

## **ANTHROPOLOGY OF IDENTITIES: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A GREAT (THE GREATEST) MACEDONIAN (based upon the Ilinden March)**

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**Abstract:** *Issues related to the ethnic, national and cultural identity during the last two decades became heightened on the territory of the former Yugoslav republics, which are today independent states. The examination of identity constructs is a part of ethnology and anthropology, especially due to the different levels of research that it allows, as well as due to its presence as a topic in academic discourse, in the political sphere and in every-day life.*

*The aim of this text is to define the common elements of the structure of national, ethnic and cultural identity, something that has connected the members of the community of the village Gorno Lisiche, and the way in which these relations function. In this sense, an attempt will be made to provide the basic frames for defining the components that form the ethnic, national and cultural identity of a local community, through a reconstruction of proceedings related to the cultural event “Ilinden March”.*

**Key words:** ideology, patriotism, nationalism, anthropology, identity, tradition, Ilinden march

“Even if one desires so, the ethnologist cannot avoid the world of politics, nor can ‘pretend’ as if political life does not influence phenomena such as ‘culture’, ‘customs’ or ‘people’. The relations of power, political and other fights for might, whether we like it or not, will in large part color our attitudes towards the past and the tradition”

Dunja Rihtman-Augustin

The village of Gorno Lisiche<sup>1</sup> was selected based upon a long-time visible presence of the constructive elements of national identity of this local community, that have reflected elsewhere in parts of the Republic of Macedonia. The “Ilinden March” was only one of the activities, as a part of the “idea of united Macedonia”, that has influenced personal and collective identity of the population. The research focuses upon the elements of reflection of the idea of united Macedonia and its influence upon the members of the concrete group of

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<sup>1</sup> The village of Gorno Lisiche is considered a bastion of VMRO-DPMNE party. However, during the last ten years or more a part of the founders and first members, as well as the majority of supporters, largely disagree with the official politics of the leaders and the members of VMRO-DPMNE.

youngsters and seniors in the examined community and beyond. The offered analyses are in no way the solely ones that are valid and correct, but they represent only one view on the construction of identity, through a phenomenon of a probable nationalism, in its latent, or potentially radical form. Thus, this paper does not aim to present the “sole possible truth” on the events that mark this community as nationalistic, even in its softest form.

In ethnological and anthropological science, as well as in related disciplines, the term identity is often found. Although its examination mostly concerns ethnic identity, from an anthropological aspect other forms of identities can be also researched. Cultural identity is one of these forms, that can be considered as an important segment, that participates into the formation of an ethnic identity, but also as a part of possible other’s (foreign) identities. Identity is being constructed through an identification that is based upon acceptance and utilization of the meaning of cultural symbols in a certain environment, whose function is to serve as personal and collective signs of affiliation (Жикић, 2011:9).

The main elements of the ethnic community are: common name, legend of common ancestors, collective historical memories, one or more elements of shared culture that differ from others (language, religion, customs). Another important element is the connection to a certain territory (motherland), as well as a feeling of solidarity that they share (Smit, 1999:40). Although identity is being often defined as a feeling of being distinct, and it refers to the notion that people have about themselves, one should not underestimate the notion that others hold about us. In this sense, these two concepts (from the “inside” and from the “outside”), sometimes do not match. The idea about oneself was especially valid in our research, since one of the aims of the ideology of the participants in the activities was (is) to protect and to sustain Macedonian identity.

In order to analyze the common elements that they share, this paper uses informal talks on the mutual memories of the interlocutors and interviews conducted during 2016-2017. The interlocutors have participated in continuity in the Ilinden march, either as horseman or organizers of the event. The Interviews and life stories focus mostly upon groups that have been partially marginalized from the official historical sources, and that reveal a lot about the structure of social life during the last seventy years. It is important to see how the life stories are told from today’s perspective. In the course of the interviews one notices the need of “a retrospective view”, i.e. that what happens “now” is impossible to comprehend without

knowing what happened “before”. One could also notice the subjectivity of the interlocutors, influenced by the conditions in which they developed and have built their own individual identity, their experiences, mind-sets, opinions, emotions, and reflections.

### **Ethnography of “Ilinden March 1978”**

The performance of the “Ilinden march 1978” is one of the forms of public, group manifestation of national and cultural identity in the village of Gorno Lisiche, near Skopje. This event today is a recognizable example of a national and state identification, and each year it is held with the support of state institutions. The motif for undertaking the trip by a group of young people was the acceptance of the idea, initiated by local creators, of the so called “United Macedonia”. During the first couple of years individuals have set their own personal, private aims versus the “high” aim of ideology. What followed was an individual initiative for going to Krushevo, by three activists, in order to be present at the opening of the “Makedonium” monument. Their goal, among other things, was to ensure that the opening speech would mention other parts of Macedonia, that lie inside the political borders of neighboring countries. Few years prior to this moment, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1970, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia has issued a decision for building a memorial complex in Krushevo. At first, the name of the complex was “Makedonium”, while later on it was re-named into “Ilinden”. The narratives from the 1970-ties say that the monument in Krushevo presents the People’s Liberation Fight (1941-1944) and the Ilinden uprising (1903). However, this was a reflection of the collective Yugoslav module of remembering, that has emphasized the participation of the constitutive nations in the liberation of the country. Especially present was the so called “partisan myth” of a wide support and movement (Кит Браун, 2010:282).

During the solemn opening of “Makedonium” in 1974, the three young people were late and arrived in Krushevo when the ceremony was already over. Immediately after arriving home, they were summoned in the police station, where they had to explain what was the reason for their trip. In spite of this, every year on St. Ilija’s day these young people and their friends went to the ceremony in Krushevo. Often they were followed by police informants, due to the publicly manifested nationalism, which at that time was considered inappropriate. Few years later, the group that counted a higher number of members (a part of them were known to the Bureau for state security as members of the informal Goce Delchev association), without

previous preparations, without the knowledge and support by elder members, started their trip to Krushevo on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1978. Even then, a part of the members wore folk costumes that resembled the ones worn by the 'komiti'. The behavior and other cultural signs (having a beard, mounting a horse, the overall attitude and body posture) were also significant, and in this case they "naturally appear as ethnic" (Putinja, Stref-Fenar, 1997:189). When the group arrived in Krushevo on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, the police did not allow them to be stationed at one location. The news about some 'komitas' arriving in Krushevo from Lisiche on horses has spread. The police was directly confronted by a Krushevo inhabitant, Vlado Karev. He had a plot of land planted with tobacco near the lake in Krushevo, and has allowed the young people to locate their horses there. Everything happened with the police watching. After solidarity with the horsemen has been expressed, the police withdrew and allowed their two-day stay in Krushevo.<sup>2</sup> After the first Ilinden march in 1978, its repetition was forbidden, until the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990-ties.

With the creation of the independent Republic of Macedonia and the change of the political and social system, conditions were created for the revival of the march. Twenty years after the first organized event, in 1998 the initiative was renewed, by the same members that have organized the first Ilinden march. The new politics of the 1990-ties allowed and financially supported the association. The mythical creation surrounding the ideological stances of the participants and the organizers of the march was supported in order to provide its contribution to strengthening the legitimacy of the government. At that time there was a need to confirm the identity of Macedonian people, especially due to the constant negation of the special character of Macedonian nation by some of the neighboring countries. For the participants and the organizers, on the other hand, the importance of the march lied in the promotion of ideology related to the idea for united Macedonia. The manifestation of this ideology through the march was considered "emphasizing of patriotism". Social sciences interpret patriotism as a complex subjective feeling and value orientation, that is, a segment that includes feeling of love and grace towards the motherland, while the strongly expressed patriotism could inspire a feeling of hostility towards those that attempt to threaten this love, as well as alertness for saving and protection of the country (Purkovic, PDF:2).

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<sup>2</sup> Later on, the family of Karev has donated a plot of land of 1500 square meters in Krushevo to the Association of citizens "Ilinden march". The participants have used their own finances and a sponsorship to build an object, toilets, a kitchen, a horse stable and to bring water and electricity to the place. This is actually the location where the horsemen of the Association stay when they arrive in Krushevo.

The creation of independent and autonomous Republic of Macedonia and the current political situation influenced the renewal of the Ilinden march. Also, the situation in other Yugoslav republics at that moment, which are today independent countries, was not irrelevant when it came to the government deciding on this issue. The majority of the Macedonian Parliament, in the period 1994-1998<sup>3</sup>, consisted of members of the Social-Democrats, that have supported the organization of the march, besides the visible nationalism of the participants. Based upon previous experiences, the organizers tried to find a way to legalize the march, in the frames of institutions. In 1998, 12 horsemen and 4-5 accompanying persons, have officially revived the march. During the first year, it was organized and implemented as activity of the Local community of Gorno Lisiche. A program was planned, that included few elements: publishing the goals of celebrating the Ilinden uprising, the activities of the members of the Association, a concept on the manifestation and responsible persons for its implementation. They have applied at the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, asking to be a part of the manifestation celebrating the 10 days of the Krushevo Republic. After the program of the march has been inspected by the responsible institution, it was approved. Two years later, the Association of citizens “Ilinden March 1978” was founded, under the existing legal provisions of the Republic of Macedonia. The usual iconography that is present even today, was (and still is) interpreted differently. The basic elements are the flag presenting the so called “Vergina sun” consisting of sixteen triangular rays, the participants wearing a komiti costume, the majority of them are wearing a beard, while the leader of the horsemen is wearing a costume containing a bullet belt crossed on the chest, resembling the commanders (‘vojvodi’). However, these were not embraced by everyone. Although the participants of the Ilinden march and the celebration itself were under the protection of the state security institutions, in 1998, the year when it was publicly supported by the government for the first time, the activity had a huge police protection. In 2003, at the 100 years anniversary of Ilinden, the state had fully supported the complete organization of the march, that was held for the sixth time. During this period, especially during 2007-2017, when VMRO-DPMNE was the ruling party, this cultural event enjoyed great support by the state, the public and the diaspora, and was covered by the media.

*“The director of the event came, and we talked how we should organize it, since for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ilinden we wanted to do something big, and we did it. Horsemen from all over*

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sobranie.mk/posleden-sostav-1994-1998.nsp>

*the country participated, a number of Associations, and more importantly that particular year for the first time we presented the Macedonian 'phalanx' and this is our trademark even today, something that is also related to the Vapcarov association, as well with the Ilinden march" (field materials)*

The inclusion of the state and the political authority of that time in the organization of this event is a turning point, since for a long time it was considered nationalistic. Now it became an event that would demonstrate Macedonian cultural identity at an official, state level. The organizers have included the "Macedonian phalanx" as part of the ethnic identity on purpose, since according to them it is a part of a valid and self-aware culture, besides the fact that official science does not support this thesis. State representatives have also reacted to this aspect.

*"Then, for the first time, we experienced reactions from the Ministry of Culture, they were here in the church where the celebration was organized, and they asked why now this phalanx, when we are celebrating 100 years of statehood. They asked us not to present it, while we said that there is no chance that we will give up. Since we are not celebrating a hundred years of Ilinden, we have not been formed a century ago as a state, we find that our roots are much deeper" (field materials)*

This conviction is held partly by the younger generation:

*"We are the first Association that officially promoted the Macedonian phalanx of Alexander the Great and of Philip II at the 100 years anniversary of the Ilinden uprising. Then we had a slight misunderstanding with the Ministry of Culture, we could not agree on the motto '100 years of Macedonian state'. We told them that a state could not organize an uprising on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August if it did not exist before, if there was not territory, no nation. Macedonian nation did not fall from the sky on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1903, in order to organize a revolution on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Thus, our fight and our state are much older than a century. However, everything calmed down, the phalanx became a part of the Ilinden march, it rides in front of the cavalry, as a vanguard. Thus, we prove that the Macedonian people and its army are much older than the Ilinden uprising" (field materials)*

Today financial support for this event is provided through the Open call for financing of projects of national cultural interest for the current year and the Law on local self-governance

of the city of Skopje. The program explication states: “The main and only reason for sustaining the Ilinden march event is to keep the traditions of the epic Ilinden events from 1903 and 1944, as a roadmap for cherishing the glorious aims of the Macedonian people and other free-thinking nations at the Balkans, for implementing and promoting the democratic principles and processes as the highest values of human civilization. The general goal of this event is sustaining the universal message of the Ilinden and ASNOM fights for peace and freedom between people and cohabitation of all people at the Balkans and in Europe, as a field for a mutual cultural competition. The gain of the city of Skopje from this manifestation is appreciation of a tradition that has started in 1978, by a group of people, and that has continued every since, until 1998. This is how we prove that the city of Skopje pays great respect towards the cultural and national heritage, and at the same time participates in the traditional celebration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, Ilinden, as the biggest national holiday in the Republic of Macedonia”.<sup>4</sup> Although the program states that the event is held aiming to preserve the universal message of the Ilinden and ASNOM fighters, the members of the Association exclusively pay attention to the memories related to the Ilinden period, mixed with elements from antique history, excluding elements of the Second World War.

Each year the march begins on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, when the horsemen and the organizers gather in the yard of the Primary school “Goce Delchev” in Gorno Lisiche.

Starting from the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Ilinden march starts and is being announced with the sounds of the zurla and the drums in a tempo that the participants call “Macedonian march”. The phalanx goes in front, in costumes inspired by the ones worn in ancient Macedonia, adorned by the 16-ray sun. These are eight girls, that each carry two yellow, crossed ribbons, that symbolize the Macedonian sun, while the young man are wearing the shields and the spears. Behind them are the drums, the zurla and the pipes, and then the dancers dressed in folk costumes. In fact, as a part of the march there are a number of folk associations from Macedonia and the diaspora. The march is organized in cooperation with the folk dance association “Nikola Vapcarov”, that is more than 30 years old, and in cooperation with the village church of St. Peter and Paul. The march starts from the school yard, through municipality of Aerodrom (Skopje) to the church of St. Peter and Paul. Many citizens gather in the church yard, where the horsemen are blessed by the priest, and sometimes this was

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<sup>4</sup> The Program for celebration of the anniversary of the Ilinden uprising and the organization of the Ilinden March, 2014.

done by the Archbishop of the Macedonian Orthodox Church-Ohrid Archbishopric. Members of the political elite are always present at the event.<sup>5</sup> Their presence as guests creates a myth of shared unity, and signals, in the eyes of the participants and the observers, that they support this event, emphasizing its importance. The organizers of the march are continuously retelling their memories in the media, since they hold a special place in the cultural memory of Gorno Lisiche that is reflected in other parts of the state. The idea of united Macedonia, although partial, still visibly reflects upon young generations of Gorno Lisiche, while for the others, who are not members of this community, the participation in the march is done purely for fun.

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In order to correctly understand and analyze the results and the sources of the conducted ethnographic empirical research in the context of ethnology and anthropology, we will examine the common elements of the structure of national/ethnic and cultural identity that connected the members of the village of Gorno Lisiche. The local personal (self) identity as well as the collective one has been created as a construction of specific inter-relations in continuity, under the influence of the so called “idea of united Macedonia”. If we start from the hypothesis that in theory “elements of identity” consist of permanency of time, the concept of unity and the continuity of the subject (Крамарик, 2010:19), then we realize that these elements are present in our examined case. Identity is mostly an expression of the totality of efforts to identify individuals and a society as a whole. However, the process of this self-recognition and self-acknowledgement does not depend upon clearly defined standards. Identity is explained as a feeling of affiliation, that is developed through the process of differentiation. In a simplified form, we come to a conclusion that there are no nations without a name, language or culture, without a way to make a difference between oneself and others, between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Self-acknowledgement is always a process of creation. Many researchers believe that identity is defined by what we exclude, or what excludes us from another group.

The title of this paper is associated with a potential emergence of nationalism, in certain space, and in the frames of certain community, in a defined period of time. Nationalism often presupposes a political principle, which states that the political and the national unit should

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<sup>5</sup> In 2016, when I was a part of the ceremony of the departure of the cavalry in the church St. Peter and Paul, the current Prime Minister of the Government, Emil Dimitriev, was present. During the last two years, when the ruling party is SDSM, government officials are present, but not the top ones.



overlap. Some of the researchers of nationalism, define the nationalistic segment as a feeling of rage initiated by the breaking of this principle, i.e. a feeling of pleasure initiated by its fulfillment...while the nationalistic movement is one that is initiated by a sentiment of this type (Гелнер, 2001:5). The instigation of nationalism at the Balkans, especially in ex-Yugoslav republics after 1991, has inspired a number of researchers to deal with the visible praxis of implementation of nationalism through its concrete, public manifestation. The reasons for its emergence, and its strengthening, could be different, but they are often initiated by the visibility (solely) of one's own suffering through history. Nationalism is ready to construct, since...nationalism needs such constructions of historic events in order to justify the "proofs" for the existence of historical injustices done to the community in the past (Kordić, 2005:266). Nationalism is often related to religions, traditions, regions and so on. National feeling incorporates differences, but it does not have to face the "other" as an enemy, since the identification with one's own nation is not experienced as nationalism. At the same time, the national feeling enables the individual to perceive more clearly one's own social environment and to commence a process of cultural identification, due to attaining elementary security in a certain cultural and political community. On the other hand, nationalistic feeling provides security of the individual only under the condition that a person subordinates oneself to the authority of the nation. Thus, nationalism as a reductionist ideology creates an imaginary reintegration of individuals, enclosing them in an absolutistic frame of "one's own" nation (Golubović, 1999:32). In the context of these events, one should maybe take into account the opinion according to which nationalism is above all a political principle, stating that the political and national unit should overlap and that nationalism is a theory of political legitimization that requires that the ethnic borders should not match the political ones, the same being valid for the ethnic borders in the frames of one state (Гелнер, 2001:6), which in praxis is almost impossible. Nationalism is usually viewed from two different aspects: a positive one that confirms it, and a negative one that negates it. In the first case, nationalism is identified with patriotism, which means love towards one's own motherland, the country in which one lives, the nation that a person is affiliated to. In the second case nationalism is manifested through idolizing one's own nation, culture and tradition, that at the same time implicates a feeling of intolerance towards members of other nations and communities. It can be noted that nationalism (or patriotism) is not considered only from its political aspect, but that it also contains a cultural dimension. Nationalism in some of its public manifestations could be considered as an ideological movement for

attaining and sustaining autonomy, unity and the identity of the population, that some people find as the only true thing. In this way national symbolic, customs and ceremonies become the most durable and the most powerful types of nationalism, since they initiate feelings of wider social strata, who do not have a deeper knowledge of the afore mentioned. Nationalism in the sense of ideology and movement has to be closely related to national identity, which is a multi-layered term, and it has to be widened so that it covers a certain language, emotions and symbolic (Smit 1999:146). In our analysis we have supported the opinion of Eric Hobsbawm, that no nation could be considered as primary and non-changeable, but that it is socially and politically constructed. Nations are constructs, new phenomena, although there is also another opinion, according to which national identification is something natural, primal and non-changeable. According to this stance, it is clear that national identities are based upon emotions and the irrational. Thus, each nationalism draws its power from this attitude, although this power can sometimes be destructive (Хобсбаум, 1993:36).

One of the basic elements of nationalism is selective politicization of the past. If the past does not correspond to today's nationalistic needs, it can be re-red, reconstructed, revised....if there is no past that suits the needs, it can be or should be invented. In this way the past justifies the present, creating a past that can be utilized to explain the present, that in most cases "does not have anything to celebrate" (Hobsbaum, 2003:204). If we search an answer to the question how societies create the past, in our case this can be interpreted as an examination of a critical ideological approach, implemented through a planned state instrumentalization of the past, but also as a result of a spontaneous activity of a relatively organized group (or groups), that through the construction of the past attempt to protect identity. This does not mean that the primary ideas of the constructors are implemented in continuity. Often the idea during its development could turn into something completely different and lose its primary sense. Collective memory is something that is primarily taken care of by the governing political elite, so that, among other things, it supports already created constructions of long forgotten "historical truths", that help it attain the positions that it already holds.

The terms nationalism and patriotism are often used as synonyms, especially in contemporary political discourse. Although in praxis they often overlap, there is a different between these two terms at least on a analytical level, since they point towards phenomena that are not identical. As a analytical term, nationalism is more complex than patriotism. Nationalism is

differently interpreted in the frames of different research contexts. Even more, representatives of different theories of nationalism are not equally understood when it comes to nation and nationalism. Nikola Purkovic, in his analysis of conceptual differences between the terms “patriotism” and “nationalism” finds that ...”drawing an analogy between these two terms is maybe not so common for the scientific discourse, but it surely is for the political (Purkovic, Analiza:2).” However, for our interlocutors, patriotism is a part of an ideology that strives towards positive goals for the state and the nation, such as, securing the state, language, culture, folklore as identity, which is separate for the Macedonian people. The manifested unity, which lies on the margin between patriotism and nationalism, is a subject of discussion of a number of authors. An important factor of their permanence (applicable in the case of Karev) was the loyalty felt by the members of the group, and the fact that they identified with him/them. According to some researchers, confirmed by our case, nationalism is a special type of patriotism, that spreads and becomes dominant only in certain social conditions, that dominate modern world (Гелнер, 2001:89-103). In this case it is a matter of two different ideologies, the communist ideology manifested through the police as a representative of the state, versus the ideology of the participants from Gorno Lisiche.

The cultural forms through which identity and the ideology of the participants was confirmed are a part of the construction of identity. Clifford Geertz defines the term ‘culture’ offering the elaboration of Clyde Klychohn. “On the 27 pages from the chapter dedicated to the term, Klychohn succeeded in defining culture as follows: 1. A complete way of life of people; 2. Social legacy that the individual obtains from his or her group; 3. The way of thinking, feeling and believing; 4. Abstraction of behavior; 5. The theory that the anthropologist develops on the way people behave in a group; 6. A depot of accumulated teachings; 7. A totality of standardized orientation of repeated problems; 8. Acquired behavior; 9. Mechanism for normative regulation of behavior; 10. A set of techniques for adjusting to the environment and towards other people; 11. A residue of history” (Гирц, 2007:14). He also provides the definition of Ward Goodenough : “The culture of a society...consists of what one has to know or to believe, it can function in a way acceptable for the members of that society” (Гирц, 2007: 20). It is a fact that people are the only creatures that can communicate among each other through symbolic systems (religious, linguistic, iconic, ethnic, cultural), where the symbols as systems of communication are created, developed, changed or go

extinct through the processes of connecting different groups or communities (Petrovic, 1988:7).

In the context of creating identity constructions, cultural memory (both collective and individual) becomes popular (Мирчевска, 2014:155), due to a number of factors: migrations, globalization, general insecurity, instability of the individual. All of this increases the importance of cultural memory in securing identity integrity. Cultural identity is a specific expression, that is incorporated in the wider social system in three ways: 1. As objective description of the content of the life of a given population, defined through a system of meanings that defines the distance from “us”; 2. As a string of elements that the population uses for self-identification, that are developed upon the understanding of unity, language, blood, origin; and 3. As an organizer of the whole life process, including material reproduction (Golubovic, 1999:32). If we seriously think that the past is an utilized and active content, then one has to carefully examine not only the utilization of the past, but also the different explanations of this usage. We should not forget that the interests are always regulating the relation towards *public memory* and *forgetting* as a way of implementing the memorized contents, while ideology presents selective memory as an authentic one. Selective memory, thus, constructs the view of past events, that are important for the individuals while defining themselves as members of the community.

The issue of creating cultural memory in our research case is also of great importance. The way that cultural memory is created, the elements that comprise it, its forms and the way the basic cultural elements of cultural memory of the Lisiche people are bond together, results with the Idea of unification of Macedonia, which at the same time is a belief in this idea as a way of survival of Macedonian people. In this case, besides the ban of the Ilinden march, the local population conserved the memories related to it. For years the motif and the reasons for its organization were retold, as a part of the cultural identity of the Lisiche people, that was not always understood and justified by others. If we deduct the criteria related to cultural identity in a consequent manner, we will face the argument that each culture has a special truth, that the member of a culture could decide what is true and right, while the possibility for a dialog, communication and cooperation becomes suspicious. Then it is usually said that cultures look unpredictable and incomprehensible to each other, but also that we do not have a right to judge something that is outside our culture (Коковић, 2002:128). Since we are talking about an isolated environment in which everyone know each other and share every-

day life, all events had an impact at a personal, but also at a level of the collective identity of the community. The complex role of collective memory was conditioned also by the importance of the role of (self)representation in the community. Through a selection of images from the past, the important events are separated from the less important ones, and criteria are built for the tradition of the following generations. However, they can easily become an emotional basis for comparison of the past and the present, a stirring force that inflames the feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Kuljić, 2006:10), something that eventually can be manipulated. Collective memory of the ones that sustained the continuity of the Idea for unification of Macedonia, tries to incorporate as a memory the period when this territory was a part of other states and empires. The period of antic Macedonia is especially important when it comes to the present construction of memories. A special meaning for the followers of the Idea in every-day life is the sustaining of tradition, as well as the interpersonal relations and the communication in their shared environment. The relation towards the past, modeled by the theoretical side of the cultural of remembering, could be followed through a network of key words (remembrance, memory, culture of remembrance, social and political conditions, historical awareness), that are present in a number of basic approaches (constructivism, criticism of ideology, symbolic and hermeneutics). Surely, the above mentioned approaches cannot be interpreted void of historical context. Often the main terms are not sufficiently covered, or they are unclearly defined, while the differences in the interpretation of the past do not stem only from theoretical doubts, but also from non-theoretical facts (Kuljic, 2006:5). Tradition is a term that is used in many ways, but often in order to mark a sum of beliefs or customs of certain region. Elements of tradition are those that the group uses to keep the existing feeling of group identity. The term also refers to something that covers the process of creation of tradition, and presupposes a feeling of continuity, customs and verbal expressions, that carry on inside the community. Tradition as a specific form of culture transmission, and its elements in the frames of certain community, are implemented directly, from generation to generation. Individual contents, that are transmitted orally or in another way, are also covered by the term 'tradition'. This term, as well as 'traditional culture', also marks the type of culture: a sum of beliefs, values, symbols, rules of behavior that are transmitted through oral legacy and whose existence is sustained and justified through one's referring to the past (Naumovic, 1996:140-141).

With the changes of current politics, the organization of the Ilinden march obtained a latent role when it comes to emergence of nationalism, supported from the highest level. Thus, the stimulated memory was not only a passive reflection of the mutual relation of culture and politics, but also a creator of culture, beliefs and values in the public and private life. The utilization of selective past becomes a tool of governing, since it strengthens authority, at the same time creating social life. The sustaining of peace, the justification of the existence of the state, the institutions and the individuals are in close connection to the past. A close connection exists also between the direction of collective memory and the construction of identity on a institutional level. Identity is no longer supported by the so called “recognized remembrance” (Kuljic, 2006:11). This memory, and repetition, are important for establishing continuity, while the Idea was sustained in continuity in Gorno Lisiche since the members of the group identified themselves with the idea of united Macedonia. Since its very emergence, the Idea had an influence upon the local population, due to the structure of the village, and the closely knitted family relations. The continuity of the idea does not imply similarity, or punctuality, since traditions are neither simply duplicated, nor they are implemented always in the same way when repeated. The term “continuity” implies to the meanings that connect this tradition to the group. The process of learning was conducted through sharing of traditions and helps us conceptualize the transmission that happens inside the group, among its members. In this way we can see that tradition is not always moving along a “straight” line, from the past to the present, from one generation to the next. Tradition includes space and time, it is transmitted from one group to another, from a person to another person, from a certain place to another, inside communities. Participation and sharing of tradition in a certain community enables its members to feel as part of it.

## **CONCLUSION**

Today, at the social and political scene, there is a noticeable need for a continuous public confirmation of ethnic and national identity in a number of ways. Certain forms, such as different festivals and manifestations, aim to present Macedonian ethnic identity. After World War II, a large portion of Macedonian ethnic population remained outside the state borders of Socialistic Federative Yugoslavia. This was one of the reasons why the efforts to create a national state in the frames of the ethnic borders of Macedonia did not seize. On the other

hand, the state, in order to sustain the legal order, though its mechanisms tried to keep the statehood in the frames of the established borders. The need for confirming the identity, partly stems from the negation of the identity by the neighbors. This situation initiated the emergence of certain forms of nationalism, which were sometimes latent, sometimes more radical, no matter if the public was aware of them or not. Nationalism was expressed not only in the sense of a desire, that one's own nation would be accepted as more powerful in relation to others, but above all in the sense of protection, sustaining and confirmation of one's own national identity.

This paper uses ethnographic data related to the manifestation Ilinden march which takes place even today. From 1998, they also enjoy government support, compared to the time of Yugoslav socialism, when the organization of the march was banned. The Macedonian Ministry of culture of the Social-democratic union of Macedonia was the first to provide a support of the "Ilinden march 1978", which after 20 years of being banned was organized again in 1998. The analyzed material was obtained through field research conducted over a two-year period. The data was analyzed in the context of ethnic/national/cultural identity in a local, and relatively small community, the village of Gorno Lisiche, near Skopje. Through nationalism/patriotism and cultural memory and tradition, the potential constructions of ethnic identity are presented, as well as the forms of nationalism that are created through politicization of certain events from Macedonian history. With the changes of the government, a major part of the statements contained in the first platform of the VMRO-DPMNE party are abolished, but in the cultural memory of the Lisiche people there is still self-identification related to Macedonian identity in the wider sense of the word, that from time to time intrudes the ethnic identity outside contemporary Macedonian national identity.

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Group leader (2016)



Jane Sandanski (Aerodrom), Skopje



Macedonian falanga, Lisiche, Skopje



Krushevo, (komitas, vojvodi with ammunition ... older photo)