

# Remembering the 2001 Armed Conflict in Macedonia:

MODES OF COMMEMORATION  
AND MEMORIALIZATION



Humanitarian Law Center

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# Abbreviations

<b>ANA</b>	Albanian National Army
<b>ARM</b>	Army of the Republic of Macedonia
<b>DA</b>	Democratic Alternative
<b>DPA</b>	Democratic Party of Albanians
<b>DUI</b>	Democratic Union for Integration
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ICTY</b>	International Crime Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
<b>IMRO-DPMNU</b>	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity
<b>KFOR</b>	Kosovo Forces
<b>KLA</b>	Kosovo Liberation Army
<b>MD</b>	Ministry of Defense
<b>MIA</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs
<b>MOC</b>	Macedonian Orthodox Church
<b>MPSICR</b>	Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NLA</b>	National Liberation Army
<b>OFA</b>	Ohrid Framework Agreement
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>SDUM</b>	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNPREDEP</b>	United Nations Preventive Deployment Force
<b>USA</b>	United States of America

# Abstract

This paper discusses the strategies of commemorating and memorializing the armed conflict in North Macedonia since its formal ending in August 2001. It argues that there are two prevailing modes of remembering the 2001 conflict in post-conflict Macedonia, which match the domains of the two largest ethnic communities in the state, the Macedonian and the Albanian. Observation of annual developments, however, demonstrates that commemorative practices within the two domains are not as uniform as they might seem. The paper argues that there have been critical changes in the commemorative discourses, actors, and activities over the last two decades, which hint at the shifting power dynamics related to the memory of the conflict and its end. In the first part, the paper analyzes the figure of the “defenders”, the dominant term for commemorating the killed members of the state security forces. The analysis moves on to the figures of the “victors” and “martyrs”, as promoted by the Albanian actors. The second part of the paper focuses on the patterns of interactions between the two communities over the memory of the 2001 conflict. The four patterns that the paper identifies differ in terms of the spatial distribution within the state, the emphases on different episodes of 2001, and the “administration” of memory by the political actors.



# 1. Introduction

This paper discusses the strategies of commemorating and memorializing the Macedonian conflict in North Macedonia since its formal ending in August 2001. It argues that there are two prevailing modes of remembering 2001 in post-conflict Macedonia, which match the domains of the two largest ethnic communities in the state, the Macedonian and the Albanian.<sup>1</sup> In the first part, the paper analyzes the figure of the “defenders”, the dominant term for commemorating the slain members of the state security forces, and the figures of the “victors” and “martyrs”, as promoted by the Albanian actors. The second part of the paper is focused on the patterns of interactions between the two communities over the memory of the 2001 conflict. The four patterns identified differ in terms of the spatial distribution in the state, the emphases on different episodes of 2001, and the “administration” of memory by the political actors.<sup>2</sup>

The arguments of this paper draw upon nationalism and memory studies approaches centered on “everyday practices” in post-conflict settings.<sup>3</sup> The paper aims at tracing the production of memory discourses, narratives, and practices related to 2001 from a longitudinal perspective. It argues that the major trajectories and critical changes occurring during the last two decades have been predominantly elite-driven and, in several cases, founded on vernacular understandings of 2001. The processes of policing the memory of 2001 following those changes were multifaceted, however, and largely determined by the local histories of interethnic relations, episodes of the conflict, and post-2001 municipal debates.

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1 As per the last population census of 2022, ethnic Macedonians constitute 58.4% and ethnic Albanians 24.3 % of the total number of North Macedonia's residents.

2 The paper views the process of “administering memory” in line with Sara Dybris McQuaid and Sarah Gensburger, “Administrations of Memory: Transcending the Nation and Bringing Back the State in Memory Studies,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 32, no. 2 (2019): 125-143.

3 For an overview, see: Denisa Kostovicova, Ivor Sokolić, and Orli Fridman, “Below Peace Agreements: Everyday Nationalism or Everyday Peace?” *Nations and Nationalism* 26, no. 2 (2020): 424-430.



The paper traces all these dynamics by looking at the “memory industry” over 2001 as the field of commemorations, cultural production, and media reports related to the conflict.<sup>4</sup> It also explores the developments of “memoryscapes” related to 2001 as critical sites of physical manifestations and visual representations of past events before the public.<sup>5</sup> Individual recollections of 2001 are not the primary focus of this paper, although it builds upon several memoirs and oral history accounts when portraying certain groupist patterns of remembering. The paper also avoids normative conclusions and does not advocate any mnemonic model. The accent is thus on the empirical evidence from the last two decades, and the goal is to identify and analyze the major memory actors, agencies, and activities in the given time period.

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4 On the “memory industry”, see: Jelena Đureinović, *Politika sećanja na ratove devedesetih u Srbiji: Istorijski revizionizam i izazovi memorijalizacije* (Beograd: Fond za humanitarno pravo, 2021).

5 On “memoryscapes”, see Vjeran Pavlaković: *Memoryscapes of the Homeland War* (Rijeka: University of Rijeka, 2022).

# 2. The 2001 Armed Conflict

## 2.1. Yugoslav Macedonia: A Prehistory

The violent escalation of interethnic tensions in 2001 had a prehistory on the local, national, and regional levels going back several decades.<sup>6</sup> The first attempts to institutionalize the multiethnic population and interethnic relations in the most recent Macedonian history came with the People's Liberation War during the Second World War. The antifascist struggle paved the way for establishing a Macedonian state within Yugoslavia and concluded the Macedonian nation- and state-building program. The 1944 Declaration on fundamental rights by the wartime Macedonian government and the 1946 Macedonian Constitution officialized, for the first time, the language, identity, and culture of both Macedonians and ethnic minorities.

The rights of the minority groups further expanded with the 1963 Yugoslav Constitution and the assumption of power by a "liberal" cohort of politicians in Macedonia in the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> By the end of the 1960s, the numbers of the political representatives of the minorities rose, as well as their presence in schools and universities, and several Macedonian municipalities officialized the use of the languages and flags of the minorities.<sup>8</sup>

The early 1970s in Macedonia saw a more conservative group of politicians in power and a growth of unemployment rates. However, it was Tito's death, the Albanian protests in

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6 Vasiliki Neofotistos argues this was a result of the "flux" of sociopolitical arrangements and rearrangements in and beyond Macedonia, see: *The Risk of War: Everyday Sociality in the Republic of Macedonia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 5-6.

7 On the notion of "liberal" in socialist Macedonia, see: Neven Radičeski, *Liberalizmot vo Makedonija (1966-1974)* (Skopje: Makedonika Litera, 2013).

8 Dušan Anakioski, "Kretanje zaposlenosti i promene u socijalnoj strukturi stanovništva SR Makedonije," *Stanovništvo* 5-4 (1967): 293-304; Ranka Čičak, "Podelja vlasti u Sobranju," *Vjesnik*, 22.12.1969.

Kosovo and several Macedonian cities, and the results of the population census in the early 1980s, that triggered a major change in Macedonian politics and which informed the interethnic relations in the coming years.<sup>9</sup> In short, the elite saw the rise of Albanian nationalism as a critical challenge to state security and launched a campaign for battling it, framing it as a pressing need and justification for eliminating all nationalisms. The protests of ethnic Albanians, their boycott of state institutions, and their ties with and remittances from the Albanian political diaspora further fired up the state campaign which had evolved in different spheres.<sup>10</sup>

The above-mentioned state policies eventually led to the marginalization of the Albanian population and development of two separate polities in the state.<sup>11</sup> Exclusion from the state sector and social benefits encouraged the Macedonian Albanians to seek labor migration in and beyond Yugoslavia, as well as in small-scale trade. Hence, on the eve of the Yugoslav demise, the two largest ethnic communities in socialist Macedonia had “very different perceptions [...] as to how the Macedonian state is failing, and who is paying the price for its failure”.<sup>12</sup>

## 2.2. The Late 1980s and The 1990s

In November 1989, the ruling party in Macedonia pushed a set of *Glasnost*-style reforms. These reforms were directed towards political pluralism, democratic elections in December 1990, and a successful independence referendum in September 1991. Although all the Albanian politicians boycotted the Constitution voting, while a vast majority of Macedonian Albanians refused to participate in the independence referendum and the

9 See the monographs of Irena Stawowy-Kawka, *Albańczycy w Macedonii 1944-2001* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ, 2014); and Marijana Stamova, *Albancite vo SR Makedonija prez prez poslednoto desetiletie v Titova Jugoslavija (1981-1991)* (Kyustendil – Gaborovo: Ivan Sapundžev, 2017).

10 For an overview of the official discourses, see: Slavko Milosavljevski and Mirče Tomovski, *Albancite vo Republika Makedonija (1945-1995): Legislativa, politička dokumentacija, statistika* (Skopje: Studentski zbor, 1997).

11 Ulf Brunnbauer, “Fertility, Families and Ethnic Conflict: Macedonians and Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia, 1944-2022,” *Nationalities Papers* 32, no. 3 (2004): 565-598.

12 *Ahmeti's village: The political economy of interethnic relations in Macedonia* (Skopje – Berlin: European Stability Initiative, 2002), 1.

first post-Yugoslav census in Macedonia, a multiethnic coalition was formed in 1992.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, prior to 2001, it was widely considered that the political democratization of Macedonia, the history of inclusive political representation, and its opening to the international community, had brought a relaxation of interethnic relations despite the regional tensions.<sup>14</sup> However, the politics and legacies of the 1980s appear not to have been as satisfactorily handled as expected; although state officials did invest certain efforts to advance minority rights in the early 1990s.<sup>15</sup>

The 1990s in Macedonia were marked by contested privatizations, slow-paced reforms and a lack of foreign investments. Additionally, there were multiple and different contestations with neighboring countries: over the state name with Greece, over the Macedonian language and history with Bulgaria, over the status of the Macedonian Orthodox Church with Serbia, and, up to 1998, the rights of the ethnic Albanians in Macedonia with Albania. All these developments led during the 90s to a collapse of the democratic mechanisms for policing interethnic relations into a “parapolitics”, or their mutation into a persistent competition over culture, politics, and identity between the two ethnicities.<sup>16</sup> Tensions along ethnic lines reappeared from the early 1990s. On several occasions, the tensions escalated into violence. In 1992, four people were killed in a confrontation between the police and ethnic Albanian cigarette dealers, and in November 1993, a number of Albanians were arrested on charges of gun-running and conspiring to create paramilitary organizations.<sup>17</sup>

13 It was the only multiethnic cabinet in post-communist Europe by the end of 1992. More in Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 252. A concise political chronology of the early years of post-Yugoslav Macedonia can be found in Mišo Dokmanovikj, *Sami na svoeto: Kratka istorija na makedonskata nezavisnost (1990-1993)* (Skopje: FES, 2021).

14 See, for instance: John Marks and Eran Fraenkel, “Working to Prevent Conflict in the New Nation of Macedonia,” *Negotiation Journal* 13, no. 3 (1997): 243-252; Vladimir T. Ortakovski, “Interethnic Relations and Minorities in the Republic of Macedonia,” *Southeast European Politics* 2, no. 1 (2001): 24-45.

15 The authorities were close to reaching a deal that would advance the rights of the Albanians in Macedonia in 1992, a vast provision of which further translated into the OFA as per the German OSCE diplomat Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, involved in the negotiations. In: Mančo Mitevski, *2001: Vojna so dve lica* (Skopje: Kultura, 2008), 64-65.

16 Keith S. Brown, “In the realm of the double-headed eagle: Parapolitics in Macedonia 1994-9”, in *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference*, ed. J.K. Cowan (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 122-139.

17 Brown, “In the realm...”, 128.

Brown argues that the major struggles along ethnic lines in the Macedonia of the 1990s unfolded in municipalities with ethnic Albanian majorities - in the “zones of engagement” between the two largest ethnic communities, such as Tetovo and Gostivar. One of the major incidents occurred in Gostivar in 1997, after the setting up of an Albanian flag in front of the municipal building. The removal of the flag by the police provoked mass local demonstrations which were brutally rebuked, resulting in three deaths and more than 200 injured protesters.<sup>18</sup> The Macedonian right-wing opposition instrumentalized the Albanian demonstrations to invigorate Macedonian nationalism, which eventually opened the door to a slender electoral victory by the IMRO-DPMNU in 1998.<sup>19</sup> After the elections, the IMRO-DPMNU managed to form a government coalition with the Democratic Alternative (*Demokratska alternativa*, DA) and the Democratic Party of Albanians (*Partia Demokratike Shqiptare*, DPA).

## 2.3. Armed Hostilities

The armed conflict in Macedonia started on 22 January 2001 with a guerrilla attack on the police station in Tearce, near Tetovo, followed by an attack on a passenger train in Western Macedonia on 26 January. The self-proclaimed National Liberation Army (*Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare*, NLA), a group with the same acronym in Albanian as the KLA, immediately claimed responsibility for the two assaults.<sup>20</sup> The events struck by surprise Macedonian society and the political elites, as well as analysts and diplomats.<sup>21</sup> The two parliamentary Albanian parties also rebuked the activities of the NLA. The incidents came shortly after the border demarcation deal between Macedonia and Serbia in early 2001, which was condemned by Kosovar politicians, and the formal end of hostilities

18 Brown, "In the realm...", 129-133.

19 IMRO-DPMNU stands for Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity [*Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija-Demokratska partija za makedonsko nacionalno edinstvo*]. The party and its leader, Ljubčo Georgievski, campaigned on an anti-Albanian program in the 1990s and, in 1997, they supported the student protests of ethnic Macedonians against tertiary education in Albanian and the illegal opening of an Albanian university in Tetovo.

20 On the formation of the NLA, see: Mair Iseni, Petrit Menaj, and Rufi Osmani, *Izbor tekstovi za konfliktot od 2001 godina* (Skopje: FIOOM, 2008).

21 Zhidas Daskalovski, "The Independence of Kosovo and the Consolidation of Macedonia – A Reason to Worry?" *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 16, no. 2 (2008), 276.

in the Preševo district of South Serbia in November 2000.<sup>22</sup> Just months prior to these events, in 1999, the United Nations' Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) ended its four-year-long mandate to monitor the border areas in Macedonia.<sup>23</sup> This decision left the Albanian, Kosovar, and Macedonian borders prone to illegal crossings.<sup>24</sup>

The knowledge of the border-crossings by fighters did not prevent the outbreak of hostilities in Macedonia. After the initial attacks in February, the Macedonian state security forces pushed the rebels to cross the northern state border.<sup>25</sup> The clashes escalated anew in March 2001 and spread to Tetovo, where the NLA occupied the positions of the Kale fortress and besieged the city. After almost a week of gunfire in one of the most populated Macedonian cities, the government issued an ultimatum to the NLA, and the state forces started shelling the villages in the vicinity of Tetovo, declaring the operation a success after four days.<sup>26</sup> However, on 28 April, the NLA ambushed a convoy of the state forces in the village of Vejce, near Tetovo, and killed eight and injured six of its members. The ambush sparked incidents in several Macedonian cities - most notably in Bitola, the birthplace of four of the slain security forces' members - including the destruction of properties of ethnic Albanians.

In May 2001, the hostilities shifted to the northeast region around the city of Kumanovo, where the NLA assumed control of several villages. The Army of the Republic of Macedonia (*Armija na Republika Makedonija*, ARM) used the tactic of blasting the villages with heavy artillery and tank fire, backed up by helicopters firing rockets, as was described by journalist John Phillips, who was reporting from the NLA's "liberated territories" in the Kumanovo region.<sup>27</sup> Here, the fights were more protracted than in Tetovo, for multiple reasons, including the NLA's mobilization of local ethnic Albanians, the numerous

22 Pavlos I. Koktsidis, "The Decision to Use Violence: Opportunity Structures and the Albanian Insurgency in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," *Ethnopolitics* 18, no. 4 (2019): 383-405.

23 The end of the mandate came after China vetoed its renewal following the Macedonian recognition of Taiwan. More on the UNPREDEP's mission in Macedonia in Henryk J. Sokalski, *Odrobina prewencji: Dorobek dyplomacji prewencyjnej ONZ w Macedonii* (Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2007), 141-312.

24 See, for instance, the recollections of the first president of the Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov, *Makedonija e sé što imame* (Skopje: Kultura, 2002), 588-599.

25 Zidas Daskalovski, "The Macedonian Conflict of 2001: Between Successful Diplomacy, Rhetoric and Terror," *Studies in Post-Communist*, Occasional Paper no. 7 (2004): 7-11.

26 *Conflicting Perceptions: A study of prevailing interpretations of the conflict in Macedonia among Albanian and Macedonian communities* (The Norwegian Helsinki Committee Report, 2003).

27 John Phillips, *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans* (London - New York: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 105.

civilians who turned down the chance of safety through the international humanitarian organizations (the state authorities, as noted by Phillips, claimed that they were used as hostages and human shields by the NLA), and the strategic position of the village of Lipkovo close to the two reservoirs providing water for Kumanovo, which the NLA used as a leverage in the combat.<sup>28</sup>

Although the security forces managed to recapture the village of Vaksince in late May and cut the Tetovo-Kumanovo corridor, the shared impression of the foreign observers was that the state did not possess the military capacity to tackle the rebels.<sup>29</sup> This turned to be the case in late June, when the NLA, entrenched itself in the village of Aračinovo in near proximity to Skopje and its international airport, and threatened to attack the capital city and bomb the nearby oil refinery. The maneuver of the NLA alarmed the international community, which pushed both sides to hold back from gunfire. After several days, the Macedonian government launched a military offensive on Aračinovo, which did not bring solid results after five days of shootings.<sup>30</sup> As a final step, the international community moved in to arrange a ceasefire via the EU envoy Javier Solana, and the Macedonian government agreed to stop the offensive and withdraw its security forces. On 25 June, soldiers of NATO's Kosovo Forces (KFOR) contingent assisted the evacuation of the NLA fighters to areas controlled by the rebels.<sup>31</sup>

The situation in June was unarguably different from the one during the early conflict phases. In mid-May, a government of national unity was formed including all parliamentary parties, while the NLA started coordinating its objectives with the two major ethnic Albanian parties in Macedonia. The NLA stopped denigrating the ethnic Macedonians in their communique, rearticulated its fights as a struggle for human rights and against a territorial division of the Macedonian state, and, ultimately, obtained political legitimacy on behalf of the Albanian political parties that had initially dismissed the NLA's methods.<sup>32</sup> However, despite the seemingly better political cooperativeness and

28 Phillips, *Macedonia*, 103-116.

29 Phillips, *Macedonia*, 103.

30 Daskalovski, "The Macedonian Conflict of 2001", 9.

31 Saso Ordanoski, "Lions & Tigers: The Militarisation of the Macedonian Right," in *Conflict in FYROM – Reflection*, ed. J. Pettifer (London: Institute of War & Peace Reporting, 2004), 17-28.

32 Iso Rusi, "From Army to Party – The Politics of the NLA," in *Conflict in FYROM – Reflection*, ed. J. Pettifer (London: Institute of War & Peace Reporting, 2004), 1-16.

the peace negotiations leading to a ceasefire in early July, the NLA continued attacking state forces and kidnapping civilians.

The hostilities continued in August 2001, parallel with the efforts of the international community for a definite ceasefire. On 8 August, the NLA ambushed a state forces convoy near Karpalak and killed ten and injured three of its members. This event sped up the negotiations, while the location of the ambush became one of the most significant memory sites related to the 2001 Macedonian conflict. On 13 August 2001, the Macedonian President and the leaders of four major political parties, two Macedonian and two Albanian, signed a ceasefire agreement - the Ohrid Framework Agreement (*Ohridski ramkoven dogovor*, OFA).

The months of hostilities in 2001 resulted in more than 200 casualties and more than 170,000 internally displaced persons.<sup>33</sup> The peak of internal displacement was reached in August and September, when 70,000 people were registered as internally displaced or refugees, 60 per cent of them ethnic Macedonians.<sup>34</sup> Almost 95 per cent of the internally displaced persons and refugees had returned to their homes by 2003.<sup>35</sup> The numbers of casualties and civil victims differ depending on the ethnic standpoint about the conflict; and the domestic media often reflect these views on the conflict.

## 2.4. The Ohrid Framework Agreement

The OFA came after the negotiations in Ohrid's Vila Biljana, President Tito's former summer residence and the present-day presidential residence, following days of negotiations facilitated by the international representatives of the EU and USA. It concluded in Skopje on 13 August 2001 with signatures by the President of the Republic

33 For the casualties, see: Ulf Brunnbauer, "The Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement: Ethnic Macedonian Resentments," *Journal on ethno-politics and minority issues in Europe* 1, no. 1 (2002): 1-23. A debate, *inter alia*, on the number of casualties is available in this publication: *Istorija i apokrifi – demitologizacija na 2001: Debata* (Skopje: FOOM, 2010).

34 *Profile of internal Displacement: Macedonia* (Geneva: Norwegian Refugee Council – Global IDP Project, 2002). See, as well, the International Helsinki Federation's Annual Report on Human Rights Violations in Macedonia for 2001.

35 *Konečen izveštaj: Procenka na reintegracijata na raselenite lica i revitalizacija na regionite pogodeni od konfliktot vo Makedonija* (Skopje: MCMS – FAKT, 2003).



of Macedonia, the leaders of the state's two major Macedonian parties and the two major Albanian parties, as well as the representatives of the international community.<sup>36</sup> The published version of the OFA had a scope beyond a regular ceasefire accord, as it also aimed at redefining the institutional arrangement of minority rights and interethnic relations in the state. It consisted of three major clusters: amendments to the Macedonian constitution, changes in the legislation, and a plan for a gradual end to the hostilities and demilitarization of the NLA.<sup>37</sup>

Fundamentally, the OFA led to redefining the Republic of Macedonia as a state of all its citizens, introduced minority languages as official in municipalities where more than twenty percent of the population speaks such languages, and instituted a model of "soft power-sharing".<sup>38</sup> This model centers on the double ethnic majority voting principle for laws affecting culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols, and a stronger participation of minority groups in public institutions.<sup>39</sup> In principle, the OFA allowed for a devolution of power to a local level as a major vehicle for creating autonomy for the ethnic communities.<sup>40</sup> A condition for those amendments was an operation of demobilization of the NLA, conducted and supervised by NATO, and a subsequent redeployment of the state security forces in the insurgent areas.

One of the most contentious issues stemming from the OFA was the implementation of the 2004 Law on Territorial Organization, which decreased the number of municipalities from 123 to 84, maximizing the possibility of municipal population structures where ethnic Albanian citizens would make up more than twenty per cent.<sup>41</sup> This issue sparked tensions and eventually led to a referendum against the redrawing of the municipal borders, but which ended with a low turnout of 26 per cent, insufficient to reform the legislative process.

36 More on the negotiations leading to OFA in Veton Ljatifi, *Pregovorite za postignuvanje na Ohridskiot dogovor* (Skopje: FOOM, 2008).

37 *Framework Agreement*. Concluded at Ohrid, Macedonia; Signed at Skopje, Macedonia on 13 August 2001.

38 Florian Bieber, "Power-Sharing and the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement," in *Power-Sharing and the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement* (Skopje: FES, 2008), 7-40.

39 See, as well, Aisling Lyon, "Political decentralization and the strengthening of consensual, participatory local democracy in the Republic of Macedonia." *Democratization* 22, no. 1 (2015): 157-178.

40 Risto Karajakov, "Macedonia's 2001 ethnic war: Offsetting conflict. What could have been done but was not?" *Conflict, Security & Development* 8, no. 4 (2008): 451-490.

41 More in Eben Friedman, "The Ethnopolitics of Territorial Division in the Republic of Macedonia," *Ethnopolitics* 8, no. 2 (2009): 209-221.

The OFA did not envision any transitional justice mechanisms other than the so-called “amnesty law” adopted in 2002, which reprieved all the combatants from prosecutions except those who had committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, or other violations under the jurisdiction of the International Crime Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).<sup>42</sup> In early October 2002, the ICTY requested Macedonia to send the court five investigations of alleged crimes, four of them committed by the NLA and one by the state security forces. The authorities complied with the ICTY requests in late November 2002. In April 2005, the ICTY stated that the only indictment out of the five received cases would be for the investigation of the alleged killing of ten civilians by state security forces in Ljuboten.<sup>43</sup>

Although praised in the mid-2000s as a successful model for resolving minority rights issues, the OFA contributed to a particular citizenship regime in post-conflict Macedonia which Spaskovska terms “ethnizenship”, where citizens participate in the public sphere solely as members of ethnonational or religious communities.<sup>44</sup> These divisions along ethnic lines were further recreated in many social, political, and economic domains. The post-OFA practices of political concessions, bargaining over municipal funding, and public expectations contributed to creating an almost impenetrable model of exclusion of other ethnic groups from the alleged platforms of the ethnic, religious, and language communities. A good illustration of the above practice in the cultural sphere is the parallel existence of two annual pop-music festivals, the Skopje festival and the Nota fest, both taking place at the same venue in Skopje, but without, however, the participation of ethnic Albanian singers in the former case and ethnic Macedonian singers in the latter.<sup>45</sup>

Various memory practices have also helped maintain this regime shaping participation in public life, because the commemorative activities related to the 2001 conflict predominantly take place inside the domains of the two largest ethnic communities.

42 Elmina Kulasic, *Transitional Justice in Macedonia and its Relations with Democracy* (Skopje: KAS – CRPM, 2012).

43 Zoran Ilievski, *Ethnic Mobilization in Macedonia* (Bozen – Bolzano: European Academy, 2007), 25-26.

44 Ljubica Spaskovska, “The fractured ‘we’ and the ethno-national ‘I’: the Macedonian citizenship framework,” *Citizenship Studies* 16, no. 3-4 (2012): 383-396.

45 Maja Muhic, Violeta Simjanovska, and Lea Linin, “Re-thinking cultural policy: From strategy to reality – intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity in Macedonia,” in *Cultures and sustainable development at times of crisis* (Belgrade: University of Arts in Belgrade, 2014), 329-345.

Observation of annual developments, however, demonstrates that commemorative practices within the two domains are not as uniform as they might seem. Namely, there have been critical changes in the commemorative discourses, actors, and activities over the last two decades, which hint at the shifting power dynamics related to the memory of the conflict and the agreement.

# 3. The Two Memory Cultures

## 3.1. The Defenders

The Macedonian public depicted the state security forces as “defenders” (*braniteli*) since the start of the armed hostilities in January 2001. The figure of the “Defenders” encompasses the police units and military forces, as well as the reserve forces that ARM mobilized during the conflict. It also suggests that all those formations fought to defend the territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Macedonia in 2001. Although not a legal category, the term “defenders” also resonates with the 2002 Law regulating the rights of the members of the state forces and their families. The law underwent several changes in the 2000s, although a final compromise addressing the many administrative barriers for compensating the defenders and their families is far from being reached. The main reason for the stalemate is the Democratic Union for Integration (*Bashkimi Demokratik për Integritim*, DUI), the political party established in 2002 by the former NLA fighters, as it openly rejects a legislative solution that will not grant the former NLA members the same rights as the armed forces and their families.

The dispute over the “Defenders’ law” encapsulates in the public discourses the symbolic struggle over the 2001 conflict and the OFA provisions. On the one hand, the former members of the armed forces and the ethnic Macedonian public in general view a possible realization of the DUI’s demands regarding the compensation of the NLA fighters as an act of “rewarding the terrorists” and elevating their legal status to that of “defenders of the

state”.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, the DUI’s demands for granting the former NLA fighters the same privileges as the armed forces stem from their claim that the NLA was a legitimate side in the conflict fighting for the advancement of human rights within the state borders and institutions. In the past years, commemorative events organized by the DUI’s affiliates were used as platforms for promoting this position, as will be further discussed in the text.

In this context of heated public debates over the conflict, the state institutions started developing activities to commemorate the slain members of the Macedonian armed forces in 2001. It is important to mention that those activities commenced as early as the end of the armed hostilities in Macedonia. In 2002, for instance, just a few months after the signing of the OFA, the Macedonian Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo za vnatrešni raboti*, MIA) installed a memorial plaque dedicated to the slain policemen and set up an eternal flame in front of its main building in Skopje. This site became a central place for marking 7 May, the Macedonian Police Day.<sup>47</sup> In a similar vein, the Ministry of Defense (*Ministerstvo za odbrana*, MD) and the ARM placed memorial objects dedicated to their affiliates killed in the conflict within their institutional complexes.

Since 2002, local municipalities and war veteran associations have been initiating memorial plaques dedicated to the fallen members of the armed forces in public spaces. One of the first memorial plaques was installed in the municipality of Dračevo, Skopje, and, since the mid-2000s, similar objects have been placed in other Macedonian cities, such as Strumica and Berovo. The memorial plaques are dedicated to the slain soldiers, emphasizing those from the municipality, and depicting them as Macedonian patriots and heroes of the nation. Similarly to the state institutions, the local communities and organizations also organize different commemorative practices at the sites of the memorials related to the 2001 conflict. As an illustration, in many cities and towns with a predominantly ethnic Macedonian population not directly affected by the conflict, the annual days of the municipalities often involve commemorative activities at those sites.

46 As framed by Kumanovo’s Defenders’ Association leader Predrag Petruševski in 2012. More in Klauđija Lutovska, “Defenders’ Law Shakes Macedonia Politics,” *SETimes*, 16.09.2012. Available at: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/16092012-defenders-law-shakes-macedonia-politics/>

47 “Svečeno odbeležan 7 maj, Denot na policijata,” *Vreme*, 08.05.2004.

The importance for the communities of commemorating their local war dead is also visible in other types of commemorations, such as the memorial sports tournaments (mostly football), blood donation activities, and renaming of streets and schools. It is not only locals who attend these events, but also representatives of municipal and national governments, political parties, civil society organizations, and the Macedonian Orthodox Church (*Makedonska pravoslavna crkva*, MOC). The MOC has assumed an important role in the commemorations of the state forces, who were mostly, but not exclusively, Orthodox Christian. MOC representatives have participated in both the vernacular and the official commemorations since the end of the conflict. One of the first commemorations of slain members of the armed forces was a religious ceremony in the Lešok monastery complex near Tetovo in 2002, destroyed by the NLA in 2001 and reconstructed shortly after the conflict.<sup>48</sup>

The developments in the municipality of Prilep, the birthplace of the majority of the armed forces slain in the Karpalak ambush, illuminate the relations between official and vernacular memory practices. The first commemorative events in the city date back to late 2001, when the Macedonian troops were returning from service and started visiting the graves of their slain fellow servicemen at their birthplaces. Friends and relatives of those killed also attended these events, and they eventually turned into platforms for discussing more organized forms of preserving the memory of the slain. Such was the case with the formation of the first veterans' association in Prilep, which would be focal in organizing the annual commemorations at Karpalak in the coming years - as will be discussed in more detail below, as well as lobbying for the rights of the veterans and the families of the slain members of the armed forces.<sup>49</sup>

In addition, government representatives attended the vernacular (and religious) commemorative ceremonies for slain members of the armed forces in the post-conflict years. In the case of Prilep, the former city mayor, IMRO-DPMNU's Marjan Risteski, was himself a survivor of the Karpalak ambush. During his time in office from 2005 to 2017, Risteski transformed the memory of the slain fellow servicemen into the main cultural project of the municipality. Besides the monument and memorial room within the ARM

48 Dejan Nikolovski, "Panihida vo Lešok za masakriranite braniteli," *Dnevnik*, 30.04.2002.

49 See the personal accounts in *Voeni prikazni na prilepskite veterani od 2001* (Prilep: Mirovna akcija, 2020), 49-50.

established shortly after the conflict, Risteski's cabinet also placed a memorial plaque in the city center in 2007, renamed 13 streets with names of those slain in the Karpalak ambush, and founded a memorial complex with two monuments dedicated to the "Prilep Defenders" in the early 2010s. Both monuments in Prilep are more than 15 meters tall and stand in the middle of two central roundabouts.

The two monuments in Prilep are also atypical cases of the post-2001 memorial architecture honoring the Macedonian "defenders": they are depersonalized, resonate with Orthodox Christian symbolism, and do not carry national and ethnic references. The first of the monuments, for instance, consists of ten concrete sides over a water fountain, symbolizing the ten slain defenders, that hold a pulsing ball which indicates the eternal lives of the Macedonian defenders.<sup>50</sup> The other monument was finished and inaugurated in August 2013, on the day of the Karpalak ambush. A spiral-like 'modernist' tower, the monument honors not only the slain defenders at Karpalak, but also the "defiance" of all Prilep-born fighters throughout Macedonian history.<sup>51</sup> The two monuments play a major part in the annual commemorations of the slain defenders at Karpalak.

There are many nuances to the state-sponsored commemorations of the slain members of the Macedonian armed forces, but a common denominator is that they take place within institutional complexes, at birthplaces, and, finally, at the sites of ambushes. The focal points of all these activities are the memorials in their honor placed after 2001. The memorials portray the slain armed forces as Macedonian patriots and heroes of the nation and usually employ Orthodox Christian symbols. The official commemorations have among their goals showing solidarity with the families, relatives, and co-combatants of those who gave their lives for their fatherland. These events often present the sacrifices of the "defenders" in light of the struggles for Macedonian statehood since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the midst of the aforementioned impediments relating to reparations, the annual commemorations serve as sacrosanct platforms for reenacting the institutional commitment to the memory of the slain armed forces.

50 Monika Taleska, "Spomen-obeležje Karpalak vo Prilep," *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, 03.04.2011. Available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/3545325.html>

51 "Kamen-temelnik za nov spomenik vo čest na Prilepskite braniteli," *A1on*, 11.03.2013. Available at: <https://a1on.mk/macedonia/kamen-temelnik-za-nov-spomenik-vo-cest/>

## 3.2. Victors and Martyrs

The commemorative activities related to the NLA predominantly revolve around the tropes of the struggle, sacrifice, and victory of the Albanian insurgents. This tendency resembles the post-war memory dynamics over the fallen KLA fighters in Kosovo.<sup>52</sup> In Kosovo, however, rival political factions compete over the right to be regarded as the authentic heirs of the Kosovo Liberation War.<sup>53</sup> In post-conflict Macedonia, the two uncontested agents that claim the legacy of the 2001 conflict are the successors of the NLA: the DUI political party and the NLA's veteran organization (*Shoqata e Veteranëve të Luftës së UCK-së*).

In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, the DUI and the NLA veteran organization curated a series of events that commemorated the “liberation” of the villages and towns that the NLA brought under its military control in 2001.<sup>54</sup> The largest events took place in Šemševo, near Tetovo, and Slupčane, near Kumanovo, on the anniversaries of the armed uprisings in the two regions. The event in Šemševo in 2002, titled “The Tetovo Kale Epic”, was supposed to take place in the city of Tetovo, but its organizers changed the venue to avoid interethnic tensions under the pressure of the international community.<sup>55</sup> Although the organizers tried to soften the public image of these annual events, their underlying tone was celebratory: the commemorations positioned the NLA as the final winner in 2001.

Besides commemorating the start of the insurgency, the DUI and the NLA veteran organization work on archiving the armed struggle and preserving the memory of the slain insurgents. According to several sources, the NLA's 2001 death toll was between 60 and 100.<sup>56</sup> These initiatives have not always been in tandem with state institutions. Such was the case with the “Museum of Freedom” (*Muzeu i Lirisë*) in Skopje's municipality of

52 Valur Ingimundarson, “The Politics of Memory and the Reconstruction of Albanian National Identity in Postwar Kosovo,” *History and Memory* 19, no. 1 (2007): 95-123.

53 Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, “The bequest of *Ilegalja*: contested memories and moralities in contemporary Kosovo,” *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 41, no. 6 (2013): 953-970.

54 Vasiliki Neofotistos, “The Construction of Albanian Martyrdom in the Republic of Macedonia,” *NCEEER Working Paper* (2012): 1-14.

55 CONNEKT Country Reports. *Meso-Level Dynamics: Commemorations of the 2001 Macedonian conflict in Tetovo, North Macedonia* (European Institute of the Mediterranean, forthcoming).

56 For an overview, see Sašo Klekovski, “Braniteli, ONA i civilnitate žrtvi,” *Megjutoq*, 20.09.2012. Available at: <https://www.megjutoq.mk/2012/09/brانيتeli-ona-i-tsvilnitate-zhrtvi/>



Čair, which the DUI's representatives opened in 2008. The initial exhibition covered two periods: the early Albanian nation-building and the NLA struggle of 2001.<sup>57</sup> Until 2011, the museum operated without official registration, and has had issues with its day-to-day functioning ever since.<sup>58</sup> In 2012, the DUI opened another museum, the Museum of the NLA, in Slupčane. This museum exhibits military memorabilia and honors the fallen NLA fighters, but also shows the Albanian civilian victims.<sup>59</sup>

The amalgamation of different historical periods is not a novelty in Macedonia, nor in Kosovo and Albania either. Namely, there are many cases of linking the 1990s and early 2000s struggles of the ethnic Albanians in the context of the notions and ideologies of pan-Albanianism. Such is the case with the memorial complex titled the "Albanian Mother War Memorial" (*Nëna shqiptare*), inaugurated in 2013 in Zajas, one of the DUI's political strongholds in the western part of North Macedonia; as also with the National Independence Museum in Vlora in Albania, whose recent opening in March 2022 was attended by the DUI leader Ali Ahmeti.<sup>60</sup> Besides the general focus on the ethnic struggle for recognition, rights, and statehood, the narrative is based on particular individuals, such as Adem Jashari, one of the KLA's founders.<sup>61</sup> In November 2012, for instance, a monument dedicated to Jashari was erected in Raduša, North Macedonia. The monument portrays the golden figure of Jashari standing on an ARM tank seized by the NLA, even though the Serbian police killed him in 1998 and there are no proofs that he was active on Macedonian territory.<sup>62</sup>

57 Oliver Stanoeski, *Tranziciona pravda vo Republika Makedonija. Izveštaj za 2010-2011 godina* (Skopje: Centar za istraživanje i kreiranje politiki, 2013), 36.

58 Afrim Jonuzi, "Muzeu i UÇK-së' apo muzeu i lirisë i lënë në harresë! Hapet vetëm para zgjedhjeve," *TV21*, 10.11.2020. Available at: [https://tv21.tv/muzeu-i-lirise-hapet-vetem-para-zgjedhjeve-bari-po-e-mbulon-shtepine-e-jashar-bej-shkupit/?fbclid=IwAR1-0R4OZZlxDaW08yftD8m9egxeLZ02yoZ52ODhGnyfQ05DLmnM\\_ymVW6E](https://tv21.tv/muzeu-i-lirise-hapet-vetem-para-zgjedhjeve-bari-po-e-mbulon-shtepine-e-jashar-bej-shkupit/?fbclid=IwAR1-0R4OZZlxDaW08yftD8m9egxeLZ02yoZ52ODhGnyfQ05DLmnM_ymVW6E)

59 "Përurohet muzeu i UÇK-së në Sllupčan," *Telegrafi*, 21.11.2012.

60 "Ahmeti me porosi nga Vlora: Shokët që ranë nëpër beteja, ëndëronin të vinin në sheshin e flamurit," *Politiko*, 12.03.2022. Available at: <https://politiko.mk/2022/03/12/ahmeti-me-porosi-nga-vlora-shoket-qe-rane-neper-beteja-enderronin-te-vinin-ne-sheshin-e-flamurit/>

61 Anna Di Lellio and Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, "The Legendary Commander: the construction of an Albanian master-narrative in post-war Kosovo," *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 3 (2006): 513-529.

62 Boris Pavelic et al., "Ethnic Divisions Set in Stone," *Balkan Insight*, 25.06.2013. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2013/06/25/ethnic-divisions-set-in-stone/>

Neofotistos has described the commemorative tendency with regard to the fallen NLA fighters as a means of constructing the “martyrs of the Albanian nation”.<sup>63</sup> The first memorial sites for fallen NLA fighters in 2001 were initiated by friends and relatives, with financial support from the Albanian community in and beyond Macedonia. The NLA memorials were an opportunity to raise funds and strengthen ties with the Albanian diaspora.<sup>64</sup> The memorials are in village squares and on the sides of main roads, and they have become “an integral part of the landscape through which Albanians physically move everyday”.<sup>65</sup>

One of the most recurring symbols of post-2001 Albanian memorial architecture is the black double-headed eagle of the Albanian flag. The most recent memorial, erected in 2022, is on the top of a 20-meters-tall memorial tower in Lipkovo, near Kumanovo. It will be discussed later in the text. The memory narrative concerning the fallen NLA fighters also bears religious references, attributing spiritual purity to the fighters. Reef argues that the role of religion in commemorations of the Albanian fighters ascribes aspects of religious martyrdom to the martyrs of the nation.<sup>66</sup>

On the whole, the DUI and the NLA veteran association have assumed the role of custodians of the memory of the NLA struggle in Macedonia since immediately after the end of the hostilities. Their memory work frames the armed rebellion as being in continuity with the regional pan-Albanian struggle. The new memorials act also as counter-memory objects, because they almost exclusively promote narratives that go against the official and ethnic Macedonian versions of the armed hostilities in 2001. Against a background of ethnic Macedonian public resentment, the memorials mobilize an ethnic Albanian memory community nourished by ethno-centric historical narratives and the story of the supposedly successful NLA military campaign in Macedonia. However, despite the resentment, there have been no cases of displacement or demolition of the NLA memorials, in contrast to the reactions to the commemorations at the sites of ambushes.

63 Neofotistos, “The Construction”.

64 Nadège Ragaru, “Macedonia: Between Ohrid and Brussels”. *Cahiers de Chaillot* (2008): 41-60.

65 Neofotistos, “The Construction”.

66 Paul Reef, “Macedonian Monument Culture Beyond ‘Skopje 2014,’” *Südosteuropa* 66, no. 4 (2018): 451-480.

# 4. The intersections

## 4.1. Frictions

The commemorations of the armed struggle of the state forces and the NLA take place within the domains of the two largest ethnic communities, the Macedonian and Albanian. Even in spatial terms, they rarely overlap. However, there are also commemorations that have taken place within the spatial contexts of the other ethnic community. The majority of these have taken place at the sites of 2001 ambushes in the northwest part of the state, where the NLA attacked the state forces. This paper, in line with Mannergren Selimovic, perceives the memory activities at the sites of ambushes as “frictions”. The sites of friction reflect the asymmetric power relations between various social and political actors, but also allow for negotiating and rearranging those relations, reframing the narratives about past events, and producing meaning in the present.<sup>67</sup>

The commemorations at Vjece and Karpalak near Tetovo are the most prominent commemorations at sites of ambushes. The visits to the sites started in 2003, when relatives, friends, co-combatants and members of veteran associations, as well as representatives of municipalities, national governments, and Orthodox Christian religious officials, started organizing commemorations honoring the slain members of the armed forces and erecting memorial plaques. The memorials were demolished almost immediately after the ceremonies, sparking public debates about the latency of the interethnic conflict and hostility to interethnic reconciliation.

The first commemorations at the graves of the Macedonian soldiers slain in the Vejce ambush took place in 2002, as well as the first memorial plaques and objects dedicated

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<sup>67</sup> Johanna Mannergren Selimovic, “Making peace, making memory: peacebuilding and politics of remembrance at memorials of mass atrocities,” *Peacebuilding* 1, no. 3 (2013): 334-348.

to them in their birthplaces near Bitola. In the following years, it became evident that the memory of slain fellow citizens is important for the local communities. In 2009, for instance, the Municipality of Makedonska Kamenica named an elementary school after one of the slain members of the armed forces, Mile Janevski-Džingar, and established the day of the ambush as the school's patron day. A monument dedicated to those slain at Vejce is in the very city center of Bitola, while a centrally placed square, park, and monument dedicated to them opened in Dračevo, Skopje, in 2013.

The Albanian community reacted to the commemorations at the sites of ambushes negatively. In 2003, local Albanians blocked a convoy of participants at the Vejce commemoration. Although commemorative plaques were installed at Vejce on an annual basis in the 2010s, they were demolished immediately after the commemorative ceremonies. The media showed a renewed interest in the annual commemorations at Vejce in 2010, when the families of the slain defenders and the veteran association "Dostoinstvo" mounted a plaque that was destroyed immediately after the ceremony. One of the many veteran organizations formed after 2001, "Dostoinstvo", turned into a right-wing party in 2011, with the rights of wounded and disabled veterans and their families high on their political agenda. The party gradually emerged as a custodian of the memory of the slain members of the armed forces in the 2010s.

"Dostoinstvo" members, most of them former members of the armed state forces, participate in all the above-mentioned annual commemorations at the sites of ambushes, but also push for other forms of commemorating 2001 and even advocating for reconciliation. Their activities are a combination of advancing the memory of the slain defenders and, to a lesser extent, proposals for alternative activities that aim at bridging the two ethnic memory communities. The party put forward several demands to state institutions for honoring various aspects related to the memory of the state forces. In 2021, they urged the President of North Macedonia, Stevo Pendarovski, to award three deceased generals medals for their service in 2001.<sup>68</sup>

As for the other point, one can mention the first ever, and, up to this point only joint commemoration in post-conflict Macedonia. In December 2018, after a series of public

68 "Dostoinstvo podnese inicijativa za odlikovanje na trojca počinati generali," *Fokus*, 16.02.2021. Available at: <https://fokus.mk/dostoinstvo-podnese-initsijativa-za-odlikovane-na-trojtsa-pochinati-general/>

exchanges over the conflict, Stojanče Angelov, the founder and president of “Dostoinstvo” and former commander of the special police units, and Abedin Zimberi, a former NLA commander, commemorated the civil victims slain in 2001 at the Lipkovo cemetery. While both participants held official positions at that time, the state did not organize the commemoration. In an essay he wrote after the commemoration, Angelov stated that different views on the past should not present obstacles for future interethnic relations. Angelov and Zimberi had also planned similar events at the graves of ethnic Macedonian civil victims, which they cancelled owing to the negative publicity the public attached to the December event.<sup>69</sup>

The commemorations at the Karpalak ambush site illuminate the history of confrontations with state politics. In August 2004, at Karpalak, relatives and friends of those slain in the ambush boycotted Vlado Bučkovski, the prime minister at the time, and a similar scenario was repeated in 2005. Bučkovski, in return, promised a monument to be dedicated to the Macedonian soldiers slain in the ambush. The issue of the potential memorial at Karpalak resurfaced in 2019, when government officials noted that it would be possible to erect the memorial once the state becomes a NATO member. North Macedonia became a NATO member in 2020. However, there is no memorial currently planned at Karpalak. The reasons for the delays could lie in the contested nature of the ambush site, with destruction of the memorial plaques and the daubing of NLA/KLA graffiti occurring in recent years.

The demolition of the memory plaques reinvigorated those public discourses which criticized reconciliation in any possible form, and disturbed the sense of security of the citizens of North Macedonia. Acts of violence and destruction at memorial sites function as “peace-breakers” in the Macedonian post-conflict setting.<sup>70</sup> They also showcase how radical groups and their acts can significantly shift and alter the public discourse about the conflict and the OFA. However, popular perceptions of the acts are not as uniform as they might seem to be in media reporting. A 2022 study reveals that Tetovar youth from Macedonian and Albanian ethnic backgrounds condemn the violence that occurs at the

69 Stojanče Angelov, “Vo 2001 izgubivme site, izgubi Makedonija,” *Mkd.mk*, 16.12.2018. Available at: <https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/generalot-angelov-vo-lipkovo-vo-2001-izgubivme-site-izgubi-makedonija>

70 On the notion of “peace-breaking”, see Gëzim, Visoka: “Everyday peace capture: Nationalism and the dynamics of peace after violent conflict,” *Nations and Nationalisms* 26, no. 2 (2020): 431-446.

Karpalak site after the commemorations, perceiving them as initiatives of small radical groups.<sup>71</sup> In the next subsection, the discussion will move to other types of interethnic engagements which do not necessarily result in immediate violence.

## 4.2. Zones of Engagement

The memory activities in the multiethnic cities and municipalities of Macedonia - or “zones of engagement”, in the words of Brown - are unarguably different from those in the birthplaces of the members of the Macedonian armed forces or the sites with dominant ethnic Albanian populations. Here, everyday practices mostly revolve around formal and informal engagements and interethnic bargaining, OFA provisions, legal infrastructure, and cultures of remembrance. They are also a product of the interplays, concessions, and tensions between national and local agents, agendas, and institutions. In general, they illustrate the political instrumentalization of the memory of the 2001 conflict in Macedonia and the production of ethnocentric narratives concerning history and memory in the public space. This subsection drafts the prevailing patterns marking the transformation of pre-2001 interethnic tensions in the post-2001 memory policing domain: such are the weaponization of memory and the neglect of the symbols of the other ethnic group, as well as the demarcation of ethnic territory with memorial objects.

For many actors, the struggle during the armed conflict and the struggle for its legacy are zero-sum games. The case of the Tetovo village of Šemševo, where the DUI organized the first commemoration of the beginning of the 2001 shootings, illuminates this tendency. In January 2003, approximately 200 ethnic Macedonian pupils in the village started boycotting the elementary school because the authorities did not remove the statue of the NLA's Jumni Jonuzi from the school premises. It had been there since the end of the armed conflict. The local authorities changed the name of the school from Dame Gruev, a Macedonian national hero active in the conspiracy against the Ottoman Empire, to Januzi, without submitting to OFA principles.<sup>72</sup>

71 CONNEKT Country Reports, forthcoming.

72 Emil Zafirovski, “Šemševci kje ja bojkotiraat nastavata i vo vtoroto polugodie,” *Dnevnik*, 22.01.2003.

The dynamics in Tetovo, where ethnic Albanians have dominated the municipal council since 2001, followed a similar pattern of erasing non-Albanian identity markers and memorials. In 2010, for instance, the city temporarily removed the statues of the Tetovo Partisans in the People's Liberation War from the city center and never returned them.<sup>73</sup> The above-mentioned examples of the demolition of memorials and obstruction of commemorations of slain members of the Macedonian armed forces are also indicative of this pattern. In the mid-2000s, local Albanians stopped a Macedonian group from commemorating the two civilians that the NLA had slain in August 2001 while they were working as security at the "Brioni" motel in Čelopek. The local Albanians still prevent the reconstruction of the motel and the memory site.<sup>74</sup>

A corresponding pattern also unfolded in the multiethnic city of Struga, in the southwest part of the state. After the changes in local territorial organization that gave the ethnic Albanians a majority in the city, DUI's Ramiz Merko became the city mayor in 2005. Soon after his election, his administration advanced the idea of erecting a memorial to the slain municipal councilor, Nura Mazar-Struga, who was a member of the NLA. However, the city authorities passed the decision without the necessary double-majority principle stipulated by the OFA. While the memorial was eventually stopped, Ragaru has observed that such initiatives leave the Macedonian inhabitants of Struga with an uneasy feeling, describing the manner in which the past was instrumentalized to demonstrate the political dominance of a particular ethnic group as "ethnic homogenization".<sup>75</sup>

Another manifestation of weaponizing the memory of the conflict occurred in the region of Kumanovo. Namely, in 2003 and 2004, the media reported stories of ethnic Macedonians forced to bow in front of a memorial to the fallen NLA fighters in Matejče, before being allowed to return to their houses in the surrounding villages.<sup>76</sup> In the Skopje region, people in NLA uniforms blocked a local road for an hour on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of "the NLA's victory". In 2020, local ethnic Albanians crowdfunded a

73 Dona Dimov-Markovska, "Ilustracija na primenata na ORD na lokalno nivo vo Tetovo i Tearce," in *Ohridski ramkoven dogovor: Studii na slučaj* (Skopje: MCMS, 2011), 131-136.

74 Z. Andonov, "16 godini čekame Pravda za Svete i Boge, velat semejstvata na ubienite kaj Brioni," *Sakam da kažam*, 26.08.2017. Available at: <https://sdk.mk/index.php/dopisna-mrezha/16-godini-chekame-pravda-za-svete-boge-velat-semejstvata-na-ubienite-kaj-brioni/>

75 More in Ragaru, "Macedonia", 26.

76 "Poklonenie pred ONA, vleznica za doma," *Dnevnik*, 09.02.2004.

large memorial plaque with NLA and KLA logos at the entrance to a neighborhood in Dolno Orizari, illegally renamed after the NLA's Arben Bajrami.

Tensions over the memory of 2001 appeared in the capital city of Skopje, as well. After the imposition of the Greek veto on Macedonia's membership in NATO in 2008, the IMRO-DPMNU government launched a project of rebranding the nation via new memorial content in the capital city. The flagship undertaking, entitled "Skopje 2014", resulted in over 130 monuments and memorials in the city. The memorial objects and architectural adornments predominantly depicted ethnic Macedonian historical personages, with only a few figures from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds introduced in the latter stages of the project's development. From the present perspective, however, there are many allegations of the government breaching standard procedures when commissioning the statues.<sup>77</sup>

The IMRO-DPMNU government established the "Macedonian Defenders" monument as part of the "Skopje 2014" project. It portrays four members of the state armed forces, in a realistic manner and bare-chested, trying to hold together a visibly cracked sphere. The monument includes a plaque with the names of all members of the state forces slain in 2001. Its location is in the park named after the female Partisans in the city center, just across the building of North Macedonia's Parliament. It is suggestive that the government inaugurated the "Macedonian Defenders" memorial on 23 October 2011, the day of the formation of the Macedonian revolutionary organization in 1893. IMRO-DPMNU claims to inherit the legacy of the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century anti-Ottoman revolutionary organization, and in 2007 established the day of its formation in 1893 as a national holiday.

The "Skopje 2014" statues and their locations exemplify the marking of symbolic borders between the ethnic communities in the city.<sup>78</sup> The memorial repertoire and events related to Macedonian history and culture on the right riverside of Vardar imply the presence of ethnic Macedonian settlements in present-day Skopje. The IMRO-DPMNU's coalition partners of the DUI at the time marked the left riverside in a similar manner. In November

77 More in *Analiza na Zakonskata regulative i sprovedenite postapki za izgradba na spomen obeležja vo ramki na projektot Skopje 2014* (Skopje: Transparency International Macedonia, 2011).

78 For an overview of the scholarly debate, see Naum Trajanovski, "'Skopje 2014' Reappraised: Debating a Memory Project in North Macedonia," in *Europeanisation and Memory Politics in the Western Balkans*, eds. A. Milošević and T. Trošt (London – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 151-177.



2006, the Municipality of Čair and the DUI inaugurated Skanderbeg Square in Skopje on the Day of the Albanian Flag.<sup>79</sup> The central mural at the square displays the historical amalgamation of Albanian heroes and martyrs of the nation, similar to the master-narrative of the fallen NLA fighters, but also corresponding to the ethnocentric mode of “Skopje 2014”. Ever since, the Square has provided a platform for “articulation of the symbolic power members of Albanian community have assumedly amassed throughout history until now”.<sup>80</sup>

### 4.3. Ethnic Accommodations

In line with Koneska, this paper uses the notion of “ethnic accommodation” when discussing the functional interaction patterns in post-conflict societies.<sup>81</sup> This section applies the notion of “ethnic accommodation” to the memory activities in Macedonia on the level of the elites. The more or less successful cases of ethnic accommodation over memory-related issues depend on various contextual factors.

The case of Kumanovo, a multiethnic city in the northeast part of North Macedonia, shows certain viable results of ethnic accommodation on the level of local elites. In pre-2001 Kumanovo, as observed by Dimova, the spaces that narrate different histories had been the subject of contention since the early 1990s.<sup>82</sup> The feeling of loss of class and ethnic privileges among ethnic Macedonians in the city in the wake of the Yugoslav demise provided fertile ground for nationalism and negative attitudes towards the local Albanians. Even though all these prejudices existed beforehand, the improved status of the ethnic Albanians in post-Yugoslav Macedonia had reinvigorated the ethnic stereotypes.

79 Nadège Ragaru, “The Political Uses and Social Lives of ‘National Heroes’: Controversies over Skanderbeg’s Statue in Skopje,” *Südosteuropa* 56, no. 4 (2008): 528-555.

80 Vasiliki Neofotistos, “Commemorations and the Re-invention of a City: Alternative Memories of the Past in North Macedonia,” in *Cultures and Politics of Remembrance: Southeast European and Balkan Perspectives*, eds. N. Trajanovski et al. (Skopje: forumZFD – Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology – Institute of National History, 2021), 89-96.

81 Cvete Koneska, *After Ethnic Conflict: Policy-making in Post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

82 Rozita Dimova, “Consuming Ethnicity: Loss, Commodities, and Space in Macedonia,” *Slavic Review* 69, no. 4 (2010): 859-881.

The local authorities, however, demonstrated a firm sense of civic responsibility and an ability to deescalate the tensions during the hardest periods of 2001. Nevertheless, although the city avoided major clashes, some armed confrontations took place nearby. Moreover, all citizens of Kumanovo, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, suffered from the NLA's shutting of the Lipkovo dam during the conflict. As observed by Phillips, it was in Kumanovo that the mayor, Slobodan Kovačevski, and the head of the municipal interethnic relations commission, Feriz Dervishi, "worked tirelessly" together to prevent escalations in the city during the weeks of exchange of fire in the surrounding area.<sup>83</sup>

The local elites continued approaching ethnically charged issues related to the memory of the conflict after 2001 with a similar sensitivity. According to the population census of 2022, Kumanovo has an ethnic Macedonian majority of approximately 55 per cent, an Albanian minority of almost 26 per cent and significant Serbian and Roma communities. The municipal council roughly reflects the urban population structure in terms of ethnic backgrounds. In 2008, the council passed a municipal program including projects for two memorials, one for the fallen Macedonian defenders in 2001, and the other for the fallen NLA fighters. At the time, it was the only such case on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia.<sup>84</sup> They also named several streets with numbers, avoiding ethnic names, before the 2009 local elections.

The more recent developments in and around Kumanovo, however, suggest that local accommodations can easily be undermined. In May 2015, a Kumanovo shootout between state security forces and the Albanian National Army (*Armata Kombëtare Shqiptare*, ANA), an armed group opposing the OFA and the post-war arrangements in Kosovo, resulted in eight slain and 37 policemen hospitalized, as well as ten slain militants. As an outcome, 28 Albanian rebels were arrested under terrorism-related charges.<sup>85</sup> Just a month prior to the Kumanovo shootout, a group wearing KLA insignia took over a police station in Gošince, in the municipality of Lipkovo, near the Kosovar and Serbian borders, demanding the creation of an Albanian state within North Macedonia. The group illegally acquired a

83 Phillips, *Macedonia*, 112-113.

84 "Ulogata na megjuetničkiot dijalog vo procesot na odlučuvanje vo Opština Kumanovo," in *Ohridski ramkoven dogovor: Studii na slučaj* (Skopje: MCMS, 2011), 137-142.

85 *CONNEKT Country Reports. Framing Violent Extremism in the MENA Region and the Balkans: North Macedonia* (European Institute of the Mediterranean, 2020).

large number of weapons and ammunition at the station, which was later recovered in Kumanovo, following the attack on the town in May 2015.<sup>86</sup>

The violent escalations, but also the halt to the development of the memorial projects, led to a certain setback in popular opinions about the monuments in Kumanovo. Already in 2011, for instance, approximately 65 per cent of the ethnic Macedonians in Kumanovo had a negative opinion about the OFA as it allegedly favored one ethnic community, while the other ethnic groups in the city had percentages of above 55 per cent of negative opinions about the OFA.<sup>87</sup> The local authorities failed to proceed with the policy agenda of the late 2000s and stopped the establishment of the two monuments. Koneska notes the lack of implementation of adopted policies as one of the ways in which ethnic accommodation between elites can potentially turn to ethnic resistance.<sup>88</sup>

In practice, however, the variable between accommodation and resistance is not so binary, and falls within “a wider range of tendencies” to cooperate, compromise or resist the other group.<sup>89</sup> The memory domain in post-conflict Macedonia is a good example of how elites can compromise on one front, and repulse on another. The recent inauguration of a 20-meters-tall memorial tower honoring the NLA in Lipkovo is a neat illustration of this dynamics. The village of Lipkovo, as mentioned previously, was a focal point in the fighting around Kumanovo. Ever since, the DUI has reimagined the village as a stronghold of the memory of the NLA fighters and the civilians who lost their lives in 2001.

In 2012, the DUI’s erstwhile Minister of Defense, Fatmir Besimi, laid flowers at the NLA memorial tower in Slupčane, in very close proximity to Lipkovo. It was the first-ever endorsement of an NLA monument by a high-profile government official.<sup>90</sup> The episode provoked a massive backlash from media and state institutions, similar to the Angelov-Zimberi commemoration in 2018, which also took part in Lipkovo.

86 Ivan Stefanovski, “A Bottom-up Perspective on Peace and Security in North Macedonia: Turbulent Violent Past versus Uncertain Future?” in *Peace and Security in the Western Balkans: A Local Perspective*, eds. N. Džuverović and V. Stojarová (London – New York: Routledge, 2023), 70–87.

87 Marjan Mladenovski, “Ramkovniot dogovor, etničkata distanca i multikulturalizmot: Fokus na opština Kumanovo,” in *Ohridski ramkoven dogovor: Studii na slučaj* (Skopje: MCMS, 2011), 25–35.

88 Koneska, *After Ethnic Conflict*, 3–38.

89 Koneska, *After Ethnic Conflict*, 12.

90 Mirjana Spasovska, “Namesto pomiruvanje, nov razdor,” *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, 16.08.2012. Available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/24678840.html>

However, even though corresponding public reactions were noted when inaugurating the memorial tower in 2021, the institutional responses suggest that the elites secured a compromise before the establishment of the monument. The Municipality of Lipkovo erected the tower, worth 210,000 EUR, without complying with the parliamentary procedures and the Law on Memorials.<sup>91</sup> Nonetheless, the Mayor of Lipkovo, Erkan Arifi, claimed that the monument was the first and only NLA-themed object that had passed all the required procedures, and it was officially registered.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, many high officials of the DUI attended the inauguration of the tower, although the party had rebranded as a green party just a week before.

The Macedonian media interpreted the inauguration of the monument as yet another proof of the DUI's political reliance on the symbolic capital of 2001. In Kumanovo, it led to a mobilization of the police union to initiate a new monument to all the fallen Macedonian defenders that would represent "the proper treatment" of the Macedonian heroes and their sacrifices for the state.<sup>93</sup> The bottom-up activities, however, are as such, unlikely to have a post-factum impact on the products of the elite's compromises.

## 4.4. The Settlement

The annual day of the signing of the OFA is another domain of intersections between the elites. If the above cases suggested accommodations or resistances behind closed curtains, the annual state-sponsored events marking the anniversaries of the signing of the OFA have become platforms for "the ritual reconciliation of elites".<sup>94</sup> The memory of the OFA has thus transformed into a "currency" of both the Macedonian and Albanian political elites, who use the events to show their capacity for adapting their perceptions of past

91 Sotir Trajkov, "Sobranieto bez programa za memorijalni spomenici," *Telma*, 03.05.2022. Available at: <https://telma.com.mk/2022/05/03/sobranieto-bez-programa-za-memorijalni-spomenici/>

92 "Zelenata agenda na DUI počnuva so izgradba na spomenik na ONA vo Lipkovo," *360stepeni*, 11.06.2021. Available at: <https://360stepeni.mk/zelenata-agenda-na-dui-pochnuva-so-izgradba-na-spomenik-na-ona-vo-lipkovo/?fbclid=IwAR10Bj5wjCUOu6xVaxObk4iLsTIAUYk3hA3AftdkiKTbG2k8udkF9XOWh9o>

93 "Poradi spomenikot na UČK vo Lipkovo se povlekuva inicijativata za izgradba na spomen-obeležje na zaginatite braniteli," *Mkd.mk*, 09.05.2022. Available at: <https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/poradi-spomenikot-na-uchk-vo-lipkovo-se-povlekuva-inicijativata-za-izgradba-na>

94 For the "ritual reconciliation of elites" in former Yugoslavia, see Vjekoslav Perica, *Pomirenje i posljedji dani. Balkanske nacije u mitovima i muzejima slave, stida i srama* (Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 2021).

events and historical narratives to “foreigners’ expectations in exchange for political and economic benefits”.<sup>95</sup>

The elites’ attitudes towards the OFA were not as favorable and uniform as nowadays. In the ethnic Macedonian camp, the OFA has been a subject of fierce debates since August 2001. Various agents of memory henceforth have used the anniversaries of the OFA to promote their favored interpretations of both the conflict and the agreement.<sup>96</sup>

In the immediate post-conflict years, the two largest Macedonian parties in Macedonia, the then-ruling Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (*Socijaldemokratski sojuz na Makedonija*, SDUM) and the opposition IMRO-DPMNU, developed opposing standpoints over the casus belli, the conflict and the agreement that settled it. The SDUM-DUI government (2002-2006) pushed the implementation of the OFA in the context of heated debates, commemorations, and public narratives of the conflict. The SDUM government representatives attended commemorations of slain armed forces, such as the ones at Karpalak, and did not mark the OFA in the early post-conflict years.

One of the major proponents of the OFA in the early 2000s was Boris Trajkovski, the President of Macedonia from 1999 to 2004, and backed by the IMRO-DPMNU. It was Trajkovski who articulated the discourse of the common future for the two ethnic communities as the state’s only prospect. On the first anniversary of the OFA, for instance, Trajkovski stated that the OFA “is not the perfect document, but it was the most proper political response to the crisis we faced”.<sup>97</sup> He also promoted this discourse at state-sponsored commemorations that did not necessarily deal with the 2001 conflict, such as Ilinden or Republic Day.<sup>98</sup> After Trajkovski’s death in a plane crash near Mostar in 2004, there was no other figure from the

95 Lea David, “Lost in Transaction in Serbia and Croatia: Memory Content as a Trade Currency,” in *Replicating Atonement: Foreign Models in the Commemorations of Atrocities*, ed. M. Gabowitsch (London – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 73-97.

96 More in Lidija Georgieva, Naum Trajanovski, and John Wolffe, “Memory Regimes and Commemorative Practices of the Good Friday Agreement (1998) and the Ohrid Framework Agreement (2001),” *Religious Diversity in Europe: Mediating the Past to the Young*, eds. R. Altnurme et al. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 137-158.

97 “Ramkovniot dogovor klucen stolb na uspesnoto resenie na krizata – Trajkovski,” *A1*, 13.08.2002.

98 More in Naum Trajanovski, “The Three Memory Regimes of Ilinden Commemorations (2001-2018): A Prolegomenon to the Study of the Official Memory in North Macedonia,” *Southeastern Europe* 44, no. 1 (2020): 28-52.

right-wing camp led by the IMRO-DPMNU who would promote the OFA and the post-conflict consolidation of Macedonia.

The IMRO-DPMNU officially approved the OFA only in 2006, when they formed their second cabinet. In the early 2000s, however, the party and its leader Nikola Gruevski opposed the sending of the two case files on the Macedonian armed forces to the ICTY, claiming that the state was under attack in 2001 and only those who provoked the conflict should be further prosecuted in The Hague.<sup>99</sup> In 2011, the IMRO-DPMNU-DUI coalition pushed for a parliamentary reinterpretation of the amnesty law of 2001 that dismissed the four case files concerning the NLA, returned by the ICTY to the Macedonian courts in 2008.<sup>100</sup>

The topic of the OFA was not as divisive in the Albanian political camp in Macedonia. Since 2002, the DUI, the “only party that did not participate in the creation and the negotiations (leading to the OFA)”, has appropriated the legacy of the OFA and the memory narrative about the NLA and the 2001 conflict.<sup>101</sup> The party hence used the OFA annual commemorations to re-legitimize itself as a pro-NATO and pro-European party, as a trusted partner from the Albanian camp, and as a party that aims at settling interethnic tensions in a democratic and peaceful manner. Between 2002 and 2006, only the DUI organized events to commemorate the signing of the OFA in different locations across the state. The locations were mostly in the western part of the state, which is multiethnic and multiconfessional.

While Macedonian politicians boycotted these events, diplomats and representatives of the international community attended. The international presence at commemorations symbolizes the support to the OFA and the peace process in Macedonia. The US President Joe Biden formalized this standpoint in 2021 with an Executive Order that extended sanctions to persons who obstruct the implementation of the OFA, among other regional agreements, frameworks, and accountability mechanisms related to the

99 See, for instance, “Nikola Gruevski, lider na VMRO-DPMNE: Tragedija e da im se sudi na branitelite,” *Dnevnik*, 30.10.2003.

100 Irena Zdravkovska and Biljana Volchevska, “Analysis of the status of The Hague cases in North Macedonia.” *BIRN*, 24.12.2020. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/12/24/how-north-macedonia-traded-justice-for-peace/>

101 Katerina Blaževska, “Frčkoski: Ohridskiot dogovor e uspešen, no ušte 'nerazbran,’” *DW Macedonia*, 14.08.2021. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/mk/фрчкоски-охридскиот-договор-е-успешен-а-сè-уште-неразбран/a-58862983>

Western Balkans.<sup>102</sup> The international community played an important role in recreating the image of the OFA in the public discourses in Macedonia.

Since 2006, there has been an increased institutionalization of the anniversaries of the OFA. The first such move was by President Branko Crvenkovski, whose office organized a reception in Ohrid on the fifth anniversary of the signing of the OFA, just days after the DUI-organized ceremony. In the mid-2000s, a special state institution, initially titled the Secretariat for the Implementation of OFA, took over the organization of OFA anniversaries. The Secretariat organized various events, including memorial academies, conferences, and cocktails. In 2019, a parliamentary decision turned the Secretariat into the Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations (*Ministerstvo za politički sistem i odnosi među zajednicite*, MPSICR), which took over the organization of the anniversaries. The DUI has dominated the Ministry since its inception.

The annual ceremonies of 13 August remain the most successful model of a joint commemoration of any aspect of the 2001 armed conflict in Macedonia. The anniversary commemoration, focused on the common prospects of the ethnic communities, also legitimizes the shared geopolitical visions of the political elites. Its reception seems to be more favorable than for other commemorative events involving representatives of the two ethnic groups.

However, the attempts to open the annual ceremonies of the OFA to the wider public are not obtaining similar successes. Most recently, the MPSICR announced the organization of a summer school and a music festival on 13 August 2022, with the goal of promoting interethnic peace. The festival, which took place at the Skanderbeg Square in Skopje, received negative publicity even before its official start, when two ethnic Macedonian singers cancelled their participation just days before the event. Moreover, during the very event, the audience booed the host of the ceremony when she greeted them in Macedonian. Nonetheless, the organizers evaluated the event as “a success”, and announced their plans to make it annual.<sup>103</sup>

102 “Executive Order on Blocking Property and Suspending Entry into The United States Of Certain Persons Contributing To The Destabilizing Situation In The Western Balkans,” *The White House, Presidential Actions*, 08.06.2021.

103 Sanja Nikolovska, “PoIn pogodok ili nepotrebna skapa proslava,” *Telma*, 14.08.2022. Available at: <https://telma.com.mk/2022/08/14/poin-pogodok-ili-nepotrebna-skapa-proslava/>.

# 5. Concluding Remarks

The 2001 conflict remains a matter of contention in today's North Macedonia. The commemorations of different episodes of the armed conflict shape these debates. They also represent platforms for articulating and formatting different discourses about the conflict, its prehistory, and the agreement that settled it. The numerous projects of memorializing various aspects of the 2001 conflict point out the different ideas of recreating discourses and narratives about 2001 in physical spaces. The text argues that the coordinate system of commemorating and memorializing the 2001 conflict in post-conflict Macedonia was, and still is, divided along the axis of the two dominant ethnic communities in the state. The two communities developed separate memory cultures curated by political stakeholders and social actors. In addition, the question of state support provides the second most significant point of division between the memory activities of the two communities. However, many other variables, such as the local histories of interethnic relations, armed hostilities, and post-conflict negotiations inform the annual developments in the sphere of memory. The text mapped those points of intersections between the two domains, recognizing four prevailing models of bridging the ethno-centered commemorations and memorializing projects in post-conflict Macedonia.



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