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The fight for a name – Macedonia’s fight for national subjectivity and the creation of identity

The end of the 80s’ and the beginning of the 90s’ was a time of huge political changes in Europe. This was when Huntington’s predicted ‘third wave of democracy’ came about. This was, as Francis Fukuyama stated, “the end of history”. Yet the savage civil war that was soon waging in the Balkan Peninsula shook global public opinion. In 1991, the breakup of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – “Tito’s creation” which united the six republics of the Balkan Peninsula in political, economic and cultural terms – began. Nationalist parties came to power in four of the republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and all but Serbia were agitating for secession from “Tito’s creation”. Serbia, being the core of Tito’s Frankenstein monster, tried to keep its primacy in the region – through force of arms.

The Republic of Macedonia was no exception. Unlike the other states, however, it was dominated by a pro-Yugoslavian mood. Still, on 8 September 1991 a referendum was launched, the question being: “Are you for a sovereign and independent state of Macedonia, with a right to enter into any alliance with other sovereign states of Yugoslavia?”¹ The referendum was approved by 95,1%

¹ Републичка изборна комисија “Извештај за спроведувањето и резултатот од претходното изјаснување на граѓаните на Република Македонија на референдумот одржан

of all votes.² In the same year, on 17 September, the Parliament of Macedonia voted through the constitution of an independent Macedonia.³ This was the peaceful beginning of a new independent country and the source of on-going ethnic problems. These shall be investigated.

Topics related to the Balkan Peninsula, and especially North Macedonia, have recently become a popular research field. The works of Irena Stawowa-Kawka and Piotr Majewski are certainly the basic literature in this field. A starting point to any investigation of Macedonian nationhood is the concept of social and national identity. For countries that gained independence not so long ago, these notions are particularly important because the sense of identification with a given community has integrative function and provides complacency for members of the group. To define identity and national identity, the author cites the definitions of Piotr Sztompka, Konstanty A. Wojtaszczyk and Jakubowski.

In this work, the history of Macedonian statehood after 1991 will be described, along with the difficulties that they had to face during this period. This part of the paper will also broach the subject of relations between Macedonia and Greece. These have been and still are exerting an impact on the modern shape of the country and its society.

The last part of the on-going work will inform the reader of the opinions that Macedonians hold of their national identity, based on research and analysis of social behavior. The presented information was built upon the descriptive analytical method, and the researched period was 1990–2020. Essentially, I am trying to answer the questions – how do Macedonians identify themselves and is national identity an important element of being Macedonian?

1. Shaping Macedonian identity

In psychology, ‘identity’ is considered as a component of ‘I’, i.e. self-knowledge. Herein, locating one’s self in a social space allows defining one’s own cultural affiliation. ‘Identity’ answers the question “*Who am I?*” and is the base of

на 8 септември 1991 година”, Available at: https://old.sec.mk/star/arhiva/1990_Referendum/Izvestaj_za_sproveden_referendum_1990.pdf (accessed: 22.06.2020).

² Т. Чепреганов, *Самостојна Република Македонија*, (in:) *Историја на македонскиот народ*, (ed.) Т. Чепреганов, Скопје 2008, p. 330–331.

³ Macedonia changed its name twice after 1991. Due to the conflict with Greece, it became the ‘Former Republic of Yugoslavia’, but this name was applied internationally. Within the Balkan Peninsula ‘Macedonia’ was always used. In 2019, after pressure from Greece, the name was changed to ‘North Macedonia’. In the text I will use the name Macedonia, unless I describe events that took place after the renaming (after 2019).

self-cohesion, self-continuity and individuality. In sociology, 'identity' is usually analyzed as an aspect of 'social identity', which is understood as identification of an individual with a given group or a wider community.⁴ Identification of an individual with a group and society is a phenomenon of distinguishing one's own group from other social groups and is a way of identifying 'one's own' from 'strangers'. Hence, individuals can mix into their community and define themselves as members of bigger group, thus satisfying needs such as a need for security, belonging and acceptance.⁵

National identity, a phenomenon most frequently investigated by political scientists, is the reflective attitude of the nation towards itself, thereby it is a collective self-knowledge and opportunity for self-determination for members from one collectivity.⁶ Here, individual identification is focused around elements that shape the culture of the particular nation. One of the focal points of national identity is 'country' in its political and economic meaning, but also its lack.⁷ Often, national identity is stronger the more the attributes of state independence are threatened. This happens because lack of prospects related to the future and myths of the golden past focus national thinking on the past, and thus affect the identification of members of the community within a given nation. Nation and identity were developed in the Balkan Peninsula in the XIX century, when people began to think about their nationality through romanticism and the concept of *Volksgeist*. In the XIX century, Macedonian proto-nationalism was evolving similarly to that of the other Balkan nations, and doing so relatively peacefully. At the same time, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization was created. In August 1903, they organized a revolt against the Ottoman Empire known as the 'Ilinden Uprising'.

Following the two Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, most of the territories of Macedonia were divided between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. The lands of the present Macedonia were annexed by Serbia and named "South Serbia". During this period and on this territory, Macedonian statehood had its humble beginnings. In Yugoslavia, the idea of equality of nations and their rights to self-determination in the future were highly propagated. For this reason, in 1944, the Anti-fascist Assembly for the

⁴ Z. Sielska, *Tożsamość bałkańska – wybrane zagadnienia*, [in:] *the Peculiarity of Man. Fundamentalne kategorie ludzkiego poznania: Przyczyna – cel (1)*, (ed.) R. Stefański, Toruń – Kielce 2016, p. 140.

⁵ P. Sztompka, *Kapitał społeczny, teoria przestrzeni międzyludzkiej*, Kraków 2016, p. 136–137.

⁶ K. A. Wojtaszczyk, W. Jakubowski, *Spółeczeństwo i polityka, podstawy nauk politycznych*, Warszawa 2007, p. 187.

⁷ J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna, stadium zjawiska*, Toruń 2008, p. 181.

National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) proclaimed the People's Republic of Macedonia as part of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the same year, Macedonian was declared an official language and in 1945, the Macedonian alphabet was codified by linguists of ASNOM, who based their alphabet on Serbian Cyrillic script.⁸

Greek and Bulgarian nationalists, however, are of the opinion that Macedonia gained its independence only thanks to Serbian propaganda; hence, Macedonia as a nation is a non-entity. The difficulties with the creating of a separate Macedonian statehood and nationality are best illustrated by the statement of the Macedonian Interior Minister, Ljubomir Frčkovski, from 1992 – *Serbia recognizes the existence of a nation, but does not accept the Macedonian state, Bulgaria recognizes Macedonia as a state, but does not recognize the nation, and Greece does not accept the state or the Macedonian people.*⁹

One element affecting the formation of national identity is religion. The Macedonian models of self-identification were shaped by neighboring Churches such as the Patriarchy of Constantinople, the Bulgarian Exarchate, Serbian and Greek Autocephalous Churches. However, *some of these come with strong feelings of loyalty towards Greece or Bulgaria. When Macedonians were asked who they are, many just insisted that they always were "Christians"*¹⁰ This religion-based identity came about because of the activity of the Ottoman Empire, the territories of Macedonia being under its control during the romantic period of the XIX Century. In the Ottoman Empire, Macedonian national identity was based on separateness of collectivities, "we" – Christians, "they" – Muslims. Today, the Albanians form the largest minority in Macedonia (25.5%¹¹ of the population). The Albanians are mostly Muslim as the result of conversion under the Ottoman Empire. Hence, echoes of religion as a distinctive element of community in North Macedonia is visible on the plane of Macedonians – Christians and Albanians – Muslims: "we" versus "they".

Collective memory is the element of identity that integrates the community and binds it together. National identity, shaped within one society, has strong influence on individuals inside the group. Religion, nation (as a territory) and language connect the community, but can also contribute to the formation of

⁸ I. Stawowy-Kawka, *Historia Macedonii*, Wrocław 2000, p. 244

⁹ D. Stets, *Macedonia's bloodless road to independence*, "Philadelphia Inquirer", 1992 p. A01. As cited in: M. Kawka, P. Płaneta, *Dyskursy o Macedonii*, Kraków 2013, p. 131.

¹⁰ M. Mazover, *The Balkans, A Short History*, wyd. Random House, Nowy Jork 2000, p. 219.

¹¹ Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in The Republic of Macedonia, Book XIII, Republic of Macedonia State Statistical Office, Skopje 2002, Available at: <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/knigaXIII.pdf> (accessed: 05/02/2013).

animosities between social groups. Today, the political dimensions of memory cause controversy, especially if we are dealing with a state that regained independence after many years. In Macedonia, creating a separate language, generating religious independence and invoking common history was completely instrumentalized by state authorities.

In Macedonia, in 2006, a trans-ethnic political party VMRO-DPMNE (eng. Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity, мац, Внатрешна македонска револуционерна организација – Демократска партија за македонско национално единствено) came to power. The policy of this party is focused on consolidating the elements of national identity, thus reviving the myths and symbols of age-old Macedonian community.

In 2007, the authorities changed the name of the airport to 'skopje Alexander the Great Airport'. This activity had the intent of creating an "anti-image" within modern Macedonia, and makes reference to ancient Macedonia and the discovery of a true Macedonian identity. Such action is based on the recognition of creative coexistence among contemporary Macedonians, anti-Macedonian and Slavic genes and ancient cultural heritage. The system of education and the basis of teaching were also subject to change so as to promote Macedonian identity.¹² Furthermore, in 2010, the "Skopje 2014" project was enacted, under which the architectural appearance of the capital was modified so as to gain a more classical make-over, by the building of the Museum of Archeology and the Museum of Macedonian Struggle. The shaping of collective memory was, hence, notably aimed at identifying Macedonians with ancient Macedonia – to which Greece also has expressed historical claims.

2. Greek-Macedonian relations – from FYROM to North Macedonia

Even though the modern state of Macedonia was not reborn through armed struggle, Serbia for a long time did not recognize the independence of Macedonia. Indeed, in 1992, Serbia was still planning invasion and was trying to draw Greece in. However, in 1996, relations between these two Slavic countries were normalized and Serbia recognized Macedonia as a independent country. Bulgaria recognized the independence of Macedonia on 15 January 1992, but for many years there was noticeable political tension between the two countries.

¹² Brunnbauer U., *Serving the Nation: Historiography in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) After Socialism*, Historien vol.4 p. 161. 2003, Available at: <http://www.nnet.gr/historein/historeinfiles/histvolumes/hist04/historein4-brunnbauer.pdf>. (Accessed: 20.06.2020)

The current president has also questioned the existence of the Macedonian nation. Similar rhetoric was held by Bozhidar Dimitrov – director of the National Museum of History in Sofia and member of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, who wrote a book entitled “The Ten Lies of Macedonism”.¹³ It is worth underlining that even nowadays many Bulgarians see Macedonians as “western Bulgarians” who were made to believe in a fake identity by way of Yugoslavian propaganda.

The relations between Greece and Macedonia are much more complicated. In 1991, the contemporary Minister of foreign affairs said that Greece will never recognize a country named Macedonia. Primarily, Greece accuses Macedonia of attempting to steal a part of its cultural heritage, stressing that Macedonia is a geographical and historical concept referring to a specific region of 'Aegean Macedonia', not a state with a capital in Skopje. In 1995, the national relations warmed-up as a result of pressure from the United Nations, the European Union and United States. At the same time, a temporary agreement was signed and Macedonia accepted the provisional name of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” – FYROM.¹⁴ Other counter-proposed names were “Vardar Republic” or “Republic of Skopje”. In the beginning of 1996, diplomatic relations between Greece and Macedonia were established and later, in February, the ceremonial opening of embassies in Athens and Skopje took place. However, VMRO-DMPNE, by winning the parliamentary elections in 2006, brought about a deterioration of relations. In 2007, the VMRO-DMPNE government changed the name of the main national airport to Skopje Alexander the Great Airport, and placed antique artifacts in front of the building of the Council of Ministers in an act of Macedonian “Antiquisation”.¹⁵ As a consequence, Greece blocked Macedonian accession to NATO during the 2008 Bucharest Summit. From that point onwards, the diplomatic relationship between these countries re-entered the deep-freeze.

VMRO-DPMNE ran the country until 2016 when snap elections took place.¹⁶ In these, the party of Zoran Zaev – SDSM (eng. Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, мац. Социјалдемократски сојуз на Македонија–СДСМ), took power. The new government was pro-union and had a willingness to reopen

¹³ P. Majewski, *(Re)konstrukcje Narodu, Odwieczna Macedonia powstaje w XXI wieku*, Gdańsk 2013, p. 134.

¹⁴ Relations with other European countries, including Poland, were also not the easiest. For a long time, the name of Macedonia was a moot point. Poland, like other countries, accepted the independence of Macedonia under the name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Macedonian authorities did not hide their dissatisfaction with the position adopted by Poland.

¹⁵ P. Majewski, *(Re)konstrukcje Narodu, (...)* p. 177.

¹⁶ Nikola Gruevski was accused by the opposition of corruption, large-scale wiretapping (more than 20,000 people were tapped, including judges, diplomats, policemen and journalists) and the rigging of the 2014 parliamentary elections.

negotiation with Greece.¹⁷ Thanks to this, Macedonian and Greek Prime Ministers met for the first time after almost ten years, on 24 January 2018, at the World Economic Forum in Davos. The outcome of this meeting was that the Macedonian head of government, Zoran Zaev, announced that his government will rename the country's main airport and highway towards Greece, both currently called Alexander the Great. On 12 June 2018, an agreement between them was reached. Greece agreed to recognize its neighbor as the Republic of North Macedonia, a move that the Republic of Macedonia welcomed, and on 17 June 2018, the two Prime Ministers (Alexis Tsipras and Zoran Zaev) signed the agreement ending the naming dispute.¹⁸ The agreement ended 27 years of dispute between the countries and opened the way for Macedonia to join NATO and the European Union.

3. Macedonians – Who are we?

The Prespa agreement, although ending the long-standing Macedonian-Greek conflict and allowing Macedonia to join NATO and the European Union structures, reintroduced the question of national identity. Public opinion was divided and society was polarized. After the agreement was signed, a large group rose-up against the negotiations. The hashtag #ournameismacedonia (our name is Macedonia) appeared on social media, protests were organized and information posters were hung.

One of the issues raised in the debate was the role of the name in the process of shaping identity. People give names to identify objects. Through names, humanity identifies itself as “I” – a person, and “we” as a state, nation or community. Therefore, Macedonians were asking that if a nation's name can be readily changed, then what are we... have we a basis for calling ourselves a nation? On posters with a picture of a sad child the slogan “nobody has the right to change your name” appeared. The apple of discord was the naming of Macedonia's citizenry, and more precisely their definition in the constitution, on passports and other state documents. The discussion concerned the provision of “Macedonians” as citizens of the state, which changed over to “citizens of North Macedonia”.

¹⁷ J. Wojnicki, *The formation of the Party System in Republic of Macedonia*, VOL 1. Lublin 2016, DOI:10.17951/m.2016.1.157.

¹⁸ The agreement is often called the “Prespa agreement” – from Lake Prespa, located in Macedonia, where the agreement was signed. M, Nimetz, *The Macedonian “Name” Dispute: The Macedonian Question—Resolved?* (in) *Nationalities Papers* (2020), 48: 2, p. 217, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2020.10>

Opponents were of the opinion that the amendment interferes with their identity, and thus damages the essence of the Macedonian state and the Macedonian identity. However, Prime Minister Zoran Zaev explained that the change of this provision only had importance in the light of the Greek-Macedonian conflict, as it applies as well to all citizens who live in North Macedonia, whether they are, for example, of Albanian or Turkish origin or belong to another minority. The opposition, with VMRO-DMPNE, as a party in charge, and President Góto Ivanov, believed that Macedonia should negotiate with both Albanians and Greece without losing the rights to a name and identity that is defined by most Macedonians as Macedonian identity. The opposition also accused the SDSM party of submissiveness to the Albanian minority, arguing that official recognition of the Albanian language, legal functioning of Albanian parties and a term that does not contain word “Macedonian” in relation to the country’s citizens are too much.¹⁹ After numerous talks, negotiations with political parties, the Albanian minority, and protestors against the change, it was agreed that the citizens of North Macedonia would retain the name – Macedonians.

Most of Macedonian society, especially young people, supported the required changes in order to become closer to the “the West”. They believed that the Pre-span agreement, and thus voting through the constitutional amendments, was important in opening the way to becoming part of the structures of the European Union and NATO. In the pre-referendum poll concerning the change of the name in the Macedonian constitution, of the majority of people who were in favor of the change, 48,2%, were young people. Over all, according to a telephone survey conducted by Telma television²⁰, the majority of respondents were in favor of accepting the agreement – 41.5%, while 35.1% of the respondents did not support the idea. Still, the outcome of the analysis with ethnicity grouping showed that the majority of Albanians supported the idea of an agreement (88%), while only 27.4% of all Macedonians did so.²¹

The referendum on renaming Macedonia, which took place on 30 September 2018, perfectly illustrates the indecision of Macedonians. The text of the question put to voters was: “Are you in favour of European Union and NATO membership by accepting the agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece?”. While the vote in favor of the referendum question reached

¹⁹ Z. Sielska, *Albanian Minority questions in Macedonia: Selected Issues*, DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.6726944, s. 77–89.

²⁰ The survey was conducted by phone, 1026 respondents were surveyed from July 24 to August 1, 2018, Телма, Анкета, Available at: <https://telma.com.mk/anketa-41-5-ke-glasaat-za-35-1-protiv/> (7.08.2018).

²¹ *Ibidem*

94.18%, only 36.89% of all citizens with voting rights cast a vote, therefore, the referendum was declared invalid.²² The opposition, along with part of the public, boycotted the referendum and opposed the name change.

The sense of identity among Macedonians is thus an important issue. Most Macedonians strongly identify with their family and Macedonian nationality. Indeed, more than half of the respondents (54.31%) replied that they definitely agreed with the sentence “I feel strongly identified with my family”. This is not a surprising answer because strong bonds of family are important in the region of the Balkan Peninsula due to the history of invasion and changing boundary. An equally large number of respondents answered “I definitely agree” to the sentence “I feel Macedonian”, (46.55% of all respondents). Hence, the sense of identity with the national community, especially in such a young and ethnically divided state, was important (Table 1).

Table 1. Sense of identity in Macedonia (1- I strongly disagree; 2 – I rather disagree, 3 – I have no opinion; 4 – I rather agree; 5 – I strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
I feel a strong identification with Macedonia	13.79	18.97	25	19.38	21.55
I feel strongly identified with my religion	23.28	9.48	26.72	17.24	22.41
I feel a strong identification with my family	6.03	3.45	6.90	28.45	54.31
I feel strongly identified with the region where I live	16.38	12.07	24.14	26.72	18.97
I feel Macedonian	13.79	6.09	10.34	21.55	46.55
I feel European	17.24	9.48	16.38	6.03	12.07
I feel like a citizen of the world	12.07	0.86	8.62	6.90	32.78

As noticeable in the above table, Macedonians are divided about their identification with attributes of nationhood. In the survey, 21.55% strongly agreed with the sentence – “I have a strong identification with Macedonia” and 13.79% answered that they strongly disagree with this sentence. In the case of religion, Macedonians seem to be equally polarized. 23.28% of all respondents definitely did not feel identified with their religion, while 22.41% of all respondents definitely identified with their beliefs. However, a very large number of respondents had no opinion on this subject (26.72% of all respondents) (Table 1). Of note, the University of Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, which conducted a similar survey among the student community, obtained completely different results in relation

²² Република Македонија државна изборна комисија, Референдум 2018, Available at: <https://referendum.sec.mk/Referendum/Results?cs=mk-MK&r=r&rd=r1&eu=All&m=All> (Accessed: 30.06.2020); I. Janev Uncertain Future and Prospects of the Prespa Agreement between Macedonia and Greece (in) *Advances in Politics and Economics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2020, p.12, Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/304928971.pdf> (accessed: 07.10.2020)

to religion. Their research shows that religion ranks at third place among the communities with which students identify themselves. However, a similar result can be observed in the case of the sense of identity with the family (Table 2).

Table 2. A sense of identity among the student population²³

Community	Average value
Family	6.60
Closest friends.	6.36
Religion	5.91
Place of residence	5.57
Ethnic group	5.51
Country of origin	5.47
State of residence	4.96

Macedonians feel like citizens of the world, but they identify less with Europe. In the survey, 32.76% of the respondents answered that they definitely feel like a citizen of the world, but only 12.02% marked the same answer in relation to European identification (Table 1). This outcome may be related to many factors, certainly the constant delay in initiating negotiations between the European Union and North Macedonia was not well received among Macedonians. First of all, it is related to a strong belief that they will be sacrificing part of their identity. Ultimately, after eleven years, on 26 March 2020, the ministers of European affairs gave their political consent to start accession negotiations.

Conclusions

After Macedonia gained independence, questions about the shape of its cultural and ethnic history and the continuity of the Macedonian ethnos through the sense of ownership in relation to the heritage of the inhabited territory and the awareness of belonging to the same ethnic group, returned. Although separation from Yugoslavia took place without armed conflict, the young state was not fully recognized by its neighbors – Bulgaria did not recognize the nation, the Serbian Orthodox Church did not recognize the Macedonian autocephaly and Greece did not recognize Macedonia as a state or as a nation. Looking at the current affairs and behavior of these nations, we can say that nothing has changed on this

²³ Tabela własna, źródło: *Перцепциите на идентитетите на студентската популација во Република Македонија*, Skopje 2014, Available at: <http://isppi.ukim.edu.mk/files/percepcija-na-identitetite.pdf> (Accessed: 01.06.2020).

topic. However, Macedonians, like any community, needs a sense of community and national belonging.

The research shows that although Macedonians really want to belong to international structures and to be a part of the greater world, they are not convinced about sacrificing elements of their identity. The low turnout and the boycott of the referendum about renaming of Macedonia from FYROM to North Macedonia is a confirmation of the citizens' concerns. Macedonians have created their national identity, and thus their separateness from others, by means of elements that bind the community together, such as the state, religion and collective memory. Of course, the family is the community with which the respondents identify most strongly, but Macedonian nationality is also important and it is not marginalized. The issue that is currently being discussed in Macedonia is membership in the structures of the European Union. The ending of the conflict with Greece made it possible to begin accession negotiations and to enter the structures of the North Atlantic Pact. Changing the name was perceived by the majority of Macedonian society not as an admission that such a state as Macedonia, and a nation as Macedonians, does not exist, but as a rational approach, which in turn opened the way to membership in international organizations. Who are the Macedonians then? Although the name was changed to North Macedonia, the name of the nation stayed the same – Macedonians. A name plays an important role in identifying an individual. We give names to people, we name things, we name our national and political identity through choice of name. Thanks to this, we can distinguish ourselves from others. For Macedonians, national identity is important, but ending the conflict with Greece and opening Macedonia up to the world are also important issues. A balance was achieved.

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Summary: After Macedonia obtained its independence a few questions appeared again. What is the shape of its cultural and ethnic history? Will Macedonian ethnicity keep its continuity through the sense of tenure over its native land, its heritage and awareness of belonging to the same ethnic group? Although detachment from Yugoslavia took place without major military conflict, the new Balkan nation was not recognized by its neighbour – Bulgarians did not recognize the country, the Serbian Church did not recognize autocephaly of Macedonian Church and Greece did not recognize either Macedonia as a country or as a nation. The important issue discussed in this work is identity, social as well as national, in the context of the elements that unite the community such as the state, religion and collective memory. Identity is a very important factor in a country that became independent not so many years ago because the sense of identification with a given community has an integrational function and gives members a feeling of security. The article will first include a capsulation of the history of Macedonian statehood after 1991 and the problems that the young state encountered during this period. Also in this part, the author will inform the reader of the past and current state of Macedonian-Greek relations, as these were instrumental for the present shape of the country and society. In the last part of this particle, the author will present the opinion Macedonians hold on these notions, as discovered on the basis of research and analysis of social behaviour.

Keywords: North Macedonia, Balkans, Conflict, Identity

Walka o imię – Macedońska walka o narodową podmiotowość i kreację tożsamości narodowej

Streszczenie: Po uzyskaniu przez Macedonię niepodległości powstało ponownie pytanie o kształt jej kulturowych i etnicznych dziejów oraz o ciągłość istnienia etnosu macedońskiego poprzez poczucie prawa własności w stosunku do dziedzictwa zamieszkiwanego terytorium oraz świadomość przynależności do tej samej grupy etnicznej. Choć odłączenie się do Jugosławii odbyło się większości bez konfliktu zbrojnego to młode państwo nie było w pełni uznawane przez swoich sąsiadów – Bułgarzy nie uznawali narodu, Serbska Cerkiew nie uznawała autokefalii macedońskiej, a Grecja nie uznawała ani Państwa, ani narodu Macedońskiego. Ważną kwestią omawianą w rozdziale będzie pojęcie tożsamości, zarówno społecznej, jak i narodowej w kontekście elementów, które spajają wspólnotę, czyli państwo, religia i pamięć zbiorowa. W państwie, które od niedawna posiada niezależność jest to szczególnie ważne, bowiem poczucie identyfikacji z daną wspólnotą pełni funkcje integracyjne i daje członkom poczucie bezpieczeństwa. Następnie zostanie opisana historia państwowości macedońskiej po 1991 roku oraz problemów jakie młode państwo napotykało w tym okresie. Ta część poruszy również ważną problematykę stosunków macedońsko-greckich, które rzutowały na współczesny kształt państwa oraz społeczeństwa. W ostatniej części za pomocą analizy zachowań społecznych oraz zebranych badań zostanie przedstawiona opinia Macedończyków.

Słowa kluczowe: Macedonia Północna, Bałkany, konflikt, Tożsamość