Political culture in Macedonia after the Ohrid Framework Agreement

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Summary

The political culture, according to scholar Kavanagh is part of the overall societal culture, and represents a set of basic values, emotions, knowledge, attitudes and convictions, within which the political system operates, shaping and feeding political processes. Culture came as a sequence to efforts to factor the spiritual world of people in explicating policy. Political culture brings to surface some kind of independence of culture from economic factors, and the role of culture in political order and economic development.

This paper provides the theoretical aspects of political culture and political systems, within which its reflection is analysed on several aspects of interethnic relations in a democracy. Also, it accentuates the preferred paths of Western Balkan countries, including Macedonia, towards integration with the European Union, which is spiked with many challenges. In the political culture of multi-ethnic societies, ethnic divisions may have an influence. The ethnic principles are still present in the political arena of Macedonia, where although there is some "interethnic reconciliation", the failure in implementing the Ohrid Framework Agreement, signed in 2001, between Albanians and Macedonians, there are often political contractions, affecting national interests, which is in contradiction to all values of the European Union, mainly with human rights, but also ethnic rights.
The object of the analysis of this paper is specifically related to:
- extended transition of Macedonia,
- political consensus,
- role of political parties, and
- interethnic relations after the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

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Political culture in South-Eastern European countries has been analysed in different views, especially in the reform process, where it has an important role.

Conclusions of this paper are that Macedonia must fulfil the conditions set forth, both political and institutional, based on the political culture for EU integration, since political culture, according to scholar L. Pye represents a "set of basic values, emotions and knowledge shaping and feeding political processes".

Key words: Macedonia, Ohrid Agreement, Western Balkan, political culture, democracy, transition, integration.

Introduction

Political culture is unavoidably one of the key topics of research in modern political science, and not only. This is where the different views on its meaning come to surface. Therefore, the view of those who see political culture as a model of individual attitudes and orientations towards politics between members of a political system seem more comprehensible. This statement, finding ourselves in the views of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, represents a subjective area which gives meaning to political activity. The notion of today's civil culture and political culture rotate within a source of debate and new research initiatives.

Underlining the importance of political culture in society, where a special accent is given to socio-political aspects, Denis Kavanagh has defined it as part of the general societal culture, representing a set of basic values, emotions, knowledge, attitudes and convictions, based on which the political system of a country operates, shaping and feeding the political process[1]. This is the definition which describes what we call political culture. Another definition provides that "political culture represents a set of basic values, emotions, and knowledge shaping and feeding political processes".[2] When we talk about definitions, one must state that depending on the number of scholars tackling the issue, that many are the definitions, although in essence they are intended to underline the role and relevance of political culture within a certain political system. In these terms, an extraordinary contribution is given by Almond and Verba, who see development of the notion of political culture closely related to the concept of a political system.

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[1] Denis Kavanagh, Political Science and behavioural policy (Shkenca Politike dhe Politike Sjelljes), 1983
[2] L. Pye, Political Culture (Kultura politike), 1995

In a wider sense, political culture consists in the set of all features of personality relevant to politics. It sprang as a consequence of efforts to factor the spiritual world of people in explicating politics, thereby bringing to surface some independence of culture from economic factors, but also the relevance of culture to the political order and economic development.

Almond and Verba have argued that political culture is in fact civil culture, and they have stated that this is more suitable for democracy, rendering it more stable. In their terms, there are three basic types of political culture: parochial (provincial), vassal (subjected) and participatory political culture. They underline that the political culture of any society is in fact a mix of these three types, in which case political processes are dominated by and fed by this mix. This political culture they prefer to call a "civil culture". In this context, sustainable democratic systems were created as a result of a mixture between the subjected political culture and the participatory one, which in modern times is known as a civil culture. In terms of civil culture, people are rather familiar with the political process, and they feel they have sufficient power to be able to make changes. Simultaneously, elites are rather sensitive to impulses coming from citizens. Therefore, political culture is more a result of cognitive orientations, emotional and evaluation orientations towards the political system, the inputs and outputs aspects, as per their positions in the political system. In other words, this is the manner how people see and evaluate the political system, themselves and other subjects in a political system, and the feelings the have against entities of a political system[3]. Therefore, people are those who give value to their needs, wishes and preferences (and emotions) through their civil initiatives, which are fed into the system institutions, and express their reaction or feedback for the same. This in fact in a way consolidates the clear contours of democratization of a modern society.

Political culture as a term was first used by the German philosopher, I. Gerder, 1979, in his work "Political Culture and Soviet Policy". In political science research, his accent was on comparing political culture of various regimes and states. Only in the United Kingdom and the US was there a civil culture suitable for development of a democratic political system, although later, research by other authors has suggested that this conclusion is rather rigid, and changes in political culture in due time allow for establishment of democratic structures in those countries in which such culture had not existed before (Italy, Germany, etc.).

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[3] Gabriel Almond dhe Sidney Verba,"The Civic Culture",1963

J.J. Rousseau, according to David Held, saw the individual as completely involved in decision-making and direct policy-making (especially in enacting laws), which is related to its life and affirmation of the notion of active participation of all citizens in drafting major laws[4]. This would mostly correspond to a congregational political culture, which is in fact related to culture corresponding the political structure, in which political knowledge of the population is predominantly correct, and their impressions and assessment are harmonious. Many scholars and researchers have seen the transfer of political culture to individuals through political socialism, which affects political behaviour, which in turn influences the stability of political systems. Many studies have even suggested that the desirable *societal* values are "cut" from individuals by social mechanisms and political socialism! Also, Dimitar Bajallxhiev thinks that political culture has a direct impact on policies, political systems, in all fields and political behaviour and activity related to political decision-making. All occurrences related to politics are found in the sphere of political culture operation[5]. Political culture assigns special care to existence and recognition of political experience and tradition, by which legacy is created, meaning succession in political life. Setting from this, political culture is an embodiment of contradictions, the unity of the past and the future, contradictions which may be resolved only by creative skills of humans, which result in capabilities of a critical view on society and the personal (individual), to demand future projections in atypical conditions.

South-Eastern Europe, or better said, countries of the Western Balkan, which includes the Republic of Macedonia, are coping with numerous political reforms. This reforming path is passed faster by some, and slowly by some other countries. Such reforms are a condition for EU integration, and therefore many of these countries have faced and continue to face many challenges. Some of these countries have not met the required conditions, both political and institutional. In the majority of cases, the recent Progress Reports of the European Commission have remarked on Macedonia, which although has been granted its status of candidate country, and despite the statements of some progress, it has "not fulfilled its political criteria". Although serious steps have been taken in addressing key priorities of the Accession Partnership, there is still need for further efforts in reforming certain segments. Considerable challenges remain in key areas, in which the OSCE – ODIHR Election Monitoring Mission has reported that key international standards have not been met in elections". Here it is stated that "political dialogue needs to be strengthened and be sustainable, with a view of allowing for an efficient

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[4] Дејвид Хелд , "Модели на демократија", Академски печат, Скопје, 2008
[5] Dimitar Bajallxhiev (Politologija, Skopje, 2009

performance of political institutions, specifically the parliament". Also, corruption keeps expanding and remains a rather serious problem, although a number of steps have been taken to this direction[6]. There is no lesser emphasis on the measures to be taken to ensure that public administration is protected against undue political interventions, which otherwise means avoidance of politicization and partisanship of public and state administration. The framework of changes must necessarily involve the political culture, which in the reforming process has a very important role. Many scholars are of thought that clichés and biases, when talking about political culture, are not acceptable. This is further combined with the fact that research so far has suggested the fact that societies and regional countries with changes in the reform process have had a faster progress in their political culture.

Political culture in South-Eastern European countries must be analysed from several aspects, especially in the process of reforms and realization of national rights, where it plays a major role. This suggest a very convincing argument, for as much as democracy is embedded into a society, that much the political culture changes. In political culture of societies in multi-ethnic countries, an influence may be exerted by ethnic divisions as well. The ethnic principle is present also in the political arena of Macedonia, which often generates political contractions, thereby affecting national interests, which is in turn a contradiction to all values of the European Union, mainly human rights. Here is where political will is required to change power relations in creating national, religious and gender equality. Before all, this may be achieved with an active participation of all ethnic communities in political life, as is the case with the Republic of Macedonia, and further, the civil security, which makes the full puzzle of the EU integration process, and general democratization of the society, and development of democratic institutions. At this point, one must emphasize the fact that it is necessary to tackle with the challenge of political communication, where according to refined German views, the "communication models are what creates an identity within progress". In fact, what is emphasized by (Ernest) Genler is that the foundation of a modern social order is not the executor, but the deliverer. Not the guillotine, but *'doctorat d'etat'* (reasonable nomination), is the main tool and synonym of state strength"[7].

Stepping further, we shall see that Hangtinton believes that the majority of countries in the world shall eventually become modern countries, but not at the same level or shape. Cultural differences shall remain to influence

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[6] Europa, Press Release, Rapid, Brussels, 5 November 2008

[7] Ethnic conflict – religion, identity and politics (Konflikti etnik-religjioni, identiteti dhe politika) (edited by S.A. Janakos), "Prosvetno dello", ShA, Shkup, 2009

international relations, economic development and political changes. "The world as we know it will change. The most important challenges for us, in the coming years, is to live and to know how to deal with diversity"[8]. Therefore, democracy affirms the principle of political, national, racial, religious and gender equality, by denying the existence of a unique absolute social truth, because where there is an absolute and ultimate truth, there is no room for freedom or equality. To have a solid, functional and transparent democracy, state authority holders do not use repressive and violence means to gain and retain the power. If we approach this from a different angle, e.g. from what Hobbes calles (in)justice, where according to him "before calling something just or unjust, we must have a repressive power, to compel barbarian people to apply their conventions, by fear of punishment, larger than the benefit they expect from violating the deal". We must be aware that this conclusion pertains to the Hobbes' time, while today, any such tendency placed in the current context would be an abuse of power, because the modern objective is to have an organized plural, modern, dynamic society, where potential conflicts must be kept at a tolerant level, and any eventual dispute must be resolved through a dialogue. The people and politically active levels must support the idea of democracy and democratic institutions, but also the international influence with its positive images on democratic stability.

Democratic order implies political and social pluralism. Democratization as a process related to modern political history, consists in creating, cultivating and developing a democratic order in modern societies. The wave of democracy contains in itself a set of a transition from non-democratic regimes to a democratic regime, based on certain time periods. This does not apply though to all countries in the same manner. When we talk about Macedonia, one must admit that changes have not had the same pace throughout the years of transition. Here we can use the conclusion of A. Giddens, who talks about social development and links it to transition, thereby stating that "transition has often gone opposite ways throughout these periods".[9] Changes are important, although they do not represent transition to a new shape, but are a result of modernism: from an early period to the current "high modernism". There are no entirely new movements. All movements marking the whole modernism period are related to some of its basic elements, such as the "institutional dimension of modernism". According to Marx, ideas and culture are part of a "superstructure" which is conditioned by the economic base – the manner of production. In his quest of providing a more thorough explanation, S. M. Lipset sets the conditions for maintaining

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[8] Samuel P. Hangtinton, Politicka misla, Shkup, 2003)
[9] Anthony Giddens, Konzekvencije modernosti, 1990

democracy, through market economy, economic development rates (GDP per capita) and democratic political culture (democratic values). In this process, T. Carothers, suggests that many countries, pursuing the early paradigm of transition, have fallen into so-called political "grey areas", which means that these countries suffer from a large democratic deficit, which consists of poor representation of citizens' interests, lesser participation beyond elections, violations of laws by senior officers, poor public trust on state institutions and poor institutional consistency of the state[10]. Changes made as a result of transition initiated, go in parallel with other negative tendencies of development, such as inadequate distribution of development, and increased social differences between citizens in Macedonia, which have created a higher level of economic and social insecurity in the country. In social and economic terms, Macedonia did not have any increase of gross domestic product after its independence, which shows that the system, based on socially owned property, was not able to secure positive economic effects.[11] Therefore, since the beginning of transition, Macedonia had to cope with external political and economic pressure. Inefficient privatization and economic reconstruction, mass dismissals from work, serious reduction of livelihood standards, and rapid growth of poverty, are some of the main causes to be emphasized by Mitrevska. Meanwhile, according to Vankovska, from an "oasis of peace", the country was transformed into a *"Place d'armme",* interethnic relations suffered a lot, fragile identities of main ethnic groups surfaced.

It is already necessary to support the extended and delayed political and economic transition[12], including the completion of approximation of domestic legislation with the EU legislation, always waiting for a suitable moment, eventually aspiring EU membership. The European Union has strengthened its economic and other kinds of support for the Western Balkan countries in their efforts to cope with the challenges.

EU involvement and assistance needs to be combined with a truthful effort of governments in undertaking necessary reforms in creating necessary administrative capacities and to cooperate amongst them… In this context, high priority is to be assigned to the combat against organized crime and corruption; progress in this field is essential in securing rule of law, to strengthen trust in state institutions, to generate private investments and taking the country closer to EU membership. A careful study of political culture and its effects on political development may facilitate the democratization process, especially when transition occurs in an authoritarian post-communist and ethnically

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[10] Dr. Veselin Vukotić, Dr. Steve Pejovich, Tranzicija i institucije: što dalje?, 1999
[11] Marina Mitrevska Conflict prevention and management ("Parandalimi dhe menaxhimi i konflikteve"), Soros, Skup, 2009
[12] Jonuz Abdullai Social changes and transitin ("Ndryshimet sociale dhe tranzicioni"), Tetovo, 2008

divided society. Today's political culture shows a deficiency of participatory elements – a phenomenon brought about by the third wave of transition to the region. The appearance of democratic values and human rights in post-communist societies, as an objective to be achieved by the leading elites, may legitimate a new direction and educate the population on such values.

All non-democratic regimes, whether it is Medieval tyranny or the modern totalitarian oligarchy, are characterized by an opposition of the idea of political equality. In such constellations, there was an assumption of a single societal absolute truth, which was "uncovered" only for people in power! Therefore, Heywood called the former president of the former USSR, Gorbatchev to be rather brave, because while talking about a "common European home", he had proclaimed the fact that the human rights doctrine bridged ideological rivalries between communism and capitalism. This gives us the right to conclude that human rights, but also national rights, must be protected well. But, in Macedonia, this can be done only when institutions enhance the culture of respect for human rights and national rights, a culture which is a wider political democratic culture, embedded in the minds of people, that others have equal rights, and understanding them in time, when they are threatened or violated, by protecting them with legal means.

No further than August this year, the Ohrid Agreement will have its 9th anniversary, an agreement which put an end to the conflict between Albanian fighters and Macedonian security forces. The Agreement aimed to protect the territorial integrity of Macedonia, and to fulfil requirements of Albanians for constitutional and legal changes in the sense of equality of Albanians with Macedonians.

Analysts had initially evaluated this agreement to be a success not only for Macedonia, but also as an example of diplomacy, which had brought stability to this part of the region.

In fact, what was expected from the Ohrid Agreement, being viewed as a document not only resolving the problems of the moment, but a framework for resolving major challenges faced by Macedonia, in fact did not come. Its effects, eight years after, have shown that this Agreement was a very important document for ending the 2001 conflict, because the situation might have gone someplace else, but it did not halt interethnic disagreements! The political culture and engagement we have recorded, throughout these years, in implementing the Ohrid Agreement, and especially in approving laws, have targeted some of the concrete problems which needed to be solved in protecting the country's unity, and to progress in Euro-Atlantic integration.

At that time, the political analyst, Bruce Jackson, had considered the Ohrid Agreement as an example of successful diplomacy which would be beneficial to the whole region, looking at it as an agreement of accomplishment

– a document which provided the foundations for integration of this southern Balkan edge with the European institution. In a way, "by radiating stability around Macedonia". At that time, it was considered that the conflict in Macedonia had found an unprepared West, which considered Macedonia to be a "successful example of a multiethnic society in the region". Nevertheless, looking at political elites of Macedonia, and their hesitation in participating in political activities because of the feeling of powerlessness of taking historical political decisions for the country, forced the international community to seriously engage in filling the political gap and preventing a wide-scale civil war. They showed their persistence for a participatory, responsible and accountable culture for the citizens. This culture implied their engagement for basic values of a democratic society as common good, in respecting human rights, national equality, rule of law, accountability, tolerance in diversity, interethnic dialogue, etc. In such circumstances, the prime minister of that time, Lubco Georgievski, head of the Macedonian opposition Social Democratic Union, Branko Crvenkovski, the leader of the Albanian Democratic Party, Arben Xhaferi and the president of the Party for Democratic Prosperity, Ymer Ymeri, signed in Ohrid an agreement on a package of amendments to the Constitution and laws in a way of fulfilling requirements of Albanians, as parameters for a fair representation of Albanians (read: ethnic communities in administration), language rights, and a framework for consolidation (decentralization) of local government. Nevertheless, the division lines remain frequent and changeable. Macedonia is still a country of a large divide between Macedonian and Albanian ethnic communities. Being divided along language and religion lines and a strong feeling of national and cultural identity, communication between the two communities was limited in the most recent decades. Florian Bieber stated that tensions between Albanians and Macedonians have become a determining feature of the state since its creation.

The period between 1991 and 2001, had not resulted in any substantial inclusion of the Albanians in public administration, and the state acted mainly as a national state of the majority community. Although Albanians have been involved in governments, the governmental system cannot be considered as power sharing, but only as an effort to include the Albanian elites (....) in this sense, Macedonia in the nineties was no exclusion from the rule of a national state. Placement of national Macedonian symbols in the country was the key response to multiple challenges, created by neighbouring countries for the Macedonian state and its distinctiveness.

The main point of dispute was focused on the international relations of the country, focussing on the matter of the name (with Greece), distinctiveness of the Macedonian people and language (with Bulgaria) and the Macedonian Orthodox Church (with Serbia).[13]

In terms of use of symbols, Albanians and most of the other minorities had not opposed the selection of state symbols. The new Macedonian Constitution not only has set forth by the Preamble the domination of the Macedonian people (where the state is described as a state of the Macedonian people), but also in defining Macedonian as a state language, and in differing the Macedonian Orthodox Church.

One must admit a decisive fact, that the Agreement was achieved under the strong pressure of the international community, the US, the EU, etc. The EU representative, Alain Le Rois, had the following statement on the Ohrid Agreement: "For the international community, August 13th is still an important date, because it shows how leaders of Macedonian parties were able to find a compromise, which was, I must say, rather effective last year". He further adds: "If we compare the conflict in Macedonia to all conflicts occurring in Balkan, you can see how mature were the Macedonian parties, being able to find this compromise". Nevertheless, after nine years, neither the Macedonian nor Albanian politicians are happy with the compromise. Washington has appealed on authorities in Macedonia to build upon these achievements, ensuring them that the United States and the European Union shall continue to support peace, dialogue, political culture and economic recovery in Macedonia.

The former head of EU Foreign Policy, Javier Solana, who had a key role in mediating the agreement, was convinced that the Peace Agreement had brought peace and greater stability to the Balkan Region. Although the agreement is considered to be relatively successful, fields still requiring further efforts include ethnic reconciliation, a culture of political participation which implies activity and engagement in implementing approved laws, etc.

Also, during the last years in Macedonia, there have been debates on the spirit of the Framework Agreement, which is first and foremost related to the application of the so-called the "Badinter Rule" in formation of coalition governments (with the involvement of the largest ethnic Albanian party), to expand further in discussing other matters. The Ohrid Agreement was not an agreement halting war efforts, but an agreement with which the Constitution of Macedonia changes grounds. From a political model oriented towards the classical idea of Westminster democracy, the amended Constitution

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[13] Florian Bieber, Ndarja e pushtetit dhe zbatimi i Marrëveshjes Kornizë të Ohrit", botues: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Shkup, 2008.

transformed the structural regulation into a consensual democracy, with special rules by which minor ethnic communities are protected from majority domination in political fields. This publication aims to discuss whether this Macedonian model of an agreement on division of power is an example of strong or weak institutionalization of consensual democracy.[14]

"Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement has not been satisfactory in several fields", stated Daniel Serwer, of the American Peace Institute. Serwer claims clearly the fact that the "Agreement aimed to give voice to the Albanian community, without denying the Macedonian community's rights in doing that". International political analysts like Serwer have opposed these "concerns" of Macedonian critics, stating that political and social stability created by the Ohrid Agreement shall have a positive impact on strengthening the civil society. He has remained convinced that this agreement has not enlarged the ethnic divisions, since for some time Macedonians and Albanians have been living in parallel and divided realities. Therefore, "this reality must change and I believe it is changing gradually. Civil society is not built in a day, this can only happen when democracy reaches a certain level of maturity".[15]

To this date, there is a strong conviction that the success of the objectives of the Ohrid Agreement in preserving the integrity of Macedonia and in creating a functional state of a multi-ethnic society is in hands of the Macedonian leadership. But, many calls and appeals made to Macedonian political forces, to quit concentrating on their own ethnic policies, and focus on integrating principles of the Agreement, desired effects have not been produced, or better said, we are far from such a reality. Now, we are aware that we are in the stage of implementation of the legal framework, and not in the approval stage anymore, and the Macedonian leadership has not shown and is not showing any interest to focus on integrating aspects of the Ohrid Agreement, to consolidate the national rights (ethnic communities).

The international factor has encouraged all governments to fully implement the Ohrid Agreement, and has reiterated its commitment to further support Macedonia in its Euro-Atlantic integration. But, Macedonia continues to lag behind… the formerEU Foreign Policy and Security representative, Javier Solana, several days before ending his term in office, he had once more reiterated the view of Brussels, that "without resolving the matter of the name with Greece, and without the full implementation of the Ohrid Agreement, Macedonian steps towards EU membership cannot be made".[16] Also, in terms of political participation culture, it is worth mentioning also a message of the

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[14] Division of Power and implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (Ndarja e pushtetit dhe zbatimi i Marrëveshjes Kornizë të Ohrit"), published: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Shkup, 2008
[15] Daniel Serwer, American Peace Institute, August 2006
[16] Javier Solana: Emri dhe Marrëveshja e Ohrit pastaj në BE, Bruksel, 14 maj 2009

official Brussels, stating that Macedonia should learn from the good practices of the European Union in terms of use of languages, and improvement of use of Albanian in education and Government". This has largely been a message coming once too often from the European Parliament (EP).

Last year, in the EP website, there was a report which included parts of the report of the Euro-Deputy and Reporter on Macedonia, Erik Meyer, who demanded the initiation of negotiations for Macedonian Membership in the EU "in the shortest future, as soon as necessary conditions are met". Amongst these conditions, the report states that "Macedonia must admit the equal value of languages of its citizens". The EP recommends that Macedonia assigns special care to education and public administration, so that all communities can live in equality and harmony, and appeals on both larger linguistic groups (Macedonians and Albanians, our remark), "to try and live in equality and peace". The Ohrid Agreement was thought to be the beginning of a new future for Macedonia, and an agreement to regulate relations between Macedonians and Albanians, and to establish foundations on which a new Macedonia would be built, but to this date, it remains pawn to disagreements and violation of timelines. Now, Macedonia must understand that it must be a state of justice for all its citizens, and must not have existential problems in terms of interethnic matters. The Ohrid Agreement has not been fully implemented, because it is felt by the Macedonians to be a failure.

Ultimately, "neither yesterday, nor today, neither Macedonian nor Albanian politicians seem to be that happy with the compromise they achieved!"[17] Today, there is no common stand on the Ohrid Agreement. The Macedonian side sees it as an imposed agreement, which is not for the benefit of Macedonia, while the Albanian side sees the Ohrid Agreement as a political objective, and a document which may balance the political arena in Macedonia and the equality of citizens, despite their ethnic differences. Different views on political culture after the Ohrid Agreement, and the events in 2001, continue to keep Macedonia under 'political tension', while the agreement is still fully supported by international representatives, by which it was also achieved.

In the meantime, the Macedonian authorities do not take any action in explaining to citizens that this Agreement is beneficial for all. This one action can be taken immediately, to educate people on the grounds of democracy, and for the coming generations to have an opportunity to do something with it. This has made the Albanian political elites to come up with voices "which have often stated that the Ohrid Agreement is being replaced with various agreements between Macedonian and Albanian partners of the government coalition. The Ohrid Agreement was thought to be the beginning of a new

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[17] Demush Bajrami, kolumna "Korniza" pa fotografi!, Koha, Shkup, 23.06.2011

future for Macedonia, but everything remained pawn to disagreements and violation of timelines. Macedonia must understand that it must be a state of justice for all its citizens, and must not have existential problems in terms of interethnic matters. After ten years, there is no common stand on the Ohrid Agreement". The EU, the US and Albanians have underlined the need for reforms and implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. I know that it will be no news, and I will repeat myself, that no economic program can bring about progress without political stability. First, open political matters should be resolved. Further, of course there will be economic progress. Ultimately, if Macedonia does not observe its agreements, it will lose its chance for membership with NATO and the European Union… this is also reflected by the poor willingness of the political elites to listen to others, or no will to argue with the force of argument"![18]

The Progress Report for Macedonia in 2011 continues its critical tones on the lack of reforms in justice, public administration, fight against corruption and the situation of media. The missing solution on the matter of the name with Greece remains at the centrepiece of EU membership processes. But, the freedom of expression and media divided along ethnic and political lines have also been mentioned. Some of the EU Progress Report recommendations for Macedonia are:

- Government should be stable, to resolve problems with democratic cooperation,
- Do more in implementing reforms as required by the European Union
- Demand dialogue on problematic issues in interethnic relations
- Decentralization must be assigned more attention
- Further efforts must be made to ensure professionalism and transparent independence in public administration,
- Reform of the judiciary system
- Combat corruption which is spread into many areas,
- Slow progress in improving treatment and degrading conditions in prisons
- Undue political intrusions with the media,
- Limited involvement of civil society in political developments,[19] etc.

Despite efforts to preserve a somewhat non-discriminatory balance to manage diversity, there are still deficiencies in civil competency and social capital. There is a low level of effective civil participation and political trust, which enables the continuation of implementing diversity policies.

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[18] Ibid
[19] http://www.albeu.com/maqedoni/raporti-i-ke-priten-kritika-per-maqedonine/

Robert D. Putnam, born in 1940, an American political scientist and commentator, has addressed and studied political culture, by emphasizing the special importance of "social capital": the level of trust and cooperation in society. The political culture had been placed at the heart of the strategy for development of the democratic system, and consists of the main statement for the future. It is obvious that the quality of the system of values is the grounds for development of civil society, equality, freedom, interethnic tolerance. This requires focus on the full national equality between the two largest ethnic communities in Macedonia, Macedonians and Albanians. This does not mean one can allow the rule of unbound political oligarchies, or governance at any cost with the help of mythological creations, erosion of values, etc. Andrea Liphard, in the Dutch example, developed a further type of political culture, which considers the relations between the elites and the masses, and not only the type of pluralism and mechanisms of conflict settlement between groups and embedded blocks. This model of Liphard, enables a "stable democracy and strong fragmentation of the society'.[20]

Meanwhile, to provide a more comprehensive and full overview of our approach to the paper, one must provide an explanation of politics as a notion. Hence, politics, according to Andrew Heywood, is an art of governance, a public matter, a compromise and consensus, but also politics as power and distribution of resources[21]. In explicating the political background, Robert A Dahl, thinks that participation in a modern political system is characterized by "rivalry or competition between the government and opposition, which is an important aspect of democratization and public opposition".[22] The political parties, as a voluntary political union of citizens around a permanent organization, to create and shape state policies by building onto political will of the citizens, selecting candidates for public functions, and drafting political programs, and other activities, are necessary for democratic systems. The role of political parties in a democracy, or in the governance system, would find an embedded and a more concise explanation in the definition of Max Weber, who says in his definition of political parties that they are "children of democracy and general vote".[23] Elections are often considered to be the heart of a political process. Elections are nothing less of democracy in practice, and are a means by which the citizens can control government, says Heywood. In countries with a strong presidential system, it is specifically important to limit the timeline of rule of senior state officials. In this limitation, there is term governance, where

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[20] Liphard A. Comparative Political Science, Typologyes of Democratic Systems, 1968
[21] Andrew Heywood, Politics (Politika), Tirana, 2008
[22] Robert A Dahl, Polyachry – participation and opposition ("Poliakria - pjesëmarrja dhe opozita"), Pegi, Tirana, 2005
[23] Daniel-Louis Seiler, Political parties (Partitë politike), Tiranë 2000

the same (elected) person cannot be president of the country for more than two times. At this point, Montesquieu states that in democracy, the people realize its sovereignty through its vote, which are an expression of its will. This thesis is further supported by M. Prélot, 1963, according to whom the people in the modern sense is consolidated at elections. Political legitimacy and stability in modern political debate is less taken as a moral obligation, and more as a political behaviour and trust.

Now, there is a question whether modern societies are characterised by free competition between values and ideas, or characterized by a "dominating culture". Beliefs, symbols and values of the people structure their attitudes against the political process, meaning the manner they see the regime they live in – when the people consider their regime as fair or legitimate. Political culture is understood as an orientation of people towards political objects, such as parties, governments, constitution, expressions in beliefs, symbols and values[24]. Here comes handy a statement by Jean Jacques Rousseau: "the strong are never sufficiently strong, unless when turning the right into power and conviction into an assignment".[25] Perception may be better and more important than reality, and therefore the model of the political culture of a dominating ideology may also expand the level of homogeneity of values and beliefs of modern societies. Political scholars have agreed so far on the vital role of the values and beliefs in promoting stability and survival of a regime. Andrew Heywood says that it is not about why the people have to obey the state, but because they do it, they obey a certain state or governing system.

How would a state be organized to be fair, good and harmonious? Aristotle thought that it was bad and specifically problematic to have a democracy form in which the masses would rule, and not the law. He blames the demagogues for this. They, according to him, "are to be blamed that the decisions of the people have larger power than the law, because they transfer all the rights to the people. In this manner, they become even more powerful, because the supreme power is with the people, and they have a strong influence on the thoughts of the people, because the people listen to them". Rule of law instead of human rule, he stated.[26]

Also, a specific role in creation of political culture is left to the language, as a means of human communication and as a factor related to the political life of a society. Different countries, different people, and even different social groups are first identified by the language and phrases they use. Socio-linguistics is today the most important means in processing incorporated

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[24] Andrew Heywood, Politics (Politika), Tirana, 2008
[25] Jean Jacques Rousseau, Social Contract (Kontrata sociale), 1962
[26] Michael Rowsend and Jonathan Wolf Political Thought (Mendimi politik), Universiteti Ufo, Tirana, 2007

messages, especially when it is about regional, continental or wider interventions to the favour of creating relations between information and communication. The language, as a primary technique of communication, says Sapir, was almost unavoidable until the appearance of the capitalist society, which would initiate a secondary explosion of communication means. Humanity has never been closer to each other, due to the creation of possibilities for trans-continental transfer of information. Here, Heywood, provides his argument that the media, by a combination of societal and technological changes, have become political actors, increasingly stronger and embedded into the political process. Development of journalism and parliamentary life has open the door to democracy, thereby creating a time for a massive creation of an information consumption area, thereby marking a boom in secondary communication. The Earth, as stated by Makluan, in fact has transformed into a "global village". In this global world, there is an area of "current" billions of pieces of information. There is a need though for rules in terms of objectivity. Macedonia is still a country of politically dependent media. This is found by the American organization "Freedom House" (FH). Simply stated, as much as the government influences public broadcasters, or influences the appointment of directors, larger is the need for rules, objectivity and equality. Similar situations are more or less seen in other countries of SEE, where opposition parties call systematically for imposing strict rules on objective representation. These rules would not be necessary if the parties in rule would not exert that much control on the public broadcasters. The case of Macedonia continues to stall, and no improvement is made in terms of impartiality and media balance and professionalism, closely related to the independence of journalists and managers.

Ultimately, everything that was stated could be summarized in short, and here we find the views of Isak Adize, who thinks that it is difficult for a democratic system to implement decisions on public policies, decisions which require changes[27]. He goes further in elaborating his thesis by concluding that the political system, which does not allow a rapid realization of decisions, by disallowing discussion, debate or questioning, may be defined as a totalitarian country. This shows the fact that essential changes in political priorities must have the required care for war and violence victims, the care for children and the elderly, sustainable development, development of a political consensus, decentralization and power division, including participatory democracy, democracy of social justice, generation of new jobs, and national and gender equality. Only something similar to this would contribute the development of a

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[27] . Isak Adizes "Zotërimi i ndryshimeve", Shkup, 1996

strong political background built upon requirements for full equality. The fall of the Berlin wall and many political changes and events taking place in the last two decades may be a lesson for the Western Balkan, especially in terms of policy-making and respect for democracy, which definitely must imply the enhancement of political culture according to the Western models.

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