

## Securitization as Policy Choice: Macedonian Case

Fatmir Xheladini

European University of Tirana

Fatmirixh@gmail.com

### Abstract

The global geopolitical transformations that have occurred in last years have raised questions about various nonmilitary concerns as a result of changes in the global order based solely on the premises of the military aspects of security. The evolution and debate on security began to shift from the traditional basis into contemporary segments of the security analysis incorporating approaches into other areas beyond the traditional concepts of security. In variety of debates of the broadening of concept of security, various scholars began to elaborate that security threats may appear in many other areas outside that of military and political sector. In this aspect Copenhagen schools examines aspects of security at micro and macro level and it represents analysis that intertwine with each other and which derive a more broad understanding what actually constitutes security for a country or community. Expanding areas of security analysis refers to the statement that security has to do with survival of a nation or society which also reasonably includes a range of concerns about the conditions of survival. The adoption of this concept expanded in various fields is a result of the need to better understand the logic of what are the related sectors and is a result of understanding what the interaction between the different sectors are. The aim of our paper is through the broadened mechanism of the concept of security to analyze the challenges and opportunities of the Macedonian security policies and how they are interlinked with other sectors. It does so by looking through the causes of tensions between ethnic Macedonian and Albanians in Macedonia, not only among the issues and emergency events that cause them, but also among the structural factors that shape and frame such a misperception.

**Keywords:** Societal Security, Securitization, Copenhagen School.

### Introduction

The concepts of security based on state and power and their focus on the military aspects of security threats failed to take into account various nonmilitary concerns that began to appear as a result of changes in the global order that was based solely on the premises of the military aspects of security. Additional concerns based upon identity as main source of disagreement that emerged in the world after the Cold War in a state of constant transformation at the global, regional and local level, for many states undergoing the process of transition were challenged by these new phenomena. Consequently, problems began to appear fueling ethnic conflicts such as those in the former Yugoslavia.

Despite the different approaches of state formation and nation-building that newly created states or those in transition have undertaken in the years that followed the Cold War, the tendency to engage in a form of securitization sought to advance the position of the dominant group using institutional mechanisms of the state. The tendency toward ethnic privilege often showed a marked preference for homogenization and discrimination in process of state-building. This most of the time happened tacitly adopting discriminatory policies towards smaller groups and leading to gradual fortification of favoring larger groups' in the structural hierarchy of the state.

Special case in this regard constitutes Republic of Macedonia after years of declaration of Independence in 1991. It succeeded in avoiding an armed clash in the early years of the nineties from the threats of the then Yugoslav army, though, failure of the state leadership to identify the interior challenges paved the way to an armed Albanian revolt in 2001. This

shift of security situation constitutes an important moment of analysis for the causes and reasons of the evolution of the uncertainty from the exterior to the interior of Macedonia.

Such development of events is mostly combined with the identification and analysis of the implications of security paradigms of Macedonia in a contemporary context of evaluation measures that will respond to the perception of the risks and uncertainties from the outside as well as from the inside. The approach to these challenges may require an analysis of the new security situation in horizontal analyzing additional sectors of security that constitute important discourse about security environment in Macedonia and in vertical view for the fact that additional levels of security in the post-cold war period require additional analysis.

Starting from here it is beneficial to approach the causes of tensions between ethnic Macedonian and Albanians in Macedonia, not only among the issues and emergency events that cause them, but also among the structural factors that shape and frame such a misperception. Such structural factors, to name a few, include political discrimination and economic, social and cultural inequalities. These elements that generate dissatisfaction among the people continue to be of great importance in the country.

### **Towards a broadened theoretical approach**

After the end of Cold War debates about the scope of traditional security approaches began to be considered more deeply by various analyst and researcher. The evolution of analysis and debate on security began to shift from the traditional basis into contemporary segments of the security analysis incorporating approaches into other areas beyond the traditional concepts of security. Traditional perspectives, especially those based on the realist concept until this time considered security as derivative of power concentrated in the state as actor. During this period in continuity to realist approach there are observations of additional segments such of those of constructivist school that analyses security situation in socio-cultural interactions and institutional regulations.

In variety of debates regarding the broadening of the concept of security, Barry Buzan's book *People, States and Fear* more specifically elaborates that security may appear in many other areas outside that of military and political sector. He argues that the concept of security in a realistic approach is too narrow and as such does not reflect the security challenges faced in a contemporary context. For Buzan, security has to do with defense of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to protect their independent identity and functional integrity against forces of change that they see as hostile. The essential purpose of security is survival that also reasonably includes a range of concerns about the conditions of survival (Buzan, 1991, p. 432).

Based on what was mentioned above about it is to be noted that Copenhagen schools examines aspects of security at micro and macro level and it represents analysis that intertwine with each other and which derive a more broad analysis to better understand what actually constitutes security for a country or community. Such approach to security is focused on the societal aspect of the analysis that brings it closer to the constructivist approach as it has to do with every aspect or influences that forms the perception about security (Stone, 2009, p. 2).

Expanding areas of security analysis refers to the above referred statement that security has to do with survival of a nation or society which also reasonably includes a range of concerns about the conditions of survival. The adoption of this concept expanded in various fields is a result of the need to better understand the logic of what are the related sectors and is a result of understanding what the interaction between the different sectors are. Copenhagen school emphasizes the important sectors in terms of comprehensive security analysis with specific interactions with each other are separated into five main sectors:

- Military security with the interaction of the state military defense and military perceptions of others to the state.
- Political Security, which means stability and legitimacy of the state system
- Economic Security stresses material resources of maintaining state power
- Social Security refers to sustainability concerns in terms of collective identity such as language, culture etc.

- Environmental Safety that has to do with the maintenance of local and global environmental conditions in society relies on (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*, 1998, p. 8).

This enables the analysis to evaluate each field in order to break down with specific assessment the connection with other sectors that generate a clear and more comprehensive understanding of security requirements of a unit of analysis. Such a conceptualization is needed in order to distinguish what may be a political decision in certain cases and what a military undertaking in other situations. The dissection of a referent object from an actor is necessary in order to better identify the act of securitizing. Securitization is actually the dividing line between social interactions that identifies the threat to the extent that it generates extraordinary measures beyond regular procedures. Securitization brings together the point in which all approaches come together to a common framework as it passes to another level of analysis (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*, 1998, p. 5).

Starting from such a position, Waever, another scholar from the Copenhagen school shows that the definition for securitization is a result of activities undertaken by the policy makers based on the established rules of the game and thus they reformulate the issue and present it as an emergency problem in need of finding an accelerated solution. Hence securitization presents a different political version with a more extreme nuance of implementation.

In explanation of this thesis, Waever begins from the point that every question can be presented as:

- Not political- when the state does not face a specific question and it is not part of a public debate.

- Political- when the question is part of the policy and is as necessary for the government to decide and to provide relevant tools and solutions

- Securitization- when the question is as an existential threat and based on that necessary emergent measures are needed for a rapid response to the specific threat (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*, 1998, p. 23).

From what was said above it follows that the essence of elaboration of theory of securitization is that not always defined events pose threats that need urgent and prompt measures and not always they may pose security risk for the state. But first and foremost the issue becomes emergent based on the decision of the actor of securitization. Securitization actor is not always just the state as such, as the traditional approach to security pronounces. This role may also be held by the political leaders, experts, international organizations etc. Which means that is the actor who presents arguments for the existing character of the threat and then he refers the concrete object threatened. Referent object in this regard represents precisely what it needs to survive as a result of a current threat. Thus, it can be said that the criterion for securitization has to do with the fact that when the issue presented under threat has a political effect than the securitization process has begun. And if an actor he reaches through the above-mentioned politicization to undertake steps outside the framework and rules set, then we are dealing with a case of full securitization (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*, 1998).

In that regard Buzan and admits the argument of realist that security must be linked to survival but also at the same time he adds that while the military option is the most important one for the security of the state, it may also provide other aspects of social life such as language, culture, national identity that can be considered at certain points in time under threat and hence pose security implication to national security of state. His theory further expands and gets closer to the constructivist when he incorporates the position that security and threats are not fixed notions but of social construction. The fact that Buzan expands the reference of security as a result of social interactions makes his analytical system to be Constructivists at the same time (Buzan, *New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty First Century*, 1991).

Same as in the debate about broadening the concept of security studies, comprehensive security analysis sees societal security as referent object parallel to that of the state. This is largely because in the traditional terminology state as referent object is formalized through specific territory identified by national borders and legitimacy through political and institutional system. But given the fact that many countries do not pose a national cohesion in the internal or external territorial aspect the concept of Identity therefore appear to be very important.

From what was said earlier, identity can be understood in the contours of proving the limits for a legitimate and real political activity is subjective and belongs to a field of a permanent competition. From this point of view, the appearance of the security of identity and threats to it may have a very important role, in the determination of who are "we" and who are the "others" of which "us" need protection (Cho, 2009).

According to Waever this means that societal security is defined as the ability of the community to survive within agreed terms for evolution in the framework of the traditional model and normatives that identify it. These norms are represented through language, culture, national/ethnic identity and at times may not be compatible with the organization or geographic territory of state. When these communities are in conflict with the state agenda and their survival is in a threatened state, then there is a need within the state system to identify one or more communities that seek to securitize their societal identification (Buzan, Waever, & Wilde, *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*, 1998).

Consequently it follows that societies may react in several ways to ensure their survival and this can happen when there are ways that the agenda of security of the societal identity can be incorporated and institutionalized in national security but in cases of non-cohesion of the identity boxes within state they are forced to choose other means of survival from the posed threats. These threats as stated earlier may be of a military nature but they can appear even in non-military forms. Such threats may initially be cultural and simultaneously be politicized and may be treated as urgent and hence can activate securitizing move (Collins).

### **Aspects of Societal Security in Macedonia**

Macedonia has undergone two major historical transformations since its independence. The consolidation of the state internally and regionally that have continuously lead to fears of potential destabilization of the country. Each of these challenging transformations constituted strategic and fundamental opportunities that have taken Macedonia on the brink of membership in NATO and the European Union. Both of these processes can be considered threats if the state institutions are unable to respond, and as opportunities if the state institutions and the political elite find the courage and means to move forward through the given framework to become members in the aforementioned organizations.

The fear of possible escalation of conflict in Macedonia was eminent since the early 1990's due to the underlying reasons of how two major ethnic groups viewed the state and what it represented to them. Macedonian ethnic group was in search of a state that will clearly be defined as national state of their own and hence diminish external perceived threats that there is no Macedonian nation and subsequently consolidate the state that came from the breakup of Yugoslavia as an ethnic entity that will be internally stable. The formulation of the constitution on the other hand placed Albanians in conditions where they would be second class citizens, with extremely diminished possibilities to institutionally achieve and improve their cultural, linguistic as well as other political and economic opportunities in a country that they lived and contributed through explicit constitutional exclusion referring to them as other citizens.

The constitution proved to be a justifying segment of Macedonian Political elite to undertake a number of policies and actions that will further entrench the existence of the state as ethnocentric during the period of 1990's. This was done largely in oppressing the political demands of Albanian community through actions that undermined their existence as a community. The tensions between the two largest communities involved all issues pertaining to how Macedonia should look and what path it takes as it declared independence. The reasoning of exclusions was additionally backed up by the formulation of the new constitution that gave legitimacy to such exclusions and aimed at retaining the state power in the hands of ethnic Macedonian group. This approach however, was not well absorbed in other domestic communities of the country. The perceived external security dilemmas that it faced in the early 1990's, served as a justification for the leadership of the country to exclude a relatively important segment of society internally (Engstrom, 2002).

Macedonia's population is multiethnic and as a new country it did not take into consideration the communities' composition when formulating the constitutional preamble. The preamble of the constitution of 1991 designed the state as ethnocentric thus, omitting its multiethnic character of the population. The political establishment of the time when building the new state institutions did not take into consideration the fact that more than third of the country's population were excluded to actively participate in building the state security, based on the socio-cultural preferences of their choice. As Macedonia gained independence the state institutions and power were held by the Macedonian ethnic group.

The Macedonian political elite found justification in the preamble of the constitution to institute laws enforcing ethnic discrimination that in essence constituted human right abuses. The laws were selectively applied and at often times were aimed and directed against the ethnic minorities. In this case the members of Albanian ethnic minority as the largest ethnic group were at the forefront of such abusive and selective application of discriminatory policies. These exclusive laws in nature prompted initiatives that further separated the two main ethnic groups from each other. Albanians began to view the state as instrument that is giving the Macedonian majority means to restrict their basic rights and access to services that the state provides (Holliday, 2004).

In response the Albanian community organized its own referendum that was seeking autonomy and further mobilized itself in organizing around national cause. In 1994 as a consequence a deputy minister of defense and several other high ranking members of the Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity were sentenced for subversive activities and organizing armed revolt against the state. Such a revolt never happened however several of the members arrested did serve prison sentences and subsequently were barred from political participation. Over this decade systemic privileging of Macedonian community and subsequent downgrading of the rights of Albanians through constitutional reference developed into numerous threats to the security.

The government's failure to respond to the demands of Albanians was due to the lack of will from Macedonian political elite and under-representation of Albanians in government and public institutions. There was limited number Albanians represented in the governments since the independence. This was particularly true in the first two governments formed post-independence. Apart from the selective laws that aimed at protecting the ethnocentric nature of the state the limitations in the representation through government were putting additional stain to adequately respond to the needs of the Albanian community. The participation in the government not only was limited in numbers but also in the powers that they were given to enact policies. The formations of governments did help bring the political elites together but it failed to generate a response to the essentials of improving the interethnic communicating and respond to the demands of Albanian ethnic group. The main requests of change of the constitution, the need of different approach to the Albanian language and education, reforms of local self-government became more acute with the passing of time (Hislope, 2004).

In 1994 Albanian intellectuals backed by Albanian political parties established the Tetovo University and requested that the state not only recognize it a legal status but also provide necessary funding for it as it did provide financial support for two other state funded Universities in Macedonian language. Educational rights were also tightly connected to the constitutional contest as the 1991 formulation of the constitution specified Macedonian and its Cyrillic alphabet as the only official language in Macedonia. This meant that the Albanian University level education and funding for it to be unconstitutional. The Macedonian government backed by the support of the Macedonian opposition political parties, instead of trying to find solutions to the issue reacted by sending police as it considered it not only illegal but also unconstitutional (Ragaru, January 2008).

These are some examples of portraying security threats to Macedonia at the intrastate levels. As noticed the main threat of the situation in Macedonian domestic affairs was a result of societal security and the dilemma therein. Such a societal security problem often arises in multiethnic states when the government considers the existence of different communities inside their territory to be a threat to their sovereignty, so as to justify exploitation and denial of citizenship to the members of these communities. It forces the other community to take measures that will guarantee its survival but also as the solution to the issues foretells it may have had other outcome had there been a different political approach to the concerns raised.

Based on all that has previously presented regarding securitization theory it can be stated that a certain sense securitization can be understood as an intensification of politicization. Namely, while politicization is understood as an attempt of raising any issue, or questions about the issue in which there are various possibilities for solutions at the given time that additionally requires certain amount of political or public accountability, in the other hand securitization depends on prioritizing one issue over other issues with immediate or urgent requirement of resolving it in a priority framework and through use of extraordinary measures.

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