

**DISAGGREGATING PUBLIC OPINION ON  
THE ETHNIC CONFLICT IN MACEDONIA**

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# **DISAGGREGATING PUBLIC OPINION ON THE ETHNIC CONFLICT IN MACEDONIA**

## ***Abstract***

This paper presents a multi-level analysis of the variation in Macedonian public opinion on four key issues: 1) Perceptions of the causes of the conflict during 2001; 2) Beliefs about the possibility or desirability of integration and interaction between ethnic groups; 3) Attitudes toward ethnic reconciliation and cooperation; and, 4) Support for the rapid implementation of the Ohrid agreement, which was a vital part of the end of hostilities. This analysis disaggregates the differences among Macedonians on these issues on the basis of a three-level model where the municipalities constitute the highest level, the intermediate level, neighbourhoods, is represented by the sampling clusters, and the lowest level is represented by the individual respondents. We assess the relative importance of geographical unit versus individual differences for these beliefs and attitudes, and seek to explain these with geographical contextual variables and individual attributes. These analyses are based on data on approximately 2500 adult respondents in national Macedonian surveys conducted during November-December 2003. We find a huge degree of ethnic Macedonian – ethnic Albanian polarization, which makes other individual-level determinants insignificant or trivial in effect. However, we do find considerable significant variation across municipalities and clusters, after taking into account respondent's ethnicity. The significance of such contextual variables such as violent events in the area and the percentage Albanian differ depending on the issue and the geographical units involved.

## **Introduction**

Since the end of WWII, there have been no more violent conflicts and occasions of civil-war suffering in Europe than those accompanying the break-up of the former Yugoslav state during the 1990s. The extent, evolution, and explanations for the fighting differed greatly across republics and regions. Conflict was greatest in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, but substantial in Croatia and Serbia as well. Slovenia escaped with only a very brief period of military conflict, and Montenegro escaped with the exception of participation in the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The last republic to face civil conflict was Macedonia, which only experienced limited fighting and civil strife in 2001. Obviously each of these conflicts was inter-related, involving some of the

same political actors, cooperation across some borders, and spill-over effects of conflicts across borders. At the same time, the uniqueness of the situations in each of the republics merits analyses of their individual internal situations and developments.

In this paper, we concentrate on analyses of public opinion in Macedonia, after the settlement of the fighting, but before the agreements that ended that fighting were fully implemented. We think that the Macedonian case is an important one from a scientific and historical point of view. This is because the conflict in Macedonia was truly serious, and had the clear possibility to escalate into a much more violent, widespread, and protracted civil war, with many of the features of the darkest days in Bosnia and Hercegovina and Kosovo. And, yet, Macedonia did not fall fully into the abyss of civil war and ethnic cleansing. There are many explanations for this, and the roles of political leadership, international involvement of the EU and the US, and the public opinions of the Macedonian population have all been important. But, this paper concentrates on public opinion and its divisions related to the conflict and ethnic reconciliation in Macedonia.

We concentrate on four key elements of public opinion of obvious relevance to the process of conflict avoidance and reconciliation: First, the *perceptions* of the reasons for why the conflict occurred. Was the conflict the result of the self-interests of criminal gangs, foreign countries, and outsiders? Or, was it a struggle for long-denied minority rights, pressed by Macedonian citizens? Second, the *beliefs* of the respondents whether cooperation, trust, and integration between ethnic groups are possible. Third, the respondents' *attitudes* toward a desire for improving contact and cooperation across ethnic divisions. And, finally, the respondents' position on implementing the only viable

compact for resolving the conflict, the Ohrid agreement. These are our objects of analysis.

At the same time, the priority behind our means of analysis, is to better understand the relative importance of sub-state geographical units in explaining the variation of opinion on these issues. We have endeavoured to disaggregate the variation in opinion in these issues, and to compare the importance of both geographical contexts and personal characteristics on such opinions. Such studies are very rare to in the western Balkans, especially during the post-former-Yugoslav, post-former conflict context.

More generally, this paper will contribute to the emerging research on disaggregating the study of civil war. We believe that our study is quite unique in that we analyze how public opinion on issues related to civil war and political violence varies across territorial units as well as on ethnicity and other individual characteristics. Among geographical factors that previous research has listed as interesting are internal distances and communication structure, the geographic concentration of ethnic groups, “rough” terrain, and primary commodities (Raleigh and Hegre, 2005: 3; see also Buhaug and Gates, 2002). The main emphasis of this research is to explain the onset of violence and war. Local factors – terrain, distance to the capital, communications with supporting groups in neighbour states, etc – have led scholars to see civil war as driven by insurgency and guerrilla warfare or other small scale forms of violence ([Fearon and Laitin, 2003](#)).

Empirical research has tested some of the disaggregated explanations and have found some support for insurgency theory ([Fearon and Laitin, 2003](#); Buhaug and Rød, 2005).

The Macedonia conflict follows a clear insurgency pattern with small groups of Albanian UCK guerrillas attacking police stations and other government institutions in a relatively

small part of the territory of the Macedonian state. It is likely that violence led to an increase in the polarization of public opinion about conflict between Macedonians and Albanians. It is an interesting to see if polarization is equal in all parts of Macedonia or is limited to the areas mostly affected by violence, which insurgency theory would lead us to believe. For this and other questions we develop specific hypotheses after a historical review of the conflict.

### **Review of the Evolution of Ethnic Conflict in Macedonia**

From 1945 through 1990 Macedonia existed as a republic within the federal state of Yugoslavia. This period came to an end in 1991 when a referendum on independence was held in Macedonia, and a majority of 74% voted in favour of forming an independent state. Macedonia declared its full independence from Yugoslavia in January 1992. The Yugoslav government cooperated by withdrawing all federal troops from Macedonia and the transition to independence was peaceful. Nevertheless, the proximity of Macedonia to the areas of conflict in neighboring Serbia and Kosovo, made security concerns an important issue, and in 1993, approximately 1000 UN troops were deployed in Macedonia to monitor the border with Yugoslavia, specifically, the border with Kosovo.<sup>1</sup> Due to conflict with Greece over the use of the name “Macedonia,” the independent country was named the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Diplomatic recognition came gradually, despite protest from Greece, and in 1994 the

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<sup>1</sup> The main source for the description of the conflicts in 2001-2002 is on-line version of the Britannia Yearbooks, "Macedonia." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2005. Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2 Feb. 2005 <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?tocId=9389749>>.

USA established diplomatic relations with the FYROM. Only during late 2004 was the name of Republic of Macedonia officially granted recognition by the United States, Russia, and China. It has yet to be recognized by the EU or UN.

Currently Macedonia has a population of just over 2 million inhabitants. The two major ethnic groups are Macedonians, 66%, and Albanians, 23%, of the total population. There are smaller minorities of Turks (4%), Gypsies (3%), Serbs (2%), and others. The great majority of ethnic Macedonians are Orthodox Christians, but there is also a minority of ethnic Macedonian Muslims. In contrast to Albania and Montenegro, nearly all Albanians in Macedonia are of the Muslim faith.

The Kosovo conflict had a deep impact on Macedonia. During the spring of 1999 political life was mostly determined by the Kosovo crisis. In late March, at the start of NATO's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, around 20 000 ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo had fled to Macedonia. This number increased to about 335 000 when the Kosovar Albanians started to be systematically driven from their homes. About a quarter of the refugees were transferred to other countries, but at the end of the conflict almost 260 000 refugees remained. As a result of the conflict, Macedonia's economy was hurt both by the influx of refugees and the breakdown of trade with Yugoslavia.

Unemployment rates were high (more than 35%) and industrial production fell as imports of raw materials from Yugoslavia came to an end.

In 2001, Macedonia's fragile interethnic balance collapsed and fighting between the Macedonian armed forces and the Albanian National Liberation Army (UCK) erupted and soon the country was on verge of civil war. The fighting began with a bomb attack

on a police station in the village of Tearce in late January and was followed by armed clashes between the security forces and UCK fighters. Next fighting erupted around Tetovo, the second largest town in Macedonia, with a predominantly Albanian population. During the spring and summer of 2001, government forces and the UCK were fighting around Tetovo, Skopje and Kumanovo. More than 100 persons were killed and a large number of people were displaced. Many Albanians also fled to Kosovo as a result of the fighting and anti-Albanian riots by ethnic Macedonians in a number of cities.

Cease-fires were short-lived and the government did not initially agree to negotiations with the UCK about the future status of Macedonia. The international community initially condemned the actions of the UCK, but later attempted to mediate. A first step towards reconciliation was the forming of a national unity government on May 13, 2001. All major parties from both ethnic groups were included. Negotiations continued, but with little progress, and in the summer of 2001, the fighting and killing of soldiers and civilians recommenced. Ethnic Macedonians stormed the parliament building on June 25 and one-month later rioters attacked Western embassies in Skopje, because of their alleged pro-Albanian bias. Finally, the EU and the US mediators assembled the leaders of the main political parties in Ohrid for peace talks. This resulted in the “framework agreement”, better known as the Ohrid Agreement, signed on August 13, 2001.

The Ohrid agreement provided constitutional amendments raising the status of the ethnic Albanian communities including increased local self-government, and increased participation of ethnic Albanians in the civil services including the police. The agreement also specified the disarmament of the UCK, and a subsequent amnesty. The parliament started implementing the agreement by approving 15 constitutional amendments. In

August NATO decided to deploy forces to collect UCK weapons. A month later NATO began the “Amber Fox” mission deploying 1000 soldiers to help and protect the Western observers in Macedonia collecting weapons. The collection of weapons was largely successful, although the evaluations of this differ. But, the political tensions continued and further constitutional amendments were repeatedly delayed by both ethnic groups. As a result of these delays, the EU twice postponed a planned donor conference to plan economic assistance, conditional upon progress on implementing the framework agreement.

In 2002 the situation gradually improved, and the parliament passed legislation to implement the most important parts of the Ohrid agreement. This included a new law in January on local self-government that delegated power from the central government to the municipalities. An amnesty law followed in March and in June Albanian was recognised as the second official language in Macedonia.

In the first half of 2002 ethnically mixed police units accompanied by international observers returned to villages taken over by the UCK in 2001. The night-time curfews came to an end on June 11. Although violent episodes continued to occur, both ethnic Albanian politicians and NATO rejected the allegations from government officials that the UCK was to blame.

In June the parliament adopted a new election law based on proportional representation. In the September 15th parliamentary elections, the coalition “Macedonia Together,” which comprised the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and several parties representing smaller minorities, won 120

seats. Another coalition of primarily ethnic Macedonian parties won 33 seats, and three Albanian parties, that failed to form a coalition before the election, won 26 seats. A new government led by SDSM Chairman Branko Crvenovski with support from the parties in the Macedonia Together coalition, was approved by Parliament on November 2002,

Tensions over the implementation of the framework agreement have continued, but gradually hurdles have been surmounted, increasing confidence in the solution. In fall of 2004, a referendum to reject the reform of municipality boundaries failed; and, thus municipalities were aggregated in a number of instances, and political control and participation rests increasingly on the municipal level.

These positive developments should not lead outside observers to underestimate the depth of division, conflict, and distrust among ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians during 2002 through the present. The survey data we analyze in this paper were based on interviews conducted in November and December of 2003. Thus, the interviews took place only about 15 months after the end of the serious fighting, after the Framework Agreement was reached, but before it had been fully implemented. Clearly, it would not have possible to field the SEESSP surveys nationally only fourteen months earlier. We really cannot know, but while security would have allowed interviewing nearly everywhere in the country during Summer 2002 – October 2003, tensions were so great that response rates might have been very low in some areas, and the answers very guarded.

## Hypotheses

*Individual-level hypotheses:* Our main individual level variable is the distinction between Albanian and Macedonian ethnicity. The larger the attitude-gap between the two major ethnic groups, the higher the level of polarization. We expect especially high polarization for attributing the causes of the conflict to Albanian insurgents and to the Ohrid agreement. Level of education and being female, should be negatively associated with the tendency to see insurgents as the causes of the violence as well as with ethnic exclusionism, and positively associated with a desire for reconciliation and support for the Ohrid agreement. Conversely, age and religiosity should be positively associated seeing insurgents the causes of the violence in negative terms, being more ethnically exclusionist, being less in favour of reconciliation and more opposed to implementing the Ohrid agreement.

*Contextual-level hypotheses:* Contextual variables may have two kinds of effects in a multi-level model. They may have a main effect independently of the individual level variables in the model. i.e. a uniform effect raising or lowering the intercept in the contextual level regression equations. Contextual variables may also strengthen or weaken an individual level effect. This implies a cross-level interaction.

We have entertained three sets of general hypotheses for the main effects of characteristics of the municipalities and two hypotheses on cross-level effects.

1) *General effects of violence on both Macedonians and Albanians:* Proximity to the localities of conflict could strengthen anti-insurgent perceptions of the causes for the conflict. The most obvious hypothesis is, is however, that local conflict could be

expected to discourage persons of both ethnicities from believing that ethnic integration is possible or desirable and discourage them from desiring ethnic reconciliation. Violence might have decreased trust and support in the Ohrid agreement.

2) *Effects of the ethnic composition of the municipality:* The Ohrid agreement increases local autonomy and bases representation on ethnic composition. So, the most obvious hypothesis here is that the greater the percentage Albanian, the greater the support of the Ohrid agreement by local Albanians, and to an even greater degree, the greater the opposition of ethnic Macedonians. We expect areas which are more ethnically homogeneous, either way, to be less supportive of ethnic integration and reconciliation. Finally, areas with greater percentages of Albanian would be less inclined to support the view that the conflict is mainly caused by insurgents.

3) *Effects of indicators of the level of development, cosmopolitanization, and modernization of the area:* We expect that municipalities with larger cities, higher levels of average education, and a larger composition of managers and professionals, will have greater tendency to support ethnic reconciliation and accept ethnic integration, will be more likely to support the Ohrid agreement, and will be less likely to see the reasons for the conflict in very negative terms.

4) *Effects of violence on Macedonian – Albanian attitude gap:* We expect local violence to have a polarizing effect, increasing ethnic group differences in perceptions and attitudes. Albanians are expected to be far less inclined to blame the insurgents for the violence than the Macedonians, and these ethnic group differences are expected to be

larger in the areas in proximity to violence. Since the Ohrid agreement was widely seen as an Albanian victory, we expected ethnic differences in attitudes toward the agreement to be greatest in areas of conflict. Another possibility is that in those areas which were occupied by the insurgents and bombarded by government forces, the Albanian inhabitants had a closer view and very different attachment to the insurgents than did the Macedonians in the same municipality. Furthermore, being subjected to that village bombardment local Albanians could have greater suspicion of ethnic integration, less desire for reconciliation, and less trust in the Ohrid agreement, perhaps favouring instead, partition of the country and possible reunification with Albania and Kosovo.

*5) Effects of ethnic composition on the Macedonian – Albanian attitude gap:* The reasoning is quite parallel to the effects of proximity to violence. We expect the attitude gap, or polarization to be positively related to the percentage of Albanians in the municipalities. Ethnic heterogeneity will dampen the polarization, ethnic homogeneity will maximise polarization.

## **Data and Variables**

The data used in these analyses are from the three Macedonian surveys conducted by the South-East European Social Survey Project (SEESSP), during November – December 2003. These surveys involved two independent samples of 1,018 and 1,019 respondents each, selected from the population of all adults living in Macedonia, and a supplemental sample of an additional 556 ethnic Albanians. The first two general samples were based on stratified multi-stage cluster sampling designs. The supplementary sample of ethnic Albanians involved a similar design, but was limited to predominantly Albanian

municipalities and neighbourhoods, and to Albanian respondents. The relatively high level of residential segregation across settlements and urban neighbourhoods made this selective sampling relatively easy and representative.

The first sample of respondents was administered a questionnaire version “A,” the second sample was administered questionnaire “B,” and the supplementary Albanian sample was administered only questionnaire “B.” Approximately half of the questionnaire items were “core questions,” identical in both questionnaires, while other questions were only asked in either A or B. In the present paper, all analyses are based on core variables, and hence we are able to pool together cases from all three samples. The first two general samples resulted in a combined sample of 2037, in which 1588, 78 percent, of respondents were ethnic Macedonians or “others, while 449, 22 percent, were ethnic Albanians.

These percentages approximate the most recent census-based estimates of the relative sizes of these sub-populations, based on the census of 2002. Adding the supplemental sample of ethnic Albanians provides a total sample of 1005 Albanians for comparisons to the 1588 ethnic Macedonians. In our analyses, pooled estimates for Macedonia as a whole are based on down-weighting the Albanian cases to produce the correct relative sizes of both ethnic categories in the Macedonian population. Direct comparisons of ethnic Macedonians and Albanians, and analyses of each group separately, use cases from all three samples given equal weights. We also use weights for minor corrections for the distributions of age and sex for each group.

Our multi-level analyses involve three levels: First, that of the individual respondents; second, the lowest - level sampling clusters, and third, municipalities. The data gathering project was designed for multi-level analysis from the beginning. For this reason, the sample design was based on a compromise between desires to minimize individual-level standard errors and to also have 6 – 8 respondents in each of the smallest geographical clusters for the purpose of analyzing those clusters as a level of analysis. From the standpoint of cost versus minimizing sampling error, this is a slightly larger number of respondents per cluster than we would have chosen for an individual-level analysis, and a smaller number per cluster than is most desirable for the multi-level analyses.

The sampling clusters involve every fourth household in a walking pattern from random starting points within municipalities. There are 450 clusters in the data. So, the cases in the same unit on this level are in the same small neighbourhood in a city, in the same section of a village in the countryside. In these surveys, all of the sampling clusters were ethnically homogeneous regarding the distinction ethnic Macedonian and others, as opposed to ethnic Albanian. This is primarily due to the high level of ethnic residential segregation. However, to a small degree, it was also due to the constraints of using ethnic Albanian interviewers and Albanian language questionnaires and interviews for Albanian respondents, and Macedonian interviewers and questionnaires for ethnic Macedonians and others. The fact that the clusters are homogeneous with regard to ethnicity means that we cannot test the difference in the effects of ethnicity across clusters. And, we do not have contextual measures on the level of clusters. We can and do include clusters as a second level of analysis so that we can contrast the variance

across these small geographical units with both the variance across the larger municipal units, and the variance across individual respondents.

On one hand, it is worrisome that different translations of the items and different ethnic identities of interviewers may have accentuated the Macedonian – Albanian differences in responses. On the other hand, different-language questionnaires were absolutely necessary for a portion of the Albanian population; the level of inter-ethnic distrust in the country was so great that not using same-ethnicity interviewers was expected to introduce a greater bias and certainly greatly reduce the response rate.

In Macedonia, there were 123 “municipalities” at the time of the survey, and all territory was included in one municipality or another (see Figure 1). The SEESSP samples included 88 of these municipalities. In the last few months, plans for aggregating and redistricting municipalities to a total of 84 are being realized, and local elections for these new municipalities will take place in mid-March, 2005. Relatively rural municipalities could include several “settlements” or small towns and villages. The largest cities are comprised of several municipalities. The issue of the number, sizes, and boundaries of municipalities has been extremely important in Macedonia, because the Ohrid agreement grants much autonomy to municipalities, and bases representation and hiring for civil positions on ethnic quotas based on municipal ethnic composition.

There is one additional geographical unit which is included in some of our analyses as a dummy variable. That is a distinction of seven “regions” in Macedonia. These are displayed in Figure 2. Based on both initial hypotheses and exploratory analyses, we

group these regions into a dichotomous distinction between two sets of regions, namely Skopski and Poloski, versus the other five regions.

At the level of the gathering of information from respondents, all of the interviews were face-to-face using professional interviewers. The interviews were conducted at the respondent's homes, and most lasted 60 – 90 minutes. There were both Macedonian- and Albanian-language versions of the questionnaires. In nearly all cases, the ethnicity of the respondents could be anticipated, allowing employing an interviewer of the respondents' nationality, and using the most appropriate language version of the questionnaire. In these analyses, all of the variables to be predicted were based on individual or summed Likert scale items where the possible responses were “strongly agree,” “agree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree.”

In this paper, four scales are used as indices of the four aspects of opinion in which we are interested. The first is the respondent's perception of the causes for the violence in the civil struggle in Macedonia (PCAUSES). This issue is by far the greatest divide between Albanian and Macedonian Macedonians in the questions in these surveys. The second is a scale of “ethnic exclusionist” attitudes (ETHNICEX). The third is the respondent's wish to reconcile and build relations with members of the other ethnic groups in the country (ETHNICREC). The fourth is the respondent's attitude toward the Ohrid agreement (OHRID).

The first issue, perceptions of the cause of the violence (PCAUSES), is an additive scale based on the mean response to three questions:

1. The essence of the conflict from the beginning of 1999 through today is being provoked by criminal groups who want disorder so that they can do whatever they want.

2. The interests and influence of other countries have for the most part provoked the conflict from 1999 until today.
3. The essence of the conflict from 1999 though today has been provoked and influenced by Albanians who have not lived in Macedonia for long.

A high value on this scale indicates agreement to these statements, a 5 indicating the greatest degree of agreement, a 3 indicating a neutral position, and a 1 indicating the greatest degree of disagreement. Various approaches were taken to forming scores for this scale, as for the other scales in indicators in these analyses, based on nonmetric rescaling of responses and non-metric factor scores. None of these resulted in significantly different results. An exploratory factor analysis of these four items results in a solution with only one significant factor, accounting for 75% of the variance. As additive scale, Cronbach's alpha for these items was .84.

The second issue is whether respondents show "ethnic exclusionist" attitudes: attitudes that indicate distrust or dislike of social integration among nationalities. This issue is analyzed through an ethnic exclusionist attitude scale based on four Likert items:

1. Nationally mixed marriages must be more unstable than others.
2. Men can only feel completely safe when the majority belongs to their nationality.
3. Among nations it is possible to create cooperation, but not full trust.
4. It would be best for Macedonia if those belonging to one ethnic group lived in ethnically pure territories.

The scale based on these items (ETHNICREC) is based on the mean response for the four items, with high values indicating agreement. Scales based on these items have also been used in the surveys for other South East European countries in the SEESSP project, and

also in earlier surveys in former Yugoslavia in 1989, as well as in a Croatian survey in 1997. The items clearly form one factor in both Macedonia and in the other SE European countries. This factor accounts for 48 percent of the variance in the items. Cronbach's alpha for the additive scale is .63.

The third issue is the degree to which respondents express a desire or willingness to improve relations with the other nationalities in Macedonia. We measure this with a simple average score based on only two items:

1. I have friends among other nationalities in Macedonia and want to improve my personal relations with them.
2. Now is the time for members of our nationality to improve relations with other nationalities in Macedonia.

For this scale of two items, higher values indicate a willingness to *improve* relations with the other nationalities. These two items are correlated by  $r = .44$

The final issue we include in our analyses is the respondent's agreement or disagreement with implementing the terms of the "Ohrid agreement: "Quick implementation of the framework agreement is the key to solving the problems of Macedonia".

As discussed earlier, our analyses employ predictor variables only at the first and third levels. As individual-level predictors, we introduce the respondent's ethnic identity, age, gender, level of education, and frequency of attendance at religious services. Most of the previously published studies of attitudes toward nationalism and ethnic tolerance in the successor states of former Yugoslavia have involved Croatia ([Massey, Hodson, and Sekulic, 2003](#)). But, there are a number of studies based on all-former-Yugoslav survey

data from 1989, just prior to the break-up of this state (Hodson, Sekulic, and [Massey, 1994](#); [Massey, Hodson, and Sekulic, 1999](#)). In these studies, one of the strongest predictors of nationalism and ethnic intolerance was religiosity, indexed by attendance of religious services.

These previous studies in the region have also shown weaker, but significant effects of other individual-level variables on ethnic intolerance. The level of completed education generally has had a negative effect on ethnic intolerance, younger persons are more tolerant than older persons, and females are generally more tolerant than males. We have also examined the importance of urban versus rural residence, as well as the size of the settlement, as individual-level variables. Earlier studies have also shown that, understandably, persons in ethnically mixed marriages, or with ethnically mixed parents, are more tolerant. In this study, we have not included these attributes, because marriages between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians are very rare.

Finally, but as we shall see, most importantly in Macedonia, there is the issue of the ethnic identity, or “nationality,” in an ethnic sense, of the respondents. Studies of all-former-Yugoslavia in 1989 show that at that time, ethnic Albanians, especially in Kosovo and Macedonia, had particularly strong ethnic exclusionist attitudes. We are interested in how the evolution of the conflict in Macedonia, in combination with older cultural divisions, led to Macedonian-Albanian differences in the attitudes toward the four issues examined here. In these analyses, we use a dichotomous variable for ethnicity, contrasting having a self-identified ethnicity as Albanian or not. The other category consists predominantly, but not exclusively of ethnic Macedonians. Excluding the small

number of respondents of other ethnic identities (Turks, Serbs, Bosniaks, Gypsies, Vlachs, and others) makes no difference in the conclusions.

On the third level, we examine the effects of several municipality-level contextual variables: the percentage of the municipal population which is ethnic Albanian; whether the municipality was part of the capitol and largest city, Skopje; whether or not there were serious incidents of ethnic violence in the municipality or a neighbouring municipality during the period of civil strife 2001-2002; whether the municipality bordered Kosovo; a regional division between a core area of insurgent strife contrasted with peripheral areas of conflict and those municipalities away from the areas of violent conflict; the percentage of secondary school graduates, as well as university graduates in the municipality; and the percentages of the local population employed in the “service class.” Many of the contextual variables turned out to be inconsequential, and we only report coefficients for those that were theoretically most important and/or significant in fact.

### **The Three-Level Model Employed in the Analyses**

The multi-level model employed in the analyses can be summarized as follows:

We assume a three level hierarchical model where about 2500 individual respondents constitute level 1, the about 450 sample points constitute level 2 and the 88 municipalities represented in our sample make up level 3. It is important to incorporate this data structure into the statistical model. This leads to the choice of multilevel models to be analyzed by the Mlwin software (Rasbash et al. 2004). This type of software allows us to

introduce x-variables at various levels and return estimates with correct standard errors for level 2 and level 3 variables.

In this paper several models will be presented. The simplest model is the null model, a variance component model that is used to decompose the variance in the dependent variables into variation at the three levels. This is our model 0. It may be presented in equations for each level:

$$Y_{ijk} = \beta_{0jk} + v_{0k} + u_{ojk} + e_{ijk}$$

For levels two and three:

$$\beta_{0jk} = v_{0k} + u_{ojk}$$

The “i” subscript represents respondents, the “j,” sample points, and the “k” subscript represents municipalities. In multilevel models, there are two types of parameters to be estimated: fixed coefficients, i.e. only the regression constant in the above model, and random terms, which are variance components corresponding to the three remaining terms in the model. The regression constant in this model is simply the overall mean of the dependent variable. It has subscripts both for the sample points and the municipalities, showing that it may vary among both type of contexts. The last term is the individual level residual, quite parallel to the residual in an OLS regression except for the two extra subscripts. The two remaining terms are the level three residual and the level 2 residual. We assume that residual terms within a level may be correlated, but that residuals are uncorrelated across levels. The covariance matrix involving these terms will also be estimated in a multilevel analysis. This will allow us to estimate the intra-class

correlations, showing how much of the variation in the dependent variables occurred among the sample points and among the municipalities.

Model 1 – 4 are random coefficient models, i.e. we allow at least one of the predictor-variables to have coefficients that may vary across the contexts. Model 1 has this structure:

$$Y_{ijk} = \beta_{0jk} + \beta_{1k} X_{ijk} + v_{0k} + u_{0jk} + v_{1k} + e_{ijk}$$

$$\beta_{0jk} = v_{0k} + u_{0jk}$$

$$\beta_{1k} = v_{0k}$$

In this model, we let one regression coefficient be random among the municipalities. In principle we could also let it be random across sample points. However, in our analyses, we only model random slopes for the effects of ethnicity; and, in our data, we cannot do this for the second level, because, as mentioned earlier, the second-units are homogeneous with regard to ethnicity. To present the more complex models 2-4 in an economic manner, the notation will be somewhat changed: the  $\alpha$  represent the regression constant, the  $\mathbf{X}$  is a vector of individual level regressors, the  $\mathbf{Z}$  represents the sample point regressor, and  $\mathbf{W}$  a vector of municipality characteristics. Now the  $\mathbf{v}$  represents a covariance matrix of the residual terms at the municipality level.

$$Y_{ijk} = \alpha + \beta X + \gamma Z + \delta W + v + u_{0jk} + e_{ijk}$$

## Results

The basic descriptive statistics for the variables used in these analyses are displayed in Table 1. The first issue in our multi-level analyses is the question of how much the variation in these attitudes is based on geographical units. Table 2 displays tests of the variation in means for the four dependent variables of interest, and also in the effect of Albanian ethnicity across contexts. Very different patterns are seen for each of these variables.

Consider first the estimates from the null model, M0. For the variable perceptions of the causes of the violence (PCAUSES), we see that there is significant and considerable variation at all three levels, municipalities, clusters, and individuals. Indeed, there is more variation between municipalities (0.628) than between individuals within municipalities (0.342), and a substantial amount of variation at the cluster level as well (0.527). It is really quite unusual to see so much variance in such variables based on \*units such as municipalities. For the variables ETHNICEX and ETHNICREC, there is significant variation at all three levels, but clearly the individual level variation dominates. For the variable OHRID, there is significant and substantial variation at all three levels. The individual level is the most important (0.832), but the cluster (0.615) and municipality variation is also high (0.374).

Why is there so much variation at the municipality and cluster levels? The simplest bivariate correlations and OLS regressions make it very clear that there are huge differences between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians on these questions. To what extent are these municipality differences reflecting municipality differences in ethnic composition? The lower half of Table 2, for model M1, adds to the null model a

variable for whether respondents are ethnic Albanians, as opposed to Macedonian and others. Considering the columns for perception of the causes of violence (PCAUSES), the first coefficient, (4.224) is the predicted mean for ethnic Macedonians, while the second coefficient (-1.714) is the difference in the mean for Albanians. Both effects are significant and substantial. The effect for being Albanian is by far the strongest of any of the predictor variables in these analyses.

The parameters for the random coefficients for PCAUSES indicate the following: the variance in intercepts across municipalities now falls to a trivial and insignificant level (0.012). The variation across municipalities in model M0 is mainly due to differences across municipalities in ethnic composition. The next coefficient (0.394) is the parameter for differences in the slopes, for the effect of being Albanian across municipalities. This effect is reasonably large and statistically significant. The level 2 coefficient for the variation in intercepts across clusters is also significant. Neighbourhood and village still matter. For level 1, the first coefficient (0.336) indicates significant individual-level variation for ethnic Macedonians. However, the second coefficient (0.010) indicates insignificant individual-level variation for ethnic Albanians.

The coefficients for the columns for the other three dependent variables in Model M1 of Table 2 are interpreted similarly, but with somewhat differing conclusions. For all of these variables, the fixed effect of being Albanian is substantial and statistically significant. In terms of the random coefficients, after the effect of introducing the variable for ethnicity, the variation in intercepts across municipalities drops to essentially zero and is only barely significant for ETHNICEX and OHRID. The variation in the slopes for the effect of being Albanian across municipalities is significant only for

PCAUSES and OHRID. There remains significant though moderate variation in intercepts across clusters for all four dependent variables. Because of the large differences in opinion between the Albanian and the Macedonians, our model also opens that the variance in the four dependent variables are heteroscedastic. The first variance component at the individual level measures the variation among Macedonians, whereas the second one taps the difference in individual level variation for Albanians. The latter difference is negligible PCAUSES and ETHNICREC, but substantial and statistical significant for ETHNICEX and OHRID.

Next, we next test models with additional predictor variables at the individual and municipality levels. Model 2 adds individual-level variables for age, gender, highest educational attainment, and frequency of attendance of religious services. The coefficients, variance components and fit statistics for Model 2, as applied to these four dependent variables, are displayed in Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6. These coefficients are quite small and mostly insignificant. There are no significant effects of attendance at religious services. The effect of gender is only statistically significant for ethnic reconciliation (ETHNREC), where its effect is negative. The effect of age is only significant for attitude toward implementing the Ohrid agreement, where it has a trivially small positive effect. Years of education does have significant effects on PCAUSES, ETHNICEX, and ETHNICREC, but not on OHRID. Higher levels of education do have a positive effect on the desire for ethnic reconciliation, and negative effects on ethnic exclusionism and perceiving that the violence was primarily due to criminal gangs, influence of other countries, and Albanians who have not lived very long in Macedonia. These conclusions about the magnitude and significance of these individual-level variables do not change as

level 3 predictors are added to the models. Given the weak effects of these variables, it is no surprise that the patterns of variance component coefficients are similar to those with Model 1.

The next model, Model 3, adds two level 3 attributes. First, a distinction between the two regions including Skopje and Tetevo, the core are of conflict, and the remaining regions. And, second, interaction between this dichotomous region distinction and whether or not the respondent was Albanian. The region variable alone was only significant for the scale of ethnic exclusionism, where it had a negative effect. The interaction between being Albanian and region was substantial, and positive, for perceptions of the causes of the violence. It had a significant positive effect on ethnic exclusionism and a significant negative effect on favoring implementation of the Ohrid agreement, but no effect on desire for ethnic reconciliation.

In our final model, Model 4, we add municipality-level predictors for the percentage of the municipality population that is Albanian. Also we add the dichotomous variable whether there were serious incidents of violence in the municipality, or a neighboring municipality, during the period of violent conflict. And, we add interaction effects for the effects of percentage Albanian and violence with the individual-level variable for being Albanian. None of these variables had significant effects on perceptions of the causes of the violence. There was a weak negative effect of the interaction between percentage Albanian and the effect of Albanian ethnicity on ethnic exclusionism. For the desire for ethnic reconciliation, there was a significant negative effect of the municipality having experienced episodes of violence. But, there was a positive effect of the interaction between violence in the municipality and being Albanian versus Macedonian

on ethnic reconciliation. With regard to favoring rapid implementation of the Ohrid agreement, there was a significant negative effect of violence in the municipality.

## **Discussion**

In the absence earlier studies of this kind in Macedonia closely following the period of conflict, we were quite uncertain what we would find. Needless to say, beginning our survey planning and organization in the Spring of 2001, at the very height of the conflict, we wondered if the escalation of the violence would lead to impossible conditions for conducting such a survey at all. When we found that we were fortunate and could field the survey in late 2003, the level of ethnic tension and distrust was so great that we wondered if respondents would openly express the divisions of opinion on the conflict that we and most experts believed existed. So, while we expected Macedonian-Albanian differences on questions such as those we investigated here, we were really not sure how strongly they would be expressed. Our first surprise, was that the data do indeed show a deeply polarized society, in which perceptions of the reasons for the civil strife are radically different. To a great extent, ethnic Macedonians indeed see the conflict as having been due to Albanian criminal gangs provoking disorder for their own ends, the influence of Kosovar Albanian guerrillas, and perhaps foreign interests including the US as well as Albanians from outside Macedonia. Ethnic Albanians are much more likely to see the guerrilla leaders as local and Macedonian national heroes, fighting for equality, fair treatment for Albanians, and local autonomy and representation.

This same ethnic Macedonian-Albanian polarization is also seen in the greater tendency of ethnic Albanians to express ethnically exclusionist attitudes, perhaps favoring equality and autonomy, but rejecting ethnic integration. Similarly, Albanians are less favorable to

ethnic reconciliation and improving cross-group ties. Naturally, ethnic Albanians are much more favorable to rapid implementation of the terms of the framework agreement.

On these issues, the ethnic polarization seems, for now at least, to have squeezed out the possibility of much within-group variation based on age, sex, education, and religiosity.

These Macedonian surveys were conducted simultaneously with the South-East European Social Survey (SEESSP) surveys in Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo. Our preliminary analyses of questions on ethnic reconciliation and exclusionism in these countries shows a very different set of relationships. In particular, the within-nationality differences in the effects of religiosity, age, gender, and education are much more significant in Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina than in Macedonia.

There may be many possible reasons for this, among them are the recency of the end of active warfare, whether the “nation-state” issues remain uncertain or unresolved, and the history of the quality of ethnic integration and equality for particular groups and regions within former Yugoslavia. Perhaps, if trust and cooperation improve in Macedonia, we will see increasing variation within ethnic groups in attitudes toward the conflict, reconciliation, and the means of conflict resolution.

Apart from nationality, the only consistently significant individual level predictor for the four issues we have examined here is years of completed formal education. While education did not have significant effects on support for the Ohrid agreement, it did have a negative effect on ethnic exclusionism, a positive effect on favoring ethnic reconciliation, and a negative effect on seeing the conflict as mostly due to criminal gangs and outside influence. The random coefficients indicate that for all four of these dependent variables, there was more individual-level variation for ethnic Macedonians

than for ethnic Albanians, reflecting a higher level of individual-level unanimity among Albanians on these issues. On the other hand, for two of the issues, perceptions of the causes of the violence and favoring rapid implementation of the Ohrid accord, there is substantial cross-municipality variation for Albanians, but not for Macedonians.

Given the weakness of the effects of many individual-level variables, it is impressive that we do find significant variation based on region, municipality, and sampling clusters (within neighborhoods, villages, or settlements), mainly with regard to perceptions of the causes of the violence. And more interestingly, we find significant differences across municipalities in the magnitude of Macedonian-Albanian differences in perceptions of the causes of the violence and support for the Ohrid agreement. Analyses showed that the cross-municipality variation in Albanian-Macedonian differences was driven by cross-municipality variations for Albanians, not Macedonians. Unfortunately, the municipality-level contextual variables do not have consistently significant effects. Serious violent incidents in the municipality or neighboring municipality only had significant negative effects on favoring ethnic reconciliation and a negative effect on favoring the Ohrid agreement.

The percentage of the municipal population which was Albanian had no significant level 3 effects, nor did most of the interaction terms among percentage Albanian with violence and the respondent's ethnicity. The two exceptions were a weak negative effect of being Albanian and percentage Albanian on ethnic exclusionism; and, a moderately strong positive effect of being ethnic Albanian on ethnic exclusionism in municipalities experiencing violence on ethnic reconciliation.

We note that the dichotomous variable for region captures a significant amount of variation in the municipality-level variation in Macedonian-Albanian differences on perceptions of the causes of the violence, ethnic exclusionism, and support for the Ohrid agreement.

Did geography matter? Our analyses show that it did, both on the level of municipalities and clusters. It was, in fact, the second most important factor after ethnicity; and, it modified the effect of ethnicity. Our next task is to improve our measures of the determinants of this municipal variation and to better estimate exactly which geographical units are most important

With regard to future research on these issues in Macedonia, we are investigating carrying out a new survey in Macedonia, devoted more specifically to these issues of ethnic reconciliation and political solutions to the ethnic divisions in Macedonia. In particular, we wish to conduct re-interviews of the respondents in the SEESSP survey, to study the consistency, or trends in these attitudes as the period of violent conflict recedes into the past and Macedonians are more confident that this conflict will not be renewed. Finally, a survey devoted almost exclusively to these issues would allow us to do a better job of testing the reliability of scales of items on these issues. It is well known that the reliabilities for individual questionnaire items, or small sets of two or three is relatively low. A more concentrated effort at improving measurement of these issues in Macedonia might well lead to a clearer understanding of the determinants of these attitudes.

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**Table 1. Descriptive statistics for variables (unweighted)**

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation	Valid Cases
<i>Level 1</i>						
PCAUSES	1	5	3.566	.024	1.197	2507
ETHNICEX	1	5	3.278	.016	.837	2572
ETHNICREC	1	5	3.798	.017	.871	2559
OHRID	1	5	3.447	.027	1.332	2435
Albanian	0	1	.388	.010	.487	2593
Female	0	1	.500	.010	.500	2593
Age	18	80	42.677	.320	16.319	2593
Education in Years	0	24	10.270	.073	3.727	2583
Religious Attendance	1	11	4.323	.048	2.375	2487
<i>Level 3</i>						
Regional Dichotomy	0	1	0.499	-	0.500	2583
Percentage Albanian	0	99.5	33.828	-	35.485	2583
Local Violence	0	1	0.496	-	0.500	2583

**Table 2. Testing variation in means and in the effect of Albanian ethnicity across contexts. <sup>a</sup>**

<b>Dependent variables:</b>	PCAUSES		ETHNICEX		ETHNICREC		OHRID		
<b>M0: null model</b>									
<i>Fixed coefficients</i>	Coeff.	S.e.	Coeff.	S.e.	Coeff.	S.e.	Coeff.	S.e.	
$b_{0ijk}$	3.639***	0.098	3.312***	0.043	3.800***	0.039	3.398***	0.084	
<i>Random coefficients</i>									
Level 3: $v_{0k}$	0.628***	0.151	0.077***	0.023	0.050***	0.018	0.374***	0.091	
Level 2: $u_{0jk}$	0.527***	0.100	0.217***	0.029	0.205***	0.030	0.615***	0.057	
Level 1: $e_{0ijk}$	0.342***	0.028	0.403***	0.025	0.498***	0.028	0.832***	0.026	
<i>-2 Log Likelihood</i>	5600.4		5646.12		6056.1		7319.5		
<b>M1: M0+Albanians</b>									
<i>Fixed coefficients</i>									
$b_{0ijk}$	4.224***	0.038	3.098***	0.043	3.935***	0.040	2.838***	0.061	
$b_{1jk}$	-	0.122	0.563***	0.058	-0.357***	0.067	1.484***	0.096	
	1.714***								
<i>Random coefficients:</i>									
Level 3: $v_{0k}$	0.012	0.013	0.042*	0.020	0.024	0.016	0.098*	0.041	
	$v_{1k}$	0.394***	0.151	0.029	0.037	0.028	0.043	0.317***	0.116
Level 2: $u_{0jk}$	0.254***	0.023	0.179***	0.018	0.187***	0.020	0.292***	0.032	
Level 1: $e_{0ijk}$	0.336***	0.013	0.473***	0.018	0.512***	0.020	1.097***	0.044	
	$e_{1ijk}$	0.010	0.011	-0.091***	0.012	-0.019	0.015	-0.334***	0.025
<i>-2 Log Likelihood</i>	5244.3		5493.5		6020.1		6850.1		

<sup>a</sup> Probability levels of test statistics are indicated in this way: \*\*\* P<0.001, \*\* P<0.01 \* P<0.05

Note: Albanian or Macedonian ethnicity is constant within sample points

**Table 3. Three-level models with random coefficients for PCAUSES**

	Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coeff.	S.e.	Coeff.	S.e.	Coeff.	S.e.
Constant	4.305***	0.090	4.324***	0.093	4.344***	0.096
Albanians	-1.688***	0.122	-	0.161	-2.272***	0.270
			2.447***			
Female	0.012	0.027	0.011	0.027	0.011	0.027
Age	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Education, years	-0.010*	0.004	-0.010*	0.004	-0.010*	0.004
Religious services	-0.005	0.006	-0.007	0.006	-0.007	0.006
<i>Level 3 variables:</i>						
Region 1&4			-0.044	0.077	-0.020	0.091
Reg14 *			1.074***	0.198	1.068***	0.203
Albanian						
Albanian pct. Violence					0.001	0.002
Alban*Alb. Pct					-0.113	0.082
Alban*violence					-0.004	0.004
<i>Variance components:</i>						
Level 3: $v_{0k}$	0.009	0.012			0.008	0.012
$v_{1k}$	0.361***	0.112			0.129*	0.053
Level 2: $u_{0jk}$	0.250***	0.023			0.250***	0.023
Level 1: $e_{0ijk}$	0.337***	0.011			0.337***	0.011
$e_{1ijk}$	-		-		-	
<i>-2 Log Likelihood</i>	4997.8		4976.8		4973.8	

**Table 4. Three-level models with random coefficients for ETHNICEX**

	Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coeff.	S.e.	Coeff.	S.e.	Coeff.	S.e.
Constant	3.303***	0.094	3.357***	0.096	3.316***	0.096
Albanians	0.509***	0.053	0.347***	0.076	0.621***	0.148
Female	0.022	0.028	0.021	0.028	0.016	0.028
Age	-0.001	0.001	-0.001	0.001	-0.001	0.001
Education, years	-0.021***	0.004	-	0.004	-	0.004
Religious services	0.009	0.006	0.021***	0.008	0.020***	0.006
<i>Level 3 variables:</i>						
Region 1&4			-0.188*	0.086	-	0.089
Reg14 * Albanian			0.329***	0.109	0.259***	0.124
Albanian pct. Violence					0.003	0.002
Alban*Alb. Pct					0.063	0.080
Alban*violence					-0.006*	0.003
<i>Variance components:</i>						
Level 3: $v_{0k}$	0.040*	0.019	0.028	0.016	0.013	0.009
$V_{1k}$	0.018	0.028	0.020	0.027	0.000	0.000
Level 2: $u_{0jk}$	0.177***	0.018	0.179***	0.018	0.172***	0.018
Level 1: $e_{0ijk}$	0.463***	0.018	0.463***	0.018	0.465***	0.018
$e_{1ijk}$	-0.088***	0.012	-	0.012	-	0.012
			0.088***		0.089***	
<i>-2 Log Likelihood</i>	5244.4		5236.5		5234.5	

**Table 5. Three-level models with random coefficients for ETHNICREC**

	Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coeff.	S.e.	Coeff.	S.e.	Coeff.	S.e.
Constant	3.836***	0.102	3.793***	0.104	3.822***	0.106
Albanians	-	0.069	-	0.110	-	0.176
	0.298***		0.467***		0.589***	
Female	-	0.031	-	0.031	-	0.031
	0.088***		0.089***		0.090***	
Age	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001
Education, years	0.019***	0.005	0.019***	0.005	0.019***	0.005
Religious services	-0.012	0.007	-0.012	0.007	-0.013	0.007
<i>Level 3</i>						
<i>variables:</i>						
Region 1&4			0.152	0.083	0.179	0.095
Reg14 *			0.171	0.143	0.116	0.143
Albanian						
Albanian pct. Violence					0.002	0.002
Alban*Alb. Pct					-0.197*	0.085
Alban*violence					-0.003	0.003
<i>Variance</i>						
<i>components:</i>						
Level 3: $v_{0k}$	0.023	0.015	0.020	0.015	0.017	0.012
$V_{1k}$	0.037	0.047	0.038	0.046	0.013	0.021
Level 2: $u_{0jk}$	0.188***	0.020	0.188***	0.020	0.185***	0.020
Level 1: $e_{0ijk}$	0.506***	0.020	0.506***	0.020	0.505***	0.020
$e_{1ijk}$	-0.034*	0.015	-0.034*	0.015	-0.033*	0.015
<i>-2 Log Likelihood</i>	5707.3		5697.9		5688.4	

**Table 6. Three-level models with random coefficients for OHRID**

	Model 2		Model 3 <sup>a</sup>		Model 4 <sup>a</sup>	
	Coeff	S.e.	Coeff	S.e.	Coeff	S.e.
Constant	2.669***	0.132	2.669***	0.132	2.740***	0.136
Albanians	1.471***	0.099	1.471***	0.099	1.848***	0.210
Female	0.057	0.040	0.057	0.040	0.058	0.040
Age	0.003***	0.001	0.003***	0.001	0.003***	0.001
Education, years	-0.002	0.006	-0.002	0.006	-0.001	0.006
Religious services	0.006	0.008	0.006	0.008	0.008	0.008
<i>Level 3 variables:</i>						
Region 1&4			-0.026	0.109	0.172	0.127
Reg14 * Albanian			-0.427***	0.160	-0.248*	0.113
Albanian pct.					-0.005	0.003
Violence					-0.248*	0.113
Alban*Alb. Pct					0.003	0.004
Alban*violence					0.281	0.157
<i>Variance components:</i>						
Level 3: v <sub>0k</sub>	0.088*	0.039	0.030	0.018	0.024	0.017
v <sub>1k</sub>	0.332***	0.119	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Level 2: u <sub>0jk</sub>	0.302***	0.034	0.324***	0.034	0.318***	0.034
Level 1: e <sub>0ijk</sub>	1.097***	0.045	1.100***	0.045	1.100***	0.045
e <sub>1ijk</sub>	-0.339***	0.025	-0.340***	0.025	-0.340***	0.025
<i>-2 Log Likelihood</i>	6597.1		6596.7		6587.3	

<sup>a</sup> The covariance component at level 3 had to be set to zero to achieve convergence. Therefore the v<sub>1k</sub> in model 2 is not quite comparable to the similar component in models 3 & 4.

Figure 1. Municipalities of Macedonia

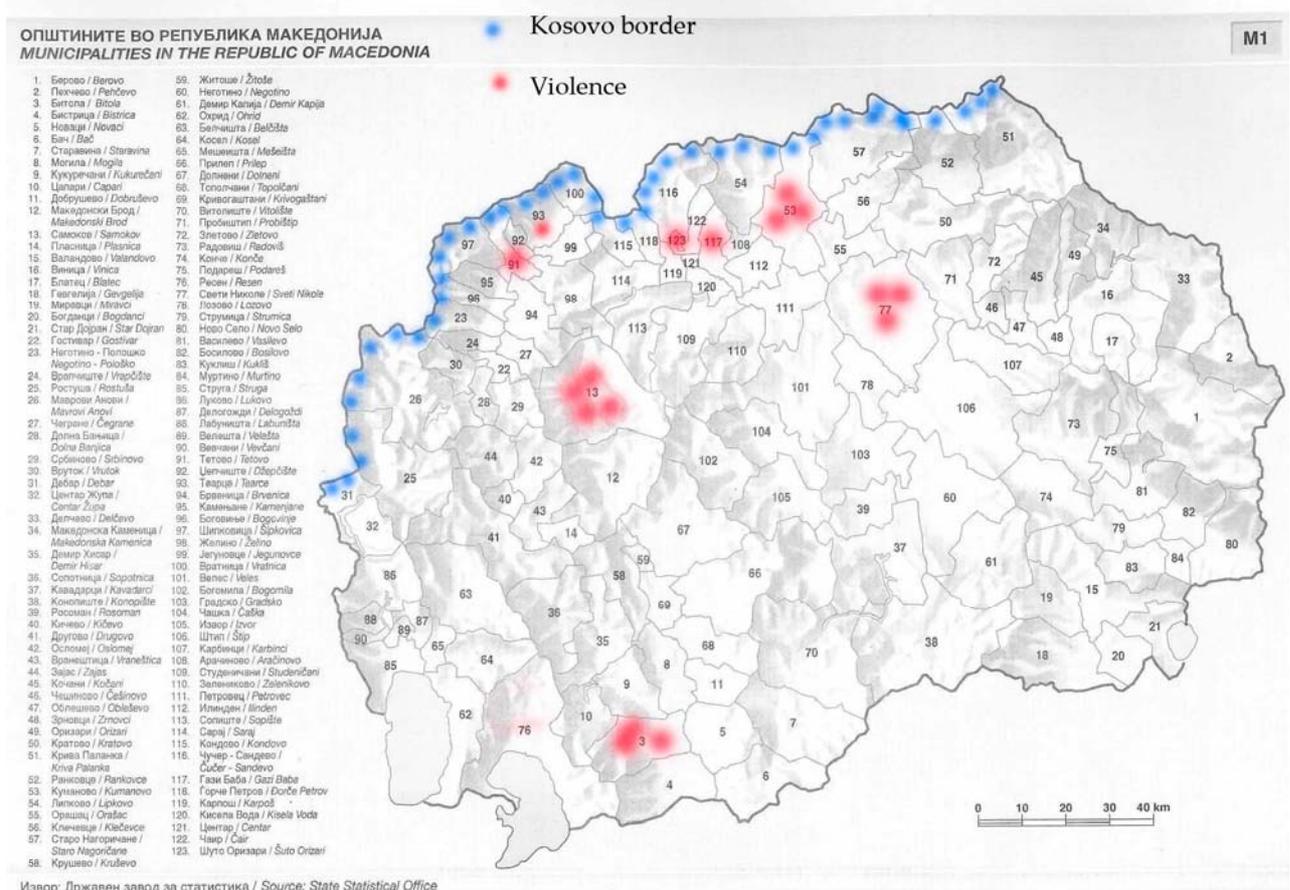


Figure 2. Regions of Macedonia

