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Faculty of Arts

Institute of World History

Skopje 2014: Governmental Role in the Spatial Politics of Collective
Memory

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Declaration

Hereby, I declare that I have worked out independently on the thesis, using only listed sources and references.

Prague, July 2013

Signature

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Abstract

Skopje 2014: Governmental Role in the Spatial Politics of Collective Memory

In my research the key interest is to understand how the government uses public spaces in order to supply the continuity of the narratives and how it maintains collective memories. In the matter of the public interpretations of the past, I am especially interested in the effects it has upon the collective memories of the citizens, notably to the generations, who have experienced the city.

Above all, I examine the work of artists and architects who are using styles and symbols that affect the memories by ambivalent imitations and interpretations. Such content is seen within the framework of a multi-ethnic state presented by polarized public with polarized relations between the two major ethnicities of Macedonians and Albanians.

I will try to examine the level of manipulation while demonstrating history in public space, creating false correlations of the past. Such phenomenon has been perceived as a one of having negative influence at present. It is taken as a possible change within the process of identification of future generations.

I organized the research in two parts. In the first one I give a synchronic presentation of delivered criticism and comments on the project "Skopje 2014". In the second part, having a diachronic approach, interpreted past of the development of the city of Skopje is presented.

Abstrakt

Projekt Skopje 2014: role vlády při využití prostorové politiky kolektivní paměti

Klíčovou otázkou diplomové práce je pochopit, jak vláda používá veřejná prostranství za účelem poskytnutí kontinuity vyprávění a jak udržuje kolektivní paměť. Ve věci veřejných výkladů minulosti jsem se soustředila na prosazování vlivu na kolektivní paměť občanů. Zajímalo mne jak se na tyto snahy dívá mladá generace a potom ti starší, kteří zažili město v jeho starší podobě.

Především jsem se zabývala prací umělců a architektů, kteří používají styly a symboly, které mají vliv na vzpomínky, na ambivalentní vliv napodobenin a interpretací. Takový obsah je vidět v rámci multi-etnického státu, kdy je předkládán polarizované veřejnosti, zejména mezi dvěma hlavními etniky - Makedonci a Albánci.

V práci zkoumám úroveň manipulace při prokazování historie ve veřejném prostoru, vytváření falešných korelací minulosti. Takový jev byl vnímán jako ten, jenž má negativní vliv v současné době, a je považován za možnou změnu v procesu identifikace s městem pro budoucí generace.

Zorganizovala jsem výzkum do dvou částí. V první části podávám synchronní prezentaci, kritiku a připomínky k projektu "Skopje 2014". Ve druhé části, aplikuji diachronní přístup, kdy prezentuji a interpretuji historii města Skopje optikou zkušenosti s projektem Skopje 2014. Zkoumám prezentaci národní a evropské identity v projektu Skopje 2014 a jejich vnímání různými představiteli veřejnosti, aplikuji koncept „branding of nation" a „branding the city“.

Résumé

Ce mémoire est une étude historique et social sur le projet en République de la Macédoine, Skopje 2014. L'objectif est d'observer l'usage des espaces publiques dans la construction d'identités collectives ainsi qu'analyser comment le projet a affectées les mémoires collectives.

Dans un Etat de courte histoire comme la République de Macédoine, comment la nation est-elle construite à présent? Dans quelle mesure les symboles oeuvrent à la creation d'une identité collective? Enfin, quelle est la répercussion que ces symboles ont pour les gens ordinaires?.

Le premier chapitre sera consacré à l'introduction du Projet Skopje 2014 en parallèle à l'histoire de la ville dans une approche synchronique. Le Projet est abordé comme la continuité d'une longue tradition de symboles dans l'histoire intégré du territoire de l'Etat Macédonien.

Lors du deuxième chapitre je vais tourner à l'approche diachronique, afin de comprendre la façon dont l'identité des habitants est cultivée. Pour ce faire j'analyserais à travers différents périodes historiques les fragments appliquées sur le développement architectural et urbain. Les théories de Miroslav Grcev et Boris Chipan seront mises en avant pour comprendre la relation entre société et architecture.

Le troisième chapitre de conclusion ouvrira un débat en combinant critique livrée et en comparant les événements de l'histoire. J'argumenterais suivant les propos de Eric Hobsbawn (1983) que la nation macédonienne – caractérisée par son manque de tradition de longue durée - repose dans la construction et revendication d'une grande tradition. Le Projet Skopje 2014 évidence l'invention d'une continuité des traditions et des symboles dans le but de maintenir la mémoire collective.

Le matériel utilisé pour répondre aux questionnements de recherche concerne un important travail d'archives (journaux, articles, magazines et livres) qui présentent un point de vue politique et intellectuel du projet, ainsi que des entretiens ethnographiques pour examiner la répercussion qu'a eu le projet sur l'opinion publique.

Резиме

Ова истражување се фокусира на тековениот проект во Република Македонија, наречен Скопје 2014. Мојата цел на истражување има тенденција да ја разбере употребата на јавните простори и на ефектот предизвикан врз граѓаните на Скопје, како и ефектот врз колективни мемории. Тезата ќе биде организирана во две основни поглавја. Во првата глава следува синхронискиот пристап на случајот Скопје 2014, кој е фокусиран во центарот на главниот град Скопје и е критикуван како мегаломански бидејќи се состои од изградба на нови згради и споменици во екстреман размер. Проектот објавен во 2010 година од страна на актуелната Влада, застапена од премиерот Никола Груевски.

Во втората глава следува дијахронискиот пристап, со цел да се анализира еволуцијата на градот Скопје. Користејќија референцата на професор Мирослав Грчев, дека архитектурата на градот е наративен факт за мотивите и социјални услови во кои градот се развивал како и видот на режим. Исто така, архитектот Борис Чипан додава дека изградбата на градот, може да биде под влијание на емоционалните и социјалните односи во општеството што подоцна градот ги прикажува истите преку својата материјална и нематеријална традиција. Тој тврди дека архитектурата сведочи за проблемите во урбанистички решенија за создавање на единствен град, како резултат на прашањето за регионализам, кога градовите стануваат се повеќе слична едни на други и тие ја губат својата автентичност како материјален извор со минатото. Затоа, овој аргумент ќе ми овозможи да тврдам дека Скопје 2014, кој има за цел промена на сликата градот во европеизирана форма, со што влијае на материјални и нематеријални традиција на градот.

Истовремено, третата глава како заклучок ќе се отвори дискусија со комбинирање на дадените критики и споредување на настани од историјата. Теоретска поддршка ќе придонесе анализа на конструкција на една нација и нејзино брендирање. Како и проблематиката со измислување на традициите е модерен феномен преку визуелизација на спомени. Употребата на нови материјали за креирање на слика на историските објекти, како што е на пример барокен стил употреба, во денешно време е непогрешлив во користењето на историската меморија. Историјата е фонд

на знаење или идеологијата на нација и држава, која пак историјата ја институционализира со цел да одржи континуитет. (Хобсбаут, 1983, стр.13)

Во прилог на ова истражување ќе доставам и резултати од етнографско истражување и податоци од спорведени интервјуа со случајни минувачи, кои ќе придонесат во заклучокот на ова истражување за разбирање на ставот на јавноста кон проектот Скопје 2014. Целта е да се разбере обичните луѓе, особено постарите генерации кои биле сведоци на Скопје поинакво од сега прикажаното во проектот, како и мислењето на помладите генерации, да се види на нивото на политичко влијание врз обичните жители. Во првото поглавје ќе претставам опис на извори. Целта на овој дел е да се обрне внимание за време на собирањето податоци и нивна селекција.

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Introduction

Recently, the research of public space has taken direction towards analysis of political dimensions, instead of being a subject of debate among architects, sociologists, and other urban experts. Especially among politicians it has become a hot issue. They tend to see the usage of public space as a tool for possible manipulation of public opinion, even as a possible source of conflicts and tensions in multi-ethnic society. The influence of politics entails another dimension of this research of public space in the sense of bringing in the notion of nationalism. As Anthony D. Smiths claimed that nationalism is an ideology of the elites or the politicians, therefore the political treatment of public spaces turns into usage of public space as narrative only of the memory of selected group of people or the elites not of the collective memory. I propose thorough elaboration of public space, which will incorporate several dimensions of an analysis and fields of studies as is urbanism, architectural point of view and socio-historical perspective. Involving such perspectives is important because the usage of public space includes interpretation of history and public voices.

Using a case study of the project Skopje 2014 I will propose that it is a spatially oriented project with a particular focus on presenting the history. I will analyze the content of the urban public space and its political interpretation. Project Skopje 2014 is in particular a work of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, planned in the main square of the capital city of Skopje. The project consists of constructing a large number of buildings and monuments, which should transform the city's image into a new one, which would be more, so-called Europeanized. The project includes designs of new cultural and governmental buildings, as well as a renovation of existing buildings and facades in order to replace the old look by the "new" baroque and neoclassical style. The plan includes a construction of around forty new monuments mostly representing historical figures of importance for the Macedonian ethnicity. The authors of the project operate with idea of European and national identities without giving explicitly their definition or explaining how they understand the correlation of the two identities. Particularly this aspect calls for an ethno-historical analysis.

I employ the method of synchronic analysis of the contents and of the impact of the project, which radically transforms the centre of Skopje. It allows me to discuss the contemporary

social action in a political realm and to express both the position of the authors of the project as well as the opinion of those who accepted the project and of those who opposed it and to take into consideration its influence on interethnic relations.

The Republic of Macedonia used to be considered as a state, which successfully dealt with its ethnic diversity. But in 2001, international observers were surprised by the necessity of military interventions among Macedonian and Albanian ethnic groups. According to the last official census, held in 2002, there were registered sixty percent of Macedonians, twenty-five percent of Albanians and fifteen percent of Roma, Turkish, Bosnian, Serbian, Vlach and other minorities in Macedonia. The synchronic approach will bring us closer to the understanding of the effects of the project Skopje 2014 in multi-ethnic setting, especially since the public use of symbols was an issue among ethnicities from the very beginning of the independence of the state in the past two decades. Macedonian-Albanian relations are somehow controversial. Several actions shaped their mutual relations. First, the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991 was criticized as ethnically discriminatory. Then the opening of the private Albanian university in the city of Tetovo in 1994 caused some tensions. In 1997 in a small town called Gostivar the local mayor displayed Albanian flags all over the city - flags which were allowed to be raised only during national holidays and he refused to obey the court orders to take the flags down. The labelling of public spaces occurred in Skopje in 2002 by erecting a millennium cross on top of the seventy-seven meters high hill of Vodno. In consequence, the Albanians built a statue of the Albanian warrior Skenderbeg in 2007 in the centre of Skopje. After these actions, the project Skopje 2014 was announced in 2010. It can be understood as a consequence of re- interpretation of urban space formulated by the right-wing marginalized party VMRO-DPMNE.¹

My engagement with this project started with ethnographical observations of the statue of the Warrior on a Horse, unofficially known as Alexander the Great. At first, I concentrated on the political dispute between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece on the use of the name Macedonia and of the symbols relating to Alexander the Great and Ancient Macedonian Kingdom, which according to Greek interpretation; only the Greeks have the exclusive right to use. Further, my interest shifted to the matter of the fabrication of a nation by interpreting symbols, to arrive finally to the point of a research on all the symbols and historical figures

¹ *Vnatresna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija - Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo*, or Intern Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity.

that are represented in the project Skopje 2014.

Italian historian Nicola Gallerano claimed that the public use of history involves not only the physical public space, but also the television, the radio, the artists and the literature, museums, schools and other formal institutions that try to interpret the past based on narrated or displayed memories and their manipulation.²

In reference to professor and architect Miroslav Grchev, the architecture of the city reflects motives and social conditions of development of a society and the type of regime, which was in power during a respective period. Architect Boris Chipan adds that the construction of a city can be influenced by the emotional and the social relationships which might later become a narrative of tangible and intangible tradition. He claims that the architecture testifies problems in the urban solutions of creating an unique city because of the issue of regionalism. He claims that cities are becoming more and more similar to each other and they lose their authenticity as a tangible link with the past. Therefore, this argument supports my hypothesis that Skopje 2014, as a re-interpretation of urban space in the city centre of Skopje, aims to turn the city image into more Europeanized one and at the same time, it negatively affects the tangible and intangible a local traditions of the city. The notion of Europeanization of the city's image of Skopje regards to the attempt to overshadow the Ottoman oriental look of the city and the presence of the architecture of the 20th century, by adding new objects as Triumphal Arch, several new fountains, a Bridge of Arts or bringing the "new" baroque. Those new constructions in the centre of Skopje simulate the look of the objects in the cities as Paris, Rome or Venice. Since, their architectural style interprets the classical antiquity relating them to the tradition of the Macedonian nation, their symbolic can be viewed as twofold: European and national.

Reading Jasna Kotevska suggests that by replicating classical antiquity and combining it with the style of Middle Ages as a continuity to contemporary architecture and by incorporating it on a local level in the city centre of Skopje, it seems that is supposed to represent there the identity of Macedonian nation and to create an idea of a "super state"³. However, as Eric Hobsbawm, argues the use of new materials in the process of creating an image of historical

² Katerina Urbanek and Milan Mihajlovik, "*Skopje, The World Bastard City. The Architecture of Divided City*", 2011, p. 82.

³ Jasna Kotevska, "*Troubles with history, The project Skopje 2014*", 2011.

objects, as it is for instance in the case of the baroque style replica in present-day Skopje, is represents an unmistakable use of historical memory.

Various comments and criticism of the project Skopje 2014 evoked several important questions. For instance, is the action of the legitimate bodies that organize the construction of Skopje 2014 transparent or not? Is the project a financial waste or a possible financial corruption? Several comments also claimed that Skopje 2014 opposes the narratives of collective memory of citizens of Skopje. Despite all these aspects, the new fabricated narrative rejects the so-called “time of now”⁴ and it overshadows the existing architectural heritage. Therefore, in order to correspond well with all the delivered criticism, it is required to go through all the historical periods of development of the city of Skopje. That is why I have applied a diachronic analysis in my research in order to understand better the newly organized spatial politics of the government of Macedonia. This approach gives opportunity to focus on understanding how the identity of the residents is being cultivated with the help of history. The diachronic analysis can assist on obtaining clear evidence of the fragments applied on architectural details and urban development of the city of Skopje going through different periods of time and regimes. For instance, while being part of Eastern Roman Empire, when Christianity was accepted as state religion, Skopje gained the first urban structure and became known as Scupi. The town was equipped with paved streets and squares, thermal baths, constructing its first water management system was constructed, and several churches as well. The Ottoman conquest imported a totally different organization of urban space, based on Islam: religious community was the essential constitutive element of the city. As a result, during the Ottoman Empire urbanization had a natural or so-called “biologically” developed venue of paths and houses interconnecting the community with its mosque, and as a result most of the churches were destroyed or transformed into mosques. Skopje became a city with typical Ottoman urban structure. In consequence, Skopje gained its Old town, called *Charshija*⁵, in these times and became organized in small municipalities called *maalo* (adapted from the Turkish *mahalle* for residential districts). Almost all of them have kept their original appearance and size into our days. We can find also the examples of neoclassical style from the times of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929). The new regime of Yugoslavia wanted to replace the previous architecture by destroying almost all the monuments and mosques from the Ottoman times. One of the most significant images of

⁴ Goran Janev, “*Narrating the nation, narrating the city*”, Cultural analysis, Volume 10, 2010.

⁵ Original Turkish word is *Carsi*, used for describing the working zone of a city in Ottoman Empire.

nowadays Skopje is the city after the earthquake when architect Kenzo Tange proposed a reconstruction of the centre of Skopje. He applied the standards of architecture used in the 20th century and created a modern city overlooking *Charshija* (Old town) and the river Vardar. In every historical period the rulers organized the urban space, they dictated the principles and selected priorities. I strongly believe that all of the mentioned regimes in Macedonia affected citizens and their relationship to public life.

When the project of re-construction and re-identification of Skopje was announced to public, there were few students and professors, mainly from the architectural faculties, who were among the first ones that decided to take up public action in order to express their disagreement with the ideology of the project Skopje 2014 but they were beaten by the Macedonian police during the public quiet protests on the main square in Skopje.

This action held by the government frightened the public not to interfere with any of the governmental activities. As a matter of fact, the ones who opposed the work of the government were simply labelled as members of the oppositional political party. It can also be assumed that in the future young students, who stood against the project, may not be able to find a job in a highly politicized job market. However, people were not critical enough about the project Skopje 2014. The modification of the city into more Europeanized one by applying irrelevant architectural copies was positively commented and accepted by major percentage of public.

I wished to approach to the project Skopje 2014 by an ethnographical observation and analysis of collected interviews with randomly selected people on the main square in Skopje. Since the case of the project Skopje 2014 covers distinct dimensions and is still in process it is crucial to add a qualitative study of its contents and influence. My aim is to understand how the project has affected ordinary people, especially older generations who have witnessed “different” Skopje than one is presented in the plan. I would also like to take into consideration opinion of younger generations and the level of political influence on ordinary residents, which represents public debate. Also, I was interested to explore how the project promotes the multi-ethnic life in Skopje and how Skopje 2014 affects the communication among the ethnic groups in the city. On the other hand, I pay attention to the political and academic discourse as it was presented in the journals, blogs and other media.

Last, not least, I would like to present a hypothesis that the Macedonian Government is

branding the city and promoting the nation in order to achieve economic development or even to fabricate the image of the city for promoting the Macedonians as a nation with long established tradition. On the other hand, the government is fostering, as they claim, the European identity of Skopje. Thus by branding the city into more Europeanized one it is opening the question what is the contents of European identity, what is the meaning of Europeanization and how it correlates with national contents of the project Skopje 2014. Are the two identities defined, presented as contradictory or complementary? Yet how presented the identities are perceived by the public?

CHAPTER I

Presentation of project Skopje 2014

Skopje 2014 is a project that consists of construction and reconstruction of buildings and monuments in the capital city of Skopje, which should have been accomplished by the year 2014. The scheme was unveiled in 2010, using 3D visualization of the future look of the city, shown on the state television Media's and on the internet. It announced about twenty new buildings and forty new monuments erections, devoted to historical figures. The responsible for project's financing is the government of the Republic of Macedonia, by representing the ideology of the ruling party *Vnatreshna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija-Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo* or as later in text VMRO-DPMNE.⁶

The project envisaged the construction of buildings for cultural institutions in baroque⁷ and neoclassical⁸ styles such as: National Theatre, Museum of Archaeology, Museum of Macedonian Struggle and Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra Hall. As government buildings were presented: Agency for Electronic Communications, Ministry of Finance, Financial Police Building, Criminal Court building, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Old City Hall, New City Hall and Water Management building. Furthermore, the project included the construction of bridges built across the river Vardar, such as the Art Bridge, the pedestrian bridge including twenty-nine sculptures; other is the Eye Bridge, the pedestrian bridge including twenty-eight sculptures. Parts of the project are existing bridges that will be renovated, such as: Freedom Bridge; Gotse Delchev Bridge and Revolution Bridge.

⁶ Translation- Intern Macedonian Revolutionary Organization- Democratical Party for Macedonian National Unity.

⁷ Baroque is a period of artistic style that used exaggerate motion and clear, easily interpreted detail, to produce drama, tension, exuberance and grandeur in sculptures, paintings, architecture, literature, dance and music. The style arose around 1600 in Rome in Italy and it spread into whole Europe. Dramatique style of Baroque architecture and art aims to impress visitors and express triumphal power and control. In exterior architecture, Baroque emphasises bold massing, domes colonnades, light-in-shade, color effects and the bold play of volume and void. The Baroque revival known as Neo-Baroque was an architectural style of the late 19th century. The term is used to describe architecture which displays important aspects of Baroque styles but not of the Baroque period of the 17th and the 18th century. Elements of Baroque architectural tradition were an essential part of school of architecture in the second half of the 19th century in France. The Baroque revival expressed pride in the new power of the unified state.

⁸ Neoclassical architecture is a revival of classical architectural style during the late 18th and early 19th century. It is characterized by grandeur of scale, simplicity of geometric forms, Greek, especially Doric, or Roman details, dramatic use of columns and a preference of white walls. Neoclassicism was highlighted in the United States and in Europe, in almost every major city. In addition, during the Soviet Union (1917-1991) neoclassical architectural style was popular among political elites, which effectively expressed state power.

The 3D visualization⁹ represented the reconstruction of façades by transforming buildings into neoclassical style. Among renovated buildings are the Houses of Parliament with new domes on its top, which are currently under construction. The Governmental building will be renovated with a new façade; about its appearance it will be decided by the Macedonian public through online votes on the government's website. Other façade reconstruction will concern some residential buildings concentrated in the city centre. Various segments of the project are included such as the construction of Skenderbeg Square, creation of fountains in the river Vardar and embed two boats anchored on the riverside; construction of parking garages and hotels.

Regarding to the monuments in the project, there were presented offers to erect around 40 new statues, such as Justinian I, Mother Teresa, Pavilion at Macedonia Square, Arch Macedonia, Tsar Samoil and the statue of Warrior, which represents Philip II and a statue with its official name Warrior on a Horse, though unofficially it represents Alexander the Great. These are already standing and some will be built in the city of Skopje by 2014. They will represent historical figures important for Macedonian history, such as the saints Cyril and Methodius, the statues of their students Naum and Kliment, as well as important heroes from the period of Ottoman Empire and from the period of the both world wars and important figures from the period of the nation and state building. Personalities who were striving for independence of the Republic during the communist regime in Yugoslavia are also on the list.

The following figures represent some built constructions of project Skopje 2014.



Fig. 1 The Archaeological Museum



Fig.2 A Pavilion

⁹ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zA_CeLEd_5k, youtube presentation on 3D visualization on project Skopje 2014.



Fig. 3 Parliament of Republic of Macedonia



Fig.4 Ministry of Finances



Fig.5 Statue of Gligor Prlichev



Fig.6 Statue of Kliment and Naum



Fig.7 Triumphal Arch



Fig.8 Statue of Samoil



Fig.9 Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Fig.10 Statues of Gotse Delchev and Dame Gruev



Fig.11 Statue of the heroes fallen in the World Wars



Fig. 12 Statue of the heroes fallen during communism



Fig.13 Statue of Justinian



Fig.14 Ministry of Finances



Fig.15 Museum for struggle for nationhood and statehood

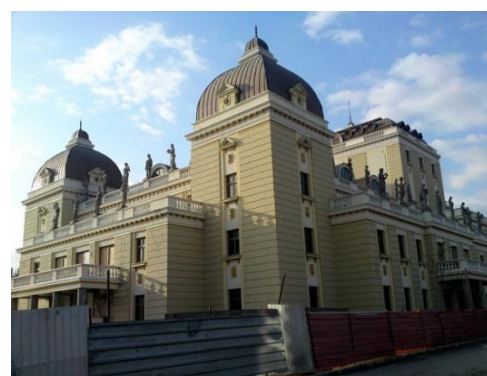


Fig.16 National Theatre



Fig. 17 Museum of the Holocaust



Fig. 18 Gotse Delchev Bridge

This massive urban renovation plan for the city faces polarized reception. There are many supporters who admire the plan and praise it as a positive effort of the government to redevelop Skopje into so-called "Europeanized" capital which would attract more visitors and develop tourism industry. On the other hand, the opponents of the project have offered numerous arguments against it. For instance, the project is criticized as being too expensive, estimating around eighty to five hundred million Euros; it is claimed that the attempt of so-called "antiquisation"¹⁰ of the city is creating tensions between the present ethnicities in the Republic, such as the Albanians, Turks, Serbs, Vlachs, Roma and others. For example, there is no equal representation of monuments that will narrate the presence of the ethnic Albanians in the state, with the exception of the statue of Skenderbeg and Mother Teresa. Furthermore, the project irritates the bilateral relations with the neighbouring country Greece; since it has already disputed the name of the state, as demonstrated by Greek politicians declaring that Greece has the exclusive right for the usage of symbols referring to the Ancient Macedonian Kingdom, especially Alexander the Great and the name Macedonia.

Student's, architect's and intellectual's main argument against the project is that it will distort the image of the city and the memories of its residents by overshadowing the Ottoman heritage that has survived from the period of the Ottoman regime, which is considered to be part of the typical architectural style of the city. Second characteristic image of Skopje was created as a result of the reconstruction after sixty percent of the city of Skopje had been destroyed during the devastating earthquake in 1963. Therefore, the author of the reconstruction project, Japanese architect Kenzo Tange, was responsible for the new plan of the city, followed the pattern of the 20th century's organization of space and architecture, creating an open city for further urban development which branded Skopje as a modern city on the Balkans. Criticism marked the project Skopje 2014 as kitsch destroying the city's image which loses its uniqueness.¹¹

In this chapter, I shall provide a presentation of criticism coming from different groups and particularly I am interested who are this groups that have addressed the criticism against the project and to which social groups they belong. This synchronic analysis of the project Skopje 2014 will explore the various effects caused upon collective memories of its residents and their identification with the city. By studying the case, my aim is to draw the attention to the usage of public places and the way it is branding the city.

¹⁰ Jasna Koteska, "Troubles with history, Skopje 2014", Art margines, Skopje, 2011.

¹¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/31/skopje-macedonias-kitsch_n_2048622.html.

The project since its first announcement is a daily subject on the social networks and media. Politicians, architects, urban experts and economists comment the project's legitimacy, relevance and significance. The person standing behind the project's ideology is the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, so-called the Great Leader, who used the occasion during the official opening of the Arch Macedonia (*Porta Makedonija*) on 6 January 2011, to address to the audience his first public speech on the project Skopje 2014.¹²

"I have supported and continued to support the project, as I always do when believing in something- ideas, visions, for the welfare of the citizens. This gathering is a triumph for a nation, state and the independence", he said.¹³

He pointed his gratitude to the opponents of the project, namely the opposition political parties, NGO's, some professors, students, columnists and prominent figures and media. He also thanked the project's supporters, such as Macedonian citizens, associate artists and all participants in Skopje 2014.

"It is important to remember that this project has not only enabled the survival of large part of construction companies, but also of over 10 000 workers in a period of the most serious global crisis. [...] After our departure, the works of art will remain to glow with all of their splendour, enabling the future generations, unburdened by the manipulation of political parties, to present their opinion",¹⁴ said the Prime Minister.

Following Prime Minister's speech on the formal promotion of the Arch, the Minister of Culture Ms. Elizabeta Kancheska-Milevska added that the object (the Arch) symbolizes the great victory of Macedonian civilization by establishing an independent, sovereign state.¹⁵

"Our motto that we understand the world, solely as a field for cultural competition among nations [...] I wish for the Arch Macedonia to become a monumental book of Macedonia's accomplishments, the place where as great poet said: The art will be a mediator of everything that may not be expressed with words", she said.¹⁶

In understanding their speeches, the Minister of Culture gives an articulation of Macedonia's contribution to European civilization, and to peaceful competition in global scale. She also bridges national and European identification.

¹² <http://macedoniaonline.eu/content/view/20045/45/> – official opening of the Triumphal Arch, Prime Minister's speech.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

But also, there is high consistence of political background to oppose competitive political parties, by labelling awareness to future generations, not to be blinded by conspiracies of opponents and to respect the significance of the arts. Also, ironic thanks addressed to the opponents do not sustain from delivered criticism on project, apart from defending that only ten thousand workers were hired in Skopje 2014 and more and more new construction companies have developed. This kind of speech can be understood as judgment for the one who criticizes and thinks differently than the Government. In addition, such a speech can lead generations to become less critical and narrow-minded.

Pursuing Minister's of Culture speech seems to emphasize the glorious sentiment of belonging to Macedonian nation. She highlighted the meaning of presented art by using a metaphor for explaining that there is nothing to be argued about the Arch which is one of the most controversial and criticized monument of Skopje 2014.

According to Suzana Milevska, an art historian, the art and architecture are metaphoric echo of the identity and active creators of new identities. Therefore, art does not have any power to solve ethical problems in unstable or multicultural societies, because political identifications and ideologies are more complex than the question of style and they can usually overcome the domain of the art.¹⁷

The associated art and its artists, previously unknown to the public and without any extraordinary portfolio, were criticized for their work on monuments, as without being representatively chosen through fair and public competitions. In her article "Troubles with history" Jasna Kotovska cites the art historian Nebojsa Vilić, called "Rape Skopje", who merits the sculptures as aesthetic and most of them as unpolished, adding that: "From the point of view of the sociology of art, we indeed got what we deserved, art that is mirroring the society as it is".¹⁸ Yet another art historian, Petruša Kostovska in her article argues work of architects by saying: "Instead of glorification of the heroes, there is fake praising of the taste of the one who orders it".¹⁹

Accused artists, creators and sculptors have gathered in order to defend their work that was labelled as aesthetic. The artist Aleksandar Stankovski has justified Skopje 2014, by saying: "The government represents the taste of the citizens, who vote and thus made an aesthetic choice".

¹⁷ Suzana Milevska, "Estetskite argumenti ne se dovolni bez etichkite", 2010, Skopje, p.68.

¹⁸ Jasna Koteska, "Troubles with history, Skopje 2014".

¹⁹ Petruša Kostovska, "More od stilovi bez idejna potpora", Skopje, 2010, p. 60.

Further, the Institute Pavel Shatev has gathered sculptors, architects, participants who created the monuments. Among them the sculptor Dimitar Filipovski, the creator of the statue of Metodija Andonov-Chento, the first Macedonian President, defended his work by saying that he supports humanistic and realistic art rather than modern art, which in his opinion is rather a quasi-art. It is very predictable that when architects are hired by the government, there is less possibility for them to express their taste and visions in the favour of expressing what has been ordered by government.

Mayor of Skopje, Mr. Koce Trajanovski in an interview for the Croatian National television channel called HRT said a positive statement on the project: "We have studied our history from the textbooks, but we never had anything to show or see. As the Croats, on the central square in Zagreb placed a sculpture of Ban Jelacic²⁰, we also want to place on the main Skopje's square something that is a symbol of our nation".²¹

Mayor's statement about the statue Warrior on a Horse highlights the essence of branding nations and he points to the example of Zagreb and its controversial figure as Ban Jelacic comparing it with the case of usage of the image of Alexander the Great as a national symbol. The statue Warrior on a Horse is the most arguable monument erected in Skopje 2014. The statue unofficially represents the figure of Alexander the Great. The Ministry of Education and Science announced a new curriculum starting in September 2013. A new subject "Introduction of Monuments" will be introduced to secondary school students. In addition, the history textbooks from the fifth to eight grade in primary school will be modified. Such decision was made after the previous survey and its result showed that very low percentage of students know the names of revolutionary figures represented in monuments and the artists, who made these statues.²²

²⁰ Josip Jelacic Buzimski (1801-1859) was a Ban of Croatia from 1848-1859. After schooling at the Theresianum in Viena, he undertook large military duties. In tempestuous year of 1848, he was appointed the Ban of Croatia and later a Vice Marshal and military commander-in-chief of Civil Croatia and Slavonia and of the military Borderland, which because of his reputation as officer and his populism, he created universal delight. As a new Ban, he discontinued the union of Croatia with Hungary in 1848 and declared a war with Hungarians. Since Hungarian politics were threat for the interest of Viennese Court, Jelacic campaign at the same time meant defence of the Court in the war waged by Austria against Hungarian Revolution. A supporter of the idea of political alliance between the Kingdom of Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia with Vojvodina and Slovenia and the Austro-Slavism. The Court in Viena did not trust him. Within the framework of his possibilities, he promoted the interests of Croatia and became one of its symbols.

²¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWQ1Wf95rkc> – Croation national television, interviews made by journalist Dragan Nikolic.

²² <http://brejking.net/se-voveduva-nov-predmet-vo-osnovnitate-uchilishta-zapoznavan-e-na-spomenitsite-zs/> - New subject in the primary school, introducing monuments.

In the interview a mother of a fifth grade student positively agreed with this innovation. "Even if my son is very intelligent, I am convinced that he will hardly remember all the represented names of the heroes. Therefore, it was about the time to introduce such school subject", she stated.²³

The modification of history textbooks contributes to the controversies over the project Skopje 2014. Aim of the modifications is to weaken identification with the ancient times in favour of the origins of the Slavs. It fully explains the criticism over an attempt to create an image of a super-state by incorporating different facts, different architectural styles and by linking large scale of historic times in a reference to one territory and one nation. Especially by adopting the figure of Alexander the Great into the narratives of Macedonian nation many foreign media criticized it as an attempt of a provocation toward Greek politicians. The Republic of Greece has vetoed Macedonia's entry to NATO and prolonged the negotiations of EU membership because it rejects the recognition of the name Macedonia. According to Greeks it implies territorial intentions toward Greece and the usage of symbols of Ancient Macedonian Empire are considered to be Greek's exclusive right. Vasiliki Neofotistos, an anthropologist, developed an argument on the statue Warrior on a Horse: "Macedonia wants to advance the thesis that it is a corner stone of Western Civilization".²⁴ Pasko Kuzman, an archaeologist from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, claimed in the interview for Balkan Insight: "Alexander conquered the world, would you ever give up something like that?"²⁵

In addition to that, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia in 2010, announced in the interview for British Guardian that Alexander the Great has no passport or birth certificate,²⁶ thus indirectly he has acknowledged that Alexander the Great cannot be part of the concept of any modern nation.

The construction of a symbolic monument that bears a name under a mask instead of publically presented figure opens further problematic sign of politics. The politics of Macedonian government is perceived by the Greek politicians as fabricating an identity for the local residents of Skopje and implementing it to the national identity of the Republic of Macedonia.

²³ <http://brejking.net/se-voveduva-nov-predmet-vo-osnovnitate-uchilishta-zapoznavan-e-na-spomenitsite-zs/>- New subject in the primary school, introducing monuments.

²⁴ Jasna Koteska, "Troubles with history, Skopje 2014".

²⁵ http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/24/world/europe/24iht-macedonia24.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&_

²⁶ J.Kotevska, "Troubles with history, Skopje 2014".

Supporters of Skopje 2014 describe the project as an attempt of the government to transform the city into a European metropolis such as Paris, Vienna, Prague or Rome, by referring to some parts of the project which the opponents criticize as an inadequate architectural symbolism and very bad copy. Beside this, antagonists label the transformation of the city as "a city of joke" or they use terms, such as: Legoland, Las Vegas or Disneyland to describe Skopje 2014. In the article "Troubles with history" Kotevska adds that the Disney metaphor is used in today's architecture dictionary as an insult or offence to architecture. Also she introduces Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben and his concept of marginalized difference between diachrony and synchrony and links it with the case of Skopje 2014 by pointing out that the project produces a division of the Macedonian identity. For instance, in her article, she provides results of an opinion poll conducted in March 2010, which showed that fifty-four percent of citizens did not support the project Skopje 2014 and forty-six percent did. Therefore, she relies on this survey to advocate the project as a binding for Macedonians in the matter of choosing between being Slavs or being descendants of Ancient Macedonians. She adds Agamben's argument of Disney metaphor to argue that the project Skopje 2014 is some kind of a paradox standing between the so-called play of diachrony and synchrony; a playfulness of today's architecture forcing citizens to make a decision of identification with historical past.²⁷

Yet other interpretation of Skopje 2014 was made by using a comparison with the Hero Square in Budapest. After the fall of socialist regime in Hungary in 1989 all of the socio-realistic statues were located in the Park of Statues or Hero Square. Zarko Trajanovski, an expert in human rights, used this example to refer to Skopje 2014 and to ask where the monuments of Skopje 2014 will be allocated. He proposed an ironical answer to create a Museum of Macedonian illusion.²⁸

The phenomenon of manifesting an attempt to erase a part of history or negotiate it and to change every material evidence that belongs to previous regime is a typical reaction for post-socialist countries. In this case, there is expressed a need to search for a new identity with highlighted tendency to historicism. It is presented by renovating city's image and by adding objects with historical motives. All countries striving for such change tend to apply new aesthetics by erasing everything from the previous system. Therefore, the modification of the architecture usually does not support the vision of the architect and city's residents but rather

²⁷ J.Kotevska, "Troubles with history, Skopje 2014".

²⁸ Zarko Trajanovski, "Antikomanija na palankata", 2010, Skopje, p. 48.

is an order of the government. During transition there is also tendency to change the system of values.

Especially in the Republic of Macedonia this effect of transition spread out in the whole country making narrow minded intellectuals less critical and students less interested in defending or criticizing the work of the government. Project Skopje 2014 and its aesthetics and art are hardly discussed among intellectuals and architects without being marked as members of opposition political parties. Also it seems that political parties in opposition lost their power to correct the ruling party.

However, among those who did not remain silent and have criticized the project Skopje 2014 actively is the First Arhi-Brigade, a society of young architects from Skopje. They have offered several arguments from architectural, urban and infrastructural point of view. They think that several issues, totally abandoned in the project, are the most important problems of Skopje 2014. For example, they argue that the required distance between the objects and the riverbank is not respected. According to them, the riverbank should remain a pedestrian zone. After the earthquake in 1963 it was decided that zones close to the river are forbidden for constructions since it is highly tectonic place. Therefore, by not respecting this principle and decision, the new change of urban city plan is criticized as usurpation of public space. Instead of public usage, there are planned state institution buildings to be constructed, such as: State Archive, Criminal Court, Constitutional Court, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁹

Other argument they offer refers to the antiquisation and use of the baroque style which according to the narratives and to typical architectural styles of Macedonia have no significance for Macedonian architecture and it rather shows a frustration and a lack of knowledge about vernacular or typical Macedonian architecture. They add that the proposed style for the garages is totally unacceptable according to the principles of engineering and also the obelisk installed into the Women's Park does not respect the principles of the humanistic character of that park.³⁰

Furthermore, they argue about the competitions of the Ministry of Culture. The young architects claimed that competitions had already predicted scheme which the architect was supposed to follow given template for the façades of buildings.³¹

²⁹ Prva Arhi Brigada, "*Protiv zidot na kichot*", 2010, Skopje, p. 49.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

The Association of Architects of the Republic of Macedonia, further in text as AAM, on its assembly devoted to Skopje 2014, has announced, "We, the architects, together with the citizens are positioned into very inconvenient situation. The professional and general public opinion are not integrated into the decision-making procedure of Skopje 2014. It is very important to express the opinion of the ones who critically comment this project. Our thesis does not offer ready solutions but it aims to open questioning and to develop profound discussion in order to continue the procedure of negotiating and deciding. The AAM does not support the project Skopje 2014 as it is because it lacks temporal, geographic, political, economic, cultural and social context. It is professionally inconsistent. It does not indicate the future".³²

Architect Miroslav Grchev claims that architecture represents an aphorism of the conditions appropriate to the stage of the development of societies, especially expressed through the state buildings and monuments. He gives an example of autocratic societies where architecture is a real materialistic evidence of the spirit of the rulers. He defines architecture and monumental statues as symptoms monitoring level of despotic rule; it witnesses how critical or narrow minded society is. For example, he finds so many things to be in common between the so-called Great Leader, the Macedonian prime minister's ruling and the reign of Hitler and their power over the architecture. Both of them incorporate glorious segments from historical architecture of other time periods and expressed in gigantic architecture and sculptures. Their aim is to erase the past and to create identification with a new super-state.

Freud's theory also contributes to the interpretation of megalomaniac architecture, as a frustration of inferiority of leaders and as typical for nations that were oppressed in the past.³³ It can offer an explanation why all of a sudden there is a search for identity and sudden love for the classical antiquities. Although, the term „antiquisation" does not fully describe the project, since there is a wide range of historical times represented in the project, such as Medieval or Renaissance period up till the monuments and architecture of the 20th century.

Despite its "copy and paste architecture", the territory of the Republic of Macedonia contains narratives of the neolith times, classical cities as Heraclea and Stobi, as well as Byzantine and Ottoman architecture. The Arhi-Brigade says that our "baroque"³⁴ is consistent in the

³² Reference of the Assembly of the Association of Architects of Republic of Macedonia, 2010, p. 7, published in "Kradat Grad", by Plostad Sloboda and Templum.

³³ Miroslav Grchev, "Arhitektonska psihopatologija", 2010, p.9.

³⁴ Baroque and Neo-Baroque architectural style were never authentic to the typical Macedonian architecture because during the time of the development of the Baroque style the territory of Macedonia was under the rule

Macedonian churches and monasteries expressed through the icons. Later, the city of Skopje reconstructed after the big earthquake in 1963 gained an image of an open city of solidarity. It became an example of one of the first modern architecture on the Balkans. Mentioned architectural styles can brand the capital city of Macedonia but in the vision of Skopje 2014 the government replaces the significant architecture with "new" architectural style for one reason - to fill up a break in the continuity of the history; and as a second reason - to rebrand the city by spending all the national budget for promoting Skopje as more Europeanized.

On the assembly for the project Skopje 2014 the Association of Artists has decided that the project is a pure political project which by default declines the presence of art. According to their statements, the project expresses "some of our historical continuity and identity which destroys the contemporary cultural and artistic potential."³⁵ Among the most criticized and controversial objects in Skopje 2014 is the Arch Macedonia. It is twenty-one meters high with a surface covered with reliefs carved in marble depicting scenes from Macedonian history. Architect Boris Chipan criticizes the symbolism of the arch because, in his opinion, the meaning of triumphal arch signifies the victory of glorious generals and military men who pass through the arch as symbolic celebration of conquered territories. He states that in none of the presented historical scenes victory for Macedonian nation was achieved, apart from the only one victory against the Nazism which is related to more recent history.

The urban expert Siljanovska has criticized the location of the Triumphal Arch when defining it as the most vulgar object of Skopje 2014.³⁶ Hristova claimed in her book "Aesthetics in architecture", that "Architectural style is a dialectic unit of the elements and symbols which contains the form and the content of the object by claiming its historical period of existence."³⁷ The architectural style is a result of the realisation of methods and the social, functional, economical, ideological and aesthetic development of one society".³⁸

It is claimed that the Triumphal Arch Macedonia represents absence of originality and cultural impotence of Macedonians. Alike Hristova, the architect Sanja Jovanovik states that "The stamp of the architecture and its symbols are the most evident proof of recognition of its authenticity and its archaeology in the future. But by applying personal interests in

of Ottoman Empire and architecture was influenced by Ottoman oriental style, placing elaborate mosques and hammams with their domed roofs in Charshija as a working zones. Later with the change of regimes Christian religion was expressed by rebuilding churches and monasteries. (f.e. wooden carved iconostas are considered as showing such cultural transfers of Baroque vocabulary

³⁵ Dejan Bugevac, "Skopje 2014-Omaz na kichot", 2010, p. 18.

³⁶ Boris Chipan, "Skopje ne e del od nasata tradicija", 2010, p. 18.

³⁷ Elizabeta Hristova, "Aesthetics of Architecture", 1978.

³⁸ Mihail Tokarev, "333 istoriski pouki i analogii", 2010, p. 83.

fabrication of a new identity can create chaos that will lead to the loss of the image of the city while producing problems for future generations”.³⁹

Therefore, relabelled image of Skopje can play important role for future generations when modifying their history as more different from the one of their parents and grandparents memories and narratives. By such modification, instead of filling up break in history, government will create a "buffer zone" between the collective memories of young generations and the collective memories of their ancestors. Žižek diagnosed the attempt to invest in the past as not a positive one and for him destroying monuments is not a negation of past. Consequently, the project Skopje 2014 is according to Žižek a helpless passage, an unsuccessful investment since according to the reactions of the residents of Skopje the project declines their collective memory.⁴⁰

For older generations it is architect Josif Mihajlovic the one who raised and branded the city of Skopje in the 1920's by respecting the identity and the spirit of the place. In 1960's the city gained special historical and memorial value because of the earthquake which had ruined the city and brought up new memories of citizens of Skopje, who were directly involved in the reconstruction of the city.

According to the architect Boris Chipan, tradition in architecture is something that spontaneously becomes expressed by its residents. He claims that the Officer House is something that should not be reconstructed since it was build during the period of the reign of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes or later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and he considers it as not being a part of the Macedonian architecture. He adds that typical Macedonian architecture, as part of Macedonian tradition, is the building of the Government or the typical house in Ohrid city which represent the modern contemporary objects of architecture.⁴¹

Alike Chipan, the urbanist Siljanovska claims that the project Skopje 2014 declaims the image of the city and its values by twisting its cultural identity which is characteristic for a newly composed nation and state which does not have continuity. She called Skopje 2014 "historical eclectism which assembles and interprets the classical architectural elements in a strange way. It all looks like a collection of souvenirs from different space and time." She points out several problems of Skopje 2014, such as its location and distance of monuments,

³⁹ Sanja Ragjenovik- Jovanovik, "Da go sksrshime sopstvenoto ogledal", 2010, p. 36.

⁴⁰ J. Kotevska, "Troubles with history:Skopje 2014".

⁴¹ Boris Chipan, "Skopje ne e del od nasata tradicija", 2010, p. 20.

its problematic artistic nature and the selection of projects solutions during public competitions that according to her opinion do not defend the civil character of the square and do not respect the freedom of the citizen.⁴²

Similarly to Siljanovska, architect and professor Jovan Ivanovski states that "Skopje 2014 is a project that won't only undermine the local urban identity, but also it is an anti-product in relation to the global attempts to promote ourselves as a country that is an eternal cradle of authentic city life, priceless art, unique aromas and irreplaceable sights".⁴³

In addition to the polemics over Skopje 2014, Professor Miroslav Grchev offers arguments that the project shapes multi-ethnic relations and alarms on issues with the signed Ohrid Framework Agreement from 2001. For instance the decision of the government to build a church on the square in Skopje is against the principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, which according to the article 19, goes against the principles of equal representation of religious objects by favouring the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Furthermore, the so-called "Program for representing important historical figures and events" performed by the advisory body of the municipality is a counter-attack to the Law of Memorial Statues. According to this law, it undermines the authority of the municipalities for raising memorials when according to the article 4 of this law historical figures of national significance are under jurisdiction of the National Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. Therefore the historical figure of Gotse Delchev, a Macedonian ideologue from the period of Ottoman Empire, is not an important figure only of local significance.⁴⁴

Professor Grchev shared his research on the lawfulness of the project for the national Croatian television: "The Constitutional Court proclaims itself as non-competent for evaluation of the lawfulness of the project, since the part of the million worth public concurs documentation quite apparently burned in a fire [...] It remains to us to be patient and wait for the moment when one democratic and civilized Macedonian Government shall evaluate criminal and urban consequences and demolish these buildings and remove them as construction debris", he said.⁴⁵

Consequently, after last local elections in April 2013 the mayor of municipality, a representative of the ruling party VMRO-DPMNE, Mr. Vladimir Todorovik lost in the

⁴² Jasmina Siljanovska, "Duhovna impotencija", 2010, p. 29.

⁴³ Ivan Jovanovski, "Razubavizator, verzija 2014", 2010, p. 25.

⁴⁴ Miroslav Grchev, "Bezzakonie koe vodi do podelba na drzavata", 2010, p. 87.

⁴⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWQ1Wf95rkc>, Croatian National Television, an interview by Dragan Nikolic.

elections and his place took over the candidate Andrej Zerenovski, a representative of the opposition party of the Liberals in coalition with the Social Democrats SDSM. Immediately after he was installed as a new mayor, he has opened the question of the legitimacy of Skopje 2014. Even though the Minister of Culture, Ms. Elizabeta Kanceska-Milevska, publically presented the annual budget costs for the years 2008 – 2013, announcing the amount of costs per each statue and building, which accomplished in total was 207,872,492 Euros. Her statement referred to project's accusations of financial corruption and illegitimacy of the costs of over five hundred millions of Euros that in her opinion were not justified. Also regarding the matter of local and national jurisdiction, the Minister of Culture defended the sides that are responsible for the signed agreements and realisation of announced constructions of Skopje 2014.⁴⁶

Following the effective comments and criticism of prominent intellectuals, architects, urban experts, politicians, student organizations and fellow associations they provide an overview of project Skopje 2014, marking several issues and problems that the project has evoked. These are the lawfulness of the project and the local over national administrative delegations, mono-ethnically represented history integrating large spectrum of past times relating them to one territory; involving architectural styles and overshadowing previous architectural heritage; investing in past events for branding a city and compromising the collective memories of its citizens. Although presented criticism has already fabricated tangible results upon social structures in Macedonian society, it is very important to bring up an insight of an ordinary resident. Therefore, in this chapter I will present results of undertaken interviews during my ethnographical observations on the square called Macedonia. The study is provided by taking daily notes during observations of the square and by asking open questions to randomly chosen participants. The questions were spontaneously asked as a matter of fact to stay more objective, politically uninfluenced and neutral.

⁴⁶ <http://a1on.mk/wordpress/archives/140235>, "Skopje so fars costs 207.872.492 Euros", 22 April 2013.

Ethnographical observation in Square Macedonia

Description of facts

Day: 28 April 2012

Place: near “Warrior on a horse” statue

Time: 3 p.m.

First two to be interviewed were a 24 years old man and a 23 years old woman, both belonging to Macedonian ethnicity and both students at the Faculty of Economics. Even though I introduced myself and my motivation, I could see their scepticism towards answering my question.

Regarding my question what they think about the project Skopje 2014, they were both looking at the statue Warrior on a Horse and the boy decided to speak in the name of both describing the project as pride of the nation of descendants of Alexander the Great.

Second person I have talked to was a 23 years old man, a student belonging to Macedonian ethnicity. When asked how he felt about the project Skopje 2014 he only stated that the project should have been proceeded long time ago.



Fig.19 Statue Warrior on a Horse, picture taken during observation

Third person I interviewed was a retired man, belonging to Macedonian ethnicity. He refused to say his age but I presume he was in his sixties or seventies. When I started asking him he replied whether I was someone from the government. After given information about who I was and what my motivation was, he shared his point of view seeing the project as a disaster. He also thought that: “the government has many other important activities to work on instead of spending money on useless statues.” He concluded by claiming that he felt rather as Macedonian than as Slav or Ancient Macedonian.

Another interviewed person was a man belonging to Macedonian ethnicity, 50 years old, employed. He was talkative and felt very comfortable with my questions related to the project. He stated that the project affirms his feeling of belonging to the nation. He specified that we cannot separate Slavs from Ancient Macedons because, according to his belief, the ethnicities were mixed. He expressed feeling of pride when looking at the fountain of Warrior on a Horse which not officially represents Alexander the Great. When given a question: “What do you think about the usage of symbols which are not completely representing the signs of Vergina?”, he answered: “It is a good political game to protect from attacks.”

Then I interviewed two women, both of them belonging to Macedonian ethnicity and employed, they refused to say their age but I assume they were in their fifties or sixties. After being given a question, their feedback referred to their pride of belonging to such a “great nation of descendants of the Ancient Macedons”, they said.

Next to interview was a couple in their sixties, husband and wife, belonging to Macedonian ethnicity and both in retirement. They both agreed that the project Skopje 2014 should have occurred earlier. They believed that Macedonian nation should not give up on its history and that this project provided a visible touch with the past.

Next interviewed person was a 40 year old employed man belonging to Macedonian ethnicity. He freely shared his opinion that due to the geographical position of the Republic of Macedonia, Macedonians should surely consider the project as being part of the national biography. He also added that he felt more like Slav rather than descendant of Ancient Macedonia. He mentioned that nations are mixed and that Macedonians have more exclusive right to identify themselves with the Ancient Macedonians rather than the Greeks.

Later on, a man who was 28 years old, unemployed and belonging to Albanian ethnicity, has stated that Skopje 2014 is a nationalistic movement of the Government of Macedonia. He

also added that he admires the image of Alexander the Great and he understands it as normal movement that everyone would like to assimilate it in the national biography of one nation.

Another interviewed person was a man, 30 years old. He was employed and belonging to Macedonian ethnicity. Upon my question he claimed that there is a lack of academic support of statements, books, interviews etc. who would discuss their opinion upon the project.

Then I interviewed a 23 year old girl who was a student of architecture and was belonging to Macedonian ethnicity. She said she felt a shame because of her colleagues who, according to her opinion, obviously demolished the image of what is typical for Macedonian architecture when reflecting the history of the nation.

Last one to interview was a 24 year old man, a student of economics, belonging to Macedonian ethnicity. He referred to the project Skopje 2014 as of a waste of money, which was made instead of investing in undeveloped domains, especially in those with high percentage of unemployment. He believed that the history of Macedonian nation starts in the 18th and 19th century and he added that some statues are useless for the identification of the nation.

Following reactions on the social networks, one of the popular common facebook joke about the Skopje 2014 was: "Don't go to the city centre for a coffee, they put statues in the coffee".

From provided observation I can derive a curiosity of citizens about the statue Alexander the Great. It seems that the Skopje 2014 is a very popular subject among citizens who are concerned and attached to the project in different ways. For instance, there is evident presence of split in identification. It seems people have easily appropriated identification with Alexander the Great without deliberating the identification with Slavs. Such a result can be advocated to the long negation of the Republic of Macedonia and the dispute with Greece. Also the high percentage of unemployment in the state makes people sensitive and reactive to political issues. Although negatively criticized by intellectuals, the residents of Skopje evidently enjoy the fountain when spending time around, taking pictures etc. According to provided interviews I can assume that younger generation, such as students, especially those who are not educated in architecture, are not really concerned with the meaning of renovating the facades or with the significance of the newly applied architectural styles. They seemed much more concerned about the establishment of a new image of the city. Elder generations seemed to be more concerned about political and economic background of the project Skopje 2014. They also found appropriate the identification with Alexander the Great as matter of

the political dispute with Greece. However, according to statistical methods, I have not achieved a representative sample of respondents that would represent all social groups. Therefore, this interview can bring up only a general overview of reactions towards the project Skopje 2014.

Description of sources

The purpose of this part is to present data collection and selection when presenting the project Skopje 2014 and my attempt is to bring up all of the supplies of information, such as are journals, online published articles and the literature directly devoted to the project.

Description of journals published on project Skopje 2014.

The Macedonian web portal "Skopjeinfo.mk" published an article entitled "*Skopje 2014 - nadgradba ili demoliranje na Makedonskiot identitet*" [Skopje 2014- a construction or a destruction of the Macedonian identity] which brings up the topic of the political influence on the work of artists involved in the project Skopje 2014 and the aspiration of politicians to modify the nation and its identity. The article is formulated as an exchange of opinions among four individual scholars and artists. First of all, it presents a critical opinion of an academic Milan Gurchinov who considers the project being purely ideological product of the ruling political party. On the other side stands the opinion of Mr. Stankovski who opposes the criticisms and claims that the project Skopje 2014 is fully supported by the avant-garde artists of Macedonia. Igor Toshevski, a member of an informal artistic group *Kooperacija*, steps in and points out that it is a manipulation with collective identity. Finally, the professor of aesthetics Ivan Djeparovski speaks about instrumental use of aesthetics for political goals. Mr. Stankovski again defends the project.⁴⁷

This article highlights a fruitful discussion about one of the problems caused by this project. The portal "Skopjeinfo" is a touristic website about the city of Skopje organized by the Society for Communicational, Technical and Consultant Services. It is composed of a team of young workers who cooperate with dwellers and publish their articles.

Further research of the names that I referred to in previous paragraph led me to another article called "Skopje 2014 - Artists defend their project". It was published by Biljana Nestoroska on the 6 May 2010 on the web portal Balkan Insight. It is an article which presents discussions held between several artists who worked on some statues, which were part of the project. They defend their work pointing out that the project is an aesthetic art. One of the artists, Aleksandar Stankovski, was mentioned in the article by Skopjeinfo. Aleksandar Stankovski, obviously because of being part of the project, supports the work of

⁴⁷ <http://www.skopjeinfo.mk/gradot/2125006240/skopje-2014-nadgradba-ili-demoliranje-na-makedonskiot-identitet>.

government and Skopje 2014 by stating that “the government represents the taste of the citizens, whose votes thus make an aesthetic choice”.⁴⁸

“Balkan Insight” is a source that contributed to the discussion over the project Skopje 2014 with important data. Balkan Insight is composed of foreign journalists who are supported by Balkan Investigate Reporting Network that operates in the region. It is funded by a range of international governments and NGO's. Considering the fact that foreigners can contribute to the objective criticism over the project, it makes it a reliable source for my research.⁴⁹

Already mentioned web portal Skopjeinfo.mk has published an article “*Kolku ke chini noviot kej na Vardar vo centarot na Skopje?*” (How much will the new riverbank of Vardar in the centre of Skopje cost?). It relates to the amount of money spent for the reconstruction of the Quai in order to build new bridges and beautify the riverside, being a part of the project Skopje 2014. It does an approximate amount of 5.5 million Euros which will be spent for this action.⁵⁰ This article and several similar other ones represent the only written source that residents and researchers can follow when investigating the amount of money spent on the project Skopje 2014.

The online newspaper “*Utrinski Vesnik*” published around nine hundred and seventy articles in the period of 2010 – 2013, which related to the project Skopje 2014. These actively criticize and report the project’s situation. Among the articles that served as a source in my thesis is an article “*Postjmotresno Skopje bese na solidarnosta, denesnoto e na kapitalot*” (translation: Post-earthquake Skopje was based on solidarity, today it is based on the capital) published by Bojan Shashevski, on the 1 May 2012, where he sites two architects Kokan Grchev and Mishko Ralev, professors at the University American College in Skopje. Their comments have an urban approach and they talk about the importance of making urban plans before applying projects. They consider that nowadays city of Skopje lacks an urban plan and they think it is a result of political and social changes.⁵¹

“Porta 3” is a newspaper available in hard copy and online, a biweekly magazine that records analysis, critics, opinions and advice given by expert engineers, architects and ecologists. They have also created a section where they allow citizens to take active part by commenting

⁴⁸ <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/skopje-2014-artists-defend-their-projects>.

⁴⁹ <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/static-page/balkan-insight>.

⁵⁰ <http://grid.mk/read/news/130986738/1380717/kolku-ke-chini-noviot-kej-na-varдар-vo-centarot-na-skopje>.

⁵¹ <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=26A2EE324C373B4094E21016147C77BD>.

and criticizing the project Skopje 2014. Such kind of source is considered as very reliable, where experts of architectural and engineer domain can produce certain and reputable critiques over the project, pointing out the urban and architectural aspects of the usage of public space.⁵²

“Skyscrapercity.com” is a web portal affiliated to world's architecture and urbanism. An article entitled “Urban Project Skopje 2014” has been written by an author using pseudonym Jankie, who highlights the historical and social turn of the project Skopje 2014, after reconstructing the image of Skopje which was given after rebuilding city of the devastating earthquake in 1963. Jankie has used references from a web portal, called Build.mk. “Build.mk”, which is a Macedonian web portal with its main interest in architecture, civil engineering and urbanization. Through their articles and forums authors attempt to activate and involve residents of Skopje in the public discussion in order to express their opinion related to the architectural and urban questions about the city.⁵³

Such kind of forums that serve people to share their opinion, critics and comments can contribute as a counter statement against the artist Aleksandar Stankovski, who claims that government represents the taste of its citizens who voted in democratic elections and thus made this aesthetic choice. On the other hand, online forums are serving only to a limited number of people, such as to those who have an access to the internet and to those who are interested in participating in forums. Otherwise, older generations who do not use computers and they do not contribute to the discussion or express their assessment.

”A1on” is an online Macedonian portal that has been operating since 2012. Its name A1on relates to the Macedonian television channel called A1 which was owned by a politician Velija Ramkovski. He was an opponent of the work of the Macedonian government. When accused by the state of money laundering and non-legal work, the television channel was turned down in 2011. Apparently the politics of the web portal has the same way of work and style of criticism. They actively comment on the project 2014 and immediately after the local elections they published an article where the Minister of Culture

⁵² http://www.porta3.com.mk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2482&Itemid=130.

⁵³ <http://www.build.mk/?tag=%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BF%D1%98%D0%B5-2014>.

Elizabeta Kanchevska-Milevska gave a detailed report about the amount of money spent on the project Skopje 2014.⁵⁴

”Kurir.mk” is a Macedonian web portal composed of young journalists who actively comment on the project Skopje 2014. Their articles contributed with supportive materials to my research. Although, I noted that on their homepage they present two writers - Dragan Latas and Milenko Nedelkovski, who are well-known to public as supporters of the work of the government. Therefore, there is a possibility that this web portal is pro-governmental and that given criticism on the project Skopje 2014 can be misinterpreted.⁵⁵

Foreign newspaper also contributed to the discussion on the project. Reuters⁵⁶, Guardian.uk⁵⁷ and New York Times⁵⁸ actively followed the events in Macedonia. All of them pointed out the political realm and the issue of the statue of Alexander the Great as a provocative politics of the government of the Republic of Macedonia towards the Greek politicians during the negotiations about the name dispute.

Fox News published an article on the 31 October 2012 of an unknown author in its tourist section. Instead of giving a touristic description of the destination of Skopje, the entitled article “Skopje, Macedonia: Kitsch capital of the Balkans”, focused more on economy and the political issues. It talked about the finances wasted on the project, it commented the choice of monuments and of the architectural style. It described the political issue between Greece and Macedonia referring to the dispute over the name and over the usage of symbols regarding Alexander the Great. In this article a Macedonian director Ljupco Luckovski talked about the project Skopje 2014. When searching for his name via Google I could not find his name in a relation to Skopje 2014. Such a coincidence interrogates a credibility of such comments.⁵⁹

“Cafebabel.com” is a British web portal that also served my thesis. Investigator Nela Lazarevic published an article on 30 August 2011, entitled “Macedonia the Great: Historical obsession and Skopje 2014”. It gives a brief reference to the history of Macedonia and it

⁵⁴ <http://www.alon.mk/>.

⁵⁵ <http://kurir.mk/>.

⁵⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/21/us-macedonia-monument-idUSTRE75K3RF20110621>.

⁵⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jun/27/macedonia-alexander-great-greece-discord>.

⁵⁸ http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/24/world/europe/24iht-macedonia24.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&_

⁵⁹ <http://www.foxnews.com/travel/2012/10/31/construction-bonanza-in-macedonian-capital-causes-controversy-kitsch-or-history/>.

describes the political dispute between Macedonia and Greece over the use of symbols regarding the figure of Alexander the Great. Cafebabel.com is an European journal that publishes scholarly articles. It is supported by the European Commission and is designed for readers and generations living in Europe and it aims at developing a critical public opinion.⁶⁰ Such example of a scholarly article is a helpful source that contributes to my research.

“*Le courrier des Balkans*” is an online francophone journal that published an article “*Macedoine: Alexandre le Grand ou Tose Proeski?*” on 11 February 2009. The article was published by Jacqueline Derens and it shows that the project was planned and prepared much earlier. Tose Proeski was a very famous Macedonian singer, who died in a car accident in 2007. As cited in the article, Macedonian newspaper “*Nova Makedonija*” presented in 2009 a doubt of the mayor of Skopje, Trifun Kostovski, who was opening the discussions over the choice of statues.⁶¹

“Art Margin Online” is a web portal, whose mission is to publish scholarly articles and essays on contemporary art, politics, media, architecture and critical theory. This is an appropriate and reasonable source to my research, especially the article by Jasna Koteska, entitled “*Troubles with history: Skopje 2014*” is the first article which has supportive bibliography along her research.⁶²

“Café Balkans” is a scholarly blog of the students from Science Po in Dijon, France. Their main focus is the study of the Balkans. The published articles can serve as reliable source to my research since scholarly researches usually tend to present facts in academic style and clearly point out to the political influence.⁶³

Literature on “Skopje 2014”

An edition entitled “*Gradot*” [The city] is a remarkable collection of articles and comments dedicated to the project Skopje 2014. The first edition was published in 2010 by two Macedonian editors, Templum and Plostad Sloboda. So far there are seven published books: 1. “*Nered i groteska*” [Disorder and grotesque], 2. “*Kradat grad!*” [Stealing the city], 3. “*Architortura i globalizacija*” [Archi-torture and globalization], 4. “*Skopski prikazni od*

⁶⁰ <http://www.cafebabel.co.uk/article/38503/macedonia-skopje-2014-history-obsession-authority.html>.

⁶¹ <http://balkans.courriers.info/article12254.html>.

⁶² <http://www.artmargins.com/index.php/2-articles/655-troubles-with-history-skopje-2014>.

⁶³ <http://www.jeunes-europeens.org/-Cafe-Balkans,268->.

2014”[Stories of Skopje about 2014], 5. “*Gradot i idninata*” [The city and the future], 6. “*Stolb na kukata sto se uriva*” [Pillar of the house that is falling down] and 7. “*Fasadata gi jade temelite*” [The facade eats the base]. Articles tend to open discussion from different points of view and the topics are the political disagreements, multiethnic divisions, urban and architectural criticism and its effect on social groups in Skopje. Prominent names of the authors - professors at universities, architects, urban experts, column writers, art historians, political analyzers, appeared in these editions. All of them present negative arguments on Skopje 2014.⁶⁴ Articles that appear in these books were published by several Macedonian newspapers before. Among these newspapers are: Utrinski Vesnik, Dnevnik, Okno, Globus, Sega, Nova Makedonija, Fokus and Kapital. Also, some of them were published on web portal blog.com.mk.

“*Skrieniot simbolizam na proektot Skopje 2014*” [The hidden symbolism of the project Skopje 2014] is an anonymous book published in 2011 by Nova Svetlina. Author is a female figure sharing her research about the hidden symbols of the project Skopje 2014. Main theme of this book is to open a distinctive point of view about the value of this project, that associates the symbols with Alexander the Great, Roman emperors, Ottoman emperors and so on. She claims that the project Skopje 2014 should pursue a deeper understanding of the origins of Macedonian nation instead of being criticized as a financial waste.⁶⁵ Promotion of the book was freely delivered in daily newspapers. The book costs only three Euros (180 Denars) and its low price made it easily accessible to public and also it is till now easily available in several book shops. This is one of the rare books or perhaps the only one I found with a supportive approach towards the project Skopje 2014.

“Skopje, the world bastard city. Architecture of the divided city” is a book by Milan Mihajlovic and Katherina Urbanek. They are both architects and they published their book in Skopje in 2011. The topics of the book are social changes, aspects and spatial controversies which were a result of the plan Skopje 2014. They comment and criticize the effects on the identity of the residents of Skopje, the multicultural situation and on the consequences this project brought in the city. They point out the political and social changes. They mainly refer to the two important periods – to 1960's, the time after the big earthquake

⁶⁴ www.templum.com.mk edition “*Gradot*”.

⁶⁵ Anonimous, “*Скриениот симболизам на проектот Скопје 2014*”, Skopje, NVO Nova Svetlina, 2011.

in Skopje, and the period of the 1990's, the time after the fall of the socialist regime of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.⁶⁶

This brief demonstration of the sources devoted to Skopje 2014 wants to show actual diversity of reactions among different social groups, and the reactions of Macedonian media and foreign media, who have criticized and commented the project and the policy of the government of Macedonia. Evidently, the project evoked numerous reactions on the symbolism and on the use of mixed architectural styles for the purpose of changing the image of the city of Skopje. Even though the project Skopje 2014 is a recent issue and politically hot, still running in progress, the quantity of writings which would stem from intellectual or scholarly milieu are not numerous. The current description of sources points out that the journalism and discussions on electronic media outnumber the classical books.

The abuse of collective memory and narratives, provoking ethnic tensions in multi-ethnic population, overshadowing existing heritage, possible financial corruption, unlawfulness of administrative organs providing the project etc. are some of the most highlighted subjects discussed about the project Skopje 2014. My concern in this thesis is first to put attention on how the project changed the identity of the city through reorganizing the public space, and second, whether the new branded image of the city affects collective memory of the citizens. The question of the open public space becomes a serious problem in the project Skopje 2014, when placing grandiose and gigantic monuments in radius of five hundred meters. Also the use of controversial statues of eclectic symbolism provokes tensions and threatens life among ethnicities, not only on local but also on national level. The project does not respect the role of public space. The art of the open public space is one of the most complicated assignments for the artists, urban planners and architects. There are numerous categories which are to be respected in order to create a functional public space. A functional public space has to be adoptable for its purpose, location and spatial contextualisation.⁶⁷ According to this statement of Nebojsa Vujic, the project Skopje 2014 should be a topic for the urban planners and architects and not for politicians as it is.

To insist on historical monuments can be understood as an attempt to fill up a break in history. Project Skopje 2014 can be judged as ignorant to the representation of the city's

⁶⁶ Milan Mihajlovic and Katarina Urbanek, *"Skopje, the world bastard city. Architecture of the divided city"*, 2011, Goten, Skopje.

⁶⁷ Nebojsa Vilik, *"Skopje umira od nevkus"*, 2010, p. 87.

history, identity and tradition. The local architecture is not necessarily narrative about the national history of Macedonia. The importance of Macedonian tradition and history cannot be provided by copy/paste architecture. Despite all this, it should allow artists to liberate their thoughts and to express themselves freely.

In the next chapter of the thesis I will bring up a diachronic analysis because of the fact that Skopje 2014 presents its own interpretations and highlights of history. In order to see better what is the discrepancy or difference, or how it simply covers the history of the city, I will present a chronological overview of historical events that represent the political, social and urban development of Skopje, in order to be able to draw conclusion.

CHAPTER II

Political, Cultural and Urban Development of Skopje

In this chapter, I will use diachronic analysis in order to present the development of the city of Skopje. I will focus on understanding how the identity of residents of Skopje has been cultivated through history, and I will explore the fragments applied on architectural and urban development, all through the periods identified by the rule of different Empires. In a reference to Professor Miroslav Grchev, the architecture of the city is a narrative of motives and social conditions of development of the society. It reflects the political regime in power as well.⁶⁸ Adding comments from architect Boris Chipan, construction of a city can be influenced by emotional and social relationships within the society which can later affect city's narratives producing specific tangible and intangible tradition. He claims that regionalism is an issue that makes problems in finding urban solutions and makes cities look similar to each other.⁶⁹ This argument allows me to argue that the project Skopje 2014 aims to modify the image of the city in a direction towards more Europeanized city and by doing so it negatively affects tangible and intangible tradition of the city. Especially by implementing an antiquity style and by combining it with the Middle Ages in order to show a continuity of the architecture of nowadays Skopje, it makes it an arguable issue. An overview of the history and the development of Skopje can give an objective frame in understanding the delivered criticism and comments on governmental project Skopje 2014.

The city of Skopje became a capital city of the independent Republic of Macedonia after the secession of the Federative Yugoslavia. Naturally, as a largest city in Macedonia it took over the position of a capital and became the main administrative, political, cultural, economical and educational centre. Skopje is located in the northern Macedonia below the mount Vodno. The city is divided by the upper course of the river Vardar. It is placed on a territory of 571,46 km² and it has got 506,926 inhabitants, according to the last census held in 2002. But it is believed that the number of the city population has grown up to around one million. The exact number is unknown since the last census planned in 2012 was cancelled. The majority of the inhabitants are the Macedonians (sixty-five percent), then are the Albanians (twenty-five percent), then the Turks, the Bosnians, the Roma people and other minorities. Ethnical Macedonians, who speak Macedonian language, are in majority Orthodox Christians. Ethnical Albanians, speaking Albanian language, are in majority Muslims.

⁶⁸ Miroslav Grchev, "*Arhitektonska psihopatija*", Skopje, 2010, p. 9.

⁶⁹ Boris Chipan, "*Makedonskite gradovi vo XIX vek Inivnata urbana perspektiva*", Skopje, 1987, p. 5.

The central position of Macedonia on the Balkan gave the city an important regional signification, both nowadays and in the past. The city lies between Central Europe and the Aegean Sea. Therefore, the fabric of the city was always reorganized to represent the rule of those who had conquered it.

Following figures present the city of Skopje and its position during different regimes through the history.



Fig.20 1798 year- Ottoman Empire



Fig. 21 March,1878 year- contract of San Stefano, Bulgaria



Fig. 22 July, 1878, Berlin Treaty, Ottoman Empire



Fig. 23 1913year- divided between Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia

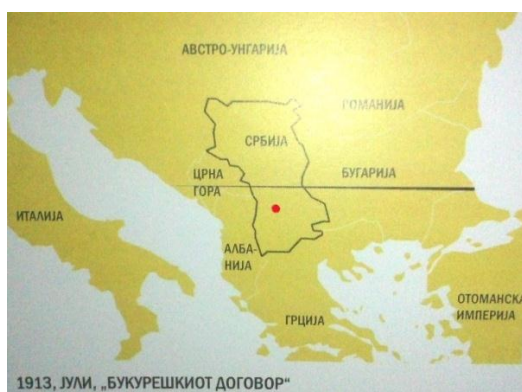


Fig. 24 1913 Bucharest Agreement- Serbia



Fig. 25 1st WW, Bulgaria



Fig. 26 1918 year, Kingdom of Serbs Croats and Slovenes



Fig. 27 1929 Kingdom Yugoslavia



Fig. 28 1944 year, Federative state Macedonia



Fig. 29 2010 year, European Union

Archaeological excavations at the fortress of Kale, located in the centre of nowadays Skopje, contribute to our historical knowledge about the territory that was inhabited since the Neolithic times, from around 4000 BC.⁷⁰ About the etymology of the name Skopje – it is derived from the name Scupi which dates back to the period of the Roman Empire. According to the historian Titus Livius, who mentioned a Roman province called Scupi also said that it was inhabited by Dardanians in the 1st century AD and that it was an important province during this period.⁷¹ The first urban structure of Scupi consisted of buildings with paved streets and squares, thermal baths with first water management system. Scupi was a Latinized administrative unit of the Eastern Roman Empire. Unfortunately, a devastating earthquake in the 5th century totally destroyed the city to the ground level. Justinian Prima, who was born in the area that is close to nowadays Skopje, rebuilt the city giving it more of a religious context by constructing Christian churches. In the 6th and 7th century, there was a

⁷⁰ <http://www.skopje.gov.mk/en/desktopdefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=46> official portal of city of Skopje.

⁷¹ Ibid.

notable importance of the migration of the Slavs in the region. For the period until the 10th century scientists have no written sources about the destiny of Scupi, apart from the knowledge about Tsar Samoil, who, according to the historian's interpretations, established the first Macedonian medieval state in the 10th century. There are no certain testimonies about the urban structure of Scupi. The geographical position of Macedonia caused many attacks from the Serbs and the Bulgarian, who tried to dominate the region in the Middle Ages.⁷² Historical data assure the claim of historians about the presence of Tsar Dushan in Scupi in the 14th century. He was a descendent of the King of Serbia. Tsar Dushan built royal palaces and churches, he established the so-called Dushan's code, created in order to regulate the private and the public life of the residents. Scupi, under the reign of Tsar Dushan, became an important centre, where Venetian and Ragusian merchants had their warehouses. Dushan's symbols were destroyed in the late fourteenth century when the Ottomans conquered the Balkan Peninsula.⁷³

The name Scupi was replaced by the name Uskup when Ottomans captured the city and transformed it into a military base and a market venue where they traded slaves. In 1555 another devastating earthquake destroyed the eminent Christian architecture of the city. Ottomans continued to build in their own Ottoman style, first they built a new working zone called *Charshija*, a street with a market place and with trading shops. The importance of this zone brought in the attention of merchants and travellers, such as Arabs, Jews, Greeks and Venetian consumers.⁷⁴ Uskup was populated with around fifty to sixty thousands inhabitants during the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, during the Austrian-Turkish war in 1689, Piccolomini, an Italian general in service to Habsburgs, conquered the city, and burned it down. Frequent epidemics of cholera caused migrations to other towns in the region.⁷⁵ French traveller Amie Boue reported in the eighteenth century that Uskup had around ten thousand inhabitants.⁷⁶ In the late eighteenth century, according to Italian traveller Itan, Uskup had around twenty thousand inhabitants, among which thirteen thousand were Muslims, seven thousand were Christians and around eight hundred were Jews.⁷⁷

⁷² <http://www.skopje.gov.mk/en/desktopdefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=46> official portal of city of Skopje.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Mihajlovic and Urbanek, "*Skopje, the world bastard city*", p. 45.

⁷⁶ <http://www.skopje.gov.mk/en/desktopdefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=46> official portal of Skopje.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

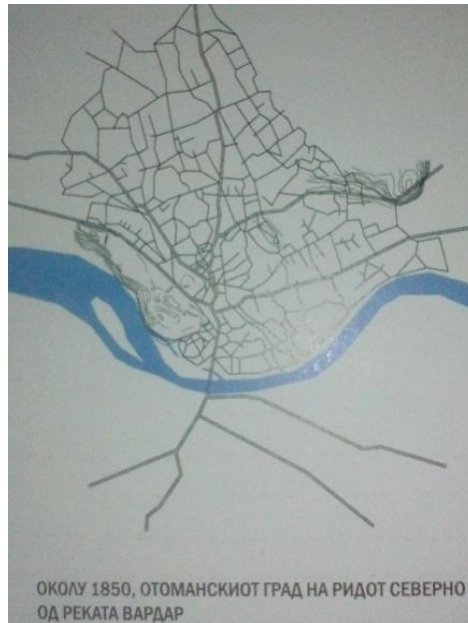


Fig. 30

According to the picture (Fig.30) the mediaeval Skopje was located on the northern bank of Vardar River. In 1873 first railway track was constructed (in Fig. 31 shown in red) which evoked the importance of the southern riverbank of Vardar.

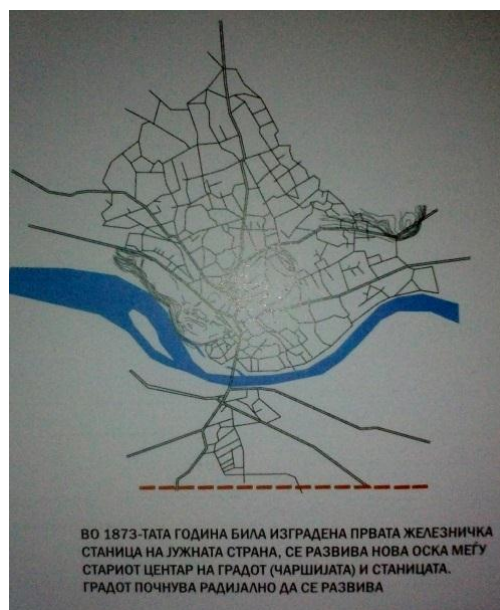


Fig. 31

During the Russian-Ottoman war in 1878, Uskup was adopted to the Bulgarian Empire and in the same year, according to the Berlin Treaty, Uskup was given back under the reign of the Ottomans.⁷⁸ In 1880 the Christian municipality, called *Pajko Maalo*, was formed.⁷⁹ As the

⁷⁸ www.cityofskopje.gov.

traveller Han noted, he was impressed by "the Dutch clearness" of the houses of the rich Christian owners, who according to his opinion were brave to show their fortune to the Ottoman tax collectors.⁸⁰ As a consequence of the establishment of the railway track, the urban development of Uskup grew and residents settled on the southern riverbank. In 1888 the railway tracks were extended to Nish and Kumanovo, which spread even more the urban development in the southern part below the river Vardar.⁸¹ (Figure 32) At the end of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century Uskup gained eminent importance in trading which influenced the growth of inhabitants. In 1890, Uskup reached the number of thirty-two thousands of residents. The city of Uskup during Ottoman Empire was surrounded by the hill Gazi Baba on the eastern borders. The hill was a place dedicated for meditations and there were buried important figures of that time.⁸²

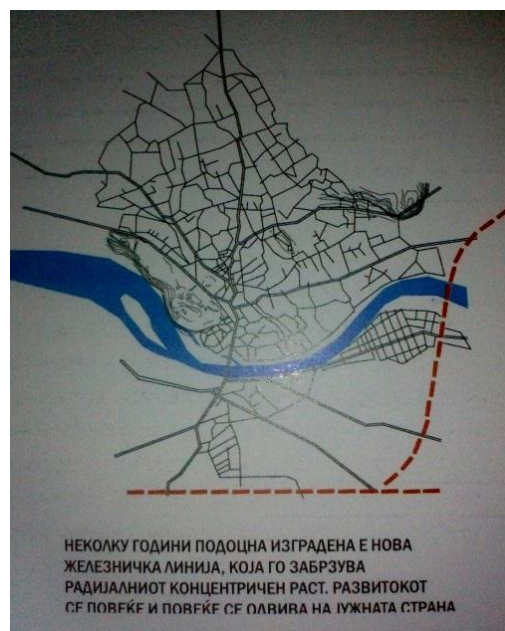


Fig. 32

The architecture of Uskup gained Ottoman outlook due to the construction of mosques. Buildings that remained from that period are the Sultan's Murat mosque, the Clock Tower, the Fortress Kale, the Stone Bridge, the work zone called *Charshija*, the Turkish bath Daut's Pasha hammam, Burmali's Mosque etc. The symbolic image of the hammam, mosques and the working zone *Charshija* gave the city a specific character of a religious, clean and labour place. The churches that remained during the Ottoman period had important meaning for

⁷⁹ *Maalo* is Macedonian word adapted according to the Turkish word *Mahalle* which can be translated in English as District.

⁸⁰ Boris Chipan, "Makedonskite gradovi vo 19 vek", p. 31.

⁸¹ Mihajlovic and Urbanek, "Skopje, the world bastard city" p.44.

⁸² Boris Chipan, "Makedonskite gradovi vo 19 vek", p.32.

Christians – for them they maintained their identity thanks to which they started the nation building activities against Ottomans.⁸³

One of the urbanistic value that remained from this period is the residential zone and the structure of the construction of the municipalities, called as *Maalo*. Among the ones that are preserved till present times are *Madzir Maalo*, *Chair*, *Pajko Maalo* and the *Evrejsko Maalo*. The streets had irregular flow that resulted out of the "biological" development of the urban network, which referred to a natural development of the venues inspired by the Ottoman organization of cities. The municipalities were inhabited by mixed population of the Muslims, the Christians and the Jews, who were organized in groups that proceeded the administrative work of the municipality, who were organized in communities administered by their religious representatives. Each community had a central tap, a bakery and a massive tree that would provide a shadow and would also function as a central meeting place for the residents. Aside from the religious activities, residents did not have any other cultural activities. The eminent citizens were called *esnafs*.⁸⁴ This name was given to a person who was generally respected among others, a person with heritage and recognized integrity. Those people played important role in the emancipation of the religious and national organization of the residents.⁸⁵

Other architectural value from that period was the established working zone called *Charshija*. It was a public space where traders offered their products and services. There were around two thousand of small shops that were made out of agile and simple construction, located on the both sides of the narrow streets. These were mostly trading places with tanneries, heats, silk and shoes. There was a hierarchy among the workers depending on their professional skills: *Usta-bashija*⁸⁶ was called the head of a guild who had the best qualified working abilities, below him was *Majstor*⁸⁷, then *Kalfa*⁸⁸ and as last one which was called the assistant called *Chirak*.⁸⁹ This area was the most important zone that contributed to the further urban development of the city. *Charshija* remained as part of the Ottoman heritage in nowadays Skopje.⁹⁰

⁸³ Boris Chipan, "Makedonskite gradovi vo 19 vek", p. 59.

⁸⁴ Macedonian word adopted from Turkish word *esnafs* and it has three meanings in the Macedonian language such as: 1. Guild, 2. Shop keeper 3. Eminent, honest person.

⁸⁵ Boris Chipan, "Makedonskite gradovi vo 19 vek", p. 42.

⁸⁶ Macedonian word adopted from Turkish word *ustabaşı* or in English is head of guild.

⁸⁷ Macedonian word adopted from Turkish word *mjeshtër* or in English is craftsman.

⁸⁸ Macedonian word adopted from Turkish word *kalfë* or in English is assistant.

⁸⁹ Macedonian word adopted from Turkish word *çırak* or in English is apprentice.

⁹⁰ Chipan, "Makedonskite gradovi vo 19 vek", p. 34.



fig. 33 *Charshija* during the Ottoman Empire



fig.34 *Charshija* in nowadays Skopje

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire began to face even more serious economic and political problems than ever. The political autonomous units were undermined by the Christians who were reinforced and emancipated as a result of the uprisings. Furthermore, the church played important role as a core base for the revival of educational activities and the stimulation of the nation building movements against the Ottomans.

The medieval city of Skopje characterized by architectural objects such as churches, hammams, mosques and fortress remained a monumental reality until the 19th century. When the Western influence came in the region it affected the architecture by constructing posts, schools, city halls etc. It also reflected the social and political changes in the Ottoman Empire.⁹¹

In 1912 Albanian rebels took over Uskup from the Ottoman Empire and made the city a part of the Great Albania. In the same year Balkan wars emerged and they ended a year later by signing the Bucharest treaty. Ottomans were pushed out from the Balkan and the territory of the nowadays Macedonia was divided between the Serbians, the Bulgarians and the Greeks. The city of Uskup belonged to the Serbs but the enthusiasm over the territory with the insatiable neighbours caused several fights at fronts during the Great War. In 1929 the city of Uskup belonged to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes which later transformed into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Uskup was renamed to Skoplje and in the following years the territory of the city did not enlarge. In 1931 there were registered about sixty-eight thousand of inhabitants. (Fig. 35) The city gained new architectural image of neoclassical style as opposite of the archetypical Ottoman style. The Mosque Burmali was ruined and replaced by

⁹¹ Idem. p. 53.

the Officer Club. Besides that, the new National Bank and the National Theatre were also built in neoclassical style and they formed the square devoted to the King Petar the Great.⁹²

Such policy of a reconstruction of the city into neoclassical style is one of the main points of the ideology of the nowadays project Skopje 2014.

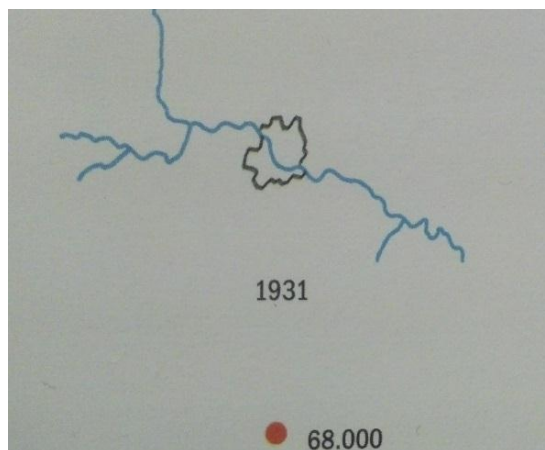


Fig. 35 The shape of the city of Skopje in the year 1931 and the number of inhabitants

During the World War II was Skoplje conquered by the Bulgarian fascists and the city witnessed another change of monuments when the symbols of previous rulers were replaced and the city renamed from Skoplje to Skopie. The Bulgarians built new museums, libraries, schools, theatre and a university devoted to Tsar Boris. Furthermore, in the end of the year 1944 the anti-Nazi resistance organization called *Partizans*, lead by Josip Broz Tito, conquered the territory of nowadays Macedonia and for the first time a state of the Macedonian nation was established with its own Macedonian language, as a part of the federal system of Yugoslavia. The name of the city evolved into it's nowadays version Skopje. Naturally, as the largest city, it became the capital and the city acquired appropriate administrative, economical and cultural functions. The national square in Skopje was renamed and devoted to marshal Tito, as well as the monuments of the former regime were melted and replaced by the symbols of National Freedom. The socialist regime of Yugoslavia was different than the one of the Soviet Union. The economy and the market were organized according to the Marxist idea of self-regulation and industries were controlled by the owners. The city of Skopje enlarged, as well as the number of residents, which rose from 82,000 in 1945 (Fig. 36) to 171,000 in 1960 (Fig. 37).⁹³

⁹² Mihajlovic and Urbanek, "*Skopje, the world bastard city*", p. 46.

⁹³ Mihajlovic and Urbanek, "*Skopje, the world bastard city*", p. 47.

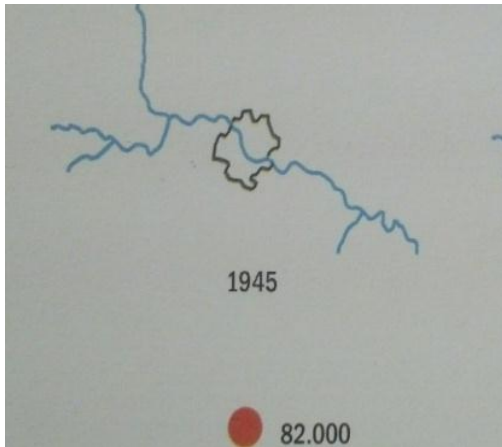


Fig. 36

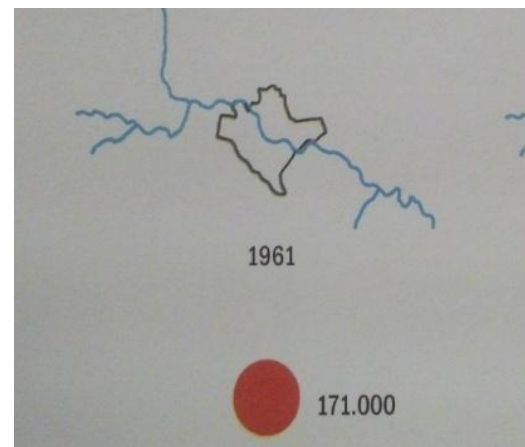


Fig. 37



Fig. 38

On the 26 July 1963, a catastrophic earthquake destroyed completely around seventy percent of the city of Skopje. Around hundred and twenty thousands of houses were destroyed and around one thousand people lost their lives. This moment was an occasion for the United Nations to unify their forces during the cold war to help with the reconstruction of Skopje. In the first thirty-six hours after the earthquake planes with food, tents, clothes and medical help from all around the world arrived. One week after the earthquake a commission of experts assembled by the government of Yugoslavia decided to tear down the rest of the ruins and to build up a new city. Due to these actions the city of Skopje gained its image of the city of solidarity. One year later, in 1964, the organization of United Nations financially supported the Council of Architects who was responsible for the reconstruction of the city. The council contained one representative from the UN, five representative architects from the Yugoslavian Federation and five foreign architects. Sequentially, the first Administration for

Urbanism in the terms of Yugoslavia was formed. Ernest Weissmann, a Croatian architect, was announced the president of the council. He supported the left wing and he encouraged the social and political questions. He stated that the need of people became abstract. Opposed to the urban solutions suggested by Weissman, one of the members of the council, a Greek architect Constantinos A. Doxiadis, representing the opposite right political wing, proposed and worked on the so-called Four Programs for the reconstruction of Skopje. It included the construction zones, program for housing, projects for traffic and transport and for the infrastructure of the city.⁹⁴ His work was less oriented to the aesthetics; he rather focused on the individual style of an architect and on the sensitivity of the user. In his works the city was perceived as a coordinated network which could accept unlimited number of inhabitants, cars and money. His aim was to promote anti-collectivism, freedom, democracy and an absolute faith in the technology. Doxiadis`s concept was an opposite to the concept of the communist urban planning promoted by the state and also stood against the narrative history of the city of Skopje.⁹⁵

After one year of research, in 1965, the council and the Macedonian Institute for the city planning submitted a general plan. Influenced by socialist regime, the plan of the city was less oriented towards the private sector. The planners created a hierarchy of units and centers by creating micro-centres in the residential zones as open and green zones. Because of the tectonic instability the zone near the riverbanks of Vardar were planned as public zones for recreation as parks, playgrounds and sport stadiums. In the plan also a new roads called Western and the Eastern traffic roads were organized in order to connect the northern and the southern roads. The future public transport was organized by bus transport being the most transparent solution for the city. In the residential zones organized by the general plan, there was suggested to build easily constructed houses that would later be open to possible reconstruction undertaken by their owners. Buildings were not meant to overshadow the image of the fortress of Kale.⁹⁶ Furthermore, the Old Town was planned to be reconstructed as a working, functional part of the city instead of an open air ethnographical museum. The new municipalities were constructed to be able to accept around six thousand inhabitants. Such organization of municipalities initiated segregation through inequality in cultural and functional standards between different ethnical groups. There were about sixty percent of Macedonians, eight percent of Turks, seven percent of Roma people, seven percent of Serbs,

⁹⁴ Mihajlovic and Urbanek, "*Skopje, the world bastard city*", p.14.

⁹⁵ Idem. p. 15.

⁹⁶ Idem. p. 17.

six percent of Albanians, fourteen percent of Vlachs, and another fourteen per cent of other minorities.⁹⁷

The general plan also proposed a construction of mobile house called *baraka*. These houses were located far from the religious temples. The need for the size of the *baraks* was different depending also on ethnical habits. For example, an average Macedonian family consisting of four family members had other demands than for instance an Albanian or Roma family, usually consisting of more than eight members. The standardized size of *barak* was not comfortable for them.⁹⁸

One of the architects who worked on the urban solution for the city centre of Skopje was Kenzo Tange. He was well-known for the reconstruction of Hiroshima. Kenzo considered the city as a structure that should correspond with the functions of a society. He especially took into consideration the ethnical diversity on the Balkan. In case of Skopje, he suggested two main elements: the city wall and the city port. The first element consisted of a dense residential zone designed for around thirty thousand inhabitants. And regarding the second element, a city port, Tange planned objects with public functions such as a railway station or a bus station. He called the riverbank the nucleus of the city and he planned the construction of a telecommunication building and the building of the Post there. He also projected a construction of two central squares on the both sides of the river. The first one called Square of Freedom and the second one called Square of Marshal Tito. One of the essential part of his plan was the project of a building called Market House Bridge, which was to connect the old and the new part of the city.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Chipan, "Makedonskite gradovi vo 19 vek", p. 60.

⁹⁸ Mihajlovic and Urbanek, "Skopje, the world bastard city", p. 21.

⁹⁹ Idem. p. 28.



Fig.39 Plan proposed by Kenzo Tange for the construction of the centre of Skopje ¹⁰⁰

Kenzo`s plan changed several times, but majority of his suggestions were accepted. However, the so-called nucleus of his plan has never become a connecting zone remaining an empty urban zone till nowadays. Regarding the two of the predicted squares, only one of them was realized and that was the square devoted to Marshal Tito, which today is Macedonia square. Other planned square remains an empty zone being used as an unofficial Roma market.

¹⁰⁰ Reading legend from figure 39- yellow- residential city wall; white- charshija; purple- educational activities; black- culture and science; brown- nucleus of the old town; red- nucleus of the new center.

The picture represent objects which were applied by Kenzo`s plan

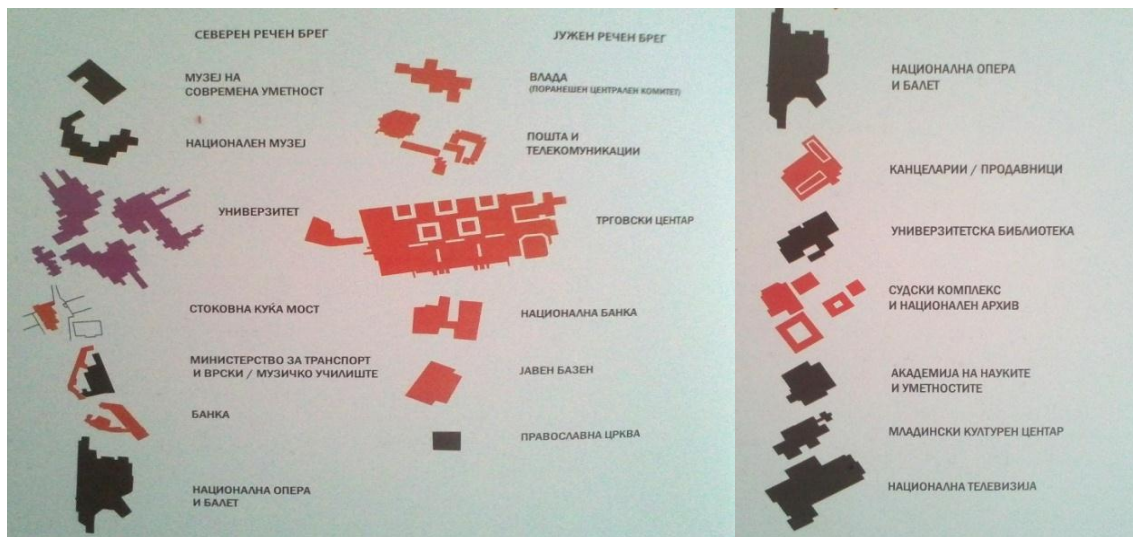


Fig. 40 (translated explanations are numerically ordered, starting from number one, on the left side and numbers continue in vertical order¹⁰¹)

¹⁰¹ 1. Museum of Contemporary Art; 2. National Museum; 3. University; 4. Market House Bridge; 5. Ministry of Transportation and Connections and a School of Music; 6. bank; 7. National Opera and Ballet; 8.

The Market House Bridge suggested by Kenzo was constructed 1980 as the last project. In the same year there were 408,000 inhabitants registered in Skopje and the city size evidently enlarged. (Figure 41)

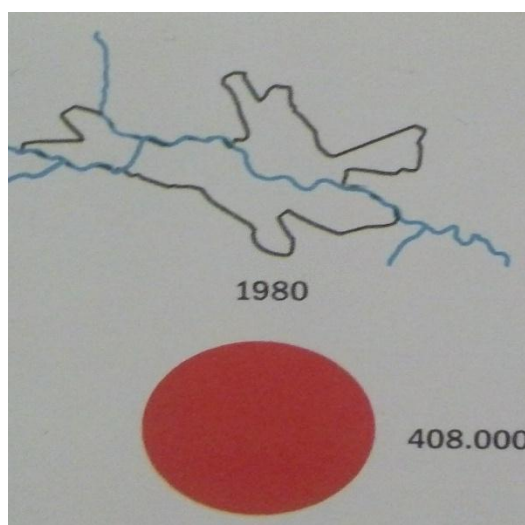


Fig. 41

After the secession of Yugoslavia in 1991, the city of Skopje became the capital of the newly established independent Republic of Macedonia. Former centralized administrative governance of the city was reorganized. Previously in the federal system of Yugoslavia, the term "local" had a meaning either of a federal state, a district or a local self-governance. Therefore in terms of Yugoslavia, the meaning of local interests had a double or even triple content. The city in terms of Yugoslavia was considered as a special unit of the local government. Such a confusion of usage of terms required a delicate legislation of the new administrative units.¹⁰²

Also, experience of an independent state brought in new issues, such as promotion of the Macedonian identity. For instance, the core symbols of the Republic of Macedonia were problematic among the neighbouring states. Macedonian language was considered by the Bulgarians a Bulgarian dialect. The Serbians did not want to recognize the independence of the newly established Macedonian church. The new flag and the name Macedonia caused issues for the Greeks that claimed these symbols as part of their Hellenistic identification.

Government; 9. Post and Telecommunication; 10. city mall; 11. National Bank; 12. public pool; 13. Orthodox church; 14. offices and shops; 15. University Library; 16. Court and National archive; 17. Academy of Sciences and Art; 18. Youth Cultural Center; 19. National Television.

¹⁰² Ilija Todorovski, "Local self government and the decentralization of Republic of Macedonia", <http://fes.hr/E-books/pdf/Local%20Self%20Government/08.pdf>.

The importance of the symbols became a significant part of the struggle of Macedonian politicians for promoting the new nation-state identity. Interrelations among the ethnicities became more and more tense, especially the relation between the ethnic Albanians and the ethnic Macedonians. The actions that shaped relations started in 1994 when the first private Albanian university was opened. Then the newly adopted laws about the decentralization and the reorganization of local units and their delegacies have irritated Albanians to criticize them as discriminatory and mono-ethnically oriented. An other situation in Gostivar- where the local mayor displayed Albanian flags all over the city - flags which were allowed to be hoisted only for national holidays – and he refused to obey the court orders to take the flags down. Such actions evoked a brief military intervention at three different places, where radical ethnic Albanians confronted Macedonian state forces. In the same year the Ohrid Frame Agreement was signed which meant that the tensions were stopped and better rights for the ethnic minorities were secured in order to contribute to more functional process of decentralization and autonomy on a local level.¹⁰³

Similar labelling of public places occurred in Skopje in 2002 when situating a seventy-seven meter high millennium cross on the top of hill Vodno. In a consequence, the Albanian community situated a statue of an Albanian warrior Skenderbeg in the centre of Skopje in 2007.¹⁰⁴ In 2002 the territory of Skopje enlarged and the census recorded 506,000 inhabitants. (Figure 42)

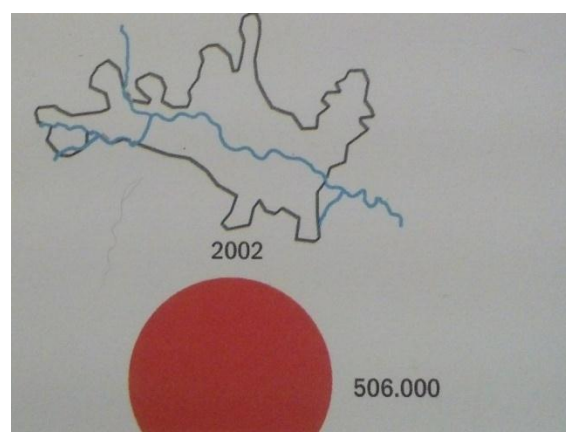


Fig. 42

In 2005 the new territorial reorganization meant creating ten administrative units (ten municipalities) in the capital city and it gave Skopje a new physical and demographical organization. Instead of previous seven municipalities, city of Skopje included the rural

¹⁰³ Goran Janev, "Narrating the Nation, Narrating the city".

¹⁰⁴ Mihajlovic and Urbanek, "Skopje, the world bastard city", p.45.

zones. The city is now 675,000 km² large and it is long forty-one kilometres. The percentage of the Albanian population has grown from 15.3 percent to 20.7 percent. The increased number of ethnic Albanians meant a right of having Albanian as an official language in those municipalities, where they represent more than twenty percent of population. (Figure 43)

In 2006, after the territorial reorganization, a marginal right wing conservative political party VMRO-DPMNE represented by Nikola Gruevski won the governmental elections. Their policy was to affirm Macedonian identity, to deal with the dispute with Greece over the name issue and to deal with the pressure coming from the European Union and its integration policy. Their politics consisted of a reconstruction of public spaces in the name of the labelling of the nation. For such purpose they hired an architectural private company IN-PUMA to create a plan for a new urban reconstruction of the city of Skopje. This was to be a first urban change of the city after the one proposed by Kenzo Tange in 1965.

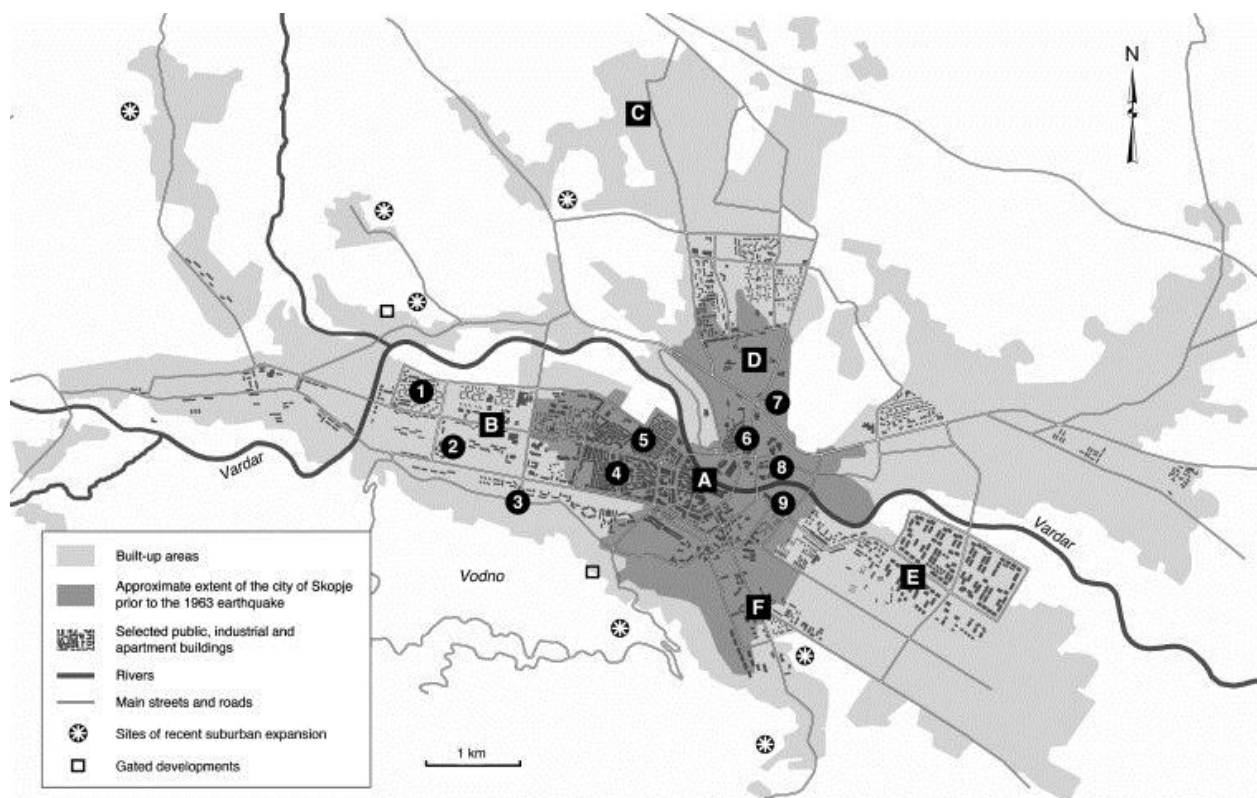


Fig 43 Skopje new physical and demographic organization

Unofficially the idea of the project Skopje 2014 occurred some years before its official pronouncement to public in 2010 (Fig. 44). Since its first presentation, the plan has been adjusted several times. For instance, the requests of the representatives of ethnic communities

in order to reduce inter-ethnic tensions were taken in consideration. The statue of the Albanian hero Skenderbeg will become part of a new, larger square devoted to this figure.¹⁰⁵

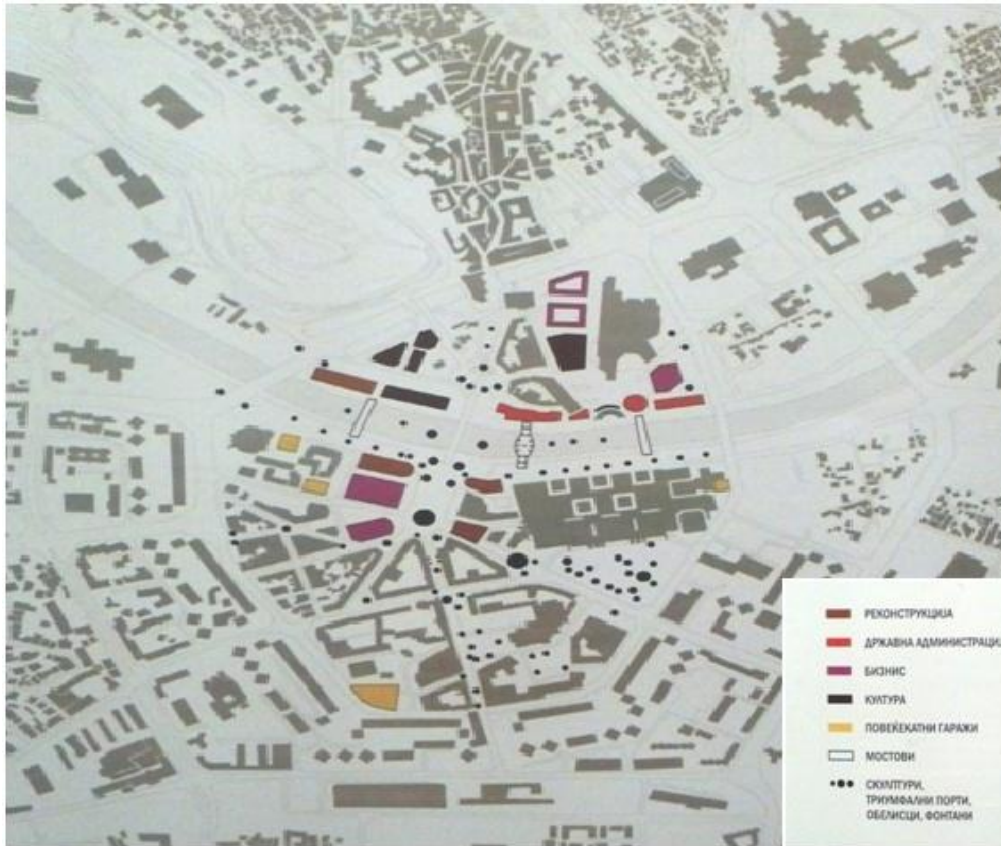


Fig.44 Plan of project Skopje 2014¹⁰⁶

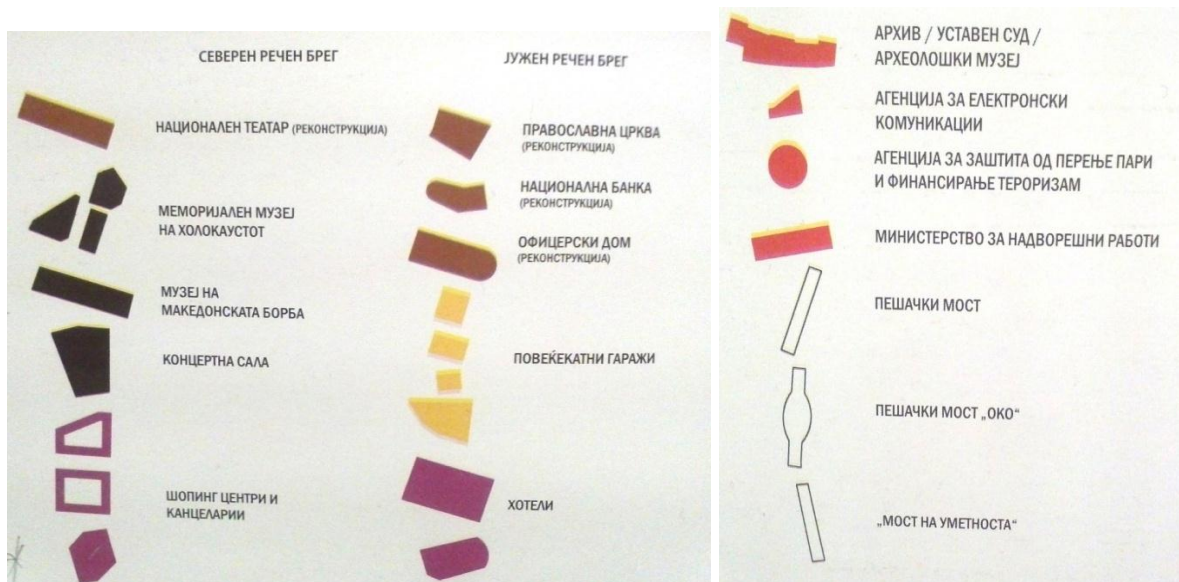


Fig.45 Objects in legend are numerically ordered from left side into vertical order¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ „Skender Beg ke bide gotov do 2014”, Skopje: build.mk. 28 November 2011.

¹⁰⁶ Brown- reconstruction; red- state administration; purple- business; black- culture; yellow- garages; white- bridges; spots- statues.

In the project there was not elaborated a plan of a modification of the fortress of Kale. But during ongoing years archaeologists have been working on excavations underneath the fortress. Therefore, in 2011 a plan for constructing a museum, which would present findings from the fortress, was established. The planned image of the new museum happened to resemble a church from the Byzantine period, which was chosen according to the dating of the findings. But the proposed style of the church evoked clashes among ethnicities turning the project Skopje 2014 down as a tendency of the government towards using symbols in public spaces of only Macedonian ethnicity. Such clashes resulted in a bloody incident involving hundreds of young Macedonians and Albanians. The incident was calmed down when vandals destroyed a metal construction of the museum.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, the project Skopje 2014 inspired declarations of hatred and panic among ethnicities.

Based on presented overview of the development of the city of Skopje in the „longue durée” perspective, we can discuss the Capital reconstruction strategy of Macedonian government. Skopje 2014 is not the only attempt of modernization and Europeanization project articulated for Skopje. The first wave can be identified when the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was established, and the de-Ottomanisation and modernization of the cities was carried also with the aim to make them look European or occidental. Second wave came during the reconstruction after WW II, and most strongly after the earthquake in 1963. The reconstruction proposed by Kenzo Tange can be perhaps understood as first of all modernizing and Occidentalizing the city. The project Skopje 2014 introduced by the Macedonian government highlights the national interpretation or appropriation of European tradition in architecture and building the cities. There is an evident predisposition of governmental units to use the symbols to label public spaces in order to demonstrate and preserve identity. However the outcomes do not always meet the target. Especially, in the studied case of the project Skopje 2014, instead of promoting interest in architecture and concentrating on the urban development, the project has only caused tensions and provocations among politicians and ethnicities. The third chapter will pay more attention to these issues.

¹⁰⁷ 1. National Theatre; 2. Memorial Museum of the Holocaust; 3. concert hall; 4. shopping mall and offices; 5. Orthodox Church; 6. National Bank; 7. Officer House; 8. garages; 9. hotels; 10. Archive and Constitutional Court; 11. Agency for Electronic Communications; 12. Agency for Protection of Money Laundry; 13. Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 14. pedestrian bridge; 15. pedestrian bridge”Eye”; 16. Bridge of Arts.

¹⁰⁸ G.Janev, *”Narrating the Nation, Narrating the city”*.

Chapter III

Theoretical review associated with the case study of project Skopje 2014

In the previous two chapters a synchronic and a diachronic approach of analysis brought light into various levels of meanings and questions that project Skopje 2014 raised and inspired. As shown in the first chapter, comments and criticism addressed to the project Skopje 2014 reviewed the case as a subject of spatial politics of the government of Macedonia that was aiming at reconstructing Macedonian identity. As a result of a large inclusion of symbols, which some of them denied or overshadowed each others importance and meaning, the project became paradoxical and controversial. For instance, passing from the symbols associated with the period of Alexander the Great directly to the baroque and neoclassical architectural style, skipping all the previous periods, can be understood as an aspiration to erase or totally suppress the presence of the Ottoman architecture or other essential architectural features of the city of Skopje. One of the proposed attempts that I have deliberately pointed out is the aim to brand the image of the city which should reflect at the same time Macedonian nationhood and an Europeanized outlook as well.

Andrew Graan proposes the term nation branding in relation to the project Skopje 2014 as a strategic mode of the Government in order to formulate a national identity as a branded community. The final result he proposes is to motivate and enhance the movement of the economy and the finances in the country.¹⁰⁹

Therefore, the idea of bringing baroque and neoclassical architectural style into the city, implemented through inadequate copies taken as example from other European cities, indicates a problem of the governmental politics. Fabrication of a new but not archetypal style refers to an invention of new symbols and traditions. The aim of Macedonian government can be understood as an attempt to create a continuity of a long history of one nation and on one territory.

Long time ago, Eric Hobsbawm in the introduction to the famous book "Invention of Tradition" claimed that: "The use of ancient materials to construct invented traditions for a novel type for quite novel purposes.[...] the echoes of baroque forms of celebration, display and pomp are unmistakable in this new festival architecture".¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Andrew Graan, "*Counterfiring nation? Skopje 2014, the politics of Nation Branding in Macedonia*", 2013.

¹¹⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, "*Invention of Tradition*", 1983, p.6.

Hobsbawm opened the question how far new traditions can use the old materials and interpret them into new symbols, extend their usage and institutionalize them. He described the process of invention of tradition as a set of practices that have symbolic nature and that aim at including certain values and norms, which would imply continuity with the past.¹¹¹

Applying Hobsbawm's comments on the results of the analysis of the project Skopje 2014, we see how wise his thoughts are. Certainly, a new proposed urban plan slowly initiated changes in high school textbooks. In order to adapt new elements, these are incorporated in the history meant for the younger generations. History as a source of knowledge, interprets the past in ways that do not necessarily present the truth, but it rather gives a representation of the past, serving to social functions and ideology of one nation and one state. Usually, these representations have not been preserved in the popular memory, but rather in the memory of the political elites, who create, legitimize and institutionalize episodes from the past.¹¹² In other words, the history, as a living place of memory already did not exist and the national ideology is an example of how memory is manipulated with the aim of achieving collective memories.¹¹³

The symbols which are illustrated from the point of view of the elites usually tend to express an ethno-genesis through the public urban space, which is composed of inhabitants of various ethnic and cultural origins.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the public space becomes means of expression of the symbolic representation of the political order. The city consists of a multitude of layers of narratives and thus becomes an image of individual and collective memory.¹¹⁵

Collective memory is a specific interactive framework, which directs activity and experience and is independent of the practice and representation from generation to generation.¹¹⁶ But collective memory does not necessarily refer to the collective experience, because it is something that is being constantly revised to keep up with the identity.¹¹⁷

Therefore, it is very important to focus on the relation between the city and the collective memory and to increase an awareness of the past and the presence by highlighting how memory shapes the identity. Especially in places as Skopje, the project brought about

¹¹¹ Eric Hobsbawm, "*Invention of Tradition*", 1983, p.1.

¹¹² Idem. p. 13.

¹¹³ Moritz Csaky, "*Collective identities in central Europe in modern times*", 1999, p. 19.

¹¹⁴ Idem. p. 2.

¹¹⁵ Herold, Langer, Lecher, "*Reading the city. Urban space and memory in Skopje*", p. 8.

¹¹⁶ Moritz Csaky, "*Collective identities in central Europe in modern times*", 1999, p.16.

¹¹⁷ Herold, Langer, Lecher, "*The city. Urban space and memory in Skopje*", p. 10.

memory clashes. It illustrates ambiguity between the architectural heritage in the city and the new constructed architectural styles and monuments that aim to become a heritage.

Jan Assmann elaborates the theory of the collective memory according to sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and the art historian Aby Warburg and he proposes an essential viewpoint of the term, which I have related to the understanding of project Skopje 2014. The authors have independently distinguished 'collective' from 'social' memory, in order to shift the discourse, concerning collective knowledge out of the biological framework.¹¹⁸ Nietzsche in addition had distinguished the difference between the animal's genetic programs that guarantee the survival of species, despite the humans who must find a means by which to maintain their nature consistently through generations.¹¹⁹ According to the authors, the solution of this problem is offered by cultural memory, as a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation. Therefore, Assmann has defined the concept of cultural memory through a delimitation that distinguishes, first from 'communicative memory' or 'everyday memory' which in narrower sense it lacks the cultural meaning; and as second, from science which does not have the characteristics of memory as it relates to a collective self-image.¹²⁰ He states that the concept of communicative memory includes varieties of collective memory that are based on everyday communication. Those varieties constitute the field of oral history. He has defined the everyday communication characterized by a high degree of non- specialization, reciprocity of roles, thematic instability and disorganization. Through this manner of communication, each individual composes a memory which is socially mediated and relates to a group. The groups are set of people such as families, neighbourhood, professional groups, and associations, up to and including nations. Every individual belongs to numerous groups. Another important point, the authors have pointed out, is the transition of memory to history. He precised this transition as a relation when the communicative memory enters into the area of objectivised culture, expressed whether in text, images, rites, buildings, monuments, cities or even landscapes. According to Assmann, "the objectivised culture has rather a ceremonial communication as a close connection to the groups and their identity. In this case the group bases its

¹¹⁸ Jan Assmann, "*Collective memory and cultural identity*", 1995, p.125.

¹¹⁹ Idem. p.126.

¹²⁰ Ibid .

consciousness of unity and specificity upon this knowledge and derives formative and normative impulses from it, which allows the group to reproduce its identity”.¹²¹

Shifting to the case of the project Skopje 2014, Assmann’s exploration can be conceived as the cultural memory of the residents of Skopje. Their collective behaviour and interactions represent the biological framework and development of their identity from generation to generation. Thus the communicative memory that sets up the concept of oral history can be different from resident to resident in Skopje, based on the conditions in which social group they belong. Accordingly the second delimitation, the scientific knowledge about the development of the city of Skopje, does not relate directly to the collective self- image of all the residents. The transition of the cultural memory in order to preserve or reproduce the identity, associates the project Skopje 2014, when in a ceremonial communication derives formative and normative impulses for the residents of Skopje.

The other important element in this thesis is the public space. Henri Lefebvre proposes that spaces are coded and they can be produced, that squares and streets can be used in order to identify with something or someone.¹²² Accordingly, in the decoding of the city of Skopje, after the implementation of project Skopje 2014, what possibly a researcher or traveller can understand from the city, like a historical source? Similarly to Lefebvre’s claim about spaces, more particularly, Peter Stachel, points out on the account of the monuments in his article ‘An Austrian Place of Memory’, when he states: ”Monuments can be understood as a form of information, storage, by which texts can be produced with application of cultural code, which can be decoded through indication and signification”.¹²³

According to his statement, then how one may interpret the statues with hidden names and gigantic shapes in project Skopje 2014? For instance, the statue Warrior on a Horse, that unofficially represents Alexander the Great, whom myths represent as being bisexual. His statue was erected in one of the most conservative and homophobic society. In addition, Stachel claims that the purpose of the erection of political symbols aims to document certain states of conditions of elites, but in the same time the variety of meanings of the statues can symbolize controversial aspects.¹²⁴ It should be additionally taken into consideration that the understanding of the symbols of statues can be influenced and differently interpreted by the political opponents by their various comments and criticism.

¹²¹ Assmann, “*The collective memory and cultural identity*”, p. 127.

¹²² Henri Lefebvre, “*The production of space*”, 2003, p.8.

¹²³ Peter Stachel, “*An Austrian Place of Memory*”, 1999, p. 159.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 173.

Historical examples from the past evidence enormous temptation to create a past or tradition by the means of invented tradition. Hobsbawm has pointed out several examples, such as the German case and their construction of formal, ritual spaces that consciously allowed German nationalism.¹²⁵ Other case, he has pointed out is the Red Square in Moscow from the year of 1918, which was systematically replicated by Fascist regimes.¹²⁶ In addition, Lubomir Liptak has pointed out to the example of naming the streets, squares and districts-after important personalities, in order to demonstrate the groups controlling the town. For instance, the most frequent cult personalities in the name of squares and streets were Rakoczi, Kossuth, from the Hungarian army in 1848-1849, generals and martyrs of the revolution.¹²⁷ In the more recent past, the socialist system also wanted to create a break with the past and therefore to erase memory, which became also visible at the urban space, like in the case of Stalinist Moscow, that was reconstructed following the general plan in the year of 1935, or as the centres of several cities in Eastern Germany were remodelled, after the Second World war.¹²⁸

Camilo Sitte, an Austrian art historian and architect was considered to have a strong influence on the urban city planning. He stated that the principles of ancient urban spaces have been lost in the modern urban planning. His statement based on his pedestrian experience as a true factor of success, he claimed that the design of streets in successful precedents always revolves the experience. In addition, he added some general guidelines of dimensions of open space as squares that are surrounded by buildings, in order to keep the welcoming spirit of the space. In his opinion, the natural growth of squares has a key notion of ideal city, but the city developed through times, means that the failing monuments should be removed and the successful have to remain. Therefore, Sitte identifies a problem of nowadays urban planners who do not respect these rules, and as he claimed, the present day's cities are constructed for machines and not for human being. Sitte believed that the use of style of Ancient framework is a failure. Further it led to inefficiency and hierarchically organized city, where the public space is not a primary component of the city. Finally, he concluded that those frameworks for construction of the public spaces are irregular elements inappropriate for the built form. He believed that those frameworks can also affect the importance of the relationship between the social class and the public space.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, "*Invention of tradition*", 1983, p. 304.

¹²⁶ Idem. p.305.

¹²⁷ Lubomir Liptak, "*Collective identity and public spaces*", 1999, p. 123.

¹²⁸ Herold, Langer, Lecher, "*The city. Urban space and memory in Skopje*", p.41.

¹²⁹ Camilo Sitte, "*City building according the artistic principles*", 1989.

Conclusion

It has not been the intention of current thesis to provide some definitive answers concerning the conflict of interests that circumscribes the project Skopje 2014. The basic preoccupation of thesis has been to emphasize the question of the strategy of the Macedonian Government and to present the effects connected with the formulation of the identity. By examining theories and examples in the past of some similar spatial politics, as it was presented in the third chapter, I wished to approach to project Skopje 2014 and to establish an academic background and possibly to come up with some new perspectives as a result of the case study.

The first two chapters` aim was to link the circumstances of the project 2014 with the destiny of the capital and the conditions of development of Macedonian nation. This method notifies the important events and memory which are preserved in the interactive framework of the residents of the city Skopje. Therefore, the project Skopje 2014 is accused to break this connection between the history of the city and the history of the nation, and disrupt the sentimental and subjective relationship of the residents with their city. But on the other hand, the chosen personalities represented in the variety of monuments confirm a continuity of one long tradition and are linking Skopje to European traditions in building of capital cities and they link Macedonian history with European history

Presented history of Skopje shows that there is an evident cultural conflict with Greece about the usage of symbols resulting in Greek denial to recognize the Macedonian state under its formal constitutional name. On the other hand, there is a cultural proximity on regional level, for instance through the similarity of Macedonian language with Bulgarians, through their similar folklore, songs etc, which are seen as a result of common past experience, which culminated when a deliberately oppressed nation became one of the nations constituting new post-war Yugoslavia. This act was yet defined as an artificial construct, or as Greek nationalists say, as 'a creation of Tito'.

According to the proposed hypothesis, the analysis of the contents of the project Skopje 2014 confirms that it is Governmental re-interpretation of urban space that aims to brand the image of the city and to promote the nation in order to achieve economic development or even to fabricate the image of the city for promoting the Macedonians as a nation with long established tradition. Thus by branding the city into more Europeanized one it opened the question what is the meaning of Europeanization and whether it is in contradiction with

national contents of the project Skopje 2014. The ethnographical observation on project Skopje 2014 helped me to approach the project deliberately and to explore if the presented identities are used as complementary or contradictory and yet how the public perceives the presented identities.

The research has illustrated the ambiguity between the architectural heritage in the city and the new construction selectively choosing from historical architectural styles and monuments that aim to become a heritage. The strategy of project's planners who aimed to make a project with a grandiose signification has rather contradictory than complementary content and effects. Firstly, the description of the promoted architectural style in Skopje 2014, the so called baroque in Skopje, does not represent the baroque of the 17th and 18th century. This new revival of the baroque in the 21st century can be criticized as a synonym for the cities without established tradition. Secondly, the project does not offer an equal representation of monuments that would narrate the presence of other ethnic groups in the state, which leads to conflicting communication among them. On the other hand, as a candidate country to the European Union, the politicians of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia have to decide which role will take the city of Skopje in this Europeanized context. To implement the politics of European standards requests diminution of the meaning of borders, increasing migration and stimulating the multiethnic communication among inhabitants. By implementing banal occidental architecture the Macedonian government is risking to lose city's uniqueness. As demonstrated in the second chapter, through the review of the urban development of Skopje, we identify the city as a modern one, especially thanks to the urban reconstruction proposed by Kenzo Tange, but also as a city with emphasized Ottoman heritage.

In addition, there are several more contradictions regarding the project Skopje 2014. The Constitution of Macedonia prohibits the use of national historical figures on a local level as it is a municipality, if the figure has not a direct connection with the local region. Therefore, the implementation of the classical antiquity as architectural style and incorporating around forty historical figures on a local level in the centre of Skopje, the Macedonian Government risks the representation of the Macedonian nation and the collective identities of the residents of the central district. Further more, the attempt of the project to Europeanize the city has been differently perceived by the public. By adding new objects as Triumphal Arch, several new fountains, a Bridge of Arts or bringing the "new" baroque, the new constructions in the centre of Skopje simulate the look of the objects in the cities as Paris, Rome or Venice. This notion

of Europeanization of the city's image of Skopje regards to the attempt to overshadow the Ottoman oriental look of the city and the presence of the architecture of the 20th century, even though this architectural style represents the collective memory of the generations of inhabitants who still remember Skopje as it was before. On the other hand, according to the results of the collected interviews, the majority of the people showed a positive approach and acceptance of project Skopje 2014. Despite them, the architects, urban experts, sociologist and other experts who mostly have negatively criticized the project, understand the notion of Europeanization of Skopje as a so called disneyfication of the city. This notion has been defined as an attempt of the Macedonian Government to attract only more tourists and to show common belonging, without considering the emotional relationship of the inhabitants with the city. In addition, the small number of students and population who have interfered to criticize the project in public protests displays the population who become less critical and less interested in mediating the work of the Government. Although, this can be addressed as a result of the fear of the population because those who opposed the idea of project were accused as being members of opposing political parties, which later can possibly affect their chances for employment, if not being supporters of ruling party.

Consequently, the project Skopje 2014 can be understood as a result of the historical frustration and events that have influenced the actual urban planning. Political influence manifested in the architecture, the statues and the monumental buildings offer to the public new historical narratives of the city Skopje and Macedonia. Nevertheless, the project Skopje 2014 is still in progress. The academic and public debates will continue, regarding the public use of history through new constructions in public places and possibly this case study, will contribute to the discussion about the approach to the public use of history in the 21st century

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