

The transformation of post-Yugoslavian cities: An anthropological case study of Tetovo, in Macedonia. It is a scientific project, which aims to analyse the public space and social relations in multi-ethnic cities in Macedonia. Tetovo, known as the “Albanian Capital in Macedonia”, is inhabited by 50 thousand of people and is located on the border with Kosovo. Although it is within Macedonian territory, the majority of citizens are Albanians autochthons. Since the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the city has changed both in urbanistic and social terms.

Macedonia is a young country, which gained independence in 1991 as a result of the breakup of Yugoslavia. Ever since, it has faced various political and social problems, including ethnic tensions. In 2001, in Tetovo there were fights between the Albanians partisans and the Macedonian army. The insurgents took up arms against the discrimination. They asked for the right to obtain a higher education in their language, to be able use Albanian language in public institutions as well as demanding political autonomy. The Ohrid Agreement ended up the half year long civil war, which is perceived as a turning point in the city’s history. From that moment, it has been getting more Albanian touch: the streets holding the name of socialist Macedonian revolutionists were replaced by those which commemorate the Albanians heroes. The main square and monuments that glorified the Yugoslav fight against fascism were brought to the ground and partly adapted into parking places. In the coffee shops, where in the past one could mostly see Macedonian, today one will find just Albanians. The city is quite popular among young representatives of this group. A significant number of students from Macedonia as well as other former Yugoslavian countries come to Tetovo. Young Albanians can start their education in the two newly open universities, where the language of instruction is Albanian.

The project conducted by Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan aims to research the direction of the changes, how and why the street, schools and even hotels were renamed. The researchers are interested in the transformation from Yugoslav provincial cite to “Albanian capital in Macedonia”. However, not only the symbolic aspect of changes is part of this three year long project. Cultural anthropologists draw attention also to how inhabitants perceive the interferences in public space and how those changes influence social reaction.

It is worth mentioning that the investigation conducted in this highly dynamic city is pioneering. Neither Polish nor foreign researchers have ever analysed Tetovo. The current transition is a watershed in the city’s history and requires documentation, description and careful analysis.

The scientists plan to popularize the effects of their research in conferences in Poland and abroad. Although the project has a strictly scientific character, it also aims to propagate the ethnographic part of research among audience outside of the anthropological circle. In the future anyone curious about the city people will be able to find material in The Jozef Burszta Digital Archive. One and a half year after running the project everyone will be able to use pictures, interviews recordings and sound samples on the Creative Common licence on the webpage of the archive.