

Geographic Patterns in Attitudes towards Post-Conflict Reconciliation in Macedonia^{*}

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Introduction

The causes, dynamics, and outcomes of armed conflict are usually studied from an aggregated country-level perspective. This body of research has been successful in identifying a handful of factors that in general distinguish between peaceful and unstable societies. For example, we now know that intrastate conflicts occur most frequently in large, poor, ethnically diverse, and oil-rich societies (Hegre and Sambanis, 2006). Despite all its merits, however, this research is not well suited to evaluate micro-level explanations for social unrest – to which theories of civil war often refer (e.g. Gurr, 1970). Even so, it is not uncommon in these studies to draw inferences about local determinants and individuals' motivation. For example, some argue that the powerful empirical association between low per capita income and outbreak of civil war is driven by low opportunity costs of joining a rebellion in such countries (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). While unemployment and poverty may well be important risk factorsⁱ, this deduction nonetheless constitutes an ecological fallacy as it offers a micro-level explanation for an observed country-level pattern. More generally, an unfortunate but often unnoticed limitation of the habitual state-centeredness is the implicit assumption that conflicts have a uniform spatial impact on the conflict-ridden societies.ⁱⁱ A brief look at the contemporary world, with its many peripheral insurgencies, shows that this is not a very attractive assumption. In fact, geography exerts a pervasive influence on armed conflict. In Colombia, vast forests and inaccessible rural hinterlands, coupled with an unusually favorable resource endowment, have made the current guerrilla war the longest uninterrupted intrastate conflict in the post-World War II period (Harbom and Wallensteen, 2007). And it is hard to imagine that the insurgencies in Cabinda, Angola or Assam, India would have lasted for decades, had they not enjoyed local support and occurred in some of the most outlying areas of the affected countries.

Civil war is not a diffuse disease that afflicts countries, but rather a conflict between a central state authority and peripheral groups, be they rebellious ethnic minorities, terrorist networks, or others insurgent actors. Consequently, conflicts are usually limited in spatial extent and leave large portions of the populations unaffected. Disentangling conflict processes to uncover the key actor constellations driving conflict is crucial if we seek to further knowledge on the micro-foundations of rebellion: a convincing explanation has to offer a localized account involving real actors with real motives in their proper social and spatiotemporal context. Recognizing this, researchers are increasingly adopting disaggregated approaches to

the study of conflict (e.g. Buhaug and Gates, 2002; Buhaug and Rød, 2006; Hegre and Raleigh, 2005; Gates and Murshed, 2006; Raleigh and Urdal, 2007; Weidmann et al., 2007).

Most systematic micro-level research on civil war concerns questions of origin or dynamics of hostilities; comparatively little attention has been paid to post-conflict developments and normalization of inter-group relations. One exception is Humphreys and Weinstein (2007), who explore determinants of successful demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in Sierra Leone. Other exceptions include Arjona and Kalyvas' (2006) similar analysis for the case of Colombia and Annan et al.'s (2006) evaluation of the state of youth in Northern Uganda. Despite the importance of evaluating DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration) programs, however, these studies offer little insight on reconciliation of the large masses.

One study that does take a broader approach on the issue of post-conflict reconciliation is Ringdal et al. (2007). Based on data from a survey conducted in the aftermath of the 2001 conflict in Macedonia, they investigate the Macedonian public's opinion on the cause of conflict, desirability of ethnic reintegration, and the implementation of the peace agreement. They find that the respondents' ethnicity trumps all other individual-level characteristics in explaining the variation in attitudes. Fundamental social and socio-economic factors, such as age, gender, and education, have only trivial effects, if any at all. The only other factors that seem to co-vary with the respondents' answers, after controlling for ethnicity, are contextual in nature: whether any fatalities occurred in the municipality, and some regional effects. Clearly, the Macedonian society was still heavily ethnically polarized at the time the survey was conducted, in late 2003.

In 2005, a second survey was conducted where 1,881 of the original respondents were re-interviewed. This makes it possible to trace changes in attitudes towards the conflict as time passes by. Moreover, while the original study did reveal some geographic patterns in attitudes, this finding was not explored in further detail but rather acted as a control for multi-level variations. Hence, in this paper we start by comparing the attitudes towards the conflict and the peace process among the Macedonian and Albanian between 2003 and 2005. Next, we explore the relative influence of individual- and municipality-level factors on the respondents' views on the conflict, using data from the 2005 survey only. Our findings compare well with Ringdal et al. (2007) whereby ethnic identity by far offers the best

explanation for the variation in the dependent variables. We also find some indication that proximity to Kosovo and proximity to violent events affect the ethnic groups in different ways, although the (preliminary) results do not easily translate into a consistent and unitary explanation of social behavior.

The Macedonian Conflict

The violent conflicts accompanying the break-up of the former Yugoslav state during the 1990s were among the most devastating in Europe since World War II. The conflict and suffering was most severe in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, but was substantial also in Croatia and Serbia. Slovenia escaped with only a very brief period of military conflict, and Montenegro escaped with the exception of some participation in the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The last republic to face civil conflict was Macedonia, which only experienced limited fighting and civil strife in 2001.

From 1945 through 1990, Macedonia existed as a republic within the federal state of Yugoslavia. This period came to an end in 1991 when a referendum on independence was held and a majority of 74 percent voted in favor of forming an independent state. Macedonia declared its full independence from Yugoslavia in January 1992. The Yugoslav government cooperated by withdrawing all federal troops from Macedonia, and the transition to independence was peaceful.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Kosovo War of 1998–99 had a deep impact on Macedonia. During the conflict, Macedonia received about 335,000 refugees from its northern neighbor and the economy deteriorated by the breakdown of trade with Yugoslavia. In 2001, Macedonia's fragile interethnic balance collapsed and fighting between the Macedonian armed forces and the UCK (*Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare*; National Liberation Army) erupted. Soon, the country was on the verge of civil war. During the spring and summer of 2001, government forces and the UCK were fighting around Tetovo, Skopje, and Kumanovo. More than 100 people were killed and a large number of people were displaced. Many Albanians fled to Kosovo as a result of the fighting, and anti-Albanian riots by ethnic Macedonians broke out in a number of cities.

After several failed ceasefires and attempted negotiations, EU and US mediators assembled the leaders of the main political parties in the city of Ohrid for peace talks, which resulted in the “framework agreement,” signed on 13 August, 2001. The Ohrid agreement provided constitutional amendments for raising the status of the ethnic Albanian communities, including increased local self-government and increased participation of ethnic Albanians in the civil services. Despite tensions over the implementation of the framework agreement, hurdles have gradually been surmounted and support for the peace plan has increased with time.

Today, Macedonia has a population of just over 2 million inhabitants. The two major ethnic groups are Macedonians, 66 percent, and Albanians, 23 percent, of the total population. In addition, there are smaller minorities of Turks (4 percent), Gypsies (3 percent), and Serbs (2 percent). The great majority of ethnic Macedonians are Orthodox Christians, but there is also a minority of ethnic Macedonian Muslims. Nearly all Albanians in Macedonia are of Muslim faith.

Research Questions

This paper builds on Ringdal et al. (2007), who used the 2003 survey to analyze perceptions of the causes of violence and attitudes to the Framework Agreement (FA) in Macedonia. They found that attitudes towards the Agreement were largely explained by the respondent’s ethnic affiliation. Ethnic Macedonians tended to agree that the conflict was mainly due to Albanian criminal gangs, the influence of Kosovar Albanian guerrillas, and external actors, such as the United States and Albanians from outside Macedonia. In contrast, most ethnic Albanians stated that the conflict was about fighting for equality, fair treatment for Albanians, and local autonomy and representation. A similar pattern of ethnic polarization was evident in the evaluation of the FA. Indeed, the respondent’s ethnicity suppressed all other individual-level explanation, including age, sex, and education.

In this paper, we reassess the original results with newer data while simultaneously paying more explicit attention to the role of contextual factors. One potential explanation for the very strong effect of ethnic identity reported by Ringdal et al. (2007) could be that it captures unmeasured elements of geography. Albanians were substantially more positive towards the FA than were ethnic Macedonians, but the conflict also took place in areas with predominant

Albanian settlement. This could imply that the original finding is not all about ethnicity but also partly reflects a stronger war-weariness among those who felt the violence most intensely. A first research question that will be explored, then, is:

How does spatial proximity to the conflict influence attitudes towards the Framework agreement?

Second, disregarding all sorts of war-related traumas, spatial proximity to violent events – which is likely to correlate with loss of relatives and friends – may also explain distrust and unwillingness to integrate with the ‘other’. Evidence of a somewhat similar logic is found in Humphreys and Weinstein (2007), who report on former combatants in Sierra Leone that ‘past participation in an abusive military faction is the strongest predictor of difficulty in achieving social reintegration.’ This could be formulated as follows:

How does spatial proximity to the conflict influence attitudes towards reconciliation?

A third possible avenue is to explore the influence of local ethnic composition in more detail. Surprisingly, ethnic balance had no influence on individual attitudes in the original study, but that only considered a linear effect of share of Albanians in municipality. Based on country-level arguments about cultural polarization and armed conflict (e.g. Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2005), one might perhaps expect attitudes towards the peace process and reconciliation to be particularly polarized in ethnically divided communities. However, in very small multi-ethnic municipalities, settlements are likely to be integrated rather than segregated, which suggests an interactive effect between size and ethnic composition. A third research question that will be explored here is:

How does the local ethnic composition influence attitudes towards ethnic integration?

Material and Methods

The design of the 2003-2005 panel

In the statistical analysis below, we rely on panel data of Macedonian respondents 2005. However, we start by comparing the distribution of attitudes in 2005 with those extracted from the 2003 survey. The first wave of the survey on Macedonia was conducted as part of the South-East European Social Survey Program (SEESSP) during November–December 2003 by Brima, Gallup. The survey involved two independent samples of 1,018 and 1,019 respondents, selected from the adult population in Macedonia. A supplemental sample of 556

ethnic Albanians was added to secure precise estimates for this minority ethnic minority. In all, this gives us 2,593 observations for 2003.

The first two general samples were based on stratified multistage cluster sampling designs. The supplementary sample of ethnic Albanians involved a similar design, but was limited to predominantly Albanian municipalities and neighborhoods. The relatively high level of residential segregation across settlements and urban neighborhoods made this selective sampling relatively easy and representative. In the general samples, 78 percent of the respondents were ethnic Macedonians or “others”, while 22 percent were ethnic Albanians. These proportions approximate the most recent (2002) census-based estimates of the relative sizes of these subpopulations. Adding the supplemental sample of ethnic Albanians provides a total sample of 993 Albanians, 1,478 ethnic Macedonians, and 119 from other minority groups.

The lowest-level sampling clusters constitute 6–8 respondents, selected on a random-route walking pattern from 450 sample points in 88 of the 123 Macedonian municipalities (census 2002 definition; see Figure 1). All sampling clusters were ethnically homogeneous, primarily due to the high level of ethnic residential segregation.

Figure 1. Macedonian municipalities and incidents of serious violence



The second wave of the panel was conducted in late 2005. Brima, Gallup succeeded in re-interviewing 1,881 respondents – 72.5 percent of the net sample in the first wave. The panel consists of 35.6 percent ethnic Albanians and 64.4 percent ethnic Macedonians. The 119 respondents from other minority groups in the first wave were not covered by the 2005 survey.

All interviews were conducted at the respondents' homes. Both Macedonian and Albanian language versions of the questionnaires were used. In nearly all cases, the ethnicity of the respondents could be anticipated, which allowed using an interviewer of the same nationality and using the most appropriate language version of the questionnaire.

Multilevel analysis

We assume a two-level hierarchical model where the 1,881 respondents constitute level 1 and the 88 municipalities represented in our sample make up level 2. It is important to incorporate

this data structure into the statistical model. This leads to the choice of multilevel models to be analyzed by the Mlwin software (Rasbash et al. 2004). This type of software allows us to introduce x-variables at various levels and return estimates with correct standard errors for level 2 and level 3 variables.

The regression constant in this model is simply the overall mean of the dependent variable. It has subscripts both for the sample clusters and the municipalities, showing that it may vary among both types of contexts. Our basic multilevel model has two equations, one for the individual level and one for the municipality level:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}X_{ij} + u_{oj} + e_{ij}$$

$$\beta_{0j} = \beta_0 + u_{0j}$$

The i subscript represents respondents, j denotes sample points, and k represents municipalities. The last term is the individual-level residual, analogous to the residual in an OLS regression except for the two extra subscripts. We allow for within-level correlation among the residuals but assume no correlation across levels. The covariance matrix involving these terms will also be estimated in a multilevel analysis. This allows us to estimate the intra-class correlations and assess how much of the variation in the dependent variables is between the sample clusters and between the municipalities.

In the basic model, only the intercept is included to show random variation among the municipalities. The basic model may be elaborated by adding more individual-level explanatory variables, by adding municipality characteristics, or by allowing one or more regression coefficients to vary randomly among the municipalities.

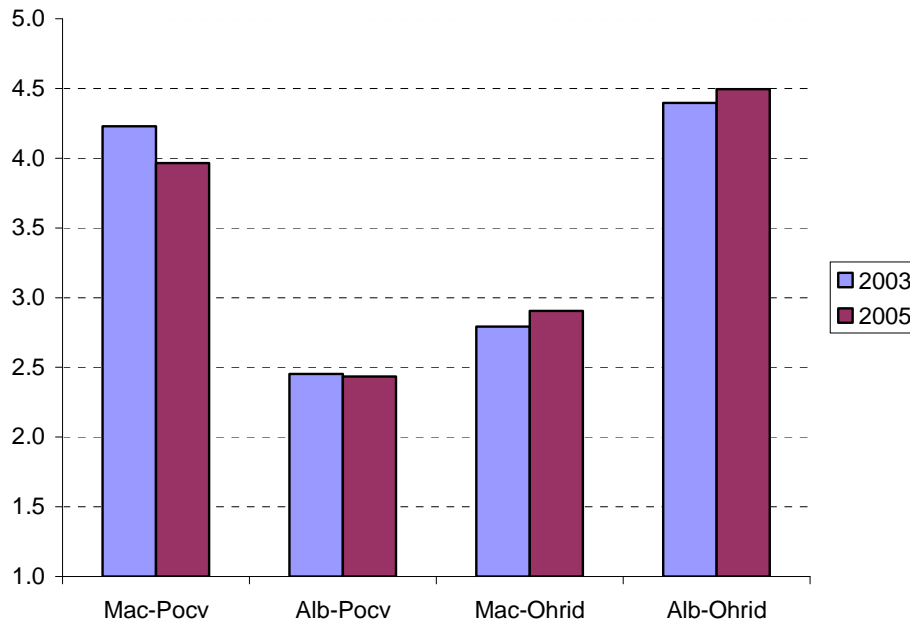
Results

A comparison of the results from the 2003 and 2005 surveys

Before we turn to the analysis of attitudes towards the peace process, based on the 2005 survey, we want to compare the second wave of the survey with the original 2003 data used by Ringdal et al. (2007). Figure 2 compares the average attitude towards the cause of the conflict and support for the FA by ethnic affiliation and across time. High scores on the scale

for perception of the causes of the conflict imply blaming the Albanian side or outside forces for the conflict, while high values on the other measure implies support for the agreement.

Figure 2. Changes in perceptions and attitudes by ethnicity, 2003-2005



Note: Mean scores for the perception of causes of the conflict scale (Pocv) and the evaluation of the Ohrid Agreement (Ohrid) by ethnic groups. Mac.: ethnic Macedonians, Alb.: ethnic Albanians. N=1,881.

Evidently, the Macedonian society exhibits a distinct ethnic polarization, even if it were slightly less profound in 2005 than in 2003. On a scale from 1 to 5, the mean score for ethnic Macedonians in 2003 were around 4.3, whereas the ethnic Albanians scored below 2.5. There is no change among the ethnic Albanians from 2003 to 2005, but ethnic Macedonians showed a statistically significant change in the direction of the Albanian view. Both ethnic groups show increased support for the FA from 2003 to 2005, but the ethnic polarization is unchanged; the ethnic Albanians strongly agree that the FA is key to solve the problems in Macedonia, whereas the ethnic Macedonians tend to disagree with this.

Additional questions on the Framework Agreement in the 2005 survey

In the 2005 survey, there are additional questions on the Agreement. Our analysis will be based on two questions on general attitudes to the FA, and seven questions on evaluation of various aspects of the Agreement. First, we describe the results in full for the sample as a

whole. Next, we identify the factors that may form two scales and we show the distribution of the scale separately for the two main ethnic groups in Macedonia. The question wordings and the results are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Questions on the Framework Agreement, 2005 survey

<i>General evaluation of the agreement</i>	Yes	No			
Do you think the framework agreement was a good thing?	60.2	39.8			
Is keeping to the terms of the framework agreement essential to keeping peace in Macedonia?	68.5	31.5			
<i>Aspects of the Framework Agreement</i>	Like it very much	Like it	Neutral	Dislike it	Dislike it very much
The decentralization of political power to the municipalities	21.1	30.3	29.4	13.0	6.3
The changes in municipality borders	12.3	18.4	27.8	25.6	16.0
Ethnic quotas for hiring persons for public jobs	16.4	15.1	22.2	27.0	19.2
Ethnic quotas for political representation	14.4	14.7	27.3	25.3	18.3
The establishment of a state-supported Albanian university	29.0	7.5	12.2	20.4	30.9
The Albanian language being made another official language	29.2	4.5	7.3	18.3	40.7
The amnesty for those who fought in 2001	25.8	9.8	16.0	16.5	31.9

A majority of the respondents (60–70 %) answered “Yes” to the two general questions on the FA; whether they thought “the Framework Agreement was a good thing” and that “keeping to the Framework Agreement is essential to keeping peace in Macedonia.” There is substantial variation in the extent of support to the various aspects of the Agreement. The most popular consequence is the decentralization of political power to the municipalities. A majority supports this, while only around 29 percent disliked it. The remaining aspects are more disliked than liked by the majority of the respondents. The least popular aspect is making the Albanian language an additional official language in Macedonia.

The individuals’ responses to the two general questions are quite strongly correlated ($r=0.67$). The scale formed by adding the binary scores for the two questions therefore shows a satisfactory level of internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha=0.77$). A factor analysis of the questions on the degree of like and dislike of seven aspects of the FA shows that a one-dimensional scale may be formed from these items. The mean correlation among the responses is 0.62 and the Cronbachs alpha for the scale is 0.92. The scale is computed as the mean score for each respondent based on the seven questions. The scale range from 1 to 5, and a score of 1 means that the respondent has answered “Dislike it very much” to all

questions, and a score of 5 means that the respondent has answered “Like it very much” to all questions.

Figures 3 and 4 show the distribution of the two scales for each of the two main ethnic groups. The polarization is especially visible in the general evaluation of the Agreement, where the Macedonians are evenly distributed across the scale, whereas most Albanians cluster at the highest score. The mean score is 1.87 for Albanians and 0.97 for ethnic Macedonians. There is more variation within the ethnic groups on the 5-point scale on subcomponents of the FA, but the ethnic divide is still apparent. Most Macedonians score below 3 (“Neutral”) whereas almost all Albanians score higher than 3. This results in a low mean score of 2.16 for the Macedonians and a much higher mean of 4.23 for the Albanians.

Figure 3. General evaluation of the Framework Agreement by ethnic group

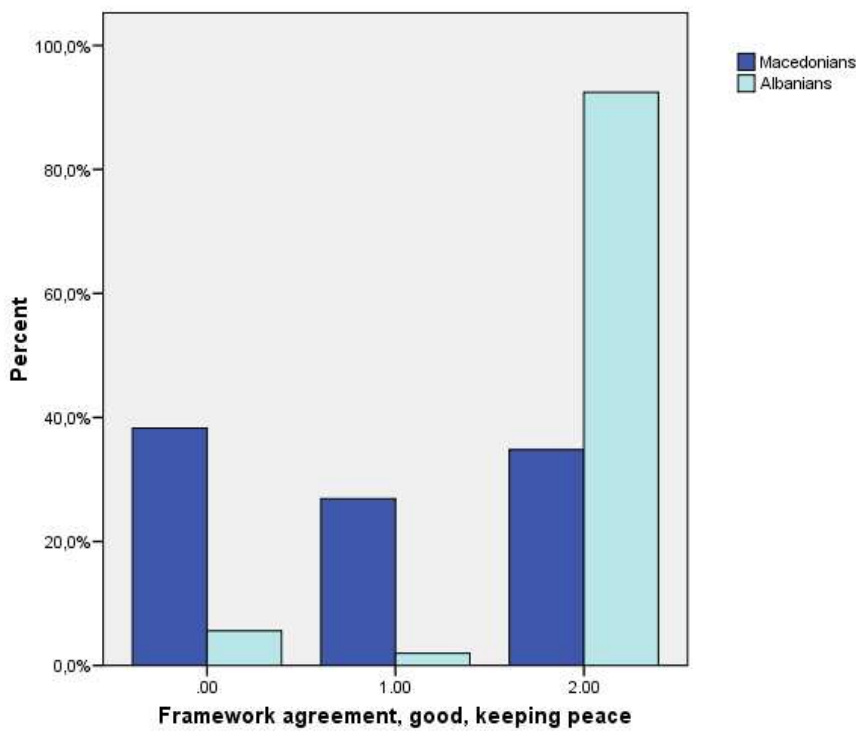
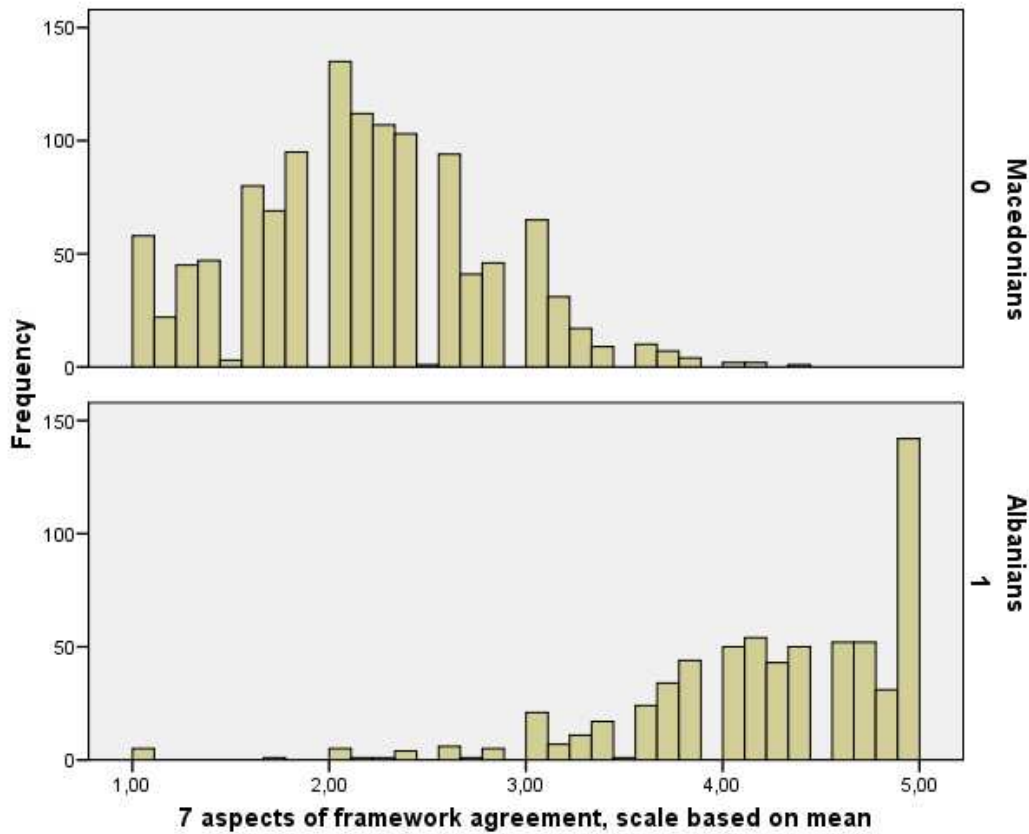


Figure 4. Attitudes towards aspects of the Framework Agreement by ethnic group



In summary, we have seen that respondents' ethnicity is a major determinant of the evaluation of the Framework Agreement, although we may trace a weak decline in the extent of polarization from 2003 to 2005. However, a majority of the Macedonians in both ethnic groups seems to support ethnic integration. As to the future solution for the state of Macedonia, both ethnic group tend to favor the status quo, though more so among the ethnic Macedonians than the ethnic Albanians.

Questions on ethnic integration and future solutions for Macedonia

The five questions on ethnic integration show that the majority of Macedonians favors integration – especially by living and working together, but less so for multi-ethnic radio and television programs and multiethnic political parties (Table 2). The four questions on the future status of Macedonia show strong support for the status quo and only weak support for divided solutions.

Table 2. Questions on ethnic integration and future solutions for Macedonia

	1 Strongly in favour of this happening	2 Only weakly in favour	3 Indifferent	4 Only weakly against	5 Strongly against
<i>Questions on Integration</i>					
Albanians and Macedonians living together in the same neighborhoods	34.0	34.3	16.2	9.0	6.5
Albanians and Macedonians working together in the same work places	38.9	38.2	12.2	6.5	4.2
Macedonian and Albanian going to the same schools, at the same times, together	32.7	30.2	17.6	11.7	7.8
More truly multi-ethnic radio and television stations and programs	19.8	27.5	26.1	13.7	12.9
The development of integrated multi-ethnic political parties	18.5	25.6	28.7	13.1	14.1
<i>Questions on future solution</i>					
	1 Very good thing	2 Good thing	3 Neutral	4 Bad thing	5 Very bad thing
Macedonian society and the state should stay like they are now	55.1	24.8	13.1	4.7	2.2
Macedonia should stay a state with its same borders, but in this state, Macedonian and Albanian communities should be separate, independent, and control themselves	8.1	17.2	20.8	30.0	23.8
Macedonia should be divided into two separate independent states, one for ethnic Albanian Macedonians and one for ethnic Macedonians	4.0	9.5	16.6	22.9	47.1
Macedonia should be divided, with one state for ethnic Macedonians, and with the other territory joining with Albania and/or Kosovo	4.2	6.9	17.2	18.3	53.4

Statistical analyses show that both sets of questions are one-dimensional and we have created a scale with high scores for those favoring integrated solutions and another scale with high scores for those favoring the status quo solution in Macedonia. Both scales show satisfactory psychometric properties for the total sample in terms of internal consistency with Cronbach alpha well above 0.8 and mean correlations above 0.5.

The differences on the scales between the two main ethnic groups are shown in figures 5 and 6. Figure 5 shows that the difference between Macedonians and Albanians on ethnic integration is small, although the latter group has a somewhat higher mean score (3.89 vs. 3.44). The figure also shows that a considerable minority of the Macedonians oppose ethnic integration.

Figure 5. Support ethnic integration by ethnic group

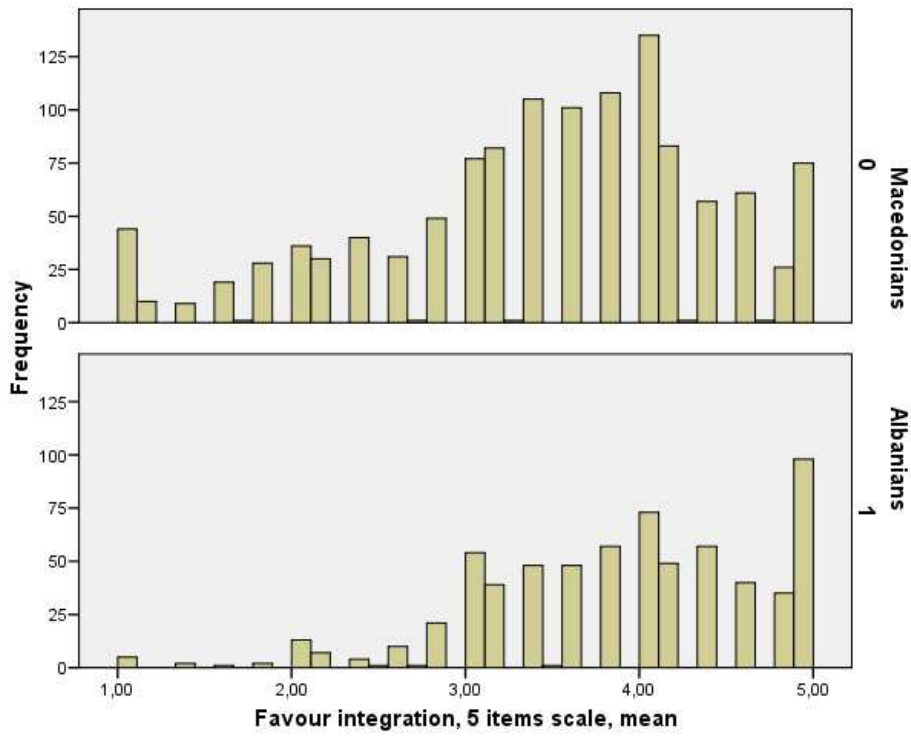


Figure 6. Support status quo solution for Macedonia

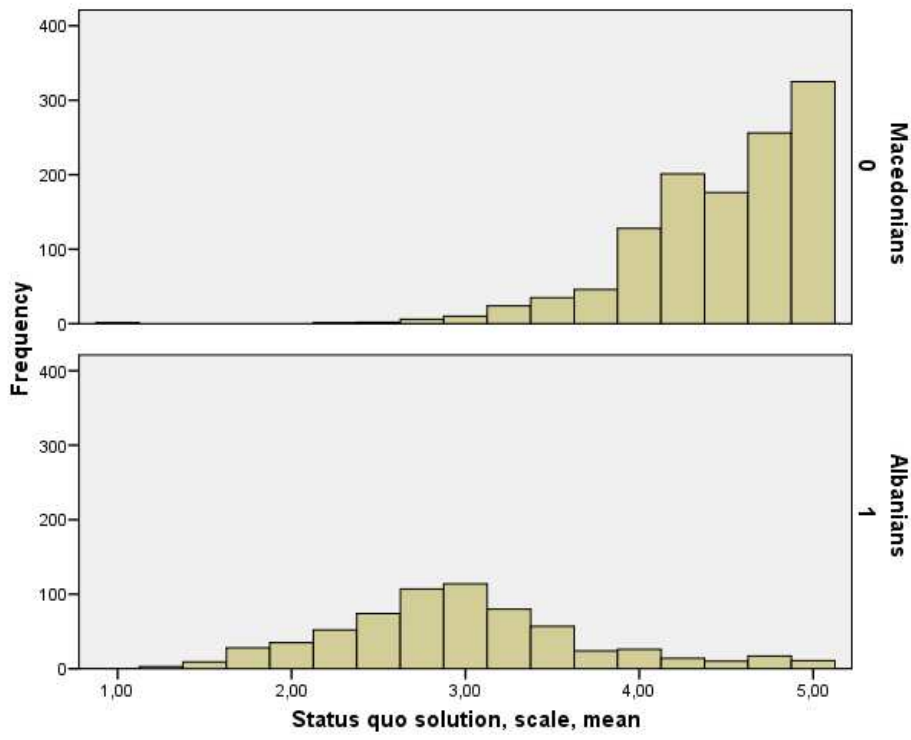


Figure 6 shows that the two ethnic groups respond differently to the question of future solutions for Macedonia. The Macedonians are strongly in favor of the status quo; almost no one shows sympathy with a divided solution. The Albanians are much more divided on this issue and the distribution of the responses is symmetric around the neutral position.

A multilevel analysis of the attitudes to the Framework Agreement

The variables to be used in the multilevel analysis are described in Table 3. The first panel lists the four dependent variables: two scales measuring support for the Framework Agreement and two scales measuring opinion on the future solution for Macedonia. The second panel describes a conventional set of individual regressors. Then follows a set of municipality-level regressors that capture the ethnic composition and geographic context of the units. The final panel describes three cross-level interactions, all involving the indicator of Albanian ethnicity.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the variables in the multilevel analyses, N min. =1839.

<i>Dependent variables</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>
General support for the Framework Agreement, scale	0	2	1.29	0.86
Support for 7 aspects of the Framework Agreement, scale	1	5	2.89	1.19
Support for ethnic integration, scale	1	5	3.60	0.96
Support for status quo, scale	1	5	3.95	0.93
<i>Individual level regressors</i>				
Albanian ethnicity (1=Albanian, 0=Macedonians, others)	0	1	0.39	
Female (1=female, 0=male)	0	1	0.53	
Age	18	80	43.47	16.42
Years of education	0	24	10.31	3.71
Attending religious services, seldom - often	1	11	4.34	2.35
Village (1=rural, 0=town, city)	0	1	0.48	
<i>Municipality level regressors</i>				
Percent ethnic Albanians in municipality	0	99.51	33.83	35.49
Kosovo border municipalities	0	1	0.20	
Violence in municipality (1=violence, 0=no violence)	0	1	0.30	
Violence in neighboring municipality (1=violence, 0=no violence)	0	1	0.23	
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>				
Albanian on Kosovo border	0	1	0.14	
Violence in municipality by Albanian ethnicity	0	1	0.17	
Violence in neighboring municipality by Albanian ethnicity	0	1	0.12	

For each of the two first dependent variables, we have estimated a series of five models, starting with the baseline model without any regressors. The second model adds a single explanatory variable, the indicator of Albanian ethnicity. Model 3 is the full individual-level model. In model 4, the main effects of the municipality level regressors are added, and in the

final model the cross-level interactions are also added. The results are displayed in Tables 4 and 5. Table 4 shows the random part, the variance components. The (fixed) regression coefficients are presented in Table 5.

The purpose of the null model is to split the variance in the dependent variables in two components: between-municipality variation (S_u) and within-municipality variation (S_e). These components may be used to estimate the intra-class correlation (ICC), the proportion of variance that is due to variation among the municipalities. The between-municipality variation in the baseline model may also be compared with the similar amount in more elaborate models for calculation of explained variance.

Starting with the general support for the Framework Agreement, the intra-class correlation is 0.26, implying that 26 percent of the variance in the scale is due to the between-municipality variation. However, the introduction of Albanian ethnicity in model 2 captures $\frac{3}{4}$ of this effect and reduces the intra-correlation to a small amount. In other words, most of the variation among the municipalities in general support is explained by a composition effect. The more complex models contribute little to increase the explained variance. The -2 log likelihood statistic is lower in the more complex models, but the decline is only marginally significant.

The intra-class correlation for the second dependent variable, the scale capturing support for various subcomponents of the FA, is large: more than 50 percent of the variance in the scale is due to variation among the municipalities. In line with the general support scale, most of that variation is explained by entering the indicator of Albanian ethnicity (Model 2), and more complex models explain only marginally more of the between-municipality variation.

Table 4. Variance components from multilevel regression models on attitudes to the Framework Agreement ^a

<i>General support for the Framework Agreement (n=1780)</i>					
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Individual level variance (Se)	0.587	0.512	0.509	0.510	0.505
Between municipality variance (Su)	0.209	0.053	0.052	0.044	0.051
Explained between municipality variance	0.000	0.746	0.748	0.788	0.756
Intra-class correlation ^c	0.262	0.094			
-2 log likelihood	4255.0	3940.9	3931.1	3924.8	3916.7
<i>Support for 7 aspect of the Framework agreement (n=1808)</i>					
Individual level variance (Se)	0.727	0.362	0.356	0.356	0.339
Between municipality variance (Su)	0.805	0.083	0.083	0.079	0.081
Explained between municipality variance	0.000	0.897	0.898	0.903	0.899
Intra-class correlation (ICC) ^b	0.526	0.187			
-2 log likelihood	4790.8	3421.5	3391.6	3388.5	3304.4

^a Models: M1: only intercept, M2: ethnicity, M3: full individual model, M4: M3 + main effect of conflict variables, M5: M4+ cross-level interactions.

^b The intra-class correlation (ICC) shows the proportion of the total variance in the outcome variables that are due to differences among the municipalities.

The fixed regression coefficients are displayed in Table 5. Let us start with the individual-level variables. As expected, Albanian ethnicity shows strong relationships to both dependent variables. Ethnic Albanians score about 1 point higher on the general support scale than ethnic Macedonians, and close to 2 points higher on the mean support for different aspects of the Agreement. The remaining individual level explanatory variables show only non-significant or very weak relationships to the two dependent variables.

Model 4 also contains four municipality-level variables: percent ethnic Albanians, indicators for municipalities bordering Kosovo, and the two indicators of proximity to violence. None of these shows any statistically significant effect on the two dependent variables on support for the Framework Agreement.

Model 5, which includes cross-level interactions, works a little better. For the first dependent variable, the Kosovo border indicator shows a statistically significant effect and the interaction of that variable with Albanian ethnicity comes close to statistical significance ($p=0.09$). This shows that the ethnic Macedonians along the Kosovo border score about 0.4 points lower than ethnic Macedonians living in municipalities adjacent to the Kosovo border. The effect of being on the Kosovo border for Albanians is found by adding the two

coefficients (-0.397+0.280). Evidently, Albanians on the Kosovo border do not differ much in the general evaluation of the Framework Agreement from ethnic Albanians living elsewhere in Macedonia. Surprisingly, whether there was violence in the municipality during the conflict has no effect on the general attitudes to the FA, regardless of ethnicity. However, Table 5 shows that violence in a neighboring municipality is associated with a reduction in support for the Agreement, but only among Albanians, and the effect is only borderline significant (p=0.062).

Table 5. A multilevel analysis of attitudes to the Framework Agreement (FA), Models 4 and 5. ^a

Model 4	<i>General support for FA</i>			<i>Support for aspects of FA</i>		
	B	S.e	Sig.	B	S.e.	Sig.
Intercept	0.666	0.118	0.000	1.924	0.104	0.000
Albanian ethnicity	1.035	0.061	0.000	2.179	0.051	0.000
Female	0.021	0.036	0.563	-0.069	0.030	0.020
Age	0.003	0.001	0.016	0.001	0.001	0.150
Years of education	0.015	0.005	0.008	0.020	0.005	0.000
Attending religious services	0.009	0.008	0.269	0.002	0.007	0.813
Village	0.011	0.047	0.815	-0.020	0.041	0.619
Percent ethnic Albanians	-0.001	0.001	0.576	-0.001	0.001	0.493
Kosovo border municipalities	-0.164	0.106	0.129	0.054	0.124	0.663
Violence in municipality	0.067	0.098	0.496	0.020	0.117	0.863
Violence in neighboring municipality	-0.156	0.092	0.097	-0.168	0.110	0.131
Model 5 ^b						
Percent ethnic Albanians	-0.001	0.001	0.645	-0.001	0.001	0.480
Kosovo border municipalities	-0.397	0.154	0.012	-0.253	0.160	0.116
Violence in municipality	0.084	0.136	0.540	-0.174	0.147	0.240
Violence in neighboring municipality	0.000	0.114	0.999	0.330	0.123	0.009
Albanian on Kosovo border	0.280	0.164	0.090	0.179	0.152	0.240
Violence in municipality by Albanian ethnicity	-0.039	0.155	0.802	0.320	0.148	0.031
Violence in neighboring municipality by Albanian ethnicity	-0.227	0.121	0.062	-0.904	0.107	0.000

^a B: fixed regression coefficient in the metric scale, S.e.: the standard error of B. Sig.: the probability value of t, the test statistic for B.

^b For Model 5, only the results for municipality level regressors are reported.

For the second dependent variable, the interaction effects with the violence indicators demonstrate that violence indeed has affected the attitudes of the two communities differently. More specifically, violence in the municipality seems to increase the average support for the subcomponents the FA among ethnic Albanians while it has only a negligible

effect on the Macedonians. Violence in a neighboring municipality, in contrast, has a radically different effect: It increases the support among ethnic Macedonians while it weakens the support among ethnic Albanians, and both effects are significant.

A multilevel analysis of attitudes to ethnic integration and future solutions for the status of Macedonia

Next, we consider the second set of dependent variables, concerning attitudes towards ethnic integration and the future status of Macedonia. The results are reported in Tables 6 and 7 and follow the same structure as the previous analysis. Table 6 shows that about 24 percent of variance in the support for ethnic integration is due to variation between the municipalities. This percentage is only slightly lower in Model 6, when the indicator of Albanian ethnicity is introduced. This variable explains about 20 percent of the between municipality variation. The introduction of the other variables increases this percentage to about 30.

The intra-class correlation for the support for status quo scale is 0.44, but most of the between-municipality variation is explained by the Albanian ethnicity variable in Model 6. Adding the remaining variables does little to increase the explained variance.

Table 6. Variance components from multilevel regression models on attitudes to ethnic integration and to the future status of Macedonia.^a

<i>Support for ethnic integration, scale</i>	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
Individual level variance (Se)	0.736	0.723	0.698	0.698	0.686
Between municipality variance (Su)	0.295	0.232	0.218	0.199	0.206
Explained between-municipality variance	0.000	0.215	0.260	0.327	0.302
Intra-class correlation ^c	0.286	0.242			
-2 log likelihood	4760.4	4714.9	4649.0	4643.0	4613.6
<i>Support for status quo, scale</i>					
Individual level variance (Se)	0.511	0.311	0.307	0.307	0.305
Between municipality variance (Su)	0.399	0.058	0.056	0.048	0.049
Explained between municipality variance	0.000	0.854	0.860	0.879	0.879
Intra-class correlation (ICC) ^b	0.439	0.158			
-2 log likelihood	4135.7	3142.0	3116.2	3109.0	3093.1

^a Models: M6: only intercept, M7: ethnicity, M8: full individual model, M9: M8 + main effect of conflict variables, M10: M9+ cross-level interactions.

^b The intra-class correlation (ICC) shows the proportion of the total variance in the outcome variables that are due to differences among the municipalities.

The regression coefficients for the regressors on both dependent variables are reported in Table 7. Ethnic Albanians are more supportive of ethnic integration than are the Macedonians, and less supportive of the status quo. The effects of gender, age, and education exert statistically significant impacts on support for ethnic integration, whereby older, more educated males are the most positive. Only age displays a similar influence on attitudes towards the status quo; the comparatively strong effect of ethnicity on the final dependent variable trumps the effect of both gender and education.

Table 7. A multilevel analysis of attitudes to ethnic integration and the futures status of Macedonia, Models 9 and 10.^a

Model 9	<i>Support for ethnic integration</i>			<i>Support for status quo</i>		
	B	S.e	Sig.	B	S.e	Sig.
Intercept	2.930	0.149	0.000	4.226	0.094	0.000
Albanian ethnicity	0.506	0.072	0.000	-1.530	0.048	0.000
Female	-0.172	0.041	0.000	-0.003	0.027	0.915
Age	0.005	0.001	0.001	0.004	0.001	0.000
Years of education	0.035	0.006	0.000	0.004	0.004	0.333
Attending religious services	0.003	0.009	0.760	0.006	0.006	0.337
Village	-0.111	0.058	0.056	0.089	0.037	0.018
Percent ethnic Albanians	0.003	0.002	0.068	0.001	0.001	0.251
Kosovo border municipalities	-0.294	0.192	0.132	-0.272	0.101	0.009
Violence in municipality	0.077	0.182	0.672	0.114	0.095	0.235
Violence in neighboring municipality	0.165	0.171	0.338	-0.056	0.089	0.534
Model 10^b						
Percent ethnic Albanians	0.003	0.002	0.073	0.001	0.001	0.252
Kosovo border municipalities	-0.163	0.244	0.504	-0.012	0.135	0.926
Violence in municipality	-0.374	0.226	0.101	0.061	0.122	0.616
Violence in neighboring municipality	0.551	0.190	0.005	-0.228	0.102	0.028
Albanian on Kosovo border	-0.430	0.223	0.054	-0.305	0.136	0.026
Violence in municipality by Albanian ethnicity	0.751	0.217	0.001	0.097	0.131	0.460
Violence in neighboring municipality by Albanian ethnicity	-0.807	0.154	0.000	0.263	0.098	0.007

^a B: fixed regression coefficient in the metric scale, S.e.: the standard error of B. Sig.: the probability value of t, the test statistic for B.

^b For model 10, only the results for municipality level regressors are reported.

Our interest is mostly directed towards the coefficients for the municipality-level variables reported at the bottom of the table. In model 9, only the effect of the Kosovo border is statistically significant, and only with respect to the question of status quo. The negative coefficient implies that respondents living in municipalities along the northern border, where

most of the fighting (and spillovers from Kosovo) occurred, are generally less happy with the current situation. Model 10, with the cross-level interactions, offers a more nuanced view. Evidently, the effect of proximity to Kosovo applies only to ethnic Albanians, who are significantly less supportive of both integration and maintaining the current situation than Macedonian respondents in the same municipalities and Albanians elsewhere in the country. This effect does not quite outweigh the substantial positive effect of violence in municipality on Albanians' support for ethnic integration/status quo, though the two contextual variables 'Kosovo border' and 'Violence in municipality' are clearly correlated so additional tests are necessary to extract the true, combined effect of the two factors. Violence in a neighboring municipality exerts an even more powerful impact, and again, affects the two ethnic communities in opposite directions. For the question of ethnic integration, the effect of the interaction between ethnicity of respondent and violence in neighboring municipality completely contradicts the corresponding effect of ethnicity and violence in same municipality. Finally, we find that violence in a proximate municipality decreases support for status quo among the ethnic Macedonians but does not seem to change the opinions of the Albanians. Second, Albanians on the Kosovo border are less supportive of the status quo than Albanians elsewhere, whereas geographic location does not seem to influence the general opinion of ethnic Macedonians.

Discussion

So what have we learned? To what extent do the ethnic composition of municipalities and the spatial proximity to violence influence attitudes towards the Framework Agreement and the future of Macedonia? Do such contextual factors affect the Albanian and Macedonian populations differently? Or does the overwhelming effect of the respondents' ethnicity, as documented by Ringdal et al. (2007) for the year 2003, continue to trump all contextual factors two years later?

We started the analysis by comparing the attitudes of the Albanians and Macedonians in 2003 and 2005. We uncovered signs of conciliation among both groups, but the degree of change was minimal. Macedonians continue to blame the 2001 conflict on Albanian criminals and Kosovar Albanian guerrillas whereas ethnic Albanians consider the conflict as a just fight for increased rights and self-determination. Similarly, while both groups show a slight increase in

support for the Ohrid Framework Agreement, Albanians are still substantially more positive towards the Agreements than the average Macedonian respondent.

We then turned to the main content of the analysis, a multi-level statistical assessment of attitudes towards the peace agreement and future solutions for Macedonia. Here, few results are robust across models and it is hard to identify a consistent pattern. Apart from the very powerful effect of individual-level ethnicity, only one factor shows a statistically significant effect across all four dependent variables: the interaction between ethnicity and violence in a neighboring municipality. Ethnic Albanians are much more positive towards the Framework Agreement and future ethnic integration, and less satisfied with the status quo. However, Albanian respondents in municipalities proximate to violent events display significantly more moderate attitudes. Surprisingly, violence in own municipality during the conflict has no general effect on the respondents' answers, though it appears to increase Albanian support for aspects of the FA and increased ethnic integration.

As most fighting occurred along the border to Kosovo, and this part of Macedonia was also negatively affected by the previous civil war across the border, one might expect the respondents' proximity to Kosovo to have a systematic and general influence on attitudes to the peace process. This is not the case. While ethnic Macedonian residents in this area are more opposed to the general agreement than Macedonians elsewhere, their attitudes towards aspects of the FA, ethnic integration, and future status of Macedonia do not differ from their compatriots. Albanians along the Kosovo border, however, appear to hold less consistent views than their kin in other parts of Macedonia by being less supportive of ethnic integration but at the same time being more eager to alter the status quo.

A lot remains to be desired about this analysis. In particular, more sensitivity analysis is required in order to identify and control for potentially problematic multicollinearity. It may well be that seemingly unstable parameter estimates and high standard errors are due to correlation between several of the regressors, in particular in the models with cross-level interaction terms. Clearly, the likelihood of a random respondent being Albanian isn't unaffected by the percentage of Albanians in his/her municipality, whether the municipality is located along the Kosovo border, and whether there was violence in the municipality or in a proximate one during the conflict, not to mention the interaction terms. When it comes to the potential influence of ethnic composition of the municipalities, we should investigate non-

linear effects of the indicator “percent ethnic Albanians” as we have reasons to expect heterogeneous communities to be more supportive of ethnic integration than homogenous ones. Additionally, in order to more thoroughly explore the influence of geography and spatial proximity to the conflict zone, we also need to improve the contextual measurements. One solution in that regard would be to make use of geographic information systems (GIS) software, along the lines of Buhaug and Rød (2006).

Geography has been shown to exert a profound influence on the likelihood, location, and duration of civil conflict (e.g. Buhaug and Gates, 2002; Buhaug, Cederman, and Rød, 2007; Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala, 2007). In this paper, we are exploring the extent to which settlement patterns and spatial proximity to violence show a similar influence on individuals’ attitude towards the peace process in Macedonia. While the preliminary results reported here offer little systematic support for our expectations, future work will reveal whether ethnic differences in support for the Ohrid Agreement really are due to the intrinsic nature of ethnic identity or whether more subtle explanations can be uncovered.

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Notes

ⁱ See Hegre et al. (2007) for a study that actually finds conflict to be more intense in the relatively richer regions of the country, at least for the case of Liberia.

ⁱⁱ See Buhaug (2007), Buhaug and Lujala (2005), and O’Lear and Diehl (2007) for more thorough discussions of this issue.

ⁱⁱⁱ Due to conflict with Greece over the use of the name “Macedonia,” the independent country was named the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Diplomatic recognition came gradually, despite protest from Greece. Only during late 2004 was the name of Republic of Macedonia officially granted recognition by the United States, Russia, and China