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e-Diasporas Atlas

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Reference to this document

Kristina Balalovska, *Discovering 'Macedonian diaspora'. A Web cartography of actors, interactions and influences*, e-Diasporas Atlas, April 2012.

Plateforme e-Diasporas

<http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=section§ion=21>

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«TIC-Migrations - e-Diasporas Atlas» Working Papers are produced in the course of the scientific activities conducted in the ANR research project e-Diasporas Atlas.

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Abstract

While the 20th century saw the emergence of a Macedonian nation and the establishment of an internationally recognized Macedonian state, in the 21st century 'Macedonia' remains a focus of struggle not only in today's Republic of Macedonia, but also abroad, and not least among émigré communities.

In this framework, our main interest is both how diasporization impacts national identity (re)constructions and their relation to the state; and, how the settings of nation and state-building impact diasporization. More specifically, can 'diaspora' be constructed to assist in a process of nation- and state-building. Our main focus therefore is the emergence of 'diaspora' in discursive constructions of sovereignty, authenticity and national resources, in the context of the interaction between the sending state, émigré communities and national identity-building.

We seek to define in this paper an existent 'Macedonian diaspora field', its main actors, linkages and interactions, through the establishment and analysis of a web cartography. Through this cartography we seek to confirm several hypotheses about the interactions and the relative positioning of the different actors in the process of negotiation of 'Macedonian diaspora'.

Keywords

diaspora, web, Internet, Macédoine, Etat-nation

Mots-clefs

diaspora, web, Internet, Macedonia, nation-state

Macedonia – a continued object of contestation¹

The famous “Macedonian question”, much present at the beginning of the 20th century during the Balkan Wars and at the end of the First World War, is not set to disappear. While the 20th century saw the emergence of a Macedonian nation and the establishment of an internationally recognized Macedonian state, in the 21st century “Macedonia” remains a name inspiring interest, puzzlement and questioning. Where is it, what is it exactly, what does it mean, where does it come from?

“Macedonia” remains a focus of struggle in today’s Republic of Macedonia, but it is also a focus of struggle abroad, not the least transnationally among émigré communities, adding to a complexity of interventions and negotiations in defining what is Macedonia and what is being Macedonian. Macedonia, in terms of national identity, a nation and even a state, remains an object of contestation in its very being, its very composition and, for some, its very existence, which is what makes it an almost unique object of study.

First, it is an object of contestation in terms of national identity(ies). What the Macedonian identity or the Macedonian nation is, is today still open to discussion and contestation, both at home and abroad. Is being Macedonian only related to the Republic of Macedonia? Are other communities who have never lived in a Macedonian republic but who also consider themselves Macedonian also considered as Macedonian? Is it totally different or perhaps the same as being Greek or Bulgarian or Serb? Who has the right to call him- or herself Macedonian and to use this name?

Macedonia also remains an object of contestation in terms of the structuring of the state and its institutions. Despite the establishment of the Republic in 1991 as result of the break-up of federal Yugoslavia, the state’s constitutional make-up is still an object of discussion, particularly in view of the population’s multi-ethnic character. Constitutional changes after an internal conflict in 2001, which opposed Albanian paramilitaries to

government structures and challenged what was conceived then as a national state of the (‘ethnic’) Macedonian people, are still subject to discussion as to their legitimacy or fulfilment. Macedonian institutions are thus in particular flux and subject to questioning.

Finally, Macedonia is an object of contestation with regard to the state’s positioning on the international scene, namely the Republic’s relations with its neighbours as well as its membership in international and regional structures, most importantly the EU and NATO.

The word “Macedonia” thus continues to evoke questions related to ethnicity, identity, state, citizenship, and is thus a true puzzle. These and other questions are still present on the Macedonian public scene today, but also among other actors outside the Republic, namely among émigré communities, neighbouring states as well as ‘their’ émigré communities.

According to Tölölyan, “[w]here once were dispersions... there now is diaspora”.² This is also true with regard to the Macedonian context. A search undertaken in June 2011 through a Macedonian Internet engine³ gives 2397 results for the word “diaspora”. In contrast, there are only 425 pages resulting for the original Macedonian word *ise-lenistvo*, a noun denoting émigrés as a group, despite this being the original Macedonian word that is still to a degree used in the official names of some government institutions dealing with émigrés such as the *Ministerstvo za iselenistvo* (Ministry of Emigration), the *Agencija za iselenistvo* (the Emigration Agency) or the *Matica na iselenicite of Makedonija* (House of Immigrants of Macedonia), or by some authors having written on the subject.⁴ On this basis, one can claim that the word “diaspora” is today also much present on the Macedonian public scene, leading to the question why this is so. Is “Macedonian diaspora” perhaps an accident, a trend à la mode, something that a relatively young nation wishes

1. This article has been elaborated in the framework of the author’s PhD research at the Institute d’études politiques of Paris.

2. Khachig Tölölyan. “Rethinking diaspora(s): stateless power in the transnational moment”. In *Diaspora*, 5. 1996 ; p.3

3. www.najdi.org.mk

4. Pandil Kosturski (1994) *Diplomatijata i makedonskoto iselenistvo* [The Diplomacy and the Macedonian Emigration]. Skopje: Studenstki Zbor; Slave Nikolovski-Katin (1996) *Makedonski iselenicki panoptikum* [Panopticum of Macedonian Emigration]. Bitola: Drustvo za nauka i umetnost; Tanas Vrazinovski (2000) *Makedonskoto iselenistvo vo Soedinetite Amerikanski Drzavi* [Macedonian émigrés in the United States of America]. Skopje: Matica Makedonska.

and needs to have since today, with the proliferation of "diasporas", one may even claim that each nation has its own diaspora? But in addition, the word is also increasingly used in the media and the Internet, by political actors, associations, and so on. According to Brubaker, while " 'diaspora' yields a million Google hits; a sampling suggests that the large majority are not academic".⁵ Thus, is perhaps the "diaspora" word instead present due to its use by different actors, both at home and abroad, for particular political purposes? For, is it a coincidence that "diaspora" is present more forcefully on the Macedonian scene in the context of a strong questioning of Macedonian identity, development or even existence, which has been paradoxically on-going and is perhaps even stronger ever since the establishment of the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign state? Particularly, new and relatively less-developed states often think of "their diasporas" when engaged in processes of nation- and state-building. Werbner, for instance, mentions that it has been said that "many diasporas are deeply implicated both ideologically and materially in the nationalist projects of their homelands".⁶ But we ask the question, how do the different actors struggle to be implicated in such projects, for what ends, and how does this interplay with the effort of home government actors and bureaucracies to implicate them.

It is thus of particular interest to us *how the above-elaborated objects of contestation are played out in relation to "diaspora" processes*. In other words, our interest lies in *how "diaspora" as a category but also émigré populations as social objects are politicized, played out and thus shaped in the context of such contestations. We thus see "diaspora" as a field of struggle around the said-Macedonian objects of contestation*.

When, how and why does "diasporization" take place or, to put it differently, when, how and why, does the fact of emigration become a political issue that needs to be addressed and "diaspora" is created so that diaspora becomes a political subject, a social category? In answering this question, we seek to explore the relation between diaspora and the territorial nation-state, namely the question how diaspora and its construction relates to

nation- and state-building and the construction of national identity, from the point of view of a small and relatively fragile nation, Macedonia, whose need for integration in the international community is particularly emphasized.

More specifically, on the one hand, how does diasporization impact national identity (re) constructions and their relation to the state; and vice versa, how do the settings of nation and state-building impact diasporization? Indeed, can diaspora be constructed, by whom and how, to assist in a process of nation- and state-building? Is there any negotiation of the Macedonian nation that includes "Macedonian diaspora"? In this case, how is Macedonian national identity being reconstructed outside of the Macedonian state (based on which content, symbols, myths, ideologies)? How far is the conception of the Macedonian nation the same at home and abroad? How are homeland-émigré relations a reflection of the conceptions of national identities in the country of origin? Our main interest therefore is the emergence of "diaspora" in discursive constructions of sovereignty, authenticity and national resources, in the context of the interaction between the sending state, émigré communities and national identity-building.

As a first step to answering these questions, which are central in our on-going PhD research, we seek to define in this paper an existent "Macedonian diaspora field", its main actors, linkages and interactions, though the establishment and analysis of a Web cartography providing a snapshot, at a particular moment in time, of Macedonian diaspora and Macedonian diaspora actors' interactions. Although we will be able to argue the existence of a Macedonian diaspora field, Macedonian diaspora, we will see, has no one centre, no one dominant actor, and is thus in a process of definition and negotiation.

Identifying the actors of a Macedonian diaspora

Who then are the Macedonian diaspora actors? Macedonian emigration is characterized by a multiplicity of actors, and we claim that this multiplicity is particularly interesting here and even more so than in other cases, since Macedonian national identity is an identity in negotiation, including in the transnational field, namely with and between émigré communities. We thus

5. Rogers Brubaker (2005) "The 'diaspora' diaspora", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(1); p. 1.

6. Pnina Werbner (2000) "Introduction: The Materiality of Diaspora – Between Aesthetic and 'Real' Politics", *Diaspora*, 9(1): 5-20; p.6.

start from the assumption, which we will seek to confirm through the present mapping exercise, that speaking of or even in the name of 'Macedonian diaspora' are not only ethnic Macedonian émigré actors or actors from the present Macedonian Republic, but also actors of neighbouring countries, and of other diasporas who may have some claim to being part of a 'Macedonian diaspora'. The bottom line here is that who and what is 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian', and by extension 'Macedonian diaspora', is being negotiated in the Republic itself, in neighbouring countries, in the international community and also in the transnational field between émigrés.

When speaking of a multiplicity of actors shaping a diaspora field, we do not forget that it is not all migrants who are involved. As affirmed by Guarnizo *et al*, "[t]ransnational political action... is regularly undertaken by a small minority, is socially bounded across national borders, occurs in quite specific territorial jurisdictions..."⁷ We also understand that their involvement cannot be static. Actors change with time, and some are involved only at particular points: "...while core transnationals stay involved in their home country policies via electoral or non-electoral means, others become more active only at special junctures such as highly contested elections or national disasters"⁸. In our work, we focus primarily on *institutional actors* with a certain continuity in their activity and presence on the public scene in their home country, while recognizing that our cartography represents a snapshot at a particular point in time.

We have thus included for our cartography⁹ the following actors:

- Republic of Macedonia official institutions:
Ex. Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Presidency of the Republic; National Assembly; Emigration Agency; Embassies in main host countries
- Official institutions of host states:
Ex. Governments of Australia, Canada and

7. Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, Alejandro Portes & William Haller (2003) "Assimilation and transnationalism: Determinants of transnational political action among contemporary migrants", *American Journal of Sociology*, 108(6): 1211-1248; p.1211.

8. Ibid., p.1238.

9. Namely when making the initial selection of actors before launching the crawls.

the USA, Presidency of the USA

- Official institutions of neighbouring states:
Ex. Governments, embassies and official state institutions dealing with nationals abroad of Greece, Bulgaria and Albania
- Republic of Macedonia political parties:
Ex. Governing right-wing VMRO-DPMNE¹⁰; governing Albanian DUI¹¹; opposition left-wing SDSM¹²; opposition Albanian DPA¹³ and New Democracy
- Macedonian political parties in neighbouring countries:
Ex. Rainbow in Greece; OMO Ilinden – Pirin in Bulgaria; Macedonian Alliance in Albania
- Émigré NGOs and associations based in the Republic of Macedonia:
Ex. World Macedonian Congress; Matica
- Émigré NGOs and associations based in the EU and overseas countries:
- Macedonian: Ex. United Macedonian Diaspora – UMD (USA), the United Macedonians Organization (Canada), Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee – AMHRC (Australia), Macedonian Human Rights Committee International – MHRMI (Canada), as well as other smaller or less visible organizations¹⁴
- Bulgarian-Macedonian: Ex. Macedonian Political Organization – MPO (USA)
- Greek or Greek-Macedonian: Ex. Pan-Macedonian Association (USA),

10. *Vnatrešna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija – Demokratska Partija za Makedoinčko Nacionalno Edinstvo*, or Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity.

11. *Demokratska Unija za Integracija*, or Democratic Union for Integration

12. *Socijal-Demokratski Sojuz na Makedonija*, or Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia

13. *Demokratska Partija na Albancite*, or Democratic Party of the Albanians

14. An accent is placed here on organizations with a political orientation, namely those frequently expressing themselves on political subjects relating to the Republic of Macedonia, to Macedonian émigrés or to Macedonian national minorities. To avoid arbitrary reductions of a "Macedonian diaspora field", in the Web cartography, however, others have also been included, of a humanitarian, cultural, sports, religious or business character.

World Council for Hellenes Abroad, Australian–Macedonian Advisory Council

- Albanian: Ex. National Albanian American Council, Albanian Canadian League
- Macedonian émigré NGOs and associations based in neighbouring countries:
- Ex. Ilinden – Tirana (Albania)
- Media
- Based in the Republic of Macedonia (including ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian), in neighbouring countries and abroad.

Why have we selected these actors? Each of them, we argue, may have a vested interest in “diaspora” and potentially benefit from its use as a symbol, since we find them to be: (1) actors who see themselves or are identified by others as part of Macedonian diaspora; (2) actors who speak in the name of Macedonian diaspora; or (3) actors who speak of Macedonian diaspora¹⁵:

Actors who see themselves or are identified by others as part of Macedonian diaspora

These include émigré organizations, most notably in the USA, Canada and Australia, and also in European countries, but also political parties and associations of Macedonian national minorities in the neighbouring countries, Greece, Bulgaria and Albania, as well as some émigré organizations abroad associated with other states, most notably Greece and Bulgaria, that nevertheless use the adjective “Macedonian”.

To illustrate this wider use of the adjective Macedonian when referring to different émigré communities, a keyword search with the name “Macedonia” in the publication *The Australian People: an Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins*, leads to entries on Greek, Macedonian and Bulgarian immigrants and communities in Australia.

Actors who speak in the name of Macedonian diaspora

These include émigré organizations abroad, but also organizations based in Macedonia, who thus do not belong to the first group, such as the World

15. This is not a classification, but criteria according to which we have identified the “Macedonian diaspora actors” considered in the Web mapping exercise

Macedonian Congress or the historical House of Immigrants of Macedonia.¹⁶

We argue that speaking in the name of Macedonian diaspora is done to give legitimacy to the speaker both in front of local authorities in the host state and also vis-à-vis the home state, thus allowing in both cases that specific and “legitimate” requests are made or pressures exerted in the name of diaspora. It is therefore not infrequent that émigré organizations abroad speak as spokespersons of “the Macedonian diaspora”:

UMD [United Macedonian Diaspora organization] hopes that the future of Macedonia will not be put into question to win political points and votes. The émigrés also call upon the government and the opposition to discipline their ranks, to refrain from thoughtless moves and to give to the people what they deserve: a country that will be socio-economically stable standing as a model in Southeast Europe and a country whose place is in the Euro-Atlantic organizations such as NATO and the EU.¹⁷

Another example shows that the UMD, for instance, may see itself as a unifier of all Macedonians abroad. “This unity can only be achieved when we [the United Macedonian Diaspora – UMD] reach out to all Macedonian groups wherever they may live, building partnerships and sharing our work.”¹⁸

Another example comes from the Community of Macedonian Associations in Switzerland, speaking in the name of the entire Macedonian community in this country after an audience at the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “In the name of the Macedonian diaspora in Switzerland, [the Community] expressed its dissatisfaction with the boycott by its southern neighbor of Macedonia’s entry in EU and NATO. It appeals to the Government of Switzerland to recognize

16. This is a bad translation, found on the Web page of this institution, of its original title in Macedonian, which is *Matica na iselenicite od Makedonija*, or literally Queen Bee of Émigrés from Macedonia. We will use the name Matica further on in this article.

17. Utrinski vesnik (2011) “OMD i se naluti na vlasta za imeto” [UMD angry with the government about the name], 1 March 2011; our translation and italics.

18. Mark Branov (2010) “The Macedonians of Sweden: An important key to Macedonia’s European future”, *UMD Voice*, Spring; p.26

the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name and to extend its support for its membership in the EU."¹⁹

Actors who speak of Macedonian diaspora

These actors may have the characteristics of the two criteria above, but in addition see themselves as authorized to speak "objectively" and "knowledgeably" of Macedonian diaspora. They do so often when justifying or defending a particular policy or a position. For instance, during the discussions at the National Assembly on the new state symbols of independent Macedonia in 1992, it was argued:

Why do we not respect our Macedonian who, defending his existence in overseas countries and in Europe, sends numerous telegrams and who in all public gatherings in Australia, Canada, the USA, Germany and Sweden waves the flag with the sun and the emblem. Why do we not respect the will of the Macedonian people...?²⁰

It will be necessary that this Parliament consciously satisfies the justice of the Macedonian people that have for centuries kept these symbols... And this will be saluted by our people with great acclamations, including all our émigrés in the diaspora in the overseas countries. It is then that our people will be fully recognized both here and there and their requests be satisfied. We cannot ignore the demands of the people.²¹

Do you wish to see where Macedonia is? It is over there, in Australia, in Canada, in the US. Have you seen, have you seen, gentlemen from the Government, from the Presidency, Mr President of the Republic... Do you know which flags they wave? They are far from this country and they are free. And they carry the

emblem and flag with the lion and the sun.²²

In addition, there may also be those institutions that work with/for émigrés, and as such may claim a certain expertise/knowledge/experience of and with Macedonian diaspora.

These actors include political parties based in Macedonia, media, the Macedonian Orthodox Church, government bodies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Emigration Agency, but may also be government bodies and media of the neighbouring countries Bulgaria, Albania and Greece.

Claiming a specific connection to a "Macedonian diaspora, each of these actors may thus have a vested interest in 'diaspora' and potentially benefit from its use as a symbol. All of them can thus be seen as spokespersons as defined by Latour, namely who " 'speak for' the group existence"²³ and thus delineate it. They make up the "millions of contradictory voices about what is a group and who pertains to chat"²⁴. They define what the group is, what it should be and what it has been. And not the least, they delineate the group against other "anti-groups"²⁵, thus at the same time delineating its boundaries.

Drawing the cartography of Web interactions of Macedonian diaspora

Following the methodology of Medialab at the Institute d'Études Politiques de Paris and that of the Programme d'études sur l'usage des TIC dans les migrations (TIC-Migrations) at the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris, the cartography has been established on the basis of a group of core websites that we have identified on the basis of the criteria established above. These were websites that we judged related to "Macedonian" emigration and the Republic of Macedonia in general, and that in many cases carry the name Macedonia or the adjective Macedonian within their http address, even if they are Greek-language or Bulgarian-language sites.²⁶ Beginning

19. www.zmd.ch/aktivnosti/aktivnosti.htm, accessed 1.07.2011; our translation.

20. Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia1(992) Stenographic notes of the First continuation of the Forty-first session of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 11 August 1992; pp. 8-9; our translation.

21. Ibid., pp.VI.1.-SP/ML, our translation.

22. Ibid., pp.VII/5-VII/6, our translation.

23. Bruno Latour (2005) *Reassembling the Social*. New York: Oxford University Press, p.31.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., p.32

26. Although, of course, we could not start with the same number of Macedonian-, Bulgarian- or Greek-language sites, our starting point being "Macedonian diaspora" rela-

with not more than 50 Websites before the first crawl, our final maps now count 323 Websites.

In what follows, we provide some conclusions on the basis of the cartography that we produced in July 2011 according to the following categorizations: (1) Geographic location, (2) Type of actors; and (3) Use of language.²⁷

tive to the Republic of Macedonia as home state. It has to be stressed, however, that there is a true Web struggle over ownership of the domains carrying the name "Macedonia". www.macedonia.com and www.macedonian.com.au are thus of Greek language exposing Greek claims to Macedonian identity, whereas www.macedonia.com.au is of Macedonian language and ethnic orientation.

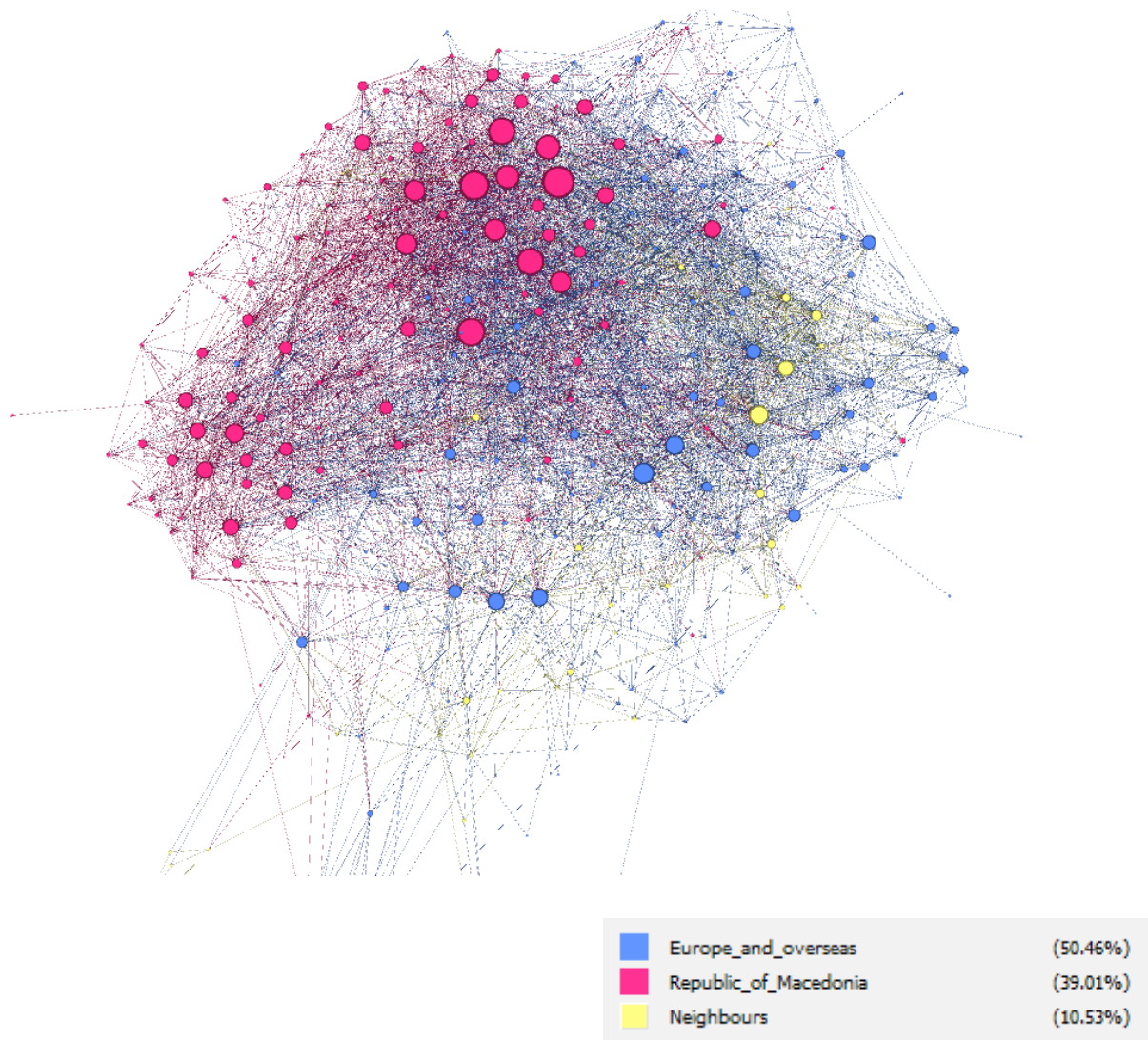
27. The graphs were produced with the help of Medialab at the Institute d'Études Politiques de Paris, and of the Pro-

Geographic location

This first map, illustrating the geographic location of Macedonian diaspora actors, indicates that, while many actors are based in the Republic of Macedonia (39.01 percent – in red clustering in the upper and left-hand parts of the graph), the majority of actors are in overseas countries (50.46 percent – in blue in the right-hand and bottom parts), and, not the least, in neighbouring countries (in yellow, on the right and at the bottom). While many authority nodes are in the Republic of Macedonia, there is also a significant

programme d'études sur l'usage des TIC dans les migrations (TIC-Migrations) at the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris, both of which we would like to thank.

Figure 1. Map of web interactions of 'Macedonian diaspora' actors, according to geographic location, July 2011



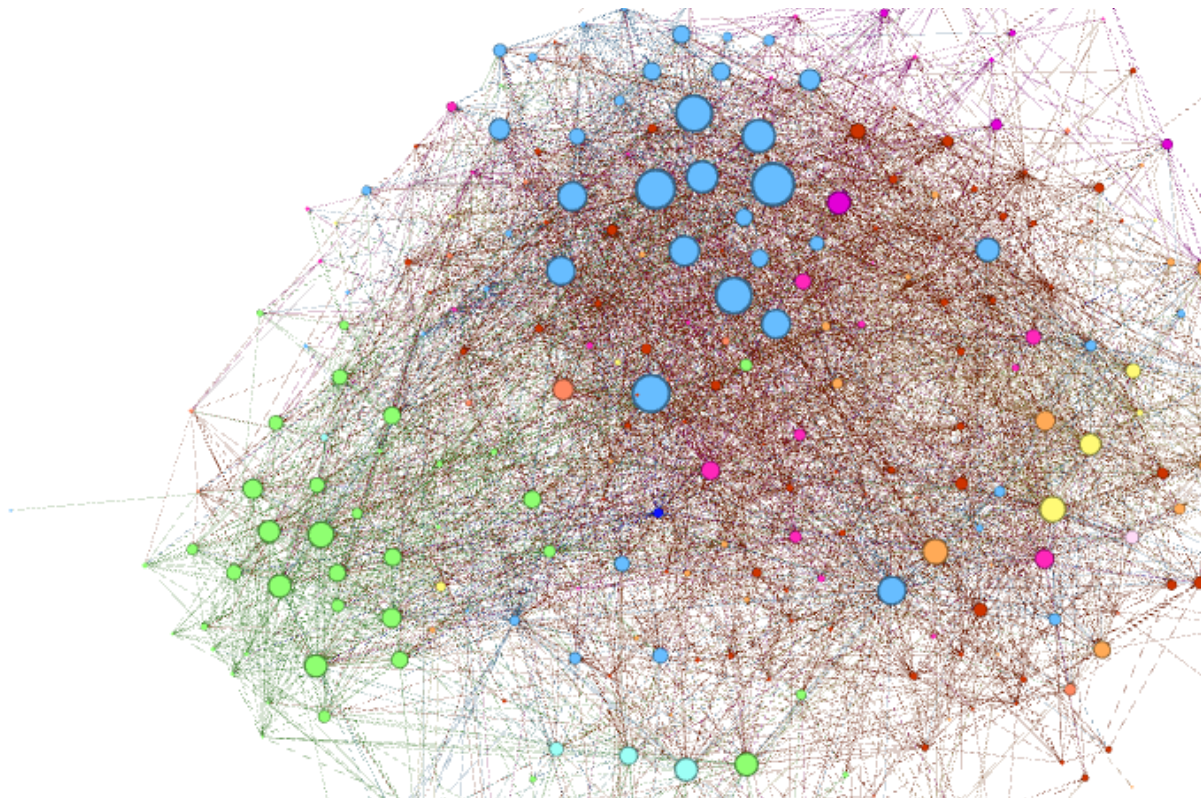
number in overseas and neighbouring countries, indicating that, *although the Republic of Macedonia may be considered a primary Macedonian diaspora centre, it is not the only one*. Another illustration in this direction is that the inbound edges from the actors in Europe and overseas are about the same number as the outbound ones (1002 and 1019 respectively), going towards the Republic of Macedonia, meaning that there is as much interaction between actors overseas as there is with the Republic. This may lead us to ask why the Republic of Macedonia is not an obvious centre and, by extension, where the referent homeland may lie in the diaspora actors' imaginary and in their consequent actions, thus blurring even further the inside/outside distinction often made when referring to migrants: for inside and outside of what are we really speaking about?

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this graph is the spatial proximity between actors based overseas and those based in neighbouring countries. This implies greater direct and indirect interaction between émigré organizations overseas and actors (organizations and political parties) based in neighbouring countries, whose activities focus predominantly on fighting for the human rights of Macedonians in neighbouring

Albania, Greece and Bulgaria. Their spatial distinction from institutions in the Republic of Macedonia indicates that, to the contrary, there is relatively less interaction with Macedonian institutions, including government institutions and bureaucracies. The issue of Macedonian National Minority (MNM) protection thus can be seen to be the bonding tissue between Macedonian émigré and MNM organizations, whereas this connection is less evident with the Republic of Macedonia, which in this area cannot be seen as the clear and unambiguous state-protector of "its" minorities abroad. Diaspora links are thus stronger horizontally, namely between émigré organizations overseas and MNM organizations in neighbouring countries, than vertically, namely between these two groupings and Republic of Macedonia government institutions and bureaucracies. This shows a weak positioning of the home state in terms of so-called protection of the rights of Macedonian minorities, despite greater efforts in this direction on the part of the current government, and despite a new state definition of "Macedonian diaspora" that includes all these groups.

Type of actors

Figure 2. Map of Web interactions of Macedonian 'diaspora' actors, according to type of actor, July 2011





This second map, showing interactions according to types of actors, shows that interactions are dense in the upper part of the map, where Macedonian actors are dominant, namely those of the Republic of Macedonia as well as those that claim to be “ethnic” Macedonians. In the bottom part of the map are situated neighbouring and overseas countries institutions, as well as international organizations, with which interactions are less dense but present. *Judging from this density of the links, the relatively concentrated aspect of the map with no presence of separate islands of a set type of actors (as is the case for instance with the Palestinian corpus of the e-diasporas), we can thus draw the conclusion that there is such a thing as Macedonian diasporization and a “Macedonian diaspora field”.*

The map has, in addition, a somewhat typical disposition when it comes to cartographies of different diasporas, namely having the media (in blue in the upper centre) and portals (in fuchsia somewhat spread out in the centre) as intermediaries through which interaction occurs between government institutions and bureaucracies (in light green on the left side), on the one hand, and émigré organizations (in orange on the left), blogs and forums (in purple), on the other. Perhaps expectedly then, the largest authorities in the map are the media. The media, perhaps always expectedly, have more inbound (being cited) than outbound edges (citing others). Nevertheless, it is interesting that, while media cite most often government institutions and bureaucracies (24 % of all outbound edges), they are also very much interested in diaspora organizations (with 19 % of all outbound edges), thus showing a relatively strong interest for the public in the Republic of Macedonia of diaspora activities and positions.

Government institutions and bureaucracies are also significant authorities, but not more so than

some émigré organizations, political parties or even international organizations. This confirms our claim announced in the introduction that these actors should not automatically be considered as necessarily the principal and central actors when speaking of diaspora–home country relations and interactions. The respective clusters for these groups are also easily identifiable on the map, meaning that they form relatively compact groups.

Government institutions and bureaucracies

These are expectedly all clustered together, forming a distinct grouping. A focus on the Macedonian government’s main website (Figure 5) shows that the edges are principally incoming from the media, but also that there are edges with *none* of the émigré or MNM organizations. One exception is an edge incoming from the Rainbow political party of the Macedonian minority in Greece (large yellow node on the right). Indeed, the present government has stated that, unlike previous governments, it would do more to protect the interests of MNM in neighbouring countries, and it appears from the graph that there is such an, albeit limited, attempt. Upon his election in 2006, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, for instance, “promised the expelled Macedonians that he would initiate a dialogue with Greece on their repatriation in Aegean Macedonia”²⁸. We thus detect here an ambiguous line between a government wishing to assist Macedonian minorities in neighbouring countries, and one that does not wish to be charged of irredentism by neighbouring states.

28. UMD (2006) “Macedonian Prime Minister Will Seek Justice for Expelled Macedonians from Greece”, 31 July [http://umdiaspora.org/, accessed 18 July 2011]

Figure 3. The Macedonian Government's position and edges, map according to type of actor, July 2011

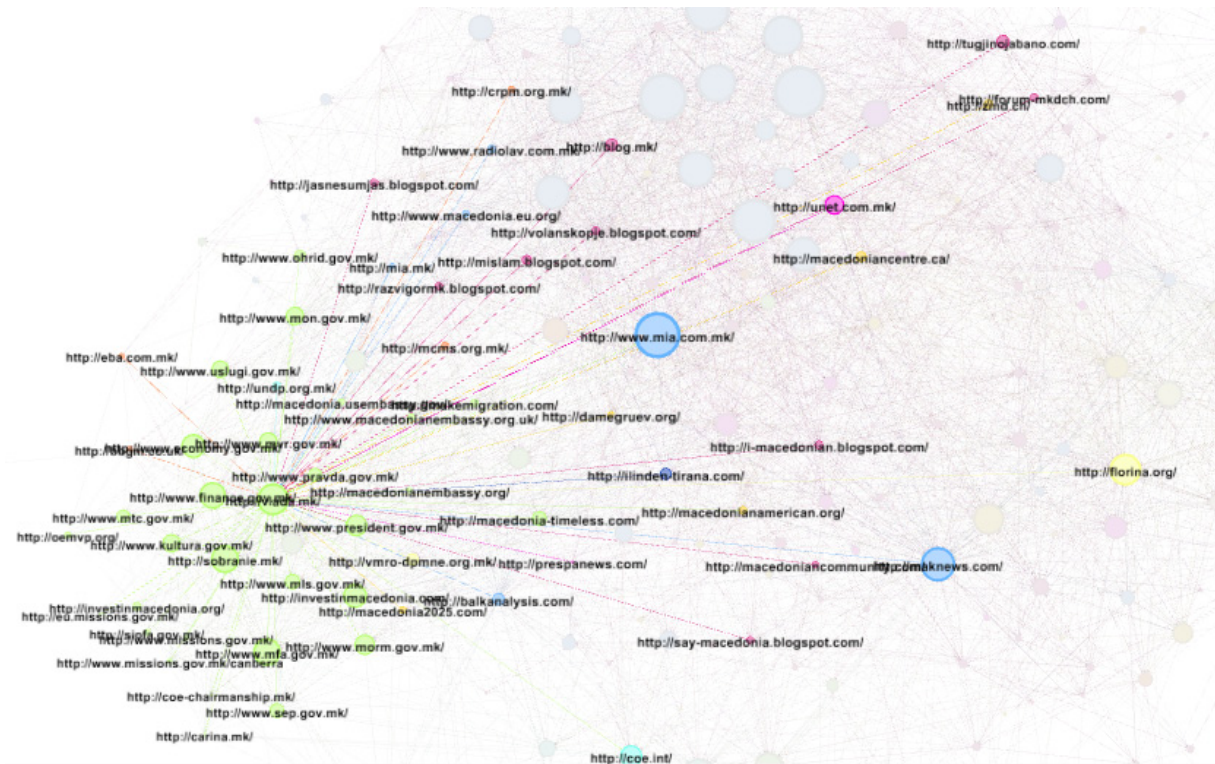
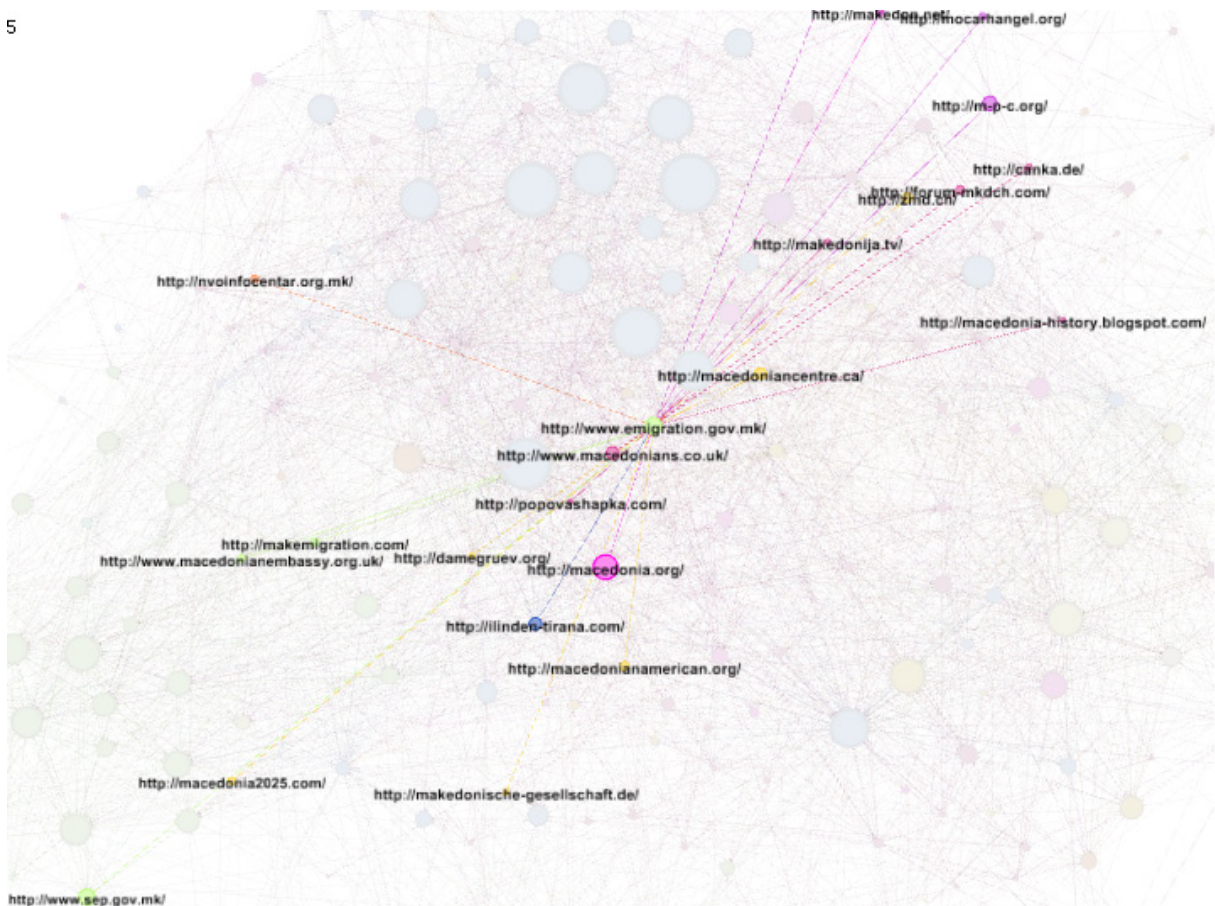


Figure 4. The Emigration Agency's position and edges, map according to type of actor, July 2011



The Emigration Agency is the only one of the government and state institutions whose node is in the centre of the graph. This is expected, bearing in mind that its primary role is to coordinate communication with émigré organizations. What is striking, however, is that it is not an authority, although it is the only state agency whose primary role is related to Macedonian émigrés abroad, established to replace an earlier Emigration Ministry (1998-2000), and further back in time, the historical Matica. It is also noteworthy that there are no links whatsoever with the main émigré organizations that will be referred to in the following section and which are also important authorities. Finally, there are no links either with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which until recently had a Sector for Diaspora through which it "monitored the work of the Agency", as stated by a Ministry official.²⁹ The Agency, on the other hand, has argued a complete separation in its mandate from that of the Ministry (the Ministry only being responsible for citizens abroad, whereas the Agency, for all émigrés with or without citizenship), and even a relative disinterest on the part of the Ministry in the work of the Agency.³⁰

Diaspora organizations

Judging from the relatively large nodes in the map, several émigré organizations that are quite visible in the media and which themselves claim to be among the most active, are the United Macedonian Diaspora organization (UMD), the Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI), the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) and, perhaps more surprisingly, the United Macedonians organization (UM). While the UMD, based in Washington D.C., USA, is a young organization established in 2005 but which has ambitious objectives³¹ and has risen to visibility and relative respectability³²; the MHRMI and AMHRC are somewhat older organizations established in the second half of the 1980s and based respectively in Toronto, Canada and Melbourne, Australia, whose main objective is the protection of the

human rights of Macedonian communities everywhere, most notably of MNM in neighbouring countries, namely Greece, Bulgaria and Albania. Finally the United Macedonians organization of Canada is historically the oldest among them, organizer since 1958 of the largest Macedonian mass gathering abroad, the Ilinden picnic,³³ but which has lately not been very visible. This mix of historical importance and lost visibility seems to be confirmed by UM's relative authority but marginal position in the map.

It is interesting that, while the other three organizations are clearly at the left side of the map, UMD is more central, spatially closer to the media, to international organizations and foreign governments and also to Macedonian government and state institutions: it has one outgoing edge with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Figure 7). This seems to confirm its media visibility, the relative lead it has taken as a major lobby organization in the USA, and also tentatively in Brussels, for Macedonia's entry in the EU and NATO, and Macedonia's recognition under its constitutional name, as well as numerous contacts with representatives of the Macedonian government.

Another interesting point is the position of the Matica, one of few émigré organizations positioned more centrally (Figure 8). It has numerous edges, but most of them signify that it is a hub rather than an authority (the edges are in orange meaning they start from the Matica node). It is interesting that a significant portion of its edges link it to Macedonian state and government institutions, which is a reflection of its historic positioning as a formerly state-established institution that used to be, during Yugoslav Macedonia (1944-1991), the exclusive intermediary, together with Yugoslav consulates, between the then-socialist republic and émigrés abroad.³⁴ Its apparent lack of authority in the graph, however, illustrates its lost position today: today the Matica has the status of an NGO, being one among several, despite efforts to maintain its historic position illustrated by its outgoing edges.

29. From our interviews, Skopje, July 2011

30. From an interview with an Agency employee, Skopje, April 2009 and 2011

31. It is the first émigré organization to have a professional staff.

32. Judging from our interviews. In addition, articles relative to the Macedonian émigrés, Macedonian media frequently seek UMD's comments.

33. For a history of this organization, see Tanas Vrazinovski (1998) *Obedineti Makedonci* [United Macedonians]. Skopje, Melbourne: Matica Makedonska.

34. According to Vrazinovski, for instance, "the main cooperation between the United Macedonians organization and the Republic of Macedonia used to take place through the mediation of the Matica" (*ibid.*, p.137).

Political parties

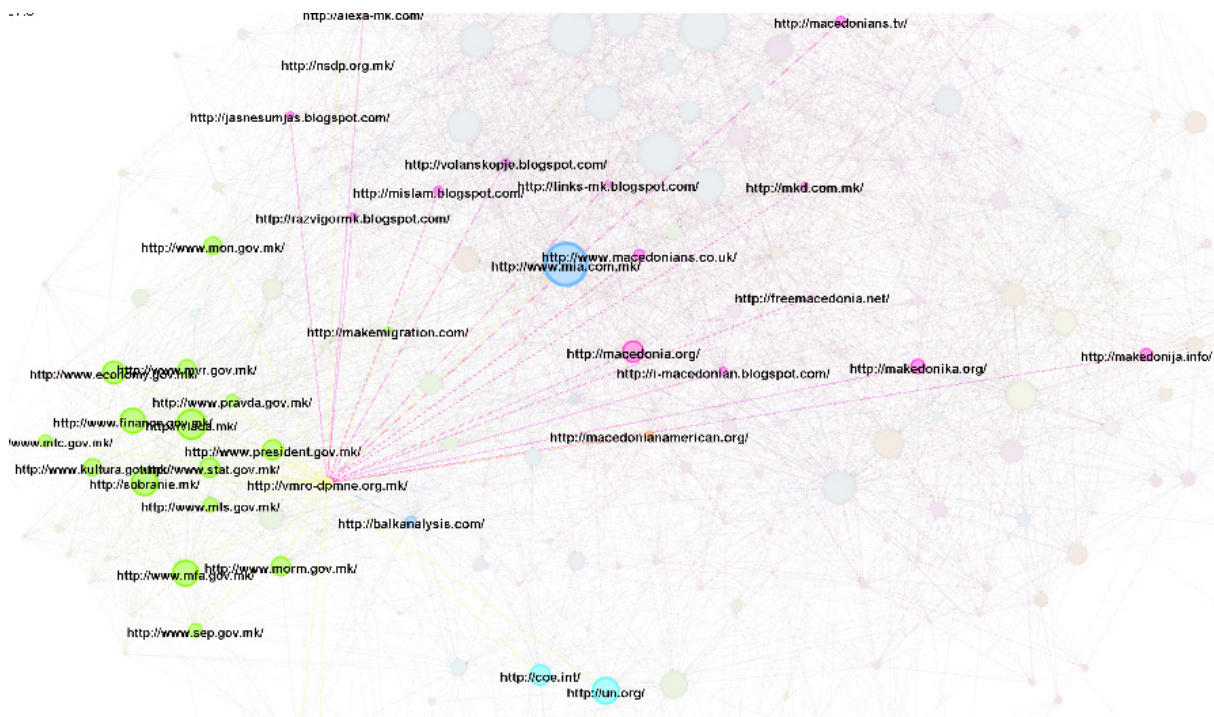
It is interesting to note that, despite its claims and a general belief of being close to émigré communities abroad³⁵, the governing right-wing nationalist party VMRO-DPMNE is a considerable hub, but not an authority, and expectedly close to the government institutions and bureaucracies (Figure 9). It would have thus been expected that it would be a considerable authority. Indeed, this party was founded abroad *inter alia* by émigrés, has extra-border committees and is believed to be much more popular among émigrés than other major parties, particularly the opposing left-wing SDSM, considered to be a successor of the former communist Yugoslav regime. VMRO-DPMNE

35. From our interviews.

potentially draws supporters abroad through its carefully selected name, the historic VMRO having been an organization at the turn of the 20th century fighting against Ottoman occupation for an independent Macedonia, in other words, a significant part of the national myths.³⁶ In addition, since it came to power in 2006, there has been a more visible effort on the part of state and government institutions to tie émigrés more closely to the Republic. The VMRO-DPMNE also won all three seats in the June 2011 Parliamentary elections that were for the first time voted for by Macedonian citizens residing abroad.

36. In the historical background Web page of the party, the VMRO-DPMNE starts from this historic VMRO, thus creating/claiming a direct link of continuity. [<http://www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk/>, accessed 22 July 2011]

Figure 7. VMRO-DPMNE's position and edges, map according to type of actor, July 2011



VMRO's lack of authority in the map, however, may signify that the party is finally not all that trusted after all among diaspora actors, despite its many efforts. Indeed, the regularity of the election of three additional MPs voted by citizens abroad in June 2011 has been widely put into question both in the Macedonian media and by émigrés themselves:

For a long time some of those activists lobbied

forcefully for this decision [of the possibility to vote abroad], because they thought that the vote would be the beginning of the reinforcing of the links between the diaspora and the Republic of Macedonia. Nevertheless, the large majority of the Macedonian diaspora was caught off guard and unprepared for this undertaking, surprised with the speedy decision of the government to implement the decision of the vote abroad at the early Parliamentary

elections [in June 2011]...

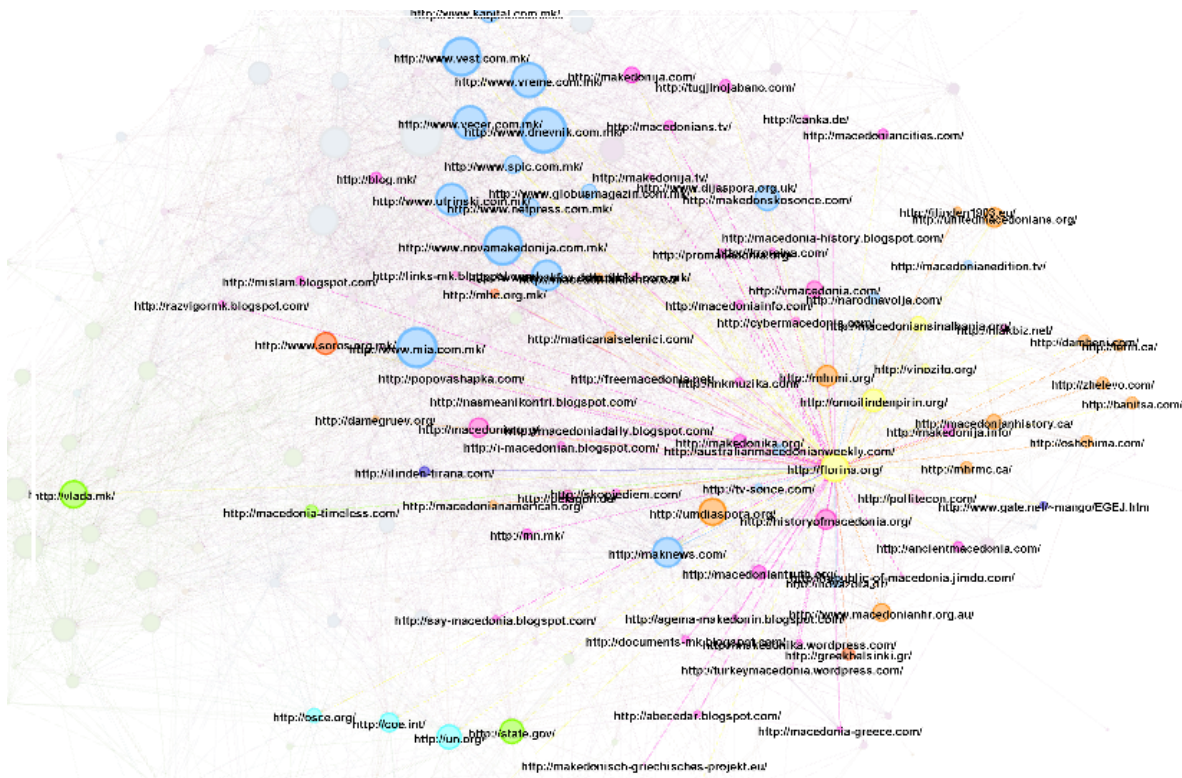
[...K]nowing the political support of the diaspora to the DPMNE, this quick an uncritically brought decision can only be interpreted as a political calculation on the part of the DPMNE thus expecting to win 2-3 additional MP seats in Parliament...

It is true that the decision that the émigrés may vote at the early Parliamentary elections has opened a new page in the between the diaspora and the Republic of Macedonia, but the decision has not raised relations at a higher level. (Sinadinovski 2011)

Another interesting observation concerning the parties is the noticeable presence of several

important political party authorities (in yellow) among the émigré organizations and blogs in the left side of the map. These are the parties of Macedonian minorities in the neighbouring countries Albania, Greece and Bulgaria, that, judging from the map, interact much more with overseas diaspora organizations than with Republic of Macedonia institutions, or, for that matter, the government institutions in their own countries (which are further down in the bottom of the map) (Figure 10). *There is thus no doubt that a Macedonian diaspora field involves in practice also the MNM in neighbouring countries.*

Figure 8. Rainbow's (Macedonian party in Greece) position and edges, map according to type of actor, July 2011



Religious organizations

The Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) has, in the literature on Macedonian emigration, often been cited in the past as a central actor in maintaining émigrés' connection with their homeland and in reinforcing their Macedonian national identity.³⁷ This central role seems to be

maintained even today, since MOC is a relatively significant authority and hub in the middle of the graph (Figure 11), indicating that it keeps a key

Macedonian Orthodox church community became perhaps the most prominent marker of the migrants' identities as Macedonians. And the relationship of the diaspora to the formation of the church becomes a critical piece in understanding the re-creations of Macedonian identity across the century" (Gregory Michaelidis, "Salvation abroad: Macedonian migration to North America and the making of modern Macedonia, 1870-1970", PhD dissertation, 2005, p. 260.

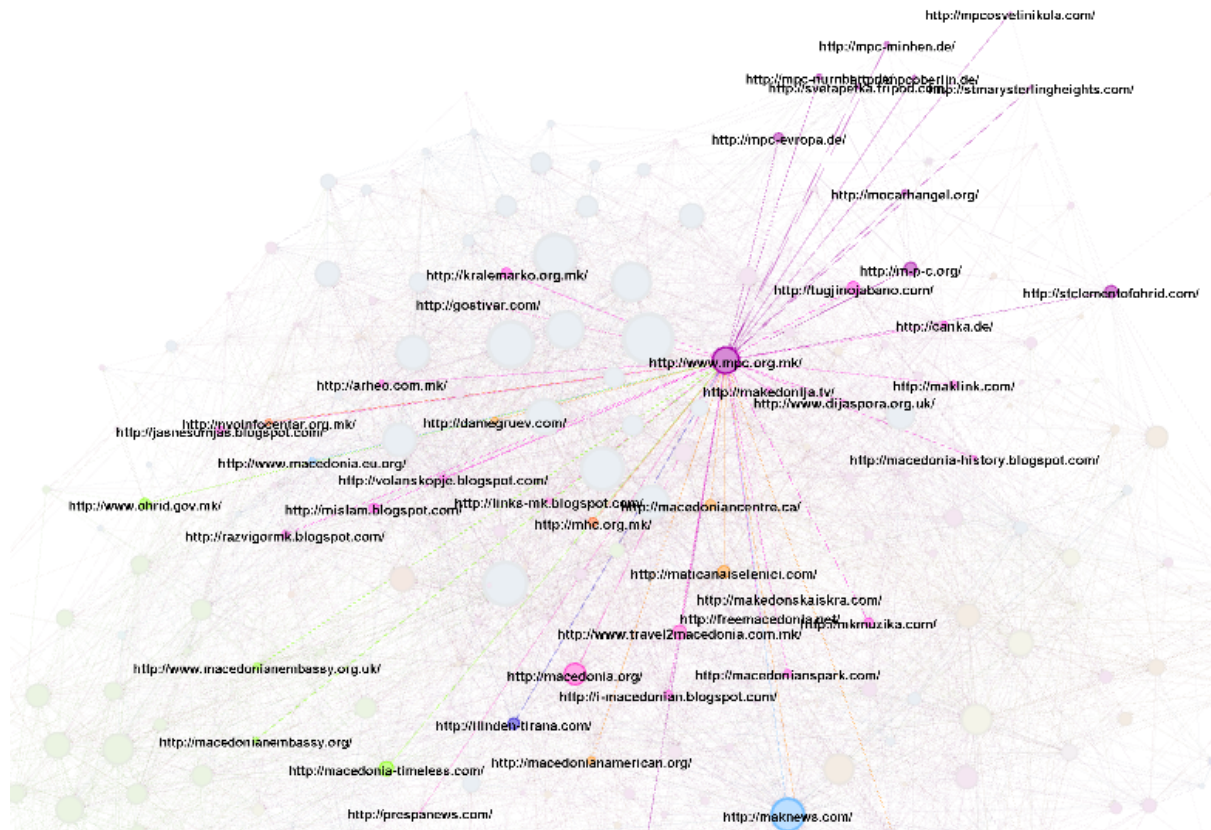
37. According to Michaelidis, for instance: "Among the modern generation of Macedonian migrants, belonging to a

political position within the field of Macedonian diaspora actors. Nevertheless, a marginal cluster of the MOC church communities abroad in the upper right-hand corner (in purple) may point to a weakened role, which can be argued to result from a detachment of younger generations, a lack

of transparency in the management of funds in church communities,³⁸ as well as a long property-related dispute between the central MOC and independent Macedonian-established churches in Australia.

38. From our interviews, Chicago and Toronto, June 2010.

Figure 9. MOC's position and edges, map according to type of actor, July 2011



Use of language

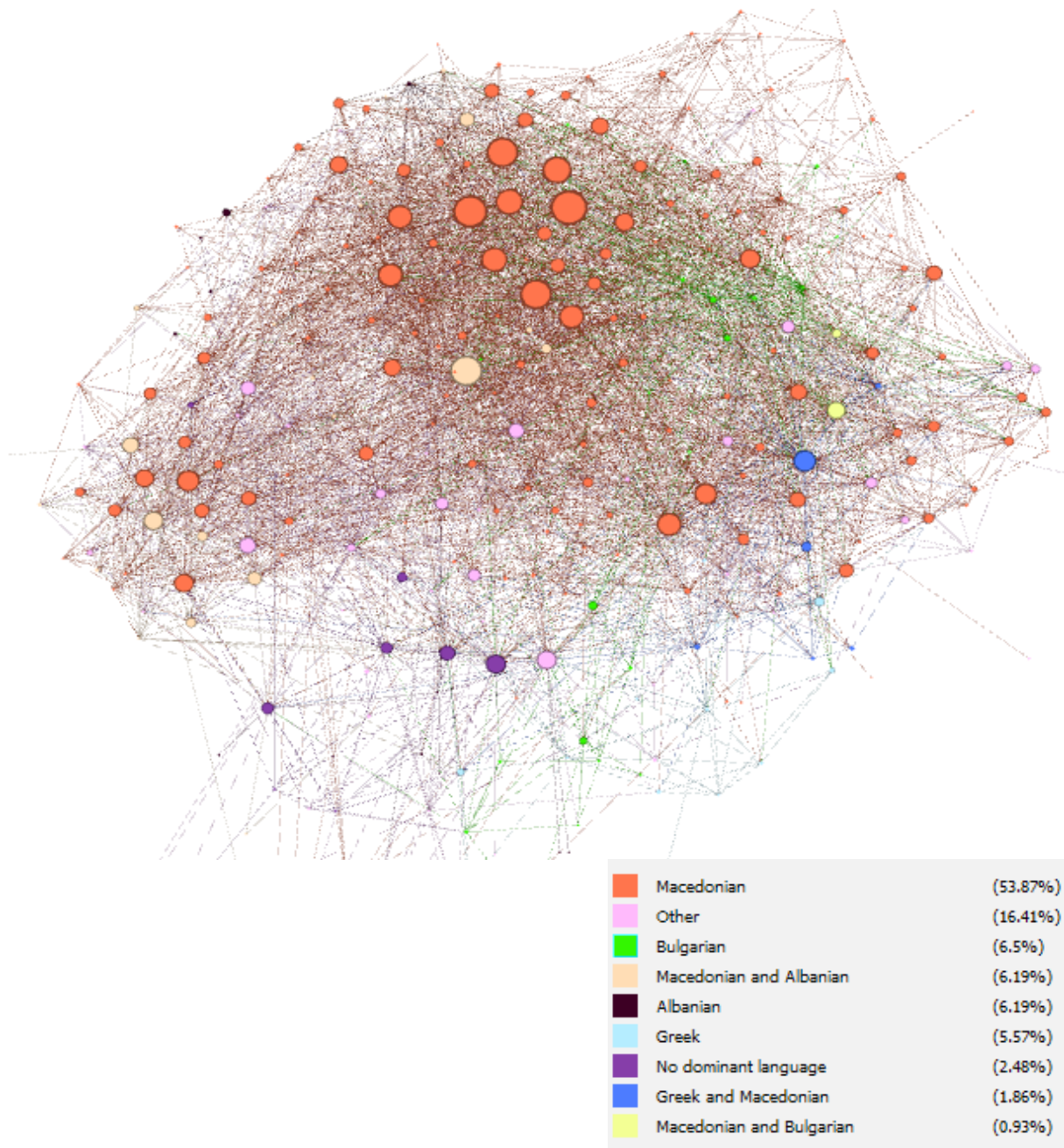
In our final map, we categorized actors according to their dominant use of language, which, although an essentialist criterion, we can argue that it represents a claim to belonging or affiliation to a particular community, or, *a contrario*, an effort to construct a new definition of the community.³⁹

39. Thus, we qualified sites according to the dominant language, namely the language that appears when opening the initial page of the site. If some sites used English for purposes of communication, which was the case with some émigré organizations, but made clear reference to a home state (for instance through state symbols, references to national institutions or media), these were then qualified according to the language of the home state (most sites in these cases had at least some texts in the home-state language). This choice was

made to avoid having a number of the sites in the languages of the host state – which would not have been telling for the purposes our analysis in this section. This was not the case for some blogs that use strictly English and that had no clear references to states or nations.

We used two languages to label some sites, namely “Macedonian and Albanian”, in cases where some actors from the Republic of Macedonia have made efforts to have sites both in Macedonian and Albanian, thus showing a nascent civic understanding of the Macedonian state and nation. We have used “Greek and Macedonian” and “Bulgarian and Macedonian” to label actors using both these languages in their websites, mostly ethnic Macedonian minorities in either Greece or Bulgaria. We labeled “no dominant language” the sites that are posted in several languages (more than two), which is mostly applicable to pluri-lingual international or regional institutions. We labeled “other” sites that were either in English (with the exception of the sites in English as described

Figure 10. Map of Web interactions of Macedonian diaspora actors, according to use of language, July 2011



Albanians and Macedonians

We find this important for exploring the approach to a Macedonian diaspora as an 'ethnic diaspora', or one associated more closely with the Republic of Macedonia, whose reality and political system since the internal conflict of 2001 recognizes and promotes a civic conception of citizenship giving particular rights to the Albanian community. Albanians constitute an important portion of

above) or any other language not cited in our analysis.

the population of the Republic, namely 25.2 %, ⁴⁰ and after the post-2001-conflict constitutional changes, that has made them the second community in the country, with particular political rights and participation; it would therefore be expected that efforts be made to ensure that the 'Macedonian diaspora' is not formed solely on an 'ethnic Macedonian' basis. In this respect, the Emigration

40. According to the last census (2002) conducted in the Republic.

Agency has indeed claimed that among its priorities is also reaching out to Albanian émigrés from the Republic.⁴¹ We have thus made a distinction in the present map between “Macedonian”, “Albanian” and “Macedonian and Albanian” categories, according to the dominant language used by the websites respectively denoting actors that address themselves only to a Macedonian or to an Albanian public, or actors that do not make such an obvious distinction but use both languages, thus showing a nascent civic understanding of the Macedonian state and nation.

Despite the said claims of the Emigration Agency, the graph in Figure 14 below shows that Albanian “diaspora” organizations are in the very bottom of the map, closer to international organizations and foreign-state institutions than to Macedonian government institutions and bureaucracies. None

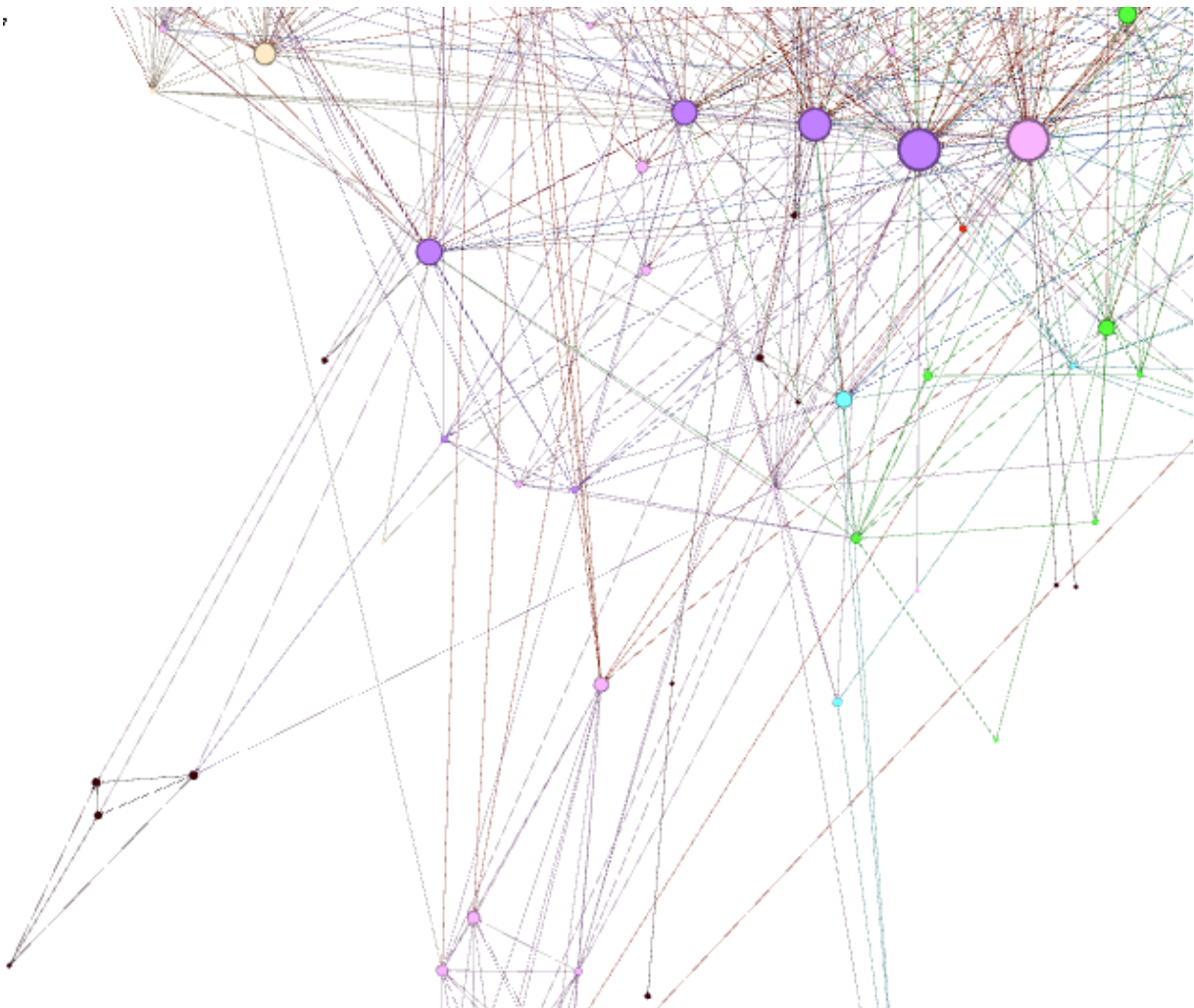
41. From an interview with a high-level Emigration Agency official, Skopje, August 2009.

of the Albanian-language actors in the graph are neither great authorities or great hubs, meaning that they are somewhat marginal to the cartography of Macedonian diaspora. In addition, most Albanian language nodes, including Albanian parties in Macedonia, Albanian émigré organizations abroad and Republic of Albania government institutions are relatively clustered in the part illustrated in Figure 14, meaning that they maintain at least indirect connections.

Edges, or direct interactions, are not numerous however, contrary to what we may have expected of “ethnically” organized diasporas.⁴²

42. An Albanian “diaspora” is however our focus only to the extent that it is included in and interacts with Macedonian diasporization. This is why we have included in this mapping exercise only a few main Albanian émigré organizations. We have however included all main Albanian parties in Macedonia as well as Albanian organizations cited in the database of the Macedonian Emigration Agency, meaning they are thus linked to a “Macedonian diaspora”.

Figure 11. Position of Albanian-language actors (in black), map according to language, July 2011



It is interesting that, despite some claims to the contrary, namely that Albanian émigrés from Macedonia interact more with the Albanian parties in the Republic than with the Macedonian government institutions,⁴³ the two main Albanian parties, DUI and DPA, although spatially relatively close in the map to ethnic Albanian

43. From an interview with a DUI high-level representative, Skopje, December 2009.

émigré organizations, have direct edges only with international organizations and US institutions (Figure 18).

The relative clustering of the Albanian-language actors in the bottom left of the map finds its exception with the Albanian -language media in Macedonia, which are not clustered with other Albanian-language actors, but with Macedonian-language media (Figure 15).

Figure 12. Position of Albanian-language media (in black), map according to use of language, July 2011



In Figure 16, one can even see that the largest Albanian-language authority, ALSAT-M TV in Macedonia,⁴⁴ connects not only to other Albanian-language actors, but also to a variety of other actors, including Macedonian-language blogs, media, NGOs, as well as a government institution – the Ministry of Education. Interestingly, its node is connected to only one Albanian party from Macedonia, the New Democracy (*Demokracia e Re*, in Albanian), which is itself not in the same -cluster with other Albanian-language actors, including other Albanian parties from

44. ALSAT is a news channel from Albania, and is the first Albanian national satellite television station. ALSAT-M is its offshoot that caters for the Albanian public in the Republic of Macedonia.

Macedonia, which was shown in Figure 14 above, but is instead spatially closer and thus more integrated in the general map, closer to Macedonian-language actors. In a way, this confirms the image that the party has intermittently had in the Republic of Macedonia, particularly during the 2009 Presidential elections, as the only ethnic Albanian party in Macedonia trying to appeal to an Albanian-speaking *as well as* to a Macedonian-speaking electorate.

These examples, combined with the fact that in our maps there are as many Albanian-language actors (20 nodes) as there are both Albanian and Macedonian (20 nodes), perhaps means that there is a true movement in the negotiation of a civic vs ethnic Macedonian nation. Nevertheless,

Figure 13. ALSAT-M TV's position and edges, map according to use of language, July 2011

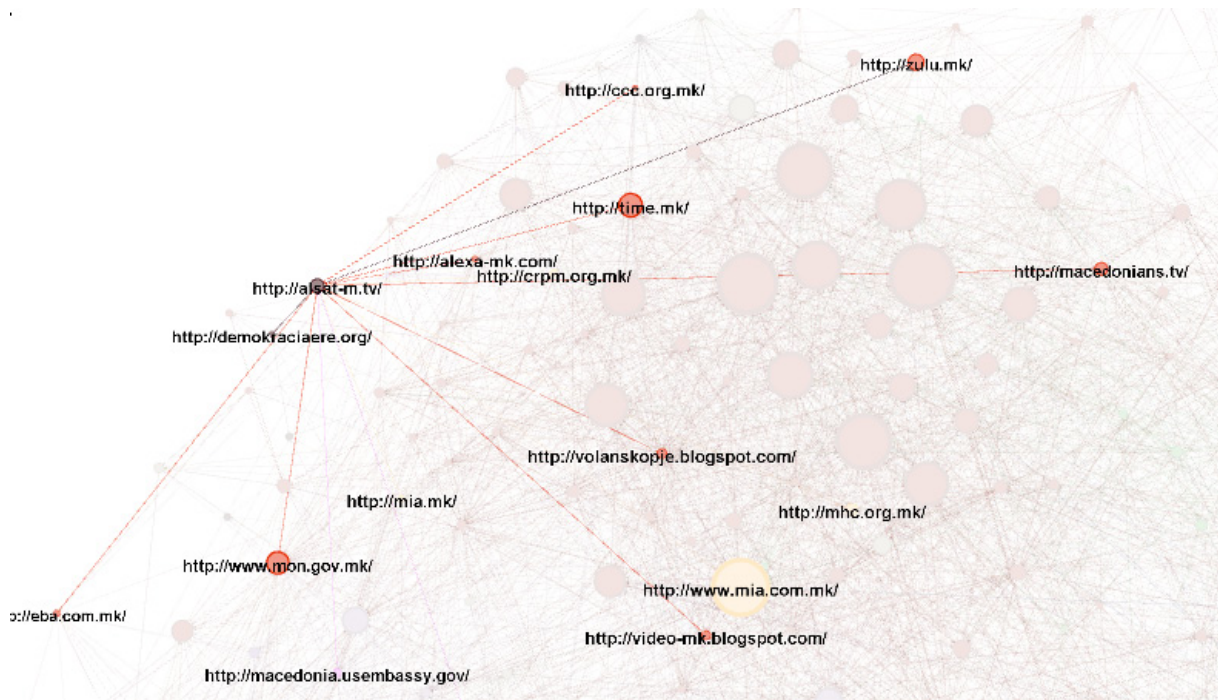
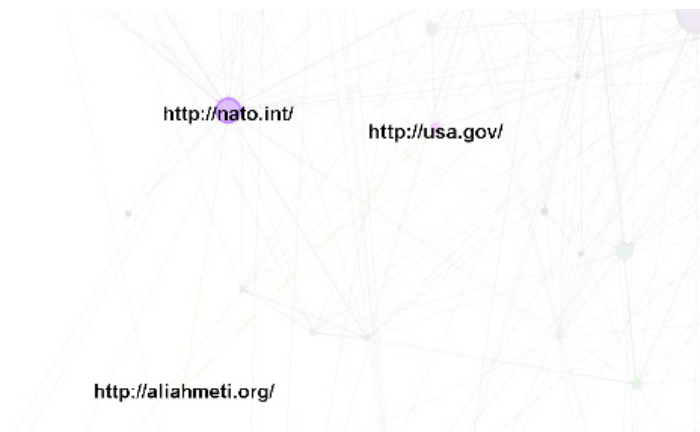


Figure 14. New Democracy party's position and edges, map according to use of language, July 2011



Figure 15. DUI's position and edges, map according to use of language, July 2011



significantly, the Macedonian and Albanian actors are almost all within the Republic, whereas the exclusively Macedonian and exclusively Albanian can be inside the Republic as well as abroad.

From the above, we can draw the conclusion that a Macedonian diaspora is shaping as an ethnic diaspora, despite discourse and efforts of government institutions to include all émigrés originating from the territory of the Republic, thus confirming a mismatch in the conception of the Macedonian nation at home and abroad. This general mismatch, we claim, reveals that (albeit nascent) national and state changes at home in the understanding of what is “Macedonian” are not necessarily reflected in national identities abroad. This mismatch in the conception of the Macedonian nation at home (civic or at least bi-national) and abroad (ethnic Macedonian) is also illustrated by the presence of actors in pale pink (“Macedonian and Albanian”) in the left and centre, representing mostly Macedonian

state institutions and bureaucracies and some media, and the clustering of actors in red (“Macedonian”) in the top and mainly right-hand side of the graph, coinciding again with some media and more importantly with Macedonian émigré organizations.

Greeks and Macedonians

Through our third map focused on language, we also wish to look at the interactions between and with actors that claim a part of and a right to definition of the Macedonian identity, while also identifying themselves as Greek or Bulgarian, namely those for whom being “Macedonian” may mean also being Greek or Bulgarian.⁴⁵

45. For the sake of clarity, we will continue to call “Macedonian” actors either related to the Republic of Macedonia or who see themselves as ethnic Macedonian only, regardless of whether they originate from Bulgaria, Greece or Albania; “Albanian” – actors either related to the Republic of Albania or defining themselves as ethnic Albanian, regardless of whether they originate from the Republic of Mace-

Figure 16. Position of Greek actors (in light blue), map according to use of language, July 2011



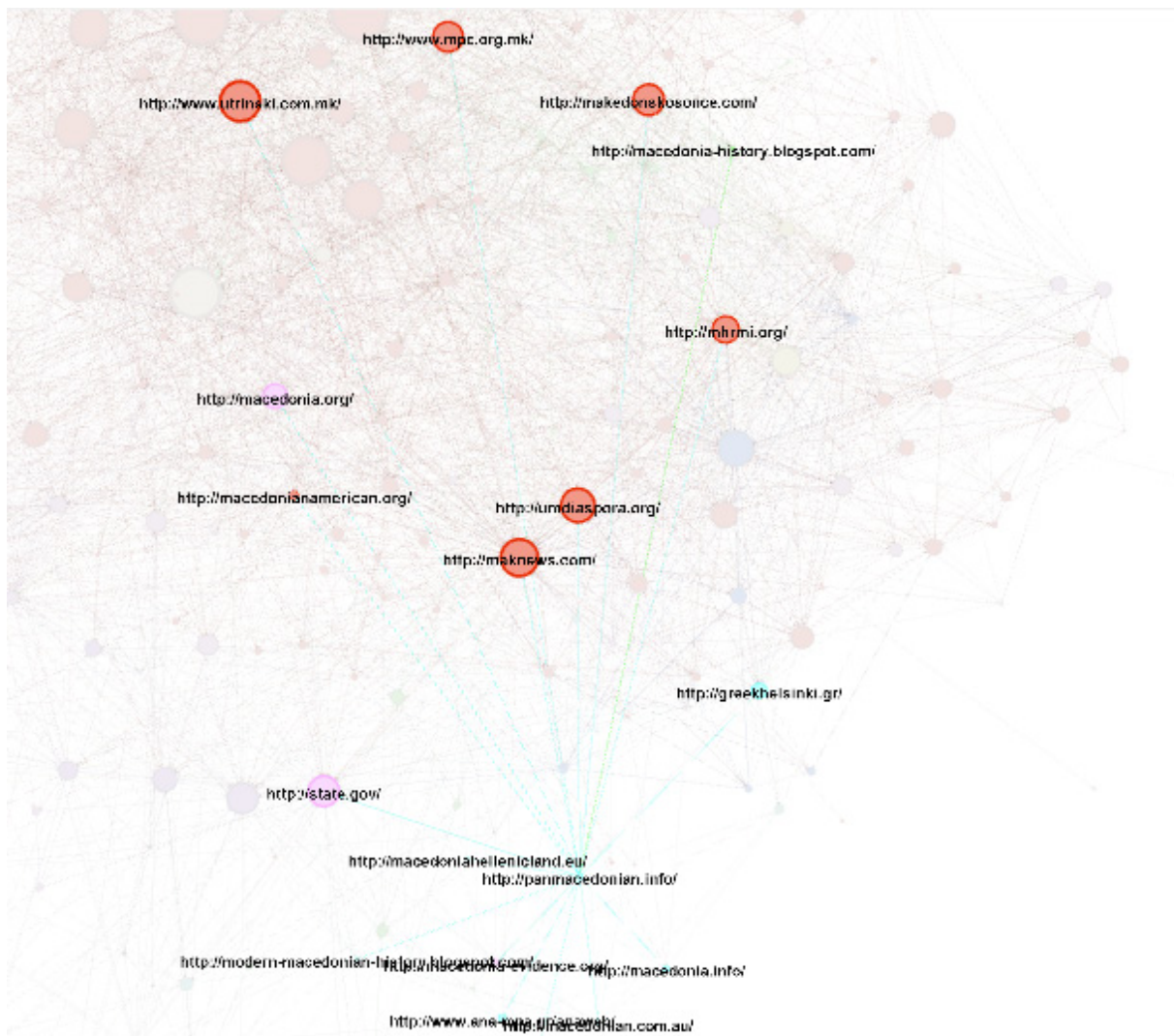
As in the Albanian case, Figure 19 shows that Greek-language actors, including media, state actors, NGOs and émigré organizations, are relatively clustered on the margins of the map, in the bottom-left corner, showing once again a clear demarcation from a Macedonian-language diaspora linked to the Republic of Macedonia. However, it is interesting that there are relatively more direct interactions (edges) between some of the Greek actors and Macedonian actors than is the case for Albanians (as we argued relative

to Figures 14 and 18 above). This is somewhat expected since we claim that a major part of the battle for the Macedonian name and therefore for the delimitation of the borders of what and who is Macedonian, and by extension whether émigrés from today's Greek part of the wider Macedonia region are in fact Greek or Macedonian, goes on in the transnational political field, namely between Macedonian and Greek émigrés. In addition, this may also reflect the relative continued fluidity of Macedonian identity, with some battles still on going to attract and shape émigrés from the wider Macedonia region as either Greek or Macedonian.

Several examples are illustrative here. One is the Pan-Macedonian Association, a large and visible organization of Greek émigrés in the USA who make a claim to Macedonian identity as

donia; "Greek" – actors either related to Greece or defining themselves as ethnic Greek, regardless of whether they also see themselves as Macedonian in a wider sense of this term, including Greek Macedonian; "Bulgarian" – actors either related to the Republic of Bulgaria or defining themselves as ethnic Bulgarian, regardless of whether they also see themselves also as Macedonian in a different sense of this term, including Bulgarian Macedonian.

Figure 17. Pan-Macedonian Association's position and edges, map according to language, July 2011



being part of the Greek identity, since many of its members originate from the wider Macedonian region which covers a part of present-day northern Greece (Figure 20).⁴⁶ As stated on the Association's website:

The need to create the Pan-Macedonian Association of USA arose among the Macedonians of the Diaspora when they sensed that they had to protect the boundaries of their birthplace from the expansionistic view and greedy stance of their northern neighbors [the Republic of Macedonia]... The function of the Pan-Macedonian Association presently remains steadfast to the fact that the name "Macedonia" was, is and will be Greek and it only belongs to Greece. This matter for the members of the Association does not incorporate any political convictions, but they strongly believe that the issue is cultural, linguistic, historical and ethnic. It is a matter of their identity that cannot be negotiated, and an issue of their heritage that cannot be disputed or spared. The FYROM desires to be called "Macedonia" and by usurping the name,

it appropriates the Greek history and many other elements that go with the name, such as identity, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, belonging, cohesiveness, texture, color, and many other qualities.⁴⁷

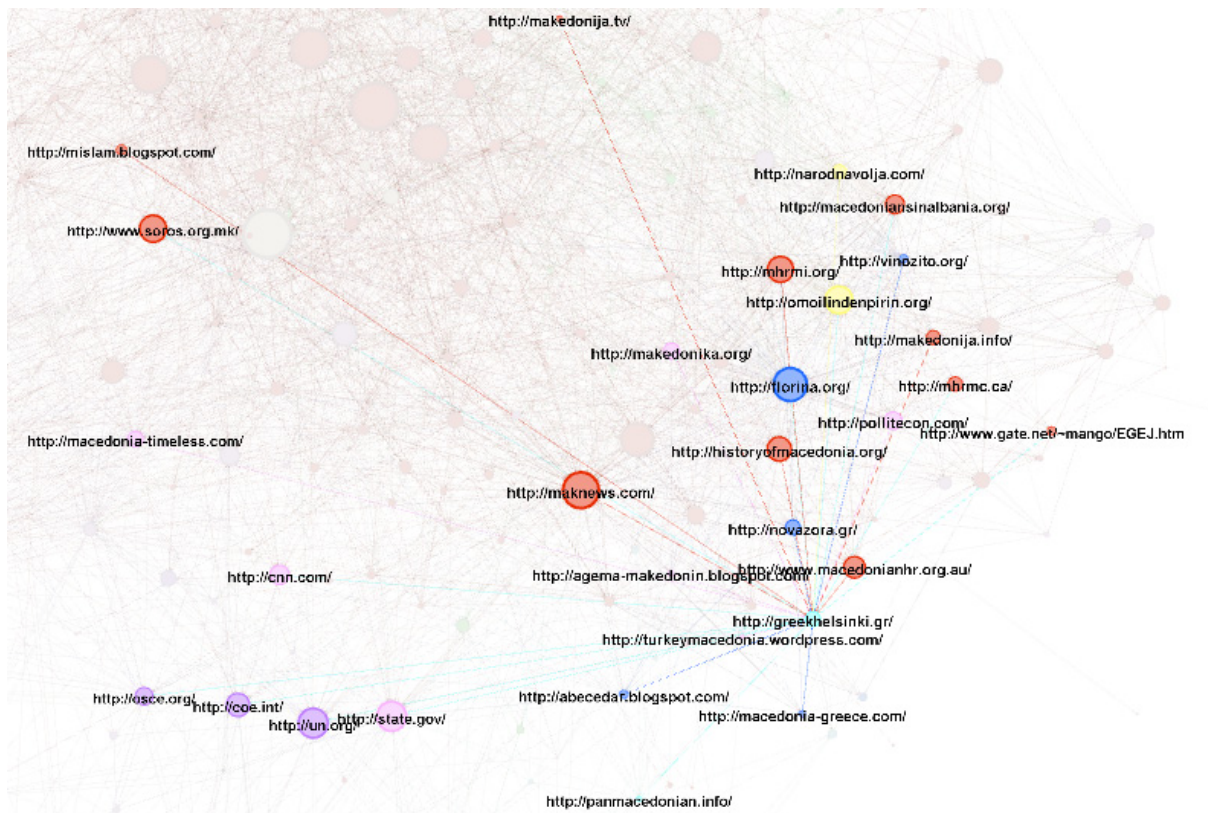
Tellingly, the edges of the Pan-Macedonian Association connect it directly not only to Greek-language sites (blue edges going towards the bottom) but also to Macedonian sites (red edges going towards the top), including media, blogs, and most importantly, major Macedonian émigré organizations such as UMD and MHRMI, both of which are very vocal in the Greek-Macedonian dispute over the Macedonian name. These connections are illustrative of the transnational battles between émigrés claiming Macedonian or Greek identities, over the true nature of being Macedonian.

Another Greek-language actor that is closer to the centre of our map and is interestingly a more important authority than other Greek-language actors (Figure 21), is the Greek Helsinki Committee, a human rights NGO based in Greece and

46. From our interviews, Toronto, June 2010

47. <http://panmacedonian.info/>, accessed 24 July 2011.

Figure 18. Greek Helsinki Committee's position and edges, map according to language, July 2011



part of the wider Helsinki Committee network, which has been vocal in denouncing the Greek state for violating the rights of the ethnic Macedonian national minority (MNM) in Greece by not recognizing its existence. Its position of authority in our map and its numerous links with actors, including Macedonian and including the political parties of the Macedonian minority in Greece, is therefore not surprising, bearing in mind that its human-rights position assists the objectives of Macedonian actors in their battle for the protection of the MNM.

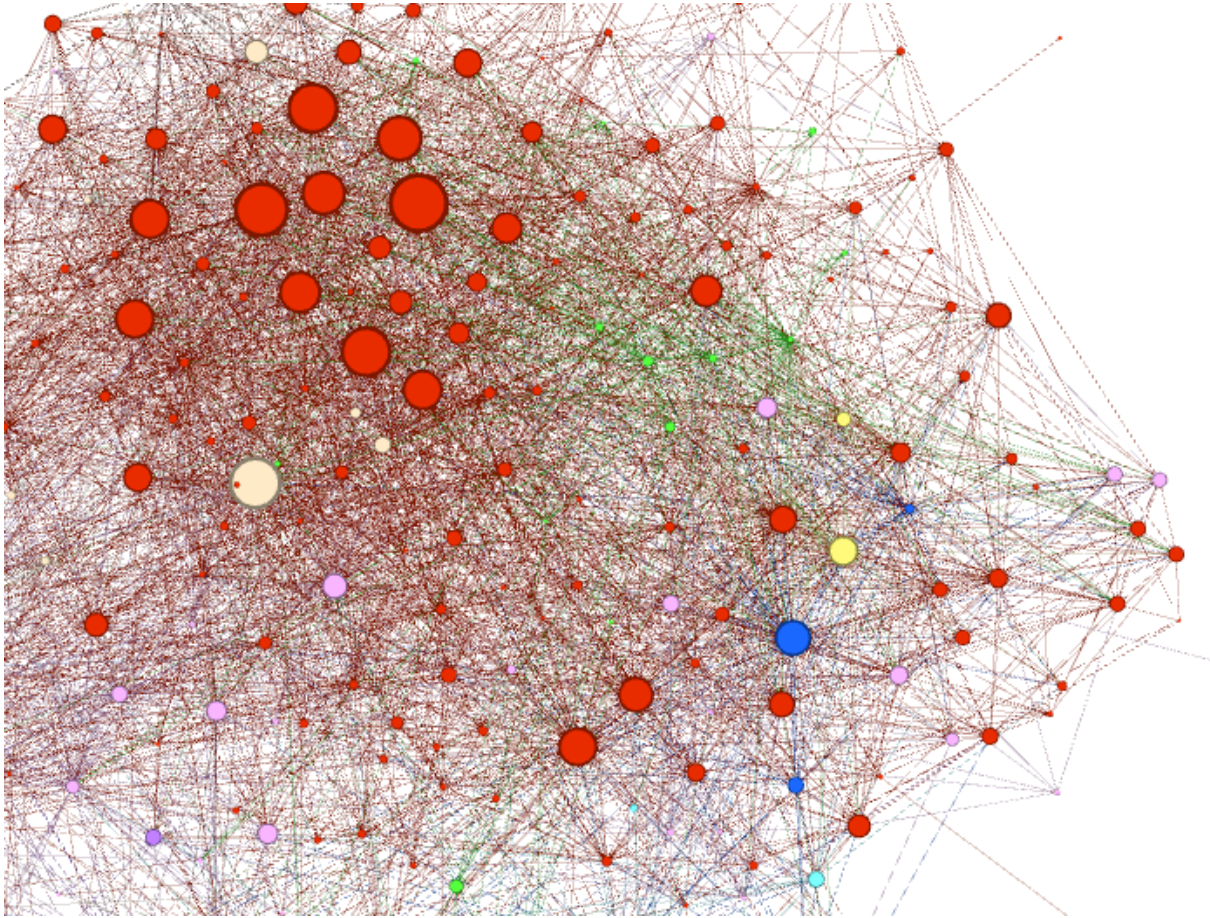
Finally, an interesting relative counter-example of an almost total lack of connection to the map (despite its presence) is the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE), established by the Greek state “to consult and advise [it] on issues concerning the Greeks abroad”.⁴⁸ It is thus a global Greek organization with relatively less focus on Macedonian as part of the Greek identity, which is illustrated in Figure 22 by this organization’s spatial separation from the rest of the map.

48. <http://www.sae.gr/>, accessed 24 July 2011.

Figure 19. SAE’s position and edges, map according to language, July 2011



Figure 20. Position of Bulgarian actors (in green), map according to language, July 2011



Bulgarians and Macedonians

With regard to the positioning of the Bulgarian-language actors, they seem to be even more integrated in the “Macedonian diaspora field” than the Greek and even Albanian (152 outbound edges from Bulgarian to Macedonian sites; 18 from Greek to Macedonian and 22 from Albanian to Macedonia sites), thereby perhaps implying a more direct negotiation of “Macedonian-ness” and greater ambiguity in the identity, looking at it through a Macedonian-Bulgarian prism. In Figure 23 below, therefore, the bright green (Bulgarian language) nodes are well mingled with the red (Macedonian language) ones and, even more, they are positioned in the right side of the graph, close to Macedonian émigré organizations, while interacting also with Macedonian media and Bulgarian state institutions.

An example is the *Macedonian Tribune*, a Bulgarian-language journal of the Macedonian Political Organization (MPO), which is the oldest Macedonian émigré political organization but

which is today considered by the majority of Macedonian actors to promote the Bulgarian nature of Macedonian identity. Although it is not an authority in our graph but only a hub, its edges connect it to Macedonian media, Bulgarian émigré organizations and Bulgarian émigré actors as well as to Bulgarian state institutions (Figure 24). It can thus be argued that some Bulgarian émigré actors lie at the borders between a “Macedonian” and “Bulgarian” diaspora, which allows other diaspora actors to strengthen their positions and weaken those of other actors by using this ambiguous position of the MPO.

Similarly to what we saw in Figure 11 above, in the section relative to the political parties (maps according to types of actors), a significant authority is the website of OMO Ilinden-Pirin, party of the Macedonian national minority in Bulgaria, an actor using both the Bulgarian and Macedonian languages. Despite its partial use of Bulgarian, as the website of a party established in Bulgaria by Bulgarian citizens, the node is very much

Figure 21. The Macedonian Tribune's position and edges, map according to language, July 2011



immersed in the general cluster of the Macedonian language actors, with numerous connections to Macedonian actors, most significantly media and Macedonian émigré organizations, but also to Bulgarian government institutions.

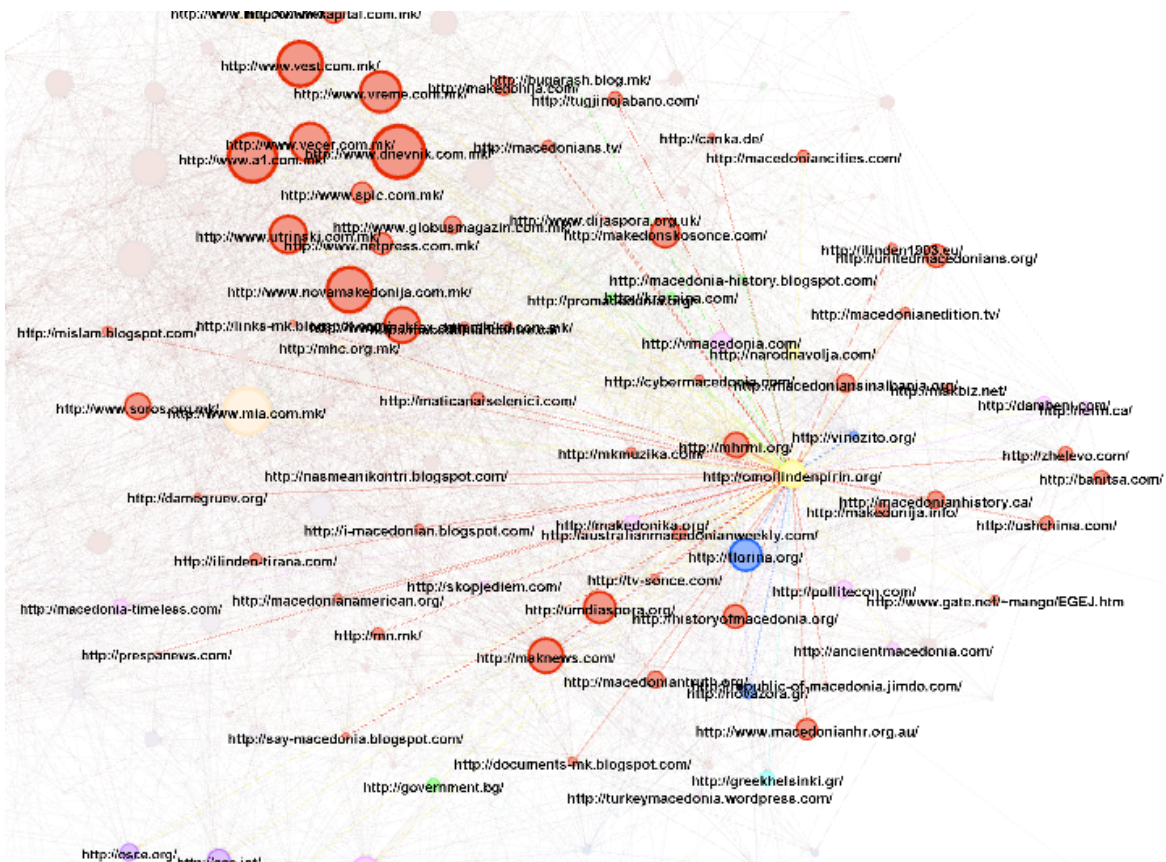
Conclusion: shaping a Macedonian diaspora field

By visually illustrating the relative positioning, linkages and interactions between its main actors, we hope to have shown that there indeed exists a Macedonian diaspora field. On the basis of the above, we can conclude the following:

- There is an on-going Macedonian diasporization through the shaping and actor interactions in a Macedonian diaspora field.

- In this process, actors sometimes claim to have the relative position that they do not have and to make the efforts that they do not make or that do not have the intended results in the field.
- There is no one dominant actor that exercises a particular authority: perhaps expectedly the media are the greatest authorities; but apart from Macedonian government and state institutions, significant authorities are also several émigré organizations and political parties based in neighbouring countries. State actors are thus not the only actors in position of authority when speaking of Macedonian "diaspora".
- Although the Republic of Macedonia can be considered a centre for the Macedonian

Figure 22. OMO Ilinden-Pirin's position and edges, map according to type of actor, July 2011



diaspora, especially as some state and government institutions may attempt to position themselves as such, it is not the only centre, and competes with centres in both overseas and neighbouring countries. This is particularly the case when it comes to the issue of the position of Macedonian minorities in neighbouring countries.

- The relatively important presence of actors from neighbouring countries shows that Macedonian diaspora includes not only émigrés and their organizations, but also MNM in neighbouring countries, and their organizations.
- The struggle over a Macedonian diaspora is rendered more complex by Greek and Bulgarian actors who take part in the process through their use of the name “Macedonia” and the adjective “Macedonian” and who are, albeit marginally, involved in Macedonian diasporization. They are thereby involved in

a struggle over the Macedonian identity in a transnational political field.

- *A contrario*, despite efforts to include ethnic Albanians from the Republic of Macedonia in a non-ethnic Macedonian diaspora, these remain relatively marginal actors, showing almost no links with Macedonian actors in the Republic or abroad. This, we claim, reveals a mismatch stemming from the national and state changes at home of what is “Macedonian”, which is not necessarily reflected in national identities abroad. Thus, despite some government efforts to define a “diaspora of the Republic of Macedonia” (instead of a “Macedonian diaspora”), namely which would include not only ethnic Macedonians but also others originating from the territory of the Republic such as ethnic Albanians, Macedonian diaspora sees and organizes itself as an ethnic community.
- There are thus different competing conceptions of “Macedonia” and “Macedonian-ness”:

- At home and abroad (in the Republic and in the diaspora);
- Between Macedonians and Macedonian Albanians;
- Between Macedonian, Bulgarian and Greek diaspora actors abroad.

These are the postulates arrived at on the basis of the interactions revealed and illustrated by our mapping exercise. Our cartography, however, does not allow us to analyse what goes across the interaction channels between the actors forming the Macedonian diaspora field: how is Macedonian identity understood and negotiated; how is "diaspora" understood; what concepts are associated with it by the different actors? This is why one needs to study the use of the "diaspora" symbol in the Macedonian context, namely its understanding and use by the different actors, as well as the concepts with which "diaspora" is most often associated.

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