

Abstract: The Albanian Component in the Democratic Transitions in Macedonia and Montenegro

Due to the breakup of Yugoslavia, seven new countries appeared in the region. All these countries were faced with three track transitions, democratic, economic, and the transition to the independence. Macedonia and Montenegro, however, had an additional challenge to resolve; the issue of the ethnic Albanian minority relations with the new states.

Yugoslavia was a mono-party led state without developed mezzo political and social structures. As a result of the collapse of the Party and subsequent collapse of the country, the processes of transitions ensued and many new parties and tendencies emerged. Consequently, all of the former republics and one autonomous region became the independent states. Montenegro and Serbia tried to preserve rump Yugoslavia, but eventually they also separated. Their separation was followed by the Kosovo's, with its ethnic Albanian majority, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008. This independence is still the most contested issue and such reality exemplifies the complexity of the ethnic Albanian factor for the several regional countries. But, Serbia was not the only new country which had large Albanian minority within its borders. This paper compares the impact of that component in the political transitions of Macedonia and Montenegro by the method of the two most similar cases design. We propose three variables to explain the difference in the transitions between the two countries: the border with Kosovo, the ethnic minority distribution, and the speed of stateness transition.

Using the model for minority aspirations, we observe how and why the demands of the ethnic Albanians rose and created political conflict and violence in Macedonia and prevented democratic consolidation, and why the same did not occur in Montenegro.