Conceptualization and Construction of a People: Enacted Macedonianness in Australia

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Abstract. Contemporary literature widely agrees that the emic quality of distinctness of a people, in the form of a nation and/or ethnicity, is socially constructed as oppose to the descent essentialist approach rendering belonging to a people as an "immovable fact". Nevertheless, despite the said agreement, there is paucity in literature exploring the ways in which the emic quality of distinctness of a people is constructed. The proponents of the performance/practice theory of ethnicity/ nation[alism] (Bentley 1987, 1991, Eriksen 1991, 1992, Dunn 2005, 2009) find that performance/practice is at the core of ethno-distinct collective formation. Inquiring into the dynamics of feeling and identifying as Macedonian in Australia, this paper presents the findings from the Australia-wide study conducted on ethno-Macedonians during 2006-2008. During this period five focus groups were conducted with a total number of 38 (N=38) participants and 817 (N=817) ethno-Macedonians were surveyed. The findings provided support and a further empirical ground for the proponents of the performance/practice theory of ethnicity/ nation[alism] by identifying six performance ethno-identity attributes (communal activity, Macedonian cuisine, Macedonian music, Macedonian Orthodoxy, Macedonian language, and respect and following of Macedonian traditions) and three non-performance (history, place of birth, and ancestry) of core relevance to Macedonianness in Australia. The findings also indicated that the affective and symbolic differentiation of material culture and performance as Macedonian has its roots in the shared habitus by ethno-Macedonians in Australia.

Keywords: *A people, constructivism, ethnicity, habitus, Macedonians, nation, performance*

The term "people" is a part of academic, polity and state administrative rhetoric, as well is the popular vocabulary. While there is a dispositional assumption of full conceptual knowledge in using the term "people", it is often the case that there is a little conceptual knowledge of it. Despite the conceptual ambiguity, a lot is vested in it: the prominent democratic principle rests upon the notion of people directly or indirectly governing themselves; polities and states are governed in the interest of a body of people; the principle of self-determination of *a* people rest with *the* people as well. De Seade (1979, p. 369) states that "in ordinary usage" the term "people" is used with political connotations as *the* people, for example the people's will, and as '*a* people invoking ethno-cultural

unity. In this paper, the focus is upon the concept of *a* people as a distinct ethno and/or civic collective subject to the collective right of self-determination. With particular focus on the Macedonian people in Australia, this paper will address the following questions: (1) What is the conceptual reference for *a* people?, and (2) How is the *emic* quality of *a* distinct people constructed?

Conceptualizing a People: Nation and/or Ethnicity

A people may be understood as a group particular. The concept of group particular can be understood against the re-emergent theoretical paradigm in political theory towards group particularism, i.e., towards the understanding that "the group is morally and sociologically prior to the individual" (Vincent, 2002, p. 3). According to Vincent (2002, p. 3) a group particular is "envisaged as a morally complete entity in its own right". Numerous terms in academia, polity and state administrative rethoric as well as at the popular level are used to refer to a category of *a* people, e.g. tribe, race, nation, and ethnicity. A "specific group particular that has had most publicity" in the last few decades "has been the nation, although it also clearly overlaps with cultures, communities and ethnicities" (Vincent, 2002, p. 4). Hence, the following question gains in importance: What is the conceptual reference when a reference is made to a specific people, for example the Macedonian people? In his article *Are Ethnicity and Nationality Twin Concepts?,* Banton (2004) argues that at the popular level ethnicity and nationality might be able to be/are used side by side implying mutual descent. However, the conceptual substance of ethnicity and nationality suggests a difference between the two. I will now discuss the conceptualization of *a* people as a nation and as an ethnicity.

As opposed to the understanding that *a nation is* and needs to be self - realized, this paper adopts an approach that *collective humanity is,* and that humans - by virtue of self-realization - construct collectives by means of agency. National conciseness is not there: it is resting and needs to be "awakened", rather, it is to be constructed into being. When defining the concept of nation, students of nationalism are challenged by realities of a seemingly paradoxical existence. According to Anderson (1983, 2001), these challenges are visible in the following three paradoxes:

> The objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of the nationalists; (…) The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept – in the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have'

a nationality (…) vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations (…); [and] The 'political' power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence (Anderson, 2001, p. 44).

The existence of these paradoxes is an indication that the concept of nation can only exist as an imagined construct. The nation can be imagined as ancient, as modern, as civic, ethnically "pure" and/or ethnically mixed. As an imagined construct, the concept of nation offers a remedy for irremediable paradoxes. Taking up the challenge to define nation amidst the aforementioned paradoxes, Anderson (1983, p. 44) provided the following definition: "… [a nation] is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". Adopting Anderson's definition, Hawkins (2006, p. 9) writes:

> …[T]he nation is an 'imagined community', the members of which view themselves as connected to each other through the shared rights and responsibilities inherent in citizenship of the state, as well as through shared language, culture and history.

These definitions of nation emphasize several conceptual properties. Firstly, a nation is a community, an imagined community: secondly, the community has a political character; thirdly, it is imagined as limited and sovereign; and fourthly, it can be either a civic or an ethnic community.

The Macedonian nation is, as is every other nation by definition, an imagined community. This implies that despite the fact that it is impossible to meet and know all "fellow- [Macedonian] members", in their minds they have the image of "their communion" (Anderson 2001, p. 44). This is evident in everyday Macedonian rhetoric, in the usage of the term *nashi,*[1] which literary translates as 'ours'. Although this is a contemporary practice among Macedonian diasporic[2] communities, Anastasovski (2008, p. 93) explains that this popular term was used as early as the second half of the 18th century among Macedonians resident in the territory of Macedonia, as a term "of identification indicating separateness from others, and acknowledging an individual or a group as being Macedonian". This kind of rhetoric is also supportive of the defining element of the nation as limited. If *nashi* are ours (Macedonians) then the operative assumption is that there are

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[1] This is plural of *nash* (another variation is *nashio)*. This is a widely used nickname for fellow Macedonians, usually used to depict men rather than women). When Macedonians use the term '*nash*', they refer to a person who is 'one of us'. When they use the term *nashi*, they refer to a group of people as 'ours'.

[2] In this particular case, the term 'diasporic' is used to refer to communities formed by people outside their homeland of Macedonia.

others who are not ours. So, the Macedonian nation is imagined as "finite": beyond its boundaries there are other nations (Anderson 2001, p. 45). *Nashi* implies inclusiveness based on Macedonianness: and its usage does not seem to discriminate on any other basis such as class, regional, urban or village belonging. Thus, it is supportive of the claim that the nation is imagined as "horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 2001, p. 45), i.e., in a non-discriminatory way.

As a political community, the nation is imagined as inherently sovereign. This implies by extension that the Macedonian nation, as a political community, is inherently sovereign. Broadly, this would imply monopolization of power for the benefit of the members of the Macedonian national community by the Macedonian collective. The sovereignty discourse "focused on individual and [group] particular identity [...] provides the driving energy for the nation". Without the assumed property of sovereignty, "the nations would have little interest and significance" (Vincent 2002, p. 34). Hence the positioning of *a* people as a distinct ethnicity and not as a distinct nation will deem the particular people unable to access and utilize the political right of sovereignty. This calls for a discussion on the relations ethnicity and nationality.

As suggested earlier in this paper, the terms "ethnicity" and "nationality" are often used interchangeably and are experienced as the same at the popular level. Their distinct conceptualization does, however, imply difference. This is explored in detail by Thomas Eriksen in his work *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2002). In the section titled *Nationalism and Ethnicity Reconsidered*, Eriksen (2002, p. 146) states: "The distinction between nationalism and ethnicity as analytical concepts is a simple one, if we stick to the formal level of definition. A nationalist ideology is an ethnic ideology which demands a state on behalf of the ethnic group. However in practice the distinction can be highly problematic". The practical existence of civic-nationalism expressive of a "polyethnic or supra-ethnic ideology which stresses shared civil rights rather than shared cultural roots" (Eriksen 2002, p. 147), presents the first practical challenge to the "simple distinction" between ethnicity and nationalism. For Walker Connor, there is only one kind of nationalism: ethnonationalism. In his article *The Timelessness of Nations* (2004, p. 45), Connor writes: "identity does not draw its sustenance from facts but from perceptions; not from chronological/factual history but from sentient/felt history. [...] The sense of constituting a distinct and ancestrally related people, [...] is central to the sense of nationhood...". Hence, nationhood is incomprehensible in the face of ignorance of

the psychological component of the national identities. As this component is experienced as a sense of belonging to a distinct group with shared ancestry no other kinds of nations are conceivable. Other authors sit quite comfortably with other forms of nationalism. Two such authors are Bald and Couton (2009), who argue that the structural power shift in the contemporary international political scene signifies a need for a new "conditionally specific concept" of intercultural nationalism (Bald and Couton, 2009, p. 651). This concept is discussed and developed in relation to the Quebec national policy framework known as *Interculturalism.*[3] The core substantive value of intercultural nationalism, according to Bald and Couton (2009, p. 652) is detailed as "…[I]ntercultural nationalism respects the value of ethno-cultural diversity (…); however it does so with the explicit understanding that a singular cultural tradition will serve as the official discursive medium". This quote can be interpreted in the same way as Erikson's (2002) duality of nationalism argument, i.e., that while promoting inclusion and civic justice there are mechanisms in place to reproduce the hegemony of the dominant ethnic group. This is also a challenge derived from practice in respect to the "simple" distinction between ethnicity and nationalism. The other two practical challenges, according to Erikson (2002, p. 147), are presented through non-consistent usage of the terminology by the mass media and through some collectives that find themselves in a "grey zone".

What might be perceived as a prospective development in the field of ethnicity and nationalism and consequently as a more concise distinction between ethnicity and nationalism is depicted in Riggs' (2002) argument. Riggs (2002) maintains that state nationalism, which is closely related to civic nationalism, historically precedes ethnic nationalism. The latter challenges and transcends the state. In line with this argument, ethnonationalisms, i.e., specific ethno-national collectives, will abandon their "intimate" relationship with the state and claim their sovereignty in respect to the individual and cultural rights of the collective. They will exist as polities with no attachment to particular territory or state. In this way the Romani nation, for example, will be able to claim nationhood, that is, sovereignty in matters relating to the individual and the cultural rights of the Romani people. A nation does not need to claim statehood to exercise its

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[3] According to Bald and Couton (2009, pp. 651-652), interculturalism differs from multiculturalism as a national policy in a way that multiculturalism requires few 'fewer *official* socio-cultural requisites'.

sovereignty; rather it can claim a status of polity. Following Walby's (2003, p. 7) notion of nation as a polity, I draw the reader's attention to the following argument:

> Nations can be a type of polity under certain circumstances. A nation is a social and political group which is perceived to have a common history and destiny and which has a set of governing institutions which root such beliefs in the social and political structure. It can be a polity when its institutions are well developed and it is able to demands some external difference.

Theoretically, it is plausible to argue that ethnonations can potentially develop as polities and assume position as players in the international political scene, alongside some religions (Walby, 2003).

It becomes clear from the above that what seems a simple distinction between ethnicity and nationalism at the abstract analytical level becomes rather problematic in practice. At the popular level the terms "ethnicity" and "nationality" are used interchangeably: they are often experienced as the same; a collective belonging to *a* people, a collective identity.

Following my discussion of the conceptualization of *a* people provided thus far, this section provides a theoretical discussion of the genetic structuring of *a* people. It has been established that the most prominent conceptualization of *a* people is in terms of nations and ethnic communities. It has further been established that at the popular level, those two concepts at least overlap and at most equate, that is, they are experienced as the same. Hence, the collective identity of *a* people can be most usefully referred in reference to an ethno-cultural construct, be it a nation or ethnicity. For the Macedonians this socio-cultural construct is Macedonianness. Knowing that this is how Macedonians experienced/experience their existence, the following questions gain in importance: How does Macedonianness come into being? What drives Macedonians' collective feeling of being Macedonian?

Almost a quarter of a century ago, G. Carter Bentley posed the same questions in recognition of the fact that none of the discussions on ethno-identity to date had explained "how people come to recognise their commonalities in the first place" (Bentley, 1987, p. 27), that is, how does the emic quality of *a* people develop? With reference to ethno collective claims he observed:

> [Irrespective of] whether an impetus to such [claims] lies in an innate tendency to favour kin (even fictive kin), ecological adaptation, shared positions in structures of production and distribution, or emotional sustenance, ethnic-identity claims

involve symbolic construal of sensations of likeness and difference, and these sensations must somehow be accounted for (Bentley, 1987, p. 27).

Sharing the same inclination when accounting for the "symbolic construal of sensations of likeness and difference", Bentley turned to Pierre Bourdieu's *Theory of Practice* formulated in the latter's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977). This approach which came to be known as *Practice Theory of Ethnicity* (Jones, 1997), was strongly advocated by Bentley (1987, 1991) and Eriksen (1991, 1992, 1993b). Drawing on Judith Batler's performance theory of gender identities,[4] Kevin M. Dunn (2005, 2009) argues that national identities could be conceived as an ongoing discursive practice, as "an amalgam of acts, statements and representations that are constantly reiterated [...] [where] the stability of dominant constructions depends upon such consistent reiterations" (Dunn, 2005, pp. 31-32). What these authors have in common is performance (practice) at the core of the construction of collective identities. Pursuing the same line of argument, i.e., that Macedonianness is constructed through practice, this paper presents the results from an Australia-wide study of the resident ethno-Macedonian population exploring, *inter alia*, their experiences of being Macedonians in the said country. During 2006, five focus groups were conducted, one in each of the following sites: Sydney, Port Kembla[5], Canberra[6]/ Queanbeyan[7], Melbourne[8] and Perth[9]. The number of focus group participants totaled N=38. Between December 2007 and July 2008, 817 (*N*=817) ethno-Macedonians in Australia were surveyed. The findings of this study regarding their feeling and indentifying as Macedonians is presented below.

Enacted Macedonianness in Australia

In this research, the question of "What makes you feel and identify as Macedonian in Australia?"[10], was twice explored: first, as a question for open discussion by the focus groups, and second, as a multiple choice question in the

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[4] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (London: Rutledge, 1990)
[5] Australian state of New South Wales (NSW)
[6] Australian Capital Territory (ACT)
[7] Australian state of New South Wales (NSW)
[8] Australian state of Victoria (Vic)
[9] Australian state of Western Australia (WA)
[10] In the survey questionnaire, this question was formulated as follows 'What defines your ethnicity as Macedonian?'.

survey questionnaire. The answers that this question attracted during the focus group sessions were later analyzed and a list of ethno-identity attributes devised for the survey questionnaire. A Perth focus group participant stated:

> ***Participant M1***: First of all... many of us have come to Australia as migrants; we came here with a fully developed national identity. Of course some of us in more advanced years, at the age of 25 or 30; it's obvious that the feeling of being Macedonian cannot be cut off just like that immediately, just by entering the Australian territory. .... [T]hat feeling stays on. In my opinion, it is only normal that we would carry with us the mentality of lifestyles from Macedonia. Our way of expression [the language], our cultural element, our way of personal and communal socializing, the traditional values that come along with the Macedonian identity and all those things. ... [D]espite the fact that we live in Australia, a new environment, I still think that almost all of us still keep and carry on with our own traditions of eating, behaving...

In this statement alone, several ethno-identity attributes are identifiable: "our way of expression", that is, the Macedonian language; "the traditional values that come along with the Macedonian identity", enacted through respect and the following of Macedonian customs; "personal and communal socializing" which are often enacted through communal activities; and, "our own traditions of eating", that is, Macedonian cuisine. A Sydney focus group participant commented: "The churches are of great importance for the Macedonians. It is within churches where our newborn children are being christened, it is where the old traditions are upheld". This is a reference to the Macedonian Orthodox Churches. In this way, all nine ethno-identity attributes were developed and included in the survey questionnaire: communal activities, Macedonian cuisine, ancestry, Macedonian music, language, place of birth, respect for and the following of the Macedonian customs, Macedonian Orthodoxy and Macedonian history.[11] Survey participants were asked to rank their answers and to choose as many answers as they felt necessary. In addition, several other markers were identified after analysing the survey result. In no particular order, these were: the Macedonian state, partner's descent, Macedonian athletes, Macedonian dignity, Macedonian humanitarianism, the family, the Macedonian name and the Macedonian bloodline. In addition, a few references were made to the Macedonian cultural way of life, to singing and

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[11]These are developed in conjunction with the relevant literature, the qualitative data collected during the qualitative stage of the research, and the reference group of November 2007.

dancing, i.e., "*pesnata i oroto*",[12] and to the good life. Others pointed to all of the ethno-attributes; "all which is Macedonian". Some respondents took the opportunity to explain their views more elaborately; one responded stated "'The history and the love towards safeguarding it; the name; Macedonian language and tradition and our beautiful religion" (case 354)", while other stated as follows: "Without ancestry, without religion, without history there is no truth in being" (case 591).

Figure 1. Ethno-identity Attributes
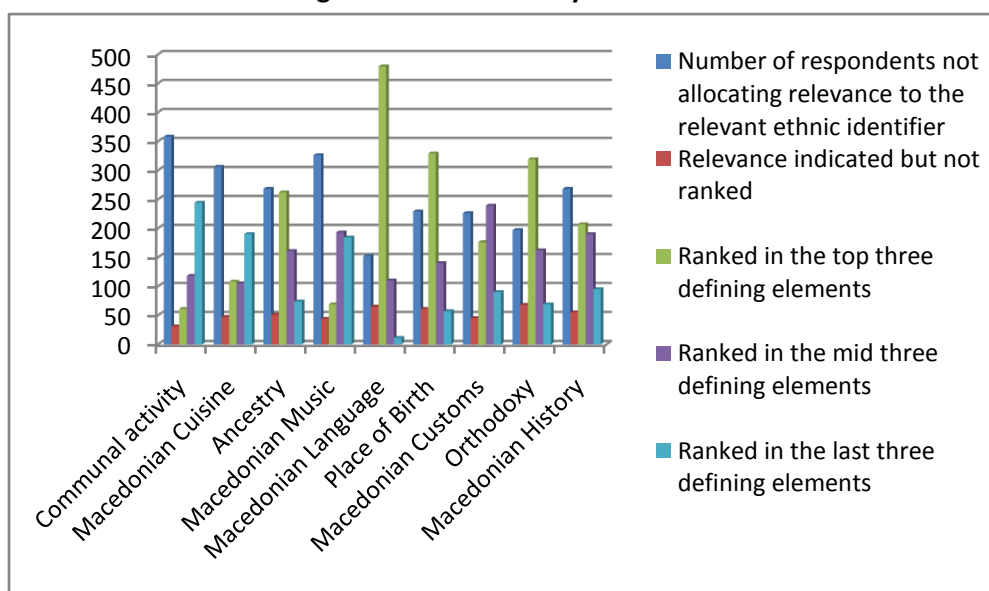
All ethno-identity attributes developed from the relevant literature and the focus groups data were categorized as either performance, passive or symbolic attributes. Synchronous with the practice theory of ethnicity (Bentley, 1987) ethnic group formation and continuity have practice at their core. The everyday practices such as communal activity and engagement, cooking, enjoying music, conversations, traditional customary behaviours and church attendances, which are symbolically and affectively differentiated as Macedonian, are considered as performance ethno-identity attributes. Macedonian history has a symbolic value, and in light of Connors' (2004) argument, is a "felt history", hence, acquires an affective value as well. The same may be extended to the Macedonia Orthodoxy as

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[12]Macedonian contextual translation of 'singing and dancing'. Macedonian Cyrillic spelling.

an ethno-identity attribute. When it comes to ancestry and place of birth, although symbolic value is attached to these attributes, they are, in the main, passive attributes symbolically differentiated vis-a-vis a single event - birth of an individual – that may or may not have relevance to the individual's socialization and self-identification. Given their "factual nature", the latter are over-used, and over-depended upon, as measure for belonging to *a* people.

In the main, ethno-identity attributes data indicate that (1) all attributes are reported to be relevant to their Macedonian identity by a qualified majority (+50%); and, (2) the most critical are the performance attributes (see ***Figures 1*** and ***2***). Bentley (1987, p. 36) alludes to the recognition of commonalities among a people by means of "shared habitus and symbolic differentiations both cognitively and affectively generated". The recognition of commonalities amongst Macedonians can also be explained by means of "shared habitus" and cognitive and affective, symbolic differentiations.

It may be argued that the Macedonian ethno-collective's persistence and cultural sustainability in Australia is mainly due to practice. Macedonians engage in communal activities, practice Macedonian cuisine, enjoy Macedonian music, communicate in the Macedonian language, respect and follow the Macedonian customs, and practice Macedonian Orthodoxy. All of these are recognized, that is, they are cognitively differentiated as Macedonian practices. This is strongly supported by the research data presented below.

Symbolically and Affectively Differentiated Performance Ethno-identity Attributes

Out of the overall surveyed population *N*=817, 459 respondents (56.2%) indicated that communal activity is a relevant ethno-identity attribute. The ranking of each ethno-identity attribute, showed how the level of relevance of communal activity varied amongst the respondents. In 31 cases, while this attribute was selected as important, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by 13.2% of the valid number of responses, 25.8% ranked it in the middle three (4-6), and the majority (53.1%) ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes relevant to their Macedonian identity. Only 19 respondents ranked this attribute first, that is, most important to their Macedonian identity. In its own right, communal activity was most frequently ranked the ninth ethno-identity attribute.

According to the Sydney focus group participant, in Australia, "it's very easy for every willing Macedonian to feel like a Macedonian". One can participate in

communal activities at many levels evident in the quote below:

> ***Participant M3***: ... The Macedonian community throughout Australia has organised schools; for NSW specifically there is the Macedonian School Council of NSW (Makedonski Prosvetno U~ili[en Odbor na Nov Ju`en Vels[13]) (...) There is a similar committee in existence in Melbourne as well. (...) This is a ... good thing for the younger generations of Macedonians so they can carry on with the Macedonian tradition, they can learn the Macedonian language. Also there are literary associations in existence such as: Grigor Prlichev, Braka Miladinovci in Melbourne, (...) Then we have the sporting associations, youth organisations, folklore dance groups and the church councils... All of those constitute a well established circle of the community and it's very easy for every willing Macedonian to feel like a Macedonian.

From the above, it may be concluded that the communal activity, as a Macedonian ethno-identity attribute, is considered important. But, considering that it was most frequently ranked the ninth ethno-identity attribute, it may be concluded that it is not a core ethno-identity attribute for the Macedonianness of the Macedonians in Australia.

Out of the overall surveyed population *N*=817, 511 respondents (62.5%) considered the Macedonian cuisine a relevant ethno-identity attribute. In 47 cases, while this attribute was selected as important, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by 21.8% of the valid number of responses, 32.3% ranked it in the middle three (4-6), and the majority (37.2%) ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes of ethno-identity. Thirty-three respondents ranked this attribute as first, that is, of most importance when it came to their Macedonian identity. In its own right, Macedonian cuisine was most frequently ranked as an eight defining element.

A particular cuisine is recognized by the ethno-Macedonians as a Macedonian cuisine. This is evident in the following:

> ***Participant F3***: ...there are Macedonian specific foods in existence. The Macedonian cuisine is different from all the other ones. It contains dishes that are specific to the Macedonians and they are not cooked by Australians, for example. That makes us feel as Macedonians ... the Macedonian restaurants where we can dine, for example. There are numerous Macedonian restaurants here that cook various Macedonian foods. We can also cook the foods at home, the Macedonian way.

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[13] The title of the organisation in Macedonian language. Macedonian Cyrillic spelling.

A Port Kembla focus group participant commented:

Participant PKF3: You know we [the Macedonians] are used to the sound of a dipping spoon in a mandja dish. This is something that is traditional to the Macedonian cuisine and it stayed with us. It is the best thing for us.

It is evident from these statements that the aforementioned foods which are cognitively differentiated as "Macedonian specific foods", have sentimental value: "that makes us feel as Macedonians". There is also evidence for some "branding" and commercialization of Macedonian foods: "Macedonian restaurants where we can dine". Macedonian foods are "[home] cooked foods, cooked traditionally [in the diaspora] just the way it was cooked in our old country, in Macedonia". In Australia, "different nationalities have their [food] outlets. I still think that the Macedonians, I wouldn't say a great lot, but they do keep reasonably away from [fast] foods. I still think that they do most of the cooking at home"[14], [e.g.] "banana chillies, [and] Macedonian baked beans (*Makedonsko tav~e-grav~e*[15])"[16] Explaining the sentimental value of the symbolic differentiation of foods as Macedonian, a Queanbeyan focus group participant stated:

Participant F5: I migrated to [Australia] when I was young. I had my children here ... now I have grandchildren. My sons-in-law are Australians. When they ask 'What's for dinner?' – I reply 'Mandja'. They know that that will involve a pot. In the pot, there can be a lot of things. And all of that is Mandja. The difference is that we don't use steamed vegetables, rather the vegetables are contained in our mandja. In the very beginning they might have not been as keen on eating stuffed capsicum, the stuffing... the stuffed cabbage leaf, but now they are a keen. ... I think the [Macedonian] cuisine is very important for us.

It may be concluded from the above that the Macedonian cuisine is another important ethno-identity attribute for Macedonians in Australia. In comparison to the communal activity as an ethno-identity attribute, Macedonian cuisine is considered more relevant to their Macedonianness. Ethno-cuisines, foods, as an embodied form of transnational identity, are "one of the novel dimensions of work on embodied transnationalism" (Dunn, 2010, p. 6). The findings in this research, regarding Macedonian cuisine as an ethno-identity attribute, contribute to the "emergent research emphasis ... on the embodied practices around food" (Dunn, 2010, p. 6) evident in the works of Caplan, (1997, p. 13)

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[14] Perth focus group participant
[15] The name of the dish in Macedonian language. Macedonian Cyrillic language.
[16] Port Kembla focus group participant

(ethnicity as an area of difference symbolized by foods), Thompson (2005), and Longhurst et al. (2009).

The Macedonian music as a performance ethno-attribute is, according to 60.1% of the overall surveyed population, relevant to Macedonian ethnic identity. In 44 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by 14% of the valid number of responses. The majority 39.3% ranked it in the middle three (4-6), and 37.5% ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes relevant to their Macedonian identity. Only 7 respondents ranked it first. Macedonian music was most frequently ranked as sixth ethno-identity attribute in its own right.

Macedonian language, as a performance attribute of ethnic identity, was most frequently ranked first, n=158, across all ethno-identity attributes. In its own right, it was most frequently ranked the second attribute. Out of the overall surveyed population *N*=817, the vast majority (81.4% representing 665 respondents) rated the Macedonian language a relevant identity attribute. In 65 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by a majority of 72% of the valid number of responses, 16.5% ranked it in the middle three (4-6) attributes, and 1.7% ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes relevant to their Macedonian identity.

Out of the overall surveyed population *N*=817, 551 respondents (67.4%) indicated that respecting and following Macedonian customs is a relevant identity attribute. As stated by a Sydney focus group participant, the tradition is "practically the way of how people behave". In 45 cases, while it was selected as important, it was not ranked. This attribute was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by 32% of the valid number of responses. The majority (43.4%) ranked it in the middle three (4-6) attributes and 16.3% ranked it in the last three (7-9). Thirty one respondents ranked this factor first and the most important when it came to their Macedonian identity. Respecting and following Macedonian customs was most frequently ranked as third ethno-identity attribute. It may be concluded that respecting and following Macedonian customs is a very important ethno-identity attribute for the Macedonians in Australia.

Macedonian Orthodoxy which can be considered both a performance and a symbolic attribute corresponds with a practicing orthodoxy and a nominal orthodoxy: it was most frequently ranked as a first identity attribute in its own right

by 114 respondents. Out of the overall surveyed population N=817, 620 respondents (75.9%) indicated that Macedonian Orthodoxy is a relevant ethno-identity attribute. In 66 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked: it was ranked in the top three attributes of identity by a majority of 51.5% of the valid number of responses. Furthermore, 26.1% ranked it in the middle three (4-6), and 11.2% ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes of their Macedonian identity. Considering the above, it may be concluded that Macedonian Orthodoxy is a core ethno-identity attribute.

Symbolically and Affectively Differentiated Symbolic Ethno-identity Attributes

Out of the overall surveyed population N=817, 549 respondents (67.2%) considered Macedonian History a relevant identity factor. In 55 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by the majority (37.8%) of the valid number of responses: 34.7% ranked it in the middle three (4-6) attributes and 17.3% ranked it in the last three (7-9). Forty seven respondents ranked this factor the most important when it came to their Macedonian identity. Macedonian History was most frequently ranked as a third attribute. It may be concluded that for a majority of ethno-Macedonians in Australia this ethno-identity attribute is the most important vis-a-vis their Macedonianness.

**'Factual', Passive Ethno-identity Attributes**

Out of the overall surveyed population N=817, 549 respondents (67.2%) indicated that ancestry is a relevant ethno-identity attribute. In 51 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by a majority of 47.7% of the valid number of responses: 29.4% ranked it in the middle three (4-6) and 13.5% ranked it in the last three (7-9) defining attributes of their Macedonian identity. This attribute was ranked first by 144 respondents, making it the most frequently ranked first in its own right.

The final ethno-identity attribute considered in this study is place of birth. Out of the overall surveyed population, 588 respondents (72%) indicated that place of birth is important in their perception of their Macedonianness. In 61 cases, while this attribute was selected as important, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three ethno-identity attributes by a majority of 55% of the valid number of

responses: 23.9% ranked it in the middle three (4-6) and 9.8% ranked it in the last three (7-9). It was ranked first identity attribute by 146 respondents. In its own right, place of birth was most frequently ranked as a first defining element.

As discussed earlier, symbolic value is attached to these attributes, ancestry and place of birth. But, in the main, they are passive attributes, "social facts", symbolically differentiated vis-a-vis a single event - birth of an individual – that may or may not have relevance to the individual's socialization and self-identification. Based on the findings in this study, these ethno-identity attributes, in their symbolic strength, are very important when it comes to the respondents' Macedonianness.

Figure 2. Ethno-identity Attributes. Relevance vis-a-vis non-relevance
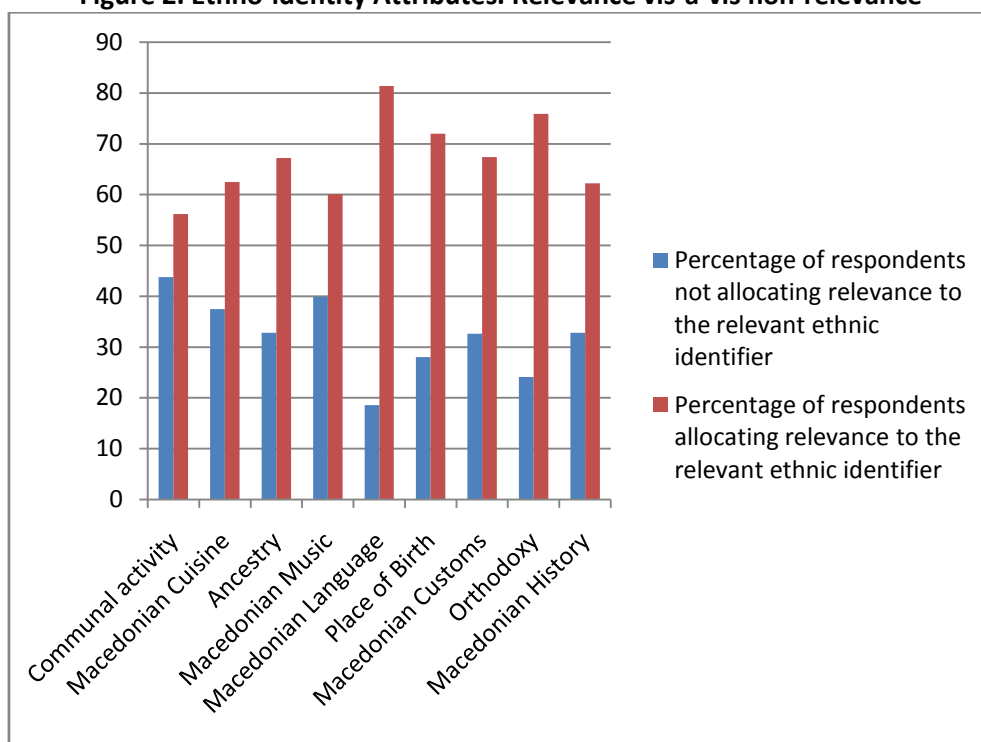
As stated earlier in this paper, all of these attributes have been proven to be important to ethno-Macedonian identity. In addition, the percentage of respondents allocating relevance to the relevant ethno-identity attribute reveals that the following two performance attributes are the top two attributes of ethno-identity: Macedonian language and Macedonian orthodoxy (performance and symbolic). Following the passive attribute of place of birth, the fourth top attribute

is also performance attribute of respecting and following Macedonian customs. It, in turn, is followed by the passive attribute ancestry, Macedonian cuisine (performance), Macedonian history (symbolic), Macedonian music (performance) and Macedonian communal activity (performance). Some respondents raised additional features they considered relevant to their Macedonian-ness, such as, Macedonian blood[line] (*n*=1) as a passive attribute, and the symbolic attributes of Macedonian state (*n*=3), Partner's descent (*n*=2), being "the oldest nation" (*n*=2), Macedonian name (*n*=1) and their very "Macedonianness", and "all which is Macedonian" (*n*=8).

The data indicate that whereas performance attributes are critical to one's ethno- identity, passive attributes are second to performance attributes. And, although symbolic attributes are third to performance attributes, the data indicate that they are far from being irrelevant to one's ethno-collective identity.

Sharing a Habitus: Macedonian Habitual Settings in Australia

So far, it is established that practice is at the core of the Macedonianness in Australia – it is an enacted Macedonianness. I will now explore the correlations between the above ethno-identity attributes, in a bid to identify the habitual settings of the ethno-Macedonians in Australia. The ethno-identity attributes correlational data is presented in *Figure 3*.

The performance attribute communal activity was found to be moderately correlated at α=.01 level with the Macedonian cuisine, Macedonian music and Macedonian customs attributes (Spearman Rho of +0.443, + 0.339 and +0.352 respectively) and weakly correlated with ancestry and the Macedonian language (Spearman Rho of +0.187 and +0.243). At α=.05 level, this attribute was found to be weakly correlated with place of birth and Orthodoxy (Spearman Rho of +0.115 and + 0.121). In other words, respondents who identified community activity as relevant were more likely, in moderation, to identify place of birth, Orthodoxy, Macedonian cuisine, Macedonian music and Macedonian customs as relevant as well. These positive correlations are found mainly between performance ethno-identity attributes. This is a set of durable dispositions in regard to ethno-collective identity that, at the relevant strengths of α=.01 and α=.05, are shared between ethno-Macedonians.

Apart from a moderate correlation with community mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Macedonian cuisine attribute is strongly correlated with

Macedonian music at the α=.05 level of significance (Spearman Rho of +0.563). In addition, a weak correlation at the same level of relevance is noted with the following identity attributes: Macedonian language, place of birth, Macedonian customs and Orthodoxy (Spearman Rho of +0.216, +0.194, +0.252 and +0.197 respectively). Again, a strong and moderate correlation is found between performance attributes.

The ancestry attribute is only weakly related to Macedonian customs at α=.05 level (Spearman Rho of +0.093): the identifiable correlations at α=.01 level are also weak: that is, Macedonian music (Spearman Rho of +0.168), place of birth (Spearman Rho of +0.187) and Macedonian history (Spearman Rho of +0.165). When it comes to the Macedonian music attribute, apart from the aforementioned moderate and strong correlation with communal activity and Macedonian cuisine, the rest of the identifiable correlations are weak and only relevant at α=.01 level. These include: Macedonian language (Spearman Rho of +0.162), place of birth (Spearman Rho of +0.226), Macedonian customs (Spearman Rho of +0.155), Orthodoxy (Spearman Rho of +0.163) and Macedonian history (Spearman Rho of +0.133). The Macedonian language attribute, in addition to the aforementioned correlations, is found to be weakly correlated at α=.01 level with place of birth, Macedonian customs, and Orthodoxy (Spearman Rho of +0.143, +0.246 and +0.179 respectively) and at α=.05 level with Macedonian history, i.e., Spearmen Rho of +0.109. When it comes to the passive attribute of place of birth, in addition to the aforementioned correlations, this attribute is weakly correlated at α=.01 level with the Macedonian customs attribute and Macedonian history (Spearman Rho +0.161 and +0.130 respectively). The following additional weak correlations are identifiable at α=.01 level relevant to the Macedonian customs attribute: Orthodoxy (Spearman Rho of +0.228) and Macedonian History (Spearman Rho of +0.213). The ethno-collective identity attribute Orthodoxy is also moderately related to Macedonian history at the same level of significance (Spearman Rho of +0.493). Finally, the remainder of the identified correlations for the symbolic attribute Macedonian history are weak at both relevance levels. At α=.05 level, this attribute is weakly correlated with Macedonian language (Spearmen Rho of +0.109) and at α=.01 level it is correlated with ancestry (+0.165), Macedonian music (+0.133), place of birth (+0.130) and Macedonian customs (+0.213) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Identified Correlations among Ethno-identity Attributes

	CA	MC	MC1	A	POB	MH	MM	MO	ML
Communal Activity (CA)	N/A	+0.443*[17]	+0352*	+0.187*	+0.115**[18]	nil[19]	+0.339*	+0.121**	+0.243*
Macedonian Cuisine (MC)	+0.443*	N/A	+0.252**	nil	+0.194**	nil	+0.563**	+0.197**	+0.216**
Macedonian Customs (MC1)	+0352*	+0.252**	N/A	+0.093**	+0.187*	+0.213*	+0.155*	+0.228*	+0.246*
Ancestry (A)	+0.187*	nil	+0.093**	N/A	+0.187*	+0.165*	+0.168*	nil	nil
Place of Birth (POB)	+0.115**	+0.194**	+0.161*	+0.187*	N/A	+0.130*	+0.226*	nil	+0.143*
Macedonian History (MH)	nil	nil	+0.213*	+0.165*	+0.130*	N/A	+0.133*	+0.493*	+0.109**
Macedonian Music (MM)	+0.339*	+0.563**	+0.155*	+0.168*	+0.226*	+0.133*	N/A	+0.163*	+0.162*
Macedonian Orthodoxy (MO)	+0.121**	+0.197**	+0.228*	nil	nil	+0.493*	+0.163*	N/A	+0.179*
Macedonian Language (ML)	+0.243*	+0.216**	+0.246*	nil	+0.143*	+0.109**	+0.162*	+0.179*	N/A

The above correlations, in their own strength, point to a shared set of dispositions among ethno-Macedonians through which they understand, interpret and act in the social world. The strongest positive correlation was identified between Macedonian cuisine and Macedonian music. This means that for the ethno-Macedonians in Australia, enjoying Macedonian food and Macedonian music is a shared practice. The data also indicate that performance ethno-attributes are more likely to be positively correlated overall. Hence, it may be concluded that shared habitus can explain the ethno-Macedonians' feeling and indentifying as Macedonians.

As evident in the findings presented in this paper, practice is considered at the core of Macedonianness in Australia; in other words, it is an enacted Macedonianness. This is evident in the ethno-identity attributes identified by the Macedonian participants in the five focus groups. Performance ethno-identity attributes were most commonly emphasised as relevant to the Macedonian collective identity evident in the depiction of six performance ethno-identity attributes (communal activity, Macedonian cuisine, Macedonian music, Macedonian Orthodoxy, Macedonian language, and respect and following of Macedonian traditions) vis-a-vis three non-performance (history, place of birth,

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[17] * stands for α=.01.

[18] ** stands for α=.05.

[19] Nil stands for no significant correlation identified.

and ancestry) attributes of core relevance to Macedonianness in Australia. The findings also indicated that the affective and symbolic differentiation of material culture and performance as Macedonian has its roots in the shared *habitus* by ethno-Macedonians in Australia. These findings provide support and an additional empirical ground for the relevance of the performance/practice theory of ethnicity/nation[alism].

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