

**NATIONAL MINORITIES FROM BULGARIA, SERBIA  
AND MACEDONIA TOWARDS REGIONALISM  
AND THE CULTURAL AUTONOMY <sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract.** *In this research we cope with national minorities from Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia, with the aim of analysing their attitudes towards regionalism, cross-border cooperation as well as their increased participation in the local administration affairs. The results show the fact that representatives of these minorities do not perceive the changes of their own social position through regionalism. However, they appear to be willing to take part in such a form of democratic activities, the evidence of which is found in their apprehension of their own rights, stemming from the authentic cultural autonomy area, as well as in their knowledge to accomplish them. This displays their attitudes as up-to-date, specially due to their realisation which has been awaited for decades.*

**Key words:** *decentralization, regionalism, democracy, personal autonomy, cultural rights*

INTRODUCTION

1. The analysis of the way national minorities and majority nation understand regionalism is a very important issue since it helps us identify the extent of the state power domination in the consciousness of the respondents from the fringe parts of Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia. The attitudes of both the majority and the national minorities also become significant because of the fact that every closeness and autism of people tend to be seen as conservative and non-adjusted to the free flow of ideas, capital, commodities, services and people as the presently major bearing in the EU. At the very basis of this approach is re-ques-

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The research enclosed is partially introduced on Секция "Глобално и регионално развитие" на Института по социология при БАН и НЦИОМ при Народното събрание на Република България с подкрепата на Фондация "Фр. Еберт" 10.06.2008. в гр. София.

tioning of the political consciousness regarding the type of sociability in given population as crucial social actors. The research also comprises the attitudes about identity and cultural features, that is, about articulation of the very *cultural autonomy*. One of the paper's issues refers to the questioning of the principle about the extent to which the national minorities are perceived as the subject of the rights or whether every usage of the concept *region* is avoided regardless of the fact that its introduction is legitimate through the legal, political and social plan. The assumption is that the minority communities have a cautious attitude since they could also be seen as part of disloyal citizenry.

The main and auxiliary hypotheses are: the need for regionalization of this part of the Balkans has existed in people's consciousness as the idea about reviving political society and it is based on the need to overcome hegemonic set-up and to carry out the civil social concept for the sake of promoting minority national communities. The individual hypotheses are: 1) the population of the national minorities in the parts of the Balkans has a reserved attitude concerning the needed for regional identification of the part of the territory it inhabits, and 2) population of the national minorities in the examined parts of the Balkans thinks that the regional concept application will create the social prerequisites and institutions for its more adequate inclusion into the social processes for the sake of expressing its social and political will.

2. The collection of equivalent empirical material was done in 2003/4 in five counties of Southeast Serbia, two regions of Central and West Bulgaria and three municipalities of Northwest Macedonia. The sample of the empirical research comprises 1800 respondents and it is the result of random, stratified and quota approach with socio-demographic characteristics: age, education and national affiliation. The groups of respondents are determined by the proportions of these groups' share into the basic population of the given regions following the Population Census. The quotas of some minority ethnic groups are enlarged in order to provide for a relevant number of cases needed for generalizing data about the position of the minorities in each of the given regions. The questionnaire consists of 82 questions of closed and open types as well as those with possible creation of answer (more about the theoretical-hypothetical approach in: J. Živković, 2005:22-26).

The research was realized in the border zones of Southeast Serbia while the places where the poll was conducted in Bulgaria and Macedonia are:

Table 1

Respondents by poll sites in Bulgaria	N	%
Shumen	126	21.1
Kaspichan	34	5.7
Nikola Kozlov	36	6.0
Great Preslav	50	8.3
Veliko Trnovo	176	29.4
Helen	26	4.3
Gornja Orahovica	112	18.7
Stražnica	36	6.0
Total	599	99.5

Not included 3 which is 0.5%

Table 2

Respondents by poll sites in Macedonia	N	%
Skopje	445	75.0
Kumanovo	77	13.0
Tetovo	65	11.0
Total	593	99.0

Not included 6 which is 1.0%

The composition of the respondents regarding gender, age, nationality, degree of schooling, profession, habitation and confession, are presented here from all the three examined regions:

Table 3

Respondents by gender	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Men	307	51.7	291	48.6	328	55.3	926	51.87
Women	286	48.1	304	50.8	261	44.0	851	47.63
Total	593	99.8	599	99.4	589	99.3	1777	99.50

Table 4

Respondents by age	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
19-29	138	23.2	128	21.4	185	31.2	451	25.26
30-39	139	23.4	124	20.6	132	22.3	395	22.13
40-49	138	23.2	102	17.0	110	18.5	350	19.56
50-59	78	13.2	87	14.5	98	16.5	263	14.70
Over 60	99	16.7	156	26.0	68	11.5	323	18.16
Total	592	99.7	593	99.5	593	100.0	1778	99.81

Table 5

Respondents per national affiliation	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Albanian	126	21.36	—	—	134	22.6	260	
Bulgarian	95	16.10	353	59.33	—	—	448	
Roma	109	18.48	83	13.95	100	16.9	292	16.43
Serb	258	43.72	—	—	129	21.8	387	21.76
Macedonian	1	0.17	—	—	229	38.6	230	12.94
Vlach	1	0.17	45	7.56	—	—	46	2.58
Turk	—	—	114	19.16	1	0.2	115	6.48
Total	590	100.0	595	100.0	593	100.0	1778	100.0

Table 6

Respondents by degree of schooling	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No school	53	8.9	24	4.0	14	2.4	91	5.1
Incomplete primary school	62	10.4	84	14.0	60	10.1	206	11.5
Primary school	132	22.2	174	29.0	93	15.7	399	39.9
Three-year professional school	55	9.3	25	4.2	56	9.4	136	13.6
Completed secondary school	195	32.8	197	32.9	255	43.0	647	64.7
Completed high school, faculty or academy	95	16.0	93	15.5	115	19.4	303	16.96
Total	592	99.7	597	99.7	593	100.0	1782	99.8

Table 7

Respondents by profession	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Farmer	31	5.2	27	4.5	17	2.9	75	4.2
Worker	133	22.4	106	17.7	126	21.2	365	20.43
Clerk	69	11.6	52	8.7	69	11.8	190	10.7
Professional	26	4.4	19	3.2	49	8.3	94	5.3
Private entrepreneur	33	5.6	29	4.5	43	7.3	105	5.8
Hired worker	17	2.9	16	2.7	2	0.3	35	1.96
Unemployed	74	12.5	125	20.9	92	15.5	291	16.3
Pupil-student	38	6.4	35	5.8	59	9.9	132	7.36
Housewife	84	14.1	13	2.2	54	9.1	151	8.46
Retired	72	12.1	171	28.5	61	10.3	304	16.96
Other	9	1.5	4	0.7	15	2.5	28	1.56
Total	586	98.7	595	99.3	587	99.0	1770	99.00

Table 8

Respondents by habitation	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Village	154	25.9	168	28.0	83	14.0	405	22.63
Suburbia	75	12.6	16	2.7	117	19.7	208	11.66
City	363	61.1	410	68.4	392	66.1	1165	65.20
Total	592	99.7	594	99.2	592	99.8	1178	99.49

Table 9

Respondents by confession	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Orthodox	347	58.4	394	65.8	339	57.2	1080	60.46
Muslim (follower of Islam)	152	25.6	154	25.7	212	35.8	518	29.03
Protestant	37	6.2	2	0.3	1	0.2	40	2.23
Roam Catholic	3	0.5	1	0.2	–	–	4	0.23
Other	1	0.2	–	–	–	–	1	0.06
I do not acknowledge any confession	5	0.8	24	4.0	13	2.2	42	2.33
I do not know my confessions	6	1.0	7	1.2	5	0.8	18	1.00
Refuse to declare myself	39	6.6	14	2.3	11	1.9	64	3.60
9,00	1	0.2	–	–	–	–	1	0.06
Christian	–	–	–	–	1	0.2	1	0.06
Evangelist	–	–	–	–	3	0.5	3	0.16
Adventist	–	–	–	–	3	0.5	3	0.16
Total	591	99.7	596	99.5	588	99.2	1775	99.46

Of the data that we should draw attention to, the following are singled out:

- As for "gender affiliation," greater is total presence of men for 4.24%, though they are fewer among the respondents in Bulgaria 2,2 % (Table 3);
- As for respondents by *age*, the most present are of 19-29 years of age – 25.25%, as well as those of 30-39 – 23.13%, which makes 47.39% of the total respondents (Table 4);
- Prominent are respondents by *national composition* in Bulgaria – with 25.20% but also in Serbia with 21.76%. In Macedonia this number is much smaller – 12.94%;
- The most dominant structure of the respondents is by completed *secondary school* 36.23%, then *primary* 22.3% and *high school, faculty or academy* 16.96% (Table 6);
- An interesting structure of the respondents is that of *profession*: workers (22.4%) and housewives (14.1%) are mostly from Serbia; unemployed (20.9%) and retired (28.5%) from Bulgaria; while professionals (8.3%) and pupils-students (9.9%) are from Macedonia (Table 7);
- *Place of habitation* is the most present in Bulgaria since the respondents are mostly from villages (28.0%) and cities (68.4%) while the fewest of them are from suburbia (2.7%), with respect to the respondents' composition from the other two countries. Yet, the ratio of 65.20% to 34.29% is approximate to the ratio of 2/3 to 1/3 of those who belong to urban environment (Table 8);
- Regarding *confessional affiliation*, it is evident that 60.46% are Orthodox, while 29.03% Muslims. It is peculiar that most of the Orthodox respondents are declared in Bulgaria 65.8%, in Serbia 58,4% and Macedonia 57.2%, as well as Protestants in Serbia 6.2%, while the other data refer to Macedonia – with followers of Islam with 35.8% (Table 9).

## CONCRETE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SELF-IDENTIFICATION

The first aspect of the answer which we define as insight into the respondents' self-definition as well as the examination whether it is expressed in the relation from *the individual to the special and to the general* shows that we have the knowledge about this. Even now the most dominant is the declaration for the formulation *belonging to humanity* that we have defined in our earlier papers as an *abstract approach to concrete situations and importance of direct living* (J. Živković, 2005:28). Most surely, there are differences among the countries though, with the population of Macedonia, this standpoint is the most dominant – 86.0% while the least dominant among the respondents in Bulgaria – 64.8% (Table 10). In further marking of the peculiarities, we would like to stress that the difference concerning the above-mentioned statement between the respondents of Macedonia and Bulgaria is 21.2%, just as for Macedonian population this issue is *not important* only for 2.7% (in Serbia – 8.2%, in Bulgaria – 6.7%).

Table 10

Belonging to mankind	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very relevant	448	75.4	388	64.8	510	86.0	1346	75.4
Less relevant	80	13.5	168	28.0	43	7.3	291	16.26
Irrelevant	49	8.2	40	6.7	16	2.7	105	5.86
Total	577	97.3	596	99.5	569	96.0	1742	97.6

Attitude to Europe is significant – 59.93% but more as cultural belonging to certain region. Here again the greatest *affiliation* is with Macedonian respondents 63.9% while the smallest in Serbia 53.5% (Table 11). That the least valued is the feeling of localism is clear when the respondents declare themselves regarding their belonging to the Balkans. In this case, there are no more than 44.66% for this; of them, the greatest decline is with Serbs – for 21.2% (Tables 11 and 12). It is suggested that generality is always more dominant than specialty; it also appears when the explored is the relation between the state and the region (Tables 13 and 14) while their difference is in the range to even 20%.

Table 11

Affiliation to Europe	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very relevant	318	53.5	374	62.4	397	63.9	1089	59.93
Less relevant	192	32.3	170	28.4	153	25.8	515	28.83
Irrelevant	70	11.8	52	8.7	34	5.7	156	8.73
Total	580	97.6	596	99.5	584	95.4	1760	97.49

Table 12

Affiliation to the Balkans	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very relevant	192	32.3	294	49.1	312	52.6	798	44.66
Less relevant	275	46.3	205	34.2	172	29.0	652	36.50
Irrelevant	112	18.9	97	16.2	82	13.8	291	16.30
Total	579	97.5	596	99.5	566	95.4	1741	97.46

If other answers to the questions are taken into consideration, there is an evident shift despite the dominant pre-political values in the opinions of the respondents. Regardless of the fact that the attitudes towards *affiliation to the state* are increasing and that it is opposite to the experience from the previous findings (since it is with Macedonian respondents 72.2%, Bulgarian 75.1%, opposite to the population in Serbia 58.1%, Table 13), at the same time, there is an increasing feeling towards *affiliation to region/province*. In that context, the data show that the respondents recognize as *very relevant* the role and importance of region/province in Bulgaria with 48.6% (to Serbia, it is greater for 11.9%), in Macedonia even with 60.2% (to Serbia it is greater for 23.5%), Table 14.

Table 13

Affiliation to the state	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very relevant	345	58.1	450	75.1	428	72.2	1223	68.46
Less relevant	172	29.0	115	19.2	110	18.5	397	22.23
Irrelevant	58	9.8	33	5.5	29	4.9	120	6.73
Total	575	96.8	598	99.8	567	95.6	1740	97.42

Table 14

Affiliation to the region/province	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very relevant	218	36.7	291	48.6	357	60.2	866	48.5
Less relevant	256	43.1	209	34.9	166	28.0	631	35.33
Irrelevant	106	17.8	94	15.7	42	7.1	242	13.53
Total	580	97.6	594	99.2	565	95.3	1739	97.36

The analysis shows that the respondents are open towards other options of social organizations since 48.5% accept some of them – regionalism or autonomy. This could have been assumed if we know that the total sum of the respondents express the attitude that the *attitude towards the place of habitation* is present with 67.96%, that is, that this issue is relevant only for 6.6% (Table 15).

Table 15

Respondents' attitude towards place of habitation	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very relevant	332	55.9	426	71.1	456	76.9	1214	67.96
Less relevant	177	29.8	140	23.4	110	18.9	427	24.03
Irrelevant	72	12.1	31	5.2	15	2.5	118	6.6
Total	581	97.8	597	99.7	581	98.0	1759	98.5

## NOT ENOUGH THOUGHT-UP IDEA OF REGIONALISM

One of the hypothetical standings is that the representatives of the national minorities do not declare themselves about regionalism since they share some fear of unitarians and centralists. In that sense, the following questions are posed in order to spot the replies of the minorities in the case that regionalization of Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia is realized.

Since the political-legal establishment of a country does not only depend on what the minorities (ethnic, religious or territorial) think or desire, it can be clearly seen from the framework that the region (in the case it is formed) would not be understood as the foundational territory that would in time secede from the structure of the state, except for such an attitude taken in Macedonia with 40.40%, contrary to 39.89% opting for the region for the sake of confirming ethnic and cultural identity (Table 16). Regarding the fact that this attitude is not dominant in our research, we would like to remark that there are no more than 28.68% of those who would, within the total, think that the region represents a division in any of the examined countries.

Table 16

Let's assume that your area territory becomes a region. Would the minorities use it	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Only to confirm their independence, ethnic and cultural identity	165	28.20	148	25.69	235	39.89	548	31.32
Only to secede in time from the state	155	26.49	109	18.92	238	40.40	502	28.68
I do not know	265	45.29	319	53.38	116	19.69	700	40.00
Total	585	99.98	576	97.99	589	99.98	1750	99.00

The derived conclusion is not only supported by the fact that 31.32% of the respondents declare that regionalism would mean a greater freedom in *confirming ethnic and cultural identity* but also that 40.0% of them say that they *do not know* what this kind of decentralization actually means. This approach is also adjoined by those from the Serbian population that, up to 28.20%, thinks that regionalization would be helpful for the acquisition of ethnic and cultural identity (Table 16).



Despite the thesis that regionalism does not mean breaking-up of the state, still the majority population does not agree with it: with Serbs 52.83%, Bulgarians 74.14% and Macedonians 51.49%, that is, out of the total sum 59.60% of respondents (Table 17). Since the attitude towards this issue has additionally been checked, it is confirmed by the answers in Table 18, since the attitudes towards regionalism are even more rigid: in Serbia 72.04%, Bulgaria 84.70% and Macedonia 70.89%, that is, in total sum 2/3 of the respondents say that *for the realization of the collective rights of the minorities it is not necessary for the territories they live in to become realized as regions*.

Table 17

Formation of regions for minority communities primarily means	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1,00	1	0.2	–	–	–	–	1	0.06
Integration in the legal and political system of the state	75	12.90	50	8.50	107	18.80	232	13.34
Greater safety in that part of the country	91	15.66	79	13.43	96	16.87	266	15.30
Increasing level of cultural autonomy	34	5.85	11	1.87	18	3.16	63	3.62
Possibilities for acquiring full independence in the near future	60	10.32	12	2.04	51	8.96	123	7.07
Something else	13	2.23	–	–	4	0.70	17	0.97
I disagree	307	52.83	436	74.14	293	51.49	1036	59.60
Total	581	99.79	588	98.2	569	99.98	1738	97.90

Table 18

For the realization of the collective rights of the minorities it is not necessary for the territories they live in to become realized as regions	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	163	27.95	91	15.29	170	29.11	424	24.06
No	420	72.04	504	84.70	414	70.89	1338	75.93
Total	583	99.99	595	99.99	584	100.00	1762	99.99

From all that has previously been said, it follows that the minority rights are still irrelevant for further expansion of the democratic social ambience contrary to the primacy that the statement about unified state territory has (Table 13 in which the importance of the state gets up to 68.46%).

What opens up new aspects in data interpretation is also the approach of the members of the national and religious minorities to the answers offered in Table 17 especially since it is assumed that they are created by the representatives of the ethnic and religious communities themselves. The following issues treat the attitudes towards the general rights that should be considerably more present in the legal and political practice.

## THE SIMULATION OF THE MINORITY RIGHTS' REALIZATION

If the strengthening of the local self-rule is realized by transferring the central jurisdiction to the lower levels, then this kind of practice is still improbable in the respondents' consciousness regardless of what the authorities say about the legal and political establishment. It is also certain that unitarism still resides and that it has not been overcome after the socialist period; even more so since the social "base" still supports it, even implicitly (through understanding of independence, sovereignty, self-sufficiency, etc.). That the starting point is not ungrounded, namely, that such values can be seen through the attitudes towards the minority communities in the examined countries, is suggested by the data about the possibility that *others have the right to autonomy*. In this context the respondents stay detached from such possibility or openly say they do not support such an option. In any case, they say *no* to the territorial autonomy that tends to increase the minority rights (in Bulgaria such an approach amounts to 84.5%, Table 19) despite their positive attitudes, with as many as 80.33% (Table 20) when asked whether they are for the creation of organizations and associations that would preserve and develop their culture. The same situation re-emerges when treating other rights from the sphere of cultural identity: the respondents, on principle, have an understanding for the publication of minority books – up to 75.6% (Table 21) and education in the mother tongue – 68.3% (Table 22).

Table 19

That they have the right to territorial autonomy	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	167	28.1	63	10.5	213	35.9	443	24.83
No	335	56.4	506	84.5	324	54.6	1165	65.16
I do not know	73	12.3	28	4.7	49	8.3	150	8.43
Total	575	96.8	597	99.7	586	98.8	1758	98.42

Table 20

That they can create organizations and associations for preservation and development of their cultures	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	450	75.8	467	78.0	517	87.2	1434	80.33
No	85	14.3	103	17.2	54	9.1	242	13.53
I do not know	47	7.9	28	4.7	17	2.9	92	5.16
Total	582	98.0	598	99.9	588	99.2	1768	99.02

Table 21

To publish books and other publications in their own language	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	440	74.1	398	66.4	512	86.3	1350	75.6
No	90	15.2	164	27.4	62	10.5	316	17.7
I do not know	51	8.6	35	5.8	14	2.4	100	5.6
Total	581	97.9	597	99.6	588	99.2	1766	98.9

Table 22

To get education in their mother tongue	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	409	68.9	344	57.4	466	78.6	1219	68.30
No	126	21.2	230	38.4	91	15.3	447	24.96
I do not know	40	6.7	24	4.0	31	5.3	95	5.33
Total	575	96.8	598	99.8	588	99.2	1761	98.59

Special is intolerance towards minorities when it comes to disruption of the state framework coherence. This approach is evident when it comes to the issue of the practice of the minorities' rights to the official use of their language and setting up the inscriptions in the places they live in. In that case, a positive answer hardly exceeds 50%, while the highest intolerance is with Bulgarian respondents since they support it with 54.9% in the sense of being against the practice of this right by minority ethnicities (Table 23).

Table 23

That they have the right to the official use of their language and to set up the inscriptions in public places in the places they live in and their neighborhoods	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	352	59.3	228	38.1	329	55.5	909	50.96
No	165	27.8	329	54.9	228	38.4	722	40.36
I do not know	64	10.8	41	6.8	31	5.2	136	7.61
Total	581	97.9	598	99.8	588	99.1	1767	98.93

The same trend is present when the respondents state their opinion regarding the possibility that the national minorities should have their representatives in local authorities (regardless of election results)". In this case the suspicion is also dominant among the Bulgarians – 52.9%, while the attitude of all the respondents who agree with the realization of the minorities' rights do not exceed 55.87% (Table 24).

Table 24

That they should have their representatives in local authorities (regardless of election results)	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	343	57.7	249	41.6	397	66.9	989	55.87
No	172	29.0	317	52.9	165	27.8	654	36.94
I do not know	68	11.4	32	5.3	27	4.6	127	7.17
Total	583	98.1	598	99.8	589	99.3	1770	99.98

The defense of the unitary character of the state is explicit when the minorities are not given support in more essential participation, namely, that they also decide in the majority ethnicity state – Serbs, Bulgarians or Macedonians. A good example is when the question is

asked whether the minorities can have their representatives in national assemblies (regardless of election results). Then the understanding for the minorities' rights fell to 49.6%, that is, to an explicit statement that they are against such participation up to 42.57% (Table 25).

Table 25

That they should have their representatives in national assemblies (regardless of election results)	Serbia		Bulgaria		Macedonia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	311	52.4	198	33.1	366	61.7	875	49.60
No	199	33.5	367	61.3	185	31.2	751	42.57
I do not know	69	11.6	33	5.5	36	6.1	138	7.82
Total	579	97.5	598	99.8	587	99.0	1764	99.99

It is quite certain that the crown of all the acceptance of the domination of the majority ethnicity and an undisturbed system of oligarchy is evident in the respondents statements that they are against the right to territorial autonomy to even 65.16%. The idea about such model of the legal and political set-up of the state is understandable and expected since the dominant are the closed statements. What follows is that the issues such as whether patriotism and loyalty to the nation are the first and the most important tasks of every citizens in the options "completely" and "mostly agree" would be dominant among as many as total of 62% while an open approach is supported by only 18.6% (Table 26).

Table 26 Patriotism and loyalty to the nation are the first and most important task of a good citizen

	Total	
	N	%
Do not agree at all	117	6.6
Mostly disagree	213	12.0
I am irresolute	344	19.4
I mostly agree	492	27.7
I completely agree	609	34.3
Total	1772	100.0

If the basis for the above-given values is looked for, then it can be found in pre-politicality since it is all the time expressed by relying on the system specific for the *community* but not for society. The same thing is repeated even in the statements expressed regarding the following question: "What institutions do you trust most?". The respondents say that they most trust the institution of president of the state (18.0%) and the army (12.5%) as well as the church (9.4%). These attitudes do not need any comment, especially because the basic spheres of the division of power have no greater importance (a positive attitude towards the parliament is expressed in only 5.1%, courts of law 4.8% and towards the executive power, government only 4% (Table 27).

Table 27 What institutions do you most trust?

	Total	
	N	%
President of state	309	18.0
Parliament	88	5.1
Government	68	4.0
Courts of law	83	4.8
Army	214	12.5
Police	45	2.6
Church	161	9.4
University	85	5.0
Political parties	8	0.4
Academy of science	28	1.6
Non-government organizations	21	1.2
Other	14	0.8
None	451	26.3
No attitude	142	8.3
Total	1717	100.0

That in this part of the Balkans the degree of social democratization is not part of the real practice or that in the consciousness of these peoples there are no democratic assumptions about faster foundation-building of an open society is suggested by negligible answers about the social role of the political parties as the basis for its plural foundations, university, academy of science and non-government organizations.

#### CULTURAL RIGHTS – BACKGROUND OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

The attitudes of the minorities clearly suggest their needs for the formation of regions, that is, the existence or absence of the reasons for asking for regionalization of the countries in which they live. Regarding the interest in the issue concerning "the need to form a region in order to realize collective rights of minorities," the answers are significant in not a single country except in the case of Albanians – 49.6% in Serbia and 40.2% in Macedonia (in Bulgaria, the attitude of the Vlachs is such that they think that the region is needed in 31.1% of the cases "in order to realize collective rights of minorities") as well as Romas 66% in Macedonia, following quite a different opinion – of only 26.2% in Serbia (Tables 28 and 29). This attitude is also checked by another question related to minority ethnicities: "To realize the minorities' collective rights, it is necessary for them to have the right to territorial autonomy". In that case, the answers differ, most of all because in Serbia (identical percentage of Albanians) interest in territorial autonomy is expressed by Bulgarians in 32.6% and Romas in 42.6% (Table 31). While in Bulgaria there are no changes, in Macedonia the number is doubled – the need for territorial autonomy is expressed by Albanians 88.6% while Romas express it even more – 88.8% (Table 33). Only the Serbs reduce their needs with respect to the desires to form regions, down to 3.9% (from 15.9%, Table 30), besides Macedonians themselves – who say that the minorities need territorial autonomy in 1.3% (comparing to their affinity for regionalization in 13.8% – Table 30).

Table 28 To realize the minorities' collective rights, it is necessary for the territory in which they live to be organized as region?

Serbia	Albanian		Bulgarian		Roma		Serb		Macedonian		Vlach	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	62	49.6	29	31.2	28	26.2	43	17.1	–	–	1	100.0
No	63	50.4	64	68.8	79	73.8	209	82.9	1	100	–	–
Total	125	100.0	93	100.0	107	100.0	252	100.0	1	100.0	1	100.0

Table 29 To realize the minorities' collective rights, it is necessary for the territory in which they live to be organized as region?

Bulgaria	Albanian		Bulgarian		Roma		Turk		Macedonian		Vlach	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	–	–	36	10.3	18	21.7	23	20.4	–	–	14	31.1
No	–	–	314	89.7	65	78.3	90	79.6	–	–	31	68.9
Total	–	–	350	100.0	83	100.0	113	100.0	–	–	45	100.0

Table 30 To realize the minorities' collective rights, it is necessary for the territory in which they live to be organized as region?

Macedonia	Albanian		Bulgarian		Roma		Serb		Macedonian		Turk	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	53	40.2	–	–	66	66.0	20	15.9	31	13.8	–	–
No	79	59.8	–	–	34	34.0	106	84.1	194	86.2	1	100.0
Total	132	100.0	–	–	100	100.0	126	100.0	225	100.0	1	100.0

Table 31 To realize the minorities' collective rights, it is necessary for them to have the right to territorial autonomy:

Serbia	Albanian		Bulgarian		Roma		Serb		Macedonian		Vlach	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	57	49.6	30	32.6	46	42.6	32	12.6	1	100.0	1	100.0
No	35	30.4	50	54.3	44	40.7	202	79.5	–	–	–	–
I do not know	23	20.0	12	13.0	18	16.7	20	7.9	–	–	–	–
Total	115	100.0	92	100.0	108	100.0	254	100.0	1	100.0	1	100.0

Table 32 To realize the minorities' collective rights, it is necessary for them to have the right to territorial autonomy:

Bulgaria	Albanian		Bulgarian		Roma		Turk		Macedonian		Vlach	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	–	–	8	2.3	19	22.9	27	23.9	–	–	9	20.0
No	–	–	336	95.5	57	68.7	78	69.0	–	–	31	68.9
I do not know	–	–	8	2.3	7	8.4	8	7.1	–	–	5	11.1
Total	–	–	352	100.0	83	100.0	113	100.0	–	–	45	100.0

Table 33 To realize the minorities' collective rights, it is necessary for them to have the right to territorial autonomy:

Macedonia	Albanian		Bulgarian		Roma		Serb		Macedonian		Turk	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	117	88.6	–	–	87	88.8	5	3.9	3	1.3	1	100.0
No	8	6.1	–	–	8	8.2	109	84.5	199	88.1	–	–
I do not know	7	5.3	–	–	3	3.1	15	11.6	24	10.6	–	–
Total	132	100.0	–	–	98	100.0	129	100.0	226	100.0	1	100.0

In any case, "looking for" *territorial autonomy* by the minorities is not related to the realization of cultural rights or more efficient activities in the neighborhood (Tables 16, 21, 22 and 23), but it is directly oriented to political activity and, thus, to direct political participation in the environments in which they live as a minority ethnicity.

The expressed attitude is confirmed by the answers to the next question as well, namely, whether "formation of region for minority communities, above all, means... ." The expressed views are mostly related to the first two possibilities, namely, "integration into the legal-political system" and for "greater safety in that part of the country"; they are followed by the third one, "raising the level of cultural autonomy." Integration into the political system is important in Serbia for Bulgarians to 25.8% and Romas 15.0%, in Bulgaria for Vlachs 15.6% and Turks 12.4%, while in Macedonia for Albanians 51.5% and Romas 22.0%. The greatest vulnerability is expressed in Serbia by Albanians in 46.4%, in Bulgaria Vlachs in 24.4% and Turks in 22.1%, while in Macedonia Romas in 40.0% and Albanians in 18.5% (Tables 34, 35 and 36). The data show that their attitude is minor regarding "raising the level of cultural autonomy," while it is not a relevant problem since in Serbia it is most expressed with Albanians in 10.4%, Bulgarians 6.5% and Romas 2.8%; in Bulgaria it is even less expressed – with Romas in 1.2%, Turks in 1.8% and Vlachs 2.2%; in Macedonia Albanians figure out in 6.9% while for Romas it is a problem in 1% while for Serbs it is negligible 0.9% (Tables 34, 35 and 36).

Table 34 Formation of region for minority communities, first of all, means:

Serbia	Albanian	Bulgarian	Roma	Serb	Macedonian	Vlach
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Integration into the legal-political system	12.0	25.8	15.0	8.0	–	100.0
Greater safety in that part of the country	46.4	7.5	10.3	6.0	–	–
Raising the level of cultural autonomy	10.4	6.5	2.8	4.8	–	–
Possibility of achieving full independence in the future	25.6	3.2	3.7	7.6	–	–
Other	4.8	1.1	1.8	1.6	–	–
I disagree	0.8	55.9	66.4	71.6	100.0	–
Total	(125) 100.0	(93) 100.0	(107) 100.0	(252)10 0.0	(1) 100.0	(1) 100.0

Table 35 Formation of region for minority communities, first of all, means:

Bulgaria	Bulgarian	Roma	Turk	Vlach
	%	%	%	%
Integration into the legal-political system	6.7	7.2	12.4	15.6
Greater safety in that part of the country	9.9	10.8	22.1	24.4
Raising the level of cultural autonomy	1.2	4.8	1.8	2.2
Possibility of achieving full independence in the future	2.3	1.2	1.8	2.2
Other	–	–	–	–
I disagree	79.9	75.9	61.9	55.6
Total	(343) 100.0	(83) 100.0	(113) 100.0	(45) 100.0

Table 36 Formation of region for minority communities, first of all, means:

Macedonia	Albanian	Roma	Serb	Mace- donian	Turk
	%	%	%	%	%
Integration into the legal-political system	51.5	22.0	8.5	3.6	–
Greater safety in that part of the country	18.5	40.0	6.0	11.3	–
Raising the level of cultural autonomy	6.9	1.0	0.9	2.7	100.0
Possibility of achieving full independence in the future	14.6	4.0	12.0	6.3	–
Other	2.3	–	–	0.5	–
I disagree	6.3	33.0	72.6	75.6	–
Total	(130) 100.0	(100) 100.0	(117) 100.0	(221) 100.0	(1) 100.0

## CONCLUSION

Therefore, the attitudes suggest that it is still impossible to ensure a constitutional and legal space in which to implement cultural rights and cultural autonomy about which the respondents are considerably outspoken like other aspects of the legislature by which their status as members of minority communities should be defined (Tables 20, 21 and 22). However, these tensions turn out to be acute not only in the context of the existing power relations and official political options; thus the minority populations are right in believing that they should not separately declare themselves to avoid further disturbances of their position. This especially rings true when it comes to regionalism. That is why the issue of regionalism as an implicit requirement expressed as territorial autonomy is still



seen as valid within the set of the ruling unitarian social concepts. Since the representatives of the minorities are still stifled by their own civic reactions, it can be assumed that the first auxiliary hypothesis is confirmed.

Knowing that their subjectivization would initiate the change of the existing statuses, most of all, through the political position and propulsive political engagement, the representatives of the minority ethnicities still allude to the penetration into the political sphere – thinking it is the only effective way for realizing suppressed rights. This attitude of the minorities confirms the second side hypothesis as well.

Since it is sure that the states in which the position of the minorities has been explored can be considered as unfinished, it is also true that the issue of the true civic values is differently understood by the representatives of the national minorities themselves (especially when it comes to Albanians) since, in relation to security in local environments, vulnerability is more cared for in local environments; that is why some of the regions should be seen as insecure.

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## NACIONALNE MANJINE BUGARSKJE, SRBIJE I MAKEDONIJE O REGIONALIZMU I KULTURNOJ AUTONOMIJI

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*U radu se bavimo analizom stavova o regionalizmu, prekograničnoj saradnji i učestvovanju u radu lokalne samouprave pripadnika nacionalnih manjina u Bugarskoj, Srbiji i Makedoniji. Rezultati pokazuju da predstavnici manjina izmenu svoje društvene pozicije ne sagledavaju kroz regionalizaciju. Međutim, ispostavlja se da su oni veoma spremni za participativni oblik demokratije. Potvrda za takav zaključak se izvodi na osnovu toga što smatraju da znaju koja su to prava iz domena kulturne autonomije, odnosno koja su to prava koja mogu i treba da ostvare. Odatle se može konstatovati da su njihovi stavovi veoma savremni, pogotovo zato što se na njihovo ostvarenje čeka više decenija.*

Ključne reči: decentralizacija, regionalizacija, demokratija, personalna autonomija, kulturna prava