



Sosyal Bilimler
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T.C.
MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI
SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER BİLİM DALI

**THE ROLE OF ETHNIC KIN GROUPS IN THE ESCALATION OF ETHNIC
VIOLENCE: THE CASE OF NORTH MACEDONIA**

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

AZRA ERDEM ADAK

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Danışman: DOÇ. DR. HÜSEYİN ALPTEKİN

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ÖZET

ETNİK ÇATIŞMANIN ŞİDDETLENMESİNDE ETNİK AKRABA GRUPLARIN ROLÜ: KUZEY MAKEDONYA ÖRNEĞİ

Neden çok kültürlü ülkelerin bazılarında etnik sorunlar şiddetli çatışmalara dönüşürken bazılarında çatışmalar daha düşük bir seviyede gerçekleşmektedir? Neden bazı etnik gruplar şiddete başvururken diğerleri barışçıl yöntemler izliyor? Bu çalışma, bu soruları cevaplamak için teorik bir çerçeve önermekte ve uluslararası faktörlerin yerel faktörler kadar önemli bir rol oynadığını ve bunların birleşiminin en şiddetli etnik çatışmalara yol açtığını savunmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, sınır ötesi akraba grupların çatışmaya taraf olan etnik grubun mobilizasyon yöntemi üzerinde etkili olduğu öne sürülmektedir. Sınır ötesi akraba grubun şiddeti teşvik edici yöntemlere başvurması durumunda etnik çatışmanın şiddetinin artma ihtimalinin yüksek olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca, bu tez kapsamında yapılan araştırmalar akraba grubun bulunduğu ülkedeki siyasi statüsünün de önemli olduğunu ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bu kapsamda akraba grup siyasi güce ne kadar yakınsa şiddete başvurma ihtimali o kadar düşüktür. Çalışmada nicel ve nitel araştırma yöntemleri birlikte kullanılmıştır. İlk olarak “All Minorities at Risk” (AMAR) veri setindeki bilgiler doğrultusunda hipotezler sıralı lojistik regresyon analizi ile test edilmiştir. Sonrasında Kuzey Makedonya örneği incelenerek nedensel mekanizmaların detaylı analizi yapılmıştır. Bu bağlamda 2001 yılında Kuzey Makedonya’da gerçekleşen iç savaş sırasında Kosova Arnavutlarının Kuzey Makedonya Arnavutlarına vermiş olduğu destek incelenmiştir. Sonuçlar etnik akraba desteğinin etnik gruplar arasında şiddetli çatışmaların artmasında veya azalmasında belirleyici bir etken olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etnik çatışma, sınır ötesi etnik akraba grup, sıralı regresyon, Kuzey Makedonya

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF ETHNIC KIN GROUPS IN THE ESCALATION OF ETHNIC VIOLENCE: THE CASE OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Why do ethnic disputes turn into violent conflicts in some multiethnic countries but not in others? Why do some ethnic groups mobilize violently whereas others pursue peaceful methods? This study proposes a theoretical framework to answer these questions. It argues that international factors play as important role as domestic factors and their combination led to the most violent interethnic conflicts. Accordingly, it suggests that transborder ethnic kin groups affect the mobilization methods of rebel groups. If the kin group resorts to conflict-inducing methods, the risk of violent conflict increases. On the other hand, this thesis displays that the political status of kin group matters. In this regard, it argues that the closer the transborder ethnic kin group is to political power in its country, the less likely the ethnic conflict in a country to escalate into violent rebellion. This study uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The hypotheses are tested using ordinal logistic regression based on the All Minorities at Risk data in a large-N analysis. Furthermore, an in-depth analysis is conducted to examine the causal mechanisms. In this regard, Kosovar Albanians' support for Macedonian Albanians during the 2001 insurgency in North Macedonia is examined. Results show that ethnic kin support is a determinant in the escalation or peaceful resolution of interethnic violence.

Keywords: Ethnic conflict, transborder ethnic kin group, ordinal logistic regression, North Macedonia

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKSH	: Albanian National Army
AMAR	: All Minorities at Risk
DPA/PDSH	: Democratic Party of Albanians
DUI	: Democratic Party of Integration
DV	: Dependent Variable
EU	: European Union
FYROM	: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GENLIN	: Generalized Linear Model
IV	: Independent Variable
KFOR	: Peacekeeping Kosovo Force
KLA	: Kosovo Liberation Army
LDK	: Democratic Alliance of Kosovo
MAR	: Minorities at Risk
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NLA	: National Liberation Army
OFA	: Ohrid Framework Agreement
PKK	: The Kurdistan Workers' Party
PPD	: Party for Democratic Prosperity
SDSM	: The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
TEK	: Transborder Ethnic Kin
UN	: United Nations
UNMIK	: United Nations Mission of Kosovo
US	: The United States
VMRO-DPMNE	: The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic belonging and the social tension and conflicts associated with it have been the subject of many studies. In this context, the causes, aims, and methods of ethnic-based conflicts were examined, and solutions were developed on how to prevent conflicts. However, despite all the results of these studies, ethnic conflicts are still a reality today. Especially in the multicultural state structure that emerged after the world wars, people from different nationalities, cultures, and identities started to live within the borders of the same state. Some states have been able to manage this diversity in peace, while others have witnessed violent conflicts. For instance, Balkan Peninsula witnessed brutal conflicts that led to ethnic cleansing happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995. The conflicts between Bosniaks and Serbs took a violent form causing one of the greatest atrocities in history. Similarly, during the Kosovo War from 1998-1999, the deadliest clashes broke out between Kosovar Albanians and the Yugoslav regime headed by Serbs. Additionally, countries from different regions such as India, Sri Lanka, Iraq, and Palestine have witnessed destructive struggles which led to great human suffering.

As Samuel Huntington (1993) stated in his famous work, states were at war before, but now there are wars between civilizations and cultures. Although it is valid for most of today's conflicts, it is one of the problematic aspects of the thesis that it sees identity and culture as phenomena that will directly cause conflict. Undoubtedly, many factors lead ethnic groups to conflict. Although ethnic identity forms the basis of ethnic-based conflict, it has been suggested in many studies that the main causes of conflicts are the discrimination a group faces or opportunities a group has due to their ethnic identity.

Moreover, ethnic conflict has national and international dimensions. In this context, although there are problems arising from the internal functioning of the states, there may be situations that occur across borders or as a result of external intervention. Therefore, ethnic conflict has global consequences. For example, during the conflicts in Kosovo between 1998 and 1999, thousands of Kosovar Albanians migrated to the neighboring country of North Macedonia. This intense migration wave seriously affected the social and economic structure of North Macedonia. A few years later, ethnic tensions began to increase in North Macedonia and civil war broke out. Of course, the war in Kosovo and the resulting immigration wave were not the only cause of conflicts in North Macedonia. Ethnic tensions within the country became more severe due to an ongoing war in the neighboring country. Thus, this phenomenon, which has consequences on a global scale, needs to be addressed on a global scale in the same way. For

this reason, I argue that ethnic conflicts should be analyzed at both domestic and international levels. Therefore, this thesis aims at providing a more comprehensive approach to the literature on ethnic conflict.

1.1. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The main research questions of this thesis are: Why do ethnic disputes turn into violent conflicts in some states but not in others? Why do some ethnic groups mobilize violently whereas others pursue peaceful methods? Which factors play important role in the escalation of ethnic conflict? What is the role of ethnic kin support in conflict escalation? More specifically, why did ethnic tensions in North Macedonia turn into violence in 2001?

As I mentioned earlier, ethnic conflict has both domestic and international factors. I will answer the questions I have listed above by considering these two dimensions. Accordingly, this study assumes that the ethnic group that is a party to the conflict is already subject to discrimination in the political, social, and economic fields. Therefore, ethnic tensions exist among minority and dominant ethnic groups. Therefore, ethnic tensions exist. In such cases, tensions can turn into violence if there are factors triggering the conflict or when the ethnic group thinks that the conflict is an opportunity for them. The ethnic group, which is uncomfortable with the situation they are in, may resort to actions that will intensify the conflict when the setting is appropriate. At this point, I argue that ethnic groups supported by another group or state are more prone to conflict. In this regard, support from cross-border ethnic kin groups is the most important factor in the intensification of conflicts.

In line with this understanding, this thesis has three main hypotheses to explain the escalation of ethnic violence. Firstly, this thesis hypothesizes that "the existence of close transborder ethnic kin affects the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict. If there is a kindred group nearby with close relations, it is more likely for the kin group to intervene in the conflict." The presence of ethnic kin across the border provides important opportunities for the rebel group. For example, the group that cannot establish the necessary operations center within the borders of its own country may be mobilized in the region where the cross-border relative group is located. At this point, it is important to have close relations between the kin group and the rebel group. For example, in the North Macedonia case, it is known that the relationship between Macedonian Albanians and Kosovar Albanians is better, while Albanian Albanians are more distant. While the role of Kosovar Albanians in the civil war in North Macedonia was tremendous, the support of Albanian Albanians was limited. In terms of worldwide conflicts, Gurses (2015) found in his study that of the 148 civil wars that broke out between 1950 and 2006, 114 were fought by groups that had close kin groups in transborder countries.

Secondly, this thesis argues that “the type of intervention and support provided by the close transborder kin group, affects the severity of the conflict. If the kin group resorts to conflict-inducing methods, the risk of violent conflict increases. On the other hand, if the kin group favors democratic resolution of problems, the level of conflict is reduced.” The presence of a cross-border kin group does not always increase the severity of the conflict. It depends on its approach to the ongoing ethnic tensions in the rebel group's country. While some kin groups try to resolve ethnic tensions through diplomatic means, others intensify the conflict by providing military support. For example, despite the discrimination and assimilation policies that the Bulgarian Turks were exposed to, there have been no violent conflicts between the Bulgarian Turks and the Bulgarian Government that ends in civil war. One of the reasons for this is that Turkey, which borders Bulgaria, resorted to diplomatic means to seek the rights of the Bulgarian Turks. On the other hand, although they were in a much better position than Bulgarian Turks in terms of political representation and fundamental rights, Macedonian Albanians were also uncomfortable with being second-class citizens in their country. Since they had military support from their kin in Kosovo, ethnic disputes turned into civil war in 2001. Additionally, the fact that kin groups resort to diplomatic ways or tend to violence affects not only the intensification of conflicts but also how they will result. Kin groups who pursue diplomatic methods can mediate between the warring sides and resolve the conflict in a peaceful way (Gurses, 2015: 144).

Lastly, this thesis asserts that “the closer the transborder ethnic kin group is to political power in its country, the less likely the ethnic conflict in a country escalate into violent rebellion.” Kin groups in power or close to power tend to approach the problems in the surrounding countries more distantly and prefer to resort to diplomatic means in case of any intervention. However, kindred groups with limited access to political power are more prone to violent methods. They are likely exposed to state repression and become radicalized. For example, Kosovo lost its status as an autonomous province within Yugoslavia in 1989. It caused great resentment among Kosovar Albanians. Even though they pursue diplomatic methods at first, the growing repression of the Yugoslav state radicalized the group, and they appeal to violent methods. This affected the conflict in North Macedonia. Radicalized Kosovar Albanians provided military support to Macedonian Albanians. On the other hand, Albania made only diplomatic attempts. While Kosovo, which lost its political status, took actions to encourage conflict the Albanians of Albania, who were in power in their country, resorted to diplomatic means.

1.2. Research Design

The thesis displays the relationship between transborder ethnic kin group support and escalation of violent interethnic conflict. In doing so, qualitative, and quantitative research methods will be used to test the hypotheses mentioned above. First, to analyze the relationship between violent ethnic conflict

and transborder ethnic kin, I will conduct a large-N analysis using ordinal logistic regression in SPSS. I will benefit from the AMAR dataset to test dependent and independent variables in the analysis. In terms of empirical analysis, the case of North Macedonia needs closer attention to understand the domestic and international dynamics of violent interethnic conflict. North Macedonia has been chosen for this study because as a state that peacefully declared its independence and escape from the deadliest conflicts in the Balkans, it witnessed a civil war after many years. I argue that the role of the Kosovo War and the support from Kosovar Albanians play a significant role in the escalation of ethnic conflict. For that purpose, I will use the process tracing method to understand the relationship between ethnic conflict and ethnic kin support in North Macedonia.

1.3. Outline of the Thesis

In Chapter Two of the thesis, the conceptual analysis of the main variables that constitute the thesis will be made. In doing so, it will be examined how the terms are defined in the literature, and then it will be expressed in what context they are discussed in this study. Accordingly, the terms ethnicity and ethnic group, ethnic conflict, and transborder ethnic kin will be conceptualized. Later, alternative explanations and theories on the causes of ethnic conflict will be examined. In this context, the main approaches in the literature will be discussed under five main headings: Primordialism, incentives, opportunity, elite manipulation, and institutionalism. After the conceptual framework and literature review, the theoretical framework of the thesis will be introduced. In this direction, the method applied in the thesis will be explained in detail, detailed information will be given about the theory to be used in the thesis, and the main arguments of the thesis will be stated. Finally, the chapter will end with a conclusion part.

In Chapter Three of the thesis, quantitative analysis will be conducted. In this context, detailed information will be given about the dataset to be used and how the variables are measured will be explained. Then, the analysis method will be specified. Various assumptions will be tested, and the results will be analyzed to check the suitability of the analysis method. Then the analysis results will be displayed and interpreted. Finally, the chapter will end with a conclusion part.

In Chapter 4, the hypotheses tested in Chapter Three will be examined in the North Macedonia case. First, brief information will be provided in the chapter and alternative explanations for the outbreak of civil war in North Macedonia will be analyzed. Afterward, a brief history of North Macedonia will be provided and an analysis of ethnic tensions in the country will be made. In doing so, the relationship between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians in the country will be emphasized. Later, the outbreak of the Kosovo War and its impact on North Macedonia will be evaluated with a specific focus on the formation of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and National Liberation Army (NLA). The former is a rebel organization created in Kosovo, whereas the other is created by KLA members in North

Macedonia. Then, I will focus on the international agreement which ended the civil war immediately. At that point, the content of the agreement and its reflections on the Albanian community will be discussed. Later, information will be given on post-agreement conflicts and recent developments in the country such as name dispute. Finally, the chapter will end with a conclusion part.

In Chapter Five, the arguments and hypotheses of the thesis will be represented. According to the regression results and process tracing in the North Macedonia case, I will interpret the validity of my hypotheses in this study. Secondly, I will mention the contributions and limitations of the study and make some recommendations for future research in this area.



CHAPTER 2

A THEORY OF ETHNIC VIOLENCE

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, first I will define the dependent and independent variables which are violent ethnic conflict and transborder ethnic kin group respectively. To define ethnic conflict, one must mention the theories of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Therefore, I will briefly examine the terms and provide information about how they are defined in the literature and define our approach in this study. Secondly, I will provide a literature review that examines the alternative explanations of ethnic conflict. After that, I will present the research design of the study and introduce the arguments and causal mechanisms between dependent and independent variables. Finally, the chapter will end with the conclusion part.

2.2. Conceptualization

In this part, I will define the dependent and independent variables of this study and give information about how they were used in the literature by other scholars. In this regard, I will conceptualize ethnicity and ethnic group as they are the basic units of this analysis. Secondly, I will explain the usage of ethnic conflict in other studies and my approach to the term. Finally, I represent the independent variable that constitutes the theory of part of this thesis transborder ethnic kin. I will define its usage in previous studies and explain how this study will implement it.

2.2.1. Ethnicity and Ethnic Group

Discussions on the causes of ethnic conflict start with the definition of ethnicity in the first place. Some scholars following primordial thought argue that ethnic identity is unchangeable (Kaufman, 2011: 92). It has such deep roots in the historical background that it should be taken as a given. (Cordell & Wolff, 2010: 10). According to them, our ethnic identity is definite even before we are born. However, it does not stem from genetic facts. As Van Evera (2001) pointed out “ethnic identities are not stamped on our genes.” Nevertheless, it is hard to reconstruct them once they formed. Taking ethnicity as a primordial identity makes ethnic conflicts inevitable because of ancient hatreds that pass down.

Contrary to the primordialist view, some scholars focus on the artificiality of ethnic identities and argue that identities are social construction (Gurr, 2000: 4). It is considered an outcome of modernization. Ethnic identities may exist before modernity, but modernity transformed their meanings (Varshney, 2009: 285). Localized identities turned into masses through instruments produced by modernity. As for Anderson, this instrument was "print capitalism" (Anderson, 1983). According to him, through the printing press and the spread of vernacular languages, local identities turned into national ones.

Following this, other scholars of the constructivist school of thought argue that state policies play a major role in the formation of groups where there was no group consciousness before (Hale, 2004: 461). Therefore, ethnic groups are not ancient but modern phenomena. Moreover, they may be produced and promoted because of material or political purposes. It has been argued that ethnic identity gain importance when it is used by political entrepreneurs in response to threat or opportunity. It is instrumentalized by elites who want to manipulate their masses.

On the other hand, scholars pioneered by Anthony Smith mix both primordialism and constructivism and point out the importance of myths and symbols in the formation of ethnic identities. Smith argues that symbols that unite nations may be ancient and persistent but groups may appeal to them in new forms for new intentions at different periods (Hale, 2004: 461). Symbols, myth, memory, value, ritual, and tradition are considered crucial elements of ethnicity (Smith, 2009: 25).

Regarding different schools of thought, ethnicity is defined by scholars in several ways, each focusing on different aspects of it. A broad definition is made by Chandra (2006) arguing that ethnic identities are a subdivision of identity divisions in which membership is decided by descent-related or believed to be descent-related attributes. Similarly, Toft (2003) claims that “ethnic groups are composed of individuals who share a common trait such as language, race, or religion, a belief in a common heritage and destiny, and an association with a given territory.”

In this study, I adopt Smith’s definition of ethnicity and ethnic groups. An ethnic group, in Anthony Smith's definition (1986), “is a group sharing five key traits: a group name, a believed common descent, common historical memories, elements of shared culture such as language or religion, and attachment (even if only historical or sentimental) to a specific territory.”

2.2.2. Ethnic Conflict

The term conflict refers to a disagreement and a division between at least two parties. In Ted Gurr’s studies “conflict defined as a process refers to the interaction between groups in their respective attempts to alleviate relative deprivation” (Gurr, 2016: 44). According to Cordell and Wolff (2011) “the term 'conflict' describes a situation in which two or more actors pursue incompatibly, yet from their perspectives entirely just, goals.”

A conflict can be named an ethnic conflict if either party defines itself along ethnic lines and the essential fracture of confrontation is one of the ethnic differentiation (Cordell & Wolff, 2011: 4). In other words, if a party of the conflict perceives that its members are being discriminated against and cannot realize their goals because of their ethnic identity, it can be considered an ethnic conflict. A distinction between violence and conflict is also emphasized by some scholars. An ethnic conflict can be managed peacefully

or turn into violence. In that sense, violence is considered a degree of conflict rather than a form of conflict (Brubaker & Laitin, 2004: 90).

In this study, the level of conflict is examined. Under which circumstances, a conflict turns into violence? What makes a conflict violent? Why do some ethnic groups pursue violent conflicts, but others appeal to peaceful means?

2.2.3. Transborder Ethnic Kin

Coupled with domestic problems, civil wars are highly influenced by the international environment. A series of studies show that this type of violence is caused not only by factors within the country but also by influences operating beyond state borders (Gleditsch, 2007). The risk of civil war in a state increases if there is an active or latent conflict in the neighboring countries. Recent studies prove that transborder ethnic kin (TEK) groups play major roles in ethnic conflicts (Cederman et al., 2009; Cederman, Gleditsch, Salehyan, et al., 2013; Cetinyan, 2002; Davis & Moore, 1997; Salehyan, 2009). Their size, concentration, affinity for the ethnic groups in conflict, and their political and economic status in their country of residence may affect the type of conflict.

Transborder ethnic kin group is identified in the literature as “ethnic groups with transnational ethnic connections and whose settlement area is split by an international border” (Vogt et al., 2015). According to Gleditsch (2007), “transnational ties related to ethnicity are likely to influence the willingness of groups to mobilize for violent conflict or respond violently to government repression.” In this regard, transnational ethnic kin ties affect the escalation of disputes between deprived ethnic groups and a central authority into violent conflict. It may intensify the conflict by providing material and military resources to the rebel group. It does not only affect the dynamics of the conflict but also affects the outcome of it. According to Gurses (2015), “civil wars waged by ethnically mobilized ethnic groups that have kin in a neighboring country are more likely to result in an outcome favorable to the rebels.” His research displays that of the 148 civil wars that ended in 2006, 48 concluded in a resolution, and of these 48 cases, 42 had close transborder ethnic kin (Gurses, 2015: 146).

In this research, ethnic conflict in a state is taken into consideration as consisting of three parts: The government, the rebel ethnic group, and the transborder kin group. In this triadic relationship, the role of ethnic kin is determinant in terms of the duration, severity, and outcome of the conflict. It can intensify the conflict by providing military support for the rebel group as mentioned above. On the other hand, it can also provide diplomatic support to mediate between the belligerent parties for a peaceful settlement (Gurses, 2015: 144). During the bargaining processes, the kindred group put pressure on the repressive government. Therefore, the outcome and the course of the conflict are contingent upon the acts of the kin groups.

This study examines the role of transborder ethnic kin in the escalation of ethnic conflicts. I argue that ethnic conflict in a state is influenced by the structuring of transborder ethnic kin. In this regard, I analyze the Macedonian conflict in 2001, between Albanians and Macedonians. I argue that the war in Kosovo had a critical effect on the Macedonian conflict. Due to the radicalization of the Kosovar Albanians after the war and close relations between these two kin groups, the ethnic tensions and protests in Macedonia turn into armed rebellion. In the escalation of conflict, the military support of Kosovar Albanians played a crucial role. Additionally, the unresolved status of Kosovo after the war increased resentment among ethnic Albanians. Therefore, violent conflicts continued even after mediation efforts led by international actors such as the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in both countries.

2.3. Literature Review

There are mainly five dominant theories in the study of ethnic conflict. These are Primordialism, incentives, opportunity, elite manipulation, and institutionalism.

2.3.1. Primordialism

In the ethnic conflict literature, primordialists focus on the origin of ethnicity and argue that it is entrenched in hereditary biological traits and has a long history in the application of cultural differences. In other words, it is a givenness that occurs with being born in a religious society, speaking a certain language, and following certain social codes (Geertz, 1963: 105). In this line of understanding, ethnicity creates an attachment among members who has the same ethnic characteristics. This attachment does not necessarily stem from interaction rather it is the result of blood ties (Shils, 1957: 142). One becomes a member of a specific ethnic group innately and it cannot be changed. This understanding also assumes homogeneity in ethnic groups. Preferences of group members are considered to be the same and the boundaries of the group do not change over time. Therefore, ethnic groups are assumed to have stable characteristics (Evera, 2001:20). The problem with the stability is the fact that it also brings strictness preventing any other inter-group interaction. Boundaries not only bring group members together but also highlight the characteristics of that group that distinguish it from other groups. Therefore, polarization may occur in the society resulting in ethnic disputes.

Apart from explaining the ethnic group formation and bonds, primordialism argues that essential differences among ethnic groups result in interethnic conflicts. Those differences are treated as consequences of unalterable natural inheritance and as the source of ethnic tensions. In other words, ethnicity is seen as the generator of the conflict itself (Strapacova, 2015: 59). Therefore, all multiethnic states carry the potential for ethnic conflict (Blagojevic, 2009: 7). Even though violent conflict may not be present at a specific time, ethnic tensions persist as a result of old animosities and previous

experiences. However, this argument does not explain why interethnic tensions turn into conflict in some multiethnic states but not in others.

The strict characteristics of ethnic groups also show themselves in ancient-hatreds arguments. It has been argued that violent ethnic conflict is the result of long-standing historical enmities among ethnic groups. As Toft (2003) summarizes this enmity is passed to the generations via blood ties. Groups carry their history and narratives from generation to generation. Nevertheless, there are several examples of ethnic groups who were in conflict in the past but live in peace at present. Thus, historical enmities do not cause ethnic conflict. They can only provide the basis for ethnic tensions.

2.3.2. Incentives

The role of incentives motivated by political, economic, or cultural factors is analyzed comprehensively in ethnic conflict literature. Rather than considering interethnic tension as an inevitable outcome of ethnic diversity as in the case of primordialism, this understanding focuses on the conditions and environments in which ethnic groups reside. In other words, it underlines the role of sociopsychological factors to study ethnic rebellion.¹ In this sense, inequality, grievance and greed-based explanations were analyzed by several scholars. The former refers to the role of motives whereas the latter mostly focuses on maximization of interests (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004: 564). On the other hand, there have been important studies connecting the perception of territory with the level of ethnic rebellion (Toft, 2003).

The grievance-based theories have their roots in the literature on discrimination, repression, and inequalities in the state among different ethnic groups. It is argued that they create a sense of resentment that is later followed by strong incentives for rebellion (Gurr, 2000: xv). In his prominent studies, Ted R. Gurr introduces the term “relative deprivation” to explain the causal mechanism between incentives and political violence. He defines the term as “actors’ perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities”. Value expectations are the properties and living preconditions that people think they are entitled to. Value capabilities, on the other hand, are the properties and conditions they believe they can obtain and retain (Gurr, 2016: 24). According to the theory of relative deprivation, individuals' dissatisfaction with their social status triggers conflict. The theory assumes a relationship between frustration and aggression based on fundamental human behavioral mechanisms.

In line with the relative deprivation theory, the role of inequalities has been questioned. The conditions in which grievances among ethnic groups emerged have been analyzed. Based on this approach,

¹ For further reading on the role of social psychological factors, see Muzafer Sherif’s realistic conflict theory (Sherif, 1966) and Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner’s theory on social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

grievances are assumed to have been triggered primarily by the political and economic inequalities in society (Cederman et al., 2011). The role of grievances has been indirectly examined by exploring the empirical link between inequalities and the outbreak of civil war at the group level. The studies show that ethnic groups who are below and above the country average in terms of economic and political conditions are more likely to experience civil war. Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug explain the causal mechanism in two main steps: First, objective political and economic inequalities can be transferred into grievances when group comparison takes place. For this to happen, group members should embrace a shared identity. Thus, members of relevant groups tend to make social comparisons based on the distinction between in-group and out-group classifications. Second, such grievances trigger conflict through collective mobilization.

States mostly react to that kind of violent action not by enhancing the situation of the discriminated group but by repressing them through different state mechanisms. On the contrary, it has been argued that severe repression does not contain conflicts as is assumed by the states. Rather, it intensifies such conflicts by creating resentment among minorities. (Gurr, 2000: xvi) Groups targeted in this way will have no choice but to take up arms to protect themselves against state intervention. It tends to deepen grievances and radicalize the movement. (Cederman et al., 2013: 50).

Some recent studies examine the effect of territory in ethnic conflicts. The territory is significant for an ethnic group as it has historical value and is a component of their identity. Throughout history, wars had been made for the sake of lands. People defended their soil at the cost of their life. In this context, the meaning attached to territory plays a crucial role in explaining violent ethnopolitical conflicts. Domination on territory can become an element of survival and thus it becomes indivisible (Toft, 2003: 2).

Criticizing the relative deprivation theory proposed by Ted R. Gurr, Toft argues that it is not possible to test people's perceptions adequately since they cannot be standardized. Thus, the theory does not enough to explain violent conflicts. According to Toft, violence occurs if the state views its territory as indivisible and the ethnic group concentrated in a specific region demands independence. Thus, what both sides attribute to the notion of territory is significant. Settlement patterns are assumed to influence territory perception. Whether an ethnic group will risk violence in its pursuit of territorial control depends on the settlement type (Toft, 2003: 32). On the other hand, in terms of its territorial integrity, the territory becomes indivisible for a multinational state if it believes allowing an ethnic group to become territorially independent may set a precedent for other groups.

2.3.3. Opportunity

Earlier works on motivations as the cause of ethnic violence have been challenged by more materialistic approaches. Scholars primarily focus on the role of opportunity mechanisms rather than incentives and emotions. In line with this perspective, collective action theory argues that group motivations are inadequate on their own to construct political mobilization (Cederman et al., 2010: 96). Ethnic groups challenge since, under specific conditions, violence may be a useful tool to acquire substantial advantages (Weidmann, 2009: 527).

In their study, Collier and Hoeffler revising their earlier theory on the effect of greed on ethnic conflict propose an econometric model arguing that insurgency demands both impulse and opportunity (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004: 563). Greed and opportunity should go hand in hand to realize the aim. According to their perspective, opportunity structure could be analyzed under three dimensions. First, an opportunity mechanism should be available to finance the rebellion. Any kind of violent activity cost much to both sides. The will to rebel can be realized only if the group can afford it. Access to natural resources or having material support from diasporas or foreign actors can provide the necessary finance. Second, in the case of atypically low-cost, rebellion may be a profitable option. If the expenses are much lower than what is expected or already seen as inevitable, then the rebellion may occur. The unusual cheapness of the rebellion motivates the group to act. Third, government military capability may be inhibited by several factors such as terrain, geographic dispersion, and social cohesion.

The role of the terrain is also emphasized in Fearon and Laitin's insurgency model. They argue that “insurgency is favored by rough terrain” since rebels know the area better than the government military forces (Fearon & Laitin, 2003: 76). Mountainous terrain proved to be related to the conflict in both studies (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2003) even though the former find a shred of weaker evidence whereas the latter find stronger one. For instance, in the case of the terrorist organization PKK (The Kurdistan Workers' Party) in Turkey, rebellions mostly hide, live, and train in the mountainous regions of the country. Those areas provide them with a haven.

In line with the terrain argument, geography, in general, is suggested as the cause of ethnic conflict. Following the indivisibility of territory theory of Toft, Weidmann focuses on the role of group settlement patterns to explain violence (Weidmann, 2009). He argues that the geography of the group provides the framework in which the members of the group communicate and therefore is critical in determining the ability of the group to take action in the event of conflict (Weidmann, 2009: 531). Concentrated groups are prone to take mutual action thus they can engage in conflict more easily. In addition to group concentration, a group's proportion to the country's population is an important factor (Cederman et al., 2010: 96). Studies display that group size is an important opportunity factor for ethnic mobilization.

The role of the state and its strength to govern is assumed to have a positive relationship with the incidence of ethnic violence. Studies show that state weakness that is caused by poverty, instability, and a large population favors rebellion (Fearon & Laitin, 2003: 88). Furthermore, groups may feel threatened in the case of instability or the collapse of the central government. In such circumstances, groups act to provide their security. Nevertheless, "what one does to enhance one's security, causes a reaction that can make one less secure" as set forth by the security dilemma approach (Posen, 1993: 28). This situation ends in violence as was the case during the collapse of Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union.

2.3.4. Elite Manipulation

Usually studied under social-psychological explanations concerning symbolic politics theory or instrumentalism, the role of elites needs closer attention. Researches display that chauvinistic leaders use ethnicity and ethnic symbols as an instrument for their ambitions (De Figueiredo & Weingast, 1999; Kaufman, 2001). According to Smith, ethnicity is regarded as essentially instrumental. It serves aims other than the cultural ones its proponents affirm as its *raison d'être*, but it does so via merging economic and political factors (Smith, 1986: 9).

De Figueiredo and Weingast (1999) propose an elite-predation model arguing that it is not the ethnic groups who want to fight but the elites who are afraid of losing authority. They call it "gambling for resurrection". Elites may provoke ethnic violence to change the agenda if they could not solve the problem through the normal course of politics. For instance, during the Yugoslavian war, the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic appealed to the Serbians' fear of an aggressive Croatian regime to wage war against Croatia.

Several studies found a link between electoral competition and ethnic violence (Bates, 1983; Wilkinson, 2004). In his analysis of the Hindu-Muslim conflict in India, Wilkinson (2004) argues that "ethnic riots are often planned by politicians for a clear electoral purpose." Politicians may use the ethnic card to appeal to their bases. Recently, such kinds of arguments become highly apparent during the electoral periods. Especially far-right politicians target ethnic minorities and immigrants in their speeches criticizing the resources allocated to them.

Elite manipulation is better understood with symbolic politics or ethnosymbolism.² The symbolist approach proposed by Stuart Kaufmann recognizes that ethnic identity is more than an elite-ruled social category. Building on the findings of Anthony Smith, the symbolist theory states that each ethnic group is characterized by a "myth-symbol complex" that determines which components of a shared culture

² Ethnosymbolism is the earlier approach regarding the ethnic myths, symbols, and traditions as important elements in nation formation. It emerged as the critical theory of the modernist school of thought.

and what perception of history unite the group and differentiate it from others. (Kaufman, 2006: 50) In other words, ethnic groups have myths and symbols that constitute their identity. Kaufmann defines a symbol as "an emotionally charged shorthand reference to a myth" (Kaufman, 2001: 16). For instance, the flag of the country is an important symbol for the Turkish people. Its red color is believed to represent the blood of martyrs' during the Independence War. Another example could be the Srebrenica Flower which is the symbol of remembrance for the 1995 genocide that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a powerful symbol for Bosnians.

Even though they indicate a specific identity and represent a powerful belonging, symbols and myths do not cause violence on their own. However, they can easily be instrumentalized by external actors, especially by elites. From this point of view, symbolic politics theory suggests that hostile myths are the precondition for the emergence of ethnic conflict together with ethnic fears and opportunities. Elites use myths and symbols to promote hostility, despair and security dilemma between groups (Kaufman, 2001: 34). Ethnicity calls for extreme violence only if there is concern that the group's existence is in danger.

2.3.5. Institutionalism

Ethnic violence is also assumed to be triggered by institutional settings in the country. First and foremost, the degree of institutionalization is considered an important factor (Alptekin, 2013; Snyder, 2000). Studies argue that weak institutions allow elites to pursue their goals through undemocratic means. To gain political support, they may address ethnic issues and create resentment in society. Furthermore, Lieberman and Singh (2012) argue that the state's institutionalization of ethnic categories affects the likelihood of violent conflict. It creates ethnic differentiation mainly emphasized by political leaders to make ethnicity relevant in the political sphere for their electoral purposes. That differentiation leads to a competitive environment among ethnic groups which may result in violent conflict.

Access to state power and involvement in decision-making processes proved to have an impact on violent ethnic mobilization. Studies display that "large ethnic groups that are excluded from state power or underrepresented in government are much more likely to challenge the regime's insiders through violent means (Cederman et al., 2010: 114)." Concerning this, some academics focus on the designs of political institutions to explain violent conflicts. Regime types, democratic polities, and electoral systems are analyzed as the key elements to understanding why violence occurs in some multiethnic states but not in others (Horowitz, 1985; Lijphart, 1977; Varshney, 2009). More recent studies found that state institutions and policies of ethnic incorporation are proved to have a significant effect on ethnopolitical mobilization (Alptekin, 2017). The common ground in those studies is the fact that ethnic mobilization is shaped by the actions of the state. It is about how ethnic groups are treated by the state.

2.4. Hypotheses

It is a fact that interethnic relations and conflicts cannot be explained through one theory. Several factors work simultaneously for the occurrence of ethnic-based resentment and conflict. Different factors may come to the fore in different cases. However, to understand the essence of the conflict and produce efficient solutions and mechanisms one should consider the factors not only inside countries but also factors operating beyond state borders. In my opinion, when these two factors come together, they cause the most violent ethnic conflicts. From this point of view, this thesis aims at analyzing the causes of ethnic conflict with a special focus on the transnational dimension and the influence of kin groups.

The effect of transnational linkages is studied by several scholars. The most prominent theorists of kin groups are Cederman, Gleditsch et. al. (2009) who developed the theory of ethnonationalist triads and analyzed the transborder ethnic kin (TEK) effect on the escalation of ethnic violence. According to the theory, ethnic conflict can be influenced by international and transnational linkages. Among them, ethnic linkages are considered the most notable ones. (Cederman et al., 2009: 409). Transborder ethnic kin groups can provide resources (financial, military, etc.) and create opportunities for violent rebellion. As opportunism argues ethnic groups assess the costs and benefits of a potential conflict. There are several factors involved in this assessment both from domestic and international dimensions. As for the domestic dimension, the economic conditions of the group and the state, group size, and political situation are crucial factors. On the other hand, international and transborder factors are as crucial as domestic factors. In this regard, transborder ethnic kin support heavily influence the conflict assessment procedure. Especially kin financial and military support increases the likelihood of violent conflict. Following the theory, I argue that transnational ethnic linkages are likely to affect the readiness of the ethnic group to mobilize against state repression. Nevertheless, the method of mobilization differs according to the support provided by ethnic kin. In this regard, the status of the kin group in its country is determinant.

In doing so, I already assume that the ethnic group in a country experiences state repression, its members are discriminated against because of their ethnicity, have limited access to political power, and have resentment against the government. In other words, all internal conditions are against the group. At this point, I argue that if the external conditions are in favor of the group, then there is a risk of violent ethnic conflict.

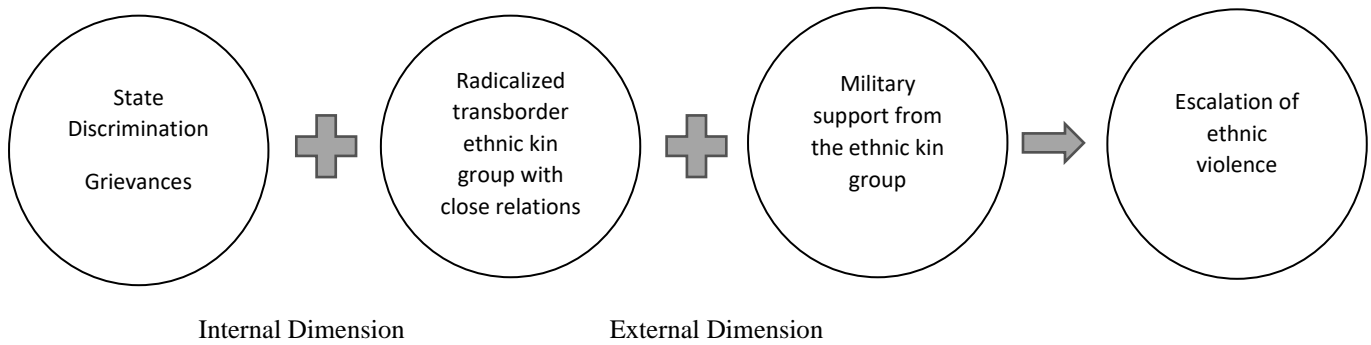


Figure 2.1: Causal mechanism between dependent and independent variables

In terms of external conditions, I argue that the attitude of transborder ethnic kin groups affects the level of ethnic conflict in the state where their members constitute a minority and if that minority is relatively deprived. In this chapter, the main hypotheses of this study will be introduced. First of all, this analysis assumes the existence of transborder ethnic kin.

H1: The existence of close transborder ethnic kin affects the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict. If there is a kindred group nearby with close relations, it is more likely for the kin group to intervene in the conflict.

H2: The type of intervention and support provided by the kin group, affects the severity of the conflict. If the kin group resorts to conflict-inducing methods, the risk of violent conflict increases. On the other hand, if the kin group favors democratic resolution of problems, the level of conflict is reduced.

Even though the existence of kindred groups increases the risk of violent conflict, it depends heavily on their political situation in the country they reside in. Kindred groups who have no or limited access to political power are more prone to violent methods. They are likely exposed to state repression and become radicalized. On the other hand, if they are part of the government, they are more inclined to resort to diplomatic methods.

H3: The closer the transborder ethnic kin group is to political power in its country, the less likely the ethnic conflict in a country escalate into violent rebellion.

2.5. Data and Method

In this thesis, I take an explanatory approach that aims at providing an answer to a why question. Why do some ethnic groups mobilize violently whereas others resort to peaceful methods? I argue that transborder ethnic kin groups have a direct influence on it.

First, I would like to introduce my variables and unit/level of analysis. First, my dependent variable (DV) is ethnic rebellion, and the independent variable (IV) is transborder ethnic kin. Accordingly, my unit of analysis is a group because I study ethnic group mobilization. On the other hand, the level of analysis is regional as I will focus on the transborder groups.

I will test my hypotheses by employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods. First, to analyze the relationship between violent ethnic conflict and transborder ethnic kin, I will benefit from AMAR Dataset (Birbir et al., 2016) which is a project initially started by Ted R. Gurr. The earlier version of the project was known as Minorities 'at risk' (MAR). It includes each group that 'communally suffers, or takes advantage from, organized discriminatory conduct vis-a-vis other groups in a community; and/or communally assembles in defense or advance of its self-constructed benefits' (Birbir et al., 2015: 111). The project attracted a lot of attention from academics and researchers who want to study ethnic group mobilization. As the scope of the research developed, concerns arose about whether the sample selected for the project was sufficient. To clarify the selection issues, Birbir et. al. developed the project by providing a sample frame of an expanded group list introduced as AMAR (All Minorities at Risk) that includes almost 1,200 socially relevant ethnic groups that are selected free from any politically categorized criteria as being 'at risk' or 'politically relevant for the period between 1945-2006 (Birbir et al., 2015: 111). Socially relevant refers to the situation in which people recognize ethnic differences in everyday life and condition their actions accordingly (Fearon, 2006). With this new approach, the AMAR dataset has become a much more consistent and comprehensive resource in ethnic conflict studies.

In the second part of the thesis, I will analyze the ethnic mobilization methods in North Macedonia. In doing so, I will analyze the Macedonian insurgency in 2001 with a special focus on the effect of the Kosovo War and the role of Kosovar Albanians in the Macedonian conflict.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the conceptual framework of this study and defined the concepts of ethnicity, ethnic conflict, and transborder ethnic kin. In doing so, their usage in the literature and other studies are also examined and my approach to them is specified. Later, alternative explanations to my research questions are analyzed. In this regard, the most prominent theories of ethnic conflict have been studied. I grouped them under five main headings: Primordialism, incentives, opportunity, elite manipulation,

and institutionalism. Undoubtedly there are other theories of ethnic conflict that were not addressed in this study. The reason is to examine the most dominant ones and control for them in the analysis of my hypotheses.

After the definitions and alternative explanations, I introduced my theory on the escalation of ethnic conflict into violence. In this regard, I appealed to the international dimensions of ethnic conflict and benefited from the theory of transborder ethnic kin. First, I gave information about the theory and how it was used in the previous studies. Later, I demonstrated my hypotheses and explain the rationale behind them. In doing so, I proposed an approach to the issue.

Lastly, I explained how to test my hypotheses. For that purpose, I gave information on the data and method that will be used in this analysis. Accordingly, this is a mixed study conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In this regard, I will benefit from the AMAR dataset covering the period of 1945-2006 to analyze the relationship between dependent and independent variables of this thesis. The unit of analysis is a group whereas the level of analysis is regional. In terms of the method, a large-N analysis will be conducted using ordinal logistic regression. In the fourth chapter of the thesis, I will analyze the ethnic conflicts in North Macedonia between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians from 2001 up to today with a specific focus on the role of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

CHAPTER 3

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF ETHNIC VIOLENCE

Ethnic conflicts have drawn considerable interest from academics. Several studies are conducted to analyze the causes, goals, and methods of interethnic violence. In this regard, quantitative research methods have been used in numerous research. Quantitative methods allow us to conduct large-scale analyses. Thus, it is a useful method to examine a global phenomenon. In this chapter, first I will introduce the data source and sample. Then I will introduce the variables and explain their measurement processes. Lastly, I will provide information about regression analysis and represent the outcomes.

In this study, I will analyze the factors that shape the mobilization methods of ethnic groups. In doing so, I will display the influence of transborder ethnic kin groups on the escalation of violent inter-ethnic conflicts. To test my hypotheses in a large-scale dataset, I will benefit from the AMAR database (Birbir et al., 2017) which has substantial data to analyze and understand ethnopolitical conflicts worldwide. It is the most comprehensive dataset in ethnic conflict analysis. The provided data includes information on the emergence and levels of ethnopolitical conflicts, and groups' characteristics as well as indicators for key theories of ethnic conflicts from 1945 to 2006. It is an updated version of the MAR (Minorities at Risk) dataset originally designed in the late 1980s by Ted Robert Gurr and it was the most comprehensive project to examine "politically active communal groups and their political actions." (Birbir et al., 2015: 111). The earlier version included only minorities "at risk", in other words, ethnic groups who suffer or benefit from systematic discriminatory treatment in comparison to other groups in a society. This was criticized by scholars as it caused selection bias. In an effort to solve the selection bias problem, developments were made in the data to provide a more complete sampling frame that better represents the universe. The latest version of AMAR includes approximately 1,200 socially relevant ethnic groups without any necessary political activation who met the following criteria:

1. Membership in the group is determined primarily by descent by both members and non-members.
2. Membership in the group is recognized and viewed as important by members and/or nonmembers. The importance may be psychological, normative, and/or strategic.
3. Members share some distinguishing cultural features, such as common language, religion, occupational niche, and customs.
4. One or more of these cultural features are either practiced by a majority of the group or preserved and studied by a set of members who are broadly respected by the wider membership for so doing.
5. The group has at least 100,000 members or constitutes 1% of a country's population (Birbir et al., 2015).

3.1. Dependent Variable

This thesis aims at answering the question of why some ethnic groups mobilize violently whereas others pursue peaceful methods? What are the factors that affect the transformation of ethnic tensions into

conflicts and the severity of these conflicts? AMAR has a variable that indicates the level of ethnic violence which is the dependent variable of this study: Rebellion (AMAR variable name: REB). This variable ranges from 0 to 7 (0: None reported, 7: Civil war) indicating the level of the conflict. In an attempt to reduce the number of zero frequencies in the ordinal regression, I recoded REB categories as follows: "None reported=0; political banditry, campaign of terrorism, local rebellion and small-scale activities=1; intermediate guerilla activity=2; large-scale guerilla activity=3; civil war=4. I specifically recoded political banditry, campaign of terrorism, local rebellion, and small-scale guerilla activities into the same category because they are also very similar in terms of the level of violence. The REB variable after the recoding process is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Recoding of Rebellion (REB)

AMAR value	Original coding	Recoded
None reported	0	0
Political banditry, sporadic terrorism	1	1
Campaigns of terrorism	2	
Local rebellions	3	
Small-scale guerilla activity	4	2
Intermediate guerilla activity	5	
Large-scale guerilla activity	6	3
Civil war	7	4
No basis for judgment	-99	-99

3.2. Independent Variables

To test my hypotheses, the AMAR has several variables related to kindred groups. The effect of close transborder kin will be measured using the transnational dispersion-kindred groups (AMAR variable name: GC10) variable. GC10 indicates the degree to which a group has close kindred near their regional base ranging from 0 to 3 (0: No close kindred across an international border, 1: Close kindred across a border which does not adjoin its regional base; 2: Close kindred in one country which adjoins its regional base; 3: Close kindred in more than one country which adjoins its regional base). The problem with this variable is the number of missing data. In an ordinal logistic regression model, which will be used in this analysis, to have consistent results, the number of empty cells should be reduced. There are many techniques to handle missing data. One of them is to reduce the number of categories in a variable by recoding it. For this purpose, I recoded the GC10 variable as follows: “No close kindred across and international border=0; Close kindred across a border which does not adjoin its regional base, close kindred in one country which adjoins its regional base, close kindred in more than one country which adjoins its regional base=1”. I recoded it as a categorical variable because this study argues that the

existence of transborder ethnic kin groups increases the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict. The newly coded categorical variable allows us to measure that hypothesis. The adjusted GC10 variable is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Recoding of GC10 Variable

AMAR value	Original coding	Recoded
No close kindred across an international border	0	0
Close kindred across a border which does not adjoin its regional base	1	
Close kindred in one country which adjoins its regional base	2	1
Close kindred in more than one country which adjoins its regional base	3	
No basis for judgment	-99	-99

In addition to the existence of a close kindred group, I also argue that the closer the transborder ethnic kin group is to political power in its country, the less likely the ethnic group is to resort to violence. Therefore, I added transitional dispersion-kindred groups in the power (AMAR variable name: GC11) variable to the analysis. It ranges from 0 to 3 (0: Kindred have no access to political power, 1: Kindred are outside the political ruling coalition but are not barred from power, 2: Kindred is in the ruling coalition, 3: Kindred dominates state coalition). Similar to the previous variable, due to the number of missing data I recoded this variable into three categories as follows: Kindred have no access to political power (no kindred abroad) =0; Kindred are outside the political ruling coalition but are not barred from power=1; Kindred are in ruling coalition=1; Kindred dominate state coalition=2" I considered being in the coalition and being not barred from power as similar categories since the focus here is to access the power. If a group has an opportunity to be a coalition partner using its democratic rights, then there would be not much difference in terms of the level of access to power. In addition to recoding, Huisman (2000) expresses that imputation is a popular method to deal with missing data. Several ways of imputation serve different aims of estimation. To handle the missing data, I used the median of nearby points method which is calculated by using observation values under and above the missing data (Çokluk & Kayrı, 2011). I chose this method because missing data in the kindred group's access to power variable would be best predicted in line with previous and next year's scores. This imputation technique did not increase the number of cases to a great extent but decreased the number of missing data allowing us to have better results. The adjusted GC11 variable is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Recoding of GC11 Variable

AMAR value	Original coding	Recoded
Kindred have no access to political power (no kindred abroad)	0	0
Kindred are outside the political ruling coalition but are not barred from power	1	1
Kindred is in the ruling coalition	2	
Kindred dominates state coalition	3	2
No basis for judgment	-99	-99

In addition to the presence and status of the kindred group, the support of the group should be added to the analysis as it is one of the arguments of this study. However, the variables indicating kin support lack consistent data. Including them reduce the number of observant cases to a large extent. Thus, I exclude it from the quantitative analysis. I will analyze the effect of kin support in detail in the next chapter in which I test my arguments on the case of ethnic conflict in North Macedonia. In doing so, I will analyze the relationship between ethnic Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo and support from Kosovar Albanians to Macedonian Albanians during the ethnic clashes in Macedonia from 2001 to 2015.

3.3. Control Variables

Apart from the dependent and independent variables, I will add control variables to take into account the other theories of ethnic conflict and control them in this analysis. In this regard, lagged dependent variable (ethnic rebellion) should be included in the analysis as the dataset has a longitudinal nature. In conflict studies, scholars assert that the probability of ethnopolitical conflict advances with the number of previous conflicts (Cederman et al., 2010). Thus, one year's outcome can affect the following year's outcome. AMAR dataset does not have a variable indicating the number of previous conflicts. Therefore, the lag process is used to have the necessary data. In doing so, the reliability of the results increased.

Group proportion to country population is also an important variable to consider. The size of the group is proven to influence ethnic conflict. As mentioned in the literature review, scholars of the opportunistic school of thought argue that the likelihood of ethnic conflict rises with the ethnic group's comparative demographic size (Cederman et al., 2010: 96). To control for this argument, I will use the GPRO scale variable in the dataset. It provides information on the group's proportion of the country's population. I multiplied it by 100 to have it in percentages.

Additionally, group spatial distribution is supposed to allow mobilization. Following Weidmann's (2009) argument presented in the literature review, geography plays a significant role in ethnic

mobilization. The geography of the group supplies the framework in which group members communicate and is thus critical in regulating the group's capability to act in a conflict situation. In other words, concentrated groups are more likely to mobilize. GROUPCON variable in the dataset provides information on the dispersion of group members ranging from 0 to 3 (0: Widely dispersed, 1: Primarily urban or minority of group lives in one region, 2: Majority of the group lives in one region, others dispersed (at least 50% of the group lives in one region, but not more than 75%) 3: Concentrated in one region (at least 75% of the group lives in one region).

Lastly, one should take notice of the effect of discrimination and grievances as motives for ethnic mobilization. As pointed out by Ted R. Gurr (1970) "an anticipated disparity between one's value expectations and their value capabilities can be explained as relative deprivation." Relative deprivation turns into discontent and as he put forward "violence is the result of a high level of discontent". Discriminatory policies toward ethnic minority groups cause discontent among group members. Especially politically discriminated groups members are more likely to rebel since they lack political representation which enables them to protect their rights and express their demands peacefully. In addition to this, economic factors are also proven to be important in ethnic mobilization. In this regard, a group may feel a higher level of discontent due to the lack of political representation or access to public goods, job opportunities, etc. Therefore, I will add political discrimination (AMAR variable name: POLDIS) and economic grievance (AMAR variable name: ECGR) variables to the analysis. POLDIS ranges from 0-4 (0: No discrimination, 1: Neglect/remedial policies, 2: Neglect/no remedial policies 3: Social exclusion/neutral policy, 4: Exclusion/repressive policy) whereas ECGR ranges from 0 to 2 (0: No economic grievances expressed, 1: Economic grievances focused on ending discrimination, 2: Economic grievances focused on creating or strengthening remedial policies).

Table 3.4 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

	N	Min	Max	Mean/%	Std. Deviation
<i>Dependent Variable</i>					
Rebellion (the degree of ethnic violence)	9067	0	4	0.32	0.81
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
Transnational dispersion -- kindred groups (absence- presence)	8333	0	1	-	-
Transnational dispersion -- kindred groups in power (proximity to political power)	10179	0	2	1.28	0.66
<i>Control Variables</i>					
Group proportion of the country's population	10186	.01	96	11	13.96
Group spatial distribution	9145	0	3	2.09	1.1
Highest level of economic grievance	4225	0	2	.86	.94
Political discrimination index	7918	0	4	1.67	1.57
Lagged dependent variable (rebellion)	9066	0	4	.32	0.81
Valid N (listwise)	2987				

As a result of adjustments in the data Table 3.4. shows the descriptive information on the variables included in the analysis. Having added all the variables in the dataset, I will run an ordinal logistic regression analysis using SPSS software to see the relation between my dependent variable and independent variables. Ordinal regression is chosen for the analysis because rebellion is an ordinal variable that indicates the level of the conflict. According to the results, I will discuss my hypotheses and outcomes.

3.4. Results

The relationship between the level of ethnic rebellion and transborder ethnic kin groups is analyzed using the ordinal logistic regression model. To run ordinal regression, the data should meet some assumptions. Otherwise, the ordinal regression method can not be the best fit. Four assumptions are required for ordinal regression to give valid results (Agresti, 2010; Kleinbaum & Klein Mitchel, 2010).

Firstly, the dependent variable should be measured at the ordinal level. The categories should increase or decrease according to a pattern indicating the different steps of the variable. In the case of DV in this study, ethnic rebellion is an ordinal variable since it indicates the levels of rebellion. Therefore, the first assumption is met.

Secondly, there should be more than two independent variables either categorical, ordinal, or continuous. Ordinal independent variables should be treated as categorical or continuous depending on the purpose of the research. In this analysis, there are seven independent/control variables. Thus, the second assumption is met.

Thirdly, there should not be multicollinearity between independent/control variables. Multicollinearity appears when at least two independent variables are extremely correlated with each other. It affects the outcome of the analysis negatively. Due to multicollinearity, the effect of the variables cannot be measured accurately. To test it, the linear regression method in SPSS is used. The test results in Table 3.5 show that there is no multicollinearity between independent variables. Hence, the third assumption is also met.

Table 3.5 Collinearity Statistics

	TOLERANCE	VIF
Lagged DV	0.93	1.06
Group proportion to country population	0.79	1.25
Group spatial distribution	0.80	1.24
Political discrimination index	0.75	1.32
Highest level of economic grievance	0.81	1.22
Transnational dispersion-kindred groups	0.67	1.48
Transnational dispersion-kindred groups in power	0.66	1.49

The last assumption is to have proportional odds. This means that each independent variable has the same effect in each cumulative division of the ordinal dependent variable. This assumption can be tested using the full likelihood ratio test. It correlates the fit of the proportional odds model to a model with differing location parameters. It can be tested in SPSS using a test of parallel lines option. Test of parallel lines compares the two models in the -2 Log likelihood column which are null hypothesis and general.

For this assumption to be met we should expect $p > 0,05$ which indicates the statistical insignificance. In this regard, Table 3.6 shows that the assumption of proportional odds was met, as evaluated by a full likelihood ratio test comparing the fit of the proportional odds location model to a model with differing location parameters.

Table 3.6 Test of Parallel Lines

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Null Hypothesis	2423,349			
General	2398,093 ^b	25,256 ^c	21	,236

The null hypothesis states that the location parameters (slope coefficients) are the same across response categories.

In addition to basic assumptions, there are two more indicators of valid regression results. One of them is model fitting information which is expected to be statistically significant. The other one is the goodness-of-fit test. It should be statistically insignificant. In this analysis, Table 3.7 shows model-fitting information that met the criteria. In terms of goodness-of-fit, there are two types of measurement methods as shown in Table 3.8: Pearson and Deviance. In the analysis, Deviance meets the criteria.

Table 3.7 Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	3121,112			
Final	2423,349	697,763	7	,000

Link function: Logit.

Table 3.8 Goodness-of-fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	10673,484	5781	,000
Deviance	2321,134	5781	1,000

Link function: Logit.

Ordinal logistic regression can be run in SPSS using two different procedures. These are PLUM and GENLIN commands. The test results and assumptions shown above were obtained through the PLUM procedure. However, in terms of interpreting the regression results and making predictions PLUM provides only log odds which are the logarithm of odds. The problem with the log odds is that they do

not give us precise probability results. Thus, interpretation can be challenging. On the other hand, odds are defined as the probability of success/failure and provide more accurate results for interpretation. Therefore, to obtain the odds ratio we also use the GENLIN procedure and interpret the results according to the odds ratio. Coefficients (log odds of the analysis), odds ratio and %95 confidence interval results obtained by the Generalized Linear Model (GENLIN) procedure are shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 Ordinal Logistic Regression of Ethnic Rebellion Worldwide (1945-2006).

	Coeff.	Odds Ratio	%95 CI for OR
Independent Variables			
Existence of kindred groups			
No close kindred across an international border	-0.50	0.60**	-0.86-0.14
One or more close kindred across an international border	<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
Kin groups' access to power	-0.33	0.71**	-0.53-0.14
Control Variables			
Lagged rebellion	1.35	3.88***	1.23-1.48
Group proportion ratio	0.01	1.01***	0.006-0.02
Group concentration index	0.37	1.45***	0.23-0.51
Political Discrimination	0.07	1.08	-0.005-0.16
Economic Grievance	0.58	1.80***	0.45-0.72
Intercepts			
0	3.57	35.69***	3.06-4.09
1	5.19	180.03***	4.64-5.74
2	6.36	578.50***	5.75-6.96
3	7.62	2037.71***	6.92-8.31
4	<i>ref.</i>		
Likelihood ratio chi ²	697.76***		
Pseudo R ²			
Cox and Snell	0.20		
Nagelkerke	0.31		
McFadden	0.21		
N	2987		

NOTE: * p<0,05; ** p<0,01; *** p<0,001.

The likelihood ratio chi-square of 697.76 with a p value of 0.000 indicates that the analysis is statistically significant as a whole in comparison to the null model with zero predictors. Furthermore, the pseudo R^2 is 0.31 according to Nagelkerke results shown in Table 3.9.

The results show that transborder kindred groups matter in the escalation of interethnic violence. In this regard, the absence of close kindred groups on an international border decreases the degree of rebellion in comparison to the presence of close kindred groups, controlling for other variables (Wald $\chi^2 = 7.71$, $p = 0.005$). To put it differently, if an ethnic group has close kindred across the border, the likelihood of violent rebellion increases. Thus, it can be inferred that the analysis supports one of the main arguments of this study (H1). When we examine the coefficients (log odds) and odds ratio of the analysis, there is a decrease in the log odds of 0.5 of scoring higher on the dependent variable which is the degree of rebellion for the absence of a close kindred group compared to the presence of a close kindred group. Nonetheless, as mentioned above interpretation of log odds can be challenging. Thus, we need to interpret the results according to the odds ratio column. Accordingly, for the absence of a kin group in comparison to the presence of the group, there is a 0.6 decrease in the odds ratio of being in higher levels of rebellion controlling for other variables.

In terms of the kindred group's access to power, the results indicate that the status of the kin group has a statistically significant effect on the degree of interethnic rebellion. In this regard, the closer the kin group is to power in the country in which it is located, the less likely the conflicts will escalate (Wald $\chi^2 = 11.93$, $p = 0.001$). When we examine the coefficient and odds ratio of the analysis, there is a decrease in the log odds of 0.33 of scoring higher categories on the dependent variable which is the degree of rebellion. Similar to the previous explanation, interpreting the odds ratio is needed for a better understanding of the effect. In that sense, an increase in access to power is associated with a decrease in the odds of the degree of rebellion, with an odds ratio of 0.71, controlling for other variables. In other words, one unit increase in the access to power decreases the degree of rebellion by 0.71 times when other variables are held constant. This supports my hypothesis in the sense that the status of the transborder ethnic kin group is a determinant factor in the escalation of interethnic conflict. (H3). Kin groups that are part of the government or have the opportunity to be part of the government are less likely to resort to violence when interethnic conflict breaks out across the border. Instead, diplomatic methods are expected to be applied in the first place. However, politically discriminated kin groups are more likely to respond to an interethnic conflict nearby using violent methods.

A few control variables are also found statistically significant in the analysis. They are lagged ethnic rebellion score, group proportion ratio, group's spatial distribution, and economic grievances. On the other hand, the political discrimination index resulted as statistically insignificant. First of all, lagged ethnic rebellion score is proven to be an important predictor of violent ethnic rebellion. Accordingly, a

unit increase in the previous year's rebellion score increases the likelihood of being in a higher degree of conflict by 3.88 times controlling for other variables (Wald $x^2=443.63$, $p=0.001$). In other words, for every one unit increase in the past year's rebellion degree, the odds of violent rebellion increase by 3.88 times.

In terms of the variables indicating the group characteristics, an increase in the group population ratio is associated with an increase in the odds of being in a higher degree of rebellion with an odds ratio of 1.01 controlling for other variables (Wald $x^2=13.54$, $p=0.000$). To put it differently, one unit increase in the group ratio increases the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict by 1.01 times. Group concentration is also controlled for in the analysis. In this regard, an increase in the group concentration level is associated with an increase in the odds of being in a higher degree of rebellion with an odds ratio of 1.45 controlling for other variables (Wald $x^2=29.14$, $p=0.000$). It means that one unit increase in the concentration level increases the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict by 1.45 times.

To control for the status of the ethnic group in the society, political discrimination and economic grievances variables were analyzed. Accordingly, an increase in the economic grievance level is associated with an increase in the odds of being in a higher degree of rebellion with an odds ratio of 1.80 when other variables are held constant (Wald $x^2=74.03$, $p=0.000$). In other words, one unit increase in the level of grievance increases the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict almost twice. Thus, the role of grievances in ethnic conflicts is crucial. On the other hand, one unit increase in the political discrimination index is associated with an increase in the odds of being in a higher degree of rebellion with an odds ratio of 1.08. However, it is not statistically significant.

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I tested the validity of the hypotheses outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis. The first hypothesis indicated that there is a positive relationship between the existence of transborder kindred group and the severity of the ethnic conflict. In this regard, it is expected that the existence of close transborder ethnic kin affects the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict. If there is a kindred group nearby with close relations, it is more likely for the kin group to intervene in the conflict. This hypothesis is supported by the regression results. The absence of a kin group is proven to decrease the level of ethnic rebellion when compared to the presence of the group. On the other hand, the third hypothesis assumed a negative relationship between kin groups' access to power and the severity of the ethnic conflict. The hypothesis indicated that the closer the transborder ethnic kin group is to political power in its country, the less likely the ethnic tensions in a country to escalate into violence. Analysis results supported the argument showing that the political status of a kin group affects the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict. Kin groups who are close to the political center are expected to appeal to diplomatic methods and

therefore decrease the severity of the conflict. In contrast to this, kin groups who are away from the political center or banned from it are expected to be radicalized and thus encourage the ethnic group members to rebel by providing military and operational support.

Unfortunately, the second hypothesis indicating the effect of the support type could not be tested through regression analysis. The kin support variable in the AMAR dataset does not provide sufficient information since there are a great number of missing data. Including the variable in the analysis reduces the number of cases dramatically. Hence, it was excluded from the analysis. However, this hypothesis will be tested in Chapter Four in the case analysis of the North Macedonia conflict.

In conclusion, the large-N analysis indicates that transborder ethnic kin groups have an important role in escalation of ethnic conflict.



CHAPTER 4

ETHNIC ALBANIANS AND THE CONFLICT IN NORTH MACEDONIA

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will analyze the causal mechanisms of the civil war in 2001 in North Macedonia and further ethnic conflicts that took place until 2015. In doing so, I will test my hypotheses pointed out in Chapter Two using the process tracing method in this case analysis chapter. North Macedonia has been chosen for this study because its strategic location, relations with neighbors, and ethnopolitical structure makes the country an important actor in the Balkan region. Even though peacefully dissolved from Yugoslavia, North Macedonia could not escape from the deadly conflicts.

There are a few studies that analyzed the reasons for violent ethnic conflict in North Macedonia. Some of them appealed to the ancient hatred theory prominently argued earlier by Kaplan (1993). The theory suggests that Balkan conflicts are the results of intransigent cultural and religious differences that come from the past. As for Huntington's clash of civilizations theory in line with the ancient hatreds, it has been asserted that the conflict in North Macedonia was the result of a confrontation between Islam and Orthodox Christianity. Nevertheless, even though religion is an important factor, in the case of North Macedonia it was not the main issue. There were some problems with the Orthodox Church since it was mentioned in the constitution. However, religious motives were slightly effective in the escalation of ethnic conflict in the country.

On the other hand, economic factors were examined by several scholars. Following the greed and grievances, theories explained in Chapter Two of this thesis, ethnic violence is considered primarily by economic dynamics (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Additionally, scholars point out the importance of elite manipulation and institutional settings in the country. It has been argued that the nationalist cleavage and double ethnic outbidding are the real cause of conflict in North Macedonia (Lika, 2020). Additionally, increasing nationalist parties negatively affected the relations between Albanians and Macedonians. In this regard, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE)'s nationalist rhetoric arguably contributed to the deterioration of ethnic relations.

In this chapter first, I will give brief information about the historical background of North Macedonia starting from the 1990s. Secondly, I will display the political and ethnic structure of the country with a specific focus on ethnic Albanians. Thirdly, I will analyze the relationship between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians in the country. Then, I will examine the outbreak of the Kosovo War and its impact

on North Macedonia since I consider Kosovar Albanians as the kin group of Macedonian Albanians. After that, I will analyze the outbreak of conflict in North Macedonia, the establishment of peace, and the involvement of Kosovar Albanians in the conflict. In doing so, I will display the causal structure that induced violent conflict in the country. I will also give information about the post-Ohrid period and later developments. Lastly, the chapter will end with a conclusion part in which I will discuss the results.

4.2. Historical Background

Being one of the six former republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, North Macedonia managed to escape the brutal outcome of wars that took place all over the Balkans during the breakup of Yugoslavia. Following the “period of transition” in the region, North Macedonia declared its independence in 1991. Unlike Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo, Macedonia's independency effort resulted peacefully. Since Macedonia's possible involvement in the ongoing conflicts, could trigger a large-scale Balkan war, its peaceful formation is encouraged and supported by international actors. Known as the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)", it became a member of the UN in 1992 (Kim, 2001: 2). After gaining independence, its democratic rule and ability to maintain interethnic cohesion (at least in comparison to other Balkan states) were appreciated and followed closely.

Although it had a peaceful independence process, North Macedonia had historical identity problems like most of the Balkan countries. Firstly, the nationhood of the country was in question. Bulgaria rejects the existence of a Macedonian identity arguing that it is a subgroup of the Bulgarian nation. Accordingly, the official language of North Macedonia is considered a dialect of Bulgarian, not a different language (Irwin, 2010). The ongoing controversy between the two countries negatively affects North Macedonia's EU membership process.

Another part of the identity crisis is the dispute with Greece about the name of the country. Before the independence, Macedonia was an administrative unit of Yugoslavia. However, this new state, which gained independence in 1991 as the “Republic of Macedonia”, was met with concern by the Greek government since majority of ancient Macedonia was Greek (Nimetz, 2020: 207). Moreover, the northern part of Greece is mostly called Macedonia, and people who live there refer to themselves as Macedonian. This newly formed state on the northern border of Greece with a desire to unify historic Macedonia posed a threat to state's security” (Nimetz, 2020: 21). Hence, Greece carried the dispute to UN Security Council and the name of the country changed to the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" in 1993 when Macedonia was entered to the United Nations. However, the dispute continued and even took a brutal form when Greece placed an embargo. In 2018 both sides signed the Prespa Agreement and agreed on the name of "North Macedonia". As a result of successful negotiations that took place after resolving the dispute, North Macedonia became a NATO member in 2020.

4.3. Political and Ethnic Structure

Macedonia, which declared its independence by leaving the communist regime, had to follow the democratization trend while preserving the values of the communist regime in the internal administration. This dilemma affected the political structure of the state causing two opposite poles on the administration level. Studies argue that nationhood cleavage stemmed from the different visions of nationhood is the main reason for interethnic conflict in Macedonia (Lika, 2020). It is the case because it prevents political parties to cooperate on key governmental policies, especially on ethnic policies. The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), the heir of the League of Communists of Macedonia, was one of the two main political parties in the state. SDSM respects Yugoslavia and Tito for building the Macedonian nationhood and modernizing the Macedonian language (Lika, 2020: 43). On the contrary, the second most important political party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) opposes the Yugoslav vision. VMRO's position on the Macedonian Question also differs from SDSM's. It supports the improvement of the relations with Bulgaria considering them as part of their nationhood. However, SDSM emphasized the distinctiveness of Macedonian nationhood apart from the historical relations with Greece and Bulgaria. This controversy affects the internal governmental issues in all fields. For instance, VMRO harshly criticized the government for signing the Prespa Agreement arguing that:

Prespa Agreement is unilateral. It is almost like capitulation ... You know we opposed that, we strongly oppose ... the price that you pay is extremely high. Not only change the name, but also change the identity, change of history, or culture. (Lika, 2020: 44)

In parallel to this, their stance on ethnic policies was completely different from each other. SDSM's vision was to create a multiethnic state in which all citizens benefit from equal rights and freedom. On the other hand, VMRO-DPMNE appealed to fascist ideology against ethnic minorities arguing that Macedonia is only for ethnic Macedonians. Concerning that, VMRO-DPMNE rejected Slavism doctrine which was asserted by SDSM to differentiate themselves from Greek Macedonians and Bulgarians and excluded also the ethnic Macedonians that define them as Slavs (Lika, 2020: 44). The national identity imaginations of the two parties differed radically.

Despite this divergence, North Macedonia was constituted as an ethnically diverse state. The first multiparty elections were conducted in November 1990. Out of 120 seats in the assembly, VMRO-DPMNE won 38, SDSM won 31 and PPD (Party for Democratic Prosperity) won 23 seats. Having the majority of seats VMRO-DPMNE unwillingly formed a coalition with the PPD even though it was against their agenda. The Macedonian Assembly elected Kiro Gilgorov as the president. He came from Belgrade and had close ties with Yugoslavia. Even though VMRO-DPMNE was suspicious of him due to his connection with the communist administration, most people thought that Gilgorov was fortunate

for Macedonia. The independence period was successfully led by Kiro Gligorov, the first Social Democrat president of post-communist Macedonia elected in 1991 and served until 1999. (Irwin, 2010: 329).

After being elected, Gligorov formed a group of experts to draft the new constitution whose members were mostly from SDSM. Accordingly, the multiethnic cohesion in the country was prioritized by the government. Minority rights were protected under the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia of 1991. The preamble of the Constitution states that "Macedonia was created as the national state of the Macedonian people, which ensures the full equality of its citizens and the permanent coexistence of the Macedonian people with Albanians, Turks, Roma, Vlachs and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia." Additionally, several articles of the Constitution emphasized equality and freedom in every field, free expression of nationality, preservation of the ethnic, linguistic, and religious identity of nationalities, the opportunity for self-government, and so on (Ortakovski, 2001: 27-28). VMRO-DPMNE fiercely opposed those rights and named the minorities in the constitution. However, Gligorov managed to settle the dispute. Eventually, the protection of minority rights by law contributed much to the recognition of the country by European Commission (Vankovska, 2013: 92). However, these constitutional rights were not enough, and several changes were made through the Ohrid Framework Agreement which was signed after the deadliest war in North Macedonia.

The relationship between SDSM and PPD needs closer attention. Being a social democratic and pro-minority political party, SDSM was an important actor for the Albanian party. SDSM provided protection for ethnic Albanians against the hateful discourses and actions of nationalist VMRO-DPMNE. On the other hand, PPD, having a swing role, was a strong ally in coalition formations. SDSM and PPD understood that they need each other to improve their respective agendas (Lika, 2020: 60). To improve the constitutional status of ethnic Albanians, SDSM and PPD agreed upon amendments to the constitution. Nevertheless, this improvement could disturb VMRO-DPMNE and even cause the breakup of a conflict. Hence, for the sake of domestic and regional stability, both sides decided to take steps carefully. In the end, it was SDSM that could protect Albanians against VMRO-DPMNE's political attacks. Later, when the first assembly was dissolved, the new assembly was established in 1992 under the guidance of Branko Crvenkovski within the SDSM-PPD coalition government including the Liberal Party and Social Party of Macedonia, and SDSM took steps to deliver some of the promises.

4.4. Ethnic Albanians – Macedonians Relations from 1991

According to the recent census of September 2021, the country has a population of 2,097,319. The previous census was held in 2002 and since then it was repeatedly delayed until 2021. The change in the ethnic composition of the country from 2002 to 2021 is presented below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Ethnic Composition of North Macedonia (2002 vs. 2021)

Ethnic Group	2002 Census (%)	2021 Census (%)
Macedonian	64.17	54.25
Albanian	25.17	29.52
Turk	3.85	3.98
Roma	2.66	2.34
Serbian	1.77	1.18
Bosniak	0.8	0.87
Vlach	0.47	0.44

Source (*Census 2021*: 1; *Macedonia Census 2002*: 34).

These results are important for ethnic minorities since the Constitution guarantees several rights such as recognizing any other language spoken by at least 20 percent of the population as an official language and the formation of local self-government units where the majority of residents belong to a nationality. As the largest minority group in North Macedonia, Albanians mostly live in the northwestern region of the country in the cities bordering Kosovo and Albania. They mainly centered on the city of Tetovo and constitute the majority population in the city.

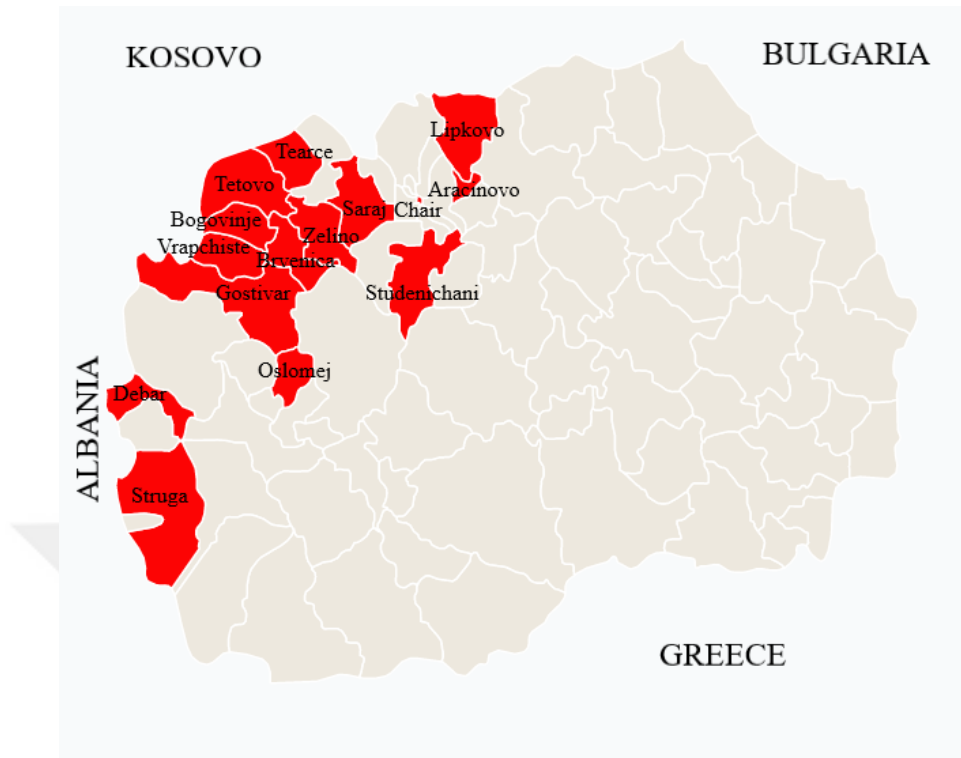


Figure 4.1: Albanian-majority municipalities in North Macedonia according to 2002 Census.

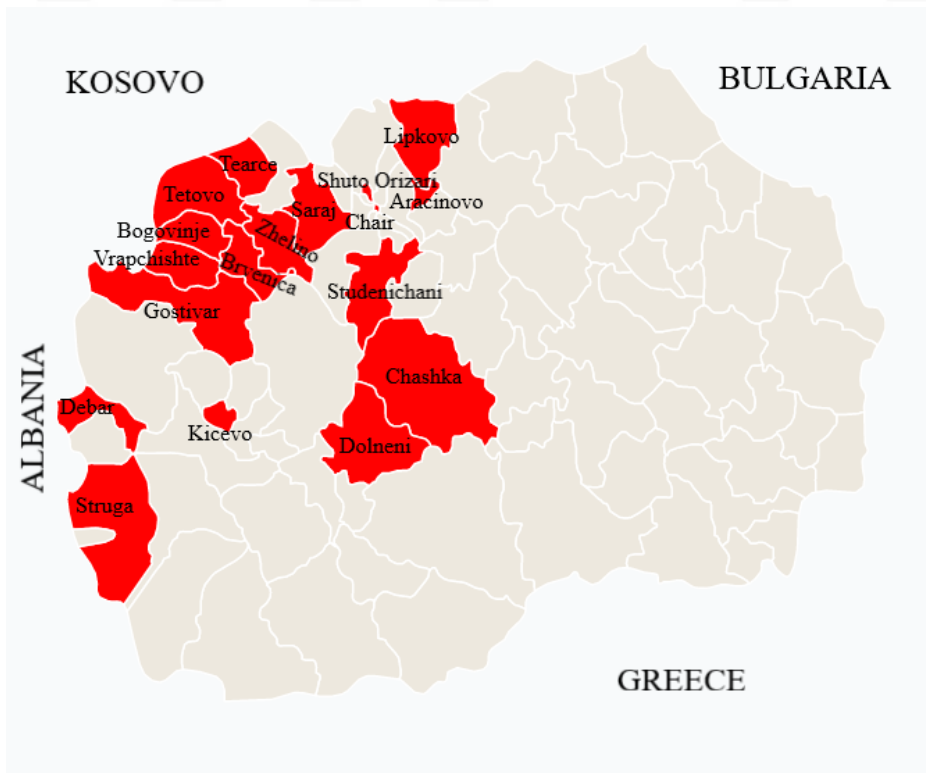


Figure 4.2: Albanian-majority municipalities in North Macedonia according to 2021 Census.

Their main language is Albanian which is a completely different language from Macedonian. Most of them are Sunni Muslim whereas Macedonians are Eastern Orthodox in the majority. Moreover, Albanians are the largest ethnic minority group and constituent element of the state. For this reason, the relationship between Albanians and Macedonians has always been decisive for the fate of the country. The interethnic cohesion admired by many other Balkan states did not long last in North Macedonia. After independence, Albanians demanded improvement in their political and cultural rights. The resentment goes back to Tito's times when Macedonians were regarded as one of the six constitutive nations of the Yugoslav Federation whereas Albanians were recognized as nationalities without any rights in their respective republics in Yugoslavia (Ceka, 2018). In independent Macedonia, Macedonians regarded themselves as the founder nation whereas Albanians were just a nationality. This division is important to understand their approach, vision, and cleavages. Macedonians consider Macedonia as the Macedonian nation in its ethnic/cultural sense. On the other hand, for Albanians Macedonia is a multiethnic state and they are the constituent elements of it. Thus, they insist on equal rights in political, cultural, or economic spheres (Iseni, 2013).

The first Albanian parties were established in 1990 and they included as a coalition partner in every government since then (Ortakovski, 2001: 33). The first of them was the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PPD) led by Nevzat Halili. "PPD was part of Coordinating Council of Albanian Political Parties in Yugoslavia led by Kosovar Albanian leader Rugova and his party Democratic Alliance of Kosovo (LDK)" (Lika, 2020: 53). Their goal was to improve the collective rights of Albanians and make Albanians a constituent element of the state through constitutional regulations rather than being just a minority group. This intention increased the degree of expectations from the state so that Albanian representatives opposed the 1991 Constitution even though it seemed to provide several rights and freedom to ethnic minorities. Arben Xhaferi, the leader of the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) which is the largest political party of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia argued that the constitution itself caused ethnic competition in the country (Bellamy, 2002). According to ethnic Albanians, the regulations were inadequate in terms of education in the native language at all levels, along with the university degree, and equitable representation of Albanians in governmental positions and the public sector, especially in security forces. They also demanded the recognition of Albanian as the second official language of the country. Some Albanian politicians even radicalized their claims for political rights, along with territorial autonomy (Ortakovski, 2001: 34). Moreover, the constitution mentioned the Orthodox Church even though the state is secular and there is no official state religion. Since ethnic Albanians were Muslim to a great extent this also posed a problem for them. Macedonian government's reaction and reluctance to develop constitutional rights increased the grievances among ethnic Albanians.

Education played a key role in interethnic relations. Albanians demanded education in their mother tongue at all levels, including university education. Before the Kosovo War, the only university that provided education in the Western Balkans was Pristina University. After it was closed by the Tito administration, Albanians needed another institution. Therefore, ethnic Albanians in Macedonia established a university in Tetovo in 1994 but it was not recognized by the Macedonian government. Security forces repeatedly raided the university to end its activities. Nevertheless, the university continued to function. This dispute increased the tensions between Albanians and the government.

Another breaking point in Albanian-Macedonian interethnic relations in the country is the flag case. According to the Flag Law, the Albanian flag was allowed to fly only on holidays together with the Macedonian flag. Nonetheless, in 1997, the Albanian flag flew over the city hall of Gostivar and Tetovo resulting in fierce intervention from the Macedonian police forces. The mayors of both cities Rufe Osmani and Alajdin Demiri were arrested after brutal conflict (Ortakovski, 2001: 34). Due to the violent demonstrations, three people died and many more were injured. Following these incidents, ethnic Albanians' grievances grew and turned into an insurgency with the influence of the Kosovo War.

4.5. The Kosovo War and Its Reflection on North Macedonia

Kosovo witnessed one of the most violent conflicts in the Balkan region following the ethnic genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was a landlocked region sharing borders with Albania and North Macedonia. The war in Kosovo had severe consequences for the stability of the region and its effects are still felt even today. The history of ethnic resentments and conflict goes back to pre-Ottoman times. Several groups fought over the Kosovo region including the Serbs and Ottoman Empire. In 1912, Serbia conquered Kosovo and took it away from the Ottomans. From that time, Kosovo became a disputed area between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians. Serbs tried to increase the Serbian population in the region because the majority of Kosovo was ethnic Albanians, and Serbs had a small minority group. They were unsatisfied with the situation and brought Serbian colonists to settle. However, this attempt failed because they were forced out after the Second World War. Nevertheless, the new administration established under Tito, began to implement anti-Albanian policies again. In 1968, the status of Kosovo was enhanced and it was accorded more autonomy status in Yugoslavia (Trix, 2010: 360). Kosovar Albanians were granted constitutional rights, had administrative positions, and were able to join the military and get a university education in their mother tongue. These were promising signs of progress however they did not long last.

Due to the poor economic conditions unrest increased among the Albanian community at the beginning of the 1980s. Riots were first started at the University of Pristina by a group of students who were dissatisfied with the conditions at the university. Yugoslav forces intervened by using force. Demonstrations spread to other cities in Kosovo. State of emergency was announced in the province. As a result of riots, officially ten people died even though hospital records indicated several more. After these demonstrations and deadly riots, Serbs were concerned that Kosovar Albanians acquired excessive power and wished to unify with Albania. Moreover, the demographics in the province were changing in favor of Kosovar Albanians. In the 1981 census, %77 of the population were Kosovar Albanians whereas only %13 were Serbian (Trix, 2010: 361). Additionally, Serbs were moving from Kosovo because of the poor economic situation. Consequently, Serbia increased its pressure and restrictions on Kosovar Albanians.

In the late 1980s, the situation in Kosovo deteriorated. Slobodan Milosevic declared the abolition of Kosovo's autonomous status in March 1989. During the protests, several people were killed. At first, the reaction of Kosovar Albanians to Serbia's suppression was based on nonviolent actions. They formed two organizations. One of them was the Council for Defense of Human Rights which documented the human rights violations, the other was the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). The head of LDK was Ibrahim Rugova who was the head of the Kosovo Writers' Union. His strategy was to defend their rights through peaceful methods. In 1990, Kosovo Assembly gathered, and members declared their wish for independence. Later, an unofficial referendum was organized by Albanian parties. %99 of the voters favored independence. Meanwhile, Serbia intensified its exclusionary policies against the Kosovar Albanians. They were dismissed from the public sectors, military, media, and legal sectors as well as health and education. Teachers were fired and students were not allowed to enter the university. According to the Amnesty International report in 1998, the unemployment rate of the Kosovar Albanian population was estimated higher than %70 (Booth, 2001: 116). Kosovar Albanians established parallel institutions to provide necessary services for their people. Rugova maintained his strategy of passive resistance and believed that the international community would see their effort. They were also afraid of the brutal war going on in Bosnia and its spread toward Kosovo.

Nevertheless, when the war in Bosnia ended, the non-inclusion of Kosovar Albanians' demands into the Dayton Accord in 1995 created resentment in the society. Thus, some studies argue that Dayton Agreement is the primary cause of ethnic violence in Kosovo in 1998 (Carson, 2013). Furthermore, due to the increasing poverty and deprivation, some Kosovar Albanians thought that peaceful methods were not the solution. Hence, Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was formed in 1997 to fight for the independence of Kosovo. KLA members targeted police stations and security forces. Later in that year, KLA was declared a terrorist organization by US envoy Robert Gelbard (Trix, 2010: 364). The

counterattack from Serbian military forces on an Albanian family resulted in fifty-one deaths and incited Kosovar Albanians leading to more radicalization. In conclusion, support for KLA and its activities increased. Meanwhile, conflicts spread to different areas mostly centering on the Drenica valley area and through some villages. As the degree of conflict increased, KLA radicalized both its attacks and statements. Its members publicly announced that their major goal was to unite Albanians all over the region under the “Great Albania.” Sulejman Selimi served as a General Commander of KLA from 1989- to 1999 and stated that:

“There is a de facto Albanian nation. The tragedy is that European powers after World War I decided to divide that nation into several Balkan states. We are now fighting to unify the nation, to liberate all Albanians, including those in Macedonia, Montenegro, and other parts of Serbia. We are not just a liberation army for Kosovo” (Phillips, 2012).

There were attempts from the international community to settle the dispute. However, they were mostly ineffective. The American Ambassador Richard Holbrooke announced a cease-fire between Serbs and Albanians in 1998. Unfortunately, it did not last long. In 1999 Serbia maintained its military operations. In March 1999, NATO intervened in the conflict and started its bombing campaign. In a press release of NATO, it was stated that “the NATO Secretary General may authorize air strikes against targets in FRY territory to [force] comply with the demands of the international community and reach a political solution” (*Statement by the North Atlantic Council on Kosovo*, 1999). At the same time, there was also another international attempt in Rambouillet, France. Both sides were pressured to sign an agreement, but it failed. The proposed provisions were unsatisfactory, especially for Albanians. In the end, NATO bombings took place from 24 March to 11 June 1999 involving a thousand aircraft. Even though their target was Yugoslav military forces, a NATO aircraft assaulted Albanian escort and killed around fifty people assuming that was a Yugoslav convoy. Later it was announced that civilians were not the target, and it was an incident.

As a result of continuous attacks, Serbia signed Military Technical Agreement on 9 June 1999 and agreed upon the removal of the Serbian forces from Kosovo (Trix, 2010: 365). Later, on June 10 NATO stopped bombing and with the authorization of the Security Council, the peacekeeping Kosovo Force (KFOR) led by NATO entered Kosovo with 30.000 soldiers and initiated the disarmament of KLA members. During the war, five hundred Albanian villages were destroyed and approximately ten thousand people were killed and many more displaced. Kosovo became a UN protectorate. It was still under the Yugoslav authority but administered by the UN. The final decision on the status of Kosovo was to be made by the will of the majority. Nevertheless, studies show that the United Nations Mission of Kosovo (UNMIK) was not successful in its mission to protect and prosper Kosovo. To maintain peace in a fragile region, necessary measures should have been taken urgently. In this regard, UNMIK was

slow to establish security and administrative structures. International civilian police arrived only after two months whereas KFOR, the security forces in charge of external security arrived after six weeks. Moreover, administrators appointed by UNMIK were not well organized (Trix, 2010: 366). Consequently, KLA, taking advantage of the situation, assigned mayors to all the major cities. This caused frustration among ethnic Serbs. In addition to security and administration, UNMIK was supposed to establish a functioning judiciary system which also failed. Due to the lack of rule of law, security, and lack of clarity on the political status of Kosovo, extremist groups strengthened. This caused further polarization between Albanians and Serbs and ethnic violence took place in the city of Mitrovica.

In November 2001, the first elections were held in Kosovo. Ibrahim Rugova's party (LDK) won the elections by %47 votes whereas Thaçi's (leader of the liberation army) party PDK got %26 and became the second party. These results were interesting since Albanians did not vote for the Albanian party that seized the power through violence. On the other hand, Rugova was known for his efforts to pursue diplomatic methods during ethnic tensions with Serbians. It can be deduced that Albanians in Kosovo wanted stability and peace for their future. The political system established in Kosovo was still not fully functional. UNMIK had the power to veto elected people. This situation created resentment among people. Furthermore, the UN did not make any attempt about the status of Kosovo. An official from UNMIK, Michael Steiner, highlighted the idea of "standards before status". However, people thought that it was nothing but a stall. In terms of standardization, there were no concrete attempts either. Economic problems continued and a broader problem of corruption emerged among both international and local officials (Trix, 2010: 368). As a result of mismanagement of the process, and due to rising resentment among Albanians and Serbians, deadly riots broke out in March 2004, first starting when three Albanians drowned in the river. In the end, a total of nineteen people were killed from both sides and almost a thousand more were injured. During the riot, several churches and homes were damaged as well as some vehicles of UNMIK. They became the target of protesters because their action or incapability to act was the main reason for their frustration.

In the wake of UNMIK's inefficacious administration after the war, Kosovar Albanians' demand for independence increasingly continued. In March 2007, the UNDP published a survey indicating that %96 Kosovar Albanians favored independence. Despite the EU and NATO's efforts to implement Athisaari's plan which promises to end the UN protectorate of Kosovo after 120 days, Serbia and Russia objected to this plan several times. Nonetheless, on 17 February 2008 Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia. Even though Serbia and Russia protested the decision and did not recognize Kosovo as an independent state, sixty-two states officially recognized Kosovo by mid-2009. Today, 109 states recognize Kosovo's statehood. Even though the independence decision was met with joy, the fact that

it is still not recognized by Serbia means that Kosovo's political problems have not been fully resolved. Consequently, resentment among Albanians is expected to be present.

Vankovska, professor at the Cyril and Methodious University in Skopje rightfully asserted that:

"The violent conflict in Kosovo was a failure of the entire international community, but the military intervention and how it was assumed by NATO was a failure to prevent conflicts in general. Conflict management through the widespread use of force in and over Yugoslavia has jeopardized and worsened the prospects for successful conflict prevention efforts in neighboring Macedonia and throughout the region" (Vankovska, n.d.).

The Kosovo war directly influenced Macedonia since it is a border state and have a great number of ethnic Albanian minority. When the conflict in Kosovo started in 1998, Macedonian Albanians gave their direct support to their ethnic kin nearby. There was some news announcing that KLA fighters getting medical treatment in Tetovo hospital (Vankovska, n.d: 4). Ortakovski (2001) argues that the relationship between Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia is traditionally closer than the Albanians in Albania. The reason may be having similar experiences in terms of fighting for their rights in their respective countries. Moreover, the cultural tie is much stronger between Kosovo and Macedonian Albanians. Kosovo was a cultural and intellectual hub for Albanians. They were getting a university degree at the University of Pristina. Due to the lack of education in the mother tongue, it was an important opportunity for Macedonian Albanians. As a result of this interaction, Macedonian Albanians explicitly expressed their readiness to fight along with their ethnic kin during the war. Official reports prove that Macedonian Albanians provided arms and healthcare support to Kosovar Albanians.

One of the greatest outcomes of the Kosovo war was the influx of refugees who fled from their homes to escape the deadliest effects of war. According to the Macedonian Red Cross, Macedonia hosted around 360.000 Kosovo refugees in 1999. It was equal to %18 of its population (Ortakovski, 2001: 39). The influx of refugees caused economic and social challenges for Macedonia. The economy of Macedonia was already in turbulence due to the sanctions from the UN and Greece. It was one of the poorest countries in the region. As a result of the war, trade between Yugoslavia and Macedonia was also affected negatively. Additionally, such a large Albanian population could disturb the Republic's vulnerable demographic structure. Thus economic, and social grievances have grown among people.

Among all, the most important impact of the Kosovo war on Macedonia is the risk of violent ethnic mobilization among Macedonian Albanians against the government of Macedonia. Along with the economic and social effects of the war, the radicalization of the kin group beyond the border increased the risk of violent conflict. As Ortakovski asserted (2001) "The risk of infiltration of some radical Albanian elements, which could radicalize the situation in Macedonia, has increased." According to some reports (1999), Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was planning to use Macedonia as an operational

base to fight with the Yugoslav army. Additionally, KLA was recruiting soldiers from both Kosovar refugees in Macedonia and Macedonian Albanians. After the Kosovo war ended, it was feared that the KLA would change course to Macedonia, especially to predominantly ethnic Albanian regions. It is believed that KLA has close connections with National Liberation Army (NLA) established in Macedonia by Albanians.

4.6. Formation of NLA and 2001 Insurgency in North Macedonia

The devastating effects of the Kosovo war also deeply affected Macedonia as stated above. Although the war was over, its effects increased exponentially. Due to the high number of refugees coming from Kosovo, inter-ethnic cohesion is severely disturbed. The economic and social structure, which had been severely damaged, deteriorated. The unemployment rate was high, trade activities were interrupted since the biggest trade partner was Yugoslavia. Under these circumstances, Macedonia's intercommunal balance began to shatter.

Even though some attacks were carried out earlier, in January 2001, the first incidents of armed rebellion took place in an ethnic Albanian village, Tanusevci. It happened right after an agreement was signed between Macedonia and Yugoslavia-Serbia on border delineation on 22 January. Although it was welcomed by the international community and considered a step to establish peace in the region, ethnic Albanians were uncomfortable with the agreement. Some scholars assert that this was the turning point of the insurgency (Irwin, 2010: 341; Ortakovski, 2001: 41). National Liberation Army (NLA) claimed responsibility for the attack in Tanusevci. Several reports and statements indicated that NLA members were rebels of the Kosovo Liberation Army who infiltrated the country (Kim, 2001: 5). Ortakovski (2001) states that according to the media estimations the number of armed rebels was around 500-1.000, most of them came from Kosovo and were either trained by or members of KLA. Moreover, in a report published by UNODC (2008), it was stated that Tanusevci was "a funnel for arms to the KLA" in the 1990s. However, it was never officially acknowledged by NLA leaders or members. On the contrary, they claimed that their members were mostly from Macedonia. The leader of the insurgent group Ali Ahmeti was born in Macedonia. However, he had close ties with the Kosovar Albanians. He was a university student at the University of Pristina and graduated in 1983. He participated in the Albanian separatist movement in Kosovo and was even imprisoned because of his actions. In 1988 and 1989, he was the leader of student protests against the Milosevic government (Arsovska, 2015: 54). He led the military formation both in Kosovo and Macedonia. Furthermore, his uncle and one of the leaders of NLA Fazli Veliu were supposed to have close ties with the Kosovo criminal clan Jashari, which was connected with Hashim Thaçi, the founder of KLA. Apart from the leadership positions, several members of the NLA fought in Kosovo under the KLA administration. The two insurgent groups also

displayed similarities in their function and transformations. After their dissolutions both movements turned into political parties: KLA leader Hashim Thaçi formed the Democratic Party of Kosovo in 2007 and was elected as prime minister whereas Ali Ahmeti established the Democratic Party of Integration (DUI) right after the conflict in Macedonia.

KLA's influence on the formation of an insurgent group in Macedonia and its military support for the armed conflict increased the violence. The relationship between these organizations is also pointed out in media coverage. According to a column in Associated Press (2001), Arban Aliu, a member of NLA located in Selce, Tetovo stated that “supplies and equipment come from both inside Macedonia and from neighboring Kosovo,” where he and many other rebels took part in during the war. Another column published in *Le Monde diplomatique* (Chiclet, 2001) asserts that “KLA exports Albanian conflict to Macedonia.” According to an interview article published by Morning Edition (2001), the ethnic Albanian insurgency in Macedonia is reminiscent of the Kosovo conflict. An analysis was published by National Public Radio (Siegel, 2001) with the following headline: “Attempts to defuse the crisis in northern Macedonia are undermined by Kosovo militants supporting ethnic Albanian guerrillas across the border”. These facts and statements support our argument by proving the relationship between Kosovar Albanians and Macedonian Albanians and the influence of the ethnic kin group on the ongoing inter-communal conflict.

NLA leader Ahmeti declared that their only objective is to enhance the rights of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. Concerning this, he explained their demands as such:

International mediation to resolve their differences with the Slavic majority and determine the exact size of the ethnic Albanian community; changes in the Macedonian constitution recognizing Albanians as a constituent people; and the release of all political prisoners (Kim, 2001: 6).

However, none of the two main ethnic Albanian parties claimed a connection with the NLA. Furthermore, they condemned the use of force in search of political tenets. On March 11, a new political party was established under the name of the National Democratic Party. Even though there was no direct link between NLA, their manifesto and objectives were similar. In a nutshell, ethnic Albanians in the governmental position did not directly involve in the insurgency. On the contrary, the officials of PDSH, an Albanian ethnic party, claimed that these were attempts to unseat them from the coalition they formed with VMRO-DPMNE and other parties (Lika, 2020: 72).

Violent attacks continued later in January. NLA attacked a police station in Tetovo and one Macedonian police officer was killed and some others were wounded. Macedonian government decided to launch a military offensive to push rebels out of its borders. President Trajkovski emphasized neutralizing the terrorist threat as well as maintaining diplomatic processes with legitimate political parties.

Nevertheless, they strictly declined to bargain with the rebels. In March, the government organized offensives and took control of the villages around Tetovo. On April 28, ethnic Albanian rebels attacked a Macedonian police convoy and military forces in the village of Vejce. As a result of the attack, eight people died and three were wounded. The only intervention in the actions of the rebels did not come from the government. Macedonians also began to react to the attacks.

On May 3, Albanian rebels attacked again to security forces in Vaksince, near the capital city of Skopje. Two Macedonian soldiers were killed. The government organized a counterattack in the region of Kumanovo. Later in May, government forces conducted an offensive using long-range attacks on rebel-occupied villages. Nevertheless, the advance of rebels continued towards Skopje and Tetovo. Five soldiers were killed on June 6. Four days later, rebel forces captured Aracinovo, which was a highly strategic region near the capital city. On June 11, both sides agreed upon a ceasefire that lasted until June 22 when the government forces bombarded the territory near Aracinovo (Kim, 2001: 7).

Armed clashes between the Macedonian government and Albanian rebels concerned the international community. A local cease-fire was arranged by US Envoy to evacuate ethnic Albanians from Aracinovo under the supervision of NATO. This caused frustration among Macedonians and protests took place in Skopje. On July 1, rebels took control of four more villages. EU envoy and NATO tried to arrange another cease-fire on July 5. It was only used to gather supplies and recover from the previous clashes. The cease-fire was again brokered, this time by rebel forces when they advanced into territory near Tetovo. On July 25, NATO intervention took place and rebel groups pulled back from advanced locations and let displaced people to go back their homes. International intervention in the conflict was perceived as a support for Albanian rebels and worsened the situation.

The deadliest clashes were held in early August when Macedonian police launched an invasion on rebels in Skopje and killed five Albanians. The rebel forces' reaction was devastating. 10 Macedonian soldiers were killed the next day in an ambush between Skopje and Tetovo. Violent demonstrations took place in Skopje. The intensity of the conflict increased day by day. Government forces bombarded territories near Tetovo. On August 10, eight security forces were killed. Later, on August 12, government forces killed five Albanians. Some argue that those were civilians. On the same day, another truce was announced, and leaders signed an agreement on August 13. According to the agreement, NATO would initiate the disarmament of rebellions. Ali Ahmeti stated that they will abide by the rule of the agreement and turn their weapons to NATO forces.

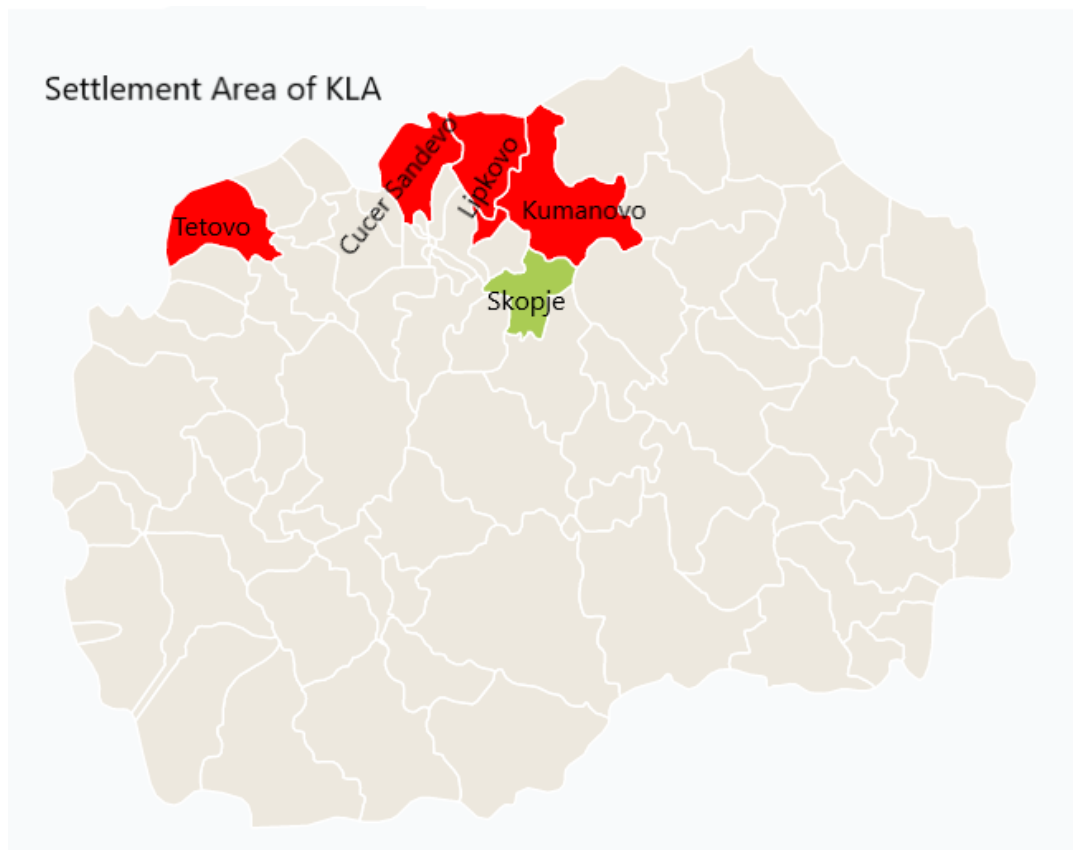


Figure 4.3 The battlefields of 2001 Insurgency in North Macedonia.

4.7. Ohrid Framework Agreement and Later Developments

As a result of escalating violence and armed conflict for eight months, approximately 100 people died and according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, over 100,000 people were displaced. Through international mediation led by the EU and U.S. (the United States), on 13 August 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) was signed by the leaders of the two largest Macedonian parties, two main Albanian parties, and the president of Macedonia, and one special representative from each of EU and U.S. The conflict ended and negotiations for resolution took place. OFA is considered a turning point in the interethnic relations in Macedonia. The agreement put an end to the conflict and opened a new phase for Macedonian and Albanian relations. The demands of ethnic Albanians were accepted mostly by the Macedonian government and granted in the provisions of the agreement. Even though NLA was not officially part of peace talks, its leaders were consulted unofficially and approved the negotiated terms including disarmament. The process of disarmament was carried out by NATO under the name of “Operation Essential Harvest”. 11 NATO members including Britain, Italy, France, Greece, Belgium, Poland, and Turkey sent a total of about 4,500 troops to Macedonia. More than ten collection centers had been formed to gather weapons surrendered voluntarily by the NLA members (Kim, 2001:

12). By late September, over 3,300 weapons had been collected and the operation was accomplished. Later, NATO forces left the country and NLA leaders asserted that they ordered their members to disarm completely.

One of the major concerns of ethnic Albanians during the peace talks was the status of granting amnesty to former NLA members (Kim, 2001: 11). NLA members who were disarmed voluntarily after the conflict should be integrated into all spheres of society, and even be re-educated if necessary. They should get equal treatment before the law, be employed in public administrations, and be respected by society without facing any discrimination. For this purpose, Amnesty Law was enacted in 2002. According to the law, former rebels will be exempt from prosecution. All charges against them will be dropped and if there is an ongoing prosecution against them, it will be stopped (Zejneli et al., 2011: 152). After the Ohrid agreement, Ali Ahmeti, a former NLA leader, founded a political party under the name of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI). It has been in government almost continuously since the first post-conflict elections in 2002 (Ceka, 2018: 147).

The agreement was built on key arrangements necessary to establish long-lasting interethnic peace in Macedonia. Its main aim was to secure the future of Macedonia's democracy, promising close relations between Macedonia and the Euro-Atlantic community mainly the EU, NATO, and the US, and promoting the peaceful and coherent development of civil society while respecting the ethnic identities and interests of all the citizens of Macedonia (Marolov, 2013: 135). Matters subject to the agreement can be listed under the following headings: the rejection of violence under any circumstances, inviolability and indispensability of the states' territorial integrity, preserving of the multi-ethnic character of the state, ensuring a modern democratic state continuously evolving to affirm international standards through amendments in the constitution, developing local self-government, in other words forming a decentralized government, equitable representation, regulations of the use of language and expression of identity.

Accordingly, the long-lasting demand of ethnic Albanians to be recognized as a constituent people of the Republic of Macedonia was granted with Amendment IV in the 1991 Constitution.

The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people, as well as its citizens living within its borders are part of the Albanian people, the Turkish people, the Vlach people, the Serbian people, the Romany people, the Bosniak people, and others taking responsibility for the present and future of their fatherland (Macedonian Constitution, 1991).

One of the disputed issues was the right to education in the mother language as well as recognition of Albanian as the official language of the state. To address that, following the negotiations of OFA, new regulations were made with Amendment V in the constitution.

The Macedonian language, written using its Cyrillic alphabet, is the official language throughout the Republic of Macedonia and in the international relations of the Republic of Macedonia. Any other language spoken by at least 20 percent of the population is also an official language, written using its alphabet, as specified below (Macedonia Constitution 1991).

Undoubtedly, the Ohrid Framework Agreement addressed a number of legitimate grievances of the Albanians. However, the promised changes in the agreement have not been fully implemented. For this reason, the discomfort of ethnic groups in the country, especially among ethnic Albanians, continued. In a speech on the tenth anniversary of OFA, Reka, an ethnic Albanian scholar born in North Macedonia and currently the Minister of European Integration of Kosovo stated that (2011) “even though OFA ended the conflict, it did not appeal to the sources of conflict. Although OFA’s vision was to form a civic state, even after ten years from the conflict, Macedonia still functions as a mono-ethnic state.” He also criticizes the 20 percent rule arguing that it degrades Albanians into statistical numbers. Why would Albanians need to be counted to acquire certain collective rights? In terms of adequate representation in societal segments, the agreement promised “equitable representation of persons belonging to all communities in all levels and other areas of public life”. Nevertheless, the term equitable was controversial. Some scholars claim that the Framework Agreement and constitutional changes related to it institutionalized ethnicity in all spheres of state institutions including the ones that dealt with human rights protection (Vankovska, 2013: 98). Despite the rhetoric emphasizing human rights and freedoms, the constitution institutionalized and rooted ethnic differences.

As a result of ongoing grievances, small-scale conflicts broke up after the signing of the OFA. On 25 December 2002, a bomb exploded in a high school in Kumanovo, and one Macedonian was killed. Later, the incidents of kidnapping, and terrorist attacks on police stations took place. A newly established rebel group Albanian National Army (AKSH) took the responsibility for its actions. AKSH denied the framework agreement claiming that it was treacherous and demanded secession (Lika, 2020: 76). This shows that without concrete solutions, rebel groups exist under the name of different organizations. On 12 April 2012, five bodies were found near Lake Smilkovo in Skopje. All of them were Macedonians. The six suspects, all of them ethnic Albanians, were arrested immediately and charged with life in prison. As a result, violent protests took place in Skopje. Protests turned into clashes between police forces and protestors. Some argue that these clashes were the result of VMRO-DPMNE's exclusionary and authoritarian policies. On 9 May 2015, clashes between Macedonian security forces and 40 Albanian fighters in Kumanovo resulted in the deadliest incidence of the decade. Eight security forces and

fourteen rebels died during the two-day-long clashes. According to a report published by the International Crisis Group, the rebel group included Kosovar Albanians and former KLA/NLA fighters.

Several worrying things about Kumanovo are already clear. The highest levels of the Kosovo and Macedonia governments had known about the group of fighters from multiple sources for months, perhaps as early as September 2014. 40-45 fighters, aged 23 to 48, including at least 28 from Kosovo and nine from Macedonia who arrived days before and was seen moving around openly, were a serious threat. At least five were wartime commanders in the Macedonian NLA or its Kosovo equivalent. Many had experience fighting in northern Macedonia (ICG, 2015).

Despite both international and local initiatives to maintain peace in the region after the war in Kosovo failed. However, the reason for violent conflict in Macedonia cannot be explained only by the spillover effect and the contagion of conflict unlike the arguments of some scholars (Koktsidis, 2014). Albin Kurti, one of the public leaders in Kosovo at that time, articulated that the economic crisis, accelerated by Kosovo's unresolved political status, was the main cause of inter-communal disputes and the resulting instability in the region (Trix, 2010).

4.8. Conclusion

In this section, examining the process from the Kosovo war to the radicalization of Kosovar Albanians I analyzed the effects of Kosovar Albanians as a kin group on the ethnic insurgency that broke out in Macedonia between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. The findings are in line with the main hypotheses of this study. First, I argued that the existence of a close kindred group nearby escalates the level of ethnic conflict (H1). This hypothesis has two dimensions in itself. First of all, there should be a kindred group at cross-border. In this case, Albanians in North Macedonia have a kin group in Kosovo. The second aspect of the argument is the relationship between them. I assume that kindred groups with close relations are more likely to increase the level of conflict. Due to the similarity of their problems, there was a close relationship between Kosovar Albanians and Macedonian Albanians. On the other hand, the relations with Albanian Albanians were much more distant.

Secondly, I argued that the type of intervention and support provided by the kin group affects the severity of the conflict. If the kin group promotes rebellion, the risk of violent conflict increases. On the other hand, if the kin group favors democratic resolution methods the level of conflict is reduced (H2). During the war in Kosovo, Macedonian Albanians joined KLA to fight for Kosovo's independence and supplied arms and healthcare services. Moreover, there is evidence that KLA members used ethnic Albanian majority cities in Macedonia as their bases such as Tanusevci. In terms of the conflict in North Macedonia, it is clear that the insurgent group in Macedonia was supported by Kosovar Albanians. There is strong evidence that the Kosovo Liberation Army played an important role in the formation of the National Liberation Army. The leader of the former Ali Ahmeti was also one of the founding members of the latter insurgent group. Additionally, several members participated in the fighting in both

organizations. Thus, the support from the kin group is evident. On the other hand, the kin group did not pursue diplomatic methods but resorted to violence and encouraged Macedonian Albanians to use force. It is because the kin group was radicalized as a result of the Kosovo war and radicalization continued due to unresolved political status issues.

Lastly, I argued that the closer the transborder ethnic kin group is to political power in its country, the less likely the ethnic conflict in a country escalate into violent rebellion (H3). This argument helps us understand the importance of political status and rights given to minority groups. Kin groups that are part of the government having access to the administrative processes are more inclined to use diplomatic methods in the case of a dispute. On other hand, kin groups barred from power become radicalized and more likely to resort to violent methods. In this case, even though Kosovar Albanians may seem the ruling party in Kosovo, its self-government and independence demand were ignored by the Yugoslav administration led by Serbia. Therefore, since the status of Kosovar Albanians is controversial, radicalization increased.

Apart from the main hypotheses of this study, the case analysis also showed that ethnopolitical discrimination and grievances have an influence on ethnic conflict. As my causal diagram presented in Chapter Two displays, grievances are a must for conflict to break out. Combined with discrimination and grievances, the existence of radicalized close kindred groups across border increases the likelihood of violent conflict. As Gleditsch (2007) argues “transnational ties related to ethnicity are likely to influence the willingness of groups to mobilize for violent conflict or respond violently to government repression.” In the case of the Macedonia conflict, the military support of radicalized close kindred group across the border to an ethnic group having relative deprivation escalated the conflicts

It can be understood from the findings that the unresolved status of Kosovo increases the radicalization of Kosovar Albanians. The conflicts occurred in 2015 even after the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Reports show that they were conducted by both KLA and NLA members. This indicates that if the status of Kosovo remains unresolved, ethnic tensions in the region and North Macedonia will likely continue. Even though Kosovo is already recognized by more than a hundred countries, relations with Serbia have not improved yet. Serbia still does not recognize the independence of Kosovo. For this reason, tensions arise from time to time between the two countries. Failure to resolve the disputes regarding Kosovo's political structure may lead to the radicalization of Kosovar Albanians. In this case, one of the countries that will be most affected will undoubtedly be North Macedonia.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Ethnic conflicts, which increased especially after the cold war period, have been studied by many researchers. Undoubtedly, it is one of the most important problems in the world. In this context, while ethnic-based civil wars are seen in some countries, it is also known that there are political structures that will facilitate the coexistence of different ethnic groups. What explains this divergence? At this point, there are different theories about the factors that lead to the violent mobilization of ethnic groups and escalation of conflict. However, most of these theories deal with the issue at a single level and develop partial explanations. This study focuses on the international dimension of ethnic conflict while taking into consideration domestic factors. This study argues that the combination of both leads to the most violent interethnic struggle.

5.1. Arguments and Findings

This thesis aimed at understanding the causes of different mobilization methods of ethnic groups. In this regard, the main questions of the thesis are as follows. Why do ethnic disputes result in violent conflicts? Why do some ethnic groups mobilize violently whereas others pursue peaceful methods? What explains the difference in mobilization methods of ethnic groups? When we look at the North Macedonia case, what are the factors that led to violent ethnic conflicts in North Macedonia, even though it was left out of the deadly wars in the Balkans in the post-Soviet period and peacefully declared its independence?

To seek an answer to these questions, I take into consideration both international and domestic factors. In this regard, I argue that the main source of tensions between ethnic groups in a country is the problems arising from internal politics. Thus, state policies on how to manage ethnic diversity are important. It is not possible to live in peace in a political system where one ethnic group is prioritized over others. For this reason, the main factor forming the basis of inter-ethnic conflict is the rights granted to ethnic groups. Ethnic group members who are excluded and discriminated against in the political, social, and economic fields begin to feel uncomfortable with the situation they are in. According to Ted Gurr's theory, this discomfort turns into relative deprivation as group members find themselves in a lower position than they think they should be. When this situation of relative deprivation is combined with some opportunity mechanisms, the risk of ethnic conflict arises. In this regard, this thesis assumes that ethnic groups in question are already experiencing resentment and relative deprivation due to internal politics. When these domestic factors are combined with international factors, the risk of violent conflict increases even more.

In line with the arguments mentioned above on the role of international factors, I argue that cross-border kin groups affect the intensification of conflicts. Whether this effect increases or decreases violence is directly related to the attitude of the kin group. If the kin group acts intending to prevent conflict and resorts to diplomatic means, the conflict is likely to end peacefully. But if it resorts to violence to support the conflicting party, the conflicts will inevitably intensify. Thus, this thesis analyzed the escalation of interethnic conflicts with a specific focus on transborder ethnic kin groups. Accordingly, the thesis is built on three main hypotheses. Quantitative and qualitative research methods are used to test them. In the quantitative analysis, I conducted a large-N analysis on ethnic rebellion using ordinal logistic regression. In the qualitative part, I analyzed the effects of Kosovar Albanians as a kin group on the ethnic insurgency that broke out in Macedonia in 2001 between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. In the following paragraphs, I will display the hypotheses and empirical findings of both analyses.

Firstly, I argue that the existence of close transborder ethnic kin affects the likelihood of violent inter-ethnic conflict. If there is a kindred group nearby with close relations, it is more likely for the kin group to intervene in the conflict. The existence of a kin group across borders can create various opportunities for the conflicting ethnic group such as military support, manpower, base camp, etc. This argument is tested using regression analysis. The results show that the existence of a close transborder ethnic kin group is a statistically important factor in explaining the escalation of inter-ethnic conflict controlling for other variables. On the other hand, ethnic Albanians in North Macedonia have a kin group in Kosovo as well as in Albania. Nevertheless, their support for Macedonian Albanians differs. While the role of Kosovar Albanians in the civil war in North Macedonia was tremendous, the support of Albanian Albanians was limited. I argue that Kosovar Albanians intervened in the conflict more effectively since they have close relations with Macedonian Albanians.

Secondly, the type of intervention and support provided by the close transborder kin group affects the severity of the conflict. If the kin group resorts to conflict-inducing methods, the risk of violent conflict increases. On the other hand, if the kin group favors democratic resolution of problems, the level of conflict is reduced. Following the first hypothesis, the approach of an existent ethnic kin group to an ongoing inter-ethnic conflict in a rebel group's country is determinant. This argument could not be tested in the quantitative analysis due to the lack of data. However, it is tested in the case analysis of North Macedonia. The war in Kosovo played important role in the shaping of relations between Albanians in both countries. As a result of the war and unresolved status of Kosovo, Kosovar Albanians are radicalized and appeal to violent methods under the Kosovo Liberation Army. Devastating outcomes of the war affected North Macedonia in several ways. Ongoing ethnic tensions in the country increased due to the flow of immigrants from Kosovo. In such a situation, ethnic tensions turned into violence in North Macedonia. In terms of kin support, this study finds strong evidence that the Kosovo Liberation

Army played an important role in the formation of the National Liberation Army and conducted the rebel attacks in 2001 and afterward. The leader of the former group Ali Ahmeti was also one of the founding members of the latter insurgent group. Additionally, several members participated in the fighting in both organizations. Thus, the support from the kin group is evident. On the other hand, the kin group did not pursue diplomatic methods but resorted to violence. Findings display that Kosovar Albanians provided military and healthcare support to the rebels. In doing so, they encourage Macedonian Albanians to use force.

Lastly, I argue that the closer the transborder ethnic kin group is to political power in its country, the less likely the ethnic conflict in a country escalate into violent rebellion. I expected that politically powerful kin groups are more likely to appeal to diplomatic methods whereas politically excluded groups tend to use violence. Ethnic groups without access to political power are more likely to be radicalized. As a result of this radicalization, they tend to resort to violence both in their own country and in the problems experienced in the surrounding countries. This argument is tested in regression analysis. The results show that there is a negative statistically significant relation between kin groups' access to political power and escalation of inter-ethnic violence. Thus, the hypothesis is proven to be valid. On the other hand, the case of North Macedonia shows similar results. Kosovo was an autonomous province under the Yugoslavian regime until 1989. After Yugoslav authorities retrieved its autonomy, the political status of Kosovo decreased. This led to the radicalization of Kosovar Albanians to gain independence. Later a deadly war broke out between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians in 1998. Even though the war ended in 1999, the political status of Kosovo stayed unresolved. This situation affected the ongoing conflict in North Macedonia and the escalation of insurgency in 2001. Kosovar Albanians intervened in the conflict using violent methods. On the other hand, Albanians in Albania did not resort to violent methods, rather they pursued diplomatic means. In Albania, Albanians were the majority ethnic group, and they were in power. However, Kosovar Albanians were suffering from political loss. These findings prove the hypothesis showing that the kin group in power is more likely to pursue diplomatic means whereas the kin group excluded from the political sphere is more likely to resort to violence.

5.2. Contributions and Limitations of the Study

This study contributes to the literature by combining the domestic and international factors in explaining the escalation of ethnic violence. The international dimension of ethnic conflict is mostly neglected in other studies. Most of them generally focus on internal politics, state-level and group-level factors as underlying causes of ethnic conflict. However, ethnic conflict is a global phenomenon. Hence, it can easily be affected by international settings and regional factors. In this regard, this study put an emphasis

on transborder ethnic kin groups as important elements of inter-ethnic relations. In doing so, it displays that internal regulations of conflict prevention are not enough on their own. Regional and international factors could lead to violent conflicts. Thus, it offers a more comprehensive theoretical framework. Additionally, it has a methodological contribution to the literature on ethnic conflict. The large-N regression analysis conducted in the research contributes to the ethnic conflict literature with a specific focus on transborder ethnic kin groups. Even though an earlier version of the AMAR dataset has been used by several scholars in numerous studies, the updated version needs more attention as it corrected the selection bias problem. Thus, the analysis provides more accurate results. Moreover, the conflict in North Macedonia has been examined in line with several theories of ethnic conflict. Even though the effect of Kosovar Albanians as a kin group was mentioned in those studies, it was not at the center of the analyses. Thus, this thesis brings the kin group to the center and develops a theory at the regional level.

There are some limitations of this study. First of all, due to the lack of data one of the hypotheses could not be tested using quantitative analysis. Since the AMAR dataset has several missing data on the type of kin support variables, I excluded them from the analysis. Therefore, I could not test one of my hypotheses in the large-N analysis. On the other hand, in the North Macedonia case, even though the process tracing method helped me to test my arguments, an in-depth analysis could provide better results. However, due to the lack of time and resources, I could not conduct in-depth analyses such as field research and interviews. Lastly, the question of the generalizability of the theory can be asked. In this regard, even though the theory has its implications for the North Macedonia case, whether it applies to other case studies is important. At that point, the large-N analysis results display the statistical significance of the hypotheses worldwide. Hence, it proves that the theory can be used in other case studies. Additionally, to avoid the problem of ecological fallacy, this study tests the theory and hypotheses with statistical, large-N analyses. The results indicate that the theory is confirmed given the available evidence. Further, the thesis has also a qualitative section. Its in-depth analysis examines the causal mechanisms in the case of North Macedonia.

5.3. Future Research Recommendations

The role of the transborder ethnic kin group is displayed as an important factor in the escalation of ethnic violence worldwide and specifically in North Macedonia. However, to see the effect of different mechanisms and examine the causal mechanisms related to transborder ethnic kin support in other case studies, comparative researches should be conducted. In this regard, the cases of Turks in Bulgaria and Albanians of North Macedonia would be interesting to examine. Additionally, the theory can be implemented to the ethnic conflicts in other regions. Furthermore, the mechanisms performing between the rebel group and kin group needs closer attention.



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