

# Congresso nazionale della Società Italiana di Scienza Politica

Roma, 17-19 settembre 2009

Panel: 3.2. Il peso del passato nella costruzione della democrazia

## **The pre-conditions for power sharing, inter-ethnic conflict and democracy: Macedonia and Bosnia**

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### *Introduction:*

The widespread inter-ethnic violence that devastated the Balkans during the Nineties brought the international community to face the problem of how to deal with ethnically divided societies. Lijphart's consociative democracy and "power sharing" appeared to be among the preferred solutions of the international peace-makers, both due to the EU's own positive experience with consociative democracy, as well as due to the dynamics of the inter-ethnic conflict themselves, which make power sharing the most easily acceptable solution (Roeder and Rothchild, 2005).

The Dayton and Ohrid peace agreements that brought to the settlement of the conflicts in Bosnia and Macedonia were thus aiming at two goals: the settling of the inter-ethnic conflict and the democratization of Bosnia and Macedonia. The power sharing and ethno-federalism as means to attain these ends appear rather curious if we only remember that authors like Bunce (1999) underline that inter-ethnic power sharing and ethnically-based federalism were actually the trigger of the breakdown of the Yugoslavian State and of the affirmation of nationalism in the single republics. Almost ironically, the institutional arrangements that in the Dayton agreement were proposed as a solution for the inter-ethnic conflict (division of power along ethnic lines) were very similar to those that, in the eve of the conflict in Bosnia, were adopted by the Bosnian elite<sup>1</sup>. In fact, the first multi-party elections in Bosnia saw the victory of a coalition composed by the Serbian, Bosniak's<sup>2</sup> and Croat nationalists and

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<sup>1</sup> For the description of the political system in Bosnia in 1990-1992 and the political system established after Dayton, see Delamer and Rabkin, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Bosniak" (Bošnjak) is used to refer to the muslim ethnic group living in Bosnia, southern Slavs of islamic religion, while "Bosnian" stands for the citizen of Bosnia (regardless of their ethnic origin) or for the adjective, like "Bosnian state".

the establishment of a government based on power-sharing principles that at the first challenge brought to immobilism and conflict).

The performance of the power-sharing mechanisms in the two countries, after several years of its implementation, scores rather poorly on both tasks it was supposed to meet: inter-ethnic peace (stability) and democratic performance (quality of democracy). After 8 years since the last ethnic conflict in Macedonia and 13 after the end of the conflict in Bosnia, the two countries still show serious difficulties in their paths to democratization and stabilization, Macedonia yet showing a significantly better performance than Bosnia.

As far as the quality of democracy is concerned, both countries are still far from the status of consolidated, good quality democracies, yet, here again Macedonia performs slightly better than Bosnia. As the goal of this paper is not assessing the quality of democracy in the two countries, we will use the rather rough and approximate data offered by the watch-dog NGOs for illustrating the situation in the two countries. According to the “Freedom in the World” scores on political and civil rights for 2009”, both Macedonia and Bosnia are only partially free countries, performing worse than other former Yugoslav republics that are qualified free (see table 1)

Table 1: “Political rights and Civil Liberties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, 2009”

	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Macedonia
Political rights score	4	3
Civil Liberties score	3	3
Status	Partly Free	Partly Free

(Source: Freedom in the world, 2009 report, freedomhouse)

In Table 2 we show the comparative performance on the different dimensions of democracy as reported by the Freedomhouse’s “Nations in transit” report for 2008. We can observe how, beside the electoral process and level of corruption, Macedonia performs better on all other dimensions. The lower score on the electoral process is the product of a high rate of irregularities and of cases of violence that are often registered in Macedonia in the pooling day. The enormously high stakes associated with the access to power (according to the Macedonian analysts, the most important line of discrimination in Macedonia follows the party, not the ethnic lines<sup>3</sup>), creates a situation in which the electoral competitions are a zero-sum game situation with enormously high stakes, which then results in cases of violence, in the effort to ensure the electoral victory by any mean and in the lack of political will to ensure free and fair elections<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> See Hristova, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> That the violence and irregularities that characterize the Macedonian electoral competitions are a sign of the lack of political will rather than of the incapacity to avoid the violence is evident if we compare the assessment of the elections and the strength of the international community’s pressure for fair elections. The more positive assessments and

Table 2:

<b>NIT Ratings</b>	Bosnia	Macedonia
Democracy Score	4.11	3.86
National Democratic Governance	5.00	4.00
Electoral Process	3.00	3.25
Civil Society	3.50	3.25
Independent Media	4.25	4.25
Local Democratic Governance	4.75	3.75
Judicial Framework and Independence	4.00	4.00
Corruption	4.25	4.50

Both countries still suffer very serious problems concerning the rule of law, the lack of domestic elite's accountability and the extremely high levels of corruption and "state capture" (see Donais, 2003 for Macedonia, and Labovik, 2005, for Macedonia). The overall politicization, the party's penetration in all aspects of life, its influence over the judiciary<sup>5</sup> and media<sup>6</sup> and the control of the recruitment for the civil servants<sup>7</sup>, which seriously hampers the institutional capacity and, at the same time, opens the door to nepotism and politicization of the state apparatus, are present in both countries.

Yet, while partisanship, ethnic division, lack of the elite's accountability, problems with the rule of law, corruption and state capture are present in both countries, the functionality and capacity of the state significantly differs as we pass from Macedonia to Bosnia. Almost since the signature of the

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decrease of irregularities are clearly associable with the strength of the EU and USA pressures for fair elections. See Gaber Damjanovska and Jovevska 2006, Hristova, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> For Bosnia, see the European Union Commission's report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2008. Also: Nations in transit report for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2008. For Macedonia, see the European Union Commission's report on Macedonia, 2008; Nations in transit report for Macedonia, 2008. Even though the Macedonian judicial reform brought into existence a rather good legislative framework, its implementation is still insufficient. In a series of interviews undertaken by the author during her visit to Macedonia, the domestic experts underlined how the politicization and pressures are still present, only now combined with nepotism and personal links as criteria for appointing the judge (from the interviews with Jovanovski, Taseva, Hristova, August 2008, Skopje). Thus, as Jovanovski stress: "In Macedonia we do have a nominally independent judiciary. Yet, the nominal independency is hampered by the political control through the minister's control of the budget and through the veto-powers and unofficial pressure he exercises" (from the interview with Jovanovski, director of the office of the Information Office of the Council of Europe in Skopje, August 2008).

<sup>6</sup> On the political parties control over the media in Bosnia, see European Union Commission's report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2008. Also: Nations in transit report for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2008. For Macedonia, see European Union Commission's report on Macedonia, 2008; Nations in transit report for Macedonia, 2008; Šopar, 2004, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> On the ethnic and party-guided recruitment of civil servants in Bosnia, see the European Union Commission's report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2008. Also: Nations in transit report for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2008. On the recruitment of the civil servants, the analysis of the existing models, the description of the Macedonian legislation and the implementation as a key condition for increasing the quality of the Macedonian civil service, see Vitanski, 2008.

Dayton peace agreement up to today, Bosnia is characterized by a legislative paralysis, caused by the incapacity of the nationalistic ruling elites holding veto powers to find an agreement, which results in the failure to undertake the necessary reforms. While the Macedonian national assembly appears as a rather active body with an almost remarkable capacity to pass the bills, the Bosnian parliaments are very often subject to the paralysis created by the inter-ethnic disputes. The governments of the two countries show a similar situation, where the Macedonian government, with its increased capacity to propose bills, takes the role of the most important legislative initiator, while both the Bosnian government and presidency are often blocked by the inter-ethnic conflict, resulting in the seriously hampered efficiency of both executive organs. This sharp difference in the two systems' output brought Macedonia in the position to apply for both NATO and EU membership, while Bosnia is still delaying the reforms that would bring the country to the declared goal of its politicians: stable, democratic Bosnia as a part of EU.

As far as the inter-ethnic peace is concerned, Bosnia is currently facing the serious challenge of the blocked constitutional reforms, the calls for independence coming from the Republika Srpska (particularly after Kosovo's declaration of independence) and the demands for a greater centralization and the abolishment of entities put forward by the Bosniak ethnic group. The lack of stability in the country is best illustrated by the impossibility of the United Nations to withdraw the High Representative (HR), whose mandate was to expire in June 2008, but, due to the persistent internal problems, was prolonged. Only in the last year (2008), the OHR intervened 12 times and in the first seven months of 2009 he intervened 7 times, exercising his Bos's powers to legislate, annul the acts of the domestic legislative and executive bodies and remove the state officials from their offices.

In this dimension Macedonia appears to perform slightly better when compared to Bosnia. While here again we find a strong segmentation of the society and division along the ethnic lines between two groups that, aside from the political level, have almost no contacts on the level of society, the country at least appears to avoid the stagnation and the lack of functionality registered in Bosnia. In both countries the NGOs, the media, the school systems and even the universities are completely ethnically divided, in a manner to create two (or, in Bosnia, three) different and strongly divided societies with their own public opinion and their own values and representations of realities. In Macedonia, similarly to Bosnia, the party system is also segmented on ethnically divided party systems with a political offer based, in the first place, on ethnic lines. Yet, the inter-ethnic conflict, at least on the elite level, is far better managed than in Bosnia. While in both countries the original agreement that brought to peace and introduced the power-sharing mechanisms is brought into the question by both public opinion and political elite, in Macedonia such disagreements mainly concern the implementation of the OFA and the by-legislation, rather than its substance. Further on, while in Bosnia the disagreement over the Dayton peace agreement and constitutional reform brought the country into a solutionless stagnation to this very day, in Macedonia such crisis were (more or less successfully) surpassed: in 2007 the

interethnic tensions brought to the re-negotiation and change of the 2001 Ohrid peace agreement through what can be labelled an “unofficial and unconstitutional” de-facto constitutional reform. The incumbent Macedonian VMRO and the major Albanian opposition party DUI, reached what is known as the “May Agreement”, that was never published in the official media, but that brought to the enlargement of the issues to which the minority-veto applies: the revision of the legislation concerning the use of language and the establishment of the practice according to which the government is formed by the winning parties of the Macedonian and Albanian block, regardless of their ideological preferences and distance. While the content of the agreement has been kept secret to date, all speculations of the media on the practical solutions proposed in the agreement revealed to be accurate: such policies like new elections, the creation of the coalition VMRO-DUI, the enlargement of the minority’s veto powers, the revision of the use of language, the Albanian’s acceptance to delay the division of the municipality of Kicevo believed to be a part of agreement, were all put into practice<sup>8</sup>.

Nationalism and inter-ethnic tensions are thus still characteristic of these polities, and some authors indicate that such a situation is precisely the outcome of the institutional settings established through the peace agreements that brought to the introduction of inter-ethnic power-sharing arrangements<sup>9</sup>. Indeed, the genesis of nationalism as an ideology and as a representation of the political community is deeply affected by the overall power structure and by the distribution of power among the political elites.

But before assessing the degree to which power sharing contributed to bring to such deficiencies in Bosnia and Macedonia, the first question we should answer is whether the two countries represented a fertile ground for consociative democracy<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, starting from Lijphart, many authors dealt with the pre-conditions that may influence the performance of the power sharing mechanisms. It is therefore possible that the poor performance in Macedonia and disastrous performance in Bosnia are a product of the unfavourable domestic settings, rather than a consequence of power sharing itself.

This paper represents a first step in our exploration of the impact of the power sharing mechanisms in Macedonia and Bosnia. In this paper we will concentrate on the critical exam of the criteria that Lijphart considers as favourable conditions for the establishment of consociative democracy, on exploring the different criteria listed by the author, analyzing the extent of their logical coherence and theoretical relevance and examining how well the two countries performed along these dimensions.

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<sup>8</sup> On OFA, power-sharing mechanisms, May Agreement and their impact upon the inter-ethnic conflict in Macedonia, see Lebamoff and Ilievski, 2008. On May agreement, see Gaber Damjanovska and Jovevska, 2007

<sup>9</sup> On how power sharing undermines both the peace and democratization in the long run, see Roeder and Rothchild, 2005. On how Dayton and Ohrid peace agreements produced the institutionalization of ethnicity, contributing to the survival of the inter-ethnic conflict, see Bieber, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> As in this paper we are not interested in drawing a line between consociative democracy and power-sharing, in this paper the two terms are inter-changeable.

### *The pre-conditions for a proper functioning of power sharing*

Since inter-ethnic power sharing has become “the international community’s preferred remedy for building peace and democracy after civil wars” (Roeder and Rothchild, 2005: 5), the preliminary question of the conditions for its applicability rose. Given the disputable record of the power sharing and (of particular interest for this study) its record in Bosnia and Macedonia, it becomes important to understand which are the favourable conditions that can ensure the proper application of the power-sharing mechanisms.

According to Lijphart, there are nine background variables that, when present, can favour the establishment of consociative democracy. Five of these variables are strongly linked to the size of the ethnic groups and to their distribution over the territory: the absence of a single majority group, groups of roughly equal size and a balance of power among them, the geographic concentration of ethnic residence, small number of groups and a country with small total population. Among these, the absence of a single majority group, according to the author, is one of two most important favourable conditions.

### *Absence of a single majority group, groups of equal size and the balance of power among them – or the stability in size?*

In Lijphart’s words: “The most serious obstacle to power sharing in divided societies is the presence of a solid majority that, understandably, prefers pure majority rule to consociationalism” (Lijphart, 2008: 51). A similar condition can be found developed in Schneckener: “The state or region is not dominated by a clear majority group, but there exists a relative equilibrium concerning the size. There are either a number of groups among which no one has an absolute majority of the total population or two almost equal segments” (Schneckener 2002: 211).

However, as the two cases we have examined show, the absence/presence of a single majority group is a neither sufficient nor necessary condition for the functioning of the power sharing. The size of ethnic groups (presence of three ethnicities: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, among which none represents a majority) did not succeed in making Bosnian power-sharing arrangements work. On the other side, the particularly “unfavourable” situation in Macedonia, where we find a significant Macedonian majority (65%) against the far smaller Albanian minority (25.2%), still did not stop Macedonia to perform relatively better in creating a more or less sustainable, more or less stable peaceful coexistence. That the disproportion in the size of the ethnic groups does not necessarily represent an obstacle for the establishment of power sharing is rather clear if only we recall the situation in Macedonia during the early Nineties. While the full-fledged list of power-sharing instruments was introduced in Macedonia after the 2001 conflict and through the international mediation, some of them were already there, in the political practice, during the ‘90s. The over-sized multi-ethnic coalitions chosen voluntarily (in absence of any external or domestic institutional

constraint) that saw the inclusion of the Albanian parties in the governments even when the elections produced a clear-cut winner capable to rule alone is an example of the power-sharing mechanisms introduced by the spontaneous will of the majority group.

This first criterion is strongly linked to another criterion listed by the author: the similar size of the groups, that should allow some balance of power among them (Lijphart, 2008: 52). Lijphart's preoccupation with the size and presence/absence of a single majority group derives from his conception (in itself correct) of size as a dimension of the power held by a single group. This brings us to two specifications. First of all, as far as the size is concerned, in line with what Roeder and Rothchild (2005) and Pappalardo (1979) argue, the *stability* in the two groups' size, rather than size itself, turns out to be the most important factor. Among the conditions for the consolidation of peace and democracy through the use of power sharing, Roeder and Rothchild argue that, more than the relative size of the groups, it is important that the relationship between the size of the two groups does not change in time. In fact, a change in their demographic composition would risk to nourish a malcontent with a "power sharing" arrangement reflecting a situation superseded by demographic process. This, in turn, may well result in claims for a substantial revision of the power sharing agreement.

The strong conflict still ongoing in Bosnia over the census of the population is an important example of the importance this dimension has. The last officially accepted census that is still used in the official documents is the one carried out in 1990, before war and ethnic cleansings took place. In 1996 the UNHCR undertook another census, but its results were never accepted by the Bosnian authorities as, it was argued, its acceptance would de-facto legitimize the ethnic cleansing that took place during the conflict. For the same reason, both Bosniaks and Croats are fiercely contrary to the census required by the EU and scheduled for 2011, arguing, unlike the Serbs, that the census should not include questions linked to the ethnicity, language or religion. Indeed, a census which included questions concerning ethnicity would reflect the almost ethnically homogenous nature of the Republika Srpska, once a multi-ethnic territory (according to the 1990 census), and today almost totally composed by Serbs. This would significantly influence the power sharing arrangement on the local levels. In fact, without a new "ethnic" census, the representation of the three ethnic groups should be based on the 1990 data, when the territorial units were ethnically far more heterogeneous than today. While on the aggregate central level the results of the census would probably not significantly influence the numeric relationships between the three ethnic groups, on the entity, on the canton and on the municipal level it would bring to significant reshuffles and changes in the shares of power, as, in most of the cases, on the local level the non-majoritarian groups (being their size significantly over-estimated) are currently significantly advantaged by the power-sharing arrangements. The discussion over census has a particular relevance due to its overlapping with the negotiations over the constitutional reform. Indeed, of particular relevance is the preference of the Croat ethnic group that requires that the constitutional reform (strongly recommended by the international community) is undertaken *before* the census, in

order to avoid that the reshuffles in the ethnic composition weaken the Croats' position in the power-sharing settlements<sup>11</sup>. The still ongoing conflict over the census, and the questions risen about its impact on the return of the refugees (thus heterogenization of the ethnically clean territories) and on the future functioning of the Bosnian entities and cantons is an example of the importance that stability/instability, rather than size itself, play an important role in ensuring the proper functioning of the consociativism.

Similar importance to the size question was given in Macedonia, where the census turned out to be one of the most disputed questions. Indeed, due to the significantly different birth rates between the Albanian minority and Macedonian majority, when the stability of the size is concerned, Macedonia appears far less favoured than Bosnia. The dispute over the census of citizens, the strong insistence of the Albanian minority that the full application of the power-sharing mechanisms requires, first of all, to register the precise *size* of the ethnic groups, the conflict over the results (contested by both Macedonians and Albanians, the first claiming that census overestimated the number of Albanians, the second claiming the contrary) and the arguments often heard by the Macedonian nationalists, who call for a rise in the birth rate in order to avoid Macedonians to become a minority in their own state, again testify the importance that the stability of size has in the inter-ethnic political relationships<sup>12</sup>.

Yet, pushing the argument forward, we might wonder what the size and the stability in size are actually standing for. Is it really only a matter of "how many members a group holds", or does the number (and stability in numbers) of the members stand for something else? As Macedonia's "deviation" from Lijphart's first criterion shows, even where one of ethnic groups is largely majoritarian, a smaller minority group can still successfully push forward some power-sharing solution, provided it controls other important resources. In the aftermath of the Macedonian independence, it was the fear of inter-ethnic conflict to induce the Macedonian decision makers to support some consociative mechanisms in order to ensure the full legitimization of the Albanian minority. Size appears important mainly due to its link to the *strength* of the single ethnic group, and, being so, it is only *one* of a series of resources a group can have at hand, the military, economic, network or any other resource being neglected. It is the similarity in the *strength* of the groups to bring them to accept to share the power, and, consequentially, we can hypothesize, it is the break of the equilibrium of powers upon which the power sharing agreement is based to bring to the instability of the agreement, as one group, due to the increase of its strength (be it through the increase in size, or through the increase in

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<sup>11</sup> On the debate over the census see <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1225127822.58/>, <http://balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/14389/>, <http://www.nezavisne.com/dogadjaji/vijesti/42569/SDA-ce-blokirati-popis-stanovnistva.html>, <http://www.nezavisne.com/dogadjaji/vijesti/40468/Nactr-zakona-upucen-Savjetu-ministara.html>, <http://www.nezavisne.com/nezavisnistav/vijesti/42621/Odmjeravanje-snaga.html>, <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/11/Region/51470/Sastanak+lidera+BiH+u+sredu+u+Sarajevu++.html>, the EU Commission report on BiH for 2008.

<sup>12</sup> For the debate concerning the census in Macedonia, see Gaber-Damjanovska and Jovevska, 2003.

the military or economic network or other resources) can try to capitalize its growth to change the inter-ethnic agreement. We can bring two examples to support this claim. The first example concerns the beginning of the inter-ethnic violence in Macedonia. It is widely considered that the 2001 clash between the Albanian paramilitary groups and the Macedonian security forces was a side-effect of the Kosovo conflict in 1999. The high number of Albanian refugees found shelter in south-eastern Macedonia, among which there were many members of the Kosovo's UCK paramilitary forces. In the aftermath of the conflict, due to the pressures of the Albanian coalitional partner, the Macedonian government lowered the security level on the border between Kosovo and Macedonia, which brought to an increase in the illegal traffic of weapons from Kosovo to Macedonia<sup>13</sup>. The violence in Macedonia was directly preceded by the change in the strength of the ethnic group, not only in terms of size, but also in terms of its military strength.

Our second argument supporting the thesis that, in the final analysis, rather than talking about size and stability in size, we should actually make a more general observation concerning the resources an ethnic group controls, can be found in the apparently cynical conclusion Roeder and Rothchild make when they speak about international peace-bringing intervention. The two authors underlined that international intervention to cease the inter-ethnic violence should not come too soon, for the premature intervention would leave the conflicting ethnic groups wonder about the actual distribution of forces, easily bringing to what in the international relation studies is known as the "misperception" that might cause new violence<sup>14</sup>.

Finally, Lijphart's first favourable condition relies on the important assumptions that the majority rule will, by definition, harm the ethnic minority's rights. But what rights are we speaking about? The political and civil rights of the members of an ethnic group will be harmed under the majority rule only in the measure in which such rule is not democratic, for democracy implies the equality of all citizens and universal guarantees of the civil and political rights. As far as the representation of their economic interests is concerned, the majority rule can indeed hamper their representation, but this will happen only in the case where the division of labour follows ethnic lines and, most importantly, where the majority group is economically homogenized. Otherwise, the economic interests of the minority would be represented and protected due to the existence of multiple, cross-cutting cleavages that allow them to seek the support of the members of the majoritarian ethnic group with shared economic interests, while the minority's political and civil rights will be protected by the democratic principles of equality.

The implicit assumptions upon which Lijphart based one of his most important pre-conditions for the functioning of the power sharing thus hold true only in those societies where either the ethnic groups are also divided by the large socio-economic discrepancies, or the pluralism within the ethnic groups is pushed aside due to the prevalence of the inter-ethnic cleavage that fully structures the

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<sup>13</sup> See Hislope, 2002, 2003, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> On the misperception as a cause of war, see Jervis, 1989.

representation of interests. It means that Lijphart considered a “favourable condition” a situation in which power-sharing is actually supposed to be used as a remedy.

*Limited number of groups, relative small population and geographic concentration of ethnic residence*

Other Lijphart's criteria related to the group size are the limited number of ethnic groups, the relative small population of the country and the geographic concentration of ethnic groups. Both Macedonia and Bosnia satisfy such criteria: the countries are rather small in population (according to ONU estimates on 01/07/2007, the population in Bosnia counted 3.934.818, while in Macedonia it was 2.038.464)<sup>15</sup>. The number of groups is limited (not accounting for the national minorities that are smaller than 5%, in Bosnia we find 3 important ethnic groups, in Macedonia 2), and in both countries their geographical concentration produce almost ethnically “clean” territories. The territorial concentration of the ethnic groups is, according to Lijphart, important in order to allow the usage of federalism to promote group autonomy. Indeed, if the goal to be achieved is ethno-federalism, territorial concentration is surely an important pre-condition; and the target of much criticism to ethno-federalism (see Bunce, 1999) is in fact such a pre-condition, and not power-sharing itself or some of its mechanisms. The criticisms that different authors advanced to ethno-federalism (see Bunce, 1999) are actually criticisms to one of the mechanisms of power-sharing rather than to the pre-conditions listed by Lijphart. Yet, the geographical concentration is not a sufficient condition for the effective use of local administrative autonomy in order to protect the minority's rights. It is a pre-condition that may allow the reform of the territorial organization in order to draw the borders along the ethnic lines – but such process by no means necessarily brings to a satisfactory solution. In Macedonia the territorial organization reform saw a re-drawing of the municipal borders that was mainly guided by the criteria of the ethnic composition of the future municipalities. The outcome, while surely satisfactory in terms of the maximization of the Albanian minority's autonomy and influence, is far from being satisfactory from the point of view of the sustainability of the new municipalities. In order to ensure the desired ethnic composition of municipalities, rural areas were combined with urban areas, and the outcome was that economic and territorial peculiarities of the municipalities were blurred or cancelled. This resulted in a creation of municipalities whose development and financial survival are under serious threat.

Moreover, the territorial concentration of the ethnic groups can pose a serious problem to another criterion underlined by Lijphart: the socio-economic characteristics of the ethnic groups. The geographic differences between the regions can strongly influence the structure of the prevailing economic activities, which can in turn give rise to increased differences in the economic opportunities between different regions. Where the ethnic groups are geographically concentrated, this can bring the economic and ethnic cleavages to overlap, and to increased socio-economic disparities.

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<sup>15</sup> For a criticism on this criterion, see Pappalardo, 1979.

*No socio-economic disparity among the groups*

The second most important favourable pre-condition listed by Lijphart is the lack of socio-economic disparities among the groups: “The second major factor is the absence or presence of large socio-economic differences among the groups of a divided society” (Lijphart, 2008: 51). As Schneckener specifies, “The smaller the economic and social differences between the groups, the better the conditions for consociationalism. No side should be severely disadvantaged in terms of economic and human resources; on the contrary, each group should have a similar profile with regard to the standard of living, average income, the number of employees or the level of education” (2002: 211).

The presence/absence of socio-economic disparities is relevant for the functioning of power sharing, because it can significantly influence many important variables. Large socio-economic cleavages between ethnic groups can strengthen their ethnic identification, and bring to overlapping of different cleavages (ethnic and socio-economic), contributing to the segmentation of society. From this point of view, it is a criterion strictly linked to another background condition underlined by Schneckener and considered by Lijphart in some previous work, but finally dropped from his list of requirements: the prevalence of crosscutting cleavages. “The population in total is characterized by political (or other) cleavages that cut across ethno-national or linguistic lines. This leads to overlapping memberships and prevents the creation of ‘homogeneous’ groups. The basic assumption is: the more politically relevant membership overlaps, the more stable the consociational system is” (Schneckener 2002: 213).

We will further discuss the importance and the significance of cross-cutting cleavages for the functioning of power-sharing mechanisms later. At this point we will only underline the direct conceptual link between the groups’ socio-economic structure and the overlapping memberships. While, as we will see, the absence of socio-economic discrepancies is not a sufficient condition for group memberships to overlap, it is however a necessary condition, for in the context of large socio-economic divisions following the ethnic lines, it is impossible that groups can overlap. However, it is interesting to notice how Lijphart explicitly refuses to include crosscutting cleavages among the favourable pre-conditions for power sharing, because, according to the author, the mutually reinforcing cleavages represent a definitory criterion of consociative democracy: “According to the theory of crosscutting cleavages, one would expect the Low Countries, Switzerland, and Austria, with subcultures divided from each other by mutually reinforcing cleavages, to exhibit great immobilism and instability. But they do not. These deviant cases of fragmented but stable democracies will be called *consociational democracies*” (Lijphart, 2008, pp. 28). Lijphart's decision to exclude the cross-cutting cleavages is also driven by the fact that where the cleavages are crosscutting and membership are overlapping, the division, rather than the sharing of power, appears to be the most appropriate solution. The problem is thus not why Lijphart excludes the crosscutting cleavages from the list of the pre-conditions favouring

power sharing but, most importantly, why he implicitly re-introduces it by stressing the absence of socio-economic discrepancies.

Finally, like the size of ethnic groups, socio-economic composition appeared far more favourable in Bosnia than in Macedonia. Not only do we register deeper cultural differences in Macedonia than in Bosnia (while in Bosnia the main line of division is religion, language being only recently and artificially made a salient cultural dimension, in Macedonia the linguistic and religious cleavages follow the ethnic lines), but, moreover, the Macedonian and Albanian ethnic groups are more heterogeneous in terms of many features (urbanization, literacy, employment) than their counterparts in Bosnia. While Nikolovska and Siljanovska-Davkova show great socio-economic differences between the demographic structure of Macedonian and Albanian ethnic groups, Schneckener underlines how the four-year long war in Bosnia created a situation that is “worse for all segments of society. In this respect, all groups suffer bitterly, and no side seems to be particularly disadvantaged as long as they cooperate with the international donors.” (2002: 212).

Here again, what Lijphart considered to be a most important factor for successful power sharing appears to be neither a sufficient, nor a necessary condition. Further on, it appears much more appropriate to concentrate on the presence/absence of the cross-cutting cleavages, because such formulation avoids several pitfalls. In the first place it avoids statistical approximations. The inter-ethnic socio-economic discrepancies should be considered along with the degree of socio-economic homogenisation *within* the group. For example, it might happen that the ethnic minority is prevalently rural and that the majority is prevalently urban; nevertheless, this does not exclude the possibility that the ethnic minority searches the support of the rural components of the majority in order to see its own economic interests protected.

Further on, as Roeder and Rothchild underline, even in a condition of sharp socio-economic disparities it is possible (as in Malaysia) that the economically more advantaged groups “accept the need to institute redistributive policies” (Rothchild and Roeder, 2005: 46). In such setting, a sign of goodwill bears particular importance as it represents an important commitment to the corrective equity that, in turn, can help to lower the minority’s claims and actually reduce the threat to power-sharing institutions (Horowitz, 1991, 470). Further on, as Hoddie and Hartzell (2005) stress, the power can be shared in different dimensions, and it is possible to distinguish between a political, a military and an economic power sharing.

Yet, where the economic redistribution is part of the power-sharing arrangement, economic prosperity and development appear to be important pre-conditions. “An expanded economic pie can allow ethnic elites to elevate the living standards of economically disadvantaged groups even as the other groups continue to see a rise in their own living standards” (Roeder and Rothchild, 2005). On the contrary, economic hard-times make the re-distributive effects much more visible, risking to sharpen the economic conflict between the ethnic groups. Combined with Lipset’s findings on economic

development as one of the factors favouring the democratization process, the economic prosperity turns into a favourable condition for both *consociativism* and *democratization* aspirations of the power sharing. Both Bosnia and Macedonia perform rather poorly on this dimension even though, due to the long, destructive war, Bosnia is surely far behind. The difficult economic crisis that both countries are facing (the GDP per capita in 2005 was 2252 euro in Bosnia, 2298 in Macedonia) and the significant rates of unemployment (in 2005 Bosnia unemployment rate was about 43.9%, Macedonian slightly lower, 37.3%) create an environment in which more than 25% of the population are below the national poverty line (according to the CIA world fact-book, 25% of the population in Bosnia in 2004 and 29.8% of Macedonian citizens in 2006). Moreover, in Macedonia there seem to be significant differences between the groups. In Macedonia, the Albanians sign a far higher unemployment rate than Macedonians (32% vs. 61%), even though we are uncertain about the extent to which such difference is caused by the large sector of the grey economy. From this point of view Macedonia appears to be an interesting case for assessing the impact that the economic austerity plays on the capacity to introduce difficult re-distributive reforms. The administration reform the country undertook in the last years was supposed to reach two important objectives: reduction in the number of civil servants and equal representation of the ethnic minorities. This brought to a situation in which large-scale dismissals in the administration (affecting mainly the Macedonian majority) were undertaken contemporarily with the creation of new jobs for the members of the ethnic minorities. The international actors were playing a particularly important role in this process, as the costs of such reform would have been unbearable without financial assistance for the social programs.

In Bosnia, economic disparities are also present, but they do not directly follow the ethnic lines. We already mentioned that, due to the fact that the proportional representation is based on the 1990 census, in the almost ethnically “clean” entities, cantons and municipalities, the non-majoritarian groups enjoy significant advantages. The analysis of poverty and inequality in the country reveals that even though there are groups that are poorer than others (the percentage of poor and extremely poor is highest among Serbs), the key disparities can be found *within* the groups. Thus, while according to the 1997 data 27.3 of Bosnian citizens were considered poor, it was a reality of 48.7% of Serbs, 12.6% of Bosniaks and 25% of Croats (Bisogno and Chong, 2002). The study reveals that for both Bosniaks and Serbs the percentage of poor citizens is highest in those regions where they represent the *majority*, and is combined with the particular *inner-group inequalities* that was reflected in the GINI index of the ethnic groups (for the Serbs the GINI index is 0.54, for the Bosniaks it accounts to 0,42, while the inequality is lowest within the Croatian ethnic group, with a GINI of 0.39; Bisogno and Chong, 2002). It also indicates that the particularly negative situation among Serbs was a product of the discrepancies between the two Bosnian entities, Federation and Republika Srpska, and of the International Actor's policy that, due to the opposition from Srpska, cut away financial support to this entity. Finally, the internal inequalities, that are rather significant seen that in 1990 Bosnia, as a former-communist state,

represented a higher level of social equalities, indicate the presence of unfavourable mechanisms for the distribution of wealth *within* the groups, a problem that can be directly linked to the rise of the war lords, to the high level of corruption and to a political process nourishing inequalities.

*Cross-cutting cleavages: pre-condition included by other authors*

Another set of Lijphart's criteria includes: existence of an external threat common to all groups, overarching loyalties that reduce the exclusiveness of ethnic attachments, and pre-dominance of the elite. However, before assessing the impact of these factors, we will concentrate on some of the favourable conditions present in literature that Lijphart himself has mentioned in some of his numerous works on consociationalism and power sharing, but that he dismissed in time. In fact, they are not included in his most recent works, although still get the attention of other authors.

We already mentioned the criterion of cross-cutting cleavages. The presence of cross-cutting cleavages has found its place in Lijphart's list of pre-conditions in his writings from 77-79 (see Bogaards, 1998), but the condition was dropped off the list, also due to the fact that, as we saw, the consociative democracy *implies* by definition the predominance of overlapping cleavages. Schneckener (2002), in his analysis of power sharing, includes the cross-cutting cleavages among the favourable pre-conditions, while Roeder and Rothchild states that: "Where the shared national identity (considered by the authors as one of the two necessary conditions for the functioning of the power-sharing, n.d.a.) prevails, ethnic elites are not competing the national elites, cross cutting issues divide the citizens in different ways and lower the salience of ethnicity" (Roeder and Rothchild, 2005: 323). Finally, numerous authors underlined the importance of the cross-cutting cleavages (see Pappalardo, 1979). The reasoning backing such argument is that the conflictuality is far minor in the case where the group memberships overlap and where cross-cutting political cleavages create incentives for elite moderation, increase the social links among the groups and diminish the salience of the ethnic identity, which finds itself, to say, intermingled with other important identities.

However, as Pappalardo underlines in his criticism of Lijphart's conditions for consociativism, there is the possibility that cross-cutting cleavages actually undermine the consociative democracy, because the resulting heterogeneity of the groups may increase intra-group competitiveness and undermine the elite's capacity to dominate over the segment. Indeed, elite domination over social segments and a limited pluralism within the segments themselves were included among the key-factors for sustainability of the power-sharing mechanisms by Pappalardo (1979), Schneckener (2002), Roeder and Rothchild (2005) and, in some of his writings, by Lijphart as well. In the following pages we will reconsider this factor. While the logic upon which Schneckener bases his argument in favour of cross-cutting cleavages is rather convincing (cross-cutting are a mean to temperate the inter-ethnic conflict and create the basis for communication and cooperation between the groups), Pappalardo's negative assessment also seems to make a good point, if it is true that elite predominance is one of the most important conditions for

the survival of consociativism. It is unclear whether the cross-cutting cleavages represent a positive or negative background condition for the proper functioning of the power-sharing, and we believe that this factor needs further clarification in order to be properly understood.

As Pappalardo stresses in his criticisms, the intersection of the conflicts can bring to the moderation of the elite only if all intersecting dimensions of the conflict are equally salient (Pappalardo 1979: 423). It is for this reason that Roeder and Rothchild do not require *any* kind of cross cutting cleavage, but only those cross-cutting cleavages that contribute to diminish the salience of the ethnicity. The same we can say of Schneckener, who operationalizes the variable “cross-cutting cleavages” in a manner that implicitly classifies as favourable those situations where ethnicity is not the most salient issue, and as less favourable those situations where the ethnicity is the prevailing and most important cleavage<sup>16</sup>.

This practically means that cross-cutting cleavages are important in those settings where ethnicity is not the prevailing, or the most important dimension of the conflict: which, in the final run, appears rather tautological, because power-sharing and consociative democracy are, indeed, thought as *solutions* for divided societies, i.e. societies where the ethnic conflict is indeed the most important and the most dangerous threat to social unity. It again appears that power sharing is thought as an efficient solution only for those cases where the problem that it is supposed to solve is actually absent or is not very salient.

If we go beyond this tautology, and try to further analyze the problem of the cross-cutting issues, we can notice that the key-question here becomes the representation of interests. The discussion of the cross-cutting conflicts brought us to the conclusion that, rather than the sheer existence of such conflicts, what is important is their salience, or better, *which* are the most salient conflicts in the society. But this question can not be answered only by observing the socio-economic characteristics of the population, for the demands must be politicized and the interests must be mobilized in order to become effective dimensions of conflict structuring the political scene. This brings us again to the elites as the key-actor in the formulation and mobilization of the interests. Indeed, it is rather rare to find internally completely homogeneous ethnic groups, i.e., ethnic groups that do not display some degree of internal socio-economic differences. We saw, for example, that in Bosnia there are enormous economic discrepancies *within* the ethnic groups. How can then happen that, beside the presence of such deep-rooted economic divisions, the most salient conflict in Bosnia still is the inter-ethnic conflict?

The answer to this question is very complicated and difficult. Many theories and frameworks, often in contradiction, have been formulated since the '70s in order to explain the resilience or the

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<sup>16</sup> Thus, the author adopts the electoral behaviour as an indicator of the presence/absence of cross-cutting cleavages, claiming that where the votes are not following the ethnic or linguistic lines but are structured by the socio-economic, professional or other affiliations, the cross-cutting cleavages are present. Otherwise, where the votes mainly follow the ethnic/linguistic/religious divide, the countries score negative on this factor. See Schneckener 2002: 213.

reappearance of ethnic conflict in industrial world. Anyway, one factor is to be sought in the manner in which the domestic elite articulates the interests and mobilizes the support, which will strongly depend on the potential conflicts present, different types of the identifications involved in such conflicts and on the opportunities offered to the elites by these identifications. In a series of dimensions ethnicity appears rather particular when compared to other dimensions of conflict and other mechanisms of identification.

From the elites' point of view, the mobilization of the electorate on ethnic lines shows also to be particularly advantageous, for ethnicity, due to its intrinsically ("organic") collectivistic character, allows elites to avoid the necessity to be politically accountable to their constituencies (Snyder, 2000). The ethno-nationalist appeals can be easily used to suppress not only the individual rights of the non-members, but, in the name of the collectivity, it can also justify the suppression of the individual rights of the in-group members as well. It allows the calls for sacrifice of the individual for the benefit of the community, ensuring that the 50% of the extremely poor Serbs in Republika Srpska, neglecting the fact that their economic difficulty is caused by the extremely unequal in-group re-distribution of resources, keep supporting the nationalistic parties that heavily contributed to bring them in such situation. The mobilization on nationalistic grounds is showed by Snyder to be one of the most useful mechanisms for impeding the full democratization in situations where the power-eager elite is forced to liberalize but not ready to give the power away.

While the above mentioned reasons can explain why ethnicity is an easy and convenient asset to mobilize, it will be the structure of the opportunities embedded in the institutional setting to decide whether and to which extent this tactic is feasible. From this perspective, the power-sharing institutions, with the institutionalization of ethnicity (Brieber, 2003) that they produce and their overall impetus towards the ethnicization of politics (Roeder and Rothchild 2005), represent a particularly fertile ground for the mobilization of the support along ethnic lines. Which brings us to a paradox of the power-sharing: the stability and survival of the consociative democracy is strongly linked to the structure of the domestic conflict, where, as most of the scholars agree, the prevalence of the cross-cutting issues (or, better, the non-prevalence of ethnicity as a main line of division and conflict) is a necessary condition for its proper functioning. But, on the long run, the consociative democracy appears to end up undermining the very basis upon which it resides, for it creates such structure of opportunities that it actually gives ethnicity an overwhelming importance (role) in the political process.

*Predominance of the elite: consociative maybe, but democracy?*

As we stressed, Pappalardo's claims that cross-cutting cleavages might actually undermine what he, Schneckener, and even Lijphart consider a favourable condition for consociativism: the predominance of the elites:

"The political leadership of each group is able to win internal support for compromises and

agreements. The segments, or the society as a whole, are characterized by a 'structured pre-dominance of elites vis-à-vis non-elites' (Nordlinger, 1972: 119) or by an 'elite-dominated political culture' (McGarry & O'Leary, 1990: 284)." (Schenckener, 2002, p. 214).

The strength of the elites according to Pappalardo is one of the two necessary conditions for the functioning of consociative democracy. The argumentation is rather simple: a "strong" elite can ensure the credibility of the commitments it makes to the elites of the other segments, for its undisputed authority ensures the compliance of their segment, and increases its coalitional potential by decreasing the fear of losing the power as a consequence of an agreement. The struggle for power within the segment, on the other hand, weakens the segment's elite, diminishing its credibility towards the other elites, and its capacity to negotiate the solutions, exposing it to the charge of "permissivism" and of insufficient toughness in the promotion of their group's interests.

Yet, as Hristova (2005c) underlined in her analysis of Macedonian consociativism, while consociativism requires, and nourishes, the elite's dominance over the segment, at the same time it can raise serious questions concerning the accountability of the elites. If the competitiveness of the political system is a necessary condition for ensuring the accountability and the responsiveness of the elite (i.e. democracy proper), the predominant elite that does not feel threatened from within, a necessary condition for consociativism, can represent an obstacle to democratic development.

The prevalence of the political elite is not only a basic pre-condition of power sharing, but also its unavoidable outcome: the strength of the segment elites is improved by power sharing, it is also strengthened, being thus a result of the consociativism. The ethnicization of politics threatens the status quo, converting practically every issue in a "vital" one tackling the inter-ethnic conflicts that, if not dealt with properly, might threaten the security and the survival of the state. Which legitimizes the elites to withdraw the decision-making process from the eyes of the public and, in turn, to "negotiate the solutions behind the closed door" in a decisional process that is completely un-transparent and on which the citizens and civil sectors have no influence at all, further strengthening the political elites of the segments.

There seems to be a particular tension between consociativism and democracy, for where the ethnic conflict prevails and there is no overall acceptance and support for the power-sharing mechanisms, the political struggle *within* the segments puts the status quo and survival of the state under continuous pressure. Such a trap can be avoided only under the condition that internal competition is not concentrated exclusively on the ethnic cleavage, but it involves others among the main issues present in society. It appears necessary that the elite is "predominant" (or better, that it enjoys a large, undisputed support) in those matters concerning the necessity of consensus between the segments, but at the same time it is kept accountable and responsible on matters *other* than the inter-ethnic relations: a situation possible only when there is an overall support for the institutional framework of the state and a widespread acceptance of the arrangements keeping the polity together – a condition that would allow

to pursue at the same time both the *consociative* and the *democratic* goals. Otherwise, the in-group competitiveness that would give the basis for the elite's accountability could contribute to a further intensification of the inter-ethnic conflict.

The two countries subject to our analysis clearly illustrate the problem of the democratic deficit and the competition within the segments that bring to an endless ethnicization of politics. On one side, we see, both in Macedonia and Bosnia, party systems segmented on ethnic lines, with weak differences on the left-right continuum and low salience of cleavages other than the ethnic one. The sharp political competition between the political parties *within* the segments, combined with the overall prevalence of the ethnic cleavage, brings to a situation where the political competition takes directional/salience rather than positional connotations<sup>17</sup>: the candidates seek to present themselves credibly as the real tutors of the interests of the segments. Once in power, they will be called to respond for their capacity to protect their ethnic group, and will not be held accountable for other issues. The corruption, state capture and, consequentially, the unequal allocation of the resources *within* the group are (at least in parts) consequences of such a setting where the "group" prevails over the citizens. In both countries we register rather high levels of corruption (according to the Transparency's Global Corruption Report for 2008, the two countries are on the 84<sup>o</sup> position in the world, with a cpi score 3.3 on a scale from 0 to 10), where due to the weaknesses in the judicial systems the top-level corrupt cases remain unpunished:

"Whenever someone mentions, or even proves corruption, to some politician or a government official, they will say that you're not a patriot, that you shouldn't attack your own, and that the case is politically motivated" (from the interview with Bajic from GROZD - Civic Organization for Democracy, cited in Ajder, 2009, p. 3). Similar cases, when a clear case of corruption of the high state officials of the Albanian minority was presented as the political attack against the Albanian minority, were also registered in Macedonia (see Hristova, 2005c). In Macedonia the fight against corruption is usually perceived to be politically based (the new elite pursuing the old), and a show-off put in scene in order to ensure the media publicization, without any real intention to prosecute the cases (among the initiated cases that gained significant media cover, almost none was brought to the final trial – see Labovik 2005, interview with Taseva, August 2008).

In both countries we register both a strong internal competitiveness within the segments, that produces strong pressures on the status quo, and a lack of elite accountability strengthened by the widespread nationalistic rhetorics. The major factor helping to ensure the survival of the two states is the international community, whose intervention in the two countries takes different shapes, with a different structural impact on the political systems.

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<sup>17</sup> For directional model of electoral competition, see Rabinowitz and McDonald (1989). For positional model, see Downs (1957).

### *External factor*

The external factor represents one of the conditions that most scholars judge capable to ensure the proper functioning of the power-sharing mechanisms. As pointed out by Lijphart, the common external threat can promote national unity, contributing to lower domestic inter-ethnic tensions and fostering the survival of consociative arrangement. Yet, there are several problems with this condition. In the first place, rather than a condition directly favouring the proper functioning of power-sharing mechanisms, it is a factor that might, under specific conditions, positively influence what we consider to be the most basic pre-condition for the consociative democracy: the existence of the polity. The external threat, when perceived as such by all segments of society, can offer a “significant other” in respect to which a common national identity can be built upon.

Yet, the condition is actually rather difficult to be satisfied in societies emerging from fierce inter-ethnic conflict. In the first place, as Bunce (2006) showed, the maximization of the ethnic-groups requests is often linked to the presence/absence of the external support. Very often, the “multi-ethnic” societies are composed by groups that have their mother-land on the other side of the border (as it is the case of Serbs and Croats in Bosnia and of Albanians in Macedonia). The mother land can offer support to its minority living in the neighbour country, and it is precisely upon this support that the strategies of the minority’s leader will rely. Yet, from the point of view of the power sharing and of state’s sustainability, such external threat rather than favour, may well jeopardize the fragile status quo, as we saw happen in Bosnia.

Further on, even when the external threat does not come from the mother-land of the national minority, its sheer existence does not necessarily bring to the building up of the national unity. It is possible that the external actor tries to use the existing domestic conflicts in order to grant the support of the inner allies for its own purpose, while the conflicting ethnic groups are seeking an external support for their own aims. In deeply divided societies it is therefore difficult that the external threat is perceived as such and/or with the same intensity by all the segments; and this reduces its potential as a glue capable to create common identity and national unity. Such development requires that the conflicting domestic segments are interested in ensuring the survival of the state, and this, in turn, requires that some level of loyalty to the common state and to the existing political community is already present. The common external threat can contribute to strengthen the national unity, but in order to be perceived as “common” it must be accompanied by a certain level of loyalty to the state. Otherwise, it is far more probable that the external threat will be perceived by secessionist groups as a good opportunity for them to pursue their state break-up agenda. During the Bosnian history, three different external actors were threatening the country’s sovereignty: the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and Serbia. Yet, the external threat was never capable to generate a real national unity, for each of these external actors decided to rely on one of the domestic segments in order to achieve

the control of the Bosnian state (respectively on Croats, Bosniaks or Serbs)<sup>18</sup>.

Yet, as the Macedonian example taught us, the external actors can still play a significant role in maintaining the consociative democracy and in ensuring the sustainability of the power sharing mechanisms. Indeed, in our opinion, the key difference between Macedonia and Bosnia lays in the different role of the external community and in the different impact that the external actors exercise.

In both countries the peace agreements were negotiated through the mediation of international actors. EU, NATO and, in the case of Bosnia, UN, were the international actors most strongly involved in the conflict settlement and peace building. Yet, the modalities and instruments used were substantially different.

In Bosnia's case, the Dayton peace agreement established the office of the UN High Representative, an *ad hoc* international institution responsible for overseeing the implementation of the civilian aspects of the agreement ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. HR's prerogatives were enlarged in 1997 on the Conference of the Peace Implementation Council in Bonn with the Bonn's Competencies, that gave him the legislative powers and the faculty to dismiss the domestic elected and non elected officials. The office was supposed to be a temporary solution, but 14 years after the Dayton agreement the High Representative still represents the highest power in Bosnia, and the UN was unwilling to withdraw him, fearing threats to the country's stability.

Beside the problems concerning the Bosnian sovereignty and democracy (a de-facto international protectorate in the country and a serious lack of democratic legitimacy of what is the ultimate legislative and executive power), the presence of the HR actually seems to be one of the factors contributing to the consolidation of the Bosnian status quo. Endowed with the supreme authority on legislative decision-making, the HR's paradoxically contributes to encourage the Bosnian elite to rely on ethnic propaganda even more. As the survival of the country is guaranteed by the presence of the HR, who has the power to annul any act brought by the domestic legislative and executive bodies, the domestic elites can "safely" continue to use the nationalistic rhetorics, threaten the status quo and the very Bosnian state, scoring points with their electorates, for they are sure that, in final instance, the consequences of the centrifugal forces will be avoided by the HR's intervention. The incapacity of the Bosniak, Croat and Serbian leaders to reach an agreement even on simple questions like the car plates is an illustration of the dynamics that brings the HR to the centre of the Bosnian legislative process. As the final decision will be brought by someone else, they are encouraged to back even the most unreasonable claims of their own segments and not making the concessions that their in-group opponents would use against them in the electoral campaign. At best, they will come out of the bargaining process as winners. At worse, they will be able to blame, once more, the HR for being partial and supporting the other ethnic groups.

The EU accession process exercised no positive influence on accelerating the reforms in Bosnia.

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<sup>18</sup> See Kasapovic, 2005.

Even though the country was subject to the Stabilization and Association Process, offered the status of the potential EU member and subject to the EU's membership conditionality, this still did not contribute to help Bosnia undertake the necessary political and economic reforms required by the EU. Unlike Serbia, where the presence of a strong anti-EU block weakened the EU's leverage, all relevant Bosnian political parties emphasize their devotion to the EU integrations. Yet, the lack of "ownership of the reforms" made the domestic elite once more not accountable for the failures and successes of the country's integration into the EU. The UN's HR, that since 2002 is also the EU's special representative, has the explicit task to "help the country undertake the necessary reforms on their road to the EU", and the nationalistic elite does not have any incentive to make his task easier.

The role of the external actors is substantially different in Macedonia, where the country's desire to adhere to these two institutions acts indeed as the glue that contributes to keep the country together. The only goal that Macedonians and Albanians appear to have in common is the Macedonian Euro-Atlantic integration. The context is, however, completely different from the one we find in Bosnia, for here the political elite is fully responsible for the country's performance on the EU's and NATO's reform path. So, the desire to fulfil the external requirements is currently the only factor able to counterbalance the centrifugal forces and to foster centripetal dynamics. The constitutional reform in 2005 was a clear example of the positive influence that the common "external" goal can have to limit the inclination to adopt nationalistic strategies. The judicial system reform required by the EU envisaged, beside other measures, the change of the constitution. The constitutional reform represented a golden opportunity for the ethnic minorities to re-examine the status quo – indeed, at the beginning of the process, the Albanian parties required the change of the constitutional design of the executive and the introduction of the collective presidency with the ethnic key. The opposition also tried to introduce further changes. However, the desire to fulfil the EU's requirements in time contributed for an agreement to be made among the key actors according to which the constitutional reform will be concentrated *only* on the questions concerning the judiciary and that none of them will use its veto power to push forward its own agenda. Much to EU's and NATO's representatives' surprise, who feared that the constitutional reform will create a political blockage of the country, the Macedonian assembly smoothly adopted the necessary constitutional changes.

Macedonia's relatively good performance on the path of the reforms that allowed the country to relatively quickly advance its candidatures for both the EU and NATO, is rather impressive, if compared with Bosnia. However, what the country still lacks is the adequate implementation of the reforms that, as reported by the Macedonian authors, are completely externally guided: "in Macedonia there is an impression that our political consolidation is a process undertaken only due to the pressure from the international community. In practice, this means that we and our political elite do not need to improve the existing situation, we would be happy with lower standards as well, but, as they (the international community, *author's note*) insist, we are forced to..." (Hristova, 2005a, p. 2).

The external actors took a very high level of authority in Macedonia, resulting in a situation in which the external accountability (accountability to the important international actors) became more important than the domestic lines of accountability (accountability of one domestic institution towards the others, accountability of the domestic elite towards the citizens). Seen the high level of domestic support the EU and NATO integration enjoys in Macedonia, the Macedonian political elite is particularly vulnerable to any criticism coming from the EU and NATO. The Macedonian experts often report enormously high levels of external accountability of the Macedonian political elite, which practically results in a situation where the international actors replace the citizens in their function of keeping the government responsible. As Hristova underlined, whenever some political actor fails to comply with the democratic norms, the first reaction is

“To run to the EU representative or the USA ambassador, to lament the misbehaviour of the political opponent. They behave like children that do not have the capacity to solve their inner conflicts and have to run to the teacher seeking for protection. Instead of using the domestic institutions, instead of mobilizing the citizens, instead of calling for the attention of the public, they run to the foreign representatives. And this shows where the legitimacy to govern Macedonia comes from” (from the interview with Hristova, August 2008, Skopje).

This is also a case where the inter-ethnic relations are at the stake. Both the Macedonian and the Albanian elite are seeking external legitimacy, and are willing to accept external mediation. In several occasions the international community intervened to mediate between the two, ensuring a far smoother transition than in Bosnia. The domestic ownership (and responsibility) of reforms, combined with both Macedonian and Albanian citizen's strong pro-Western orientation, contributed to a situation where the international actor's judgment is a mechanism that succeeds even in moderating the nationalistic claims. Even though we can question to which extent such substitution of the accountability towards the citizens with the accountability towards the international actors is actually democratic (Macedonia is often domestically criticized to be semi-sovereign and too dependent on the external influence), it is still a better situation than the one we find in Bosnia, where nationalism undermines the domestic mechanisms for guaranteeing the elite's responsibility, while the presence of the HR does not allow the full development of the external accountability mechanisms. The undisputed domestic responsibility for the integration process, combined with the strong international influence deriving from the shared desire to achieve the EU and NATO membership, represent the winning combination that makes the integration goal to act as a glue between the two divided political communities we find in the country. Yet, Macedonia still has to face the question of “what next”. Once the country fulfils its dream, once the membership conditionality is finished and the international actor's influence diminishes (the studies showed a significant decrease of the EU's leverage on the CEE and in some cases even the reversal of

the reforms once these achieved the status of the EU member states<sup>19</sup>), what will keep the Macedonians and Albanians together? The split might still be avoided, in order to keep the unit to which the membership status was granted alive. But what about the centrifugal tendencies at the domestic level? It is possible that the common struggle for the fulfilment of a national dream offers a basis for the building of a shared identity, and that the inter-governmental dynamics on the EU level creates an incentive for the common stand, reinforcing the creation of a single polity. Yet, due to the lack of precedent cases of divided countries entering the EU, we do not know in which measure the EU membership can contribute to strengthening the identification with the nation state.

#### *Overarching loyalties and shared national identity*

Which brings us to the final, and in our opinion most important, pre-condition for the success of consociative democracy in the ethnically divided societies: the presence of the “overarching loyalties that would reduce the exclusiveness of ethnic attachments” (Lijphart, 2008). In different formulations such pre-condition was underlined by different authors: Schneckener (2002) stresses: The groups are held together by a common loyalty, i.e. the majority on each side is somehow affiliated to the same symbols, institutions, ideals or values. A shared national or regional identity would be an example for a very distinct overarching loyalty” (p. 212). Roeder and Rothchild (2005) considered the existence of the shared national identity one of the two key conditions so that inter-ethnic power sharing brings to the consolidation of peace and democracy:

“The chapters in this volume highlight two conditions that are essential to the consolidation of peace and democracy through the power-sharing approach: an identity constraint and a resource constraint. First, a shared national identity is an important element in power-sharing cases that perform well. Where this condition prevails, ethnic elites are not competing national elites, cross-cutting issues divide citizens in different ways and lower the salience of ethnicity, and the issue of secession seldom surfaces. Second, in the successful cases, the state is strong in the sense that it is viewed as a legitimate authority possessing the capacity to enforce its responsibilities-chief among these being the preservation of national security from domestic challengers – and has an abundance of resources to cover the costs of duplicating administrations for different regions or ethnic groups.” (Roeder and Rothchild, 2005, p. 323)

While we fully agree with the identity constraint element, the resource constraint is partially tautological and included in the first criteria. A certain level of identification with the state, or, as Lijphart would label it, of “the overarching loyalty”, is a necessary (yet not sufficient) condition for the state to be viewed as a legitimate authority. As far as the abundance of resources is concerned, this criterion is indeed relevant, for, as we saw, the power-sharing institutions impose high costs, so that in a situation of financial austerity, its implementation might risk to create strong re-distributive effects that will increase the costs of the actors involved (see above).

The presence of a shared national identity, the existence of an undisputed political community

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<sup>19</sup> See for example Dallara, 2008.

appears to be the most important pre-condition, from which many of the other pre-conditions we analysed really depend. The above-cited Roeder and Rothchild's passage clearly shows that the presence of a shared national identity will allow to the cross-cutting cleavages to lower the salience of ethnicity, at the same time allowing within the segments the pluralism that is necessary for keeping the ethnic elite accountable, without undermining the survival of the nation state. In fact, the presence of an overarching loyalty means that the competition *within* the segments does not threaten the survival of the political community and is not concentrated on mainly ethnic issues. It can also decrease the threats that might derive from the change in the size of the groups, that we saw to be one of the most important pre-conditions for the stability of the power-sharing arrangements: where there is a certain level of support to the common state, the change of the force of one segment might bring to the re-examination of the institutional arrangements, but will not necessarily threaten the survival of the state itself.

Finally, as Rustow (1970) taught us, the existence of a political community (or better, an undisputed political community) is a necessary pre-condition of democracy as well, for "the people can not decide until somebody decides who are the people", (Jennings, 1956, cited in Rustow, 1970, p. 351).

Yet, both in Macedonia and Bosnia the political community is strongly disputed. In the case of Bosnia, the war destroyed the weak bounds created during the existence of the common Yugoslav state. The Bosniak group started to perceive itself as the titular nation, often underlining that it is the only one who "has no other option but the Bosnian state", while the other two groups' identification is very weak (in particular, Serbian leaders are often calling for the secession of Republika Srpska). In a similar way, the Macedonians represent the titular nation, while the level of identification of the Albanian minority with the Macedonian state is rather low. The power sharing, with its re-distributive effects, produces the incentives for the maintenance of the status quo, because by offering the re-distribution of the resources along the ethnic lines, it does create a situation in which the ethnic groups can draw particular benefits that they could not enjoy in case of secession. The Macedonian Albanians, for example, currently draw significant benefits from the principle of the equal representation in the administration, a benefit that they would hardly enjoy should the western part of Macedonia declare the independence or should it become part of Albania. A similar situation can be found in Republika Srpska, where without the "significant other" threatening the "Serbian ethnic group", the mechanisms hampering the political elite's accountability would be removed, and the biggest cost of the Republika Srpska's independency would actually be paid by its elite that, protected by the international efforts to keep Bosnia together, continues with its irresponsible calls for the secession of the RS. But these mechanisms, rather than contributing to the consolidation of peace and democracy in the two countries, actually freeze the existing status quo characterized by the persistence of inter-ethnic conflict and by a partial democratization. Such effects of the power sharing that create an incentive for the maintenance of the status quo are far from being stable, for the permanence of internal centrifugal

forces can bring to new cycles of violence and to disintegration, whenever “the exit option” appears more convenient than the status quo to the domestic elites. In the absence of the bottom-up legitimization of the common state, the sustainability of the state fully relies on the dynamics on the elite level. In such cases, where the strong segmentation on the level of the society does not offer the safe-guard for the maintenance of the common state, a crisis on the elite level can easily bring to disintegration or even violence.

Getting back to the overarching loyalties and shared national identity as the pre-conditions for the functioning of the power sharing, we should also emphasize that the very mechanisms of the inter-ethnic power sharing actually undermine, instead of reinforcing, the creation of a shared national identity. The re-distribution of power and resources along ethnic lines strengthens the citizens' identification with the sub-group, for it is precisely due to their ethnic origin that they are granted specific rights and powers. Some authors would try to solve this problem by underlining the multiple identities. But the peculiar character of the national identities, that are always both political and cultural and are kept together by powerful symbolic ties, hardly allows the development of identities that are compatible and not mutually exclusive. Multiple identities may develop, of course, but only when national allegiances are relatively weak, i.e. when the risk of ethnic conflict is not very high. Once more, unfortunately, the practicability of the remedy is in inverse relation to its utility. There is a possibility that identifications bifurcate between a larger state and a smaller national entity when the larger state is characterized in terms other than “national” (for example, “ideological”). But, as the very history of communist countries show, there is a strong tendency for ideology to be “nationalized”, so that such arrangements are doomed to be unstable and rely heavily upon the coercive power of the state.

It was thus possible, for example, in former Yugoslavia, to be at the same time a Serbian and a Yugoslav, for the category of Yugoslav embraced the commitment to the common struggle of different “Southern Slaves” for the communist state during WWII. It embraced the devotion to the communist party, to the brotherhood and unity, devotion to the “working Yugoslav people”. Yet, as soon as communism failed, the glue that held the different Yugoslav people withered away. In nowadays' Bosnia, a state more and more perceived as the state of the Bosniak's, it is impossible to be a Serb and a Bosniak at the same time. The same is true for Macedonia, for when we speak about the “Macedonian president” there is not even a linguistic distinction between the president of the Macedonian majority ethnic group and the president of the state of Macedonia which included the ethnic Macedonians, as well as Albanians, Turks, Roma, Serbs etc.

In Macedonia's case, we saw how the existence of a common goal in foreign policy and the strong international pressures created a feeble, yet important substitute for the (lack of) existence of the shared national identification. Yet, the question remains whether the country will succeed in surviving the fulfilment of its own dream, for once the common goal is reached, if not even some feebly shared identity is created, it is difficult to imagine what factors will be able to compensate for strong internal

centrifugal tendencies.

### *Conclusions*

In this paper we tried to critically analyze the various pre-conditions for the proper functioning of the consociative democracy, trying to understand to what extent the failure of the inter-ethnic power sharing to bring to the consolidation of peace and democracy in Macedonia and Bosnia, as well as its different performance in the two countries, were a product of more or less favourable domestic pre-conditions.

Yet, our analysis showed that the most of the pre-conditions favouring the consolidation of peace and democracy through consociativism are either tautological, or based on the implicit assumptions, or actually linked to other pre-conditions. The only pre-conditions that appeared to bear some relevance in the two countries are:

The stability of the size – for while it did not appear to be neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for the functioning of the power-sharing, we saw how the issue is particularly relevant in both the analyzed countries. But rather than the condition favouring the good performance of the consociative democracy, the *instability* of the groups' size can, in those aspects characterized by the lack of a shared national identity, destabilize the power-sharing agreement.

The financial prosperity, which can make the re-distributive effects of power sharing more acceptable and less evident, and at the same time is showed in literature to be positively related to the democratization process as well.

The presence of a certain, even if feeble, level of identification with the common state and a certain degree of shared national identity. The existence of political community, the will to live in a common state is, indeed, the necessary condition for both the survival of the state and its democratization. It can, as in Macedonia, be substituted by the external influence, when the common goal in the foreign policy acts as a glue and opens the door to the external actors to push the democratization reforms forward. Yet, the common foreign policy goal is only a feeble substitution for the lack of a shared national identity and, in the long run, it can contribute to moderate the domestic centrifugal tendencies only to the extent in which it can offer the basis for the building up of the shared identification of the two ethnic groups.

Indeed, as we can see from Table 1, in all other dimensions the two countries either have the same score, or Macedonia's performance is worse than Bosnia's, which further decreases the importance of these pre-conditions and strengthens our conclusions concerning the importance of the existence of something that would tie the ethnic groups together (be it the loyalty to the pre-existing national identity, a common external threat or a dream that can be reached only through cooperation).

Pre-conditions	Macedonia	Bosnia
Absence of a single majority group	-	+
Stability in the size	-	+
Groups of roughly equal size and balance of power among them	-	+
Geographic concentration of ethnic residence	+	+
Small number of groups	+	+
Country with small total population	+	+
No socio-economic disparity among the groups	-	+
Cross-cutting cleavages	0	0
Economic prosperity	-	-
Elite's domination	0	0
Common external threat	-	-
Common external goal	+	-

The overarching loyalties, or, as Roeder and Rothchild put it, the existence of some, even feeble, level of the shared national identity, appears to be the most important pre-condition of the proper functioning of the power sharing mechanisms. Yet, it is possible to argue, in the final analysis such condition is also tautological, for the inter-ethnic power sharing is actually thought of as a solution for strongly divided societies where such conditions are not present. Moreover, we saw how the power sharing actually tends to undermine, rather than to strengthen, the identification of the citizens with the common state and strengthens the identification with the sub-group. It thus, ironically, appears that the power sharing is only well-suited for those societies where it is actually not needed (the inter-ethnic conflict is not the most prevalent one and there is, even if weak, a certain level of shared national identity), where it will most probably end up undermining the only necessary condition for its stability, bringing, rather than solving, inter-ethnic tensions.

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