

**Three Outcomes of Ethnic Conflict:  
The Cases of Bulgaria, Macedonia and Yugoslavia  
1989-1999**

**Abstract**

During the 1990s three different outcomes of ethnic conflict were observed in three neighboring states in the Balkans – Bulgaria, Macedonia and Yugoslavia. This paper searches for the domestic causes of this difference in six main domains of national minority demands towards the respective states. The analysis highlights the importance of four factors: the change in minorities' constitutional status, minorities' participation in government at the central and regional level, the government's respect for fundamental human rights and for mother-tongue education. The results also show that neither minorities' participation in the public administration nor their economic status were of primary importance to the violent outcome of conflict.

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## **Introduction**

The paper is focused on three neighboring countries in the Balkans - Bulgaria, Macedonia<sup>1</sup> and Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), and on their three largest national minorities - the Turks of Bulgaria, the Albanians of Macedonia and the Albanians of Kosovo. During the 1990s, in these three cases the ethnic conflict had three different outcomes. In Bulgaria it is characterized by non-violence. In Macedonia, ethnic conflict took violent characteristics only occasionally. In Kosovo, the violent mode prevailed.

In order to find the domestic causes of this difference, in this paper I focus on six main domains of minority demands directed towards the respective states. These are: 1) The minorities' *constitutional status* before and after 1989, 2) *self-government*, 3) participation in the *public administration*, 4) the actual respect for *human rights*, 5) *education*, and 6) *economic status*. I argue that the diminishing of constitutional status, the lack of minority self-government, the disrespect of fundamental human rights and the lack of education perceived to be adequate by the minorities are the crucial reasons for the existence of violent conflict.

## **Change of the Minorities' Constitutional Status**

Before the collapse of communism in 1989, the Turks in Bulgaria and the Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo lived in different types of states which had a different understanding of ethno-national diversity. Bulgaria was a unitary state, highly centralized in decision-making and ethno-centric in its constitutional wording. The 1971 Constitution only referred to 'citizens of non-Bulgarian origin' without mentioning any ethnic or national minorities (Bulgarian Constitution, 1971:25). By contrast, the Albanians of Macedonia and Kosovo lived under the umbrella of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), a federal state. It was based 'on the national arrangement and within it even smaller nationally different populations had a considerable role to play' (Dimitrijevic, 1994:15). Under its 1974 Constitution the population was ranked according to a three-tier system: of 'nations', which had republics within the SFRY, of 'nationalities' which had kin-states outside the SFRY, and of 'ethnic groups' which had neither of these, but were ethnically distinct.

The Albanians of Kosovo and of Macedonia were nevertheless positioned differently within the basic law. The Kosovo Albanians had the right to territorial autonomy and Kosovo was defined as a 'constituent part[s] of the Socialist Republic of Serbia' along with Vojvodina (SFRY Constitution, 1974:27). The provinces were equivalent in many ways to the six republics: they were represented in the main federal bodies and had self-management powers in the economic sphere and even in some areas of foreign policy (Malcolm, 1999:327). By contrast, the Albanians living in the Socialist Republic of

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<sup>1</sup> Macedonia declared independence in 1991. In 1993 the UN recognized it under the name 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (FYROM) due to obstructions of Greece to its constitutionally proclaimed name, 'Republic of Macedonia'.

Macedonia (SRM) could not exercise any collective rights with respect to territory. The 1974 SRM Constitution defined Macedonia as 'the state of the Macedonian people and the Albanian and Turkish minorities' [nationalities] (Poulton, 1995:122) and for the first time mentioned the Albanians and Turks as nationalities by name (Ortakovski, 1998:245). In line with that wording the nationalities were guaranteed the same rights as the Macedonians which included the right to proportional representation in the parliament, to flying of the national flags, and to having nationalities' languages and alphabets considered of equal status to that of the Macedonians (Perry, 1997:253).

The new constitutions of Bulgaria, Macedonia and Yugoslavia were designed as a result of the democratization after the end of communism in 1989. The Bulgarian and Macedonian ones were passed in 1991, the Serbian one incorporating Kosovo - in 1990, and that of Federal Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) - in 1992. They address some fundamental rights, such as the right to association, religious belief, expression of ethnic/national identity and fostering of minority culture. The Macedonian and the Serbian ones allow even linguistic rights in the political sphere, postulating that minority languages can be in official use beyond the majority language units of self-government where the minorities are the predominant population. The 1992 Yugoslav Constitution goes even further by allowing media in the mother-tongue and mother-tongue use in courts and in other legal proceedings. Finally, all four basic laws forbid organized fomenting of ethnic, national and religious hatred which could endanger the constitutional order.

Despite the many rights guaranteed, minorities and human rights groups still consider those constitutions to be 'ethno-centric'. The most disputed clause of the Bulgarian Constitution is Article 11 (4), stating that 'there shall be no political parties on ethnic, racial, or religious lines...' Also, with Article 13 (3) 'Eastern Orthodoxy is considered the traditional religion in the Republic of Bulgaria' with no specific regard to any other denomination. Similarly, the Macedonian Constitution with Article 19 (3) explicitly mentions the Macedonian Orthodox Church by name, while defining the other religious denominations broadly as 'communities and groups'. However, the Macedonian Constitution's most disputed part is the preamble's wording, which states that "Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs and Roma and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia". This is interpreted as implying that the state is mono-ethnic but guarantees equality to all minorities, unlike the previous constitution which is interpreted as making Albanians and Turks co-constituents with the Macedonians, although the Macedonian 'people' and the 'nationalities' were unequal in status (Dimitras, 2001).

Although autonomy is generally considered a good measure for conflict resolution, it is precisely the autonomy of Kosovo that is in the critics' focus. This is because the Kosovo autonomy defined by the 1990 Serbian Constitution reduced the previously enjoyed rights mostly to the implementation of some centrally made decisions. Also, the Serbian

Constitution was not practically implemented in post-Cold War Kosovo, since a number of laws issued later on made many of its provisions void.

### **Constitutional Challenges and Governmental Response**

All three minorities challenged the constitutions by choosing different goals and strategies. The ethnic Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) in Bulgaria - the major Turkish party throughout the 1990s - maintained one political goal, to 'de-capsulate' the ethnos and integrate it into the civil society (Dogan, 1999). Nevertheless, it challenged the Constitution, when MRF deputies walked out of the Parliament during its final vote (Kanev, 1996:62). However, demands to change the restrictive Article 11(4) were voiced mainly during the 1989-1999 debates surrounding the adoption of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities and also thereafter, but not much before (Ivanov, 1999).

Also the Albanian political elite of Macedonia had one main political goal, although its goal was quite different in nature. It demanded that Albanians become a 'constituent' element ('nation'/'nationality') of the Macedonian state. In pursuit of this goal, the two main Albanian parties - the moderate Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) and the more radical Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA) - changed strategies. Initially they acted with more confrontation than collaboration with the authorities. On the one hand, the PDP directed a number of boycotts on the 1991 republic's independence referendum, the voting on the Constitution (Bugajski, 1995:124) and the 1991 census. On the other hand, in early 1992 the PDP called for the autonomy of the Albanian-inhabited Western Macedonia (Ramet, 1996:235), and some radical elements beyond the PDP proclaimed the 'Republic of Ilirida. As of 1992-93, radicalization gathered momentum. In 1993, several Albanian PDP high-ranking officials - among them the former secretary general of the party and the deputy ministers for health and defense - were arrested on an accusation of possession of machine-guns and of planning to create the 'Republic of Ilirida' (Ortakovski, 1999:353, Poulton, 2000:197). In 1994, within the PDP a radical faction consolidated, which later developed into the DPA. Initially it openly advocated an 'armed revolt' (Ramet, 1995:235). In 1997 it used its local government's powers to challenge centrally-made decisions, and raised the Albanian and Turkish national flags on the town-halls of Gostivar and Tetovo. DPA's radical attitude significantly softened after it entered the central government following the general elections of 1998. Thereafter it behaved in an unexpectedly cooperative way with its nationalist Macedonian coalition partner, the VMRO-DPMNE, as did the latter.

For their part, after the 1989 abolishing of Kosovo's autonomy, the Kosovo Albanian elite reformulated twice the national goal. On two occasions in June 1990 during an Albanian attempt to block the Serbian Constitution, and in September with the secret adoption of the so-called 'Kacanik' Constitution, Albanians declared Kosovo's republican status within Yugoslavia (Malcolm, 1999:346, ICG, March 1998:36) The second reformulation of the national goal was triggered by SFRY's disintegration. In September 1991 a shadow Parliament of the so-called 'Republic of Kosovo' approved a

'Resolution on Independence and Sovereignty of Kosovo', declaring Kosovo 'a sovereign and independent state' (Kostovicova, 1997:31).

In Kosovo, the strategies changed as well. Non-cooperation with the Serbian state developed as the main possible strategy, shown remarkably by the creation of a shadow-state as of 1992. The biggest shifts of Kosovo Albanian politics concerned the use of violence. In the spring of 1990 the Albanian leadership decided to strive using non-violent means. Lacking arms, Albanians risked huge human casualties by violent resistance (Kostovicova, 1997:25). Non-violence became a distinctive feature also of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), the main anti-communist and Albanian nationalist movement in Kosovo. However, as of 1996 its politics of 'sitting' (ibid, 59) was criticized by some small parties within Kosovo, and was seriously challenged by the clandestine Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which openly embarked on guerrilla warfare. Since 1996 it started claiming responsibility for terrorist acts against Serbian police and civilians (ICG, March 1998:39). KLA's power grew rapidly so that in 1999 it became one of the negotiating partners in the February-March Rambouillet international peace talks on the status of Kosovo, and 'the' major Albanian player during NATO's bombing on Yugoslavia in March-June 1999 and shortly thereafter.

On their side, the national governments understood differently the goals they had to pursue concerning the minorities' constitutional status. In Bulgaria, all governments - whether post-communists or liberals - aimed at the minorities' integration into the 'political' nation, insisting that the Constitution respect the minorities' cultural freedoms. The Macedonian governments had similar ideas. They viewed the Constitution as allowing a high degree of cultural diversity (Frckoski, 1999), but as not allowing the 'majorization' of one particular - i.e. the Albanian - minority (MFA, 1999). In Serbia, the Milosevic regime had two steady goals. First, in line with the nationalist myth of Kosovo as being a cradle of the Serbian nation, it aimed to fully reincorporate Kosovo into Serbia. And second, it wanted to transform Kosovo's ethnic structure by fostering the return of Serbs and Montenegrins to that province (Surroi, 1998:160).

The governments' actions ranged from moderate confrontation to extreme violence. In Bulgaria, while in power, the former communists on three occasions - in 1990, 1991-92 and 1996 - challenged the legality of the ethnic Turkish MRF to the highest courts, but were not successful in outlawing it (Eminov, 1998:168-170, BTA, 1996). In Macedonia, during the first transition years, the governments responded moderately to Albanian demands for autonomy, since they were preoccupied with the building of the new Macedonian state and its international recognition. Although Albanian actions for autonomy and a subsequent declaration of the 'Republic of Ilirida' in Western Macedonia were declared 'illegal', the governments still adopted a relatively cooperative attitude. They had no other choice but to cooperate with the Albanians, if they wanted to preserve the state (Glenny, 2000:656). Later on, when the state was already recognized and when the Albanian party's attitudes radicalized, the governments reacted more fiercely, although not in a steady campaign as in Kosovo, but in peaks. In 1993, as already mentioned, they arrested several PDP governmental officials. A stronger reaction,

involving legal procedures and police violence, was observed with respect to the 1997 raising of the minority flags.

In pursuit of its goals, the Serbian government used a variety of legal restrictions and violence to subjugate the Kosovo Albanians. In 1989 it pressed the Albanian Kosovo Assembly to adopt Kosovo's diminished legal status. It also issued a number of highly restrictive acts intended allegedly to be 'temporary measures' in 'exceptional circumstances' (Malcolm, 1999:346, ICG, March 1998:36). Thereafter, the authorities passed the new Serbian Constitution, abolished the Kosovo Assembly and declared the Albanian 'Kacanik' Constitution 'illegal'. Until 1992 a number of other laws were passed that increased the central control over Kosovo's administrative, economic and cultural life. Those legal acts were supported by a high degree of police violence.

### **Minority Self-Government and Participation in the Public Administration**

The Kosovo case demonstrates that the frustration of minorities comes exactly at the point when the institution of self-government is curtailed. Right after the abolishing of the autonomy, between March 1989 and January 1990, the Kosovo Albanians reacted with three waves of violent demonstrations and strikes (Kostovicova, 1997:25). Moreover, until 1990 the still communist Albanian leadership did not rule out participating in the state institutions as to change the system from 'inside'. After the Kosovo local parliament was abolished, this was no longer possible. The conflict increased with the creation of the Kosovo shadow-state as of 1992, meant to provide services and to demonstrate that Serbia is a 'foreign' state. In 1992 and 1998, elections for shadow parliament and president were held in private homes, which in the both cases were won by the LDK. Shadow-President became its leader Ibrahim Rugova and a government was formed under the leadership of Bujar Bukoshi with six 'ministries' covering education, health, information, finance, foreign affairs and justice and its prime-minister based in Bonn (ibid, Bukoshi, 1997:468-470).

Unlike the Kosovo Albanians who boycotted elections in Serbia, the main national minorities of Macedonia and Bulgaria participated in both parliamentary and local elections throughout the 1990s. On the macro-level, minority formations - the MRF in Bulgaria and the PDP in Macedonia - entered the first democratically elected parliaments in 1990. Thereafter, the MRF became the third-biggest represented party in parliament between 1990 and 1997. Subsequently it has been represented in a coalition with some small liberal parties, of which the MRF forms the political core. Moreover, between 1992 and 1994 a non-party government was established on its parliamentary mandate (Bell, 1997:383). Albanian and Macedonian formations ruled together in Macedonia as well. Between 1992 and 1998 the PDP ruled together with the post-communist Social Democrats, and thereafter, the DPA ruled with the Macedonian nationalist VMRO-DPMNE and the centrist Democratic Alternative. On the regional level, the minority parties in both cases also had their own representatives. During the researched period, local elections took place in Macedonia in 1990 and in 1996. The PDP was represented in the main towns of Albanian-inhabited Western Macedonia up until 1996, while thereafter

the DPA took the lead. In Bulgaria, local elections were held in 1991, 1995 and 1999. During the first two elections, the MRF had its own representatives in the local government. In 1999 this continued to be the case in many places, but the MRF lost the crucial place for a mayor in Kardzhali in favor of a candidate of the ruling UDF (BHHRG, 1999).

Nevertheless, at some points central and minority self-governing authorities entered into an open conflict. In the Macedonian case, the conflict took violent dimensions in 1997 when the mayors of Gostivar and Tetovo decided to raise the Albanian and Turkish flags on the town-halls. A gap in the legislation by that time allowed for a different interpretation of the right to expose the national minorities' flag. While Gostivar's mayor Rifi Osmani claimed that his decision was based on the minorities' constitutional right to freely express national attributes, the government saw this move as anti-constitutional and endangering the state's integrity (CEDIME-SE, forthcoming). Thereafter, police violence erupted and the main actors in the conflict were arrested, tried and imprisoned (HRW, 1998:7-8). In Bulgaria, a conflict of a much smaller scale erupted in 1995 with respect to the legality of Kardzhali's mayoral election in place of that of the former communist. After the local court declared elections invalid and new ones were scheduled for May 1996, the Supreme Court in April 1996 overruled this decision and reinstated the initially elected MRF mayor (Eminov, 1998:172-173). After its loss in 1999 the MRF called the vote fraudulent and demanded its nullification (BHHRG, 1999), but no serious actions followed.

While the minority self-government turns out to be of crucial importance to the outcome of ethnic conflict, the minorities' participation in the state bureaucracy shows a relative irrelevance, since in the three cases it was either non-existent or low. In Kosovo, after the 1990 'temporary measures' were issued, the dismissal of Albanians from managerial and executive positions followed, as well as that of Albanian doctors and medical personnel. In September 1991, Albanian teachers were fired after the introduction of a new Serbian curriculum (Kostovicova, 1997:32-36). The situation in Macedonia was much more different. On the macro-level the Albanians had a number of representatives throughout the 1990s. In 1992 the PDP had a Minister of Finance, in 1996 five ethnic Albanians participated in the government with two of them being ministers - of science, and of labor and social policy. Until 1998 and thereafter, there was also a deputy-minister of defense. Since 1998 the DPA was represented by five ministers and for the first time since 1999 by a minister of justice and a deputy-minister of interior (CEDIME-SE, forthcoming, Krause, 2001). Nevertheless, further down the bureaucratic ladder the Albanians were underrepresented mostly before 1998, but also thereafter. The main complaints concern the minority's participation in the police, army and cultural institutions (HRW, 1996:30).

In Bulgaria, the ethnic Turks had no ministers during the 1990s, despite the fact that a government was formed on their behalf between 1992 and 1994. The MRF had a deputy prime minister and minister of labor and social affairs who was an ethnic Bulgarian (Bell, 1997:383). Also, in the lower levels of bureaucracy Turks have been underrepresented,

even after the UDF government inaugurated a program by late 1998/early 1999 to give a priority to the integration of minorities into the Bulgarian society (CEDIME-SE, 1999a).

### **Minority Education**

In Kosovo, the educational systems' separation started in 1989/1990. With the imposition of 'emergency' measures and the 1991 new Serbian curriculum, the regime started 'cleansing' the University of Prishtina of Albanian administrators and professors (Gessen, 1994:36). Study in Serbian was introduced and although education in the primary school continued in Albanian, after 1992 most secondary schools became Serbian-language only. Thousands of Albanian teachers were dismissed from their jobs (MRG, 1997:252). The Albanians responded with a school boycott and created a parallel educational system at all levels. According to Kosovo Albanian data, in the 1992-93 academic year 274,000 children attended parallel primary schools and 63,000 - secondary schools (ibid). By 1994 the parallel university had 25,000 students with 900 instructors (Gessen, 1994:31). Without a doubt, the shadow education, taking place at private premises, was the most successful enterprise of the whole parallel system. For this reason, the Serbian police intimidated teachers and students alike on a regular basis.

In Macedonia, inter-ethnic and minority-governmental clashes were strong concerning education. Although the Albanians had the opportunity to study in their mother-tongue in the primary and secondary public schools, they demanded an Albanian-language state university. The government's initial rejection to that demand made Albanians in 1994-1995 create a semi-parallel structure, the Tetovo University, providing mostly education in Albanian, but aiming at recognition as a third state university. The government resisted to that move by declaring the university illegal and charging its rector and four other people with "inciting the Albanian population in Macedonia to resistance and civil disobedience" (HRW, 1996:48). Another wave of open conflict arose when in 1997 the Pedagogical Faculty in the state Skopje University allowed for the training of teachers in the Albanian language. This spurred demonstrations in Skopje by nationalist Macedonian students (Poulton, 1998:81). The university education demand in Albanian was highly politicized over the 1990s. This remained so even after the 1998 change of government when an agreement was reached to issue a more liberal education law and establish a private college providing study in Albanian and supported by the international community (CEDIME-SE, forthcoming).

In Bulgaria, the Turks' education in their mother-tongue was a major conflict area as well. Demands for education were met in two steps, during the two rules of the liberal UDF, and by the constant advocacy of the MRF. After the reversal of the assimilation campaign of late 1989, the former-communists' controlled government promised that Turks will be allowed to have mother-tongue instruction in the municipality schools of ethnically mixed areas. However, the Grand National Assembly introduced a moratorium on minority mother-tongue education and just before its dissolution passed a law that openly prohibited it (Eminov, 1998:138-140) in the state schools but not in the municipality ones (Kanev, 2001). Thereafter a widespread boycott of schools of Turkish

parents and students erupted (Eminov, 1998:138-140). With the UDF coming to government in late 1991, mother-tongue instruction started in the primary and secondary schools. The normative basis for that was fixed in 1994, allowing for mother-tongue education as an elective subject (Kanev, 2001). Also, departments of Turkish philology were opened in the universities of Sofia and Shoumen. However, this did not satisfy the ethnic Turks, and the MRF stood for a new demand, to make the education compulsory, but not - as in the first two cases - to extend it to the higher education level. This demand was met in 1999 by the introduction of a law allowing for an education in mother-tongue as a required subject.

### **Violation of Human Rights**

The Kosovo case offers the gravest examples of human rights violations. While increasing its grip on the province, the Milosevic regime used violence on a daily basis. In that three major phases are to be distinguished. First, between 1989 and early 1998 the police violently dispersed demonstrators, raided homes allegedly to search for hidden weapons, and intimidated routinely thousands in custody who were related (or not) to the parallel structures. Victims included mostly political activists, journalists, human rights defenders and scholars, who were imprisoned after being unfairly tried (Amnesty International, 1999). Second, after March 1998 the conflict intensified when special police force operations were commenced to take back territory occupied earlier by the KLA. Seven large-scale incidents occurred, which were inaugurated as 'punitive action' against alleged or real KLA armed attacks. In some villages men were separated from women and were ill-treated or summarily executed, but in others the women were also targeted individually or in groups. In the wake of these events more than 160 Albanians died. There were also reports of abductions, expulsion, torture and killings by the KLA of Serbian civilians and Albanians considered as 'loyal' to the authorities (ibid). By late 1998, Human Rights Watch issued reports of 1,000 Albanians being held in Serbian prisons (BosNet News, 1998). Third, between March and June 1999, when NATO bombed Yugoslavia, the period was marked by a large-scale 'ethnic cleansing', involving both police and special army forces. The paramilitary drove Albanians from their homes at gun-point. Before expelling them, they often robbed them, and took away and destroyed their identification documents (USIS, June 1999). Earlier the paramilitary concentrated on areas where the KLA was active and attacked mainly the villages, while now they focused on previously quiet communities and on urban and rural areas alike (OSCE, 1999). Women were raped, and organized death was not spared to them, nor to the children and elderly (HRW, July 1999). During the war, mass executions took place in at least 85 towns and villages, when no less than 6,000 Albanians were killed (USIS, June 1999). The 'cleansing' campaign and NATO's bombing caused an outflow of more than 800,000 Albanian refugees abroad.

In Macedonia, unlike in Kosovo, police violence against Albanians was not used on a mass scale. When this occurred, it was mostly based on an idea of 'teaching them a lesson' for some concrete actions. In a shooting incident shortly after Albanian's 1992 referendum on autonomy in Skopje's market 'Bit Pazar' the police injured three

Albanians and, according to some reports, shot one dead. The action was directed against black-marketers, but was interpreted in ethnic terms as ‘the Macedonian police against the Albanian black-marketers’ (Ivanov, 1996:79). In 1994, the Tetovo University was closed down in the course of a police action by which at least one protester died (CEDIME-SE, forthcoming). The strongest outburst of violence occurred in 1997 around the flag-raising issue. Special police forces - without any special warning - moved to Gostivar and Tetovo, took down the flags and arrested key members of the DPA local leadership. Police beat the demonstrators, entered private homes without a warrant and even detained individuals who did not take part in the event. Clashes left three people dead and at least 200 people injured (HRW, 1998:1). Although in Macedonia there was no massive violence of the Kosovo type, throughout the 1990s the police still harassed political opponents and people of lower social-economic status, among them mostly the minorities (ibid). Political prisoners were released in February 1999 after the adoption of an amnesty law. Since that time, as many ethnic Albanians acknowledge, the police brutality against their community has significantly diminished.

In Bulgaria, police violence towards the ethnic Turks was limited, while it was applied on specific occasions towards the Macedonians and regularly towards the Roma. However, in the spring of 1989 the Turks experienced excessive violence by the outgoing communist regime, when the borders to Turkey were opened and Turks were ‘encouraged’ through different pressures to leave their homes. As a result, by the summer of 1989 more than 300,000 Turks emigrated to Turkey. After the regime change, Turks were allowed again to have their Arabic names and to profess Islam, rights that were prohibited during communism. Nevertheless, Turks experienced a serious nationalist backlash in 1989 launched against the restoration of those rights and until 1992 they were still target of harassment by extremist groups (Eminov, 1998:138, IHF, 1992:8). Turks also experienced discrimination in the fields of culture, education, religion and health care (IHF, 1993:19). On some occasions, regional governors in the mid-1990s refused to apply local government decisions to rename streets with Turkish names. In other occasions, Turks returning from Turkey were not allowed to receive Bulgarian identity cards, and thus prevented from exercising a number of civil rights (IHF, 1996:59).

Discrimination on an ethno-national basis was also present in Kosovo and Macedonia. Compared to the Kosovo case which offers the whole range of curtailing of cultural, political and social rights, the discrimination was limited in Macedonia. Nevertheless, in Macedonia highly restrictive citizenship law of 1992 deprived more than 100,000 Albanians of citizenship (CEDIME-SE, forthcoming), along with other minorities. Albanians did not manage to qualify mostly because of the provision of having lived not less than 15 years in Macedonia (ICG, 2000:20). The lack of citizenship deprived them of a number of social and political rights.

### **Economic Status**

The three minorities felt economic deprivation in the regions where they live. First, although modernization had taken place during communism, the minorities remained

predominantly a rural population or inhabited small towns even after 1989. They made their living mainly on family-based agriculture, which - as compared to other sectors of the economy - does not easily accumulate welfare. Secondly, with the exception of Kosovo during communism, the minority-inhabited regions - although being the poorest ones of the respective states - did not experience any economic affirmative action before and after the Cold War. In Kosovo, special funds were given for improving the infrastructure, electricity and industry during socialism, but nevertheless the gap between the province and other parts of Yugoslavia continued to grow as that Kosovo turned out to be the most heavily affected region by the 1980s Yugoslav economic crisis (Chiodi, 1999:4).

Third, minorities had a higher birthrate than the majorities, but their employment opportunities remained either the same as before or decreased. While the unemployment among Bulgarians was 14.4 % in 1992, among Turks it reached 25.2%-40% (CEDIME-SE, 1999b). By 1999, the Turks' unemployment rate was around 30% (Zhelyazkova, 2000). Data about public sector unemployment in Macedonia show that in 1991 Albanians occupied 34.9% of the workforce as compared to 49.3% of the Macedonians (CEDIME-SE, forthcoming) and later the unemployment increased. Kosovo's official unemployment rate in 1996 was slightly less than 40%, with the number of workers being down to 145,000 from 238,000 employed in 1988 (Chiodi, 1999:18). However, other estimates point to up to an 85% unemployment rate, since thousands of workers were fired from the public sector.

The transformation to a market economy after 1989 brought additional pressures to the minorities. However, in Bulgaria and Macedonia this was mostly due to the general impoverishment of the respective states rather than because of special policies launched towards the minorities. In Bulgaria, the 1992 laws on land restitution and privatization affected the Turks, but only marginally, since before communism there were only a few Turkish landowners whose property was nationalized (CEDIME-SE, 1999b). In Macedonia, Albanians claim that ethnic Macedonians were given priority by buying off of state enterprises. However, the ethnic Macedonians have borne the real brunt of privatization, which affected mostly the blue-collar workers, predominantly Macedonians, who had to find alternative occupations thereafter (ICG, 1997:6).

The political turmoil in Kosovo affected seriously the economic situation. While economic activities in the public sector and in industry were occupied deliberately by Serbs, the Albanians dealt mainly with agriculture and any kind of legal and illegal trade. Kosovo is located at the crossroads trade routes from Serbia to Macedonia, Albania and Greece, and for that reason it was a good place for the development of illegal trade and drug trafficking (Chiodi, 1999:19). However, the underground economy was not limited only to Kosovo, but was spread also to Macedonia and Bulgaria and to other Balkan countries as well. Thus, it has to be seen as a part of a larger picture rather than simply a minority-based phenomenon.

Although economic deprivation of minorities existed, it was not one of the main causes of ethnic conflict in the 1990s. First, this was because the minority leaders - although they claimed that unemployment was very important - were preoccupied with lobbying for mostly political and cultural policies. Second, the minorities found channels to increase their welfare beyond the state. Although, unlike the Albanians of Macedonia and Kosovo, the Turks of Bulgaria during communism were not allowed to have any small businesses, they nevertheless developed this sector after 1989. Trade with small goods imported mainly from Turkey became an important source of living for all three minorities.

Third, the minority diaspora maintained many households back home. This was observed more among the Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo, and less among the Turks of Bulgaria. The Albanians have an 'older' diaspora with preserved ties to the original communities. During communism, Yugoslav citizens were allowed to work abroad, and many Albanians did so especially as of the early 1980s. Thus, it is assumed that at present each Albanian family both in Kosovo and Macedonia has at least one young family member living either in Europe, America or Australia. In the 1990s, from Kosovo alone the emigration numbered around 350,000 (ICG, March 1998). The 'investment' back home is very well observed in the Kosovo case, where a 3% 'tax' was imposed on each Albanian abroad, used to support the parallel system. To the extent possible, Albanians also invested in building houses back home and in small family businesses. Unlike them, the Turks of Bulgaria have a relatively 'young' diaspora - around 150,000 emigrants who remained in Turkey after the 1989 expulsion campaign, and the new emigrants - between 70,000 and 160,000 - who left for Turkey thereafter, mostly for economic reasons (CEDIME-SE, 1999b). The Turks usually do not invest back home, but when they do so, this is to build some cultural objects, but not enterprises (Zhelyazkova, 2000). The trend has remained that Turks emigrate rather than think of how to establish themselves better in Bulgaria.

## **Conclusions**

The three minorities raised demands in several policy areas throughout the 1990s, but only in some of them violent conflict occurred. First and foremost, the change of constitutional status after the collapse of communism was crucial for the reconfiguration of minorities' and governments' goals and their strategies used to pursue those goals. In Bulgaria, the Turks started enjoying more constitutionally-based rights. They had moderate claims and actions, and wanted to integrate into the civil society. The governments' goals were not very far from those of the minority - they wanted to integrate minorities into the 'political nation'. Nevertheless the liberals introduced minority-favoring policies, but the former communists acted more restrictively. There were no violent clashes over constitutional issues in Bulgaria. The Kosovo case appears at the other extreme. The Albanians' status was severely diminished by the abolition of their previously enjoyed autonomy. This made them strive even more strongly for Kosovo's republican status within Yugoslavia, and after the latter's disintegration, to declare Kosovo's independence. Pursuing those goals, they switched from violent, to non-violent and again to violent tactics. Their counterpart, the nationalist (post)-communist regime of Milosevic, had a totally different goal - to reincorporate Kosovo

into Serbia. It pursued policies by using day-to-day violence which escalated to the point of committing atrocities in 1998-1999. The Albanians of Macedonia also aim at changing the basic rules of the state. They find that the wording of the new constitution's preamble - defining Macedonia as belonging to the Macedonian people - diminishes their status and demand to become a 'constituent' element of the state. Albanians pursued that goal mostly through non-violent means. For their part, the governments of Macedonia - whether post-communist or with more liberal inclinations - find that demand not applicable and reacted violently to some nationalist actions, although not in steady campaigns, but in peaks.

In three other policy areas violent conflict occurred. First, when the minorities were allowed self-rule on a central and regional level - as in the Macedonian and Bulgarian cases - they tried to channel their demands primarily through the political system and not by taking arms. However, in Kosovo, the curtailing of self-government triggered the establishment of parallel structures, which made Albanians perceive Serbia as a 'foreign' oppressor state, which had to be overthrown by any means that could be successful. Second, the minority mother-tongue education in the public schools was a policy area of strong conflict in all three cases. Minority demands were pushed with great vigor and the governments responded with a strong resistance as well. This comes to prove once again that the nature of Balkan nationalism is culturally based.<sup>2</sup> However, when minority demands were relatively met, as in the Bulgarian case, conflict did not turn violent. In Macedonia, precisely because of unmet educational demands, significant violent incidents occurred. In Kosovo, the parallel education, students and teachers were some of the regime's main targets for intimidation. Third, intimidation in the sphere of fundamental human rights - such as the right to life and opinion - left many political prisoners in Kosovo and fewer in Macedonia, and the active involvement of police exacerbated conflict. Police violence towards the Turks of Bulgaria was limited, but was present in Macedonia mostly until the government change in 1998-1999 and was used on a daily basis in Kosovo. In Kosovo, the reaction to intimidation did not occur immediately, but was accumulated over time until its outburst in 1996-1997 with KLA's appearance on the political scene. In Macedonia, clashes occurred in peaks and mostly related to some specific occasions.

Although minorities still voiced some other demands, the latter were not of primary importance to the violent outcome of conflict. The participation of minorities in the bureaucracy was relatively low in Macedonia and Bulgaria and almost non-existent in Kosovo. In the economic sphere, the three minorities have been living in the most impoverished regions of their respective states before and after 1989. They were affected by privatization and in all three cases they faced a high degree of unemployment, with Kosovo being the extreme case. However, minorities found some channels to survive beyond the state. These were either small private businesses, or diaspora contributions,

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<sup>2</sup> Scholars make a general division between a French and Italian-type of nationalism, called 'civic' nationalism, by which the 'state' came first and the 'nation' came next, and an 'ethnic' nationalism, typical for Germany and Eastern Europe, where 'nation' - mobilized along a common language and culture - came first and the 'state' next.

mostly by the Albanians, or illegal trade, mostly in the Kosovo case. In this way the minorities managed to compensate for the lack of state interest in them and first focus their efforts on achieving their political goals.

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