed in Macedonia? If not, then what had gone wrong?

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[1] According to Freedom House's country ratings, Macedonia was classified as "Partially Free", measuring between 3 and 4 on political rights and civil liberties since 1992. For details, see www.freedomhouse.org

The Macedonian experience in the 1990s is particularly intriguing as it offers an interesting illustration of the ways in which the process of democratisation can work effectively in ethnically heterogeneous societies; yet also points to some of the factors that can obstruct the development of democracy and peaceful interethnic relations. Thus, the case of Macedonia allows us form a clearer picture of the prospects for, and limitations of, democratisation as a conflict preventive agency in multi-ethnic states. Furthermore, Macedonia's experience with democratisation and conflict prevention highlights the interconnectedness of domestic and international political forces, and demonstrates that democratisation processes do not occur in isolation from events external to the country undergoing political transformation. Until quite recently, the international dimension of democratisation was largely ignored in democratisation theory, which may be due in large part to the fact that questions pertaining to democracy and democratisation were treated mainly within the realm of traditional political science with its focus on the domestic level of analysis. At the same time, democracy theory was a largely un-chartered territory for international relations scholars until it started to emerge within foreign policy analysis in the 1980s. However, Macedonia and Bulgaria clearly show – and particularly when studied in conjunction – the interconnectedness between democratisation and international relations, particularly in the post-Cold War era.

5.2. From Yugoslav Underdog to State Sovereignty

Prior to the formation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Macedonia existed neither as state nor as an internationally recognised nation – rather, 'Macedonia' was understood as a geographical area that spread across three sovereign

states: Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia. The modern Macedonian state is thus a fairly

recent construct, dating back to the1940s. On 29 November 1943, the second congress

of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ)

extended equal status to Macedonia, on a par with Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia,

Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and on 2 August 1944, the Anti-Fascist Assembly

for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) confirmed Macedonia's status as

a federal republic within the Yugoslav Federation.[2] In an effort to undermine

historical claims on the Macedonian territory and people by Bulgaria and Serbia, the

Yugoslav leader, Josip Broz Tito, promised the Macedonians statehood in exchange

for their loyalty to the Yugoslav cause, and thus the Macedonian state was established

as the sixth constituent republic of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.[3]

With its contribution of a mere five to seven percent of the SFRY's gross domestic

product, the Socialist Republic of Macedonia (SRM) was the poorest of the Yugoslav

republics[4] and also – along with Bosnia-Herzegovina – the most pro-Yugoslav

republic.[5] As Bogdan Szajkowski points out, Yugoslavia under Tito's rule had served

Macedonia well, and hence there was a strong sense of commitment to the idea of

Yugoslavia on the part of the Macedonians. Of course, this was to a considerable

degree due to Macedonia's recognition that it depended on a unified Yugoslavia for

its own self-preservation. For as a constituent unit of the Yugoslav federation,

Macedonia was able to protect its national identity against the old claims on its

[2] Abiodun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), pp. 20-21.
[3] Duncan M. Perry, 'The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 230.
[4] 'A Threat to "Stability": Human Rights Violations in Macedonia', Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, New York, 1996, p. 7.
[5] Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 1996, 1999), pp. 34-35.

territory and people by the Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks and Albanians.[6] Yugoslavia thus became the guarantor of the integrity of the Macedonian state, which was important given that Macedonia's heterogeneous composition,[7] and the ethnic patchwork of the Balkans as a whole, rendered the new state vulnerable to threats from the outside as well as from home.

At the heart of Macedonia's sense of insecurity was the historical memory of what is known as the Macedonian Question, which was born in 1870 when Russia, on behalf of the Bulgarian nation, pressed the Ottoman Empire into allowing the creation of a Bulgarian Orthodox Church, or Exarchate, separate from the Greek Orthodox Church. The authority of this newly established Exarchate was to include parts of Macedonia, then an Ottoman province.[8] Greece and Serbia felt their national interests threatened by this development and began to compete with the Bulgarians in extending their influence over Macedonia. As a result of the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913[9], geographical Macedonia was divided, with Greece and Serbia taking the majority of the territory and Bulgaria being left with a minor part. Bulgaria had been against the division and, consequently, was compelled to ally itself with Germany in both world wars with the intention of regaining Macedonia. The emergence of communist ideology in Eastern Europe and the incorporation of Macedonia into the SFRY seemed to have resolved the Macedonian Question peacefully for the time

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[6] Bogdan Szajkowski, 'Macedonia: An Unlikely Road to Democracy', in Geoffrey Pridham and Tom Gallagher (eds.), *Experimenting with Democracy: Regime Change in the Balkans* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 250.

[7] According to the 1994 population census, the Republic of Macedonia was home to 66.6% Macedonians, 22.7% Albanians, 4% Turks, 2.2% Roma, 2.1% Serbs, 0.4% Vlachs and 2% others.

[8] Elisabeth Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (London, Royal Institute of International Affairs 1950), p. 7

[9] For an in-depth study of the 1912-13 Balkan wars, see George F. Kennan (ed.), *The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993); Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers* (London: Granta Books, 1999); Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans 1804-1945* (London: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999); L.S Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); .

being. With the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the independence of Macedonia in 1991, however, the Macedonian Question again came to the surface of Balkan politics.

While striking down hard on any sign of aggressive nationalism emanating from the republics, Tito's Yugoslavia nonetheless permitted the expression of individual ethnic identities. Yugoslavs of all ethnic affiliations were to rally around the slogan of 'brotherhood and unity'.[10] The expectation was that over time a strong sense of a Yugoslav national consciousness would emerge with which the majority of the citizens would come to identify. In the case of the Macedonian republic, Tito's policy was to encourage the development of a Macedonian national consciousness, in order to undermine Bulgarian or Serbian claims that the Macedonian land and people rightfully belonged to them, to maintain a balance between the different constituent parts of Yugoslavia by preventing the Serbs from becoming too dominant, and to prevent the emergence of a Greater Albania.[11] Thus, with the assistance and supervision of the Yugoslav authorities a Macedonian language was codified in the second half of the 1940s, and in 1958 the ancient archdiocese of Ohrid was re-established and an autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox church was founded[12] and in a further effort on behalf of the Macedonian authorities to promote the consolidation of a Macedonian nation, new history textbooks were produced to be used in Macedonian schools.[13] Tito's strategy with regards to Macedonia was similar to the one employed in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where he declared the Muslim

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[10] Duncan Perry, 'The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way', in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (eds.), *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 230.
[11] Duncan Perry, 'Conflicting Ambitions and Shared Fates: The Past, Present and Future of Albanians and Macedonians', in Victor Roudometof (ed.), *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2000), p. 271.
[12] Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), pp. 116, 118.
[13] Abiodun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia*, p. 21.

population a separate nation in order to undermine any Croat or Serb aspiration to dominate.

When, in 1968, Kosovo Albanians rose up to demand that Kosovo's status be upgraded from that of an autonomous Serbian province to that of a proper Yugoslav republic, Albanians in Macedonia demonstrated in support of their ethnic kin in Kosovo. Macedonia's Albanian leadership even went so far as to call for the unification of the Albanian people of Kosovo and Macedonia into a seventh Yugoslav republic.[14] This illustrates the sense of interconnectedness that prevailed amongst the Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia, many of whom had families in both places. Although it was only in the early 1990s that Macedonian-Albanian relations became the focus of attention on the international level, tensions between the two communities existed well before that, albeit not on the level of overt conflict. When, in the 1980s, Serbian political leaders responded with repressive means to growing Albanian assertiveness in Kosovo, the Macedonian communist leadership also initiated measures aimed at keeping its own Albanian population from revolting against Macedonian dominance. Macedonian government actions were motivated primarily by fear that nationalist sentiments amongst the Albanian population would eventually pose a serious security threat to the Macedonian nation.[15] Thus, from the early 1980s onwards, the Macedonian League of Communists set about implementing policies that circumscribed cultural and educational rights for Albanians within its jurisdiction, including the introduction of more Macedonian-language schooling at the expense of Albanian-language education, and a ban on Albanian names and folk songs that were thought to encourage Albanian nationalism.[16] In areas of Macedonia where the Albanian population made up a majority, restrictions on births by means of

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[14] Duncan Perry, 'The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way', p. 231.
[15] Ibid., pp. 231-232.
[16] Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?*, p. 128.

punitive health insurance were introduced, and Albanian as well as Turkish[17] schools were closed down by the Macedonian authorities. In the early 1980s, Albanians throughout Yugoslavia began to be excluded from the Communist Party as well as from state institutions and state-owned firms.[18] Tito's death in 1980 and the consequent loss of a strong Yugoslav leadership, paved the way for the re-emergence of nationalist sentiments in all Yugoslav republics. At this time, Macedonian policies towards the Albanian minority came to mirror those of the Serbian regime – led by the increasingly nationalist Slobodan Milošević – vis-à-vis the Albanians in Kosovo. This was largely out of fear amongst Macedonians that rising Albanian birth rates would eventually lead to a shift in the proportions of Macedonians to Albanians so that the latter came to outnumber the former, and "threatening the territorial integrity of the [Macedonian] homeland".[19]

When Yugoslavia began to disintegrate in the early 1990s, the leaders of Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kiro Gligorov and Ailja Izetbegović, introduced a middle-of-the road alternative to the irreconcilable differences between on the one hand Croatia and Slovenia and on the other, Serbia, concerning the future of Yugoslavia. Gligorov's and Izetbegović's proposal was intended to prevent the break-up of the federation by creating a loose federation with a common foreign policy, parliament, military and currency.[20] In an interview with this author, Gligorov recounts how, at a meeting between the heads of the republics where Gligorov's and Izetbegović's plan was presented, Croatian leader Franjo Tudjman responded that he

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[17] Sharing the same religion, Islam, with Albanians, the Turkish community in Macedonia became victims of discriminatory policies primarily targeted against Albanians.
[18] 'A Threat to "Stability": Human Rights Violations in Macedonia", Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, New York, 1996, p. 26.
[19] Duncan Perry, 'The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way', p. 232.
[20] Alice Ackermann, 'Managing Conflicts Non-Violently Through Preventive Action: The Case of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, vol. xix, no. 1, Spring 1999, p. 8

could not accept the proposal put forth by Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina as it was his historical mission to make Croatia independent. Serbia's Milošević, who was the next person to speak, replied that he would accept nothing less than a centralised federation governed from Belgrade. Izetbegović, in turn, sought to explain that Bosnia-Herzegovina could not afford to lose either Serbia or Croatia because Bosnia was a country of three peoples, Muslims, Serbs and Croats.[21] Macedonia and Bosnia's effort to keep Yugoslavia from falling apart had thus failed. As Croatia and Slovenia broke away from the federation, independence emerged as the only feasible option in order to prevent Macedonia from becoming wholly dominated by Serbia, the largest and most powerful remaining Yugoslav republic. Blagoj Handjiski notes that during the preparation leading up to the proclamation of independence, a debate ensued within Macedonia's political elite on whether Macedonia should simply follow in the steps of Slovenia and Croatia by declaring its secession a *fait accompli*, or whether a popular referendum on independence should be held in order to maximise Macedonia's chances of being internationally recognised as a legitimate, independent state.[22] Following a vote in the parliament, the latter course was chosen, and Macedonia became the only former Yugoslav republic to achieve its independence peacefully. Perhaps acknowledging that the small percentage of Serbs in Macedonia was not worth fighting another war over, and certainly recognising the difficulty of opening up yet another military front, Yugoslavia refrained from an armed attack against its south-eastern neighbour. Instead, Belgrade and Skopje negotiated the peaceful withdrawal of the Yugoslav army (JNA) from Macedonia in 1992, leaving it sovereign but with virtually no military defence. In the absence of military means to

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[21] Interview with Mr Kiro Gligorov, former President of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje 12 December 2001.

[22] Interview with Mr Blagoj Handjiski, former Minister of Defense, MP, SDSM, and former member of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Macedonia, Skopje, 24 April 2002.

defend itself against potential external aggression, Macedonia thus requested help from the United Nations, which in 1993 deployed a United Nations Preventive Deployment Force to Macedonia, the first of its kind.[23]

5.3. Regime Change: From Yugoslav Socialism to Liberal Democracy, or...?

Similarly to Bulgaria, Macedonia lacked anything resembling a pro-democracy organisation, which is largely explained by the fact that the Macedonian state owed its very existence to Yugoslav socialism spearheaded by Tito. Hence, Macedonia was also less interested in independence than were Croatia and Slovenia, recognising, as previously noted, that its security and survival depended to a high degree on the unity of the SFRY. Another reason for the weakness of any pro-democracy movement in Macedonia was the nature of Yugoslav socialism in the first place. In comparison with other communist regimes in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia's brand of 'egalitarian socialism' had since the late 1940s been disassociated from Soviet communism, opting instead for a more liberal form of socialism.[24] As a result, from the early 1960s, Yugoslav citizens were allowed to travel abroad, keep foreign currency and to establish private businesses. According to Denko Maleski, a former Foreign Minister of Macedonia, as the poorest nation in the Yugoslav federation, Macedonia was quite content with the Yugoslav brand of egalitarian socialism, which worked to its benefit – in contrast with the more prosperous Slovenia and Croatia. Hence, there was little impetus for a Macedonian dissidents movement to emerge from below.[25]

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[23] Alice Ackermann, 'Managing Conflicts Non-Violently Through Preventive Action: The Case of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, vol. xix, no. 1, Spring 1999, p. 11.
[24] For details on socialism in Yugoslavia see, R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War* (London: Longman, Pearson Education, 2002), pp. 113-138.
[25] Interview with Professor Denko Maleski, Skopje, 7 December 2001.

Although no organised democratic movement was present in Macedonia before 1990, several Macedonian politicians maintain that the Macedonian Communist Party was far from homogenous in character. Maleski notes that dissidents were indeed to be found within the communist party, where there were divisions between liberal and dogmatic factions. Yet, none of them advocated an end to socialist rule.[26] According to Blagoj Handjiski, a former member of the central committee of the League of Communists of Macedonia, different groups within the Party could be discerned by the early 1970s: orthodox communists were still in the majority, followed by a group of Party members who preferred the social democratic option. Further, Handjisiki suggests, there were groups within the Party whose political ideas resembled those of Christian democrats, as well as members of the Party whose political leanings were to the right.[27] As was the case in all communist countries, joining the Party was a requisite for anyone seeking to be politically active. Once a member, however, the Party served as a forum for political expression of various shades.[28]

By the 1960s it was becoming increasingly apparent that the socialist system was not leading to the prosperity envisioned for Yugoslavia. As a result, reforms were undertaken in 1965 aimed at bolstering the Yugoslav – and by extension Macedonian – economy, involving a greater focus on market forces, and a reduction in state-sponsored investment.[29] These, however, yielded little as economic reforms were stopped mid-way for fear that they would provoke a demand for political pluralism, something which the Communist Party firmly sought to prevent.[30]

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Interview with Mr Blagoj Handjiski, Skopje 24 April 2002.
[28] Ibid.
[29] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War*, p. 126.
[30] Interview with Mr Kiro Gligorov, former President of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje 12 December 2001.

When a pro-democratic movement eventually did emerge in 1989-90, it was, however, divided into two ethnically aligned factions. The ethnic Macedonian pro-democracy movement was led by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPME), a right-wing nationalist party founded in 1990.[31] The Albanian pro-democracy movement, in turn, was spearheaded by the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), the first ethnic Albanian party to be set up in Macedonia. Whereas the Macedonian movement was mainly oriented towards political and economic transition, the Albanian movement regarded the integration of Albanians into Macedonia's political institutions as its main objective.[32] This reflected the way in which, from the initial introduction of political pluralism in Macedonia, Macedonians' and Albanians' perceptions differed on how a democratic Macedonian polity would be structured. Whereas the former envisaged the development of a Western-style liberal democracy based on the principle of one-man-one-vote, and emphasising individual rights and citizenship, the latter saw democracy in terms of consensus building and group rights, fearing that without these provisions the Macedonian majority would come to wholly dominate national politics at the expense of the Albanian people. At the time of political transition, Macedonia, along with Bosnia-Herzegovina,[33] thus lacked the most fundamental requisite for successful democratisation – national unity.

With no organised dissidents movement in place, democracy in Macedonia was instituted mainly as a result of the changes in the external environment following

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[31] The party's decision to adopt the name VMRO-DPMNE is illustrative of its political heritage, which dates back to 1893 when the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (VMRO) was founded as a political movement whose main goal was to liberate Macedonia from Ottoman rule. The movement soon split between those who sought the incorporation of Macedonia into Bulgaria, and those who wanted to see Macedonia established as an independent state. On 2 August 1903 VMRO led the so-called Ilinden uprising, declaring the establishment of the Kruševo Republic, but was soon defeated by the Ottomans. The 1991 preamble of the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, however, reflects the significance of these historical events in the Macedonian psyche.

[32] Interview with Dr Teuta Arifi, South East European University, Tetovo 12 April 2002.

[33] See Chapter Three.

the breakdown of the communist bloc. In Macedonia, as in Bulgaria, therefore, the transition from socialism to democracy was largely determined by international factors. Lacking a state tradition, and owing its very existence to Tito and SFRY, Macedonia, together with Bosnia, was probably the least prepared for democracy of all the Yugoslav republics. Yet, against all odds, it was to emerge as the only former Yugoslav republic to not only achieve its independence peacefully but also to succeed in establishing a democratic political system, which despite its many shortcomings, was to prove itself surprisingly resilient.

Having sought independence largely in order to protect itself from future domination by Serbia, Macedonia was now faced with a new range of potential security threats. In this new context, the establishment of a democratic regime based on the principles of Western liberalism became the means towards an end; that of protecting the citizens of Macedonia – and in particular the ethnic Macedonian nation – from external as well as internal aggression; and to safeguard the legitimacy of the Macedonian state in the face of neighbouring states' claims vis-à-vis Macedonia and its people. To this end, the most immediate priority for the Macedonian leadership following the declaration of independence was the pursuit of membership in the Council of Europe, European Union, NATO, United Nations, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as the new, vulnerable state's political legitimacy, military as well as economic security depended on its integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. In order not to jeopardise its emerging relationship with the international community, the Macedonian government was thus forced to show restraint in its nationalist rhetoric and in its treatment of the ethnic minorities living within its

borders.[34] Considering the advancement of international norms and principles since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, and particularly since the end of the Cold War, in the direction of the Western liberal tradition, the establishment of a democratic Macedonia with a legal human rights framework that met European and international standards, meant that the West would be at least morally obliged to offer Macedonia protection from any possible threat to its territorial integrity and national security. Thus, as a newly independent state seeking to avoid an armed conflict either with Serbia or between the country's ethnic communities, Macedonia expected to secure international recognition and protection by committing itself to Western-style liberal democracy, which also meant the incorporation into the Macedonian legal framework of the main international human rights and minority rights documents, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. Ultimately, the overriding concern, particularly amongst the ethnic Macedonian majority, was the survival of the Macedonian state (and nation). Bearing in mind the historical claims made by Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Albania on Macedonia, the political leadership recognised that the pursuit of a peaceful agenda was the only way in which Macedonia could protect itself from the inevitable destruction a war would lead to.[35] Such reasoning was further supported by the fact that in 1991 the European Union had laid down specific criteria for recognition of new states emerging after the collapse of communism. These included democratic

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[34] Heather Rae, *State Identities and the Homogenisation of Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 284.
[35] Interview with Mr Kiro Gligorov, Skopje 12 December 2001.

governance, rule of law, human rights, as well as the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities.[36]

5.4. Democratisation and Interethnic Relations in the 1990s

On the recommendation of the PDP the vast majority of the Albanian population refrained from participating in the national referendum on independence held on 8 September 1991, in which 95 per cent of those who voted supported independence.[37] In January 1992 Albanian nationalists organised a referendum on territorial autonomy for Albanians within the Republic of Macedonia. A reported 74 per cent voted in favour of the proposal, although the vote was declared illegal by the Macedonian authorities.[38] Whilst in principle favouring an independent Macedonian state, Albanians took issue with the question put forth in the state sponsored referendum, which allowed for the possibility of Macedonia to eventually rejoin some federal arrangement with Yugoslavia, thus fearing that the Albanian people would become victims of a regime dominated by Serbia and Macedonia.[39] From a Macedonian perspective, Albanian non-participation in the referendum was interpreted as a sign of their lack of loyalty to the Macedonian state[40], and added fuel to existing fears that the Albanians harboured an irredentist agenda, planning to join the Albanian-dominated Western Macedonia to Kosovo or Albania.[41]

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[36] Jennifer Jackson Preece, *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 45.

[37] 'A Threat to Stability: Human Rights Violations in Macedonia', Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, New York, 1996, p. 7-8.

[38] Duncan Perry, 'The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way', p. 253

[39] Interviews with Mr Iso Rusi, Editor-in-chief of the Albanian magazine 'Lobi', Skopje 8 April 2002; Mr Ismet Ramadami, MP, PDP, Skopje 15 April 2002; Mr Azis Polozani, MP, PDP, Skopje 15 April 2002; Mr Abdurahman Aliti, MP, PDP, Skopje 16 April 2002.

[40] 'A Threat to Stability: Human Rights Violations in Macedonia', p. 8.

[41] Alice Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Violent Conflict in Macedonia* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), p. 65; Janie Leatherman, William DeMars, Patrick D. Gaffney and

Albanian refusal to take part in the referendum was also a protest against the failure of the Macedonian political leaders to define the legal status of the Albanians in an independent Macedonian state. The Albanians favoured an independent and democratic Macedonia, but sought an official declaration from the Macedonian parliament that would guarantee the Albanian population equal rights with the Macedonians. To this end, PDP presented parliament and the president of the republic, Kiro Gligorov, with a document entitled 'Declaration for the Equal Rights of the Albanians in Macedonia', and requested that it be reviewed and discussed in parliament. The Declaration called for Albanians to be recognised as an official language in areas inhabited by Albanians and for Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish to be declared as the national languages of Macedonia. The Declaration further stressed the principle of equality amongst all Macedonian citizens in respect to the right to express their national culture and religion, and the importance of creating a decision-making model based on consensus, in order to prevent non-Macedonians from being constantly out-voted on matters concerning them.[42] PDP made it clear that consideration of the Declaration was made a condition for Albanian participation in the referendum on independence. When the parliament failed to review the Declaration, PDP thus abstained from voting in the national referendum as a mark of protest.[43] As the majority of the dominant Macedonian population favoured secession from Yugoslavia, independence was eventually declared on 18 September 1991, prompting the speedy adoption of a new constitution. The constitution was written and adopted within four months, which was an exceptionally short time, but as there was a general feeling amongst Macedonia's leaders that with Yugoslavia falling apart,

Raimo Väyrynen, *Breaking the Cycles of Violence: Conflict Prevention in Intrastate Crises* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarion Press, 1999), p. 155.
[42] 'Deklaratsija za ramnopraven status na Albantsite vo Makedonija', Pratenichka grupa na PDP-NDP (Declaration for the Equal Rights of the Albanians in Macedonia), Skopje, 3 April 1993.
[43] Interview with Mr Abdurahman Aliti, MP, PDP, Skopje 16 April 2002.

a new constitution had to come into effect as quickly as possible in order to safeguard Macedonia's security. No formal international legal assistance was provided during the drafting of the constitution, which was mainly the product of a group of international lawyers, political scientists and legal sociologists from Macedonia.[44] It was then handed over to the parliament for debate, in which both Macedonian and Albanian members of parliament participated. PDP, however, protested against the preamble's definition of Macedonia as a 'national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romanics and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia...'[45] The term 'nationality' (*narodnosti*) employed in reference to the Albanians was borrowed from the 1974 Yugoslav constitution, according to which the Yugoslav people had been divided into three tiers: people (*narod*) (Serb, Croat, Montenegrin, Slovene, Bosnian and Macedonian), nationality (Albanians, Turks) and ethnic groups (Vlachs, Roma). Although the 1991 constitution of the Republic of Macedonia again classified the Albanians as a 'nationality', from an Albanian perspective this effectively downgraded them to the ranks of second-class citizens, by putting them on a par with the much smaller Turkish, Roma and Vlach communities. The Albanians were insulted by having been placed on an equal footing with the Roma and Vlach, neither of which could be said to constitute a nation, and this prompted the Albanians to demand that they be declared a constituent nation, equal with the Macedonian nation, given that the Albanian minority constitutes more than twenty percent (and according to Albanian

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[44] Interview with Mr Igor Spirovski, Secretary General, Republic of Macedonia Constitutional Court, Skopje 23 April 2002.
[45] 'A Threat to Stability: Human Rights Violations in Macedonia', p. 8.

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estimates perhaps as much as 35-40 percent) of Macedonia's total population.[1] PDP's

standpoint in regards to the preamble was that it should either make reference only to

the citizens (*gragani*) of Macedonia, without reference to ethnic or national identity,

or to all the peoples (*narodi*) living there.[2] Voting on the constitution, the twenty-five

Albanian delegates in parliament abstained, and with the Macedonian majority voting

in favour, the new constitution was passed despite Albanian concerns.[3] Failure to

reach an agreement on the legal status of the Albanians at this time would remain an

obstructing factor in Macedonia's democratic state development.

In spite of its objections, however, the Albanian community, represented by

the PDP, continued to participate in Macedonia's political life, forming coalitions

with parties across ethnic lines and holding government positions as well. The first

government, formed after the 1990 elections, included five ethnic Albanian ministers

and 23 out of 120 seats in parliament were held by ethnic Albanians. In the

government formed after then 1994 elections, four cabinet posts were filled by ethnic

Albanians.[4] By 1996, a more moderate Albanian leadership had reversed the demand

for territorial autonomy, campaigning instead for non-territorial autonomy in the

political sphere.[5] During the Yugoslav era, there had been little by way of

independent Albanian political organisation in Macedonia and the transition to a

democratic system therefore gave the Albanians an unprecedented opportunity to

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[1] The numerical size of the ethnic groups in Macedonia became a highly politicised issue early on. Following an Albanian boycott of the 1991 population census in Macedonia, the European Union and the Council of Europe agreed to supervise the next census, carried out in 1994. Particularly delicate was the question of the size of Macedonia's Albanian population: statistical data generated during the 1990s generated fear amongst the Macedonian majority of a possible population explosion in the Albanian community, which would alter the proportions of Albanians to Macedonians, thus undermining Macedonian dominance in the state. For a detailed discussion on the political controversy surrounding census taking in Macedonia see, Victor A Friedman, 'Observing the Observers: Language, Ethnicity, and Power in the 1994 Macedonian Census and Beyond', in Barnett R. Rubin (ed.), *Toward Comprehensive Peace in Southeast Europe: Preventing Conflict in the South Balkans: Report of the South Balkans Working Group* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996), pp. 81-105.
[2] Interview with Mr Ismet Ramadani, MP, PDP, Skopje 15 April 2002.
[3] 'A Threat to Stability: Human Rights Violations in Macedonia', p. 8.
[4] Alice Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail*, p. 90.
[5] Ibid., pp. 61-62.

organise politically and, as the sole political representative of the Albanian community until 1994, PDP sought to solve the problems of the Albanians' status in Macedonia through the political institutions that were developing.[51] In 1994, however, Albanian political unity came to an end following disagreements within PDP between those advocating a moderate stance vis-à-vis the ethnic Macedonians, and those who sought to pursue a more hard-line policy. As a result, a group of PDP members left to form a more radical party, the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), which was headed by Arben Xhaferi, an Albanian from Macedonia who had lived and worked in Kosovo for many years and thus retained strong ties with the Albanian community there.[52] From that point onward, PDP and DPA competed for the Albanian vote in Macedonia. From 1994 to 1998 PDP served in the government as a junior coalition partner with the ethnic Macedonian Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM), and from 1998 to 2002 DPA joined forces with the nationalist Macedonian party, VMRO-DPMNE. Thus, the Albanian community played an active part in Macedonian national politics from the start. A third Albanian party was formed in the 1990s, the People's Democratic Party (NDP), and in June 2002, a fourth political party of the Albanians emerged, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), which was the creation of Ali Ahmeti, leader of the formally disbanded National Liberation Army (NLA) that had fought against Macedonian security forces in the six-month long civil war (see section 5.8. below). In spite of prevalent political infighting amongst the Albanian and Macedonian parties respectively, the presence of Albanian parties on both sides of the political spectrum helped maintain a balance that worked in favour of inter-ethnic stability in the country.

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[51] Interview with Mr Ismet Ramadani, MP, PDP, Skopje 15 April 2002.
[52] Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* , pp. 196-197.

The transition to a democratic political system in Macedonia meant that the interests of the Albanians (and to a lesser degree, the interests of other ethnic minorities) became more visible, as they were now able to freely express their grievances and to organise politically in order to defend their interests. The implementation of a human rights framework in accordance with European standards,[53] and the protection of individual rights for all citizens of Macedonia, irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliation, that the 1991 constitution spelled out, granted the Albanians a measure of freedom they had not enjoyed previously. This was a significant change from the socialist period during which the opportunity to express political interests had been very limited, for Macedonians as well as for non-Macedonians. The absence of political expression on the part of Macedonia's Albanians in SFRY in turn, had allowed the Macedonians to live in an illusory world in which interethnic tension did not exist.[54] With the establishment of a multi-party system in which several Albanian political parties emerged, some of which entertained a radical vision of the political structure of Macedonia, the Macedonians were forced to wake up to the reality that their political dominance vis-à-vis the Albanians was no longer sustainable.

When the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM) was given the mandate to form a coalition government in 1992, it purposefully sought the inclusion of the PDP in a government coalition in an effort to alleviate some of the mistrust that prevailed between the Macedonians and Albanians. The inclusion of an Albanian party in the government implicitly "...involved recognition of some of the problems

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[53] Since its independence, Macedonia has signed and ratified the standard international human rights and minority rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities.
[54] Interview with Dr Mirjana Maleska, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Sociological and Political Research, Skopje 5 September 2000.

faced by the Albanians and preparedness to put inter-ethnic relations high on the agenda."[55] Having governed Macedonia for much of the 1990s, SDSM was ousted by VMRO-DPMNE in the 1998 parliamentary elections. The latter's nationalist leanings, however, led to international pressure to include an Albanian party in the government.[56] VMRO-DPMNE thus invited the Albanian nationalist DPA into a coalition government, which lasted until the 2002 elections that again brought SDSM to power.

Whether for lack of political will or simply failure to comprehend the seriousness of the strained interethnic situation caused by the incompatibilities of Macedonian and Albanian interests, the successive Macedonian governments were nonetheless slow to respond to the demands of the Albanians, despite their participation in all government coalitions since the democratic transition, and the absence of significant improvements not only for Albanians but also for Macedonia's other ethnic minorities did little to promote peaceful inter-ethnic relations; if anything, it only served to increase tension and a sense of exclusion on the part of the Albanian population. Other minorities, including the Turks and the Roma, enjoyed a better relationship with the Macedonian majority, which perceived the smaller ethnic communities (with the exception of the Serbs) as loyal citizens, as opposed to the Albanians. Arguably, it was in the Macedonian interest to ensure the support from other ethnic groups, particularly Muslim Turks and Roma as well as the ethnic Macedonian Muslims, known as the Torbeši, in order to prevent their 'Albanisation'. The already asymmetrical power relations between Macedonians and Albanians that were due to the numerical superiority of Macedonians in political institutions were

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[55] Bogdan Szajkowski, 'Macedonia: An Unlikely Road to Democracy', in Geoffrey Pridham and Tom Gallagher (eds.), *Experimenting with Democracy: Regime Change in the Balkans* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 256.
[56] Ibid., p. 259.

further exacerbated by the way in which the decision-making process was structured. The principle of one-man-one-vote"...made Albanians dependent on votes from Macedonians when enacting laws, including those related to their cultural identity."[57] Failure on the part of the Macedonian political elite to respond constructively to the Albanians' insistence on amending the voting system in legislative matters in order to promote decision-making by consensus, thus resulted in continued friction between the two communities.

Although the 1991 constitution proclaims the Republic of Macedonia a parliamentary democracy whose popularly elected president serves a mainly ceremonial function, it was the latter who would, during the tenure of independent Macedonia's first President, Kiro Gligorov, come to dominate national politics. Gligorov's political career had begun during the Second World War in which he fought against the Fascist occupation and he spent most of the post-war period in Belgrade serving the Yugoslav government.[58] In his capacity of President of the Republic of Macedonia, Gligorov "...quickly became the symbol of Macedonian reform and his activities overshadowed those of the government as he became a greater than life figure."[59] A pragmatist, he "forged a style of informal government by consensus using procedures that had no constitutional precedent."[60] Although he came to be regarded by Macedonians in particular as a symbol of the state[61], many Albanians were less impressed with Gligorov, and saw him as having failed them by

[57] Denko Maleski, 'The Politician, the Diplomat and the People: Macedonian Foreign Policy Experiences', *New Balkan Politics*, vol. 2/3, 2002, p. 108.

[58] Gligorov's positions included: assistant to the general secretary in the Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-47); assistant to the minister of Finance (1947-52); deputy director of the Federal Administration for Economic Planning and Development (1952-55); secretary of Economic Affairs in the Federal Executive Council (1955-62); federal secretary of Finance (1962-67); vice-president of the Federal Executive Council (1967-69); president of the Assembly of Yugoslavia (1974-78). Source: Valentina Georgieva and Sasha Konechni, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Macedonia* (Lanham, MD and London: Scarecrow Press, 1998), pp. 122-124.

[59] Duncan Perry, 'The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way', p. 237.

[60] John Phillips, *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 53.

[61] Duncan Perry, 'The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way, p. 237.

not supporting their constitutional demands. Specifically, Albanian politicians expressed their disappointment with Gligorov's handling – or, as they see it, neglect – of Albanian concerns and grievances at the time of Macedonia's transition to democracy. According to former and present PDP leader, Abdurahman Aliti, Gligorov was in fact one of the leading voices opposing the inclusion of points from the 'Declaration for the Equal Rights of the Albanians in Macedonia' in the new Macedonian constitution.[62] Others suggest that Gligorov's influence on interethnic stability in Macedonia was indeed negative in that he sought to avoid addressing the problems between Macedonians and Albanians.[63] Yet, according to PDP MP Azis Polozani, Gligorov was the main factor that created the illusion of Macedonia as an oasis of peace in the otherwise volatile Balkans.[64] As Macedonia's only 'statesman', Gligorov was able to exert substantial influence on the political processes in Macedonia, and he was also the preferred point-of-contact for representatives of the international community. Consequently, his role came to resemble that of a French President's, although his constitutional powers were much more limited. His authority was largely personal, as people from virtually every ethnic group in Macedonia trusted him, even if they did not agree with him.

Although Macedonia did achieve a measure of success in regards to democratic development and peaceful interethnic relations, particularly in contrast with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, stability and further socio-political development was constantly threatened by the difficult economic situation the country had been facing since exiting the Yugoslav federation. In addition to facing similar socio-economic challenges as other countries in transition from communism, Macedonia's situation was complicated by the fact that the international community's

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[62] Interview with Mr Abdurahman Aliti, MP, PDP, Skopje 16 April 2002.
[63] Interview with Mr Iso Rusi, Editor-in-Chief, *Lobi*, Skopje 17 April 2002.
[64] Interview with Mr Azis Polozani, MP, PDP, Skopje 15 April 2002.

withholding of diplomatic recognition – and thus exclusion from membership in international financial institutions – made exceedingly difficult for Macedonia to obtain international loans[65], and insecurity in the region due to the war in Bosnia meant that foreign investment was difficult to attract. More importantly, however, the Greek imposition of a trade embargo against Macedonia in 1994, coupled with UN-sponsored sanctions on Serbia that had been introduced in the spring of 1993, Macedonia's main trading partner, further aggravated Macedonia's economy, and arguably contributed to the rise in corruption and organised crime.[66] By the late 1990s, popular trust in the country's politicians was severely undermined by evidence of "...pervasive state corruption, fuelled by a political party system that is largely financed by illegal means."[67] The twin problems of corruption and organised crime also contributed to negative stereotyping amongst Macedonians and Albanians, as the former increasingly pointed at Albanian-led criminal organisation as support for their prejudices against Albanians, thus justifying Macedonian policies vis-à-vis Albanians.

5.5. Making or Breaking Democratic Peace: Ethnic Parties, Ethnic Politics

An ethnically and religious heterogeneous population and, in contrast to Bulgaria, the absence of a constitutional ban on ethnic parties meant that the political party system that emerged around the time of the first democratic elections in November 1990, soon became divided along ethnic rather than ideological lines. The first round of elections in 1990 indicated that the Albanian population were voting strictly

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[65] John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1997), p. 217.

[66] Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 31.

[67] Jenny Engström, 'Multiethnicity or Binationalism? The Framework Agreement and the Future of the Macedonian State', *in European Yearbook of Minority Issues*, vol. 1, 2001/2 (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2003), p. 339.

according to ethnic affiliation, which prompted many Macedonians to give their vote to the nationalist party, VMRO-DPME, in the second round, fearing that "...Albanians were seeking to either subvert the state or secede from it..."[68] As Serbs and Roma largely voted for their own ethnic parties, the Turks stood out as a group whose vote was divided between Macedonian and Albanian parties. Initially, the Turkish community had been reluctant to establish their own party, seeking instead to promote a civic concept of the Republic of Macedonia, but later acknowledging that ethnicity continued to be the determining factor in politics, the Turks established their own political party in 1992 to ensure the protection of their communal interests. As a result of the focus on ethnicity, national political strategies were largely neglected during the first decade of independence, in favour of a prevailing preoccupation by almost all political parties with the protection of the interests and rights of their specific ethnic constituencies. To the extent that political party programmes went beyond ethno-politics, they were limited to a rather broad, non-specific, commitment to democracy, free market economy, and Macedonian accession to the European Union and NATO. Curiously, although there was broad political consensus across ethnic lines on Macedonia's long-term goals of EU and NATO membership, such sentiments were not necessarily reflected in the population at large, where a sharp, ethnically defined distinction of opinion developed as the vast majority of Albanians favoured accession to the EU and NATO, whereas many Macedonians were less enthusiastic about NATO membership in particular. This distinction is largely explained by the nearly diametrically opposed perceptions developed by Macedonians and Albanians vis-à-vis the European Union and the United States, particularly since NATO's military intervention in Kosovo.

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[68] Duncan Perry, 'The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way', p. 233.

Reflecting the dominant status of the Macedonian community, the two largest parties to emerge with the introduction of political pluralism in Macedonia (VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM) were fundamentally ethnic Macedonian parties. Every government throughout the 1990s was made up of a coalition between one of these two, and one of the two main Albanian parties (PDP and DPA), with minor parties also included on occasion. Following Macedonia's first multiparty elections held in November and December 1990, a government of experts was installed, as no party received a proper majority of the votes.[69] In 1992, the government resigned after Social Democrats, Liberals and Socialists introduced a no-confidence vote against the government. After VMRO-DPME failed to form a government SDSM succeeded in establishing a coalition government that included PDP, the smaller yet more radical ethnic Albanian National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Alliance of Reform Forces of Macedonia-Liberal Party (MARF).[70] SDSM's leader Branko Crvenkovski was appointed prime minister, a post he continued to hold after the 1994 elections, where the 'Alliance for Macedonia', a coalition headed by SDSM won an overwhelming majority, which was made possible by VMRO-DPMNE and the Democratic Party's (DP) decision to boycott the second round of the elections in protest of what they said had been a fraudulent first round of elections.[71] Although there was no constitutional demand for interethnic government coalitions, the Macedonian political leadership soon realised the necessity of interethnic cooperation on the governmental level in order to preserve peace and stability in the country, and to confer legitimacy on itself in the eyes of the international community.

[69] R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War*, p. 246.
[70] John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation*, p. 216.
[71] Bogdan Szajkowski, 'Macedonia: An Unlikely Road to Democracy', in Geoffrey Pridham and Tom Gallagher (eds.), *Experimenting with Democracy: Regime Change in the Balkans*, p. 256; Abioudun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia*, p. 30.

The ethnic division of Macedonia's political parties, however, meant that, de facto, the country's electorate became divided into two (and more, if counting the smaller minorities) separate electorates, a Macedonian and an Albanian. The fragmentation of the demos along ethnic lines not only hindered democratic consolidation, but also compromised the process of democratisation. Macedonia's absence of a tradition of state sovereignty and independent decision-making – and the artificially created political distinction between Kosovo and Macedonia who, during the time of Yugoslavia were part of the same country, and the fact that many Albanian Macedonians originate from Kosovo – further complicated the development of a unified democratic system.

The extent to which political parties themselves can be said to be internally democratic also played an important role in the first decade of the democratisation process. Preoccupied with ethnic issues, Macedonia's main political parties degenerated into undemocratic pyramid structures with no clear line of strategy. Politics became little more than a pretext for all major political parties' involvement in lucrative businesses.[72] Deeply corrupt, political parties started buying factories, companies, banks, etc, displaying a blatant violation of the concept of 'conflict of interests'. All this, in turn, only served to undermine the development of a stable democratic system, capable of effectively mediating between the interests of all ethnic groups in the country.[73] Although the political system in Macedonia is designed as a democracy – designing the system was the least difficult task – one of the main problems facing the deepening of democratic structures and the development of a

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[72] Brenda Pearson, 'Putting Peace Into Practice: Can Macedonia's New Government Meet the Challenge?', United States Institute of Peace, Special Report no. 96, November 2002, p. 3.
[73] Interview with Mr Zoran Jačev, Executive Director, Forum: Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation, Skopje 3 December 2001.

democratic culture is the lack of rule of law and the immaturity of political parties.[74]

The fact that Macedonia did not have an independent political life before 1991 may partly explain some of these problems.

The idea of moulding Macedonia into a liberal democracy along European standards thus clashed markedly with the actual situation that emerged during the course of the first, crucial, decade of Macedonia's political transformation. The difficulty of establishing a liberal democratic system in Macedonia was also compounded by the fact that a vital component for such a system was missing, namely that of a liberal society. It is possible of course that such a society could have begun to emerge with the political transition, had the domestic environment been able to provide all ethnic groups with a sense of protection and security.

5.6. Regional Dynamics: Neighbours' Response to 'Republika Makedonija'

As a newly independent state, the Republic of Macedonia was faced not only with the challenges of democratic development and interethnic relations, but also found itself surrounded by neighbours who harboured sceptical or even negative attitudes to the Macedonian state and/or its people. Much of this was rooted in Macedonian, Greek and Bulgarian, and to a lesser extent Serbian, sensitivities concerning national identity. For what has been at the core of these conflicts is the question of whether there exists a distinct Macedonian national identity, separate from the Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian national identities.[75]

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Evangelos Kofos, 'Greek Policy Considerations Over FYROM', in James Pettifer (ed.), *The New Macedonian Question* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) p. 255. See also: Elisabeth Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950); Richard J. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1918 A History* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1983), pp. 81-83; Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans From Constantinople to Communism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002),

Since Macedonia declared its independence in 1991, neighbouring Bulgaria has taken an overt interest in the political developments in Macedonia, whilst distancing itself from any territorial claims on what is today the Republic of Macedonia.[76] Yet, despite the fact that Bulgaria has renounced any territorial claims on Macedonia, the latter remains an integral part of the historical memory of the Bulgarian nation[77] and, therefore, what from a Bulgarian point of view may be regarded as a need to honour their Bulgarian national identity, can from a Macedonian perspective be perceived as a threat to their national identity.

Bulgaria was the first country to extend diplomatic recognition to the Macedonian republic in 1992, but while it recognised the Macedonian state as legitimate, Bulgaria refused to accept the Macedonians as constituting a distinct nation, separate from the Bulgarian.[78] Dispute arose between Bulgaria and Macedonia over the drafting of the official document that would define the relationship between the two countries, as Bulgaria refused to recognise the existence of a Macedonian language. From their perspective, the language of the Macedonians was nothing more than a Bulgarian dialect and, consequently, the Macedonians' demand for interpreters in official communication between the two countries was met with protest by the Bulgarians. Whilst the question of the nation can perhaps be regarded as mainly a

pp. 296-302; Victor Roudometof (ed.), *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2000);

[76] Following the Russian liberation of the Bulgarian nation from the Ottoman Empire, the modern Bulgarian state was established by the treaty of San Stefano in 1878. Under this treaty, most of geographical Macedonia was incorporated into the new Bulgarian state. But only a few months later, the San Stefano treaty was replaced by the treaty of Berlin, which severely truncated the territory of the Bulgarian state by handing back the Macedonian territory to the Ottoman Empire. The reason behind this revision was British and French fears that a large Bulgarian state would inflate Russian influence in the Balkans. In the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 Bulgaria first fought alongside Serbia, Montenegro and Greece to liberate Macedonia from the Ottomans, and then found itself at war with is previous allies over how to divide Macedonia. In both world wars, Bulgaria allied itself with Germany, in an unsuccessful effort to finally integrate Macedonia into the Bulgarian state.

[77] Alice Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail*, p. 75.

[78] Stephan E. Nikolov, 'Perceptions of Ethnicity in the Bulgarian Political Culture: Misunderstanding and Distortion', in Victor Roudometof (ed.), *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2000), p.. 229.

theoretical one, the issue of language was very much a practical one, including such essential questions as how to draft the necessary documents that would define the relationship between the Bulgarian and Macedonian republics. In a statement from 1992, Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev noted that Bulgaria's decision to recognise the Macedonian state, did not mean that it was also recognising the existence of a distinct Macedonian nation.[79] The Presidents' remark was made in response to the strong reactions that Bulgaria's decision to recognise the Republic of Macedonia elicited from the Greek Prime Minister, Constantine Mitsotakis. Zhelev's remarks was thus intended to reassure the Greeks that from a Bulgarian point of view, 'Macedonia' was only a geographical term and not the name of a nation.[80] It was not until February 1999 that the political leaders of Bulgaria and Macedonia reached an agreement that would solve the practical problem of language by employing the formula 'Bulgarian language according to the Bulgarian Constitution' and 'Macedonian language according to the Macedonian Constitution' in all bilateral communication.[81] Thus, official documents could be drafted in both Bulgarian and Macedonian without Bulgaria having to recognise Macedonian as a distinct language. As such, the issue of language was resolved in legal terms whilst evading the larger ethno-national issue.

More overt in its attitude towards the Republic of Macedonia, Greece exerted significant pressure on the nascent Macedonian state, particularly in the first half of the 1990s. Official Greek policy denies the existence of a Slavophone Macedonian nation, maintaining that the only people with a right to designate themselves as 'Macedonian' are the Greeks themselves.[82] But, the Greek position distinguishes itself from that of the Bulgarians in that it does not deny the existence of a separate Slavic

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[79] 'Greeks Fear Bulgaria's Backing For Macedonia', *The Independent*, 17 January 1992, p. 11.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Abiodun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia*, p. 29.
[82] Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 30-31.

people in the territory known as Republic of Macedonia, but merely objects to the

application of the name 'Macedonian' to this people. From a Greek perspective, the

name Macedonia represents "a constituent element of Greek cultural heritage."[83] The

Bulgarians, on the other hand, never objected to the use of the name Macedonia,

which they saw as denoting a region, not a nation.[84]

In 1991, newly Macedonia chose the Star of Vergina, a sun with sixteen rays

and a symbol dating back to the ancient Macedonian kingdom, as the emblem on the

Macedonian state flag. This provoked fervent opposition from the Greeks who saw it

as a direct violation of Greek cultural heritage.[85] The appropriation of the Star of

Vergina coupled with references in the new Macedonian constitution, suggested to the

Greeks that the new republic made claims to part of Greek territory as well.[86] As a

result, Greece imposed a trade embargo against Macedonia in 1994, severing

diplomatic ties between the two countries as well. Greece's action was criticized by

most of the EC/EU countries as well as by the United Nations, yet it effectively

delayed international recognition of the Macedonian state. Following diplomatic

intervention from the United State, an Interim Accord was signed in 1995 between

Greece and Macedonia, in which they expressed mutual respect for each other's

territorial integrity, and whilst Greece agreed to recognize the legitimacy of the

Macedonian state, Macedonia conceded to Greece's demands that it change its flag

and remove any wording in the constitution that might be interpreted as a violation of

Greek integrity. However, the conflict over the name 'Macedonia' remained

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[83] Evangelos Kofos, 'Greek Policy Considerations Over FYROM', p. 232.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 35.
[86] Historically and geographically Macedonia is divided into three parts: Vardar Macedonia (today's Republic of Macedonia), Aegean Macedonia (northern Greece) and Pirin Macedonia (south-west Bulgaria).

unresolved, leading to Macedonia becoming internationally recognized under the name of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

Although the Yugoslav army withdrew peacefully and voluntarily from Macedonia in 1992, Yugoslavia (Serbia-Montenegro) withheld diplomatic recognition of Macedonia until 1996. Yugoslavia's decision to at last establish diplomatic relations with Macedonia (which it recognised under the name of Republic of Macedonia) was thus influenced by the willingness of its ally, Greece, to resolve its conflict with Macedonia.

Even amongst radical members of the Serbian elite, there was opposition to Yugoslavia's recognition of Macedonia, on the grounds that no Macedonian nation could be said to exist, and that the territory of the new Macedonian state in fact constituted part of Serbia.[87] Despite the decision on the part of Yugoslavia to extend diplomatic recognition to Macedonia, the mainstream view amongst Serbian academics is "that throughout the ages the Macedonian Slavs were devoid of any particular ethnic characteristics, and always represented a part of 'une masse flottant' that stretched between 'true' Serbs and 'true' Bulgarians..."[88]

It was not until the spring of 2001, however, that Yugoslavia and Macedonia reached an agreement on the border demarcation between the two countries. The agreement between Belgrade and Skopje caused resentment amongst Kosovo Albanians, as the demarcation in question applied not only to the border between Serbia and Macedonia border but also to that between Kosovo and Macedonia. In particular, Albanian political leaders in Kosovo argued that Belgrade no longer had the authority to make decisions affecting Kosovo, which at this time was under the direct authority of the United Nations.

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[87] Abiodun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia*, p. 27.
[88] Kyril Drezov, 'Macedonian Identity: An Overview of the Major Claims', in James Pettifer (ed.), *The New Macedonian Question*, p. 53.

Albania, in turn, did not reject the existence of a Macedonian nation, but whilst establishing diplomatic relations with Macedonia, it also was of the opinion that this new republic did not belong any more to the Macedonians than to the Albanians.[89] Initially, Albania nonetheless perceived the establishment of the Republic of Macedonia as a welcome counterweight to Serbia.[90] Facing a barrage of domestic trouble for much of the 1990s, Albania was not thought of as a significant threat to Macedonia's security, although relations between the two countries became more strained during the time of Sali Berisha's presidency in Albania. As president, Berisha "frequently and publicly raised the question of the rights of ethnic Albanians, which prompted protests from the Macedonian government that Albania was interfering in Macedonia's internal affairs."[91] He also expressed support for the Albanian language university that had been illegally founded in the Macedonian town of Tetovo in response to the failure of the Macedonian authorities to provide higher education in Albanian to compensate for the loss of access to the University of Priština. Relations between Macedonia and Albania were also negatively affected by Berisha's support for the nationalist radical wing of the PDP, which in September 1993 confronted the party leadership and criticising it for having failed pressure the ethnic Macedonians into granting either autonomy or nation-status to the Albanian population.[92] Yet, despite Berisha's interference in Macedonian affairs, the Albanian minority in Macedonia was for the most part during the 1990s less of a concern to Tirana than the Albanians in Kosovo.

The attitudes of Bulgaria, Greece, and to a lesser degree Serbia and Albania, also influenced the development of Macedonian nationalism during the 1990s. Greek

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[89] Zlatko Isakovic, *Identity and Security in Former Yugoslavia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 220.
[90] James Pettifer, 'The New Macedonian Question', in James Pettifer (ed.), *The New Macedonian Question*, p. 21.
[91] Abiodun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia*, p. 28.
[92] Ibid.; John Phillips, *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans*, p. 68

attitudes towards Macedonia as well as Bulgarian refusal to recognise the Macedonians as a separate nation affected Macedonian national consciousness both directly and indirectly, and by extension also impacted on the Macedonian attitudes towards the Albanian minority, whose grievances it became less receptive to. Thus, Macedonian nationalism was mobilised in the early 1990s "as a response to the Greek contention that the inhabitants of the new Macedonian Republic should not be allowed to call themselves 'Macedonians' and to the Bulgarian denial of a separate Macedonian identity."[93] As a result of negative attitudes coming from neighbouring states, Macedonia's political leadership was compelled to think, above all, about how to ensure the Macedonian state's survival in a hostile environment. Thus, throughout the 1990s, the preoccupation with survival impeded the development of Macedonia's state structures as well as of democratic institutions, principles and norms. Thus, Macedonia's state development was severely disrupted, which in turn undercut stability and security for the country as a whole but also for each individual citizen. Feelings of insecurity and lingering threat perceptions also contributed to the Macedonian majority's reluctance to respond favourably to Albanian demands for expanded rights in the areas of education, language and state employment. Democratic development, too, was inhibited by a fear that democracy would undermine the security and recognition of ethnic Macedonian interests.

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[93] John D. Bell, 'The "Ilindentsi" – Does Bulgaria Have a Macedonian Minority?', in John D. Bell (ed.), *Bulgaria in Transition: Politics, Economics, Society, and Culture After Communism* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998), p. 193.

5.7. Democratisation and Conflict Prevention in Macedonia: The International Dimension

As Yugoslavia was breaking up, and the issue of state recognition emerged, the European Community established an Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia in August 1991, commonly referred to as the Badinter Commission, whose assignment was to issue recommendations on which former Yugoslav republics met the requirements for diplomatic recognition by the EC.[94] The Commission's verdict was contingent on whether or not the new countries seeking recognition fulfilled the conditions listed in the guidelines on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, and by the Declaration on Yugoslavia, adopted by the EC's Council of Ministers in December 1991. On 11 January 1992, the Commission declared that only Macedonia and Slovenia met the EU's requirements for independence[95], yet Greece's objection to the establishment of an independent state by the name of Macedonia meant that diplomatic recognition of Macedonia by the international community was delayed.[96] The Greek government expressed several concerns in regards to the establishment of an independent Macedonian state. One immediate reaction on the part of Athens was its objection to article 49 of the 1991 Macedonian constitution, which stated that the Republic of Macedonia takes an interest in the situation and rights of Macedonians living in neighbouring countries. In Athens' view this inferred territorial claims on Aegean Macedonia (i.e. northern Greece), where a hitherto unrecognised ethnic Macedonian minority lives. The Macedonian authorities eventually responded to Greek concerns

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[94] Jennifer Jackson Preece, *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 45-47
[95] Ibid., p. 47.
[96] Alice Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail*, pp. 73-74.

by passing two amendments to the constitution, explicitly renouncing any territorial claims on Aegean and Pirin Macedonia.[97]

The withholding of recognition had important implications for Macedonia's future as it prevented Macedonia from applying for membership in international institutions including the United Nations, Council of Europe and the OSCE, thus leaving it to fend for itself at a time when the volatile situation in the Balkans as well as interethnic tensions at home, posed significant security concerns for a small, country, inexperienced in the affairs of governance and without a proper army to defend itself. The delay in the international community's decision to recognise Macedonia also undermined interethnic stability in the country as its legitimacy as an independent state, and by extension its territorial integrity, remained an unresolved matter. Macedonia was finally admitted to the United Nations on 8 April 1993, but under the provisional name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and obtained full membership of the OSCE on 14 October 1995 and the Council of Europe on 9 November 1995. Macedonia also became a member of NATO's Partnership for Peace. Thus, during the first few years of Macedonia's independence, the government agenda was primarily focused on the attainment of international recognition, partly at the expense of some of the domestic challenges facing the country, including in particular inter-ethnic relations, and the grievances of the Albanian population.

Although Macedonia's membership in the Council of Europe was delayed several years due to the failure of the international community to formally recognise the Republic of Macedonia, the Council of Europe would play an important role in regards to Macedonia in the first half of the 1990s. In the process leading up to

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[97] Ibid., p. 73.

Macedonia's membership in the Council, the country was under continuous supervision by the Council and thus it contributed to the development of a Macedonian legal framework that complied with international standards, and which finally resulted in Macedonia's admission to the Council.[98] The Council of Europe further implemented a continuous process of human rights monitoring in Macedonia, which lasted until 2000. Macedonians and Albanians offer different explanations for the Council's decision to terminate the mission at that point: whilst Macedonian politicians prefer to interpret the end of the Council's monitoring mission as a reward for Macedonia's constructive response to the Kosovo crisis and the resulting flow of Albanian refugees into Macedonia[99], their Albanian counterparts consider the Council's decision to have been a mistake, and one which contributed to the increased instability in Macedonia in 2001.[100]

From the perspective of the international community, maintenance of stability in a time of turbulence in other former Yugoslav republics was the main objective of its presence in Macedonia during the 1990s. The prospect of war in Macedonia would jeopardise the stability of the entire region, possibly spreading to the eastern Mediterranean where NATO had particular interests.[101] The overall purpose of international involvement was of course to prevent Macedonia from going the way of Bosnia and Kosovo, and for nearly a decade it seemed as if this mission had been successful

Throughout the 1990s the relationship between the Macedonian and Albanian communities remained tense, leading at times to sporadic violence. Macedonia thus found itself in a state of 'negative peace' during its first ten years of independence. In

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[98] Interview with Mr Igor Spirovski, Secretary General, Republic of Macedonia Constitutional Court, Skopje 23 April 2002.
[99] Interview with Mr Danilo Gligoroski, MP, VMRO-DPMNE, Skopje 10 April 2002.
[100] Interview with Mr Azis Polozani, MP, PDP, Skopje 15 April 2002.
[101] Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999*, p. 656.

contrast to Bosnia and Kosovo, however, violent, armed confrontation did not occur. Several reasons have been put forth by scholars and policy-makers as explanation for the apparent prevention of armed conflict in Macedonia in the 1990s. First, the fact that the United Nations, responding to an appeal from the then Macedonian President, Kiro Gligorov, dispatched a military preventive deployment force to Macedonia in early 1993, has commonly been regarded as a key factor in the prevention of interethnic violence in Macedonia.[102] Fearing the possibility of a military attack from Serbia, but also the possibility of a secessionist movement amongst the Albanians of Western Macedonia, Gligorov turned to the United Nations in December 1991 and requested the deployment of a preventive force. Although it was clear that such a force would not be able to fill the defence vacuum arising following the withdrawal of the JNA, the Macedonian leader hoped that it would nonetheless deter any potential act of aggression against Macedonia.[103] Initially the Security Council authorised an extension of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), deployed in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, to be stationed in Macedonia in 1993. Two years later, the extended UNPROFOR mission was replaced by a separate United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), the first of its kind to be set up by the United Nations. The decision to establish a mission independent from UNPROFOR followed an official request from Macedonia for the separation of the Macedonia mandate from that in Bosnia and Croatia, and reflected the acknowledgement within the international community that Macedonia was an independent state, as well as indicated the importance placed on the mission in Macedonia by the United Nations.[104] UNPREDEP consisted mainly of a joint Swedish-Norwegian-Finnish battalion known as NORDBAT and a US battalion, which each provided five hundred

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[102] Abiodun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia*, pp. 1-2.
[103] Alice Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail*, p. 84.
[104] Abiodun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia*, p. 76.

personnel to the mission.[105] Both the Nordic and US battalions were subsequently

decreased to 350 each by a decision in the United Nations Security Council.[106]

Whilst UNPREDEP's mandate was to monitor Macedonia's border between

Yugoslavia (including Kosovo) and Albania in order to prevent Belgrade from

launching an attack on Macedonia as well as discouraging any potential aggression

coming from Albania, the UN mission also became involved in the monitoring of the

internal political situation. In fact, there was some difference of opinion between the

Macedonian leadership and the United Nations about where the most significant

security threat came from. Whereas Macedonia's president maintained that the threat

was altogether external, the United Nations was more inclined to think that the

internal threat of interethnic violence was in fact the more pressing one.[107] The

Security Council accordingly stood firm in its position that UN civilian police

monitors be deployed to observe the Macedonian border police with the aim of

preventing the occurrence of violent incidences between the largely ethnic

Macedonian police and Albanians seeking to unlawfully cross the border.[108] Despite

the international community's insistence that the preventive deployment force played

a crucial role in deterring both internal or external aggression, some local observers

suggested to this author that UNPREDEP's significance was predominantly symbolic,

in so far as it contributed to a greater feeling of security amongst the people in

Macedonia, for whom the presence of UN forces was above all a sign that Macedonia

was not forgotten by the international community.[109] Similarly to the dilemmas facing

UN peacekeeping operations, UNPREDEP's mandate lacked the enforcement powers

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[105] Ibid, p. 69.
[106] Ibid, p. 70.
[107] Ibid, p. 41.
[108] Ibid, p. 109.
[109] Interviews with: Mr Ljubomir Frčkoski, former Foreign Minister, Skopje 12 September 2000; Ms Emilia Simovska, former Minister of Education, Skopje 6 December, 2001; Mr Eran Fraenkel, Director, Search for Common Ground/Macedonia, Skopje 17 April 2002.

necessary to intervene in the event of an attack on Macedonia, a fact that could hardly

have escaped Belgrade. The UNPREDEP mission was terminated after 1999,

following Macedonia's decision to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan in

exchange for Taiwanese investment in Macedonia, to which China reacted by using

its veto in the Security Council to prevent UNPREDEP's mandate from being

extended.[110] As Taiwanese investment turned out to be unsuccessful, Macedonia has

since detracted its recognition of Taiwan, thus retaining diplomatic ties with China.

Second, in the early 1990s the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in

Europe's (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoel,

became deeply involved in efforts to help the Macedonian and Albanian political

leaders reach a mutually acceptable solution to the unresolved questions concerning in

particular Albanian-language education on the university level and the right to display

Albanian national symbols in public (such as the Albanian national flag). In

particular, the Albanian community protested the failure of the Macedonian state to

provide Albanian-language instruction in higher education. The two state universities,

SS Kiril i Metodij in Skopje and St Kliment Ohridski in Bitola, only offered courses

taught in the Macedonian language and, as a consequence, an unauthorised Albanian-

language university was set up in a suburb of Tetovo in 1995, leading to increased

tension between the Macedonian and Albanian communities.[111] The state authorities

declared the establishment of the Tetovo University unconstitutional and in an effort

to prevent the university from opening the police used force, which led to the loss of

one life.[112] As a result of continuous work on the part of the High Commissioner over

a period of several years, a compromise solution was eventually agreed upon by the

Macedonian and Albanian political leaders, whereby a South East European

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[110] Abiodun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia*, pp. 173-174.
[111] Alice Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail*, pp. 67-68.
[112] Bogdan Szajkowski, 'Macedonia: An Unlikely Road to Democracy', p. 254.

University was set up in Tetovo in 2000, as a privately funded academic institution that would offer courses in Albanian, Macedonian and English. The OSCE also deployed a modest 'Spillover Mission' to Macedonia in September 1992, whose mandate was to monitor internal developments as well as Macedonia's borders with Serbia and Albania, with the ultimate aim of preventing a spillover of the conflict in former Yugoslavia into Macedonia.[113] Over the years, the OSCE came to oversee efforts aimed at increasing Macedonia's capacity for local self-government, and the OSCE also played an important part in the monitoring of parliamentary, presidential and municipal elections in Macedonian throughout the 1990s.

In a 1996 report, Human Rights Watch, however, charged the international community with downplaying human rights violations in Macedonia and claimed that it had moderated its criticism of the Macedonian government in order to safeguard the country's stability.[114] For example, the OSCE has repeatedly been criticised by local observers for failing to provide more critical reports on the conduct of Macedonian elections. Rather than promoting stability, however, such actions on the part of the international community instead fosters a false image of peace and security, which in turn may tempt Macedonian authorities to neglect the interethnic problems that do exist in the country. Ironically, the sentiments of Human Rights Watch echo those of van der Stoel himself, who in an interview with the author of this dissertation criticised the international community for not taking seriously enough reports produced by his office that alerted to the superficial and false sense of stability in Macedonia.[115] Another criticism of the international community's attitude towards

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[113] Alice Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail*, p. 134; Sophia Clément, 'Conflict Prevention in the Balkans: Case Studies of Kosovo and the FYR of Macedonia', Chaillot Paper no 30, Institute for Security Studies, Western European Union, December 1997, p. 25.
[114] 'A Threat to "Stability": Human Rights Violations in Macedonia', p. 103.
[115] Interview with Mr Max van der Stoel, former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Skopje 29 November 2001.

Macedonia voiced by ethnic Macedonians is that influence from outside only served to undermine the democratisation process and the rule of law. Specifically, it is sometimes argued, especially amongst the Macedonians themselves, that the continuous pressure exercised by the international community on Macedonia's political leadership effectively weakened the authority and public legitimacy of Macedonia's politicians.

In an effort to comply with international norms and to satisfy European expectations on the protection of minorities, Macedonia's leaders signed and ratified the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities, which came into effect in 1998. As the Convention refrains from defining the term 'national minority', Macedonia was free to interpret the application of the Convention as it saw fit, and thus declared that 'national minority' was understood as referring to the 'nationalities' mentioned in the preamble of the constitution. Hence the Convention applied to the Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Roma and, after special agreement, Serbian minorities. From an Albanian perspective, however, the integration of international minority rights law into Macedonian national law, was deemed not only insufficient as a means of protecting the interests of the Albanians, but was in fact insulting to them. For, as noted, Macedonia's Albanian community did not consider itself a minority in Macedonia but rather as a constituent nation, deserving of the same legal standing as that of the Macedonian nation. To be classified as a minority, according to Albanians, was to be relegated to second-class citizenship, which in turn excluded them from exercising control of the Macedonian state.

In contrast with the United Nations, Council of Europe and OSCE, the European Union was slow to develop a relationship with, and thereby influence over, Macedonia. This was arguably largely a consequence of Greece's negative stance

towards Macedonia, but once relations between Macedonia and Greece began to improve in the second half of the 1990s, the EU were to become more active in its engagement with Macedonia. Nonetheless, the EU would not come to exert influence in Macedonia on the same level as it did in Bulgaria, in part because the radicalisation of Albanian elements in Macedonia developed faster than did relations between the EU and Macedonia; thus the EU would have less of a stabilising effect on Macedonia than in Bulgaria, where the country's relations with Brussels developed faster than minority rights.[116]

5.8. Armed Conflict in 2001: Failure of Prevention? Failure of Democracy?

Whereas the design of new, democratic structures was relatively easily achieved, running a political system democratically proved to be more difficult for Macedonia's political elite. On the one hand, the fact that Macedonia managed to make the transition to a pluralist system with a democratically elected legislature and executive and in which civil and political rights were largely respected, enabled the Albanians, as well as other ethnic communities, to pursue their interests by political means and to participate in the governing of the state. On the other hand, the development of democracy has been continuously challenged by corruption, organised crime, as well as regional insecurity.[117] As noted, the lack of a sense of national unity across ethnic lines, and the absence of a popular sentiment of shared, Macedonian, citizenship, problematised the process of democratisation. To a large extent, consolidation of democracy in Macedonia was obstructed by the absence of consensus between Macedonians and Albanians as to the nature and ownership of the Macedonian state

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[116] Interview with Mr Vassilis Maragos, Counsellor, EU Commission, Skopje 4 December 2001.
[117] Bogdan Szajkowski, 'Macedonia: An Unlikely Road to Democracy', p. 249.

and the constitutional status of the Albanian population. Objecting to its legally defined status as a minority, the Albanian community insisted on equal legal standing with the Macedonians, with the implication that Macedonia should be a bi-national state.[118] The Macedonian perception, however, was that as a majority in the country, they were under no obligation to share power with the much smaller Albanian community. Whereas Albanians had 'homelands' in both Albania and Kosovo, they argued, the Macedonians had only one home, only one territory – the Republic of Macedonia – in which they were recognised as a Macedonian nation.[119] It can thus be argued that the continuous struggle between Macedonians and Albanians for control and ownership of the Republic of Macedonia effectively prevented the consolidation not only of democracy but also of the Macedonian state itself.

From the outset, the idea of what constituted a democratic political system for the people of Macedonia differed amongst the Macedonians and Albanians: whereas the former favoured a liberal democratic approach, the latter argued that such a system would permanently favour the Macedonians at their expense, and thus called for a democratic system based on the principles of power-sharing and consensus in decision-making, principles that were included in the PDP-sponsored Declaration for the Equal Status of the Albanians, discussed above.[120] These conflicting perceptions of what democracy should look like in turn highlight one of the crucial issues determining the development of democracy in Macedonia, the unresolved issue of the character of the Macedonian state. As suggested in Chapter One, a fundamental requisite for a successful democratisation process is a popular agreement on the composition of the *polity*. The failure in 1991 to reach an agreement between the Macedonian and Albanian communities on the new constitution thus undermined the

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[118] Duncan M. Perry, 'The Republic of Macedonia: Finding its Way', p. 253.
[119] Interview with Ms Gordana Stošić, Journalist, Skopje 6 December 2001.
[120] Interview with Mr Abdurahman Aliti, MP, PDP, Skopje 16 April 2002.

prospects for a consolidated democratic political system, and whilst the process of democratisation did not collapse, its development was constantly hampered by Albanian resentment over their constitutional status. The issue of the Macedonian state was further complicated by the unresolved legal status of Kosovo. During the Yugoslav era, there was a constant and unimpeded movement of Albanians between Kosovo and Macedonia, as no international border existed. At the time, Kosovo's capital, Priština, was the cultural and educational centre for Albanians in Yugoslavia, and many Albanians from Macedonia went to study at the University of Priština, which was the only Albanian language university in Yugoslavia. Thus, when Yugoslavia collapsed and Macedonia seceded, an artificial political distinction between Kosovo and Macedonia was created, and the Albanians suddenly found themselves divided by an international border. The enforced legal separation of the Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo was to have important implications for the process of state building and democratisation in Macedonia, as it undercut a sense of common belonging amongst the Macedonians and Albanians. The future of the Macedonian state as well as the consolidation of democracy in the country cannot, therefore, be separated from the hitherto unresolved question of Kosovo's future. For as one commentator notes, "[a]s long as the future of Kosovo remains undecided Macedonia continues to be vulnerable to the risk of further subversive military activities being sponsored by the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) commanders who helped to mastermind the creation of the NLA from the province."[121]

Given the interconnectedness of political developments in Macedonia and Kosovo, there was a real fear in 1999 that the Kosovo crisis would spill over into

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[121] John Phillips, *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans*, p. 166.

Macedonia, thus destroying the fragile peace that prevailed there.[122] Against expectations, however, Macedonia appeared capable of maintaining its interethnic equilibrium throughout the war in Kosovo and the refugee flow that severely strained Macedonia's material and psychological resources. At this time there was a real threat to Macedonia's peaceful, if awkward, ethnic co-existence, but recognising the seriousness of the situation, the country's political leaders, Macedonian and Albanian alike, managed to exercise sufficient restraint on political rhetoric and on their constituencies.

Yet the flow of arms into Kosovo in the latter part of the 1999s, coupled with the lax border controls between Macedonia and Kosovo meant that some arms crossed the border and ended up in the hands of militant Albanians in Western Macedonia. In the end, when fighting broke out in Western Macedonia in February 2001, the Macedonian government was militarily incapable of swiftly bringing an end to the rebellion. Initially, it was unclear what the objectives of the attacks by the NLA were, but eventually their demands "came to echo those of Albanian politicians – insisting that Albanian become an official state language and that Albanians gain equal status with Macedonians."[123] The NLA had thus officially appropriated the political programme of the Albanian parties in Macedonia. This proved to be an effective strategy as the Framework Agreement that was concluded on 13 August 2001 in Ohrid, and which put an end to the armed conflict, clearly reflected the US' and EU's belief that inadequate rights for the Albanians had indeed been the cause of the war.[124] The Framework Agreement was accordingly designed to redress those deficiencies.

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[122] International Crisis Group, 'Macedonia: Toward Destabilisation? The Kosovo Crisis Takes its Toll on Macedonia', ICG Report no. 67, 21 May 1999.
[123] Duncan Perry, "Macedonia in Crisis", Meeting Report no. 237, Washington, DC: East European Studies, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2001.
[124] Brenda Pearson, , 'Putting Peace Into Practice: Can Macedonia's New Government Meet the Challenge?', p. 2.

Yet, it would be erroneous to conclude simply that the conflict over rights was at the heart of the brief Macedonian war. Also contributing to the NLA's decision to take up arms in 2001 was regional instability resulting from the unresolved Kosovo question, and more immediately, NATO's failure to disarm the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and adequately police the border between Kosovo and Macedonia to prevent a spillover of arms. Additionally, Robert Hislope argues that Macedonia' war must be understood in the context of the extensive networks of organised crime and corruption that pervade both the Albanian and Macedonian communities, and the Balkans in general.[125]

5.9. Conclusion

In contrast to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia, Macedonia succeeded in obtaining its independence from Yugoslavia non-violently, and proceeded to developing a democratic political system aimed at consolidating the new state, as well as strengthening its legitimacy in the eyes of its multi-ethnic population as well as the international community. Recognising Macedonia's precarious situation upon its decision to leave the Yugoslav federation, Macedonia's political leadership managed to maintain a relatively moderate line in national politics as well as in relations to neighbouring states, in order not to provoke any aggression from within or from external actors. Bearing in mind Macedonia's political immaturity and lack of a state tradition, the country performed above expectations, but its progress was significantly impeded by the failure of the international community to extend diplomatic recognition to Macedonia following the Badinter Commission's favourable report. A

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[125] Robert Hislope, 'The Calm Before the Storm? The Influence of Cross-Border Networks, Corruption, and Contraband on Macedonian Stability and Regional Security.' Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 30 August-2 September, 2001.

small, fragmented country of some two million people, Macedonia was thus left without financial and political support at a crucial period in its state-building efforts. Managing to avoid the aggressive brand of nationalism that emerged in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia succeeded in transforming the old socialist structures into a democratic design, which, although flawed and at times malfunctioning, did prove to be surprisingly resilient over the years. Violent interethnic confrontation was contained by means of open communication in a procedurally democratic system. With external help from the from UNPREDEP, the Council of Europe and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Macedonia's fragile peace seemed to defy expectations. When war eventually broke out in the spring of 2001, it was nonetheless a brief one with relatively few casualties and none of the violent excesses witnessed in the Bosnian and Kosovo wars. Even at the height of the armed confrontation between the NLA and the Macedonian security forces, the country's democratic system continued to function, and pressured by the international community, a government of national unity was formed, consisting of VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM, DPA and PDP, which served the purpose of signalling to the citizens of Macedonia as well as to neighbouring states that Macedonia was still in control of its destiny. More significantly, the fact that the war when it happened, was relatively brief and that when it came to an end, Macedonian and Albanians once more came together, albeit reluctantly, to govern the country. Thus it can be argued that the continuous efforts to prevent the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo from spilling over into Macedonia, along with the ongoing dialogue between Macedonians and Albanians via the political institutions, lessened the severity and impact of the war in 2001. Most Macedonians and Albanians saw war as something they could not afford, and despite the lingering tensions between the two communities, few people expected

an armed confrontation to break out. When it did, however, it did so no as a result of an increasingly escalating dispute that eventually erupted in violent confrontation, but rather as a consequence of the radicalisation of the situation in Kosovo towards the end of the 1990s. The experience of Macedonia therefore points to an important, yet often neglected, factor that conditions the process of peaceful democratisation in a country; the security environment immediately surrounding countries undergoing such a political transition. Had Macedonia not been faced with credible threats to its territorial integrity and national security, and had the international community lent Macedonia its support from the beginning, it is possible that war would have been averted altogether.

CHAPTER SIX

Interethnic Relations and Conflict in the Context of Democratisation:
A Comparative Assessment of Bulgaria and Macedonia

6.1. Introduction

Following the two preceding chapters' examination of Bulgaria and Macedonia's experiences with democratisation and inter-communal relations in the 1990s, the aim of this chapter is to further the analysis, looking at the commonalities as well as points of divergence found in the two case studies. In doing so, the objective is to identify factors that facilitated the generally non-violent democratisation process in these two countries, and factors that ultimately distinguished their experiences from each other. This includes an examination of why Bulgaria's 'democratic peace' at home stabilised, whilst Macedonia suffered a six-month long armed confrontation between the National Liberation Army (NLA) and Macedonian security forces, a conflict which severely challenged the viability of the country's inexperienced democratic system, although it never managed to quite defeat it.

The main lesson to be learned from Chapters Four and Five is that, of critical importance for the relative success or failure of inter-communal peace and the development of democracy in Bulgaria and Macedonia in the decade following the collapse of communism were three factors. First, whether or not the larger majority of citizens subscribed to the idea of a common national identity across ethnic lines, and thus a unified political community. This factor carried important implications for domestic as well as external security. In the case of Macedonia, it is particularly noteworthy that the identity of the state had been fundamentally altered with the secession from Yugoslavia, that is, from a multiethnic federal republic to an ethnic Macedonian nation-state. Second, the two countries' respective external security

environments, which were shaped by lingering national grievances, claims and perceptions between the various ethno-national communities on the Balkan peninsula. The third factor was the influence of external actors beyond the Balkans – states and international institutions – on domestic political development in the two countries.

6.2. Questions of National Identity and Domestic Peace

As noted, democratisation in Bulgaria and Macedonia was embarked upon not so much as a result of popular demand but rather out of political necessity. Neither country had experienced a genuine anti-communist revolution and neither had much by way of an influential pro-democracy movement before 1989. When democracy was eventually introduced in Bulgaria and Macedonia, it was chiefly due to the larger political changes sweeping Eastern Europe at the time, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, all of which highlighted the importance for small countries like Bulgaria and Macedonia of seeking integration into a unified Europe upon the collapse of communism. Democratisation, human rights and minority rights protection, were thus necessary means towards an end: integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, and the security, political, economic, and social benefits would hopefully follow.

The significance of gaining acceptance as rightful members of Europe was further highlighted by the fact that, at the time when communist rule was coming to an abrupt end in Eastern Europe, opening the way for democracy and market economy, Bulgaria and Macedonia were each facing a highly volatile interethnic situation at home. The Bulgarian Communist Party's (BCP) policy of forcibly assimilating the Turkish and Muslim minorities, and the consequent departure of

350,000 Turks from Bulgaria in the summer of 1989, followed by the return of some 150,000 in 1990, resulted in an acute inter-communal crisis between the Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority at the time of Bulgaria's transition, which in turn posed a considerable threat to domestic peace. In Macedonia, the fear of Serbian aggression and of violent interethnic confrontation similar to that in Bosnia was highly palpable and the odds of Macedonia succeeding to avoid the same violent fate as befell the other former Yugoslav republics were regarded as low indeed.[1]

Although peaceful interethnic coexistence had been the norm rather than exception in both Bulgaria and Macedonia for more than a century, the 1980s had seen the emergence of increasingly authoritarian policies aimed at suppressing the largest – and thus most threatening – minority in each country and, in the case of Bulgaria, going so far as to deny the very existence of any non-Bulgarian minorities. Thus, as the communist bloc collapsed, Bulgaria and Macedonia experienced not only an ideological crisis accompanied by a precarious power vacuum, but also an inter-communal crisis. In the case of Bulgaria, the crisis was apparent, as tension between Bulgarians and Turks simmered in the aftermath of Zhivkov's assimilation campaign. In Macedonia, the crisis was perhaps more latent, in so far as it had not yet turned violent; yet it remained a credible threat, exacerbated by the fact that the ethnic Macedonian leadership failed to take seriously the warning signs at home of impending inter-communal conflict, preferring instead to focus on potential external threats.

At the time when the initial steps toward a democratic transition were taken, Bulgaria's domestic security concerns were coloured by a nationalist backlash against the Turkish minority, as mistrust and resentment between ethnic Bulgarians and

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[1] Misha Glenny, 'Heading Off War in the Southern Balkans, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1995, vol. 74, no. 3, pp. 98-99.

ethnic Turks was at a dangerously high level. For whereas the process of reversing repressive minority policies was fairly straightforward and promptly implemented following the expulsion of Zhivkov, people's perceptions, especially those of the Bulgarian majority who had been subject to years of anti-Turkish propaganda from the Communist Party, were harder to change. The popular perception that the Turkish minority, along with their 'motherland' Turkey, represented a real threat to the integrity of Bulgaria had been so successfully promoted by the communist regime that people's fear did not abate simply as a result of the Party's change in policy. Instead, there were Bulgarians who questioned the wisdom of returning the names and rights to the Turks for fear that they would take revenge on the Bulgarian majority, particularly in the ethnically mixed regions of the country.

Nonetheless, the decision to repeal the policies of the assimilation campaign, and thus recognising the right of Turks to freely choose and express their ethnic and religious identity within the Bulgarian state, was a crucial step in resolving the adversarial relations between Bulgarians and Turks, which had been revived by Zhivkov's nationalist policies, and it also opened the way for a rethinking of what it meant to be a Bulgarian national. Although Bulgaria was still regarded as a Bulgarian nation-state, the definition of the Bulgarian nation would be tacitly changed over time as the Turkish minority was integrated into the political system through the participation of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms in parliament. Whilst acknowledging the largely positive development of inter-communal relations between Bulgarians and Turks since the beginning of the democratisation process, it needs to be pointed out that post-communist Bulgaria's overall attitude towards its ethnic and religious minorities has been marked by inconsistencies and prejudice. Although the existence of Turks, Roma, Pomaks, Jews, Armenians, and other minorities – though

not those claiming a Macedonian identity[2] – in Bulgaria was acknowledged, the Bulgarian constitution of 1991 makes no mention of ethnic minorities, and to this day, the Turkish political integration in Bulgarian politics remains an exceptional case rather than a model for Bulgarian minority policies.

Despite discriminatory state policies against the non-Bulgarian minority[3], relations between the Bulgarian and Turkish communities had been largely peaceful since Bulgaria gained independence from the Ottomans in 1878, and this low level of violent inter-communal conflict had, according to local observers, contributed to the evolution of a climate of inter-communal tolerance throughout Bulgaria.[4] For Bulgaria's Turkish minority, the Bulgarian lands had been their homeland long before there existed a Turkish state, which arguably helps to explain why Bulgarian Turks retained their loyalty to the Bulgarian state after the Ottoman Empire collapsed. At the same time, the continuous reproduction of historical narratives from the time of the 'Turkish yoke', remained in the Bulgarian national psyche, and was to be revived during Zhivkov's rule, when state-sponsored propaganda hostile towards the Turkish minority served to foster inter-communal tension. During Zhivkov's regime, Bulgarian communism became increasingly infused with a nationalist element, as leaders of the BCP were beginning to worry that the Turkish minority was too numerous, and thus posed a threat to the homogeneity of Bulgarian communist society. Hence, the aim of the BCP became that of pushing out as many Turks (and Muslim Roma) as possible – by making their lives in Bulgaria increasingly difficult –

[2] Since from a Bulgarian viewpoint, there is no Macedonian nation, there cannot, logically, exist a Macedonian national minority in Bulgaria.
[3] Krassimir Kanev, 'Law and Politics on Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Bulgaria', in Anna Krasteva (ed.), *Communities and Identities in Bulgaria* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1998), pp. 56-70.
[4] Antonina Zhelyazkova, 'Turks', in Anna Krasteva (ed.), *Communities and Identities in Bulgaria*, p. 296; Interview with Dr Vladimir Chukov, Director, Bulgarian Centre for Middle East Studies, Sofia 9 October 2001; Dr Lyubov Mincheva, Research Associate, Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS), Sofia 16 October 2001.

and to assimilate the rest.[5] Among other things, official propaganda in the 1970s claimed that Bulgaria was under threat from illegal Turkish movements whose aim was territorial autonomy for the Turkish minority and, at worst, secession and annexation with Turkey.[6] Additionally, when the Bulgarian economy suffered a downturn in the early 1980s, communist officials were quick to blame it on the Turkish minority.[7]

As anti-Turkish propaganda spread throughout the Bulgarian population it gradually became integrated into local 'knowledge' and fear and mistrust of the Turks thus was embedded in the consciousness of many ethnic Bulgarians.[8] Hence, as has been the case in other parts of the world in recent history, the seeds of inter-communal tension thus originated from government policies aimed at reinforcing "intolerance and excuse harassment of targeted communities..."[9] Hence, Bulgaria's conflict between Bulgarians and Turks was largely a conflict initiated from above, rather than from the level of the community.

Macedonia, too, had enjoyed a long history of generally peaceful inter-communal cohabitation between Macedonians and Albanians. But as Serbian policy became increasingly anti-Albanian in the 1980s, with the rise of Slobodan Milošević, Macedonian leaders too followed suit and began to implement anti-Albanian policies. Thus, as in Bulgaria, inter-communal tension in Macedonia was to a considerable extent fostered by government-imposed discrimination against a minority perceived as a potential security threat.

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[5] Interview with Dr Ilona Tomova, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 25 October 2001.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Interviews with Dr Stephan Nikolov, Struga 11June 2000; Dr Ilona Tomova, Sofia 25 October 2001.
[8] Interview with Dr Ilona Tomova, Sofia 25 October 2001.
[9] Human Rights Watch, *Slaughter Among Neighbors: The Political Origins of Communal Violence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 1.

An important difference, however, was that whereas the Bulgarian Turks did not as a rule use aggressive tactics to fight back in the face of repression, Albanians in the SFRY did. Thus, while inter-communal tensions in Bulgaria subsided over time and social relations between Bulgarians and Turks improved following the restoration of rights of the Turkish minority and the successful integration of the MRF into Bulgarian national politics, social relations between Macedonians and Albanians remained precarious even after the political integration of the Albanians in an independent Macedonian state. Furthermore, in Bulgaria, the 'shame' of the 1980s assimilation process had in fact a positive impact on political development in the early years of democratisation: in particular, as the repression of Turks failed to provoke a radical response from within the Turkish community, the victimization of the Turks was a fact that could not be denied by the Bulgarian majority. In Macedonia, however, the radicalisation of Albanians, which in turn was influenced by developments in Kosovo, only helped to increase Macedonian perception of the Albanians not as victims but rather as a looming threat to Macedonia's national and territorial security.

6.3. Human Needs Theory, Conflict and Democracy

Seeking to explain the dynamics of inter-communal relations and political development in post-communist Bulgaria and Macedonia, we return to John Burton's theory of human needs and conflict analysis as first introduced in Chapter Two. Writing on international conflict resolution, John Burton maintains that conflicts within as well as between states arise from the frustration of, or (perceived) threat to,

a series of needs that are ontologically grounded in all humans.[10] By *needs* we understand "those conditions or opportunities that are essential to the individual if he is to be a functioning and cooperative member of society, conditions that are essential to his development and which, through him, are essential to the organization and survival of society."[11] Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati, in turn, highlight a number of propositions derived from a human needs approach to the study of international relations, some of which are of particular relevance to the present study. First, similarly to Burton, they maintain that all humans possess "relatively enduring needs that must be fulfilled for them to grow and develop and for societies to function harmoniously." In contrast with values[12] and interests[13], which are determined by culture and context, needs are seen as largely universal. Second, in order to pursue these needs, individuals seek to relate to, and unite with, other individuals. This takes place mainly by identifying with and participating in groups – political, class, ethnic, religious, national, economic, language and so on. Hence, identity groups serve as the medium through which individual needs are pursued. Third, whilst societies rely on the means of socialization and coercion for their immediate preservation, in the long term they are nonetheless influenced by the extent to which human needs are satisfied or not.[14] Therefore, as long as needs fundamental to the development of individuals remain unmet in any given society, there is a palpable risk that destructive conflict will arise, particularly in ethnically divided societies, such as Bulgaria and

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[10] John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Provention* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), Chapter 3.

[11] John Burton, 'Human Needs Versus Societal Needs', in Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati (eds.), *The Power of Human Needs in World Society* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1988), p. 38.

[12] 'Values' refers to "those ideas, habits, customs and beliefs that are a characteristic of particular social communities. They are the linguistic, religious, class, ethnic or other features that lead to separate cultures and identity groups." (John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Provention*, p. 37.)

[13] 'Interests', as Burton notes, "refer to the occupational, social, political and economic aspirations of the individual, and of identity groups of individuals within a social system." (John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Provention*, p. 38)

[14] Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati, 'Human Needs in World Society', in Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati (eds.), *The Power of Human Needs in World Society*, p. 13.

Macedonia, where inter-communal conflict, according to a human needs approach, are largely fostered by the failure to gratify needs, or (perceived) threats to such gratification. The kind of needs referred to in such a context include not only physiological needs, but also, and more importantly, psychological needs, including identity, security and recognition.[15] Furthermore, "...insofar as these needs become driving forces in...intergroup conflict, they are...articulated through important identity groups."[16] Conversely, identity conflicts are understood as being "deeply rooted in the underlying individual human needs and values that together constitute people's social identities, particularly in the context of group affiliations, loyalties, and solidarity."[17]

In the case of inter-communal relations between Macedonians and Albanians, and Bulgarians and Turks, issues surrounding the need for identity, security and recognition in particular, stand out. Identity was a key factor in both conflicts. In Bulgaria, the forced assimilation campaign that culminated in the 1989 exodus, sought to deny the existence of a Turkish and/or Muslim identity, thus claiming Bulgaria as a homogenous nation state. When rights were later restored to the Turkish and Muslim minorities, there were Bulgarians, particularly in the mixed regions, who feared that the re-recognition of the identities of Turks and Muslims would threaten the security of their own community, the Bulgarian nation as understood in ethnic terms. As such fears, however, were not born out by subsequent developments in Bulgaria, inter-communal tension decreased, and with the further political integration of the Turkish community, through the active participation of the MRF in national

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[15] Herbert C. Kelman, 'Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict', in William Zartman and Lewis Rasmussen (eds.), *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), p. 195.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Jay Rothman, *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict in Nations, Organizations, and Communities* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), p. 6.

politics, the conflict over identity between the Bulgarian majority and Turkish minority gradually diminished. In sum, the fact that the contestation over identity, which had been fostered during Zhivkov's regime was addressed at the very outset of Bulgaria's regime transition, thus facilitated the peaceful development of democracy, which in turn helped to improve relations between the Bulgarian and Turkish communities.

In Macedonia, the issue of national identity, and its political implications concerning a 'right' to statehood, was – and remains to this day – key to the understanding of the conflict between the Macedonian majority and Albanian minority. Whereas in Bulgaria, the identity of the majority Bulgarians was never under serious threat, the identity of the Macedonian majority has, as demonstrated in Chapter Five, been a long-standing issue of contention throughout the Balkans, and the failure of Macedonia's neighbours – most importantly, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia – to publicly recognise a distinct Macedonian nation(al)/identity, has significantly undermined the Macedonian community's need for security, recognition, self-esteem and a sense of justice, and contributed to their unwillingness to seriously take into account the grievances raised by the Albanians. This, in turn, has severely undermined efforts to reconcile Macedonians and Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia, as the latter group too have experienced their need for security, recognition, self-esteem and justice stymied by the Macedonian majority. In the case of Macedonia, therefore, the failure to address the on-going inter-communal conflict rooted in threatened needs, particularly those of identity, recognition and security, presented a real obstacle to peaceful democratic development in the Republic of Macedonia since its inception in 1991. In short, whereas there was little questioning of Bulgaria's identity as a 'Bulgarian state' in the first decade following regime

transition, the identity of the Republic of Macedonia, was and remains, highly controversial. For to say that the Republic is a Macedonian state, is to exclude the identity of a large proportion of the population, who identify themselves not as Macedonian but as Albanian, and who contest the Macedonian majority's dominance and ownership of the Republic of Macedonia. Conversely, the Macedonian community does not regard the Albanians who hold Macedonian citizenships as being part of the Macedonian nation; hence, they are viewed as a national minority, whose proper motherland lies outside the borders of the Republic of Macedonia. Identity politics has thus played an important role in post-communist Macedonia, and has proved an obstacle to the consolidation of democratic peace in the country, as the key requisite for successful democratisation is the existence of a unified political community, that is, a sufficient degree of 'national' unity. As Schöpflin suggests, identity "...offers individuals the security of community and solidarity, of shared patterns of meanings, a bounded world in which to live and in which one can find others like oneself."[18] Hence, the recognition of a Macedonian national identity became a security measure vis-à-vis the Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks and Albanians, all of whom had at various points in history made claims to the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, its people, or the name of the state.

The experiences of Bulgaria and Macedonia strongly indicate that the successful, and peaceful, introduction and development of a democratic political system in an ethnically diverse society demands that certain needs-based conflictual issues are addressed in the very beginning of the transition process, before the new political institutions have been established by law and laid down in a constitution. In order to understand the importance of this assertion, another detour to Burton's

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[18] George Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power: The New Politics of Europe* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), p. 10

conflict theory is warranted. Burton distinguishes between *disputes* and *conflicts*, where the former refers to "those situations in which the issues are negotiable, in which there can be compromise, and which, therefore, do not involve consideration of altered institutions and structures."[19] Conflicts, in contrast, are rooted in human needs and, therefore, "[t]he issues that lead to conflicts are not the ordinary ideas, choices, preferences and interests which are argued and negotiated as part of normal social living. They are those whose sources are deeply rooted in human behaviors."[20] Whereas disputes require management, to be resolved, conflicts must be addressed from a problem-solving approach that takes into account the often non-negotiable needs of the parties in conflict. Democracy, in turn, is primarily a mechanism for managing disputes that arise within the political system, whilst preserving the institutional structure that is in place. The democratic process, therefore, is inadequate as a mechanism for resolving needs-based conflicts, since such conflicts often require changes to be made on an institutional and structural level. Furthermore, demands for such structural changes could be perceived by a country's dominant culture as a threat to stability, by which is meant the status quo. Hence, for the process of democratisation to facilitate peaceful inter-communal relations in a multi-ethnic society, conflicts stemming from a need for identity, security and recognition, must be resolved within the period of initial negotiations leading up to a democratic transition. Left unresolved, such conflicts will, as the case of post-independence Macedonia demonstrates, get in the way of the development of democracy and inter-communal peace. To the extent that conflicts arising within a society such as Bulgaria and Macedonia are interest-based rather than grounded in needs, the process of

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[19] John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Provention*, p. 2.
[20] Ibid.

democratisation has a better chance of serving as a vehicle for peaceful negotiation since, in contrast to needs, interests are less constant and therefore also negotiable.

Burton also points out that "failure to make possible the satisfaction of human needs and aspirations leads to loss of legitimization of their authority."[21] 'Legitimization' is not the same as 'legality', however, by which is understood "[e]ffective control, including the ability to defend, and recognition of this by others".[22] Rather, legitimization "stresses the reciprocal nature of relations with authorities, the support given because of the services they render, and respect for legal norms when these are legitimized norms."[23] Importantly, the use of state sanctioned violence within a country is an indication of the loss of legitimization.[24] The concept of legitimization becomes particularly pertinent in multiethnic societies, where legitimization is highly dependent on the political relationship between majorities and minorities. At the time of communism's collapse, both Bulgaria and Macedonia faced a situation of lost legitimization, due to their repressive policies against the Turkish and Albanian minorities respectively. In Bulgaria, however, the decision of the BCP to restore the rights of the Turks following Zhivkov's fall, the subsequent recognition and integration of the MRF as a player in Bulgaria's national politics, coupled with the non-ethnic profile of what was de facto an ethnic Turkish party, helped restore legitimization of the Bulgarian authorities in the eyes of the Turkish minority. This in turn significantly facilitated the development of democracy and peaceful inter-communal relations within Bulgaria.

In the case of Macedonia, however, the failure of parliament and President Gligorov, to consider the claims presented by the PDP leadership in the 'Declaration

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[21] Ibid., p. 123.
[22] Ibid., p. 124.
[23] Ibid., p. 127.
[24] Ibid.

for the Equal Rights of the Albanians in Macedonia', along with the unresolved dispute over Albanian-language education at the university level, contributed to a loss of legitimization on the part of the Macedonian state vis-à-vis the Albanian community, which would be sustained until the signing of the Ohrid Agreement in August 2001. As the Macedonian case illustrates, even when the dominant political leaders in a multiethnic society claim a commitment to integration, the dynamics of politics tends to favour majority policies, thus reinforcing the feeling amongst minorities of being second-class citizens. The political elite of the majority ethnic group may come under pressure to ensure the preservation of their cultural values, such as the privileged position of the majority language as the official language. The response from minority groups is thus bound to be negative.[25]

The relative size of a given minority group also matters. Whereas the Turkish minority in Bulgaria represented less than ten percent of the total population in post-communist Bulgaria, and its numbers continues to decrease as a result of Turkish emigration, the need for the Bulgarian majority to assert its cultural hegemony was arguably not very pressing. In contrast, the need for Macedonians to protect their cultural values as a majority vis-à-vis an Albanian minority was urgently felt, as the Albanians measured at least twenty per cent and perhaps as much as thirty-five per cent of Macedonia's total population and might, or so ethnic Macedonians feared, well increase over time. As a result, majority power politics eventually eroded the legitimization of the Macedonian government authorities.

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[25] Ibid., p. 140.

6.4. National Identity and the State

Whereas inter-communal relations were at a low point in both Bulgaria and Macedonia at the time of the transition from communism, there were important differences in the characteristics of the simmering interethnic tensions in the two countries. In Bulgaria, ethno-nationalist antagonism was generated from within the country, and particularly from above, that is, from the Bulgarian Communist Party. Thus, the adversarial relationship between the Bulgarian and Turkish community's was at first a product of top-down tactics, drawing on Bulgarians' historical memory of the Ottoman suppression of the Bulgarian nation, with state-led encouragement of negative stereotyping and propaganda directed against the Turkish people, whilst the Turkish community largely refrained from aggressive counter-attack. In Macedonia, on the other hand, the conflict was to a considerable extent influenced by the break-up of Yugoslavia and by the political developments in neighbouring Kosovo, as well as by historical claims and perceptions of neighbouring nations vis-à-vis the Macedonian nation and the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, mutual suspicion fed antagonistic feelings vis-à-vis 'the other' amongst the Macedonian as well as Albanian community, thus leading to the radicalisation of both.

The issue of national identity has generally been more problematic in Macedonia than in Bulgaria. Having existed as an independent state since 1878, Bulgaria was not confronted as much with contested questions of national identity – choosing to define the country as uni-national yet ethnically and religiously diverse. Fifty years as a Soviet satellite certainly left its mark on the Bulgarian nation in terms of social, political and cultural identity, but did not undermine the unity of the country, until it was brought to the brink of violent inter-communal conflict as a

result of the assimilation campaign. Macedonia, on the other hand, was a newly independent state, and as such lacked a state tradition and experience running a country.

If Bulgarian society was more tolerant of ethnic and religious minorities than many of its neighbours during the 1990s, it was largely a result of the decreasing level of threat perception amongst Bulgarians and Turks since the culmination of the tense inter-communal crisis of 1989-1991. Whereas the conflict between the Macedonian and Albanian communities centred on the issue of state ownership and cultural characteristics, the Turkish community did not contest the ownership of the Bulgarian state or Bulgarian cultural hegemony, and in terms of national identity, both Turks and Bulgarians over time came implicitly to accept that membership in the Turkish minority did not preclude parallel membership in the Bulgarian political nation. The situation in Macedonia, however, was markedly different, as the self-identification of Albanians as being simultaneously Macedonian, was always much lesser - if not largely non-existent - in part because the ethnic Macedonian majority failed to encourage a Macedonian self-identity amongst the Albanian minority. Furthermore, as noted by Kymlicka, there is a strong historical connection between the consolidation of liberal democracy and the "...promotion of a common national language and societal culture..."[26] In Bulgaria, the common political and national language was, and remains, Bulgarian, so that even at the MRF's headquarters in Sofia, Bulgarian is the official working language. This undoubtedly facilitated the acceptance and integration of the Turks into the political domain. In Macedonia, by contrast, the Macedonian language was contested from the early 1990s as the sole national and political language, as Albanians demanded that their language be

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[26] Will Kymlicka, 'Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe', in Will Kymlicka and Magda Opalski (eds.), *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 20.

recognised as a second official language. For most of the 1990s, therefore, the unresolved conflict over language and its relation to national identity, posed an enduring obstacle to democratic consolidation.

The official line in post-communist Bulgarian politics was that the Bulgarian people constituted all Bulgarian citizens, irrespective of ethnic and religious affiliation. Hence, the understanding of the new, democratic, Bulgaria was that of a civic, or political[27], nation guided by the principles of liberalism. Of course, it should be acknowledged here that even in purportedly civic states, which includes most West European countries, in real terms it is still the culture of the majority that dominates, so that, as Schöpflin notes, "French citizenship is permeated by French ways of doing things, French codes, French points of reference and a French perception of what is 'normal and natural'."[28] In this respect, Bulgaria is no different; for it is the ethnic Bulgarian culture and the Orthodox Church that continue to define the quality and identity of the Bulgarian state. Yet, despite the obvious discrepancy between theory and practice, Bulgaria's relatively successful striving for democratic interethnic peace at home during the 1990s, and particularly the maintenance of peaceful relations between Bulgarians and Turks, can be explained in part by the official claims – even if in real terms it was, and remains, little more than an illusion – that ethnic Turks and Muslims are also accepted as members of the Bulgarian nation; a self-deception perhaps, but one that was effectively legitimated by the inclusion of the MRF in national politics, and by Ahmed Dogan's moderate leadership, which helped turn the MRF into a political party with a non-ethnic platform.[29] For how long this situation remains sustainable is an open question, however, particularly if the Bulgarian Turks

[27] See Chapter Four.
[28] George Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power: The New Politics of Europe*, p. 42.
[29] Also noteworthy is the fact that Bulgaria's current foreign minister, Mr Solomon Passy, is Jewish, and that Bulgaria traditionally enjoys a much lower level of anti-semitism than many other East- and West European countries.

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continue to emigrate, which might then result in a shrinking of the electoral basis of the MRF, unless it is able to attract non-Turkish voters.

In Macedonia, the situation was markedly different from that in Bulgaria. Whereas the contents of the 1991 constitution emphasised the rights of the Macedonian *citizen*, it was made clear early on by the politics of the ethnic Macedonian political parties – especially that of the VMRO-DPMNE – and confirmed by the wording of the preamble to the new constitution, that the Macedonian nation was to be defined in ethnic terms, in that only ethnic Macedonians were considered as rightful members of the Macedonian nation. All other groups were classified as minorities, albeit citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, which in principle afforded them equal rights with the Macedonian majority. Ethnic divisions were also so pronounced that an illusion of the Republic of Macedonia as representing an emerging liberal state in Western terms was clearly impossible to uphold. Moreover, whereas in Bulgaria, the Turkish and other minorities largely refrained from making demands for group-specific rights in the political sphere, the Albanian community in Macedonia vehemently protested that the rights system, fashioned along the lines of the liberal conception of individual rights, in fact favoured ethnic Macedonians and their culture at the expense of those of the Albanians and other ethnic communities, and thus persisted in their demands for group-specific rights designed to enhance the political status of the Albanians to equal that of the Macedonians. As a result, the political community in the new Republic of Macedonia was divided into two ethnically aligned factions at the very outset, thus rendering democratisation a problematic enterprise. The experiences of Bulgaria and Macedonia thus seem to support the claim made in Chapter One, that a common

national or political identity that is inclusive of all ethnic groups, is the *sine qua non* of successful democratisation.

David Miller, in turn, maintains that in principle a multiethnic society can have a common national identity since, first, "ethnicity is not an intrinsically political identity" and, second, ethnic identity does not necessarily translate into territorial claims.[30] It is therefore possible, he suggests, for a state to be ethnically divided yet not multinational, "when it contains two or more distinct ethnic groups each of which is nonetheless able to participate in a common national identity."[31] Bulgaria arguably falls into this category to the extent that the Turkish minority perceives itself as having a Bulgarian identity in addition to their Turkish one. Macedonia, on the other hand, can hardly be considered as anything but a multinational state, in so far as the Albanian community regards itself as a separate nation, and not merely as an ethnic group within Macedonia.

Seeking to understand how Bulgaria and Macedonia's respective domestic and external security environments influenced the prospects for peaceful democratisation in each country, some of the concepts from Georg Sørensen's theory of the security dilemma in international relations and its connection with statehood structures become relevant. Distinguishing between *modern, post-colonial* and *post-modern* types of states, Sørensen maintains that the security dilemma facing an individual country is dependent on its specific state structures.[32] The key features he identifies as characteristic of a modern state are the existence of a "centralised system of rule, based on a set of administrative, policing and military organizations, sanctioned by a legal order, claiming monopoly of the legitimate use of force" and,

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[30] David Miller, 'Nationality in Divided Societies', in Alain-G. Gagnon and James Tully (eds.), *Multinational Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 302.
[31] Ibid., p. 301.
[32] Georg Sørensen, *Changes in Statehood: The Transformation of International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 92.

more importantly for the present study, "A people within a territory making up a community in the *Gesellschaft* and the *Gemeinschaft* sense, involving a high level of cohesion, binding nation and state together."[33] Borrowing from Ferdinand Toennies, Sørensen distinguishes between the concepts of *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeninschaft*, where the former refers to a political community based on "the duties and obligations of individuals to the state and the rights and privileges that they receive in return, that is, citizenship", whereas the latter is based on "the cultural-ethnic idea of community of people defined by the nation".[34] Bulgaria, arguably, falls into this category of state type. The internal structures of Macedonia, on the other hand, in many ways resemble what Sørensen labels a post-colonial state, characterised by "'[c]aptured autonomy', based on weak administrative and institutional structures...", and the predominance of ethnic community links at the expense of state/nation cohesion, which in turn has a negative effect on state legitimacy.[35] Owing to a long state tradition that dates back many centuries as well as a consolidated ethnic majority of Bulgarians since the liberation from the Ottomans in 1878, both *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* can be said to exist in modern Bulgaria to an extent sufficient enough to secure the unity of the state. Of particular importance for the development of democracy is the public recognition of Bulgaria as constituting a political community in the *Gesellschaft* sense and, in contrast, the relative absence of the *Gesellschaft* principle in Macedonia has been a contributing factor to the difficulties of developing inter-communal peace and cooperation within a functioning democratic system.

The vast majority of democratisation processes around the world have taken place in already consolidated states, of which Bulgaria is one. In the case of Macedonia, however, the state was not yet consolidated at the time of democratic transition nor at

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[33] Ibid., p. 91.
[34] Ibid, p. 184.
[35] Ibid.

the moment of independence; instead, there was a lingering, unresolved conflict between the two largest ethnic communities over the identity of the Macedonian state. This is yet another contributing factor to the limited ability of the democratisation process to promote peaceful relations across ethnic lines. For, the conflict between Albanians and Macedonians was not simply that of the former seeking greater minority rights protection within the state, but rather conflict centred on the constitutional status and national identity of the Albanians in Macedonia. Refusing to settle for minority status in an independent Macedonia, and instead claiming equal constitutional status as a co-dominant nation, Albanian grievances vis-à-vis the Macedonians, and the Macedonian leadership's unwillingness to enter into an earnest dialogue with the Albanians over their constitutional status and the identity of an independent Macedonian state, severely undermined the development of pluralist democracy.

In order to understand the conflictual relationship between the Macedonian and Albanian communities, we therefore need to first understand their respective understanding of themselves and the other as a nation or national minority. As pointed out in Chapter Five, ethnic Macedonians regard themselves as the primary owners of the Macedonian state on the basis of their status as a Macedonian nation. Nation, in this case, is thus understood in ethnic terms, as the name of the state corresponds to the titular of the majority ethnic group making up the citizenry, thus excluding Macedonian citizens of non-ethnic Macedonian background from membership in the Macedonian nation. Neither do ethnic Albanians in Macedonia generally consider themselves as Macedonians.[36] In SFRY, Albanians living in

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[36] When asked to identify themselves, not a single Albanian I spoke to during my visits to Macedonia between 2000 and 2002 presented him-/herself as Macedonian. This contrasts with Macedonia's Turkish and Roma communities, within which there are people who choose to identify themselves as Macedonians when travelling outside the Republic of Macedonia.

Macedonia had retained Yugoslav citizenship, and although residing in SRM, they were never regarded as Macedonian in either a political or legal sense, but associated themselves primarily with the Albanians in Kosovo and elsewhere in Yugoslavia.

Whereas Bulgaria had some success in cultivating a citizen identity, or *Gesellschaft*, across ethnic lines, in Macedonia such an identity did not seem to appeal either to the Macedonian or Albanian community. This presented an obstacle to inter-communal peace, since an identity rooted in citizenship is "constructed through a system of rights and obligations tied to the territoriality of the state."[37] Hence, as a basic normative, or moral, rule, citizens are expected to refrain from using violence against each other and instead to "seek peaceful solutions to conflicts in relations with one another."[38] To the extent that a common identity as citizen, a sense of *Gesellschaft*, was gaining acceptance in Bulgaria, thus fostering a sense of a "moral community" resting on the principles of obligation and reciprocity[39], inter-communal violence was thus more readily prevented[40], whilst in Macedonia, the failure to forge a common citizen identity impaired peaceful relations between Macedonians and Albanians.

Efforts to establish a citizen identity was further influenced by the extent to which ethnic politics became institutionalised in Bulgaria each country. Bulgaria and Macedonia chose quite different approaches concerning the constitutional rules for political party formation. Whereas Macedonia's 1991 constitution did not ban the formation of parties along ethnic and/or religious lines, Bulgaria's new constitution

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[37] Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 10.
[38] Ibid., p. 11.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Because the present study examines only the relations between Bulgarians and Turks, thus excluding from the analysis, other minority groups present in Bulgaria, it must be noted here that, similarly to other countries in Europe, the popular sense of a moral community which precludes violence against another fellow citizen, did not extend to Bulgarian attitudes towards its Roma population.

expressly prohibited such parties, although the MRF, a de facto ethnic Turkish party, avoided – albeit narrowly – being declared unconstitutional. Paradoxically, the formal ban on ethnic parties in Bulgaria was to benefit the MRF, as it was able to consolidate its power and influence in national politics in the absence of any significant competing Turkish parties. Thus, the Turkish vote was largely concentrated in one party, the MRF, thereby strengthening its voice. Had there been competing parties for the Turkish minority vote there is reason to believe that neither the MRF nor the other minority parties would have garnered enough votes to gain seats in the Bulgarian parliament. This nearly happened in the 1994 elections when the BSP supported the creation of an alternative party to the MRF, in order to split the Turkish vote. The strict hierarchical nature of the MRF's organisation also served to maximise its political power and to minimise the threat of fragmentation that would have threatened the party's position in Bulgarian politics. The strict centralisation and discipline of the MRF also helped improve ethnic Bulgarian perception of the Turks, and facilitated the public acceptance of the MRF as a legitimate political force in Bulgarian politics.

In contrast with the Bulgarian constitution, the Macedonian constitution of 1991 did permit the creation of ethnic parties, recognising that for the sake of political stability in a country with a highly diverse population, it was imperative that all ethnic groups were given the right to organise themselves politically. As ethnic Macedonians amounted to more than sixty percent of the total population their dominance in national politics was of course a foregone conclusion. In the first few years of Macedonia's democratisation process the Albanians were represented by one single political party, the PDP. From 1994 onwards, however, the Albanian vote was to become split between several parties, thereby reducing the strength of the Albanian

political influence on national politics. At the same time, the plurality of Albanian parties, and their alliance with particular ethnic Macedonian parties, ensured that each government administration came to include an Albanian party as junior partner.

6.5. Containing Nationalism

In both countries, nationalism was fairly non-aggressive, in comparison with many other countries in the Balkans. The reasons for this are several: in the case of Macedonia, the pursuit of a nationalist agenda was not actually a feasible option for the ethnic Macedonian political elite, which was well aware that such action might provoke a hostile response from Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, and possibly Albania as well. Thus, the Macedonian leadership sought to maintain a more moderate, pragmatic line, in order to protect the territorial integrity of the Macedonian republic against any re-emergence of historical grievances and claims by surrounding nations. Also necessitating a moderate political line was the highly heterogeneous character of the population inhabiting Macedonia; with more than thirty percent of the population being of non-ethnic Macedonian background, around twenty percent of which were made up of Albanians, who were territorially concentrated in Western Macedonia, compromise was imperative, as the Macedonian majority simply could not afford not to cooperate with the Albanians, lest a rebellion would arise amongst the latter.[41] This is not to say that Macedonia completely escaped the winds of nationalism; indeed, the first anti-communist party to form during the transition period was a nationalist party, VMRO-DPMNE, whose legacy was drawn directly from the old VMRO organisation

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[41] Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999*, p. 656.

of the late 19th and early 20th century.[42] Ethno-nationalist sentiments also came to the fore during the drafting of a new constitution for the Macedonian republic, as discord arose in regards to the text of the preamble, when Macedonian nationalists insisted on an ethnic definition of the Macedonian state, a demand which was strongly opposed by the Albanian community, Macedonian moderates, and also other, smaller ethnic communities. Nationalist feelings were not, however, limited to the ethnic Macedonians; within the Albanian community there were also strong elements of ethno-nationalist thinking, which was displayed through the declaration of an autonomous Albanian 'republic of Ilirida'[43] in Western Macedonia, and in demands of the establishment of Macedonia as a bi-national state.

In Bulgaria, nationalist tendencies amongst the ethnic Bulgarian majority were largely neutralised by the absence of radicalisation amongst the Turkish minority, even after having been subjected to severe repression by the Bulgarian state. Indeed, throughout the 1990s, any sign of radicalism amongst the Turkish community was effectively suppressed by Dogan's leadership, in order to prevent the MRF's position within Bulgarian national politics from being undermined.

In both countries, nationalist politics were also kept at bay by a moderate presidential leadership during the first crucial years of democratisation. Though constitutionally established as parliamentary democracies with the president's office being largely of symbolic importance, Bulgaria's Zheliu Zhelev and Macedonia's Kiro Gligorov both came to exert more power – if not political then at least moral – during their tenure than the constitution of each country prescribed. This was partly a consequence of widespread political immaturity of the prime minister's office and parliament, but also owing to the statesmanship of both presidents. Zhelev and

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[42] See Chapter Five, footnote no. 31.
[43] Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), p. 136.

Gligorov both understood the importance of promoting peaceful interethnic relations for the sake of political stability, security, and in order to gain the support of the international community and thereby access to international financial aid.

6.6. Problems Concerning the Institutionalisation of Individualism

The modern democratic model espoused by the West as well as by international institutions such as the OSCE, EU and the Council of Europe is that of *liberal* democracy, with its emphasis on individualism and understanding of rights as belonging to the individual, and that such rights can never be overridden by the rights of a collective. Liberalism and individualism thus represent two sides of the same coin, in so far as liberalism is, necessarily, individualistic. The central idea of liberalism/individualism is that "a just society seeks not to promote any particular ends, but enables its citizens to pursue their own ends, consistent with similar liberty for all; it therefore must govern by principles that do not presuppose any particular conception of the good."[44] In this respect, therefore, the liberalist vision maintains that the state should be neutral towards the, sometimes conflicting, interests of its citizens, thus providing equal rights to all individuals without making a judgement as to what constitutes the common good for people and society at large. Such neutrality, however, is highly problematic, and indeed improbable, in a state where political and social identities are closely linked with ethnicity, and where the citizenry is ethnically diverse. For, in an ethnically plural state where the political and economic power-relations between ethnic groups are asymmetrical, a liberal conception of neutrality is likely to favour the dominant ethnic group. In a divided society, such as Macedonia

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[44] Michael Sandel, 'The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self', in Shlomo Avineri and Avner de-Shalit (eds.), *Communitarianism and Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 13.

and Bulgaria, where the asymmetry of power structures favours the majority ethnic group, the principle of liberalism/individualism therefore fails to deliver its promise of a just society, and instead results in the perpetuation of the status quo, that is, asymmetrical power structures, thus allowing the majority ethnic group to retain a position of cultural hegemony vis-à-vis the smaller ethnic communities. For liberalism to function as intended it presumes, paradoxically, ethnic or cultural homogeneity, or absolute pluralism with symmetrical power structures, so that no ethnic group holds a majority or dominating position In a state where ethnicity is politicised, liberalism becomes highly problematic as its underlying philosophy of neutrality and individual reductionism runs counter to the collectivist notion of identity that is inherent in the concept of ethnicity.

As the previous chapter indicated, following the collapse of communism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the political elite in Macedonia, dominated by the majority ethnic group, sought to gain international recognition by introducing Western-style liberal democracy. Hence, ethnic nationalist rhetoric was kept under relative control. The Macedonian elite's commitment to democratisation can also be viewed as a security measure designed to protect the young Republic of Macedonia from external as well as internal challenges to its legitimacy. In view of the development of international norms in the direction of the Western liberal democratic tradition, a liberal, democratising Macedonian state would, as a moral principle, have to be protected by the Western powers against potential threats from Albanian separatists, and in the event of renewed Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian claims on either Macedonia's territory or on the Macedonian national identity. However, the implementation of a political and legal system that emphasised the rights of individuals rather than those of the collective, was rejected by the Albanian

community, who feared that a rights regime centred solely on the individual would effectively perpetuate Macedonian cultural hegemony and render the Albanians second class citizens in their own country.

Whilst neither country possessed much by way of a liberal tradition, Bulgaria was able to play the liberal card more successfully than Macedonia, due to its smaller proportion of minorities, and the tacit acknowledgement amongst Bulgaria's minorities that ethnic Bulgarians were the primary owners of the Bulgarian state, along with the official notion that the Bulgarian nation was defined in political and not ethnic terms. The Bulgarian focus was from the outset individualist, declining to provide special rights for any religious or ethnic groups, although, of course, ethnic Bulgarian culture was implicitly favoured by virtue of its dominant position. This was seen as being in line with the principle of one-man-one-vote in liberal democratic systems. The emergence of a range of political parties led and supported mainly by ethnic Bulgarians, thus splitting the Bulgarian vote, combined with a unified Turkish political force, thus contributed to the consolidation of the MRF's influence on national politics. In Macedonia, on the other hand, Albanian political power was weakened by the fragmentation and political infighting characterising the relations between the PDP and DPA. Albanian demands for collective rights to protect their interests led to further tension between the Macedonian and Albanian communities.

Furthermore, an examination of the dynamics of individualism versus collectivism in multiethnic societies suggests that for individualism to take hold in a society, citizens need a measure of security – political, social, economic and cultural, whereas insecurity, as history has shown, tends to breed collectivism as people seek protection and affirmation within the group, which in turn favours not liberal democracy but chauvinism, populism and a 'tyranny of the majority'. In Bulgaria, the

relative sense of security – internal and external – thus facilitated an acceptance of individualism as a principle guiding Bulgarian society, whereas in Macedonia, the insecurity felt amongst Macedonians and Albanians alike, compelled each community to turn to their own kin.

6.7. External Security and Implications for Democratisation

In conjunction with the domestic issues addressed in the preceding section, the experiences of Bulgaria and Macedonia were significantly influenced by the extent to which external security concerns were present at the time of the democratic transition. As was noted in Chapters Four and Five, by the summer of 1989, relations between Bulgaria and Turkey were severely strained due to the assimilation policies of the former, and Bulgaria also found itself isolated from the larger international community, as a result of its blatant and aggressive violation of minority rights at a time when the political climate between East and West Europe was beginning to warm up. Macedonia, in turn, would find itself largely abandoned by the international community following its declaration of independence.

A significant difference between Bulgaria and Macedonia's relations with external actors, in the region and elsewhere, stemmed from the fact that Bulgaria was not faced with any immediate external challenges to either its territory or to its identity, whereas Macedonia was, as its national identity was not recognised by Bulgaria, Greece and to a lesser extent Serbia. Hence, even if these countries did not pose an actual physical threat to Macedonia, the psychological impact of non-recognition of a Macedonian identity must be taken in consideration when examining Macedonia's external security environment. And whereas post-Zhivkov Bulgaria was quick to reverse the discrimination against the Turks and Muslims, thereby

diminishing the tension with Turkey, and also leaving Bulgaria 'redeemed' in the eyes of the international community, independent Macedonia found itself rejected by large parts of the international community, despite the favourable recommendation of the Badinter commission as well as Macedonia's relatively moderate and non-aggressive politics, which clearly set it apart from most of the other former Yugoslav republics. Nonetheless, Macedonia was left without international support at a time when contentious external as well as domestic claims were being made on it, and the survival and future development of an independent Macedonia was indeed precarious. As a result, Macedonia began its transition to democracy at a time when it was deprived of both security and recognition.

In Bulgaria, democratisation as well as reconciliation between the Bulgarian and Turkish communities was facilitated by the absence of any significant threat to its national security and territorial integrity from its neighbours, particularly Turkey. Efforts by President Zhelev to pursue a conciliatory diplomatic agenda towards Turkey, coupled with a number of shared interests between the two countries, including, in particular, stability in the Balkans and membership in the European Union, significantly helped turn the relationship between Bulgaria and Turkey from an adversarial one into one increasingly marked by cooperation. Bulgaria's ambition to gain membership in NATO, in which Turkey was a considerable military force and an important ally to the United States, further enhanced the value of friendly relations between Bulgaria and Turkey in the 1990s. As suggested in Chapter Four, Turkey's longstanding Kemalist-influenced foreign policy in regards to its Turkish kin living outside Turkey further facilitated relations between Bulgaria and Turkey. The secularist policy of the Turkish state certainly also helped in so far as Bulgaria did not perceive an Islamist threat from its eastern neighbour that might influence Bulgaria's

own Muslim population. Hence, any large-scale fear of Turkish aggression amongst the Bulgarians soon subsided to a marginal level as Sofia and Ankara normalised their relations. Neither did other neighbouring countries pose a significant security threat against Bulgaria, although the ongoing wars in the former Yugoslavia did lead to some significant economic problems for Bulgaria as its trade routes were cut off by the UN-imposed sanctions against Yugoslavia.

Being internationally recognised as an independent European state for more than a century, Bulgaria was able to draw upon support from international institutions as well as from more powerful states such as the United States and the member states of the European Union.[45] The fact that Bulgaria had, it seemed, settled its legitimization problem arising from the earlier assimilation campaign also contributed to its international standing. From the outset of Bulgaria's transition, a 'return to Europe' was high on the agenda, and there was a general consensus among all political parties that joining the European Community/Union was a desired objective. To this end, Bulgaria concluded an association agreement with the EC on 8 March 1993. [46] The Bulgarian debate about whether or not to seek membership in NATO was, however, highly contentious. The dwindling of power in Russia, Bulgaria's traditional protector, eventually made clear the importance of seeking cooperation with NATO. This was made all the more significant given that the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact put Bulgaria in a less secure situation vis-à-vis Turkey and Greece, both NATO members with military strength superior to that of Bulgaria.[47] The end of the Cold War divide between NATO and the Warsaw Pact thus contributed significantly to the easing of tensions between Bulgaria and Turkey, and Zhelev's efforts to foster cooperative relations with Turkey at an early stage of Bulgaria's

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[45] Vesselin Dimitrov, *Bulgaria: The Uneven Transition*, pp. 105-109.
[46] Ibid., p. 93.
[47] Ibid., p. 95.

transition, in conjunction with the restoration of rights to the Turkish minority and the acceptance of the MRF as a legitimate political force in Bulgaria, further served to diminish the perception that Turkey might present a real security threat to Bulgaria.[48]

Macedonia's external security concerns, on the other hand, were significantly more severe which made peaceful democratisation much more problematic than in Bulgaria. Neighbouring states' challenges to Macedonia's national identity along with the failure of the international community to extend diplomatic recognition to Macedonia following its declaration of independence seriously undermined the country's sense of security. Whilst lacking much by way of enforcement powers, the deployment of UNPREDEP nonetheless helped to provide the country with at least a symbolic sense of security and confidence that the international community would not abandon Macedonia in the event of an external attack on its sovereignty. The crisis in Kosovo coupled with the termination of the UNPREDEP mandate in 1999, again increased Macedonia's sense of insecurity, which in turn reflected negatively on the relations between the Macedonian and Albanian communities.

The effect of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia's challenges to Macedonia's national identity was that of an increased sense of annihilation on the part of the ethnic Macedonian community, which made compromise with the Albanian minority even less desirable. Thus, we may speak of an identity-based conflict on both the domestic level (between the Macedonian and Albanian communities) and on the international level (between Macedonians on the one hand, and Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia on the other). Buzan aptly describes the importance of external recognition in addition to broad-based domestic legitimacy of the state: "Unless the idea of the state is firmly planted in the minds of the population, the state as a whole has no secure

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[48] Ibid., p. 111.

foundation. Equally, unless the idea of the state is firmly planted in the 'minds' of other states, the state has no secure environment."[49] Macedonia, in sharp contrast to Bulgaria, faced both these problems for much of its first decade of independence. Hence, the problem of an "underdeveloped idea of the state...and/or unstable institutions" left Macedonia vulnerable not only to domestic conflict but also to intervention from neighbouring states, which only exacerbated Macedonia's sense of insecurity. [50] Additionally, for the Macedonian community, the awareness of being a small, landlocked nation, surrounded by potentially hostile Albanian communities in Western Macedonia, Kosovo, the Presevo valley in Serbia, and Albania proper, only exacerbated Macedonians' sense of insecurity.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia and Macedonia's bid for independence also led to the re-emergence of the Macedonian Question, which had remained largely dormant since the end of World War II, temporarily suspended by communist rule in Eastern Europe. Without the protection of the Yugoslav federation, Macedonia found its security weakened and it is perhaps not very surprising that Macedonian nationalism grew more assertive in response to Bulgaria's and Greece's chauvinist attitudes towards the Macedonian national identity, which in turn would have a significant influence on the lingering conflict between the Macedonian and Albanian communities throughout the 1990s.

Bulgaria was the first state to extend diplomatic recognition to the government in Skopje, thereby officially accepting the establishment of an independent Macedonian state. In spite of this gesture of friendliness on the part of Bulgaria, however, Macedonian reaction was that of suspicion. For, conciliatory Bulgarian policy notwithstanding, it was no secret that Macedonia was still regarded by a large

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[49] Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1991), p. 78.
[50] Ibid., p. 113.

proportion of Bulgarians as an essential part of their national history and identity, and this was enough for Macedonians to perceive their national identity and security to be under siege.

While the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) withdrew peacefully from Macedonia in 1992, the Yugoslav government led by Milošević refused to recognise the legitimacy of the Macedonian state until 1996, and only then after the Interim Accord between Macedonia and Greece had been concluded. An unresolved issue between the Serbs and Macedonians, however, remains: that of the legitimacy of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Hitherto, the Serbian Orthodox Church has refused to recognise the former as an independent institution.[51] Although Albania did not contest the existence of an independent Macedonian state, it was able to delay Macedonia's admission to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (later renamed as the OSCE) on grounds that the Macedonian government had failed to adequately protect the rights of the Albanian minority.[52]

Even if no official claims were ever made by the governments in Sofia, Athens, Belgrade and Tirana that could be seen as serious threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the new Macedonian state, nationalist political parties in each neighbouring country did nonetheless express claims on Macedonia, either on its territory or calling for action taken to effect 'a revision of the position of their compatriot minorities that would have a profoundly destabilising effect on the new Macedonia.'[53] A potential threat to Macedonia's national and territorial integrity from neighbouring countries was thus perceived as real amongst the Macedonian community. Whilst Greek policy towards Macedonia in the 1990s had a direct impact

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[51] Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?*, pp. 180-181.

[52] Janie Leatherman, William DeMars, Patrick Gaffney and Raimo Väyrynen, *Breaking the Cycles of Violence: Conflict Prevention in Intrastate Crisis* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1999), p. 157.

[53] James Pettifer, 'The New Macedonian Question', in James Pettifer (ed.), *The New Macedonian Question* (Basingtsoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 17

on Macedonia's economic development and security, the influence of the Bulgarian perception of the Macedonians as historically belonging to the Bulgarian nation had a more indirect and predominantly psychological impact on the Macedonian national psyche. Both Greek and Bulgarian attitudes towards Macedonia nonetheless brought to bear on the intransigence of the Macedonian community's position vis-à-vis the Albanian minority.

External actors' criticism of the Macedonian majority's unwillingness to increase the scope of citizens rights for the Albanian minority, demonstrated a failure to appreciate that what was at stake in the lingering conflict between the Macedonian and Albanian communities, was not merely the rights and constitutional status of the latter but, equally important, the legitimacy and recognition of a Macedonian national identity. It was the latter issue, which itself was influenced by Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian perspectives on the Macedonians as well as the Macedonians' perceptions of those perspectives, that continued to influence Macedonian-Albanian relations. The failure to resolve the conflict between the Macedonians and Albanians can thus be explained partly by the failure to recognise how the Macedonian Question continued to exert influence on the Macedonian national psychology.

Macedonian refusal to accept the Albanian community's demand for constitutional status equal to that of the Macedonian nation as well as an upgrading of Albanian to a second official language, must thus be seen as being directly connected to the Macedonians' perceived need to protect their national identity vis-à-vis neighbouring nations. Were the Albanian minority's demands to be met, the Macedonians feared, the territorial integrity of the Macedonian state might come under severe threat, which in turn meant a threat to the survival of the Macedonian nation. For the Macedonians, the consolidation of the Republic of Macedonia as a

Macedonian nation state was regarded as a necessary means to ensure the survival of the Macedonian nation in the face of continued Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian scepticism. Hence, the interconnected domestic and external security concerns for Macedonia constitute a significant obstacle to both inter-communal peace and democratic consolidation. Zlatko Isakovic aptly sums up Macedonian nation's external security concerns as follows:

> Bulgaria is the main identity threat to the extent that identity is anchored in language; Serbs are the main identity threat to the extent that identity is anchored in religion; Albanians the main identity threat to the extent that identity is anchored in statehood; and Greeks to the extent that anchored in the name of the nation, its language and state.[54]

6.8. External Influences on Domestic Political Behaviour

For more than twenty years, democracy promotion has been a significant part of US foreign policy,[55] and has been founded on the understanding that the spread of democracy throughout the world serves US national interests. During the 1990s, democracy promotion became part of EU policy as well and, as illustrated by the Badinter commission and the Copenhagen criteria, democracy became, at least in principle if not in practice[56], a requisite for diplomatic recognition of new states by the EU members. While it is popularly held amongst Western governments that extending democracy throughout the world is the safest way of guaranteeing international peace and security in the twenty-first century, there is also a case to be made that, for new states and those in transition, particularly in Eastern Europe, the pursuit of democratisation also serves their interests, in so far as it helps to legitimise

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[54] Zlatko Isakovic, *Identity and Security in Former Yugoslavia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 220.
[55] Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), p. 4.
[56] Croatia, while not fulfilling the conditions for international recognition according to the Badinter commission, was still recognised first by Germany and then by the other EU member states, whilst Macedonia, which did meet the required criteria, was denied recognition.

them in the eyes of the advanced Western states. Additionally, for the countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union who, after the collapse of communism, found their external (and sometimes also internal) security environment in a state of flux and uncertainty, seeking integration with Western Europe by way of democratisation was a means of aiding their own security at a time when democracy is promoted as an integral feature of Western and European culture.

Thus, domestic politics in Bulgaria and Macedonia during the 1990s need to be viewed in the context of the changing international, and in particular European, order after 1989. The discrediting of European communism effectively meant that there were no longer two ways of being European (liberal democratic or communist). As Western Europe was increasingly linked up in the European Union, and with the aspiration of creating a common European foreign policy within the Union, to be a European thus became equivalent to being a democrat, and integration into Europe became a policy of the highest order for ensuring political, military and well as economic security for the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe. Hence, democratisation was at least partly a means to an end and, as is argued here, this was particularly the case with Bulgaria and Macedonia.

When considering the external impact on political development in Bulgaria and Macedonia respectively, it is particularly illuminating to examine the attitude of the European Community/European Union vis-à-vis these two post-communist countries. As I have argued earlier, processes of democratisation, more than ever, are significantly conditioned by the international environment, and their success or failure is in no small part attributed to the degree of international support offered to the country/-ies undergoing regime transition. By the time of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the 'European project' that was meant to safeguard

peace and prosperity was well underway in Western Europe, and for the Eastern countries, European integration thus became the logical, rational ambition. German re-unification arguably contributed to this vision, leaving little else to choose from as the West declared liberal democracy Cold War victor. As Stefan Sofianski, mayor of Sofia, put it to the author during an interview, the people in the East aspire to the same quality of life as the Germans in the West. And the only way to achieve that is through membership in the European Community/European Union.[57] Hence, for countries like Bulgaria, a crucial incentive for pursuing political and economic reform in the decade following the collapse of the communist regimes, was the belief, or hope, that this would eventually result in accession to the European club. For reform initiatives to be sustained, however, it was essential that the EU maintained an encouraging attitude towards the Eastern countries' aspirations. As long as European integration was perceived as a realistic goal, one that could be reached through a sustained process of reform, democratisation in the Western (liberal) tradition, prodded along on an, albeit bumpy, road. In the Bulgarian case, (re-) integration into Europe once their Soviet mentor and protector had ceased to be, was consistent with a longstanding Bulgarian tradition of imitating foreign states: "The receptivity of the nascent Bulgarian political society to European political models and foreign political models in general has been an invariable characteristic of political life after the Liberation in 1878. The first Bulgarian constitution of 1879...was modelled after the Belgian constitution of 1831."[58] Bulgaria's development of liberal democracy and market economy is thus "essentially conceived as a plan for bringing Bulgarian society closer to EU standards."[59] Hence, the prospect of becoming a full member of

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[57] Interview with Mr Stefan Sofianski, Mayor, Sofia 13 November 2001.
[58] Antony Todorov, *The Role of Political Parties in Accession to the EU* (Sofia: Centre for the Study of Democracy, 1999), p. 6.
[59] Ibid., p. 10.

Europe, significantly aided Bulgaria's political development for much of the 1990s. In Macedonia, however, the situation was somewhat different. The European Union's failure to act on the Badinter commission's recommendation to extend diplomatic recognition to Macedonia because of the Greek-Macedonian name dispute dealt a serious blow to Macedonia's aspiration to become an accepted member of the international community, despite its initial success with democratic transition and conflict prevention. Furthermore, the failure of the United States, UN and other international organisations to recognise the legitimacy of the Republic of Macedonia left the country out in the cold for several years, thus sowing the seeds of Macedonian bitterness towards Europe and the USA. When Macedonia was eventually recognised as a sovereign state by the international community, the psychological impact of being recognised not by the name chosen for itself, the Republic of Macedonia, but as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), was significant. The international community's insistence on FYROM signalled to the people of Macedonia that their state was still not fully recognised by the international community as an equal member.

Non-recognition by the international community, coupled with interethnic tension within Macedonia, as well as the absence of a national army following the JNA's withdrawal, all contributed to a highly vulnerable start for the Republic of Macedonia by undercutting its legitimacy as an independent state, legally equal to all others in the international system. I argue that the process of democratisation that the country nonetheless embarked on in the early 1990s, was seen as a means towards an end, that of gaining international recognition as well as protection by the international community from any actor, internal or external, seeking to undermine the territorial integrity of Macedonia. Yet, since democratisation is not solely a domestic process,

but also conditioned by the external – regional and international – environment, Macedonia's quest for international legitimacy - and hence increased political security - through democratisation was threatened by the very fact that non-recognition meant it was excluded from aid from international financial institutions, as well as from political and legal assistance from the international community. A small, landlocked country of two million people, Macedonia was thus forced to sail against the wind for the first crucial years of its life as an independent democratic state.

In the absence of constructive external influence, particularly from the European Union, in the early years of the 1990s, on the political leaders of the Macedonian and Albanian communities, the radicalisation of the two ethnic communities was allowed to develop largely unchecked. As a result of ethnic polarisation developing faster than did relations between the EU and Macedonia, the former was to have less of a stabilising impact on Macedonia, than on Bulgaria, where the development of EU-Bulgaria relations developed faster than did minority rights.[60] The Bulgarian leadership's objective of gaining membership in the Council of Europe as speedily as possible, in order to be regarded as a proper member of Europe, also meant that Bulgaria's attitude towards its non-ethnic Bulgarian citizens, the Turks in particular, was to an extent influenced by European values and principles. Being a 'modern' state, the main challenge to the legitimacy of Bulgaria's government[61] lay in the Bulgarian post-communist regime's position vis-à-vis the recent assimilation campaign and its reversal. Having been the target of harsh criticism from the international community over its treatment of the Turkish minority in the communist period, it was imperative for Bulgaria to redress the wrongs of the

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[60] Interview with Mr Vassilis Maragos, Counsellor, EU Commission, Skopje 4 December 2001.
[61] Understood as a "centralized system of rule, based on a set of administrative, policing, and military organizations...claiming monopoly on the legitimate use of force", Sørensen, p. 82.

past regime in regards to minority policy, in order to qualify for aid from international financial institutions and membership in organisations like the Council of Europe, OSCE and, eventually, the European Union. Hence, these institutions were to have a significant impact on the political decisions made in Sofia during much of the 1990s. In particular, Bulgaria profited from a clearer relationship with the EU than Macedonia, given the latter's trouble with non-recognition, which in turn has meant that the EU was not able to exert as much influence on Macedonia's political leadership in the early years of the 1990s.

In sum, Bulgaria and Macedonia experienced rather different relations with the international community in general, and the European elite in particular, during much of the 1990s, and this had significant implications for their respective political development. Whilst the European Union and other international institutions were instrumental in supporting and influencing the development of democracy and peaceful inter-communal relations in Bulgaria from the early days of regime transition, that was not the case in the first few years of Macedonia's struggle to survive as an independent state, when it was largely left to fend for itself. The OSCE and the Council of Europe did eventually come to play important functions in Macedonia. International influence, however – particularly from the EU and the US in the latter part of the 1990s – was not always appreciated by the political leaders in Skopje. Some critics even maintained that international pressure on Macedonia was responsible in part for undermining the authority and credibility of the country's government, thereby inhibiting the development of democracy as well.[62]

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[62] Interview with Mr Petar Gošev, MP, LDP, Skopje, 10 December 2001.

6.9. Conclusion

This chapter sought to identify the most significant factors that mediated for or against the development of democracy and inter-communal peace in Bulgaria and Macedonia and, in turn, to draw some tentative conclusions about the complexities faced by multi-ethnic societies when embarking on a process of democratisation whilst simultaneously keeping the peace between different ethnic communities. In the case of Macedonia, the failure of the Macedonian and Albanian political leaders to engage in a constructive dialogue on the fundamental needs issues that were of concern to both communities at the initial stages of regime change, together with the failure to resolve the conflict concerning the political status of the Albanian community before a referendum on independence was held, significantly contributed to the obstruction of political development and peaceful co-habitation across ethnic lines for much of the 1990s. Furthermore, the international community's withholding of diplomatic recognition as a result of the dispute between Macedonia and Greece, as well as threats perceived by the Macedonians against their national identity, stemming mainly from historical claims made on Macedonia by Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania, left the Macedonians feeling besieged by potential external aggressors, and thus reluctant to give in to the demands articulated by the Albanian community within Macedonia. The failure of the Macedonian state to actively promote a common citizen identity across ethnic lines also presented a problem for democratic peace-building. Still, given the exceptionally trying conditions in which Macedonian state creation and democratic development took place, Macedonia did in fact fare better than imagined, given the unfavourable internal and external conditions. Arguably, there was a will amongst Macedonians and Albanians alike to build a multi-ethnic democratic state, but it was ultimately compromised by the

tension generated by perceived threats, amongst both communities, against their need for security, identity and recognition.

Bulgaria, in contrast, was on the whole successful in its efforts to overcome the inter-communal crisis of 1989-91, and this was due in large part to the prompt reversal of the oppressive minority policies of the 1980s, and the integration of the MRF into Bulgarian national politics through the first multi-party elections, and the gradual acceptance of the Turks as a legitimate part of a broader conception of the Bulgarian nation. The relative absence of external threats, along with the support received from the international community, further facilitated democratic peace-building in Bulgaria, in spite of the economic hardship that befell all segments of Bulgarian society in the 1990s.

As noted in Chapter Two, numerous scholars maintain that whilst democracy is indeed conducive to peace in pluralist societies, the process of democratisation often generates rather than mitigates conflict across ethnic lines. As this chapter has demonstrated, however, the supposedly negative correlation between democratisation and inter-communal relations is not as clear-cut as it is often made out to be. First, we have seen from the experiences of Bulgaria and Macedonia, that when there are unresolved issues over the gratification of certain fundamental needs such as identity, security and recognition, present in a multiethnic society, these need to be resolved outside of the democratisation process, as they involve non-negotiable needs that are beyond the capacity of a democratic system, whose key function is that of negotiating competing interests in a political environment where interests are fluid and changeable. Second, without the presence of some measure of national/political unity among all citizens of the state, that is, without a certain degree of a citizen identity present, consolidation of democracy and inter-communal peace is highly problematic.

Third, an aspect that has not been adequately accounted for in studies on democratisation in ethnically plural societies is the way in which the external security environment influences the domestic process of democratisation. What the present study on Bulgaria and Macedonia indicates, however, is that successful democratisation and maintenance of peaceful inter-community relations at home is significantly compromised in the presence of external security threats. Similarly, support from other states as well as from international institutions is also of vital importance for societies undergoing democratic regime change. In sum, democratisation does not take place in a domestic arena, independent of the international environment.

CONCLUSION

Prospects and Limitations of Democratisation and Peaceful Cohabitation in Multiethnic States

The central aim of this study was to obtain a better understanding of the post-communist experiences of Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia, two Balkan countries that despite considerable interethnic tensions managed a largely peaceful transition to democratic rule. Bulgaria and Macedonia thus present a contrasting picture from that of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Romania, who all suffered violence in connection with regime transition.

Chapter One provided the first leg of the theoretical foundation of this study, democratisation theory. Important conceptual distinctions were outlined between democracy, democratisation, liberalisation and transition, in order to ensure clarity in subsequent sections of the study. Chapter One also argued in favour of a definition of democracy that extends beyond competitive elections to encompass the requisite human rights provisions without which the practice of democracy would become effectively meaningless. It was further noted that whilst the scholarly literature on democracy and democratisation focuses mainly on the Western ideal of liberal democracy, which emphasises the competitive aspect of political decision-making, an alternative form of democracy, the deliberative model as well as the consociational model of democracy were also considered, whose emphasis on cooperation and consensus building might serve as a preferable alternative to the more competitively oriented liberal democratic system, particularly when seeking to build democratic institutions and practice in ethnically divided societies. Further, Chapter One took a critical look at the notion of prerequisites for democratisation, as well as the choice of institutions.

The second half of the chapter was devoted to an overview of some of the specific challenges facing post-communist democratisation. The legacy of the former, communist regime was highlighted as well as the unique situation of twin transitions – political as well as economic – facing post-communist societies.

Chapter Two went straight to the heart of the matter, namely the relationship between democratisation and interethnic conflict, and centred on a critique of Jack Snyder's argument about the causal link between democratisation and violent ethnic/nationalist conflict. Rejecting Snyder's claim, it was proposed instead that the source of conflict is more appropriately located in the circumstances and events of the preceding, non-democratic, regime and that a crucial period for interethnic relations is the first transition phase following regime collapse, when the presence of a power vacuum poses a particular threat to intrastate peace and stability. In the end, it was suggested that the democratisation process can in fact serve as a constructive means of conflict prevention in ethnically divided societies.

Chapter Three was dedicated to a broad overview of post-communist politics in South East Europe, and showed that far from being a re-emergent force in the region, nationalist pretensions following the fall of communist rule was in fact more of a continuation of already established ideals. Nationalism was thus appropriated by communist rulers throughout the region to further their own political agendas, a trend that would be pursued by a number of post-communist politicians. Chapter Three further argued that Serbia and Croatia were little more than what Marina Ottaway calls semi-authoritarian states for much of the 1990s. Hence, to classify them as democratising states would be erroneous. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the democratisation process never took off as the political leaders of the Serb, Croat and Muslim communities all sacrificed democratic principles for the sake of pursuing

narrow, nationalist agendas. Largely absent in Bosnia were thus the requisite political will for democracy and a sense of a common political community.

Chapter Four examined Bulgaria's road from interethnic conflict brought on by the communist government's repressive assimilation policies against the Turkish minority, toward political integration of the latter into Bulgarian national politics in during the course of the 1990s. The core proposition made in relation to the Bulgarian experience was that the restoration of minority rights and the integration of the Turks in Bulgaria's political life were closely intertwined with the democratisation process. Emerging as the country's third largest party in the early 1990s, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) came to play a central role in Bulgarian national politics, acting many times as a balancing force between the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) on the left and the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) on the right. In the case of Bulgaria, we thus have an example of a situation in which the democratisation process played a largely constructive role in mediating interethnic relations that were severely strained at the time of the regime transition.

The Republic of Macedonia was the focus of Chapter Five; a newly independent state burdened with challenges both from within its borders as well as from without, Macedonia defied expectations and managed the transition to democracy and a peaceful secession from the Yugoslav federation. A key argument in Chapter Five was that the process of democratisation, albeit deeply flawed, constituted an attempt on the part of the Macedonian state to protect its territorial integrity, unity and national identity, as well as to safeguard peaceful cohabitation in a highly divided society.

Yet, as indicated in Chapter Six, what ultimately separated the experiences of Bulgaria and Macedonia respectively, was the failure of the latter to resolve the

complex identity conflict involving ethnic Macedonians and Albanians, and exacerbated by neighbouring countries' refusal to accept the existence of a distinct Macedonian nation. Whereas a conflict around identities lingered in and around Macedonia throughout the post-communist period, Bulgaria was able to prevent the interethnic crisis of the late 1980s from becoming a protracted identity-based conflict. By reversing the assimilation campaign against the Turks and extending minority rights to them as well as recognising the importance of integrating the Turks into Bulgaria's political sphere, what threatened to develop into a deeper interethnic conflict was effectively stopped in its tracks. Democratisation and interethnic relations thus had a mutually positive reinforcing impact during the post-communist period.

What might the future then hold for Bulgaria and Macedonia? Although Bulgaria has managed thus far to keep its peace amongst the Bulgarian majority and Turkish minority, and the democratic system, albeit flawed, appears resilient enough to withstand future hurdles, there are some questions for the future that may be of concern. First, what will happen if and when the Movement for Rights and Freedoms' electorate, which remains predominantly Turkish, decreases due to emigration to such a point where the MRF no longer passes the four percent threshold for parliamentary representation? Having been represented in national politics since the beginning of the democratic transition, it seems unlikely that the MRF and the Turkish minority as a whole would accept non-representation in the Bulgarian parliament. One factor that might stem the emigration of Bulgarian Turks to Turkey, however, would be if Bulgaria does gain accession to the EU within the five years (assuming that Turkish EU membership is a very long way off).

Another cause of concern might in fact be the MRF's success in Bulgarian politics. It is a remarkable fact that as of 2004, Ahmed Dogan is the longest serving political leader in post-communist Bulgaria, and the MRF's position as a junior member of the current government, means its influence is considerable. A recent statement by US Ambassador to Bulgaria James Pardew, is cause for concern. On 12 March 2004, in a comment directed at the MRF, Pardew expressed his antipathy for parties formed on the basis of ethnicity, and that the Bulgarian Turks ought to be able to vote for more than just one party and leader.[1] At the same time, it is possible of course that in the long-term, the MRF is able to consolidate itself as essentially a civic-national liberal party, particularly now that it has finally gained membership in the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, which according to some "marks the end of a long process of its acceptance as a normal party, normal in the context of both Bulgarian and European political life."[2]

Despite the progress made in the implementation of the Framework Agreement of 2001, doubts and uncertainties about Macedonia's future persist. The country was also dealt a blow on 26 February 2004, when its reform-minded President, Boris Trajkovski, died in a plane crash over Bosnia, on his way to attend an international conference in the Bosnian city of Mostar. Although initial reports following his death expressed concern about the possible consequences the loss of Trajkovski would have for Macedonia's peace and stability, it appears the country has managed to overcome this latest crisis.

More importantly, Macedonia today is a de facto bi-national state, yet the underlying identity conflict remains, both on the Macedonian and Albanian side, and

[1] 'US Diplomat Speaks Out Against Ethnic Turkish Party in Bulgaria', RFE/RL Newsline, vol. 8, no. 49, Part II, 15 March 2004
[2] 'The Bulgarian Ethnic Experience', Conference report, 29-30 June and 18 December 2001, Sofia, Project on Ethnic Relations, p. 17.

it is doubtful whether those conflicts can be resolved until these three things have taken place: the final resolution of Kosovo's status; the resolution of the Greek-Macedonian name dispute; Bulgarian recognition of the existence of a Macedonian nation; and Serbian recognition of the legitimacy of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. As long as the identity of the Macedonian state remains in dispute, it is hard to see how a democratic culture will have a genuine chance to set roots. As a report by the International Crisis Group spells out, the Framework Agreement left ethnic Macedonians resentful over what it saw as being Albanian gains at their expense. Hence, there is a strongly held belief amongst ethnic Macedonians that their own identity has been sacrificed as a result of the peace agreement.[3]

Having reached the end of the present study, it is time to pose a final question: what are some of the lessons then that can be draw from these two case studies?

Political Community and Democratisation

As Chapter Six highlighted, without a unified political community; that is, without a general consensus about what constitutes the nation, efforts to develop democracy are likely to be severely undermined by conflicting perceptions of the identity and character of the political community. What has thus become apparent is the absolute necessity of a common framework to which all communal divisions in society can pledge their allegiance. We might thus say that what matters is not only that democracy is introduced, but also that it is done so based on broad societal consensus. In fact, unless the process of determining the shape of the new democratic system is itself subject to an inclusive participatory process that goes some way towards honouring the democratic principle of 'rule by the people', the outcome may indeed

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[3] 'Macedonia's Name: Why the Dispute Matters and How to Resolve It'. Skopje/Brussels: International Crisis Group, Balkans Report no. 122, 10 December 2001, pp. 7-8.

be unstable as the case of Macedonia indicates. Hence, one of the core mistakes in the transition to democracy in Macedonia, was the failure to consult, on a fair and genuine basis, the non-Macedonian minorities in the decision making process that culminated with the ratification of a new constitution for the independent Macedonian republic. Albanian non-participation in the referendum on independence and the abstention of Albanian politicians from voting on the constitution were undoubtedly clear indications that a large segment of the population was at odds with the way in which Macedonia's future was being decided. Yet, the ethnic Macedonian majority appears to have stuck their heads ever so deep in the sand, rather than facing up to the challenge of uniting Macedonia's ethnic mosaic into one coherent political community.

Bulgaria, in turn, was the only country in South East Europe to establish a national round table as a forum for negotiating the terms of the transition from communism to democracy. Although it erred in not offering the MRF their own seat at the round table talks, nominal representation of Bulgaria's ethnic minorities was at least ensured by the participation of the Committee for National Reconciliation at the talks. Hence Bulgaria managed to engage in a more inclusive, participatory process in the lead-up to the first democratic elections than was the case in neighbouring Macedonia. For all its flaws, the introduction of a national roundtable allowed for a consultative forum through which conflicting interests could be aired, thus avoiding a potentially violent transition phase. In sum, the process of consultation emerges as an important ingredient of a peaceful, consensual and inclusive transition to democracy.

Democratisation, Conflict and Human Needs

Another lesson learned from this study is the necessity of making a distinction between interest-based conflict and needs-based conflict when assessing the capacity of democratisation as a means for preventing violent inter-communal conflict. Thus, we cannot be satisfied with simply assuming that since democracy is purportedly a system designed to mediate competing interests in society, it will suffice as a tool for any kind of intrastate conflict. As was pointed out in Chapter Six, any conflict rooted in basic human needs such as security, recognition, identity and autonomy,[4] cannot be resolved through competitive bargaining, as the ontological quality of human needs means that they are in essence non-negotiable. To the extent possible, according to Burton's theory, the individual will seek to meet his/her needs within socially and legally established norms in society. But, if societal norms hinder rather than enable him to pursue his needs, then, "subject to values he attaches to social relationships, he will employ methods outside the norms, outside the codes he would in other circumstances wish to apply to his behaviour."[5] From this perspective, we could thus see the NLA's decision to initiate an armed confrontation with the Macedonian state as an example of strategies being pursued outside the norms.

The democratic system of governance is peculiar in that it contains within it characteristics of cooperation as well as competition, inclusion as well as exclusion. As a system for mediating conflicting interests in society it appears to have fared well overall. But is it a system capable of mediating needs-based conflicts? The answer must be: 'it depends'. It appears, however, that the liberal definition of democracy, with its emphasis on the individual rather than the collective, and on the

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[4] A need for 'Autonomy' does not necessarily imply political autonomy, but is better understood as 'autonomy of action', control and freedom, a need that may or may not be met through political autonomy.

[5] John Burton, 'Human Needs Versus Societal Needs', in Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati (eds.), *The Power of Human Needs in World Society* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1988), pp.52-53.

equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome, is inadequate as a mechanism for protecting the needs of citizens. For by taking a neutral stance to the conception of the common good, it is in reality perpetuating the majority culture's values, culture and preferences. Whilst liberal democracy may justifiably be regarded as a fair system for negotiating competing interests, it falls short in terms of protecting people's needs in a society where political and economic power is unevenly distributed.

In multiethnic countries in general, the limits of democratisation as a conflict-mitigating tool, depends very much on the nature of the conflict at hand. If the conflict is largely one of competing interests, implementation of democratic rules and principles may serve to promote peaceful cohabitation, but if the conflict is rooted in needs, the advancement of democracy is unlikely to facilitate the resolution of the conflict. In the case of the interethnic conflict in Bulgaria, the communist regime's repression of Bulgarian Turks prompted the emergence of a needs based identity conflict. However, the speedy reversal of the assimilation campaign, the return of minority rights to the Turks, and the political integration of the Turkish minority through the MRF, meant that a potentially deepening identity conflict was halted in its tracks, which in turn enabled the democratisation process to serve as a tool for peace-building. In Macedonia, in contrast, the transition to democracy took place in a climate of conflict rooted in such needs as recognition, control and identity.

Having established that the relationship between democratisation and interethnic relations is very much dependent on the nature of the conflict at hand – whether it is interests based or rooted in needs – we may perhaps question the initial assumption made within the field of political science and international relations, that democracy is 'good' for interethnic peace, whilst democratisation is 'bad' for

interethnic peace. Rather, given the analysis above, we might want to question this distinction between democracy and democratisation in regards to its effect on interethnic conflict.

Nationalism, Democracy and Interethnic Relations in South East Europe

As Chapter Three demonstrated, nationalism did not simply re-emerge to replace communism in South East Europe, because it never actually ceased to play an influential role during the communist years. Tito, Zhivkov, Ceauşescu and Hoxha all mixed their brand of communism with a good portion of nationalism whenever it was politically expedient. If we seek to interpret the resilience of nationalism in the Balkans from a human needs perspective, it could perhaps be argued that nationalism has served essentially as a tactic for meeting certain needs for security, recognition, identity, autonomy and control and, perhaps more importantly, for a sense of self-worth and belonging.

Another lesson to be learned from the experience of post-communist Bulgaria and Macedonia is the vital significance of the kind of political crafting that Di Palma speaks of. Democratisation is fundamentally agency- driven; it is "ultimately a matter of political crafting."[6] As Albert Melone notes, the Bulgarian experience of relatively successful democratic transition in a society lacking most of the preconditions for democracy much discussed in democratisation theory, supports Di Palma's theory about the central role of 'crafting' in cases of democratic transition.[7]

As this thesis has highlighted, in addressing interethnic conflicts such as the ones in Bulgaria and Macedonia it is crucial to distinguish between conflict settlement and conflict resolution. Western liberal democracy, neither in its

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[6] Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*, p. 8.
[7] Albert P. Melone, *Creating Parliamentary Government: The Transition to Democracy in Bulgaria*, p. 1.

embryonic form, nor in its consolidated form, is a system capable of *resolving* conflicts, particularly those rooted in human needs. It is a competitive system that in principle affords all citizens equal opportunity to throw themselves into the political game, but without guarantees that their interests or needs will be protected. As long as democracy continues to be defined in terms of Western-style liberal democracy, lingering needs-based conflicts will need to be addressed outside the regular democratisation process, ideally through some form of inclusive consultation. Ultimately, what seems to be called for is a better understanding amongst international and local political actors of the of the particular dynamics of needs-based conflict, as well as a general reassessment on the international and domestic policy level of what the characteristics and processes of democracy ought to be in the twenty-first century. A democratic model closer to that of the deliberative kind mentioned in Chapter One, which seeks to promote cooperation and dialogue rather than the competition and adversarial debate that characterises the liberal democratic model, might be a healthier way of understanding and practicing democracy in a world that has seen tremendous changes since the concept of liberal democracy first appeared on the international stage.

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Other
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Appendix: Interviews[1]

Bulgaria

Mr Sabri Alagös, Editor, *Kaynak*, Bulgaria-based Turkish cultural magazine, Sofia 21 November 2001.

Dr Vladimir Chukov, Director, Bulgarian Centre for Middle East Studies, Sofia 9 October 2001.

Mr Emil Cohen, President, Tolerance Foundation, Sofia 26 October 2001.

Dr Ahmed Dogan, MP, Leader of the MRF, Sofia 1 November 2001.

Mr Dinko Draganov, Editor, *Balkanite*, Sofia 23 August 2000.

Mr O. Koray Ertaş, Third Secretary, Turkish Embassy to Bulgaria, Sofia 15 November 2001.

Professor Georgi Fotev, Director, Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 28 August 2000.

Mr Ginyo Ganev, MP, Coalition for Bulgaria, Sofia 13 November 2001.

Mr Georgi Genchev, former Executive Director of Open Society Institute-Bulgaria, Sofia 18 October 2001.

Mr Mustafa Hadji, Chairman of the Supreme Muslim Spiritual Council; former Chief Mufti, Sofia 12 November 2001.

Dr Andrey Ivanov, Political Consultant, Sofia 18 December 2001.

Mr Mihail Ivanov, former Advisor to the President of Bulgaria on Ethnic and Religious Issues (1990-97); Founding Member and Secretary of the Committee of National Reconciliation (1989-91), Sofia 10 October & 6 November 2001.

Dr Krassimir Kanev, Chairman, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Sofia 30 October 2001.

Mr Mustafa Karadaya, Member of the Youth Section of the MRF, Sofia 20 November 2001.

Mr Ibrahim Karahasan, Editor, *Etno Dialog*, intercultural magazine, Sofia 14 November 2001.

Dr Deyan Kiuranov, Programme Director, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia 17 December 2001.

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[1] Title/Occupation of each interviewee reflects the positions they held at the time of the interview.

Dr Ivan Krastev, Programme Director, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia 29 August 2000.

Dr Anna Krasteva, Department of Political Science, New Bulgarian University, Sofia 27 November 2001.

Mr Yunal Lutfy, MP, MRF, Sofia 25 August 2000.

Mr Mario Marinov, Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 28 August 2000.

Dr Ognyan Minchev, Director, Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS), Sofia 28 August 2000.

Dr Lyubov Mincheva, Research Associate, Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS), Sofia 16 October 2001.

Mr Lyubcho Neshkov, Director, Bgnes (news agency), Sofia 9 November 2001.

Professor Stephan Nikolov, Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 28 August 2000.

Mr Remzi Osman, MP, MRF, Sofia 22 November 2001.

Dr Plamen Pantev, Director, Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS), Sofia 15 October 2001.

Mr Stefan Sofianski, Mayor of Sofia, Sofia 13 November 2001.

Professor Antony Todorov, Head of the Department of Political Science, New Bulgarian University. Sofia 22 November 2001.

Mr Boyko Todorov, Programme Director, Centre for the Study of Democracy, Sofia 2 November 2001.

Dr Ilona Tomova, Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; former Advisor to the President of Bulgaria on Ethnic and Religious Issues, Sofia 25 October 2001.

Ms Tataiana Vaksberg, Journalist, Radio Free Europe, Sofia 12 November 2001.

Dr Zheliu Zhelev, former President of Bulgaria, Sofia 27 November 2001.

Dr Antonina Zhelyazkova, Director, International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), Sofia 17 December 2001.

Republic of Macedonia

Mr Abdurahman Aliti, MP, PDP, 16 April 2002.

Dr Teuta Arifi, Lecturer, South East Europe University, Tetovo 12 April 2002.

Mr Jöran Bjällerstedt, Minister-Counsellor, Swedish Consulate in Skopje, Skopje 20 November 2001.

Ms Heather Bridge, Officer, British Embassy to Macedonia, Skopje 4 December 2001.

Ms Sally Brouhgton, Programme Officer, Search for Common Ground, Skopje 5 September 2000.

Dr Jovan Donev, Director, Euro-Balkan, Skopje 6 September 2000.

Mr Fatmir Etemi, MP, DPA, Skopje 25 April 2002.

Mr Eran Fraenkel, Director, Search for Common Ground/Macedonia, Skopje 17 April 2002.

Mr Ljubomir Frčkoski, former Foreign Minister, Skopje 12 September 2000.

Mr Danilo Gligoroski, MP, VMRO-DPMNE; President of the Board, Makedonski Telekomunikacii, 10 April 2002.

Mr Kiro Gligorov, former President of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje 12 December 2001.

Mr Petar Gošev, MP, LDP, Skopje 10 December 2001.

Mr Iljaz Halimi, Vice President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje 24 April 2002.

Mr Blagoj Handjiski, former Minister of Defense, MP, SDSM, and former member of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Macedonia, Skopje 24 April 2002.

Professor Georgi Ivanov, Faculty of Law, Skopje University, 16 April 2002.

Mr Zoran Jačev, Executive Director, FORUM: Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation, Skopje 3 December 2001.

Mr Lazar Kitanoski, MP, SDSM, Skopje 25 April 2002.

Mr Veton Latifi, Reporter, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Skopje 3 December 2001.

Dr Mirjana Maleska, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Sociological and Political Research, Skopje 5 September 2000.

Professor Denko Maleski, former Foreign Minister of Macedonia, Skopje 4 September 2000 & 7 December 2001.

Mr Vassilis Maragos, Counsellor, EU Commission, Skopje 4 December 2001.

Mr Ibrahim Mehmeti, Programme Manager (Media), Search for Common Ground, Skopje 19 April 2002.

Mr Jordan Mirkovski, Agency of Information, Skopje 11 April 2002.

Mr Xhevdet Nasufi, DPA, Vice Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia, 11 April 2002.

Professor Stephan Nikolov, Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia; Struga, Macedonia 11 June 2000.

Professor Natalija Nikolovska, Faculty of Economics, University of St Kliment Ohridksi, Skopje 22 April 2002.

Mr Saso Ordanoski, Editor, Forum Magazine, Skopje 12 September 2000.

Mr Tito Petkovski, MP, SDSM, Skopje 30 November 2001.

Mr Vulnet Poska, Journalist, Skopje 6 September 2000.

Mr Azis Polozani, MP, PDP, 15 April 2002.

Mr Andreas Raab, Political Advisor, OSCE Spillover Mission in Skopje, Skopje 5 September 2000.

Mr Ismet Ramadani, MP, PDP, 15 April 2002.

Mr Iso Rusi, Editor-in-chief, *Lobi*, Skopje 8 April & 17 April 2002.

Mr Gideon Sandel, Independent Businessman, Skopje 2 December 2001.

Professor Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, Faculty of Law, University of St Kliment Ohridski, Skopje 19 April 2002.

Ms Emilia Simovska, former Minister of Education, Skopje 6 December 2001.

Mr Igor Spirovski, Secretary General, Republic of Macedonia Constitutional Court, Skopje 23 April 2002.

Mr Richard Stoddard, Resident Representative, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), Skopje 6 September 2000.

Ms Gordana Stošić, Journalist, Skopje 6 December 2001.

Dr Ilo Trajkovski, Institute of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje University, Skopje 4 September 2000.

Dr Sam Vaknin, Economic Consultant, Skopje 29 November 2001.

Mr Max van der Stoel, former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Skopje 29 November 2001.

Dr Biljana Vankovska, Pedagogical Faculty, Skopje University, 12 September 2000.

Mr Arben Xhaferi, Chairman of DPA, Tetovo 23 April 2002.

Mr Seladin Xhezairi, Journalist, BBC Macedonia, Skopje 8 April 2002.

Mr Naser Zyberi, MP, Coordinator of the Parliamentarian Group of the PDP, Skopje 10 April 2002.

United Kingdom
Dr Vesselin Dimitrov, Department of Government, London School of Economics and Political Science, London 12 September 2001.

Professor William Hale, Department of Politics and International Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London 3 May 2002.