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POLITICAL SUBCULTURE VS. CULTURAL ASSIMILATION IN REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Abstract

In the Republic of Macedonia there has been a tendency and effort for different political cultures. Consensual political culture is when citizens tend to agree on making decisions and solving problems, while conflictual political culture is when citizens are divided into two regimes for solving major problems. There is also a third political culture called "subculture". It is a situation when the division of these groups (ethnic, religious, ideological, cultural, etc.) deepens even more and this division has a real opportunity to escalate to violence and war. In Macedonia, until now, we could not speak for a consensual political culture because this was proven in the recent presidential elections, as well as in the past government, when the IMRO-DPMNU party was in power, but it was rather a conflictual political culture as citizens are divided by a strong political, cultural, ideological, ethnic and religious views, tending to pass from time to time to "political subculture", where the division escalates to violence, as there is constant violence in multiethnic countries, and the war, such as the 2001 year. Nowadays, we have a different situation after the so-called “Colorful revolution” and parliamentary elections, where the SDUM party came into power, which by using the so-called "Zaev Bombs" it successfully achieved to convince Albanians to vote for it by promising them multiethnic Macedonia, to correct past mistakes and focus on Euro-integration. In this way, they try to change political culture in Macedonia to the one called political cultural merger or political assimilation.

Keywords: Consensual political culture, Conflictual political culture, Political Subculture, Civic culture & Political assimilation!

Introduction

The political consensus is only one stage of dynamic political processes and to achieve it, it must initially possess sufficient political culture in the society as well as in the political system, because the political systems and attitudes of political leaders depend on the political beliefs of society and their citizens. Through this paper, by using empirical methods and analysis for the survey, we will find that in general the highest level of political culture is the civic political culture, but in the other side we will prove the hypothesis that in the Republic of Macedonia dominates a conflictual political culture with attempts by the current Government to turn it into consensual political culture.

In spite of this, beyond indicators that resemble with the civil political culture, and analyzing Albanian voters in the parliamentary and local elections voting for the Macedonian ruling party SDUM, we can not say that conditions for such a culture in Macedonia have been fulfilled, given the fact that this civic culture is still debatable even for the most advanced European states.

Political culture in Republic of Macedonia

Political culture, as is culture itself in general, is a complex, dynamic and multi-dimensional phenomenon, and it is in constant movement and varies in time and space depending on social, economic and legal circumstances. “Political culture is important first because it encapsulates the history, traditions, and values of a society. To understand how most people in a nation think and act politically, we can begin by understanding their political culture. Each nation has its own political norms that influence how people think about and react to politics” (Almond, Powell, Dalton, & Strom, 2008, pp. 43-44). As Abdullai said: “In a multiethnic society, ethnic cleavages can also affect the political culture” (Abdullai & Sinani, 2012, p. 33). Based on the views of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, “when talking about political culture, then this culture must necessarily be integrated into one of these three levels of political culture: the System level, the Process level and the Policy level. In the the System Level, National pride and patriotism tend to create a political culture that is conducive to legitimacy. In the Process Level three patterns that describe citizens’ role in the political process: participants (informed citizens that make performance); Subjects (passive obedience); and Parochials (Citizens are able to influence the government in various ways and they are affected by it). And finally in the Policy Level, public support of government intervention tends to decrease as affluence increases” (Almond, Powell, Dalton, & Strom, 2008, pp. 44-47). If we take into account the three above-mentioned levels of political culture, namely the Systemic level, the Process level and the Policy level, and try to elaborate on the prism of our case study, namely the Republic of Macedonia, we will see that we can not include it at all in the System level where the basis of political culture is the Legitimacy, because Macedonia is a multicultural country where "in many cases two truths are being promoted, which are completely different and continue to live; each in its own social reality, contributing so little to what we call a pluralistic society" (Pajaziti, 2011, p. 44). These two relative truths are represented by the largest ethnicities in the country, the Macedonians claiming to be a state-forming population, having the legitimacy of the state and represented through the name, constitution, flag, state anthem, preamble, and on the other hand Albanians who in some way, despite being autochthonous, feel discriminated and disagree with exclusive Macedonian legitimacy. The basic reason is also linked to the highest act “voting the Constitution” in the Macedonian Parliament, a process that Albanians boycotted. But “their rationale was very simple: they would not support an independent Republic of Macedonia without guarantees that in the new state they would not be second-class citizens” (Berglund, Ekman, Deegan-Krause, & Knutsen, 2013, p. 602). Regarding the role of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia at the second and third level of the Political Process, if we consider its three dimensions, we note that they are not

positioned anywhere, whereas in relation to the level called the Polity Level, Macedonia is far from expectations, because this is the highest level of political culture that will otherwise be called the civic political culture.

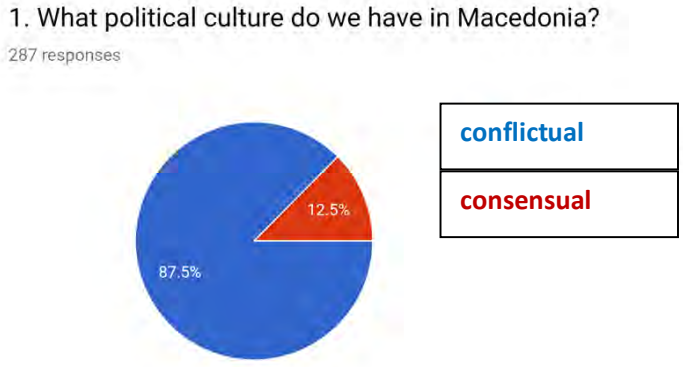
Consensual political culture vs.Conflictual political culture

The etymological meaning of the term 'consensual' is related to the Latin word 'consentire,' which means "to agree" or literally "to be together", whereas in political sciences 'consensual' is considered when all parties agree to approve something, therefore, it is a situation where a large majority of citizens represented through their political leaders agree on major problems which society faces, the best kind of governance and the solutions that need to address social issues. So, consensual political culture is when leaders of different subjects, regardless of beliefs, programs and ideologies, tend to agree on decision-making and solving problems. "Consensus democracies like Switzerland and Austria may have consensual cultures today, but they have not always been so consensual: the Swiss fought five civil wars from the sixteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, and the Austrians fought a brief but bloody civil war as recently as 1934. In the early twenty-first century, Belgium, India and Israel have consensus institutions, but they do not have consensual cultures (Lijphart, 2012, p. 302).

On the other hand, conflictual political culture, which is also understood by its own etymological meaning "conflict" which means active disagreement between people and groups with opposite opinions and principles, which it can often turn from a clash of thought into a physical clash or a state of war; in political sciences it represents a situation where citizens and their representatives are divided into two regimes to solve big problems and have no potential and will to overcome this political stalemate. Based on Teylor's book "yet it is hard to find a democratic or democratizing society these days that is not the site of some significant controversy over whether and how its public institutions should better recognize the identities of cultural and disadvantaged minorities". (Taylor, 1994, p. 3) In broader international terms, Samuel Huntington has devided the world into differente civilizations defined by their religious and cultural traditions. He then predicted that these cultural differences will be a major sourse of international conflict in the century. (Huntington, 2009, p. 250).

Below we will present the results of the survey that it has been prepared specifically for this research with the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia giving quantitative data related to our hypothesis. The questionnaire was created in Google form and the same was presented in public, where the invitation was answered by a total of 300 people. [1] The questionnaire had a total of five questions and the first one was related to the essence of the work, i.e. to the dominant political culture in the Republic of Macedonia.

[1] https://docs.google.com/forms/d/192enAG5mKh3f40rBCUohrIYRXH6UtNeNdWNGT4x_6gg/viewanalytics#start=publishanalytics



As it can be seen from the pie, the vast majority of respondents (87.5%) did not have a dilemma to answer that there is a spirit of conflictual political culture in the Republic of Macedonia, unlike a minority who think the opposite.

Political subculture

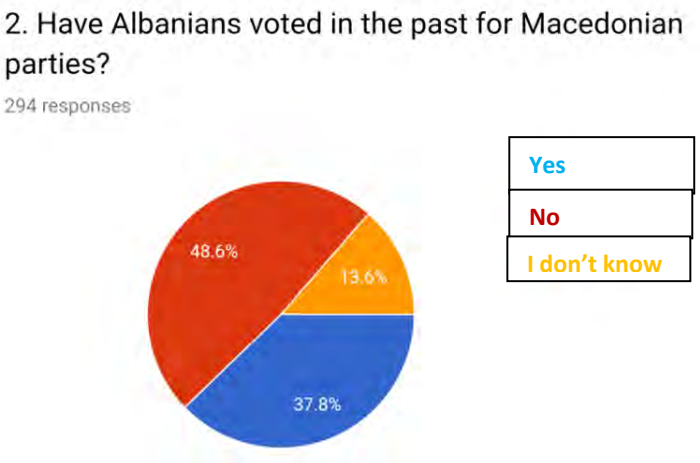
There is also another political culture which shifts from conflicting political culture that Almond adapted from the terminology of Ralph Linton and calls it "subculture"; These subcultures tend to belong to different political parties, support different interest groups, read different newspapers, etc. The citizens in these subcultures may have sharply different points of view on same critical political matters, such as the boundaries of the nation, the nature of the regime, or the correct ideology, and when these subcultures coincide with a national, ethnic or religious identity violence has a tendency to emerge. On the other hand, Hunter has defined the political subculture as a "particular pattern or orientation of political action in which every political system is embedded." (Hunter, 2011, p. 18). We empahsized that in Macedonia, for the present, there is no expression of consensual political culture, proved even in the recent presidential elections, but we deal with conflictual political culture as citizens are divided by certain political, cultural, ideological, ethnic and religious beliefs, tending to pass from time to time to "political subculture", where the separation shifts to violence, as there is constant violence in multiethnic countries, and to war, such as the 2001 year war.

About Civic Political Culture

The culmination of a country's political culture is civic political culture. Civic political culture is not just a modern culture, but as Almond & Verba said "one that combines modernity with tradition; a culture of concensus and diversity, a culture that permitted change but moderated it" (Almond & Verba, 1989, p. 5). If according to them "when we talk about France, Germany, and Italy the civic culture over there is present in the form of aspiration, and the democratic infrastructure is still far from being attained" (Almond & Verba, 1989, p. 7), then Macedonia aspiring to the model of these states is far from this political culture. In this way, and despide whatever civic or liberal rhetoric a party adopts, "all parties in Macedonia are ethnic in the sense that their membership and voter base comes entirely from one ethnic group" (Berglund, Ekman,

Deegan-Krause, & Knutsen, 2013, p. 617). Often, the main event related to the process towards a civil society is the so-called "Colorful Revulution" which came as a cause of protests against the non-consensual president but then it turned out that there was other goals: Albanians and Macedonians took part in joint protests with linked national flags that came after the publication of the so-called "Zaev Bombs", represented Zaev and his subject as rescuers and the only force that could withstand the totalitarian system that prevails in Macedonia. The period of parliamentary elections approached and the political parties in the country prepared their programs to present them to the public, but the surprise during this period was that SDUM claimed that this time will win the Albanian votes as well, which in the past there were only rare cases, but they did not have the desired effect, such as in the regular parliamentary elections of 1998 with the Democratic Alternative of Tupurkovski who attempted to create an over-ethnic political offer, or in the case of the 1999 Presidential elections won by President Trajkovski, and the third case when Imer Selmani took non-Albanian votes, but not enough to pass to the second round. Failures of these efforts are also mentioned by the author Frucht when he said that "it became obvious that the Albanians would only vote for the coalition of PDP and NDP" (Frucht, 2005, p. 601). This reality was also tested on the Macedonian side at the time when "the Albanian party DUI opened an office in the exclusively Macedonian town of Koçani in the predominantly Macedonian region of eastern Macedonia" (Berglund, Ekman, Deegan-Krause, & Knutsen, 2013, p. 618),but this policy did not succeed also because every Macedonian trying to join the Albanian parties has been offended or even threatened. "Thus,IMRO-DPMNU and SDUM compete against one another for the Macedonian vote, just as DUI and DPA compete for the Albanians one. Macedonian parties do not axpect to get votes from the Albanians, and vice versa" (Berglund, Ekman, Deegan-Krause, & Knutsen, 2013, p. 617). The 1997 and 2001 World Values Survey data show that "not a single Albanian respondent supported Macedonia's SDUM" (Pickering, 2006, p. 6).

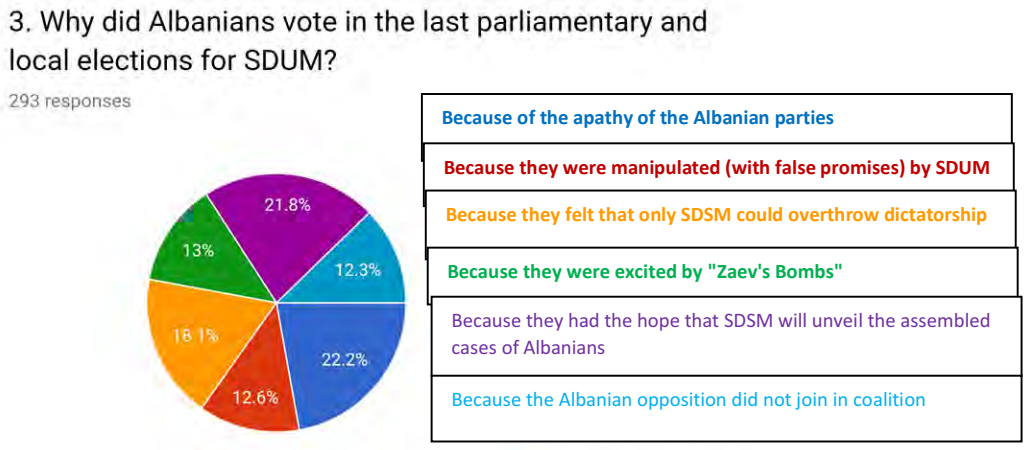
The second question we prepared for the surveyors was the aspect of past events in relation to the elections:



The results, as seen above, conclude that Albanians in the past, apart from a few of them, did not vote for Macedonian parties (48.6%), but the main dilemma in this context is precisely the

question: What persueded Albanians to vote in such a large numbers for the Macedonian SDUM party? According to Zekiri, a SDUM Albanian deputy: "Everything was worth it, because Albanians are the ones who condemned the regime of Gruevski. For the first time, this political subject was also opened to Albanians because its vision was Macedonia to be an equal country for all citizens, regardless of their ethnic background. The Albanians understood thiswell, and for this reason they also condemned the Albanian parties that have represented them so far in the form in which they have governed (brif.mk, 2016). But, according to Pollozhani, the reason why Albanians voted for the Macedonian party SDUM is “due to the apathy of the Albanian parties or because they were manipulated by SDUM, and this trend is not a normal phenomenon, because if it was normal for a Macedonian party to have an Albanian vote, then it would be normal to have the Macedonian vote for the Albanian parties” (Televizija Nova, 2017). An interesting analysis has also been done by Kajtazi: “The essential reason for voting SDUM is the total disappointment of the ruling coalition between DPMNE and DUI”. According to him, one should not overlook these two components: "The first is a message to the Albanian parties to radically change their actions in the direction of improving the life of the citizens and democratic transformation of the society, by achieving the essential equality to the ethnic community, and for all the citizens of Macedonia; and the second part of the analysis is dedicated to the situation where SDUM was opened towards the Albanian electorate with an offer to solve the issues that concern the citizens, regarding the economic situation, the living conditions in the local communities and issues related to the so-called ethnic group” (okno.mk, 2017).

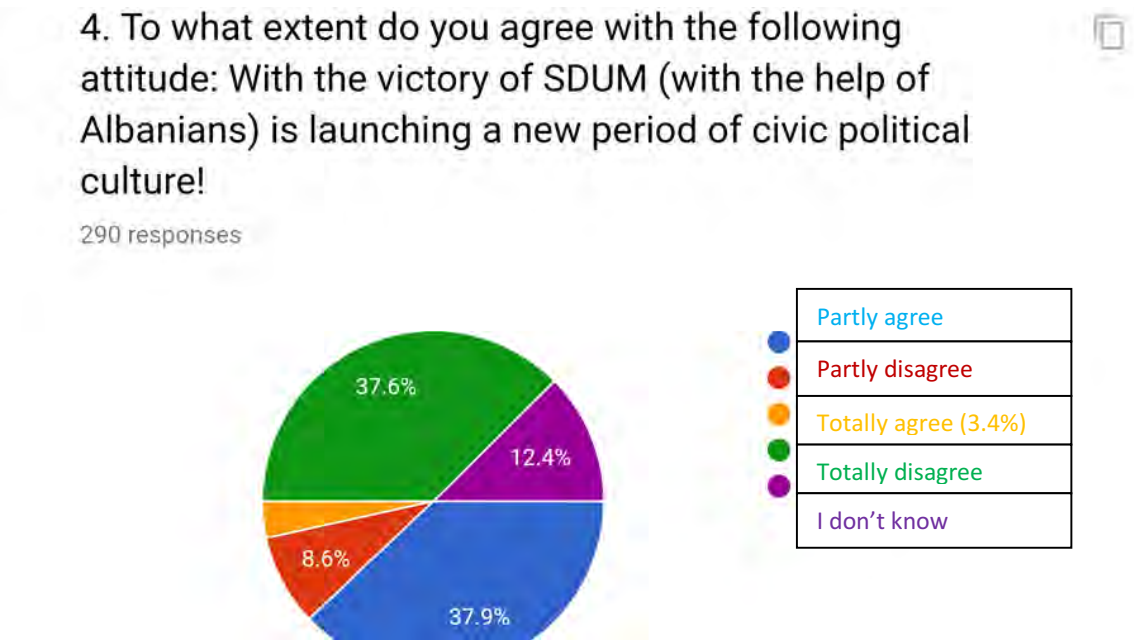
The third question of our survey is particularly related to this attitude and according to the below results that enable us to underline the reasons why Albanians decided to vote in favor of the SDUM party. The reason why we did not allow as an alternative the choice of “more than a one answer” was intentional: based on the fact that alternatives were in the cause-effect connotation, we decided to allow only one answer and the surveyors may choose the main priority or the initial cause.



Surprisingly, the first alternative that was selected by most or more specifically 22.2% of respondents is related to the apathy that the Albanian parties have, referring most of them to the

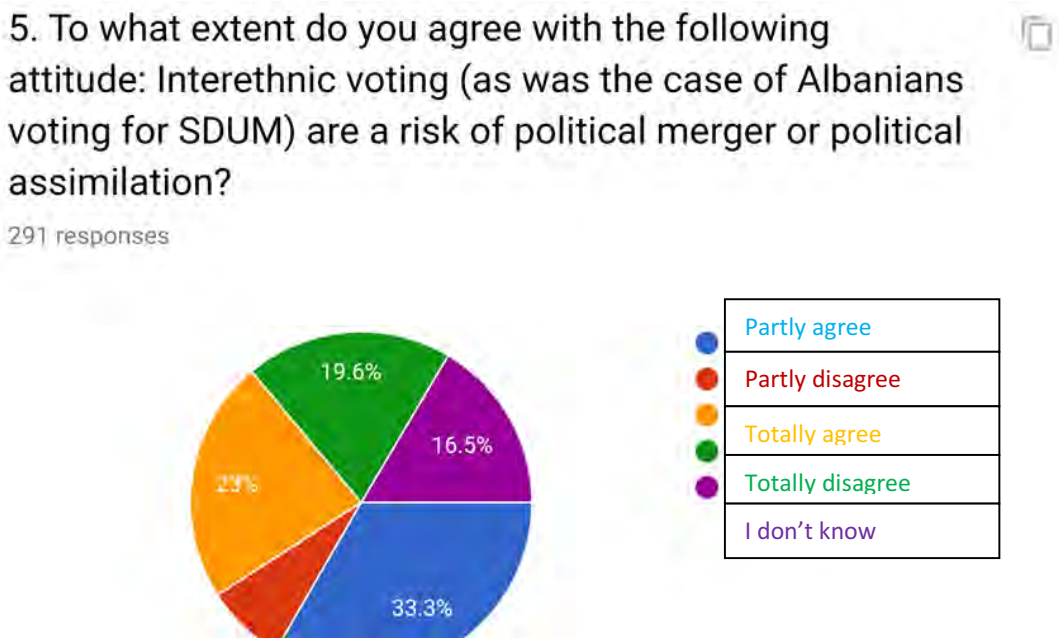
Albanian party in power, but also not neglecting the inability of the opposition parties to join together in an alliance or coalition (12.3%). The second reason why Albanians voted for SDUM was related to the organized cases against Albanians, such as the cases "Monster, Sopot, Kumanovo", and so on (21.8%). Zoran Zaev, while playing the so-called bombs, has often emphasized that he possesses evidence about the organized cases against Albanians who had been forgotten for several years, although he had not presented them to the public until present day. It is no coincidence that 13% of them have decided that the reason why Albanians voted for a Macedonian party was the enthusiasm because of the bombs that the head of SDUM presented. Suddenly, the third indication that was prompted by the "Colorful Revolution" is the the next cause for inter ethnic voting, which means that 18.1% of respondents think that the reason why Albanians voted SDUM was that according to them, only SDUM could overturn the "dictatorship" of IMRO-DPMNU on top with Gruevski and only SDUM has the potential to return the rule of law and justice in the country.

Are the conditions fulfilled to begin the process of changing the course of political parties from ethnic to civic ones, and as a result of this to slowly begin the process of "civilization" of the Republic of Macedonia, or it is quite the opposite, that the Albanian vote for Macedonian parties is the initial phase of what is called "political cultural fusion or political cultural assimilation? This dilemma was answered by our interviewers in the following two questions:



When we look at the results of the survey we can see that there is a similarity between those who partially agree with this hypothesis and those who totally disagree, but if we gather positive answers (totally agree 3.4% and partially agree 37.9%) and negative answers (totally disagree 37.6% and partially disagree 8.6%) it turns out that the number of negative responses that

"disagree" with this attitude (46.2%) is greater than the number of respondents who “agree” with this attitude (41.3%). Let's continue with our survey questions:



The attitude was not incidentally defined as a potential risk of assimilation because we are aware that the word assimilation is multidimensional term that is not based solely on political factors, but also on other factors such as social, cultural, anthropological, psychological, religious and so on. Based on the results, most of the respondents answered that they partially agree with this attitude (33.3%), adding plus 23% of those who totally agree reach a majority of 56.3%; and if we eliminate 16.5% of those who do not know or are unsure of the question, the percentage of those who totally disagree and partly disagree remains anirrelevant minority (27.2%).

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that at first view, the Albanian votes for SDUM seem as a positive signal and a courageous step in the policymaking of the Republic of Macedonia. But given that fact that such attempts have been taken in the past and they have not proved successful, it is too early to assume that the society is on the right track, not forgetting the fact that this step was undertaken only by the Albanian side and never by the Macedonian one. We conclude that the Albanian vote for the Macedonian parties that comes as a result of dissatisfaction of the Albanian parties is a potential risk of assimilation. So, there is no sense of civic political culture, because civic culture has to develop in parallel between two major ethnicities which may be in conflict between them and not just on the one hand. Despite much efforts being made in recent years to maintain a balance of non-discriminatory diversity management that is proclaimed for years in this multicultural society such as Macedonia, there is still a lack of civic competence. The last case of sided interethnic voting (Albanian votes for Macedonian parties) without having a feedback

(Macedonia votes for Albanian parties) is an argument that we can not be enthusiastic with this assimilation policy. What needs to be done in the future is effective civic participation and non-discriminatory political trust and the necessary continuation of the implementation of diversity policies.

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POLITIČKA SUPKULTURA
NASPRAM KULTURNE ASIMILACIJE U REPUBLICI MAKEDONIJI

Sažetak

U Republici Makedoniji postojala je tendencija i napor za različite političke kulture. Konsenzualna politička kultura je kada se građani nagoveštavaju da donose odluke i rešavaju probleme; Dok konfliktna politička kultura je kada su građani podijeljeni u dva režima za rješavanje velikih problema. Postoji i treća politička kultura pod nazivom "subkultura". To je situacija kada odvajanje ove dvije grupe (etničke, verske, ideološke, kulturne, itd.) još više produbljuje i ova podjela ima stvarnu priliku da eskalira nasilju i ratu. U Makedoniji do sada nismo mogli govoriti o konzenzualnoj političkoj kulturi, jer se to dokazalo na nedavnim predsedničkim izborima, kao iu prošloj vladi, kada je partija IMRO-DPMNU bila na vlasti, ali to je bila konfliktna politička kultura kao građani podijeljena je snažnim političkim, kulturnim, ideološkim, etničkim i religioznim stanovištima, koja se s vremena na vreme svodi na "političku subkulturu", gdje se podjela eskalira nasilju, pošto postoji stalno nasilje u multietničkim zemljama i rat takođe, kao što je 2001 godine. Danas imamo drugačiju situaciju nakon tzv. "Šarene revolucije" i parlamentarnih izbora, na kojima je došla na vlast partija SDUM-a, koja koristeći takozvane "Zaev bombe" uspela je da ubedi Albance da glasaju za to, obećavajući ih multietničkom Makedonijom, ispravljanje greške u prošlosti i usredsređujenje se na evrointegracije. Na taj način pokušavaju promijeniti političku kulturu u Makedoniji na onu koja se zove političko kulturno spajanje ili politička asimilacija.

Ključne riječi: konzensualna politička kultura, konfliktna politička kultura, politička subkultura, građanska kultura i politička asimilacija