

ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

Yayın Geliş Tarihi / Received: 19.10.2021

Yayına Kabul Tarihi / Accepted: 13.11.2021

Bu makale için önerilen kaynak gösterimi / To cite this article (Chicago, 17-A sürüm / Chicago, 17th A):

Ivanov, Zoran. "The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States: The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia". *Uluslararası Suçlar ve Tarih Dergisi / International Crimes* 22, (2021): 161-192.

THE CRISIS OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER AND THE STATUS OF THE SMALL STATES: THE CASE OF REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA AND REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Zoran IVANOV

Ph.D. Assistant Professor,

TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Ankara, Turkey;

e-mail: zivanov@etu.edu.tr

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8486-648X>

Abstract: *This article focuses on examining the causality between the international system and the resilience of small states and explains the experience of the Republic of Macedonia, which has been trying to join international organizations since 1991, as a case study. In this context, it proceeds from the basic assumption that the weaknesses of the state and their perception by the international system play a critical role in small state resilience.*

The article analyzes the critical weaknesses of the liberal international order's approach to neglecting small states, then examines the critical vulnerabilities and advantages of small states that lead to the emergence of weak or failed states in the international system. In addition to explaining a unique example of a country changing its name to enter an international alliance, the article clarifies the direct relationship between the status of small states in the international system and the predatory nature of the liberal international order that creates a precarious future for small states.

Keywords: *Liberal International Order, Macedonia, International System, Small States, EU, NATO*

LİBERAL ULUSLARARASI DÜZEN KRİZİ VE KÜÇÜK DEVLETLERİN STATÜSÜ: MAKEDONYA CUMHURİYETİ VE KUZEY MAKEDONYA CUMHURİYETİ ÖRNEĞİ

Öz: *Makale, uluslararası sistem ile küçük devletlerin dayanıklılığı arasındaki nedenselliği incelemeye odaklanmakta ve 1991'den bu yana uluslararası kuruluşlara katılmaya çabalayan Makedonya Cumhuriyeti'nin deneyimini örnek vaka olarak açıklamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, devletin zayıflıklarının ve uluslararası sistem tarafından algılanmasının küçük devlet esnekliğinde kritik rol oynadığı temel varsayımından hareket etmektedir.*

Makale, liberal uluslararası düzenin küçük devletleri ihmal etmeyi öngören yaklaşımının kritik zayıflıklarını ele alarak analiz etmekte, ardından, küçük devletlerin uluslararası sistemdeki zayıf veya başarısız devletlerin ortaya çıkmasına yol açan kritik kırılma noktalarını ve avantajlarını incelemektedir. Makale, uluslararası bir ittifaka girmek için adını değiştiren bir ülkenin benzersiz bir örneğini izah etmenin yanı sıra, bu örneğin karmaşıklığından hareketle, küçük devletlerin uluslararası sistem içindeki statüsü ile küçük devletler için güvencesiz bir gelecek yaratan liberal uluslararası düzenin yırtıcı doğası arasındaki doğrudan ilişkiye açıklık getirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Liberal Uluslararası Düzen, Makedonya, Uluslararası Sistem, Küçük Devletler, AB, NATO*

Introduction

We are living in liberal democracy World order or what is left of it. It gained its peak after the (first) Cold War. What was supposed to bring democracy and peace made the world difficult and less democratic to live in. Aggressively exporting democracy and capitalism through globalization as a tool made the world live in constant conflicts, wars, political instability, and economic degradation. The mismanagement of its consequences^{1, 2} by the unaccountable leaders and politicians produces populism, inequalities, forced migration, and the list goes on. Beck Ulrich argues that the line between national and international spheres is being dissolved in what remains a somewhat hazy power space of global domestic politics.³ These turbulences are affecting the state's behavior. Great powers became predatorial and middle states are trying to balance between safeguarding the national interests and great powers' interests. The small states seem that they run out of options. They are obliged to comply with great powers politics risking their national interests, state sovereignty, security, society integrity, and economic development. The small states are collateral damage while the international system is transforming itself.

The status of the small states is of emerging importance in the current global system because while great powers are learning to share power and reorganize their sphere of influence, the small states are at immediate risk of turning to weak or failing states. Many scholars believed that an inclusive international system would bring benefits to

-
- 1 John Ikenberry. "Liberal Internationalism - Robert Wright & John Ikenberry [The Wright Show]", 2 Sep 2020, Accessed 05 Jan 2021
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5X_muSLGBKY,
 - 2 Francis Fukuyama. "American Political Decay or Renewal: The meaning of the 2016 election", *Foreign Affairs*, Jul/Aug 2016, Accessed 05 Jan 2021
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/United-states/2016-06-13/american-political-decay-or-renewal?utm_medium=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_source=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_content=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_campaign=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_term=PANTHEON_STRIPPED
 - 3 Beck Ulrich. "Power in the Global Age: A New Global Political Economy." 2005. Malden Mass: Polity Press.

small states;^{4, 5, 6, 7, 8} it turned to be more extractive since many small states do not have considerable military, political, economic, and natural resources capabilities to be considered as “an equal voice on the table.” Today the media is overwhelmed with news, analysis, and opinions about mutual relationships, interests, actions, and influence of the Europe, US, China, and Russia. In the EU, the smaller states are utterly ignored. There are almost no critics, analyses, opinions about why the EU is not opening the Accession Talks after the Republic of Macedonia has changed its name to the Republic of North Macedonia for the same purpose. Small states such as the Republic of Macedonia have a negligible role in solving global challenges from the great power politics. Hence, the EU allowed this small state’s political instability to continue, corruption to strengthen its roots, economic degradation to grow, and the state’s institutions to further ruin. If this trend of treating small states continues, the number of failing states will rapidly grow and represent a direct threat to the EU. In this account, the studies of small states will be more relevant because they can provide actionable contingencies options for a possible solution for both sides, great powers, and small states, to mitigate the conditions of becoming failing states.

This article aims to analyze what happened to small states when the international system mismanaged to spread liberal democracy at the expense of small states. In this context, the article does two things. First, it will identify the critical weaknesses of the international system that implies neglecting smaller states. It will use the Republic of Macedonian experience as a candidate in the process of joining international organizations. Second, it will analyze the small state’s critical vulnerabilities and advantages within the international system, leading to weak or failing states. Using the Republic of Macedonia case study that recently changed its name to the Republic of North Macedonia will

-
- 4 Jeanne A. K Hey. “Small States in World Politics”, 2003. London: Lynne Rienner.
 - 5 Peter Katzenstein. “Small States in World Market” 1985. Cornell University Press, New York, US
 - 6 Miriam F.Elman. “The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in Its Own”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 1995. Vol. 25, No. 2 (Apr., 1995), pp. 171-217, Accessed on 10 Dec 2020 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/194084.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Acfda73178f90fb6bfd2051ece2c12cf0>,
 - 7 Browning S. Christopher. “Small, Smart and Salient? Rethinking Identity in the Small States Literature.” 2006. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 19:4, p:669-684, Accessed 10 Dec 2020. DOI: [10.1080/09557570601003536](https://doi.org/10.1080/09557570601003536)
 - 8 Anthony Payne. “Small states in the global politics of development.” 2004. *The Round Table*, 93:376, p:623-635, Accessed 10 Dec 2020. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0035853042000289209>

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

identify causality between the international system and small states' opportunities and limitations in safeguarding national interests.

The case of the Republic of Macedonia changing its name to the Republic of North Macedonia to join international organizations is a unique and vital example in examining small states' status within the international system and the international system's perception of the small states. Examining such a complex subject must include both academic perspective and practical experience. In this case, the practical experience should be considered from the professionals who were part of the state decision-making process and leaders of state institutions. They can bring valuable insights from their opportunities, limitations, faults, and misconceptions during leading state institutions.

The article has two parts. The first part will identify the critical weakness of the current international system that makes it more extractive to small states. It will use examples from Macedonian experience in the past 30 years. The second part will analyze causalities between Macedonian state institutions and the international community to understand perceptions, interpretations, decisions, and limitations that set the Republic of Macedonia to change its name to R. North Macedonia and place on the road of failed states.

Small states and Liberal World Order – LIO

The current shambles that Liberal International Order is producing, the status of the small states is diminutive. In traditional theories of international relations, the relationship between the states is considered unequal distribution of power among the states within the current international order. Hence, the article will analyze the characteristics of the international order in correlation to small states. To define small states will assume conventional wisdom that the state's power comes from its strength, primarily from the size of country and population, political, economic, and military capabilities. Thus, the small states are defined as a state that lacks relative strength to project into the international system; hence, they are constantly preoccupied with their survival.⁹ Since building the international system, small states have been neglected due to the lack of power in the regional and larger context. According to Spykman size of the state provide an effective political

9 Michael Handle. "Weak States in International System", 1990. Routledge, NY

and economic integration and defines comparative strength to influence the geopolitical environment.¹⁰ The ability to influence is an indication of the power of the states. The conventional wisdom reads: The international system is a “society without a central authority to preserve law and order.” “It is in a state of anarchy, in other words.”¹¹

Consequently, the states constantly struggle for self-preservation within the international system. In this context, the idea of perception of the state matters, especially in the regional context.¹² Even though the concept of a small state has been a relative term, “smallness” is crucial for their survival in the present context of tectonic changes in the geopolitical environment. The significance of smallness depends on the notion of power and the nature of the international system.¹³ Thus, the size of states has significant consequences for their roles in international politics.¹⁴ Recent events indicate that changing the name from the Republic of Macedonia to the Republic of North Macedonia is a matter of perception and power politics of the US and EU in the Balkans. Analyzing such a unique case begins with identifying critical elements that led LIO in crisis and ramifications to small states.

The global system has experienced rapid changes in the last century. Including the information revolution in the past 30 years created a hazy power space that needs a new and creative way of thinking to be understood.¹⁵ Today we are living in the Liberal International Order or what is left of it. The idea that of bringing peace, democracy, and economic development made the environment precarious. Instead, it has created endless conflicts and wars, inequality, democracy in decline, a deteriorating social system, and political polarization. According to Mearsheimer, there are three crucial distinctions among orders that

10 Nickolas J. Spykman. “Geography and Foreign Policy, I”, *The American Political Science Review*, Feb., 1938. Vol. 32, No. 1

11 Ibid

12 Bilijana Vankovska. “Lilliputian Foreign Policy of a Small State: The Case of the Republic of Macedonia” 2017. Accessed 10 Sep 2021: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343103574>

13 Laurent Goetschel. “Small States inside and outside of the European Union”. 1998. Springer p:15

14 Viktor Gigueux. “Explaining the diversity of small states’ foreign policies through role theory” 2016. *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 1:1, p:27-45 Accessed 10 Sep 2021 <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080%2F23802014.2016.1184585>

15 Ulrich Beck. “Power in the Global Age: A New Global Political Economy.” 2005. Malden Mass: Polity Press.

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

populate the IS. The first difference is between international and bounded order and depends on the great powers' inclusions. The second difference concerns the kinds of international orders powers can organize: realist, agnostic, or ideological (liberal).

Further, Mearsheimer argues that only a unipolar system can produce Liberal International Order if the central political ideology is liberal democracy.¹⁶ History proves that power and domination are the crucial factors for great powers to rise and fall. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the US has played a power game, thus setting a new world order and creating a new international order, liberal as is the political ideology of the leading state. Soon after, the Western order created an open and inclusive international economy; vigorously spread liberal democracy worldwide. Consequently, they gain "considerable maneuvering space to build customized versions of capitalism around distinct approaches to corporate governance, labor markets, tax regimes, business-government relations, and welfare state arrangements."¹⁷ Rosenau wrote: "the global system is so disaggregated that it lacks overall patterns and, instead, is marked by various structures of systemic cooperation and sub-systemic conflict in different regions, countries, and issue areas."¹⁸ In this milieu, it is all about the interests and benefits of the major powers. The benefits of the small states from the international system have become a pipedream. To illustrate, the EU is keeping in purgatory the smaller countries from the Balkans. Great powers have been using central Caucasus countries for their geopolitical competition over the region's resources and control of its maneuvering space. Ambiguity is rising how much Liberal International Orders is liberal. The real problem with LIO is its implementation and management, not the goal and purpose.^{19, 20, 21}

16 John J. Mearsheimer. "Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order". 2019. *International Security*. No:43(4): p:7–50. Accessed 10 Sep 2020 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332745630_Bound_to_Fail_The_Rise_and_Fall_of_the_Liberal_International_Order

17 Dani Rodrik. "The Globalization Paradox" 2011. WW Northon and Company, NY.

18 James Rosenau. "Study of the World Politics: Globalization and Governance". 2006. Routledge, NY

19 John Ikenberry. "Liberal Leviathan: the origins, crisis, and transformation of the American world order" 2011. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, US

20 John Ikenberry. "Liberal Internationalism - Robert Wright & John Ikenberry [The Wright Show], 2 Sep 2020, Accessed 04 Jan 2021 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5X_muSLGBKY

21 Fukuyama, Francis. "American Political Decay or Renewal: The meaning of the 2016 election", *Foreign Affairs*, Jul/Aug 2016, Accessed on: 05 Jan 2021 https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-06-13/american-political-decay-or-renewal?utm_medium=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_source=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_content=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_campaign=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_term=PANTHEON_STRIPPED

Liberal International Order in crisis

Two critical elements of the system led LIO into crisis and turned small states into collateral damage. First, is rule-based system is replaced with “ruled by law.” Second economic hyper-globalization is benefiting just major powers because they keep an imperialistic mindset. In such a milieu, major power dominate the system by using small states either as clients or collateral damage to gain a strategic advantage in geopolitical competition. Small states always need to comply with already set rules in the system.

In most cases, their sovereignty in decision-making is limited, or there is none. Global economic policies are predatorial if small states lack strong institutions. If they fully open the door, they will be overrun, and if they keep it closed, they will economically be degraded.

First, the major strength of LIO is (was) the open and rule-based international order turns to be a weakness. According to Ikenberry, there are two layers of international orders. The first layer is the Westphalian system of sovereign states that continue today. The second layer, as he wrote: “Over the last two hundred years, Western democratic states have made repeated efforts to build international order around open and rule-based relations among states—that is, they have engaged in liberal order building.”²² These building blocks of two different systems on top of each other and considering the current geopolitical conditions led to the conclusion that LIO is producing more challenges and complexity than peace and democracy. In such complexity, there are two weaknesses. First, the collision starts with enforcing the subjective reality of liberal ideology from the Western powers into the realm of the Westphalian system of sovereign states arrayed in global power equilibrium. The second is enforcing ruled based system through hegemonic order. Ikenberry wrote: “The shifts in the Westphalian underpinnings of the liberal order—the rise of unipolarity, the erosion of sovereignty, and the transformation of security interdependence.”²³ The collision of these two distinctive ideologic systems neglect the national element into the international order, and since the foundation of the system is built on nation-states, any modification attempt will produce nationalism. The Westphalian system is based on cooperation and collaboration among the nation-states on every level. The United Nations successfully prevented further global wars among nation-states.

22 Ibid

23 Ibid

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

On the contrary, liberal ideology promotes individual rights over the state's values. Today, mixing these two ideological concepts and disregarding the national elements and cooperation produce revolt against mainstream politics and liberal values.²⁴ The second weakness, the open and ruled-based, added more complexity and dominated the global arena because “the United States engaged in the most ambitious and far-reaching liberal order building the world had yet seen. The result was a particular type of liberal international order—a liberal hegemonic order.”²⁵ Since the contemporary liberal hegemonic order built the current LIO, only we can assume that if the LIO was built on the mutually accepted rule, it could function as it was created.

Second, the economic hyper globalization eroded economic and political sovereignty. In 1984, Keohane wrote: “It would take an ideological leap of faith to believe that free markets lead necessarily to optimal results.” Further, the Bertton Wood institutions, as the hallmark of LIO, repeatedly tried to establish ruled based system free from the US, Britain, China, and the Soviet Union's influence.²⁶ All these can be considered as disregarded indicators of the weakness of the implementation of economic globalization. Additionally, multilateralism as a bridge towards a rule-based system failed because these institutions never became genuinely autonomous from the US and other major powers which set the rules, enforce the rules, and give legitimacy to other states. To a certain extent, multilateralism gave smaller states a voice and some economic freedom and protection²⁷; yet these opportunities are available to small states only if they are not in collision with major power interests. Nye argued that stated agenda-framing had been used “to keep less powerful countries off the table or, if they are invited, the rules of the game have already been set by those who arrived first.”²⁸ Accumulating power led to the political polarization of states, social division, and unequal sharing of wealth.

Consequently, it made politicians stuck in their intersubjective reality of closed like-minded groups and much less representative of the people

24 Rodger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin. “National Populism: Revolt against the liberal democracy”. 2018. Penguin Random House.

25 John Ikenberry. “Liberal Leviathan: the origins, crisis, and transformation of the American world order.” 2011. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, US

26 Dani Rodrik. “The Globalization Paradox” 2011. WW Northon and Company, NY. p:170-185

27 Ibid

28 Joseph Ney. “Future of Power” 2011. Public Affairs, New York, p.12

who elect them.²⁹ Globalization, as well as deep regional integration (such as the EU), can on certain occasions be more devastating for small states, such as causing brain drain or foreign companies approaching in an extractive manner to exploit the natural resources, although this is more so the case in Africa and less in the Balkans. Hence, it concludes that major powers keep an imperialistic mindset rather than enforcing the liberal economic principles as they were written and meant to be implemented. It seems that Rodrik's term "hyper globalization" is the new form of the Industrial Revolution from the 19th century. The major powers accumulated their economic power because they had states institutions that could adapt to the new economic challenges, absorb the benefits of the global market, and establish international institutions and regulations to secure future economic gains. In the contemporary globalization milieu, small states are clients of international institutions.

With the predatory nature of global market rules, the small states cannot establish strong state institutions that can compete with the hyper globalized market while the domestic producers and markets are still in their infancy and not ready to face competition.³⁰ Hence, the Balkans' small countries would also be as challenging as entering the regional initiatives such as the EU. On the other hand, small states cannot afford to be "left-out" from such regional and global integrations either, as it would deprive them of numerous other privileges to access larger markets as well.

The current international system based on liberal ideology neglects the national element while promoting individual rights, international institutions, and multinational corporations. The objective reality is that we live in a system of sovereign nation-states. Hence, the national element cannot be excluded or replaced. Careful integration will foster missing multilateralism elements that will lead to cooperation and minimize the current mismanagement of LIO. This disconnection is evident in the EU's relationship with smaller Southern European states.

29 Rodger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin. "National Populism: Revolt against the liberal democracy". 2018. Penguin Random House

30 Dani Rodrik. "The Globalization Paradox" 2011. WW Northon and Company, NY. p:170-185

Is Liberal International Order extractive small states: The case of Republic of Macedonia - MKD

The analytical framework for this research will use qualitative historical analysis to identify critical events in the past that contributed to making MKD a weak or failing state. We will use Bailyn's (1982) suggestion of manifest and latent events for this preliminary research. The Manifest events denote the actual occurrence of events in the past restraining from interpretation. The latent events refer to events implied from manifest events. According to him, implementation of manifests and latent events as origins, causes, and interpretation are causes of most historiographical disputes since manifests events assume the role of "the facts" can be subject to different interpretations and understanding of concurrent latent events.³¹ To mitigate this weakness further will use comparative historical analysis to identify causes of effects of manifests events rather than interpretation. The small states, as an actor in the LIO, actions are interconnected and mutually dependent. It is critical to understand what effects affect LIO's actions to MKD in positioning itself in the international system.

Further, we assume that interaction between LIO and MKD has the average amplitude of life within time-space and intensity of interaction. In this article, we will follow the pattern of defining events and describing the implication. In part of "the event," we will try to identify the past critical events that spike up the intensity of everyday life. In the part of "the implication," we will try to describe the cause of effects, thus creating a severe impact on MKD's foreign and domestic policies and decision-making process.

Has the Republic of Macedonia become a failing state?

If using the objective parameters of defining the size of the states, the Republic of Macedonia is fitting in the category of small states. According to the traditional definition in international relations, power relations define the behavior of the states. The main principle with the current LIO is based on the relative strength of the states to project its power. Baring this in mind, Handle defines small states as weak states since they cannot project power or strength; hence, they are persistently

31 Bernard Bailyn. "The Challenge of Modern Historiography." 1982. *The American Historical Review*, 87(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1863306>

preoccupied with their survival.³² According to him, the Republic of Macedonia is already a weak country because it has small and landlocked territory, and since its independence in 1991, it has been preoccupied with the survival of its state's status and proving its identity. The following analysis will examine critical events that may lead to a failing state in the contemporary context of the crisis of the LIO.

The Republic of Macedonia gained its independence during the '90-ties, the most turbulent era in geopolitics. It is considered a period in which Western states outperformed the Soviet Union and the US-led the unipolarity. Since all the ideological and powerful rivals were removed, the US built the American hegemonic liberal Order.³³ There were few critical events that the international system was preoccupied. The significant events are the reunification of Germany in 1990, The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the Balkans' bloody dissolution of Yugoslavia. Western allies were at the zenith of their power. The liberal democracy won the communism. Hence, they were preoccupied with dominating the geopolitical arena. Domination has led to blindly following the liberal principles minimizing the responsibilities of democratic values because liberalism was perceived as political and economic freedom rather than respecting the responsibility of democratic values. Democracy is not absolute freedom; democracy is responsibility.

In such a milieu, the management of these events was only through the perception of maintaining the domination of the global arena. In addition, all emerging small/weak states were able to gain their independence based on the right of self-identification. Nevertheless, protecting its national interests was allowed if there were not interfering with major powers' interests. The case of the Republic of Macedonia is a perfect example of the predatorial nature of the international system.

The Event: Denied Independence in 1991

The way the Republic of Macedonia gained its UN membership shaped the inability to create strong state institutions and foreign policy. Further degraded participating and benefiting from international institutions. Also, it was and still represents a source of internal political instability.

32 Michael Handle. "Weak States in International System", 1990. Routledge, NY

33 John Ikenberry. "Liberal Leviathan: the origins, crisis, and transformation of the American world order" 2011. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, US

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

After the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, the Republic of Macedonia proclaimed its independence in 1991. Immediately Greece blocked its registration in the UN under its Constitutional name. Greece claims that the Republic of Macedonia represents a direct threat to Greek territorial integrity and cultural heritage. The Republic of Macedonia is a small country from the Balkans seeking its place in the international order. The facts are that the Republic of Macedonia was a former communist country, weak and newly emerging small states from precarious Balkan, without any direct communication with any major powers lacking relative strength to face unprincipled pressure from Greece. Greece has used its already internationally established position, the member of the UN in 1945, NATO in 1952, and EU in 1981 to fulfill century-long policy towards Macedonia. Under unprecedented pressure from Greece and the European Community and the UN Security Council 817 from 7 April the 1993, Republic of Macedonia became a UN member under the temporary name: "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." This example has proven Ney's theory of agenda framing in power projection. He wrote: "the agenda-framing has been used to keep less powerful countries off the table or, if they are invited, the rules of the game have already been set by those who arrived first."³⁴ Greece used the advantage of being a UN member since 1945 and already established closed relationships with the US and UK during the Cold War due to its geostrategic position in the Balkans. Additionally, the international community's preoccupation with solving the Balkan war and solving a new issue will drain energy from geopolitical dominance.

The Implications

It was born the so-called "name issue," representing precedent case in international relations. Macedonian state could not develop consistent, stable, and firm domestic and foreign policy; hence became a weak state in terms of international relations and domestic politics."³⁵

Besides the national consensus that Macedonia will develop as NATO and EU member, it was hard to develop any sustainable domestic politics

34 Ney, Joseph. "The Future of Power", 2011. Public Affairs, New York,

35 Vankovska Biljana. "David vs. Goliath: The Macedonian position in the so-called "Name Dispute" with Greece" 2010. Challenges of Europeanization. No:58. Issue:3. p:438-467 Accessed 05 Dec 2020
https://www.academia.edu/41284683/David_vs_Goliath_The_Macedonian_position_s_in_the_so_called_Name_Dispute_with_Greece

because the “name issue” imposed identity politics instead of building a democratic society. The transition from former communists to democratic society becomes a never-ending process due to the lack of incentives from the international community and internal failure to build civil society. Using Daren Acemoglu and James Robinson’s research, they have created extractive institutions to maintain political conditions to grip power, which lasts to the present day. In 2021 the US State Department Investment Climate Report will confirm consistent corruption.³⁶ The biggest hindrance in building state institutions process was the lack of strong civil society. Gjorge Ivanov, in 2001 has argued that Macedonia lacks social structure independent of the state’s structure, which are prerequisites for creating stable and democratic state institutions.³⁷ Consequently, political parties played the primary role in creating states institutions by appointing their political subjects as institutional directors. Hence, they never built a political culture based on democratic values of inclusiveness. Both international integration deadlock and extractive political culture imposed a new inter-subjective reality: political parties are the state’s center of gravity. These conditions doomed to failure of economic development and planted conditions for continuous political instability. Rodrik wrote: “Specialize in commodities and raw materials, and you will get stuck in the periphery of the world economy.” “You will remain hostage to fluctuations in world prices and suffer under the rule of a small group of domestic elites.”³⁸ Today, Macedonia is facing an incessant fall of public debt. The country’s public debt was close to 64.4% of GDP at the end of June 2020.³⁹

The years after will prove that the “name issue” will encourage 19th and early 20th-century Balkan irredentist ideologies to come to light. Following Greece’s example, in 2021, Bulgaria started to block EU integration claiming that the Macedonian language and nation have Bulgarian roots.

36 US Department of State, (2021) 2021 Investment Climate Statements: North Macedonia, Available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-investment-climate-statements/north-macedonia/>

37 Gjorge Ivanov, “Consolidation of Democracy and the Civil Society” 1999. Civil Society in the Countries on Transition, edited Nadia Skenderovic Cuk and Milan Podunavac, Open University and Agency of Local Democracy, Subotica

38 Dani Rodrik. “The Globalization Paradox” 2011. WW Northon and Company, NY.

39 Dragana Petrushevska. “North Macedonia government debt at 52% at end-July”, SeeNews, 31 August 2021, Available at: <https://seenews.com/news/n-macedonias-govt-debt-at-52-of-gdp-at-end-july-752578>

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

In the following years, the “name issue” contributed to changing how the international community perceived the country during the precarious conflict management spilled over from Kosovo in 2001.

The Event: (Un)famous Ohrid Framework Agreement

The NATO and EU played a critical role in agenda-framing in projecting security policy in the Balkan region in 2001 while managing the insurgency in the Republic of Macedonia - MKD. The insurgency in the Republic of Macedonia was a spillover effect from War in Kosovo. Driven by the success of the Kosovo campaign, former KLA (insurgents from Kosovo) members instigate insurgent movements in the region where Albanians are the majority. For the moment, the idea of “Great Albania” was back to life again. The insurgents claim they fight for Albanian’s inherent human rights in Macedonia to become a nation claiming, not a minority because they were more than 40% of the populace. After the independence in 1991, Macedonia, like any other European country, recognized minorities’ rights in the Constitution. Even today, Greece and Bulgaria still do not recognize minority rights. The EU and NATO did condemn insurgent violence and yet constrain Macedonian security forces in using force to deal with the violence, protect civilians, and secure critical infrastructure. Dualism came from protecting their “baby” former KLA members that helped the US and NATO during the war in Kosovo.

On the other hand, they must support MKD in their legal actions as a sovereign state. In such a milieu, neither side could win. To prevent further escalations of the conflict and improve its image from Bosnia that the international community can manage regional conflicts, they press both sides to sit at the table and reach an agreement.

The conflict ends with The Ohrid Framework Agreement signed by the leaders of the four major political parties, two major Macedonian and two major Albanian political. The process itself raised many questions: Why did political parties sign an agreement when none of them had ever claimed to have a conflict with each other or took any responsibility for the violence.⁴⁰ Vankovska’s research raised five significant

40 Vankovska, Biljana. “The Role of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Peace Process in Macedonia” Longo editore, Ravenna, in Stefano Bianchini et al (eds.), *Regional Cooperation, Peace Enforcement, and the Role of the Treaties in the Balkans*, Jan 1, 2007 Accessed 05 Sep 2020 https://www.academia.edu/1267906/The_role_of_the_Ohrid_framework_agreement_and_the_peace_process_in_Macedonia

shortcomings. First, it was far from being inclusive. Not all affected parties were given representation and a voice. Second, it was highly secretive and suspiciously non-transparent (even on the day of its signing, the time and place were kept secret from the public until the last second). Third, it was not a negotiation process launched by the parties to the conflict but imposed mainly by the so-called ‘third parties’ (EU and US). Fourth, the “facilitators” were not perceived as neutral and non-biased due to their long and substantial involvement in the region’s significant developments (particularly in Kosovo). Finally - the domestic leaders suffered a catastrophic lack of legitimacy among their constituencies. Nevertheless, the Ohrid Framework Agreement cessation of direct violence yet degraded the democratic process and further divided the society.

The Implications

The Ohrid Framework Agreement implied changes in the Constitution from nation-states, which was highly praised by the international community after 1991. The changes implied liberal democratic principles to promote individual human rights and civil society. After 20 years, the thesis of many experts and professors are confirmed that the Agreement served to stop further violence, not to build the inclusive democratic civil. Sadly, the international community just praised ending the armed struggle. Two significant flaws steered Macedonia from building a democratic society.

First, the Agreement excuse culture of violence as political mean and further strengthen ethnic division. “The Agreement contains specific provisions for the protection of Albanian minority community rights. These provisions, such as quotas for participation and integration of ethnic Albanians into all state institutions such as the army and police forces and various state agencies, would seem to work against division and separation of the ethnic communities.”⁴¹ Hence, replacing the professionals with a quota system created resentment and further shifted political culture away from democracy. Every state institution must have a minimum of 25% Albanian ethnic minority. The Albanian political

41 Biljana Vankovska. “The Role of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Peace Process in Macedonia” Longo editore, Ravenna, in Stefano Bianchini et al (eds.), Regional Cooperation, Peace Enforcement, and the Role of the Treaties in the Balkans, Jan 1, 2007 Available at: https://www.academia.edu/1267906/The_role_of_the_Ohrid_framework_agreement_and_the_peace_process_in_Macedonia

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

party Democratic Union for Integration, led by insurgency leader Ali Ahmeti, started to employ many insurgents and political trustees quickly. The Macedonian political parties did not interrupt any Albanian activity since the fear of the revival of violence never disappeared. Violence was the primary means to maintain power-sharing within the state.

Second, the Agreement buried the last chance to build a democratic society and cemented an ethnically divided society. The international community treated the country in a broader conflict that ruined the government and society. Hence, they imposed full measure of post-conflict state-building, ensuring that the Agreement would work. They sent special advisory teams and NOGs to work with governmental institutions on post-conflict state-building, which were embedded as special advisors to the existing Ministers and state institutions. The Project of Ethnic Relations logistically administered the state-building initiatives – PER supported by the US Agency for International Development.⁴²

In many cases, they have assumed an authoritative position over Governmental bodies and institutions rather than facilitating conditions for domestic institutions to produce their solutions. Instead, they were already imposing solutions from other regions named a preferable option. The state institutions became dysfunctional by doing so because their job was to find a way to implement foreign inflicted solutions rather than create their own.

Third, staying in power was transcendent in the new complex political context rather than building a dynamic democratic process and civil society. In 2010 Vankovska wrote: “state-building medicine and power-sharing model introduced after the 2001 conflict championed “democracy without demos.”⁴³ Two basic democratic principles were neglected. First, failed dialog between political parties, both Macedonians and Albanians. Second, instead of implementing the rule of law, political elites mastered “rule by law.” Politicians have started to tailor laws and regulations to fit their agenda and achieve impunity for corruption, control the economy, and avoid checks and balances. Today

42 Biljana Vankovska. “David vs. Goliath: The Macedonian position in the so-called “Name Dispute” with Greece” 2010. Challenges of Europeanization. No:58. Issue:3. p:438-467 Accessed 05 Dec 2020
https://www.academia.edu/41284683/David_vs_Goliath_The_Macedonian_position_s_in_the_so_called_Name_Dispute_with_Greece

43 ibid

this trend has become endemic in the Republic of Macedonia.⁴⁴ The main goal was to postpone democratization because with implementing democratic principles, current political elites will no longer be relevant political actors.

On the road of managing and fulfilling the domestic and foreign policies, there were more vicious obstacles that added more complexity to the political context in the country. The failing process of NATO membership in 2008 has proven a critical event that will lead to losing sovereignty in the national decision-making process.

The Event: 2008 NATO integration failed

In 2008 at the NATO enlargement Summit in the Bucharest Republic of Macedonia was not allowed to become a NATO member. It was the largest NATO Summit ever, including the Russian President's presence. This event was considered a critical geopolitical event where the relationships between the US and Russia deteriorated. At the Summit, the US stated that NATO should welcome all European democracies and Ukraine and Georgia to the Membership Action Plan. This action was rejected from the old, primarily from Germany, France, and Italy.

178

Consequently, Russia understood the potential threat and became very proactive in the following years in Ukraine, Belorussia, and Georgia to prevent NATO enlargement. Furthermore, this event has severely damaged the credibility of the NATO enlargement process. Likewise, they publicly embarrassed the US administration when President George W. Bush announced that three countries, Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia, would join NATO the day before the Summit. Only Albania and Croatia were admitted. In such precarious relationships between the EU and US and EU and Russia (major powers), Greece used the window of opportunity to block the Republic of Macedonia NATO membership. In the Bucharest Summit Declaration from 03 April 2008, the Head of States and Government of the member countries of NATO in paragraph 1 stated: "We reiterate our faith in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter."⁴⁵ Obviously, at the NATO Summit, member

44 Slagjana Taseva. "Grand corruption and tailor made laws in the Republic of North Macedonia", Transparency International Macedonia, 2020, Available at: https://transparency.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/grand_corruption_and_tailor_made_laws_in_republic_of_north_macedonia.pdf

45 NATO "Bucharest Summit Declaration", Press Release Apr, 2008, Accessed 05 Aug 2021 https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

countries supported major power interests to support Greece. Noticeably NATO disregards the UN Charter of the right of self-determination.

Additionally, according to Interim Accord No.32193 from 13 September 1995, Greece has obliged not to obstruct the Republic of Macedonia, to join any international organization under its temporary name “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - FYROM,”⁴⁶ confirmed by UN Resolution 817 from 1993;⁴⁷ still NATO did not deliberate. Further, this decision was confirmed by the International Court of Justice - ICJ verdict No:2011/37 from 05 December 2011.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, this great win for a small state meant nothing to NATO, the EU, nor the US. If the LIO was built on ruled-based principles, Greece, the EU, and the US would have respected ICJ’s verdict and grand membership. Noticeably, Ney’s agenda-framing is easier to use when dealing with small states such as the Republic of Macedonia because it will not distract them from the geopolitical competition dealing with emerging Russian influence. Hence, the US and EU preferred to keep the status quo. By doing so, Macedonian political instability and economic degradation continued. The consequence to the Republic of Macedonia did not trouble the EU, the US, or NATO because their interests were not directly compromised.

The major powers were blindly following geopolitical interests disregarding giving incentives to strengthen democratic values. Hence, Macedonia started many retrograde processes.

The Implications

Undoubtedly, this event was the biggest disappointment for both citizens and politicians. The fragile and divided political environment in Macedonia faced the brutality of the realpolitik of the EU and US. The political dogma that wellbeing will flourish after NATO membership fails. Likewise, the recognition of the Constitution becomes a pipedream, yet changing the country’s name becomes a reality. All politicians avoided this brutal reality, and they kept the status quo because it complements NATO AND EU fatigue.

46 Interim Accord (1995) No: 32193, Accessed 05 Aug 2021
https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/MK_950913_Interim%20Accord%20between%20the%20Hellenic%20Republic%20and%20the%20FYROM.pdf

47 UN Security Council (1993), Resolution 817, Accessed 05 Aug 2021:
<http://unscr.com/files/1993/00817.pdf>

48 International Court of Justice (2011), Press release No:2011/37 from 5 December 2011, Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/142/16841.pdf>

Consequently, government incumbent political party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Prosperity and National Unity – VMRO-DPMNE led by Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski with his Albanian coalition partner Ali Ahmeti form Democratic Union for Integrity – DUI turn politics inwards. The idea of internal growth came to the right moment. With solid states institutions and a developed economy, the country could face and manage unprecedented obstacles and dualism in implementing international laws from the EU and NATO. Nevertheless, this was not the case. Two elements marked this period that further deteriorated the status of the Republic of Macedonia.

First, politicians created the perception that Greece is the only obstacle to NATO and EU membership. Thus, in public, the significant blame took Greece, not the international community, NATO, or EU. Hence, nationalism was on the rise, and identity politics secured its roots. The Macedonian politicians keep NATO and EU membership high in their agenda and participation in NATO and EU missions. Mainly this was by inertia since the central dogma of politicians was to prove to NATO and EU that is a worthy partner. So, the Macedonian Army took part in ISAF in Afghanistan from 2002 – 2021. From 2003 until 2014, was part of Enduring Freedom in Iraq. The Macedonian contingent performed direct combat actions. In 2006/2007, at the President briefing, the suggestion to replace direct actions with more staff officers and training instructors was refused. The answer was to keep the same mission until Americans proposed it differently. The years after will prove that this policy is incorrect. The combat mission did not bring NATO and EU membership. It turns that membership is a strictly political decision.

Second, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski understood NATO and EU fatigue and shifted policy to economic development. Besides his economic successes, his policy deviated because the biggest opposition party, the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia – SDSM, could not match the VMRO initiative of reorganizations of the country. The biggest weakness of the SDSM political party was stuck within their inter-subjective reality presented by the former leader of Branko Crvenkovski and his trustee Radmila Shekerinska. The SDSM was not a constructive opposition. Hence, VMRO policy deviated to strengthen corruption, and daily politics became part of civilian life. The ten years of Gruevski – Ahmeti governance lost the last hope of building merit-based independent state institutions.

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

When Gruevski and Ahmeti started to make arrangements with China and Russia, has threatened the US and EU interest's primary in energy and infrastructure. Soon after, their governance was labeled as a regime nationalistic, authoritarian regime. In 2017 the so-called "Gruevski regime" in reality "Gruevski-Ahmeti regime" was overthrown through protests, known as the Colorful Revolution. Replacing incumbent Social Democrat Zoran Zaev was qualified as more cooperative. As for Ali Ahmeti, he remained untouchable and played the role of kingmaker.⁴⁹

The following years will prove that Gruevski did not leave any legacy and all his structure fell like the tower of cards, thus setting the condition for relegating Macedonia into geostrategic obscurity.

The Event: Precarious Prespa Agreement in 2018

The readers scrutinizing the Prespa Agreement tentatively and generally may produce two separate reactions - oppose or support. Those who oppose the Agreement are viewed as against safeguarding national interest of the Republic of Macedonia and its right of self-determination. Those in the other camp, however, the supporters of the Agreement, view the opposers as standing against liberal democracy, being anti-NATO and anti-EU, and promoting populism and authoritarianism. Additionally, the opposers support NATO and EU membership, but not at the cost of changing the country's name. Regardless of the perceptions and points of view, there are facts, conditions, and influences. In changing the country's name, the facts were replaced with assumptions, the conditions were tailored by agenda-framing, and influences were used to change decisions. Since VMRO-DPNE political party was firmly sitting in the government, the SDSM political party instigated a political crisis in early 2014, ultimately culminating in changing the country's official name. Here are several critical facts that led to the name change.

First, in the geopolitical competition, Russia threatened the US and EU energy interests in the Balkans. Mitigating the Russian offensive to strengthen the energy influence in the Balkans through Turk Stream 2⁵⁰

49 Biljana Vankovska. "Macedonia in NATO: What has changed?" Turkish Policy Quarterly, Summer 2020, Available at: <http://turkishpolicy.com/article/1019/macedonia-in-nato-what-has-changed>

50 Gazprom. "South Stream construction to create conditions for developing gasification and gas-fired power generation in Macedonia" News, Sep 2013, Available at: <https://www.gazprom.com/press/news/2013/september/article170592/>

became the US strategic priority. The US needed to prevent the same situation in the Balkans that happened to Central Europe with Nord Stream 1.⁵¹ The first step was for the Republic of Macedonia to become a NATO member. The goal was to ensure states' political decisions aligned with the EU and US interests. According to the NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration from 2018, the membership will be granted automatically after the "name issue" is solved.⁵²

Second, in the regional context, the Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama has hosted a meeting in Tirana with all Albanian political parties from Macedonia, known as "Tiranska Platforma."⁵³ They confirm the mutual support and unity of interests in Macedonia. This event was perceived as interfering in internal affairs and promoting Albanian separatism in Macedonia.

Third, after losing the early elections in 2014, the SDSM did not accept the election results, left the Parliament, and instigated a political crisis. During this crisis, they used illegal wiretapping materials in public to delegitimize VMRO governance and build the perception of an authoritarian regime named "Gruevski regime" or "the regime."

Fourth, in 2015 the US and EU were deeply involved in mediating the end political crisis.^{54, 55} The result was Przino Agreement between major political parties to have early elections in 2016, the opposition SDSM to return to Parliament, and to establish Special Prosecution Office led by Katica Janeva. Later, she was caught in racketeering businesspeople in favor of and related to high government officials.

Fifth, in the process of signing the Prespa Agreement, there are two significant illegalities. First, in Jun 2018, Greece and Macedonia signed the mutual agreement that the country will change the name to the

51 Nikos Tsafos. "Turkish Stream Opportynities", CSIS, Nov 2018, Available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/turkstream-opportunity>

52 NATO "Bucharest Summit Declaration", Press Relace Apr, 2008, Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

53 Katerina Blazevska. "Платформата" ја премина Македонската граница" Deutsche Welle, Apr 2017, Available at: <https://www.dw.com/mk/платформата-ја-премина-македонската-граница/a-38481427>

54 Fokus. "Заев и Груевски на средба со Хан" Fokus.mk, July 2015, Available at: <https://fokus.mk/zaev-i-gruevski-na-sredba-so-han/>

55 Netpress. "Груевски и Заев на средба со Хан и европатениците" Netpress.com.mk, July 2015, Available at: <https://netpress.com.mk/gruevski-i-zaev-na-sredba-so-han-i-evropratenicite/>

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

Republic of North Macedonia for overall use and change the Constitution. The SDSM excluded the opposition, other smaller political parties, and the President of the States from negotiating process with Greece. The illegality came from replacing the signatory party the President of the State with Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikola Dimitrov. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Article 119 paragraph 1 and 2, and Decree for the promulgation of the law on the conclusion, ratification, and execution of international agreements, Article paragraph 1 and 2, only the President of the States is responsible for signing the international agreements.⁵⁶ Second, the Referendum was unsuccessful because the turnouts were less than thirty percent.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the SDSM purposely misinterpreted the results and took unilateral decisions disregarding people's will and against Article 120 from the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

Sixth, the Referendum becomes a battleground for domestic and foreign influence. The foreign influence was firm and systematic through the financial support of \$8 million US congressional funds and UK Foreign Office funding in Macedonia through Stratagem International as the SDSM "Yes Campaign" task force. Both efforts were under the curtain to fight Russian disinformation that was found significant as a \$21000 investment paid by Greek businessmen sympathetic to Russia.⁵⁸ However, the people of Macedonia decided to keep their name.

The overall process of changing the country's name created many precedents in international relations and international law. Likewise, the Republic of Macedonia lost the final stand to correct political culture and build a democratic society.

The Implication

Numerous implications curtail state survivability. Hence, the article will examine two critical implications international and domestic. The other

56 Parliament of Republic of Macedonia. "Constitutions", 1992. Sobranie of Republic of Macedonia, Available at: <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Odluki%20USTAV/UstavSRSM.pdf>

57 State Election Committee "Report of the Referendum in 2018", 2018. SEC, Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/11AGxUaJI5epNrQJm_57UHyRjR56-Aqj/view

58 Purkiss, Jessica. "Russian Warlords and British PR Firms: Macedonian's Information War", The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, Sep 2018, Available at: <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2018-09-28/russian-warriors-and-british-pr-firms-macedonias-information-war>

implications are implied. They will not be examined because they represent separate topics for analysis.

Internationally, the small states are collateral damage to the crisis of the current LIO. There is nothing democratic in changing the country's name by disregarding international law and the fundamental inherent right of self-determination for beginning alliance members. The alliances are temporary and prone to changes. It demonstrates Ikenberry's theory that LIO built on hegemony on top of the Westphalian system of sovereign states will produce more ideological conflicts in which small state cannot protect their inherent sovereignty. The Prespa Agreement also resurrected 19th and early 20th-century Balkan nationalism during the nation-state building period. The stronger Balkan states such as Bulgaria and Greece saw a window of opportunity to fulfill some unfinished goals further. Unfortunately, the current political structure of the LIO allows them much freedom to fulfill their goals. After Greece, today, Bulgaria is following the same steps of blocking the Republic of Macedonia further EU integration by not recognizing Macedonian language and nation. According to Bulgarian President Rumen Radev, Bulgaria should follow Greece's regional policy towards the Republic of Macedonia.⁵⁹

Domestically, starting from the biggest disappointment in 2008, political culture picked subservience to autocratic rules and oligarchies. Gruevski's ten years of governance opened many economic opportunities. "Benefiting from strong fiscal stimulus, credit growth, and foreign investment, FYR Macedonia is experiencing one of the highest economic growth rates in the region."⁶⁰ Nevertheless, his governance resulted in degrading the political culture and civil society. He strengthens the role of political "authority" as a ruler with unchecked power over the citizens. Hence, his governance style impeded the democratic consolidation of the state institution and promoted autocratic rules and oligarchies. In 1999 and 2001, prof. Gjorge Ivanov wrote: "democratic consolidation could not be done because the state was not governed by law according to the structure of the democratic government; instead, the incumbent political party ran it."⁶¹

59 Sonja Ugrinavska., "Rumen Radev with Ultimatum to Skopje", 2021, Sloboden Pecat, Accessed 25 Oct 2021. <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/rumen-radev-so-ultimatum-do-skopje-prvo-prava-za-bugarite-pa-pregovori-so-cu/>

60 IMF "Former Republic of Macedonia – Country report", 2015. IMF Country Report No. 15/242, Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2015/cr15242.pdf>

61 Ivanov, Gjorge. "Consolidation of Democracy and the Civil Society" 1999. Civil Society in the Countries on Transition, edited Nadia Skenderovic Cuk and Milan Podunavac, Open University and Agency of Local Democracy, Subotica

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

The successor incumbent Zoran Zaev is a product of the same political camp. After four years of Zaev's governance, his actions proved that he perfectly understood the previously set political culture by Gruevski and continued in the same manner. His governance replaced the rule of law with "ruled by law." He purposely overwhelmed the nominal system of checks and balances to fit the political agenda. Otherwise, it was impossible to change the country's name, strengthen the grip on power, and deal with opposition. A merit-based system and the abiding rule of law as part of the fundamental liberal democratic principles of governance was replaced with supporting political party decisions. They view anyone who challenges their decision as standing against their interpretation of liberal democracy, anti-NATO, and anti-EU, moreover as supporters of "the regime." The precedent of tailoring the laws to fit the political agenda has become practice. Many analysts and political scientists are raising the issue that the incumbent is abusing the process of using the EU flag for the laws that needed to be passed in a shortened procedure and are considered part of the reform process to NATO and EU membership.⁶² Usually, to avoid democratic debate and bypass the opposition, they put an EU flag to be considered urgent and use a short procedure to pass the law. Likewise, the reckless neighboring policy creates more obstacles for further development and is trapped in a cycle of identity politics. The hasty signing of the Treaty for friendship, good-neighborliness, and cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria has resulted in rising Bulgarian nationalism and further blocking Macedonia in EU membership.

Unfortunately, this became a vicious cycle. Regardless of the incumbent, the focus is on how to hold the grip on power. Only the generational change in a politician who will lead the parties, there is a chance to break the vicious cycle. Today there are young politicians on the political scene. Nevertheless, they are not able to come to power yet.

Conclusion

The Republic of Macedonia started to build independence during the zenith of LIO. These two processes collide because both ideologies have a different base. After centuries, the Republic of Macedonia finally had

⁶² Jasminka Pavlovska. "Playing and abusing European flag in legal procedures", NovaMakedonija.com.mk, Accessed 05 Aug 2021
<https://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/politika/poigruvanje-i-zloupotreba-na-evropsko/>

a chance to build its nation-states according to Westphalian principles, as every other state did in the past few centuries, including major powers. According to Ikenberry, the collision started with building the liberal international order on top of the Westphalian system of balancing powers. Further, the LIO was not built on mutually accepted rules. It was built on American hegemony. In such a milieu of rising and declining powers, the Republic of Macedonia has become a client of Western powers. The current status of the Republic of Macedonia has proven Vankovska's slogan: "The smaller the state, the less independent in reality."⁶³ Considering the latest events and conditions, changing the country's name was not enough, even otherwise promised. Constantly new obstacles are rising from the EU administration or its member states. According to Handle's definition that small states are already weak. Today considering the aforementioned critical events, Macedonia is becoming a failing state. Therefore, bearing this in mind, future research should focus more on the correlation between the international system and small states.

We researched the correlation between small states and the international system using the Republic of Macedonia or the newly re-named Republic of North Macedonia to serve as an example to understand the consequences of continuous neglecting and inappropriate treatment of the small states by the international system. Instead of an object, the Republic of Macedonia became a subject in the international system. The real question is, are we willing to accept the lessons learned?

The article established starting point to further research the roots of the crisis of the liberal international system. Nevertheless, since the common understanding is that LIO is in crisis, what is next? What have we learned so far? Are we willing to accept mistakes, or will we defend them by further imposing an inter-subjective reality that everything so far is correct? How can we continue further? In this context, small states do not have many options and in the case of Republic of Macedonia dual standards of international law and human right were enforcing. Since its independence, the Republic of Macedonia was forced to sign three separate agreements: the Ohrid Framework Agreement, Prespa Agreement, and Treaty for friendship, good-neighborliness, and cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic

63 Bilijana Vankovska. "Lilliputian Foreign Policy of a Small State: The Case of the Republic of Macedonia" 2017. Accessed 10 Sep 2021: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343103574>

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

Macedonia to join NATO and EU. All three processes of signing the agreements were led, monitored, and enforced by the international community. All of them are limiting the right of self-determination as a significant obstacle to NATO and EU membership. It seems that the Republic of Macedonia is always looking forward to international integration; however, each time was dragged down and back to some historical grievances that are not relevant to liberal democratic principles. Likewise, these agreements result from a failure of Macedonian politicians to establish and implement a solid foreign policy that will protect the fundamental right of self-determination as a nation. Likewise, blindly serving external power's interests hoping to get NATO and EU membership, they lost the national sovereignty, ending with changing the country's name and potentially losing the nationality.

Analyzing this complexity has a significant limitation, such as perception. Since we live in the interregnum period where liberal international order is in crisis, perception is critical. The reader scrutinizing the analysis will judge by its perception of which political ideology camp it belongs to. Unfortunately, this trend will continue until new international order is established.

Bibliography

Acemoglu, Daren and Robinson, James. "Why Nations Fails" 2012. Crown Publishing Group, NY, US

Bailyn, Bernard. The Challenge of Modern Historiography. 1982. The American Historical Review, 87(1), 1–24.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1863306>

Blazevska, Katerina. (2017) "Платформата" ја премина Македонската граница" Deutsche Welle, Apr 2017, Available at:
<https://www.dw.com/mk/платформата-ја-премина-македонската-граница/a-38481427>

Christopher S. Browning. "Small, Smart and Salient? Rethinking Identity in the Small States Literature." 2006. Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 19:4, p:669-684, Accessed 10 Dec 2020. DOI: [10.1080/09557570601003536](https://doi.org/10.1080/09557570601003536)

Eatwell, Roger and Goodwin, Matthew. "National Populism: Revolt against the liberal democracy", 1st edn, 2018. Penguin Random House.

Elman, F. Miriam. "The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in Its Own", British Journal of Political Science, 1995. Vol. 25, No. 2 (Apr., 1995), pp. 171-217, Accessed on 10 Dec 2020
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/194084.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Acfda73178f90fb6bfd2051ece2c12cf0>,

Fokus. "Заев и Груевски на средба со Хан" Fokus.mk, July 2015, Available at: <https://fokus.mk/zaev-i-gruevski-na-sredba-so-han/>

Fukuyama, Francis. (2016) "American Political Decay or Renewal: The meaning of the 2016 election", Foreign Affairs, Jul/Aug 2016, Available at: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-06-13/american-political-decay-or-renewal?utm_medium=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_source=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_content=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_campaign=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_term=PANTHEON_STRIPPED, (Accessed on: 05 Jan 2021)

Gazprom. "South Stream construction to create conditions for developing gasification and gas-fired power generation

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

in Macedonia” News, Sep 2013, Available at:
<https://www.gazprom.com/press/news/2013/september/article170592/>

Goetschel, Laurent. “Small States inside and outside of the European Union”. 1998. Springer p:15

Hajdari, Una. “Tongue-tied: Bulgaria’s language gripe blocks North Macedonia’s EU path”, Politico, Dec, 2020, Available at:
<https://www.politico.eu/article/bulgaria-north-macedonia-eu-accession-talks-language-dispute/>

Handle, Michael. “Weak States in International System”, 1990. Routledge, NY

Hey, Jeanne A. K. (ed.) (2003), Small States in World Politics, London: Lynne Rienner.

IMF (2015) “Fromer Republic of Macedonia – Country report”, IMF Country Report No. 15/242, Available at:
<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2015/cr15242.pdf>

International Court of Justice (2011), Press release No:2011/37 from 5 December 2011, Available at:
<https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/142/16841.pdf>

Ivanov, Gjorge. “Consolidation of Democracy and the Civil Society” 1999. Civil Society in the Countries on Transition, edited Nadia Skenderovic Cuk and Milan Podunavac, Open University and Agency of Local Democracy, Subotica

Interim Accord (1995) No: 32193, Available at:
https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/MK_950913_Interim%20Accord%20between%20the%20Hellenic%20Republic%20and%20the%20FYROM.pdf

Ikenberry, John. (2009) “Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order” Perspectives on Politics, Vol. 7, No. 1, Mar. 2009, pp. 71-87 Available at:
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40407217.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A3cac8dc4a27cfc06bd4a9b20a66093cd> (Accessed on 25 Dec 2020)

Ikenberry, John. (2011) ““Liberal Leviathan: the origins, crisis, and transformation of the American world order” Princeton University Press, New Jersey, US

Ikenberry, John (2020) “Liberal Internationalism - Robert Wright & John Ikenberry [The Wright Show], 2 Sep 2020, Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5X_muSLGBKY, (Accessed on: 04 Jan 2021)

Mearsheimer J. John. ‘Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order’. *International Security*. 2019; 43 (4): 7–50.

North Atlantic Council, (2008), “Bucharest Summit Declaration”, Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

NATO (2008) “Bucharest Summit Declaration”, Press Release Apr, 2008, Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

Ney, Joseph. “The Future of Power”, 2011. Public Affairs, New York,

Netpress. “Груевски и Заев на средба со Хан и европатениците” Netpress.com.mk, July 2015, Available at: <https://netpress.com.mk/gruevski-i-zaev-na-sredba-so-han-i-evropratenicite/>

Parliament of Republic of Macedonia. “Constitutions”, 1992. *Sobranie of Republic of Macedonia*, Available at: <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Odluki%20USTAV/UstavSRSM.pdf>

Pravdiko. “Decree for promulgation of the law on conclusion, ratification, and execution of international agreements” 1998. Available at: <https://www.pravdiko.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Zakon-za-skluchuvan-e-ratifikatsija-i-izvrshuvan-e-na-megunarodni-dogovori-22-01-1998.pdf>

Petrushevskaa, Dragana. “North Macedonia government debt at 52% at end-July”, SeeNews, 31 August 2021, Available at: <https://seenews.com/news/n-macedonias-govt-debt-at-52-of-gdp-at-end-july-752578>

Purkiss, Jessica. “Russian Warlords and British PR Firms: Macedonian’s Information War”, *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, Sep 2018, Available at: <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2018->

**The Crisis of Liberal International Order and the Status of the Small States:
The Case of Republic of Macedonia and Republic of North Macedonia**

09-28/russian-warriors-and-british-pr-firms-macedonias-information-war

Press24 “Заев: Зошто да давам оставка? За Мицкоски да дојде и премиер да биде? 2021. Web News, Available at: <https://press24.mk/zaev-zoshto-da-davam-ostavka-za-mickoski-da-dojde-i-premier-da-bide>

Payne, Anthony. “Small states in the global politics of development.” 2004. *The Round Table*, 93:376, p:623-635, Accessed 10 Dec 2020. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0035853042000289209>

Pavlovska Jasminka. “Playing and abusing European flag in legal procedures”, *NovaMakedonija.com.mk*, Accessed 05 Aug 2021 <https://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/makedonija/politika/поигрува-ње-и-злоупотреба-на-европско/>

Kaplan D. Robert, “The Revenge of Geography”, 2012. Random House, Inc., New York.

Katzenstein, Peter “Small States in World Market” 1985. Cornell University Press, New York, US

Rodrik, Dani. “The Globalization Paradox” 2011. WW Northon and Company, NY.

Rosenau James. “Study of the World Politics: Globalization and Governance”. 2006. Routledge, NY

Spykman J. Nickolas. “Geography and Foreign Policy, I “, *The American Political Science Review*, Feb., 1938, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Feb., 1938),

State Election Committee “Report of the Referendum in 2018”, 2018. SEC, Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/11AGxUaJI5epNrQJm_57UHyRjR56-Aqj/view

Seraphinoff, Michail. () “The Ohrid peace agreement, how is it working ten years later? 2011. The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, Available at: https://jsis.washington.edu/ellisoncenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/09/Seraphinoff_REECASNW.pdf

Tsafos, Nikos. "Turkish Stream Opportunities", CSIS, Nov 2018, Available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/turkstream-opportunity>

Taseva, Slagjana "Grand corruption and tailor made laws in the Republic of North Macedonia", Transparency International Macedonia, 2020, Available at: https://transparency.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/grand_corruption_and_tailor_made_laws_in_republic_of_north_macedonia.pdf

Vankovska, Bilijana. "Lilliputian Foreign Policy of a Small State: The Case of the Republic of Macedonia" 2017. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343103574>

Vankovska, Biljana. "The Role of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the Peace Process in Macedonia" Longo editore, Ravenna, in Stefano Bianchini et al (eds.), Regional Cooperation, Peace Enforcement, and the Role of the Treaties in the Balkans, Jan 1, 2007 Available at: https://www.academia.edu/1267906/The_role_of_the_Ohrid_framework_agreement_and_the_peace_process_in_Macedonia

Vankovska, Biljana. "Macedonia in NATO: What has changed?" Turkish Policy Quarterly, Summer 2020, Available at: <http://turkishpolicy.com/article/1019/macedonia-in-nato-what-has-changed>

Vankovska Biljana. "David vs. Goliath: The Macedonian position in the so-called "Name Dispute" with Greece" 2010. Challenges of Europeanization. No:58. Issue:3. p:438-467 Accessed 05 Dec 2020 https://www.academia.edu/41284683/David_vs_Goliath_The_Macedonian_position_s_in_the_so_called_Name_Dispute_with_Greece

Ulrich Beck. "Power in the Global Age: A New Global Political Economy." Malden Mass: Polity Press. 2005

Ugrinovska, Sonja. "Rumen Radev with Ultimatum to Skopje", 2021, Sloboden Pечат, Accessed 25 Oct 2021. <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/rumen-radev-so-ultimatum-do-skopje-prvo-prava-za-bugarite-pa-pregovori-so-eu/>

UN Security Council (1993), Resolution 817, Available at: <http://unscr.com/files/1993/00817.pdf>

US Department of State, (2021) 2021 Investment Climate Statements: North Macedonia, Available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-investment-climate-statements/north-macedonia/>