

**Ethnic Conflict and the Journey to Peace: A Comparative Analysis of  
Macedonia (FYROM) and Kashmir**

by

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# **Ethnic Conflict and the Journey to Peace: A Comparative Analysis of Macedonia (FYROM) and Kashmir**

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This thesis is a comparative case study of ethnic violence and civil conflict resolution in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Kashmir, India. I treat the Macedonian and Kashmir issues as two separate, but similar ethno-national phenomena. Both countries involve the study of two state-level conflicts with ethno-religious, local implications: the Kashmiris within the greater South Asian backdrop, and the ethnic Albanian minority in Macedonia (and more widely in the Balkans). Within my approach, I compare and contrast peace negotiations in each region, guided by the initial research question of whether some aspects of the Macedonian peace resolution might be helpful in developing new approaches for Kashmir. Within this analysis, I investigate the viability of Macedonia's 2001 Ohrid Agreement, following the country's ethnic Albanian insurgency, and analyze the resolution's creation of an autonomous geographical zone for ethnic Albanians that is tacitly accepted by neighboring states and territories including Albania and Kosovo, which in practice, sustains peace. I examine this resolution by discussing numerous elements existent within both the agreement and its implementation.

I am interested in whether peace proposals might be developed in Kashmir by modeling the Ohrid Agreement, and whether the above mentioned elements may be useful for developing a suspension of conflict in Kashmir from its frozen state. Human rights abuses and violence, including state, militant political and structural have been ongoing since the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, albeit with periods of lesser and greater intensity. Since both conflicts

developed from pre-existing ethnic cleavages, an analysis of the political and geographical recognition acquired by the Macedonian Albanians following the 2001 insurgency within FYROM is tantalizing: might Macedonia's ability to placate Albanian grievances provide a model for solving the Kashmir puzzle? Though these cases differ in scale and severity, comparative examinations of the proposed resolutions in Kashmir compared to those in Macedonia will be academically and potentially practically valuable.

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## **PREFACE**

For my contribution to the disciplines of political science and political anthropology I find it imperative to express my sincere gratitude to the numerous professors, advisors, fellow students, friends, and family members who have made this thesis possible.

I would first like to thank Dr. Robert Hayden for his unparalleled mentorship throughout the course of this project since we first met in January 2014. His academic prodigiousness and incredible kindness since I first proposed my B.Phil thesis to him have been simply invaluable to me. My numerous visits to his office and countless emails to him, sometimes at the most inconvenient of hours in the night, were all met with the a welcoming attitude of encouragement. It has been an absolute privilege to work along side him and to be able to call him a close friend, professor, well-wisher, and advisor. Furthermore, his innumerable insights during my many scholarship applications for competitive awards have allowed me to grow not only as a student but also as an individual. My time spent with him has comprehensively reinvented my approach to the discipline of political science, which will undoubtedly assist me as I move on to the next chapter of my life. It is the gleaming example of Dr. Hayden and professors like him whose impressively accomplished lives have led me to confidently pursue a career as a teacher and researcher.

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I would also like to thank the University Center for International Studies for granting me the privilege to study abroad in locations as diverse as London, the Western Himalayas in India, Malaysia, and Singapore. Integral to the arrangement and logistics of these experiences were Jeff Whitehead, Vanessa Sterling and the amazing staff of the Study Abroad office to whom I am eternally grateful. Through my time spent in the foothills of the Himalayas during one such experience abroad, I was lucky enough to learn from, trek alongside, and spend four months with Dr. Joseph Alter and Dr. Nicole Constable. Both of these individuals helped me understand a side of my personality, intellect, and physical capabilities that I never knew existed. They treated me like their own son, encouraged my research ideas, and supported me as I explored and learned from perhaps one of the most beautiful geographies on Earth. To them and the amazing staff and teachers of the Hanifl Center in Mussoorie, India I am forever indebted as they transformed my life, and helped me embark on the journey of a lifetime.

I am also deeply grateful for my wonderful friends both at this University and beyond. Many of them attended my defense, rooting for me until the very last moment.

Those who could not be there all sent their very best wishes and congratulated me on my success. Each and every individual that I am proud to call a friend has engaged me in enlightening and rewarding discourse that taught me at once, lessons of humility, courage, and unfettered kindness. Every step of the way they have all influenced me greatly, enriching my life with each passing day.

Last but certainly not least, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my parents, without whom I would never be the individual I am today. They are the most loving, caring, and greatest parents that a son could ever ask for. Through every triumph and travail they have been at my side, applauding me in times of success and supporting me in times of failure. They have wiped my tears of joy and sadness alike, and I will continue to thank them for the remainder of my life, regardless of where its journey takes me. Thus, it is to the two of them that I dedicate this thesis.

*To my parents,*

Figure 1: Macedonia and the Balkans



Figure 2: Kashmir, India and Pakistan



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Since 1947, the picturesque and geographically strategic region of Kashmir has been marked by political and military instability. Merely months after the Partition of India and Pakistan in August of that year, the two newly formed states struggled to decide which should gain control of the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region in North India that had been a princely state and had not acceded to either India or Pakistan at the time of independence. The creation of Pakistan was intended to provide for a second state as homeland for India's Muslim population (Ganguly 1997; 102). The anomaly of Kashmir developed as the line of Partition in 1947 stopped at the border of Kashmir, which did not accede to either state, with the territory to the west of the area becoming West Pakistan until the Bangladeshi Independence War of 1971, when it became simply Pakistan. The formation of this second nation, led by the then Muslim League of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, was not met with unanimous approval, which I use as an applicable starting point for my analysis of Kashmir. The issue here was that the region was the only Muslim-majority state in India, due the autocratic wishes of the land's Hindu king (Khan 74). Furthermore, the various princely states around the then British Dominion of India could have chosen to accede either to Pakistan or India following Partition. All made a clear choice, except Kashmir, which chose to stay independent due to the wishes of its ruler Raja Hari Singh. The subsequent Indian accession in fact followed the Pakistani invasion that served as an immediate consequence of both independence and Partition.



More than 95% of the population that resides in the Kashmir Valley and the immediate areas that surround it practice Islam, thus making it a unique, Muslim-majority area within the Republic of India. After the Indo-Pakistani Partition in 1947, three wars have been fought between the two nations over claims to Kashmir, the northernmost territory of India (Schofield 13). Because both India and Pakistan have refused to relinquish their claims to the land, both states have militarily fought and diplomatically debated over which should acquire the Kashmir region<sup>1</sup>. Pakistan has stood its ground based on the original population distribution of the region, and India on the legality of the Hindu king of Kashmir's legal accession to the Dominion. It is important to note that neither has considered the will of the Kashmiri people. Complicating matters further, each instance of peaceful negotiation between the two rival nations during the 1990's and 2000's has been met with high levels of attacks by militants operating within India. Such militants have alleged links to both the Kashmir region and across the border in Pakistan (primarily Azad Kashmir).

Along with a politico-military stalemate, the ongoing presence of militants has complicated the ethnically divided Kashmir, and is now an element included within the diplomatic interaction between Kashmir's four prominent stakeholders (Pakistan, India, All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC], and various militant groups). Here, the APHC consists of numerous political and religious organizations that seek a non-violent solution to the conflict, with particular interests in securing freedom from India. The final stakeholders that are fighting largely for Pakistan, but also for the APHC's interests, are the various militant groups active in the region. Though not aligned with the militant groups due to violent nature of their ongoing actions against India, secession or accession to Pakistan has been the APHC's stated goal (Ali et

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that China has also acquired a part of the original 1947 Kashmir in the Indo-China War of 1962, but the largely unpopulated area, known as Aksai Chin, is not a component of this study.

al. 73). The ongoing conflict can thus be categorized as both a trilateral, state security issue between India and Pakistan as well as a civil conflict between the various militant groups and the Indian Army/government. After militants launched a violent insurgency in 1989 leading to an Indian security and surveillance presence, more than 43,000 civilians, insurgents, and security personnel have died in Kashmir, and more than 40,000 people have been documented as internally displaced, with skirmishes between Indian Border Security Forces and the Pakistani Army still occurring almost weekly (Schofield 101).

Interestingly there are a number of parallels between Kashmir and the situation in the former Yugoslavia, particularly the Republic of Macedonia. Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991-1992, the systematic collapse of communist regimes and political structures left the Balkans in disarray over state sovereignty, territorial control, ethnic mistrust, and violence (Ackermann 1998; 49). The most well known and widely studied (and published on) of the numerous cases that emerged from this region was Bosnia, which though of immense academic value, will not be the focus of this analysis. As a less-recognized event, the 2001 Macedonian Insurgency can inform us about the workings of modern peace agreements and the effects of their implementation the political, civil, social, and religious entities respective to certain regions.

The Republic of Macedonia, or FYROM<sup>2</sup>, faced a situation eerily similar to that of its neighbors Croatia (in 1991) and Bosnia (in 1992), in January 2001. Ethnic Albanians, claiming to be victims of discrimination within the post-communist environment (in the 2002 census they claimed to be ~25% of the population), began to fight for an autonomous Albania in the country's Polog and Skopje regions in the Tetovo, Tearce, Čučer Sandevo, Kumanovo,

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this proposal, I refer to Macedonia and FYROM interchangeably. In this analysis, Macedonia and FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) are synonymous and do NOT refer to Greek Macedonia (geographic region).

Aračinovo, and Lipkovo municipalities, and a political and military insurgency threatened to partition the ten-year-old state. Here it is important to note that geopolitically, Macedonia is bordered to the immediate north by Albanian-majority Kosovo and to the west by Albania itself. The ethnic Albanian insurgency in Macedonia followed the breakup of Yugoslavia ten years earlier, and the subsequent Kosovo War in 1999, after which ethno-political tensions in Macedonia were high.

After the Albanians in Kosovo received American support to create an independent state under the control of ethnic Albanians, Albanian Macedonians who resided in northwest regions of the Macedonia dissented against their host government, claiming that their ethnic identity was underrepresented at both the municipal and federal level and their political affiliation to ethnic Albanian parties, disregarded (Carmichael, 111). This was intrinsically similar to the claims that ethnic Albanians had made in Kosovo and Serbia, which were justifications given for the insurgent Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) during the Kosovo War.

Fighting quickly broke out between National Liberation Army (NLA) and Macedonian Security forces resulting in the deaths of over 250 insurgents, soldiers, and civilians and the displacement of over 140,000 persons. By and large, ethnic Macedonians went south and east, and the Albanians, north and west, so that the migration would result in such individuals residing amongst their compatriots and not where they would be minorities. The NLA is the Macedonian insurgent group fighting for Albanian rights in Northwest Macedonia. It consists of political leaders, military officers, and former soldiers from the KLA who crossed the border into Macedonia following the feigned “disarming” of Kosovar insurgents in 1999 (Daftary and Friedman, 98).

The KLA and NLA were thus synonymous in their political and military roots, and both were largely the consequence of the American arming and supporting of the former during the Kosovo War. After the Macedonian government effectively lost control over its northwest region, it signed the Ohrid Agreement with the NLA, which defined constitutional and territorial rights for the state's Albanian minority, providing them autonomy, political, and linguistic rights. The insurgency as such ended. Nevertheless, the "success" of the Ohrid Agreement's implementation is debated in the fields of conflict studies and comparative politics, among other disciplines. Yet, a majority of scholars agree that the comprehensive resolution meant that a large-scale insurgency between the ethnic Albanians and the FYROM government was largely over (Brunnbauer 8).

The principal demands of the insurgents and APHC in Indian Kashmir are similar to those of Macedonia's Albanian minority: the fight for Albanian territorial autonomy parallels the goals of the predominantly Sunni Muslim Kashmiris who have been pressing for a free Kashmir since the late 1980s. In both cases, the demands range from autonomy to complete independence (Bougarel 350) (Ganguly 2013; 91). Distinguishing the ultimate goal of each movement thus proves academically stimulating as the subtle contrast is often between the intention to move towards freedom or autonomy, or an independence or autonomy so great, that the nominal sovereign (India and Macedonia) has no governmental authority in the autonomous territory. In this study, I seek to determine whether or not peace can be achieved in Kashmir by analyzing possibly relevant aspects of Macedonia's Ohrid Agreement. I utilize an original methodology that qualifies both the Macedonian conflict and Kashmir Insurgency as hypothetical, geo-political chess games, operationalizing the theories of Thomas Schelling (1958). Here I delve into how and why Macedonia is faced with a regional situation within the larger Balkan

framework where neither side can defeat the other but both have the means to keep playing until they agree to a draw, and still have essentially stopped making moves, while Kashmir is experiencing a drawn chess game, but one still being played, in the Indo-Pakistani environment.

I then discuss the Macedonian issue originating from the Yugoslav era in the post-World War II Balkans, analyzing the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, the 2001 Insurgency and resulting Ohrid Agreement. Subsequently, I investigate similar elements of the Kashmir conflict, analyzing its post-Partition roots, the ensuing Indo-Pakistani Wars, active insurgency and political developments since the decline of the armed uprising in 2003. The last segment of this thesis examines the Ohrid Agreement's applicability to the Kashmir Conflict to understand what elements if any from the resolution of the Macedonian Insurgency might "work" in Kashmir. This thesis concludes with comments on the regional and global impact that a hypothetical resolution would have in Kashmir, as well as my aspirations for future research within the fields of conflict studies, comparative politics, and ethno-national violence.

## **2.0 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

Building on the case studies analyzed in my previous research on incidence of attacks by non-state actors in India, investigating the specific elements of the Ohrid Agreement and seeking their comparable impact on the Kashmir conflict becomes all the more interesting. It is necessary to first establish how I view both case studies as existential chess games, specifically in how the state actors behave with respect to their regional neighbors. Imagine the endgame of a game of

chess between two players equipped with similar skill sets. The only pieces left on the board are arranged in such a manner that an observer would deem the position a “draw”. In chess this means that neither side has the resources required to win the game, but both are able to keep making moves. Thus barring new resources (i.e. promoting a pawn), the game can go on forever, but fruitlessly. This idea of a “draw” could be hypothetically applied to the current issues constituting the Kashmir conflict. The two major players in the conflict (India and Pakistan) realize that while neither side can win, each actually needs to avoid being placed in check. Being “put in check” for purposes of this examination include the threat of losing, which for India, is the loss of territory, and for Pakistan, being unable to operate effectively in Indian Kashmir.

It is important to note that standard chess mandates that only two players compete against one another, but within the Kashmir conflict, the APHC and militants serve as the pawns, and occasionally even players. This intermittent role as a player occurs because the pawns, at times move of their own will. It is necessary to envision the APHC and various militant groups as involved in the same, but smaller chess game with India and Pakistan, competing with and at times aligning with one or the other, inherently creating a three or four-way game. Therefore, APHC and militants are not playing at the level of India and Pakistan, but can still by their independent moves, obstruct or frustrate the strategies of the two main players. The APHC may actually be able to supply the “pawns” of the game, as it represents the demands of the majority of Kashmiri population, especially those who seek an independent state (Ganguly 2013; 95). Pakistan makes use of the APHC’s seemingly neutral position by adding additional pawns of its own (the militants).

The smaller chessboard is therefore superimposed on the much larger game that India and Pakistan are playing, thereby suggesting that each move can inherently affect all three or four

players depending on one's point of view of the smaller board. So, there are in fact two interlinked chess games of different size and scope. On the smaller board making a move and being "put in check" includes the risk of loss of opportunity for the APHC to succeed in creating an independent Kashmiri state. The holistic crisis can therefore be rendered "drawn" because while each player is making moves, no move or foreseeable combination of moves can bring about a win for any party. On other hand, the parties keep making moves because of fear of the costs of not doing so, when analyzed through the possible border changes, diplomatic rivalry, and the security dilemma.

Imagine another game of chess more than 3000 miles away. Here, the players are the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and a rebel group, the National Liberation Army (NLA), which nominally sought greater rights and autonomy within the small, landlocked, Balkan country. Just as in Kashmir, the rebels are supported from across the border, as the NLA is essentially a splinter of the KLA from the Kosovo War in 1999. The local situation in both cases is thus fed from external but neighboring resources to fuel the ethnic conflict within Macedonia and Kashmir. Similar to the actions of the APHC and militants in Kashmir, the NLA can be viewed as providing the "pawns" that are involved in three way chess game between Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo, with the NLA representing the ethno-national politics of the majority in the latter two nations. The insurgency that took place in Macedonia from 2000-2001 was short lived, and the end result, the Ohrid Agreement, can be viewed as the specific terms that instituted and ratified a "suspension" of conflict. "Suspension" in these terms differs fundamentally from a "draw" in that in a suspended conflict, the parties remain at the table but are no longer making moves. Thus the NLA, Macedonians, and Albanians are all still at the board, and the longer they refrain from making moves, the more successful the Ohrid Agreement is.

“Suspension” in the Macedonian context refers to the idea that FYROM would in fact like to make a move towards establishing full control over its nominal territory but cannot, while the NLA is somewhat content with maintaining the status quo, even though the Albanian rebels could, in principal make a number of moves. In this case, the rebels have relinquished their arms (at least nominally), and their struggle because they have achieved autonomy within the northwest region of Macedonia, while the government accepts this and grants them the necessary freedoms. In other words, neither side sees a reason to fully resume the game. It is important to note that within the larger Balkan framework, the several states that surround Macedonia have too seen suspension of play there as being in their best interests, for political, social, and even ethnic reasons. As opposed to the continued “draw/ stalemate” situation in Kashmir, the Macedonian elements are seemingly less costly, which can be attributed in part, to the parameters defined in the Ohrid Agreement in 2001.

This metaphor of a chess game for the comparative situations of Kashmir and Macedonia is directly related to the overarching theory of conflict strategy and resolution that I develop through the course of this analysis. Further connected to the larger theoretical justification is the concept of interdependent decision-making. Thomas Schelling, one of the founders of game theory, formulated in 1958, that “one side’s calculation of actions is dependent on what the other side does or is predicted to do – in other words, fear, honor, and interest calculations are not made in vacuums” (206). This further clarifies my application of a “suspension” to the Macedonian context, and a “draw” to the Kashmiri one: the various players are inherently involved in a game that relies greatly on the anticipation of moves by each group and/or state. As mentioned before, the difference is that within FYROM, continuation of the game has been suspended, despite a few resurgences, while in Kashmir, each stakeholder continues to make



moves, albeit not ones that progress the situation towards resolution, and which are costly to the parties making them. The question that is examined in this study is whether the structures of the Ohrid Agreement can be adapted to bring about a suspension of play in Kashmir, which is otherwise a draw in which its players make endless moves without being able to win.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

Prior to analyzing the applicability of the Ohrid Agreement to Kashmir and determining which variables are pertinent to the application of the peace resolution, visualizing the underlying ethnic and religious diversity in both geographic zones is paramount. Two maps illustrate these divides in my target regions within Kashmir and Macedonia, displaying current ethno-religious majorities specific to the focus populations. Kashmiri Sunni Muslims are concentrated in the Kashmir Valley and currently account for roughly 97% of resident population (Staniland 2012; 147). It is important to note here that while the Buddhist majority region is large, it constitutes a small minority of the population in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

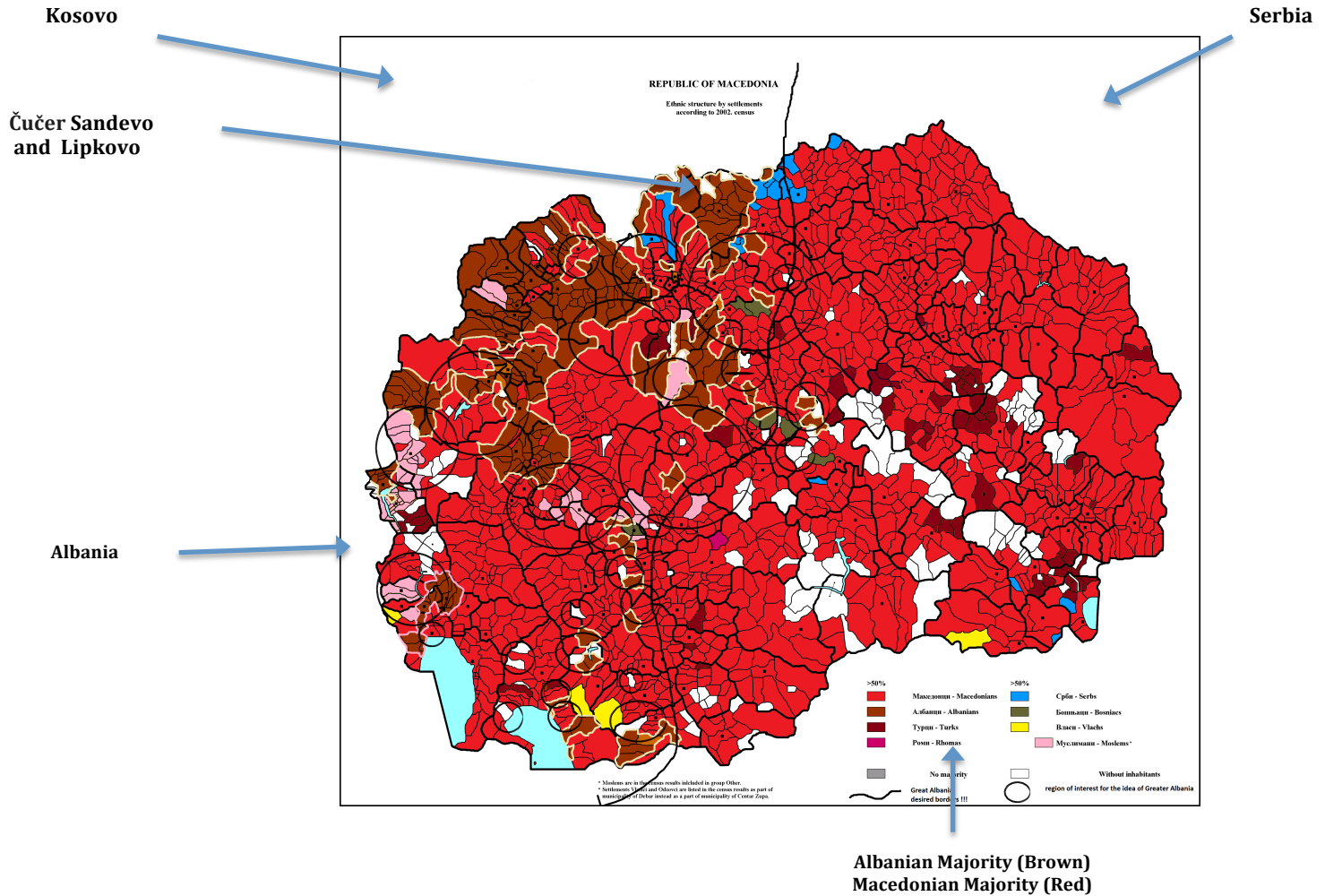
**Figure 3: State of Jammu and Kashmir (2013)**



In Figure 3, the current political border drawn around the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir includes a diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious population that resides in defined geographic space. The target area (labeled in grey within the orange region), where the majority of fighting has taken place is in the Kashmir Valley, a predominantly Sunni Muslim geographic area that touches the Indo-Pakistani border at the Northwest boundaries of the state.

Conversely, ethnic Albanian Macedonians in the Tetovo, Tearce, Čučer Sandevo, Kumanovo, and Lipkovo municipalities, are denoted in the northwest region of the country in brown within Figure 4 as below:

Figure 4: Macedonia Map (2002 Census)



As explained above and depicted in Figures 3 and 4 respectively, the Kashmir Conflict and the issues within Macedonia possess internal and external features that qualify them as “drawn” and “suspended” respectively. Thus, the 2001 Macedonian Insurgency’s almost immediate suspension during the negotiations of the Ohrid Agreement provides an opportunity for an in-depth comparative analysis and application to Kashmir. In other words, the Ohrid Agreement ratified the suspension, but did not cause it, because in application, a bilateral agreement would rarely cause a suspension, as the winning party has no reason to negotiate in the first place. Thus,

the Macedonians can say that they preserved the territorial integrity of the state, even while losing effective control over it. For their part, the Albanians can say that have achieved “autonomy”, meaning effective independence from the Macedonians.

For this study, operationalizing variables that form the foundation of a hypothetical application of the parameters of the Ohrid resolution to Kashmir is paramount. I thus seek to analyze which elements, if any, of the Ohrid peace agreement are applicable to the Kashmir conflict. I then determine which of those variables, if any, apply to future resolution of the ongoing turmoil within the latter region. Underpinning this applicative representation is the overarching question of whether the Ohrid’s ability to ratify the Albanian gains following the Insurgency can be paralleled in Kashmir. In other words, at the expense of the Macedonians, the Ohrid Agreement provided a way to institutionalize the anomaly of a majority-Albanian territory in a non-Albanian state, which the Albanians have accepted. This might provide a model for solving the Kashmir puzzle, even though these cases differ in scale and severity.

#### **4.0 A SUSTAINING PEACE: DOCUMENTING THE MACEDONIAN CONFLICT**

##### **4.1 SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY (1943-1991)**

Analysis of the 2001 Ohrid Agreement must be grounded on understanding the historical roots of the political, ethno-social, religious, and economic tension present in the wider Balkan geographic region. An applicable starting point is the year 1945 when, shortly after the

conclusion of World War II, the Yugoslav Partisans under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito (Tito) declared the state as the Federal People's Republic (Krasniqi 13). Developed as anti-Nazi resistance movement and led through World War II with Tito at the helms, the Yugoslav Partisans played a crucial role in renaming and legitimizing what became the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) in 1946 and Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1963. Immediately prior to the restructuring of the Yugoslav political infrastructure, the last monarch of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Peter II Karadjordević, was deposed by the Communist Assembly led by Tito, who then became the first President of Yugoslavia, in addition to his acquired post of Prime Minister and President of the League of Communists for the new republic. Tito's charisma, political prowess, implementation of Communist ideology, and diplomatic popularity in the West after 1953 were merely some of the many traits that assisted him in unifying the land stretching from Slovenia in the northwest to Macedonia in the southeast, (Rusinow 41).



Figure 5: Yugoslavia (1943-1991)

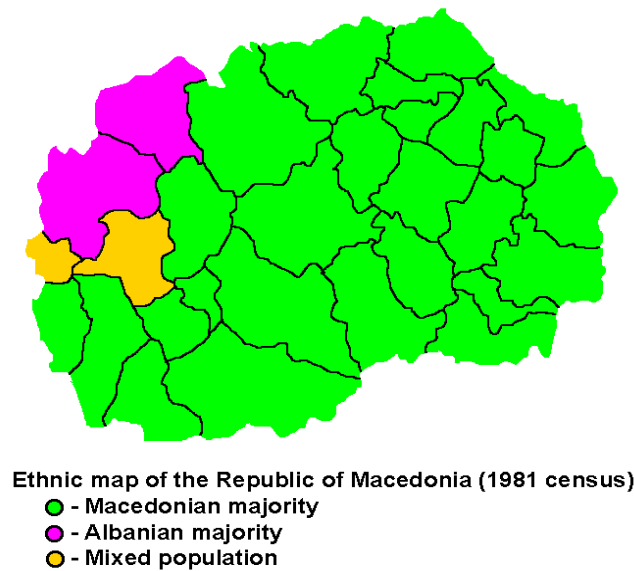


Figure 5 above documents the territory that constituted the SFRY until 1991, with the colors referring to the numerous ethno-religious identities that made up the larger socialist republic. In this figure, the Albanians are labeled in dark purple, with the territory where they form the ethnic majority including the Tetovo Region of northwest Macedonia, adjacent both to Kosovo and to Albania itself. As the 1940's came to a close, Tito, who had also successfully acquired the majority Slavic-speaking territories of Dalmatia, Rijeka, and Zadar from Italy, institutionalized socialism across the republic. Thus, FPRY was made up of six socialist

republics (SR), which included SR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SR Serbia, SR Montenegro, SR Slovenia, SR Croatia, and SR Macedonia. Also of importance here was that the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija was created as an Albanian-majority region nominally within SR Serbia, and that it borders both Albania and Kosovo. Since the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, scholars have analyzed how the socialist constituent unit of the federation impacted the formation of FYROM and also the near-civil war that it experienced during the 2001 Insurgency. Paul Shoup argues that during the Tito years, SR Macedonia, like many of its regional counterparts, was formed as a national state for Macedonians, which subordinated its ethnic “others”, or in this case, the ethnic Albanians and Turks who also called the republic home (82).

Tito developed Yugoslavia’s economy through “socialist self management” throughout the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and to many living under his regime, was known as a “benevolent dictator” (Woodward 1995; 73). SR Macedonia was an ethnically and religiously diverse republic with Macedonians, Albanians, and Turks forming the three largest groups at 67%, 19.8%, and 4.5% respectively. These three groups combined with numerous smaller minorities including the Serbs, Roma, and Aromanians, each had their own language, culture, and between the Christian-Muslim divide, religious affiliation (Clayer 2008; 132). Figure 6 below is an ethnic map of Macedonia from the 1981 census, displaying the areas of Macedonian majority, Albanian majority, and areas where there was no single majority group:

**Figure 6: Macedonia (1981 Census)**



The ethnic Albanians living in Macedonia had the right to practice their own culture and use their own language for official purposes, primarily in the Tetovo, Tearce, Čučer Sandevo, Aračinovo, and Lipkovo municipalities. This was in part due to Tito's influential role in Macedonian politics, as he had devolved the necessary power to the League of Communists, who ruled largely from Belgrade (Rusinow 113). Thus, Communist Yugoslavia had created a system within SR Macedonia that supported the ethnic diversity indigenous to the republic, while still maintaining political and albeit highly successful economic policies throughout the territory. The state was thus Communist, and under the single-party rule of Tito's League of Communists. Through a regional "head of state", and with Tito playing a critical role from Belgrade, Albanians experienced improved education, the availability of professional training schools, and increased social opportunities including regional governance in northwest Macedonia (Engstrom 133).



Tensions arose however, during the mid 1970's and after Tito's death in 1980, as the Yugoslav economy began to waver resulting mainly from a large foreign debt. With rising nationalism and ethnic fractionalization across SFRY, efforts were made in Belgrade to bring about an end to the communist system, and developing a market, decentralized economy. As the US and its Western allies sought the complete dismantlement of Communism in the USSR and Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia was certainly on the radar (Woodward 1995; 112). After the numerous Revolutions of 1989 that enveloped many Warsaw Pact states, it was in 1991 that after more than a decade of turbulence that the end finally came, as Yugoslavia dissolved, eventually forming seven separate nations, some accompanied by severe bloodshed (Petersen 2001; 29). It is at this point that the increasingly nationalistic environment within Macedonia began to rapidly erode the remains of the stability that had preceded the dismantlement of the SFRY. Macedonia, like its regional neighbors, moved into a volatile situation rooted in long-standing ethnic divisions. Thus one could argue that despite peaceful secession from Yugoslavia, Macedonia was ultimately prone to the same kinds of tensions that plagued its neighbors.

#### **4.2 “THE BALKANS ARE DROWNING” (1991-2000)**

Throughout the Socialist Republic years of Macedonia's history (1945-1991), the internal dynamics between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians were heavily impacted by the events unfolding in what some scholars and Albanian statesmen have deemed “greater Albania” (Sluka 114). This sub-region within the Balkans consists of what is now the Republic of Albania, Kosovo, parts of southeast Montenegro, northern Greece, and the Tetovo/Gostivar regions of northwest Macedonia, together constituting territory that has one commonality: an ethnic

Albanian majority. Even though Albania, which was never a part of Yugoslavia, traversed perhaps the most extreme of the Communist paths throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its effects on neighboring Kosovo and Macedonia were important. Under the dictatorship of Enver Hoxha and his successor Mehmet Shehu, Albania was heavily centralized, and effectively impenetrable, at least politically and from 1945-1991, some would argue economically (Paes et al. 15). Yet, when the Kosovars failed to secure autonomy during the late 1980's and the Albanians in Macedonia protested in Tetovo, Tearce, Čučer Sandevo, Aračinovo and Lipkovo leading up to the 1991 Independence Referendum, Communist Albania reacted adversely, possibly due to the notion of a "greater Albania." Thus, with the 1991 Independence Referendum in Macedonia, questions arose of whether Albanians could ever acclimate to the non-socialist republic that was about to be formed (Graan 2013; 166). Predictably, the outcome of the 1991 Independence Referendum held in the country's capital Skopje, found an overwhelming 95.26% of respondents voting in favor of an independent Macedonia.

In comparison to Macedonia's former-Yugoslav neighbors, this small Balkan state remained relatively peaceful during and after the Referendum of 1991, when an independent Macedonian Republic was formally established. While Slovenia (for only 10 days), Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia became embroiled in conflicts, the Macedonians with their Albanian minority maintained, at least superficially, political and socio-ethnic stability (Donev et al. 184). Macedonia was the only ex-Yugoslav republic that had seceded peacefully, which raised hopes for future amity. Furthermore, an emerging middle class and steady growth across the country, began to change the fabric of the state. Yet, more disconcerting was the evident distress that the north and northwest regions were spiraling into, gradually, however certainly.

According to the 1994 census, ethnic Albanians made up for about 23% of the population and were concentrated in the north and northwest regions of the country (Carpenter 3). Thus, the principal goal of Macedonia was to both harmonize inter-ethnic relations, and promote democracy. Numerous political parties focusing on Albanian minority interests existed, which created a high degree of human rights and protection of ethnic, cultural religious, and even linguistic identity. Albanian newspapers, television programs and homo-linguistic schools and colleges were pervasive across the Albano-majority towns and cities. Nevertheless, Albanians living in the country began to demand greater political rights, claiming that the demographic statistic for Albanians was erroneously low (Clément 92). Political and NGO-led groups also pressured Skopje to make Albanian a co-official language with Macedonian, and to provide state sponsored support for Albanian universities in Tetovo and Gostivar.

Predictably, throughout the mid-1990's numerous manifestations of certain radical demands began to materialize. Perhaps the most controversial of these was the so-called autonomous republic of Illiyrda in western Macedonia and the raising of Albanian flags in front of municipal legislative buildings in Tetovo and Gostivar (Rossos 113). It was these events that led to the creation of a de-facto, parallel political authority in Macedonia, and set the framework for the 2001 Insurgency. Inevitably across the border to the west, Albania was decentralizing and destabilizing rapidly, after their economy was shattered in a push towards to democracy, which certainly did not assist the deteriorating regional situation.

With a deepening political crises in the Albanian capital, Tirana in the mid-1990's, coupled with the end of the wars in Bosnia and Croatia, Albanian autonomy became the focus for political mobilization, especially in those states where Albanians were a minority: Serbia and Macedonia (Daskalovski 2006; 112). As Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia all declared independence

and became sovereign states by 1992, Serbia and Montenegro proclaimed themselves the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Slobodan Milosevic<sup>3</sup>, who at the time served as the President of Serbia, had quickly lost almost all of the other constituent republics of Tito's once influential and unified state. Kosovo, after decades of Serbian oppression and relative quietness during the preceding Yugoslav Wars, finally became engulfed in a US-supported, full-scale conflict in Fall, 1998, claiming autonomy from FRY for the majority-Albanian province. It was this event, coupled with the vacuum within Albania's civil and political infrastructure during the 1997 Rebellion that effectively led to the 2001 Insurgency in Macedonia, as the Balkans were being drastically reconfigured (Schneckener 152).

The declining presidency of Sali Berisha, the first democratically elected leader of Albania who upon entering office in 1992 faced a crumbling economy and rapidly rising unemployment, was important (Carmichael 34). Organized crime, political and judicial corruption, and rapidly escalating regional instability plagued much of the Albanian socioeconomic infrastructure leading to fraudulent elections and an acute political crisis in 1996 (Clayer 2003; 284). The subsequent Albanian Rebellion from January-May 1997, which included the fall of Berisha's government, spiraled the nation into military, humanitarian and political strife, leading to the death of over 2000 civilians.

During this time, the fear of pervasive political and civil instability became an inconvenient reality in Albania. The immense power shift in the state eventually struck similar cords with the Kosovar Albanians, who are overwhelmingly Gheg, one of two major ethnic subgroups in Albania. The arms depots that were looted in north Albania for protection against the rebelling south soon sent their weapons and ammunition east into Kosovo to aid the KLA in

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<sup>3</sup> Milosevic served as President of FRY until his ousting in 2000. His critical role in the Balkan Conflicts has established his name as a central figure in the wars that drastically reshaped the region.

its fight against Serbia and Montenegro and its forces (Petersen 2002; 98). Those same caches of arms that flooded into Kosovo in late 1997 would enter the regional epicenters of the Macedonian Insurgency (Tetovo, Tearce, Aračinovo, Lipkovo, Kumanovo, and Čučer Sandevo), to assist the NLA. Figure 7 below illustrates Albania and the surrounding Balkan nations in 1997:

**Figure 7: Albania, Western Balkans, 1997**



#### **4.3 “PEOPLE ARE AFRAID THAT AFTER KOSOVO COMES MACEDONIA”**

**(2001)**

The Kosovo armed uprising lasted only one year and three months, but nevertheless left a resounding impact on its nearby Balkan neighbor, Macedonia. With Milosevic still at the helm in Belgrade, NATO began a bombing campaign against Serbian civilian targets (Ron 113). The

KLA was led by the now-minister Hashim Thaçi and here, two elements were of prime importance. First was the obvious rivalry between the KLA and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), which had been the dominant political party of Kosovo Albanians in the 1990s. Second was that the KLA, which was supported by the Socialist government in Albania, would transition into the Kosovo Protection Corps (conceived and developed by the US), which formed the core of the Kosovo Army. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) composed primarily of the former guerrilla forces, would become the ruling party in Kosovo (Engström 74). The KLA, though officially dissolved, eventually moved south into Macedonia, and some of the KLA fighters who had supposedly “disarmed” regrouped across the border in Macedonia becoming the NLA.

A paramount element in this development was the intervention of NATO in the Kosovo War in March – June of 1999, which provided an important context for the fact that the US would primarily support the Albanians in the region, and for the subsequent violence and intervention in Macedonia. Following mixed reactions from world leaders and intense disapproval of NATO interference amongst Serbs, Russia, India and China and a number of other states, the NATO bombing campaign began on March 24<sup>th</sup> (Jović 86). This led to an escalation of the conflict, and increased NATO bombing of almost exclusively civilian targets, and ultimately a UN Resolution as part of the Kumanovo Agreement, which removed all Serb forces from Kosovo. The Kumanovo Agreement also led to the deployment and retention of international civil and security forces inside Kosovo, and effectively handed responsibility for Kosovo national security to NATO. Critical here was the internal and external displacement of more than 1.5 million Kosovar Albanians, many of whom fled west into Albania and south into Macedonia, only to return later to Kosovo, after the violence had subsided. Yet, as the KLA was

supposedly disarming under NATO control in June 1999 following the Kumanovo Agreement, trouble was brewing immediately south across the Šar Mountains in Macedonia (Daftary 2008; 112).

An outside observer of the events that unfolded in Macedonia in 2001 might have promptly posed the question: why did Macedonia not fall victim to the widespread ethnic slaughter that plagued its Balkan neighbors to the north? Why and how after merely ten months of fighting and only 250 lives lost, was an agreement and ceasefire reached? The conditions were certainly fertile for a civil war, with 250,000 Kosovo Albanians spilling into northwest Macedonia after the Kosovo War (Cowan 24). The Macedonian state was shuddering under the weight of the population influx, with majority-Albanian districts in the north and northwest of the country bearing the brunt of the newly arrived yet transient refugees. Predictably many former KLA and now-NLA fighters had entered Macedonia and were prepared to assist the Macedonian Albanians with their autonomy struggle (Vladisavljević 112).

With over 25% of the population identifying as ethnically Albanian, the minority ethnic group was obvious in the majority-Macedonian country. So what took place in Macedonia during those critical ten months that culminated in a crucial NATO intervention, a general ceasefire, the Ohrid Agreement, and the disarmament of the NLA and its allied groups? Returning to my metaphor of a complex chess game, the NLA, supported by Albania and Kosovo, served as the pawns of “greater Albanian” rights and interests (Daskalovski 2003; 54). A clear third party present during the subsequent rebellion was of course, the US, which had long played a heavy hand in the region. Shortly following the Kosovo War, the US (and thus NATO) had clear instructions for the newly formed NLA: remain quiet until Kosovo was firmly secured. Ethnic Macedonians, their armed forces, and their majority government thus faced an opponent (the

NLA led by Ali Ahmeti) heavily supported by two equally hostile neighbors, in a complicated game of cat and mouse that then took place across north and northwest Macedonia.

In the municipalities of Tetovo, Tearce, Aračinovo, Lipkovo, Kumanovo, and Čučer Sandevo, the NLA fought a guerrilla style war that consisted of bombings, ambushes, assassinations, and brutal confrontations across numerous villages and towns. Many accounts describing the conflict have detailed that a consistent flow of arms, ammunition, and even fighters entered Macedonia through southern Kosovo, and eastern Albania (Wilson and Hastings 152). It did not help the Armed Forces of Macedonia, which were in any event minimal in manpower and with almost no equipment, that all of the aforementioned elements were met with welcoming arms in the north and northwest of the nation. Albanian Macedonians, by and large were ready to fight, and their Albanian neighbors provided them full support.

Following the struggle for autonomy in Kosovo in the final months of 1999, the Macedonian government moved to restrict certain linguistic and cultural rights for ethnic Albanians, in an effort to prevent possible violence. These included limiting schools and universities in their desire to teach Albanian in educational settings, removing the language from “official status” consideration, barring members of the ethnic group to contest national elections, and preventing the celebration of religious and cultural festivals (Engström 122). At stake therefore was a sense of belonging with respect to the Albanian identity regionally, but also the group’s ability to fully participate as citizens of Macedonia. Reaching a tipping point in 2000, the community was encouraged by the fact that their fellow Albanians from neighboring Albania and Kosovo were assisting them in their struggle for autonomy. Thus, in Skopje, president Boris Trajkovski was facing a possible, complete secession of the northern and northwest of the country, with military and civil crises taking place in the cities of Kumanovo and Aračinovo.



Below is a map (Figure 8) of the regions in which the insurgency was most prominent; notice the proximity of these towns, cities, and districts to Kosovo:

**Figure 8: Insurgency Affected Areas in 2001**



The map below (Figure 9) gives one a broader sense of the surrounding ethnic identities with respect to the Macedonian Albanian majority areas:

**Figure 9: Macedonian Albanians and their Neighbors**



As depicted in the map above, Albanians inhabited a large swath of land in Macedonia, where at the state level they are a significant minority, but formed concentrated local majorities as they had in Kosovo. With Kosovo to the north and Albania to the east, numerous scholars and regional leaders in Macedonia and elsewhere pointed to what they saw as an Albanian desire to create a “greater Albania”. Even if only rhetorical, it served as an ethno-political goal and implied the hypothetical secession of north and northwest Macedonia (Yusufi 74). Sali Berisha, who at the time was a candidate for president of Albania at the turn of the century further asserted that Albania be joined with other Albanians (Clayer 2003; 281). Yet, the prevailing issue with any such development during the 2001 Insurgency was (and still is) the fact that territorially, Macedonia’s Albanian regions remain part of Macedonia. Therefore, an all out civil war seemed likely, given the recent history in the region, and the obstinacy of the two rivaling groups. Despite the UN and NATO presences already in the Balkans due to the ethno-national crisis in Kosovo just two years prior, Macedonia was on the brink of meeting the same fate as its former Yugoslav neighbors (Roudometof 93). As history proved to the world, it in fact did not, due to the 2001 Ohrid Agreement.

## **5.0 “AVERTING ANOTHER BOSNIA AND KOSOVO:” THE OHRID AGREEMENT**

The insurgency in Macedonia and the numerous effects of non-state actors, incidence of human rights abuses, access to economic and social goods, impact of ethno-social and political factionalism, religious identities of the involved populations, and presence of external

spoilers/facilitators return us to our image of a large, multiple-player chess game. Playing on the board were undoubtedly Macedonia and the NLA, and if one expands the board regionally, Albania and Kosovo. However, there existed a powerful, external third party that was the USA, which was telling the players what they could and could not do, and occasionally adding a piece to the board, a crucial one being the US Department of State's writing of the Ohrid agreement itself. This move could effectively be understood as the US asking all players stop playing or making moves, while still at the table, thereby ratifying the suspension of conflict. Prior to this, the NLA and Macedonians had actually stopped fighting, as the Albanians had in reality, won on the ground, controlling territory that the Macedonians could not regain. Thus, the document that followed was able to lend legitimacy to the ceasefire. Thus, the Ohrid therefore served to institutionalize the suspension, at least nominally, which in turn sustained peace. In other words, the Agreement structured a continuation of the conflict's suspension that was already in place.

Utilizing Schelling's simple yet powerful logic, the terms of the Ohrid Agreement were straightforward: there would be a bilateral ceasefire between both the NLA insurgents and the Macedonian Armed Forces, political and official linguistic representation (Albanian) in a new Macedonian constitution, police and military representation, and developing a model of decentralization in Skopje, which would increase participation by the Albanian minority (Brunnbauer 21). After deliberation under the supervision of the UN and EU, the Albanians agreed to relinquish their autonomy demands and disarm, handing their weapons over to NATO. Interestingly, Ali Ahmeti stepped down from his leadership role within the NLA and joined politics, becoming president of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) party, a post that he still holds today.

Here, what NATO offered was the important role of a “conflict broker”, as it intervened to strengthen the prospects for future, regional stability. Taking advantage of a suspension that was already in place, the disarming process proved fruitful in Macedonia. NATO and (eventually) the EU thus had a powerful carrot to utilize: possible membership if they could prove to be both militarily and politically compliant (Daftary and Friedman 82). Though the region had long seen this as relatively far-fetched given their recent histories, Slovenia had already begun negotiations to join both the EU and NATO. This had positive implications for any former-Yugoslav state seeking possible membership. The Ohrid Agreement also paved the way for a critical NATO operation (Essential Harvest), which oversaw the attempted removal of arms from the conflict zones, restoration of the infrastructure, and the return and reintegration of Albanian refugees into Macedonia. Applicable here, was the idea of a “conflict broker”, which in this case was played by the US through their NATO involvement. Here an actor can serve as a “conflict broker” even if not seen as even-handed by all parties (which occurred in the US’s role in the Middle East [Mearsheimer 152]). This is because such an actor can bring the respective parties to the bargaining table and, as in the Macedonian case, offer them an attractive “carrot”. Thus, NATO’s role is worth analyzing due to its drastic effects on suspending the insurgency, developing an agreement, and overseeing its implementation, thereby sustaining peace.

The implications of Ohrid essentially equated to an “agree to disagree” situation where the Albanians accepted peace for ethno-national territorial control, which was granted at least in practice, providing a very high level of autonomy for the rebelling group (Zahariadis 261). So the status quo that is maintained is that those territories are nominally Macedonian but de facto Albanian. Here, the Macedonians accepted losing control on the ground in return for the territory remaining theoretically theirs, while the Albanians give up their demand for recognition of their

territorial control but retain control on the ground. Therefore, the conflict was suspended rather than stalemated or drawn due to the diplomatic abilities of Trajkovski, Ahmeti, and numerous individuals in the UN and EU. That being said, skirmishes did occur throughout the immediate years following the agreement, as well as into the 2010's. However, scholars and politicians alike have refrained from referring to them aggregately as a civil war. According to Schelling's rationale, fear, honor and resentment certainly fueled the chess game, before the players effectively ceased to play. Petersen addressed the three above elements extensively in his 2002 book, and concluded that the Balkan wars/conflicts of the late 1900's and early 2000's pressed each to (almost) the point of no return (Petersen 2002; 124). Yet, Macedonia proved to be the outlier in former Yugoslavia, signing a comprehensive agreement after only ten months of fighting.

Despite the swift action by the Macedonian government and UN/NATO/EU intervention, tensions do still exist, and many wonder whether the NLA and its fighters still exist. Ambushes in 2010 and 2014 and 2015 have proven that all is not truly quiet on the Albanian front. In March 2015, fourteen insurgents claiming to be part of the NLA were killed as part of a raid in Kumanovo, which also took the lives of eight police officers. This attack and its ensuing events coincided with widespread civilian protests and boycotts of government offices, interestingly regardless of ethnic affiliation. The Macedonian government led by Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski faced stiff opposition from the Social Democratic Union led by Zoran Zaev. Instigated by the alleged wiretapping of the opposition party by the current ruling party of Macedonia, Albanians and Macedonians alike began to corner Gruevski, pressuring him to resign. The prevailing issue here however, was that the Kumanovo attack threatened to disrupt the unique alliance between Albanians and Macedonians. With his own cohort of supporters behind him,

including the incumbent president, Gruevski has entered EU supported talks with Zaev, Ahmeti and other minority party leaders, hoping to come to an agreement. Given the small nation's history this is a critical moment for Macedonia, though suggesting that a civil war may be a possibility might seem far-fetched. Nevertheless the diplomatic clock is ticking in Skopje, as the world watches each side's next move.

## **6.0 “A SUSTAINING INSTABILITY:” DOCUMENTING THE KASHMIR CONFLICT**

### **6.1 PARTITION AND TERRITORIAL POLITICS: KASHMIR (1947)**

Included in Macedonia's global audience are Kashmir, India and Pakistan who for more than six decades have been embroiled in a bitter and frozen conflict. The Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 created a northern frontier that held a special place in the newly formed unions. The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir in north India, ruled by the then Hindu king, Raja Hari Singh had a majority Muslim population, which complicated matters, given its geographical proximity to Pakistan. Further, the diversity in Kashmir amongst those living in the Kashmir Valley, Jammu, and the eastern region of Ladakh is immediately visible (Bose 2003; 71). In the final census of British India in 1941, Kashmiri Muslims made up about 76% of the population, while Hindus, numbered about 20.5% (Ganguly 1996; 79). These statistics differ greatly region-by-region in Kashmir, as the latest census documents that the Valley is now 95% Muslim,

Jammu 30% Muslim, and Ladakh 46% Muslim (primarily Shia). Though Hindus make up the majority in Jammu, they are vastly outnumbered in the two other regions of the state by the Buddhist and Muslim populations. Given the religious affiliation of the majority of residents in this Indian region, the fact that Partition would drastically affect the future stability of the state and greater region was no surprise.

Raja Hari Singh, the last ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, who was primarily responsible for the situation in the Princely State circa 1947, perhaps could not have avoided a conflict that plagued the region by the end of that year into the next, marking the first Indo-Pakistani War. With the British removed from the South Asian region shortly after the war, what became of Jammu and Kashmir was left to Nehru and his ruling party, the Indian National Congress (INC), and a very bitter Pakistan (Shuja 223). The basics for the Indo-Pakistani divide were the result of the political, religious, and military actions of various individuals and entities in the late 1940's. In particular was Mohammed Ali Jinnah's demand for a "second nation" for the Muslims of greater India, and division of British India and accession of all princely states (except Kashmir) to either India or Pakistan. Hari Singh, whose Muslim-majority Kashmir was excluded from the proceedings of Partition his desire to politically head the princely state, faced a Pakistani invasion (and Indian counter-invasion) in late 1947 as a result (Bose 1997; 88). The political spasm created by Partition therefore led to a permanent state of conflict. Hari Singh was thus forced to accede to the Republic of India following his political stubbornness, with the front lines of the military conflict forming the Green Line (the Line of Control [LoC]) between India and Pakistan when a halt to the fighting was developed through a UN mandated ceasefire.

Formally following the war, the Instrument of Accession dissolved the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan seized two critical swaths of land, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-

Baltistan, with the rest being seized by India. The Kashmiri regions that now constitute northern Pakistan are two separate administrative territories that, like the remainder of Pakistan, have almost exclusively Muslim populations. After the UN mandated ceasefire, a provisional line (now the LoC) was drawn between India and Pakistan demarcating the two nations and defining the newly created territories, setting the stage for decades of turmoil and ethno-national conflict. Stemming from this is also the longest-standing UN mission to date, which provides further proof of why the region and conflict is in fact, globally relevant. Kashmir's status as the only Muslim-majority state in India has served as a powerful provocation for Pakistan, which has consistently made the case for Kashmir seceding and joining the Islamic Republic (Schofield 82).

During this time, two documents were of prime political importance: the Instrument of Accession which, mentioned earlier, was created during the 1947-48 War, and Article 370 of the Indian Constitution (1950). The former is important for understanding the issues surrounding the conflict, as it is the basis of India's legal claim, but it ultimately does not possess much applicative value as it lacks popular ratification (Bose 2004; 98). Both documents, however, continue to play an integral role in defining the territorial dispute that surrounds Kashmir and those who reside in the state. The Instrument of Accession served primarily as a preamble to the state constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, while Article 370 was inserted by an amendment to the Indian Constitution, providing a special status to the state within the Union of India. Following the Instrument of Accession, Jammu and Kashmir was formerly incorporated into the Republic of India and all security matters were to be handled by India (Bose 1996; 34).

Article 370 granted a unique constitutional status to Kashmir, giving it autonomy within India, at least on paper. Within this amendment to the Indian Constitution, autonomy is specifically described as the ability of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to



recommend a state governor that then relates all state needs to the President of India, while acting on advice from the Jammu and Kashmir Council of State Ministers ((Bose 2004; 99). This political caveat is unique to the state, which under Article 370 is listed as a “special autonomous division” of India. What occurred on the ground with respect to the enforcement of the state’s autonomous status was in fact the opposite: India retained essentially complete control of the region, both politically and militarily. Therefore the practical value of this constitutional status has been substantially eroded since the 1950’s, especially in the eyes of those Kashmiris who strongly favor independence (Noorani 94). This gradual attrition of the guarantee of autonomy therefore is one of the principal differences between the autonomy of Albanians in NW Macedonia and the Kashmiris in India. The movement or “tehrick” in Kashmir has thus created much uncertainty about the very concept of, as well as the difference between autonomy and de facto independence.

During this period, as the patriarch of perhaps Jammu and Kashmir’s most well known political family, Sheikh Abdullah became the longest serving prime minister of the state until the post was abolished. He founded the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) which has become one the largest and most powerful parties in the region. Leading this party until his death, he served as both prime minister and chief minister of the state shortly after Partition as well as into the late 1970’s, becoming the longest serving head in Jammu and Kashmir’s history. Though Abdullah experienced numerous political triumphs during his storied career, perhaps his greatest failure was the inability of the state and by association, India to hold a successful plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir (Bose 2004; 107). Abdullah had long fought for the rights of all Kashmiris and believed that the future of the state should be voted on by those who reside there, be them Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim. This desire of Kashmiri self-determination persisted as the state

under the auspices of Delhi pressured the UN to administer a plebiscite in both Srinagar and Jammu, the two capitals of the state. Expectedly, this wish has persisted well into modern-day Jammu and Kashmir, with the movement for an independent Kashmir playing a powerful role in current political, military, and security situation in the state (Mathur 37).

## **6.2 NO PLEBISCITE, TWO WARS, AND CONTINUED INSTABILITY**

One of the largest failures during the Kashmir conflict was the failure of India to hold a plebiscite in the state (Bose 2004; 110). The state's most prominent chief minister, Sheikh Abdullah, had emerged as a national leader early in the 1930's and continued to play an important role during the time of Partition and accession to India. Repeatedly jailed for his beliefs, he espoused the ideology of self-determination, which prevailed throughout the middle of the century as the leadership of the Indian state of J&K sought their goal of holding a plebiscite. Here, the primary legal basis of the Kashmiri demand for self-determination is the actual promise of a plebiscite, grounded in a series of UN resolutions that were never fulfilled (Duschinski and Hoffman 47). Fearing India would lose, however, Delhi has always blocked this possibility. Expectedly, this demand for a plebiscite has continued well into modern-day Jammu and Kashmir, with the movement for an independent Kashmir playing a powerful role in current political, military, and security situation in the state.

In the 1960's, two wars took place over territorial control of Kashmir, one between India and Pakistan, the other between India and China. The Sino-Indian War of 1962 and Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 each lasted several months, and the former led to de facto territorial acquisition by China, though this was not recognized by India, while the Indo-Pakistani war of

1965 was inconclusive. The Sino-Indian war was a decisive victory for China, which included the seizure of territory, namely the glacial Aksai Chin and Shaksgam Valley, both of which are still disputed (Akbar 92). The Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, on the other hand, was a futile attempt by Pakistan to acquire more territory and led to another UN-mandated ceasefire without the loss of territory. The Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 focused on East Bengal, creating Bangladesh; and saw battles in the Thar Desert in northwest India, but not Kashmir. The Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, however, produced the US-supported mujahedeen fighters, some of whom would later cross the border into Pakistan and assist the insurgency in Kashmir (Robinson 48).

### **6.3 A FIGHT NEVER WON: THE KASHMIR INSURGENCY**

Several scholars, particularly Bose (2003), Ganguly (1996) and Schofield (2003), have debated the temporal beginnings of the Kashmir insurgency, yet many have referred to 1987 as the most logical date (Jamal 101). Thousands of disenchanted and young, military-aged males left Kashmir, crossing the border into Pakistan to receive military training, arms and ammunition and logistical support from the recently victorious mujahedeen in Afghanistan (Taveres 280). Pakistan's motive was clear: they were acting on the claim that Kashmir was and always will be part of Pakistan, and the expectation that with a Muslim majority in the state, the outcome of any referendum would be in favor of accession to Pakistan. Despite this, a large majority of Kashmiris in India as of 2015 still favor independence rather than accession to Pakistan or remaining with the territorial status quo (Bradnock 83).

Particularly noteworthy events since the start of the armed insurgency are the extensive Indo-Pakistani militarization of the region and the implementation in India of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which was enacted to curb the uprising by giving the Indian Army the right to force to return stability to the region in turmoil. Since the late 1980's, the insurgency has thus taken many forms with the 1990's being particularly more violent than the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Robinson 122). Sporadic attacks and skirmishes have continued, with the majority of the unrest taking place during the 2008-2011 period. During this three-year span, widespread protests and demonstrations were an everyday occurrence, with the principal grievance being a forceful renewal of the "tehrick," which had taken a much more non-violent route since the early 2000's (Duschinski and Hoffman 53).

The Lahore Declaration (1999) was perhaps the boldest attempt to ensure peace, when then-prime ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif met and agreed on a mutual understanding of both nations' nuclear arms races. The Kargil Conflict of 1999, however, was a military confrontation that took place in the mountainous Kargil district of Indian Kashmir, lasting two months and inducing no alteration of the LoC between the two states. Even throughout the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, numerous attempts at peace in Kashmir took place, including the ambitious Composite Dialogues in 2001, 2004, and 2006 (Noorani 64). A provisional ceasefire was put in place in 2003 to ensure that Pakistan cuts back on its assistance to militants in Kashmir. However, with continued violence well into 2015, the enforcement of this political and military move has been futile.

To make matters worse, similar to the Balkan wars, Kashmir has been a case study in the analysis of state violence, and human rights abuses, amongst paramilitary insurgent groups, the Indian Army, and militant groups (Mahmood 82, in Sluka; 2000). Disappearances, unlawful

killings, mass rape, and frequent kidnappings are merely some of the abuses taking place across the Kashmir Valley committed by those fighting for an autonomous state, as well as those who are trying to prevent that mission (Schofield 118). The Indian Army and to an extent the Pakistani Military and militants are largely responsible for the widespread violations that continue to persist in the Kashmir Valley. Due to the lasting effects of the AFSPA, the soldiers who carry out the kidnappings, atrocities, rape, and unlawful arrests often act with impunity. Predictably, this has further fueled anger amongst the Kashmiri population that has been subjected to the pervasive violations carried out by the state (Duschinski and Hoffman 64). Grievances amongst both Albanians and Kashmiris regarding their respective host state's treatment of them have been at the forefront of the attempted peace dialogues that took place, especially in the latter conflict.

Returning to my metaphor of a chess game, it is clear that a draw exists in Kashmir, in which the players, including India, Pakistan, and the various groups and parties in the region make endless, inconclusive moves. Could there ever be a suspension of conflict in Kashmir similar to that of Macedonia, given the recent elections in India and Pakistan, two new prime ministers, and a coalition state government in Jammu and Kashmir? Where are the missing pieces to this seemingly insolvable puzzle? I argue that what transpired in the months following the 2001 Macedonian Insurgency, namely the development, implementation, and sustenance of the Ohrid Agreement involving ethnic Macedonians and Albanians teaches us critical lessons about Kashmir. Granted, numerous holes are yet to be filled due to the former's lasting effect on ethnic tensions, but the underlying principles are certainly academically valuable and practically introspective.

## **7.0 FROM SKOPJE TO SRINAGAR: THE LESSONS OF PEACE**

If one were to align the Ohrid Agreement with the Kashmir Conflict and see where the two are similar and different, the task would be revealing. Common in both regions is a long history of recurring conflicts, albeit under differing conditions. India and Pakistan are nuclear powers while not a single state in the southern Balkans is. In both cases, the question of potential autonomy, leading to a suspension of conflict, is ultimately primarily driven by religious and local understanding, as well as by national identity. Macedonia is not a member of the EU, while India and Pakistan are members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The latter serves as an intergovernmental organization that promotes peace amongst its member states, while asking all to maintain civil and economic progress. The EU as mentioned earlier, in a way simulates the SAARC, in that it acts as a desirable goal for Macedonia and its neighbors, as it too thrives on stability, favorable regional relationships, and economic interdependence. Furthermore, the potential offer of EU membership, remote as it may have seemed to Albanians and Macedonians in Macedonia, has proved a powerful and attractive factor during the Ohrid negotiations (Bellamy 119).

Furthermore, both conflicts have been tri or quad-partite, inclusive of a host nation, a support state (spoiler), and an insurgent group(s) fighting ostensibly for greater representation/rights, or separatism. All players have made a series of moves that have either moved them closer towards peace or suspension (as Macedonia has to an extent achieved) or a permanent draw (which is what is occurring in Kashmir). Stedman in a 1997 article analyzes the issue of spoilers, commenting that their ability to disrupt the peace process may have serious implications on those seeking peace and renewal of conflict. His chief argument is that spoilers

are leaders and parties who believe that any peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it (Stedman 5). I find that this element is present in both conflicts: in the Balkans, the USA intervening in Kosovo immediately prior to the Insurgency serves as a conflict spoiler, while in Kashmir, the APHC and by extension Pakistan, both hold potential trump cards.

Ron in his 2003 book on state violence in Israel and Serbia discusses the elements of frontiers and ghettos, and how they geographically and politically play a large role in determining why states use different kinds of violence and in some cases and not others. He argues that when a group is ghettoized or concentrated ethnically/religiously, they are more likely to become victims of severe police-style repression but not ethnic cleansing and murder (pg. 8). However, when a targeted group exists on a frontier, they are more likely to face cleansing instead of murder (pg. 14). In this regard Macedonia and Kashmir are quite similar: the militaries of both host states have been and continue to be responsible for human rights abuses against the minority and majority populations of each respective region (Daskalovski 2004; 41) (Bose 2003; 97).

The border regions between Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia, and between Pakistan and India can be viewed as frontiers, where murders or cleansing took place in small towns and villages in the more remote areas. The ghettos are the cities of Tetovo and Gostivar in Macedonia and in Kashmir, Srinagar, where police repression has long been a more severe issue. In the case of Kashmir, the Indian military security apparatus has carried out what amounts to ethnic cleansing in the Valley, which serves as a frontier region. Furthermore, when the Indian state carries out severe police repression in Srinagar, this leads to ethnic cleansing that has occurred in the border villages located in the frontier villages. In these cases, Albanians and

Kashmiri Muslims are heavily concentrated but geographically fluid, meaning that they are transient and move across borders to seek military/logistic assistance, temporary refuge, or even permanent relocation. Thus, in a frontier, the victims are not concentrated around urban areas where they can find refuge from the state, leading to a higher body count.

So what can be done? Can we use the Ohrid Agreement as an instructional document to assist us when considering Kashmir? A crucial question is whether there is a powerful, external third party that can influence the players' moves in Kashmir. Perhaps this could be in the form of an attractive carrot (similar to EU membership for Macedonia). This could be likened to the US's role in writing the Ohrid Agreement, thereby ratifying a suspension that was already in place. Yet, with respect to this parallel, the US played a significant role in actually suspending the conflict in the first place, as it supported then pressured the Albanians in Kosovo to persuade their counterparts in Macedonia to terminate the fighting. I argue that similar to the intervention of the US in Macedonia there is a powerful, external mediator, but its influence is that of a limited third party, or in other words, a state that can only threaten the region with interference without actually providing any boots on the ground. Therein lies the power of the People's Republic of China (PRC), which has not had any direct involvement in Kashmir since the Sino-Indian War of 1962 (Garver 325). The pressure that the PRC may assert on Pakistan can eventually allow for a more official autonomy to be instituted, intrinsically similar to that of post-Ohrid Macedonia.

It is often forgotten in the current East Asian geopolitical rhetoric that China was behind the nuclear arming of Pakistan, fearing a rising India (Garver 331). This point is tangential to the idea that China, if it were ambitious enough, might add its political and military pieces to the seemingly endless, yet drawn, chess game in Kashmir. Here, if there are currently two boards at



play (of different size as noted earlier), China could perhaps produce another chair, and play the game as well. Simply the threat of this occurring would disturb the status quo that is the currently drawn chess game. Given the territorial acquisitions following the Sino-Indian War, particularly in Aksai Chin and the Shaksgam Valley, India and Pakistan would be forced to recognize China's presence out of fear of conflict reprisal. Because India and Pakistan have both refused to recognize the outcome of the 1962 conflict at least nominally, China's potential presence at the chess table could help realign the diplomatic tensions between Delhi and Islamabad. As India and Pakistan would be wary of any Chinese involvement after both lost two pieces of land in 1962, each would worry that Beijing's potential intervention may foreshadow yet another unnecessary conflict (Ganguly 2013; 122).

How the introduction of China into the larger Indo-Pakistani chess game being played in Kashmir might play out is integrally related to the fact that the pawns of this game, the APHC and militant groups, actually have minds of their own. This has led to play not being suspended even when the main players might want it to be, but rather to both sides having to make strategically fruitless moves on the current board in response to the actions of the pawns. To ameliorate the situation, I believe that China pressuring the Pakistanis can assist the Kashmiris in their struggle for autonomy. In a chess game, if the pawns are playing of their own accord, and neither black nor white can seem to make any move on the board that would not ensure check on the very next, then those rogue pawns need to be accounted for. Here is where China could come into the game and potentially pressure the Pakistanis to accept the new border of an "autonomous" Kashmir. Below is a map of Jammu and Kashmir and its surroundings that includes a hypothetical Kashmiri State or states, that may prove to be useful in simulating an Ohrid-like situation in the northernmost districts of the Indian-Occupied region:

**Figure 10: What Might Work-A New Kashmir**



What worked in 2001 Macedonia and has since sustained peace, at least nominally, is the accepted ability of ethnic Albanians to claim that they are autonomous. They politically and militarily define the region as their own even though Macedonia continues to claim the territory. Each side has therefore “agreed to disagree”: the players at the chessboard subsequently no longer have to make moves. Paralleling this, I therefore suggest that the region enclosed in red, which is more than 90% Muslim and ethnically Kashmiri be incorporated into a nominally autonomous state. As in northwest Macedonia, the players who would have no reason to respond can thus cease to make endless moves that place either Pakistan or India in check. The only difference here is that China (instead of the US) is playing the role of a regional, third party mediator and pressuring the Pakistanis to remove their pawns from Kashmir.

Furthermore, the Chinese have an important infrastructure and security stake in Pakistan in the Karakoram Highway that runs through the heart of what is now Gilgit-Baltistan (Tavares 279). This route (part of the larger Asian Highway Network), which connects to a critical, Pakistani highway near Islamabad, eventually ends at the Arabian Sea near Karachi. By contributing to and maintaining the Karakoram Highway, China naturally has a “set of eyes” on Kashmir, though it formally does not have a presence in the region (Ali et al 42). Through the Karakoram, Pakistan has all the more reason to be cognizant of Chinese influence in Kashmir, which brings the post-Ohrid autonomy discussion to the front of the negotiation table. The immense pressure that Islamabad will be under to comply with the Kashmiri autonomy idea would therefore mirror that of US-Skopje relationship in 2001 after the former wrote the resolution that ended insurgency. Therefore any ceasefires that were to follow the Kashmir conflict would afford more leverage to China, as it serves as the critical third party that in fact allows for conflict suspension. The pawns, with minds of their own but also national ties to each stakeholder, would thereby have no reason to continue making moves and prolonging the current draw.

Since neither India nor Pakistan can afford a conflict with China, given their trajectories, China holds an important and powerful trump card. Pakistan would react strongly, since its involvement in Kashmir is primarily focused on its support of the militancy actors, which constitute a large portion of the current conflict. Yet, under the threat of Chinese intervention, Pakistan being the weaker of the two states might be safest by ending, or at least claiming to end, all militant operations in India. Beijing would not have to force Pakistan to in effect, “lose” this conflict, but would instead coerce Islamabad into fruitful diplomacy. Pakistan could therefore continue to play at the chess table, albeit nonviolently, as they would no longer be able to

produce the pawns required for the militancy. This would allow the Kashmiris autonomy similar to that of the Albanians in Macedonia. Delhi and Islamabad can claim to be content with this regional restructuring until China no longer has any incentive to threaten intervention. Thus, the next move may in fact need to arrive from Beijing, and shortly after, Delhi, Islamabad, and of course Srinagar. As it did in Macedonia in 2001, the role of an external, third party, might be one of the only remaining options in this 68-year old conflict.

## **8.0 POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

An issue that remains integral to the extent of China's theoretical involvement in Kashmir are the Uighurs, a predominantly Muslim, and ethnically Turkic group residing in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Here, Beijing would have to play its pieces appropriately, as any mistake in Kashmir could reinforce the Uighur's desire for complete independence from Beijing. This would worsen the already sour relationship between that ethnic group and the majority-Han Chinese PRC, leading to a renewed conflict, which could destabilize the region and leave Kashmir as a byproduct of an eventually deadly, diplomatic crossfire. Thus, overcoming this geopolitical hurdle would prove difficult, lending credence to the theoretical possibility of any Chinese involvement in Kashmir. Nevertheless, this theory's illumination of the autonomy element in Kashmir that could mirror Ohrid I argue could still be an applicative reality.

As with any study of this nature and magnitude much more work completed on both regions would be of primarily academic worth. Perhaps adding a tertiary case study would provide another lens from which to view the Kashmir Conflict. Macedonia is only one of numerous conflicts that can be equated to a large chess game in which suspension of conflict is more desirable in the long term than a draw, or stalemate. Utilizing a case study such as Cyprus or northern Spain (Basque Country) would provide interesting insights into both Macedonia and Kashmir given the current status of the conflicts.

During my Master's, an inclusion of this alternate viewpoint would serve not only the discipline and academic community, but also the practitioners of the policies that are affecting the target regions. At the PhD level, I would ultimately like to take my theoretical and applicative considerations to the field and interact with the individuals that both develop and are impacted by the policies that surround such war zones. As an academic my professional long-term goal is to reinvigorate, reexamine and further contribute to the discourse on ethnic conflicts, territorialism, and religiously divided societies with a particular focus on South Asia, and the Balkans. This study therefore, I hope is just the beginning of a long career devoted to the study of international politics.

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**Figure 5:** Yugoslavia, Former, Ethnic Majorities. (1992). Retrieved August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, from <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/yugoslav.jpg>

**Figure 6:** Panonian, Macedonia Ethnic Map, (2006). Retrieved August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macedonia\\_ethnic.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macedonia_ethnic.png)

**Figure 7:** Map of Albania, (Political) (2015). Retrieved August 1<sup>st</sup>. 2015, from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html>

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