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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Dear readers,

I am greatly pleased to present to you the latest issue of the Annual of the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research (Annual of ISPJR). As in the previous issues of the Annual, this 48th issue covers significant and current topics in the field of social sciences. Within this issue there are six positively double peer-reviewed papers, four of which represent original scientific papers and two professional papers. These papers derive from the scientific areas of sociology, communication studies, as well as political and juridical science. The papers in the area of sociology focus on the ethnification of the Macedonian "multicultural model", the considerations on census methodology for religious affiliation, as well as the individual religious identification of the population in the Ohrid-Struga region. The papers in the area of communication studies put focus on the role of parental psychological control and video game addiction among 15- to 18-year-old adolescents within problematic internet use and on the power of storytelling in public speaking, presenting the approaches and the impact. Additionally, there is a paper which analysis the preventative effects of the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) on the global threat of nuclear terrorism. The topics, approaches and research presented through the papers in this issue of the Annual are diverse and offer significant and interesting data and analyses, so I hope they will arouse your interest and enrich the scientific and academic discussion, but also that they will be significant for all stakeholders in order to better understand certain phenomena in our society.

Editor-in-Chief
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THE ROLE OF PARENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTROL AND VIDEO GAME ADDICTION AMONG 15- TO 18-YEAR-OLD ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

Although benefits can be observed from playing video games, research and practice point to harmful effects. Excessive gaming is included as a disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) (as Internet Gaming Disorder) and in the International Classification of Diseases, 11th Edition (ICD-11) (as Gaming Disorder). It is a behavioral disorder characterized by the desire to increase the time spent playing in order to achieve pleasure. Such exposure can have a detrimental impact on mental and physical health, daily routines, and the dynamics and quality of social relationships. In the research from which this paper arose, the two classifications of the disorder are named with a superordinate category – Gaming Addiction (GA). The research was conducted within the framework of the international project coordinated by Palacký University, Czech Republic, and financially supported by the integrative functions of UKIM. Of

particular interest to this text is understanding how perceived parental psychological control (by the mother) influences gaming addiction. For this purpose, the Internet Gaming Disorder Scale (IGDS9-SF) and the Gaming Disorder Test (GDT) were used, and perceived parental psychological control was measured with the Children's Perceptions of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI). The research was conducted during 2022 in secondary schools in Macedonia, through the Qualtrics platform. Secondary school respondents were 15 to 18 years old, 49.8% male and 50.2% female. The research findings showed a high correlation ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$) between the two scales measuring the disorder, justifying the use of the superordinate term "Gaming Addiction". Research results showed that as maternal psychological control increased, so did the intensity of problematic video game playing ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$ for IGDS9-SF and CRPBI; $r = 0.17$, $p > 0.01$ for GDT and CRPBI), that is, that gaming addiction is determined by perceived parental psychological control (F [21.847], $p < 0.01$ for IGDS9-SF and CRPBI and F [13.524], $p < 0.01$ for GDT and CRPBI).

Keywords: gaming addiction, parental psychological control, adolescents

УЛОГАТА НА РОДИТЕЛСКАТА ПСИХОЛОШКА КОНТРОЛА И ЗАВИСНОСТА ОД ИГРАЊЕ ВИДЕОИГРИ КАЈ АДОЛЕСЦЕНТИТЕ ОД 15 ДО 18 ГОДИНИ

Вовед

Играњето видеоигри стана една од широкоприфатените форми за забава и рекреација на децата и адолесцентите. Процесите на дигитализација и лесната достапност до интернет предизвикаа премин од традиционалните начини на забава кон играње видеоигри што окупираат поголем број сетила и имаат поизразена динамика. Забележителни се придобивките од можностите што ги нуди технолошкиот напредок како во разни области на општественото живеење и комуникацијата, така и кога станува збор за едукација, интеракција, развивање на одредени комуникациски и когнитивни вештини, креативност и сл. Покрај позитивните, потребно е да се нагласат и негативните аспекти на коишто укажуваат голем број истражувања што упатуваат на тоа дека прекумерната употреба на дигитална технологија може да има штетно влијание врз менталното и физичкото здравје, академските постигнувања, динамиката и квалитетот на социјалната интеракција во семејството, со врсниците, во рамките на училиштето и пошироката средина.

Глобалните трендови се пресликуваат и во македонското општество. Децата и адолесцентите дејствуваат, комуницираат меѓусебно во онлајн-просторот и многу често, речиси без исклучок,

играат видеоигри. Со цел да се проучат протективните фактори и факторите на ризик што се поврзани со прекумерното играње видеоигри, беше спроведено меѓународно истражување во коешто, покрај Македонија, беа вклучени: Чешка, Србија, Финска, Косово, САД, Чиле и Словачка. Проектот беше координиран од Универзитетот „Палацки" во Оломоуц, Чешка. Почнатото истражување во рамките на посочената меѓународна соработка беше финансиски овозможено од страна на УКИМ, преку средствата од интегративните функции. Подетална анализа на податоците добиени од посочениот проект што упатуваат на поврзаноста на перципираната родителската психолошка контрола и проблематичното играње ќе биде претставена преку овој труд.

Фактори што влијаат врз зависноста од играње

Во ова истражување, под поимот „играње" се подразбира секоја активност поврзана со игри што се играат од компјутер/лаптоп или од конзола на игри или од кој било друг вид уред (на пример, мобилен телефон, таблет итн.), и онлајн и офлајн.

Истражувачките студии што се фокусираат на разбирање на факторите на ризик и на протективните фактори што се поврзани со нарушувањето поврзано со зависноста од играње и неговото влијание врз менталното здравје на адолесцентите, се обидуваат да анализираат каква улога имаат карактеристиките на адолесцентите, семејството, врсниците, како и особеностите на видеоигрите.

Истражувањето спроведено во Македонија покажа дека одредени димензии/црти на личноста кај децата од 11 до 14 години можат да се појават како фактори на ризик или како протективни фактори (Markovikj, Serafimovska 2020). Се утврди дека димензијата на

личност *емоционална нестабилност* се појавува како фактор на ризик, додека димензиите: *екстровертност*, *отвореност*, *совесност* и *пријателство* се појавуваат како протективни фактори. Некои од причините зошто тинејџерите се занимаваат со играње видеоигри е делумно поради градење односи со другите (Seok et al. 2018), додека други откриле дека немањето на блиски пријатели, перцепцијата за сопствената тежина и употребата на дроги биле значително поврзани со проблематични резултати од играње видеоигри (Männikkö et al. 2015). Одредени студии (Mihara & Higuchi 2017) покажале дека зависноста често се поврзува со проблеми со врсниците и со повисока преваленција на врсничко малтретирање (булинг), и како жртва и како сторител. Генерално, високиот ризик од зависност е поврзан со самоубиствени мисли и самоповредување (Evren et al. 2014).

Утврдено е дека поголемата поддршка од семејството ја намалува зависноста од играње (Kim 2015), а дека недостигот од родителска топлина и високото ниво на контрола се поврзани со зголемена сериозност на проблематичното играње (Schneider et al. 2017). Исто така, утврдено е дека родителската контрола е поврзана со ризикот од зависноста од играње (Yang et al. 2020).

Семејната контрола на однесувањето од страна на двајцата родители има заштитна функција при развојот на зависност од интернет кај адолесцентите, додека психолошката контрола има негативен ефект (Zhu et al. 2023). Родителската психолошка контрола влијае врз зголемувањето на ризикот од појава на зависност од играње кај децата и адолесцентите (Turan et al. 2024; She 2022).

Многу истражувања укажуваат на тоа дека дизајнот на дигиталните видеоигри има особено големо влијание врз психологијата на играчите, односно гејмерите, особено врз перцепцијата и сознавањето на нештата (Thompson et al. 2010; Tam & Ho 2006; Rizzo &

Kim 2005; Richards & David 2005 во Chang & Chen 2008). Еден од начините за објаснување на заемната поврзаност помеѓу личносните карактеристики и природата на видеоигрите е воведувањето на концептот што во психолошката наука е именуван како „проток" (flow). Овој концепт е определен како состојба на оптимално искуство при коешто индивидуата е во целост апсорбирана и внесена во активноста. Соодносот помеѓу тежината на нивото на видеоиграта и неопходното ниво на вештини што ги поседува гејмерот се неопходни за да се појави феноменот на проток (Vyas 2021). Гејмерите претпочитаат случајни награди (Almodovar Alegria 2022), што во добродизајнираните игри се вклучени со цел да биде гарантирана зависноста кај гејмерите.

Зависност од играње

Под терминот „зависност од играње" се подразбира прекумерна употреба на видеоигри, што е проследено со губење контрола, приоретизирање на играњето пред другите секојдневни активности (на пример, дружење, работа, учење, јадење, грижа за себе), што, пак, резултира со значително и суштинско оштетување во повеќе области на менталното или физичкото функционирање. Зависноста е условена од леснотијата на пристапот до видеоигри, што е овозможена преку различни уреди, можност за вклучување во игра со други гејмери, можност за финансиски награди или постигнување на победнички статус. Светската здравствена организација (СЗО) неодамна ја препозна зависноста од играње како ментално нарушување што може да се дијагностицира и да се класифицира како бихевиорална зависност и го именува како нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње (Gaming Disorder – GD) во најновата ревизија на Меѓународната класификација на болести, 11-то издание (ICD-11) (*Gaming Disorder*,

n.d.), а Американската психијатриска асоцијација (АПА) истото нарушување го класифицира во Дијагностичкиот и статистички прирачник за ментални нарушувања, петто издание (DSM-5) како нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње на интернет (Internet Gaming Disorder – IGD) (*Internet Gaming*, n.d.).

Овој вид нарушување е ограничено на играње видеоигри и не вклучува проблематична употреба на интернет, онлајн-коцкање или користење на социјални медиуми или на паметни телефони. Студиите спроведени во контекст на зависноста од играње покажуваат висока преваленција кај адолесцентите и кај младите возрасни (на возраст од 12 до 20 години) (De Pasquale et al. 2020; Gao et al. 2022). Адолесцентите кои манифестираат зависност од играње можат да манифестираат пад на академските постигнувања, неуспех/напуштање на училиштето, психосоцијални проблеми, проблеми со спиењето и исхраната, психолошки проблеми како анксиозност, депресија и сл.

Според Меѓународната класификација на болести, 11-то издание (ICD-11), за да се дијагностицира зависност од играње, мораат да бидат застапени следните индикатори: 1. нарушена контрола врз играњето; 2. зголемување на приоритетот даден на игрите до степен до којшто играњето има предност пред другите животни интереси и секојдневни активности; 3. продолжување или ескалација на играњето и покрај појавата на негативни последици.

Според Дијагностичкиот и статистички прирачник за ментални нарушувања, петто издание (DSM-5), предложените симптоми на нарушувањето поврзано со зависноста од играње на интернет вклучуваат девет критериуми: 1. преокупација со видеоигри; 2. симптоми на повлекување кога играњето е одземено или не е можно (тага, вознемиреност, раздразливост); 3. толеранција, потреба да се троши повеќе време играјќи за да се задоволи поривот; 4. неможност да

се намали играњето, неуспешни обиди за откажување од играњето; 5. откажување од други активности, губење интерес за претходно уживани активности поради играње видеоигри; 6. продолжување со видеоиграта и покрај проблемите; 7. лажење за времето поминато во играње; 8. играње со цел ублажување на негативните расположенија; 9. ризик, загрозување или губење работа или врска поради играње. Според предложените критериуми, за да се постави дијагноза, треба да бидат манифестирани пет или повеќе од овие симптоми во рок од една година. Состојбата може да вклучува играње со други или самостојно (Sherer 2022).

Родителска психолошка контрола

Родителската контрола, како концепт што е мошне сеопфатен и повеќедимензионален, е поделена на два вида: контрола на однесувањето и психолошка контрола (Barber 1996).

Психолошката контрола (ПК) е дефинирана како многу подмолен тип контрола, што потенцијално го инхибира или го нарушува психолошкиот развој преку манипулација и злоупотреба на врската родител-дете, која се карактеризира се лишување од љубов, индукција на вина, критики, разочарување, срам, неконзистентни мерки, обвинување и инсистирање на прекумерна лична контрола (Barber 1996; Barber 2002).

Психолошката контрола вклучува обиди на родителите да постават ограничувања на мислите и чувствата на децата, што негативно се одразува врз севкупниот детски раст и развој (Lansford 2021). Таа се карактеризира со наметливо и манипулативно однесување насочено кон мислите и чувствата на децата или адолесцентите, преку коешто возрасните со примена на моќ настојуваат

да го контролираат психолошкиот свет на нивните деца. Родителите кои го користат овој тип контрола се карактеризираат со неможност да ги разликуваат сопствените потреби од потребите на нивните деца; уште повеќе, тие не успеваат да го визуализираат гледиштето на нивните деца (Barber & Harmon 2002).

Родителската психолошка контрола ги попречува развојот на автономија, себевреднувањето, формирањето идентитет и постигнувањето самоопределување и индивидуализација на адолесцентите (Pérez et al. 2021).

Мајките имаат поголема веројатност да користат психолошка контрола кога се под стрес поради одредени тешкотии во справувањето со родителската улога. Овој конфликт мајка-адолесцент може да ја испровоцира мајката да применува психолошка контрола (Steeger & Gondoli 2013).

Методологија

Главната цел на истражувањето е да се стекнат подобар увид и подобро разбирање на влијанието и на улогата на родителската психолошка контрола врз проблематичното играње. Во ова истражување, акцент е ставен на улогата на мајката. Од главната истражувачка цел произлегува и следната хипотеза:

Зголемената родителска психолошка контрола од страна на мајката позитивно влијае врз зависноста од играње.

Инструменти

Со цел да се проучи влијанието на родителската психолошка контрола врз зависноста од играње, беа зададени следните инструменти:

1. Скала за нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње на интернет со 9 ставки – кратка форма (Internet Gaming Disorder Scale – IGDS9-SF) (Pontes & Griffiths 2015)

Ова е првиот краток стандардизиран психометриски инструмент за процена и дијагностицирање на зависноста и претставува скала од Ликертов тип со пет степени, која има девет прашања. Овој инструмент е конструиран согласно дадените девет клинички критериуми развиени од страна на АПА, а објавени во последното издание од Дијагностичкиот и статистички прирачник за ментални нарушувања, петто издание (DSM-5) (Monacis et al. 2016). Со достигнување на резултатот 32 може да направи разлика помеѓу гејмери со нарушување и оние што немаат нарушување.

Проверката на македонскиот превод на инструментот покажа солидни метриски карактеристики: Коефициентот на внатрешна конзистентност (Кронбах алфа) изнесува 0,86, а со примената на Анализата на главни компоненти (Principal Component Analysis) беше констатирано дека тестот се однесува само на еден фактор, како и дека сите коефициенти на корелација помеѓу сумарниот резултат на скалата и секој поединечен резултат за прашањето се на ниво на значајност од 0,01 (релијабилност на тестот).

2. Тест за нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње (Gaming Disorder Test – GDT)

Тестот го мери нарушувањето согласно Меѓународната класификација на болести, 11-то издание (ICD-11). Овој тест (Pontes et al. 2021) е првата кратка стандардизирана психометриска алатка за процена на нарушувањето поврзано со зависноста од играње (GD) во рамките на дијагностичките критериуми развиени од СЗО во најновата 11-та ревизија на Меѓународната класификација на болести (ICD-11). Тестот за нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње (GDT) е

еднодимензионална алатка што се состои од вкупно четири прашања (со одговори на Ликертова скала) што ги мерат клиничките критериуми за нарушување на играње видеоигри како во Меѓународната класификација на болести, 11-то издание (ICD-11) (Darvesh et al. 2020).

Проверката на македонскиот превод на инструментот покажа солидни метриски карактеристики: Коефициентот на внатрешна конзистентност (Кронбах алфа) изнесува 0,77, а со примена на Анализата на главни компоненти (Principal Component Analysis) беше констатирано дека тестот се однесува само на еден фактор, како и дека сите коефициенти на корелација помеѓу сумарниот резултат на скалата и секој поединечен резултат за прашањето се на ниво на значајност од 0,01.

3. Инвентар за перцепција на детето за однесувањето на родителите (Child Report Parenting Behaviour Inventory – CRPBI), Психолошка контрола од страна на мајката (Maternal Psychological control) (Barber 1996)

Шефер (Schaefer во Schludermann и Schludermann 1970) развил инвентар што има за цел да го утврди начинот на којшто децата го перципираат однесувањето на родителите и истиот содржел 108 ставки. Инвентарот за перцепција на детето за однесувањето на родителите е единствениот инструмент за оценување на релацијата родител-дете што вклучува специфична мерка за родителска психолошка контрола. Шлудерман и Шлудерман (1970) од оригиналната верзија на Шефер направиле скратена верзија од 30 прашања, а Брајан К. Барбер (Barber 1996) од Инвентарот за перцепција на детето за однесувањето на родителите (CRPBI-30) издвојува шест прашања што мерат родителска психолошка контрола. Скратената форма на скалата на Барбер, која се однесува само на мајката, е

вклучена во ова истражување. Одговорите на оваа скала се следните: „Воопшто не личи на мојата мајка“, „Делумно личи...“ и „Целосно личи...“

Проверката на македонскиот превод на инструментот покажа солидни метриски карактеристики: Коефициентот на внатрешна конзистентност (Кронбах алфа) изнесува 0,77, а со примена на Анализата на главни компоненти (Principal Component Analysis) беше констатирано дека тестот се однесува само на еден фактор, како и дека сите коефициенти на корелација помеѓу сумарниот резултат на скалата и секој поединечен резултат за прашањето се на ниво на значајност од 0,01.

Примерок

Во истражувањето учествуваа ученици од средните училишта од различни градови во Македонија: Скопје, Охрид, Виница, Куманово, Гостивар и Велес. Истражувањето беше спроведено со согласност од МОН и од БРО и директорите на училиштата, а во координација со стручната служба во училиштата. Со оглед на тоа дека учениците беа малолетни, согласност за учество во истражувањето потпишуваа и нивните родители. Истражувањето беше спроведено во текот на 2022 година во средните училишта, со примена на платформата „Квалтрикс“ (Qualtrics). Испитаниците беа на возраст од 15 до 18 години, а од нив 49,8% беа машки и 50,2% беа женски. Може да се каже дека речиси еднакво беа застапени учениците кои се на возраст од 15, 16 и 18 години. Мал процент (0,4) беа на возраст од 19 години, а 1,3% не дале прецизен одговор.

Резултати

Податоците од истражувањето покажаа голема заемна поврзаност помеѓу двата инструмента што мерат зависност од играње (r = 0,78, p < 0,01). Покрај високиот коефициент на корелација, беше утврдено дека доколку обата инструмента би се анализирале како еден, внатрешната конзистенција би била особено висока (Кронбах алфа = 0,86). Ваквите показатели на метриските карактеристики на секој од инструментите, како и во случај кога обата би биле анализирани како еден инструмент, упатуваат на констатација дека употребата на кој било од нив ќе даде истоветни податоци. Добиените резултати говорат во прилог на именување на нарушувањето поврзано со зависноста од играње на интернет (IGD) и нарушувањето поврзано со зависноста од играње (GD) со надредена категорија – зависност од играње.

Доколку се земе предвид резултатот на скалата со девет прашања од 32 поени како критичен (односно дека со овој резултат и над него лицата можат да бидат дијагностицирани како зависници од играње), 2,1% (односно 10 лица од примерок од 476 испитаници) од испитаниците би влегле во категоријата *зависници од интернет*. Во оваа група нема разлика според пол (пет се машки и исто толку женски), а според возраст се речиси еднакво распоредени според возрасните категории (15, 16, 18 години).

Со цел да се провери хипотезата, беше пристапено кон проверка на поврзаноста на родителската психолошка контрола и зависноста од играње. Со примена на статистичкиот Пирсонов коефициент на корелација (Pearson Correlation), се утврди постоење на висока поврзаност помеѓу варијаблите *зависност од играње* и *родителска психолошка контрола* (види: Т-1).

Т-1: Приказ на коефициенти на корелација помеѓу резултатите на инструментите за нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње на интернет (IGD) и нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње (GD) и резултатот на скалата за родителска психолошка контрола

		Нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње (GD)	Нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње на интернет (IGD)
Инвентар за перцепција на детето за однесувањето на родителите (CRPBI) Родителска психолошка контрола	Пирсонов коефициент на корелација	0,172**	0,217**
	Ниво на значајност	0,000	0,000
** Корелацијата е значајна на ниво 0,01 (двонасочна).			

По утврдената корелација, се пристапи кон примена на статистички метод што се обидува да ги одреди силата и карактерот на врската помеѓу зависната и независната варијабла (анализа на регресија). Резултатите покажаа дека родителската психолошка контрола има влијание врз зависноста од играње:

а) $F = 21,847$, $p < 0,01$ за Скалата за нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње на интернет со 9 ставки – кратка форма (IGDS9-SF) и Инвентарот за перцепција на детето за однесувањето на родителите (CRPBI), а вредноста на $R2$ (0,047) покажува дека зависната варијабла (родителска психолошка контрола) објаснува приближно 4,7% од варијансата на зависната варијабла (зависност од играње, мерена со скалата IGDS-9);

б) $F = 13,524$, $p < 0,01$ за Тестот за нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње (IGDT) и Инвентарот за перцепција на детето за однесувањето на родителите (CRPBI), а вредноста на $R2$ (0,03) покажува дека зависната варијабла (родителска психолошка контрола)

објаснува приближно 3,0% од варијансата на зависната варијабла (зависноста од играње мерена со скалата GD).

Добиените податоци покажуваат дека независната варијабла (родителска психолошка контрола) во поголем дел ја објаснува зависната варијабла (зависност од играње) во случај кога таа е мерена со Скалата за нарушување поврзано со зависноста од играње на интернет со 9 ставки – кратка форма (IGDS9-SF).

Примената на статистичките постапки упатува на тоа дека родителската психолошка контрола (односно психолошката контрола од страна на мајката) значително и сериозно влијае врз зависноста од играње.

Дискусија и заклучок

Зависноста од играње е категоризирана во соодветните кластери на болести во Меѓународната класификација на болести, 11-то издание (ICD-11) и Дијагностичкиот и статистички прирачник за ментални нарушувања, петто издание (DSM-5). Појавата на овој вид нарушување придвижи голем број истражувања што имаат цел да ги утврдат протективните фактори и факторите на ризик. Во базата на податоци на „Пабмед“ (PubMed) се забележува интензивен пораст на бројот на истражувања, па така во 2012 година имало само 12 истражувања, за да се искачи бројката до 285 истражувања во 2022 година, со забележен мал пад – 187 истражувања – во 2024 година.

Родителската психолошка контрола, која се чини дека го попречува психолошкиот развој кај децата и кај адолесцентите, е поврзана со нарушување на зависноста од играње. Сепак, стиловите и практиките на родителство варираат во различни култури (Turan et al.

2024). Поради оваа причина, а за да се утврди ризикот и подобро да се разбере ефектот на родителската контрола врз појавата на зависност кај адолесцентите кои се во процес на психолошки развој и таа да се спречи во рана фаза, беше спроведено истражување во Македонија.

Универијантната логистичка регресивна анализа покажа дека ризикот за зависност од играње се зголемува како што се зголемува интензитетот на перципирана психолошка контрола од страна на мајката. Со цел да го надминат чувството на безвредност, а коешто е резултат на токсичните манипулативни облици на контрола од страна на родителите, децата и адолесцентите голем дел од времето поминуваат играјќи видеоигри, при што како резултат на конструкцијата на видеоиграта добиваат повремени награди што стимулативно влијаат врз хормоните на задоволство. Ваквото однесување доведува до состојба на затворен круг, каде што се навлегува сѐ подлабоко, и ваквата состојба доведува до сериозни нарушувања на менталното здравје, социјалните релации и дневните рутини (исхрана, сон, работен ангажман).

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ETHNIFICATION OF THE MACEDONIAN "MULTICULTURAL MODEL"

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Abstract

It is customary that any political issue or change in the **Macedonian society** greatly affects the ethnic balance in the state. In 2024, presidential and parliamentary elections were held in North Macedonia, after which there was a complete change of the government. As the social context is always in the process of changing and a few months after the 2024 elections, we can re-evaluate the political events and compare the views and arguments of the politics regarding the **ethnic** versus the **civic** as a concepts. All of these considering that North Macedonia is still a multicultural society that is in a search for higher level of integration. The main goal in this paper is to elaborate where the situation is leaning and shed more lights into the **ethnic/civic divide** in public debates. The "Ohrid process" paved the way to unitary future of the state but opened the window for ethnification of the politics and strengthening of the ethnic concept. Over the past 20 years, the importance of ethnicity and the power of ethnic elites has continuously

grown, by particularly strengthening ethnic identity among Albanians. In North Macedonia the economy is weak, democratic processes are with the snail speed, yet, for the ethnic themes, the debate is always fast and explosive and with a lot of emotions. As we have argued this is the result of the process of **ethnification of politics**.

Keywords: Macedonian society, ethnic/civic divide, ethnification of politics

Introduction[1]

Speaking about the existing multicultural models, it is difficult to compare or to replicate any solutions across different social contexts and geography. There are no two similar countries, according to the population, and every multicultural society should find its own way. Many nations and states are proud of their projected national identities. Some nations do not even recognize ethnic minorities due to their national strategy. With the multicultural theory and experience in the last 3-4 decades, multiculturalism is not a very popular idea because competes with and confronts nation-state. In the same time, there are many examples of destabilizing social cohesion through ethnification of politics. It is difficult to copy elements from different models of integration. The solution for these societies are through policies and regulations that do not enhance segregation of the society and decrease the possibilities of ethnic conflict.

In the 1990s a serious attempt was made to create a theory, the theory of multiculturalism. This theory was advocated by several western liberal authors, among them Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer, but also Will Kymlicka, Biku Parek and many others, authors who wrote about western societies, Netherlands, Canada and Australia, mainly immigrant countries. They advocated for more rights for distinguished cultural groups within their own societies. These rights covered topics such as identity, recognition, language, cultural rights, education, immigrant issues as well as issues related to traditional multicultural societies. This theory aimed to find more space in liberal society for diverse and disadvantaged cultural groups,

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[1] This paper is part of the project of the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research named "Analysis of the parliamentary and presidential elections 2024." In the framework of the project were prepared several analyses, concerning different issues and themes, as well as the multicultural and identity questions related to the elections of 2024.

although the boundary between culture and politics has always been the subject of fierce political and academic debates. One of the efficient attempt to reconcile universal rights and collective diversities is made in the theory of consociational democracy of Aren Lijphart (Lijphart 1977). It was a model to introduce political mechanisms to resolve burning issues related to the identity of cultural groups and their participation in the political model of the state. It seems that the basic category of defining identity and diversity and their implication in politics is the category of nationality, which in the West is understood as citizenship, as a universal category, while in the East it is understood as ethnicity, specific identity to big groups defined by common language, similar cultural trays and historical heritage. The main goal was to reach solutions that will prevent or resolve ethnic conflict, where the conflict has either started or there are indications that one will occur in another unstable and multicultural country in the Balkans, in Africa or even in an Asia.

Unlike different parts of former Yugoslavia, where in the 1990s the bloody ethnic conflict lasted for couple of years, the Republic of Macedonia in 2001 went through ethnic conflict with a small number of casualties. While in Bosnia through the Dayton Agreement, the International community installed a state with three constitutional and separate ethnic groups, in Macedonia, on the contrary, through the Ohrid Framework Agreement they tried to stop the ethnic interference in the political model concerning the Government. The local governments gained more ethnic concessions, but with intention to strengthen the democratic processes with the hope that the ethnification of politics will eventually lose its importance. Hence, North Macedonia nowadays enjoys more balance and calm relations due to the lack of strong Macedonian nationalism (Atanasov 2017). The Ohrid Framework Agreement paved the way for more multiculturally balanced politics, but also enhanced rights concerning cultural differences and needs. The moment considering strengthening the political power on the side of

Albanians is proved to be of high importance. The constitutional changes and numerous laws that gave more rights to the Albanians concerning language rights, identity of the communities, the mechanisms for constitutional protection, and equitable participation in the institutions of the system are elements of integrative strategy and policies. For sure, more cross-ethnic communication is needed, and respecting of the rule of law and the protection of the rights of all other ethnic communities (besides Macedonians and Albanians, there are 10% minorities of other ethnicities – Turks, Serbs, Roma, Vlachs, Bosniacs). The Ohrid Agreement was the document that resolved the security crisis in 2001 and laid the foundations of today's Macedonia even though this social transformation did not go easily and without problems. The Democratic Union for Integration[2] (DUI) as a political party was in a position to increase the ethnic rights of Albanians, sometimes beyond the constitutionally defined provisions. The ethnic issues debates are always flammable, especially during the election campaigns.

In 2024, presidential and parliamentary elections were held in North Macedonia, after which there was a complete change of the government.[3] After eight years of SDSM (left wing party) ruling, VMRO-DPMNE (right wing party) came to power, while among the Albanians, after 20 years, the main party in the government changed, DUI was replaced by the VREDI coalition, made up of several Albanian political parties. DUI as a political party was part of the government and influential from 2002 to 2024. Also, there was a change in the presidential cabinet, the candidate supported by VMRO-DPMNE convincingly defeated the current president as candidate supported by SDSM. We have to add, that every small political issue or change in the

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[2] The Democratic Union for Integration was a political party transformed from Albanian para-military that took part in the conflict in 2001 against the state security forces. Their leader Ali Ahmeti is the first and the only president between 2002-2024.
[3] Parliamentary elections were held on May 8, 2024 together with the second round of the Presidential elections.

Macedonian society greatly affects the ethnic balance in the state. As the social context is always in the process of changing and a few months after the 2024 elections, we can re-evaluate the political events and compare the views and arguments of the politics regarding the ethnic versus the civic as a concepts. All of these considering that North Macedonia is a multicultural society with the model of building a cohesive society that is in a search for higher level of integration.

Macedonian society between the Ethnic and the Civic

What changes did the Ohrid Agreement bring? The framework agreement contained four basic ideas – cessation of violence, decentralization of government, rebalancing of the political model and cultural issues. In some cases it simply mirrored existing European standards on these issues, in other cases it went further. The sections on "non-discrimination and fair representation" and "special parliamentary procedures" are probably the most important parts of the document. The so-called "Badinter majority" of representatives who belong to communities that are not part of the majority in Macedonia was also introduced, especially for cultural rights, the use of language, education, personal documents, and the use of symbols, and issues related to decentralization. The Ohrid Agreement was the basis for a model of society that would force political integration, but with elements of both liberal and corporate pluralism (Atanasov 2004). Unfortunately, the political elites, even after two decades of this important agreement for the state, do not pay enough attention to the social integration in many aspects important for social interaction, and about the "unitary" character of state. The sociological theory has been generally clear on this problem.

One of the basic sociological dichotomy concerning belonging to the nation is the perception of the ethnic vis-à-vis the civic understanding of the identity and the society as a part of the state. Most frequent question is always: to whom the state belong, considering the ethnic/civic dichotomy? "The ideal articulation of 'nation' as a form of cultural community and the 'state' as a territorial, political unit is now widely accepted and often taken as unproblematic" (Biswas 2002). Research on this question has led to a widely accepted distinction between two types of nationalism, ethnic and civic, and two types of nations, cultural and political. Let us consider some other elaborations of the ethnic/civic dichotomy. "The myth of the *ethnic* nation suggests that you have no choice at all in the making of your national identity: you are your cultural inheritance and nothing else. The myth of the *civic* nation, in contrast, suggests that your national identity is nothing but your choice…" (Yack 1996). It seems that ethnic identity is unchosen – not even a possible subject of choice. "It is this, crucially, which distinguishes ethnic from civic nationalism; for on the latter, national identity is presumed either to have been chosen or at least to be what it would be rational to choose" (Gilbert 2000). Brown referred to these two bases of national identity as "Cultural (or ethno-cultural) Nationalism and Civic Nationalism. Ethno-cultural nationalism depicts the nation as a community of (ethno) cultural sameness, while civic nationalism depicts the nation as a community of equal citizens" (Brown 2002). Some argue that the differences between them are essentially historical and geographical. "The enlightenment and western liberal tradition promoted a certain conception of nation identity as citizenship…" (Heathorn 2000). Another type is evolving in the post-Communist states. "Nicknamed 'ethnic democracy' … it takes the ethnic nation, rather than the citizenry, as the cornerstone of the state" (Smooha 2002). What does play a part, and especially in determining whether a particular nationalism will be defined as civic or as ethnic, is the perception

of a nation's status relative to other nations, whether it is perceived as a part of the West or not. Greenfeld argues that such perception is dependent on the traditional, prenational beliefs in the society in question (Greenfeld 1992). Theoretical arguments, very often, link ethnic nationalism and cultural nations to an objective definition of the nation, while civic nationalism and political nations are linked to a subjective definition.[4]

After this short analysis about ethnic and civic, we can broaden the horizon with comparison of nationalism and multiculturalism. Nationalism is older and stronger than multiculturalism as an ideology and practice. Nationalism has produced the nation in a long process that bred many nations on European continent. Nationalism is a standpoint for reference in a way to which nation you belong, but when nationalisms compete in the same society (state) than the multiculturalism is in conflict with the national state. Can we in this way see Macedonia as a society in which Macedonian nationalism competes with other nationalisms, or, more practically, how powerful are different cultural groups seeking for more recognition and resources interfering the Macedonian "national status quo" (Atanasov 2004). The only nationalism that can compete with the Macedonian one and did receive recognition and partially resource redistribution (on the municipality level) through the constitutional changes, is the Albanian one. Respectively, the public debates after the Ohrid Agreement are more concerned with the "bicultural" arguments, pros and cons, than with multicultural perspectives. It is evident that the biggest ethnic groups in Macedonia (Macedonians and Albanians) do not celebrate the multiculturalism but their own cultural group

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[4] This analysis of the ethnic versus civic category or concept is taken from the paper wrote by the author in 2004, and published under tittle "Macedonian National Identity: Quantitative Differences Between Unitary and Subaltern National Myths and Narratives" (Discussion Paper 32 – South East Europe Series). London, UK: Centre for the Study of Global Governance – London School of Economics.

politics. The multicultural "arguments" in this case are used more as an excuse in pursue of their own political (ethnic) goals.

The problem is that, comparing the numbers, the Macedonians will have difficulties to hold its "multicultural model" socially cohesive and with strength to succeed, while the Albanians will, furthermore, insist on re-structuring the "model" that privilege the Macedonian symbols of the society. Even though it is difficult to imagine that the Albanians will have in near future their own (sub)national anthem or football team as a federal part of Macedonia, it is more difficult to imagine Albanians standing proudly while Macedonian national anthem proceed, the flag as well. In this way, the highest argument against the Macedonian "national enterprise" from the Albanian side is that in the multicultural states all citizens cannot identify under one name as nation, if the name of the state is the same with the name of the dominant national group. In the Macedonian case putting everyone under the name Macedonia, according to many Albanians, assumes assimilationist connotations. It is not easy to give up the monopoly of the national cultural matrix (and political power), as well as resources, in order to meet the Albanian demands for equal public status for their language and equitable and fair representation in the state institutions.[5] Every society, argues Parekh, has a historically inherited cultural structure which informs its conduct of public life, and resists modifications beyond a certain point without losing its coherence and causing widespread disorientation, anxiety and even resistance (Parekh 2000). Macedonians still perceive Macedonia as their "natural" state, and involuntarily make more "space(s)" for the Albanians.

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[5] According to the census in 2022 the ethnic proportions of the population is following: Macedonians 58.44 %, Albanians 24.30 %, the rest consists of Turks (3.86%), Roma (2.53%), Serbs (1.30%), Bosniaks (0.87%), Vlachs (0.47%) and others.

Contextually, this "battle" between ethnic and civic last since the beginning of the independence of the state. Political culture research conducted in 2012 (Simoska 2012), on representative sample for the country of 1200 respondents, pointed that the citizens in Macedonian society perceived the ethnic diversity as a richness, yet, in relations to living together, Macedonians and Albanians agreed that actually they do not want to live together. In relation to identity in Macedonian society there were two constants. First one is that the Macedonians, but also Turks and Roma, feel exclusively as a "citizens of Macedonia". Contrary to this, in the last two decades the number of Albanians that feel only as a members of their own "ethnic community" continuously rise. The new thing is that this feeling is rising among Turkish community too. The ethnic revival as an identity among Albanians is related with the events that followed the independence of the country, and also due to bigger political exponents in the politics of Albanians in Macedonia.

A study done in 2011 (Hristova 2013) focused on the issue of perception of the ethnic and civic identity on the student population (with a sample of 451 students at the state universities). The research have set off from the assumption that it was possible for these two identities (ethnic and civic) to be mutually exclusive, but also compatible. The research team have envisaged four categories that express this relation of ethnic versus national identity, so that in the first case they are completely separate, in two categories these identities are nested in each other, and in the fourth category they merge (there is no difference between ethnic and national identity). A large majority of ethnic Macedonians (77.1%) chose the categories in which the civic component is dominant. The ethnic Albanians chose these categories in a much smaller percentage (32.3%), and their preferred categories are the nested identities in which the ethnic background is dominant (46.6%). They reached conclusion that the respondents (above

all, the ethnic Albanians) perceive the cohesiveness and solidarity on ethnic level, and not national level.

It is evident that the ethnic is strong category and for a longer period of time dominates in the public and obvious if you follow the elections and government policies in last 20 years. The Ohrid process paved the way to unitary future of the state but opened the window for ethnification of the politics and strengthening of the ethnic. That would be argued when we later quote some of the recent statements considering the current state-of-affairs, shortly after the parliamentary elections of 2024. That is the main goal in this paper, to elaborate where the situation is leaning and shed more lights into the ethnic/civic divide in public debates.

Ethnicization of politics

In the political space in the Republic of North Macedonia after the elections in December 2016, during the negotiations for the new government, political declaration was promoted in the public. It was presented as a document signed by members of Parliament from the Albanian political parties (20 MPs) and it became known as the "Platform from Tirana". This document and in its appearance brought public tensions. The parts of the document that asked for a public debate were understood by the Macedonians as "ethnic demands". Thus, 15 years after the Ohrid Agreement, thanks to the Tirana Platform, the main political problems again become the ethnic issues and the arguments were debated about which model is the most suitable for the "final reconciliation" of ethnic communities.

The document, which is spread over several pages, is dominated by three groups of questions or demands (Atanasov 2017). Albanian MPs through this document (under the leadership of DUI), in addition to several conventional introductory sentences, claimed a higher political status in the,

as well as a debate on the redesign of state symbols. More resources and differentiation were required in a way that will strengthen ethnicity, and there is also a request for a greater share in the national narrative of Macedonia. So this is another sign of the demand for ethnification of politics. The first group of questions refer to the demands for a higher political status of the Albanians within the state of the Republic of Macedonia. In particular, language federalization is required, first of all, in the area of language policies and the use of the Albanian language. Second, debate on redesigning state symbols is also demanded. The attitude of strengthening the ethnic was clearly exposed. Many times the leaders of the ethnic communities try to freeze the ethnic differences just to prolong their political prominence and expiration date. The second group of questions is related to the requirements for designing parallel institutions that would have specific competences within the policies of redistribution of resources. And this group of questions refers to concessions related to greater ethnic control over the socio-political processes. The establishment of a Ministry of Political System and Relations between Communities was required, a body that would be responsible for the rights of the communities, but also required to have competence in supporting greater economic and social development of underdeveloped areas. The establishment of a central institution for the implementation of the law on the use of the languages of the communities was required, as well as a permanent body, a "Round table", with a rotating presidency of the Albanians for issues of an "Ethnic" nature. The third group of questions were related to the requirements for the historical role and redefine the role of Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia as a political entity. The demands for the involvement of the Albanians in the resolution of the "state" issues, such as the negotiations on the differences over the name issue with the Greece, for the involvement of the Albanians in the communication and the building of policies with the neighboring states, such as Bulgaria, Albania and

Kosovo, were requirements at the level of a relationship between a federal entity and a federation.

Thus, the further internal divisions of a society will only weaken the chances of building a political nation whose sole task is to provide a better life for its citizens – regardless of belonging to different cultural, ethnic, religious or any other identities. The only way to "strengthen" the state status of the Albanians should be by overcoming the "ethnic knots" (Atanasov 2017), through an open dialogue and the choice of policies that unite and not divide, but also by creating more space for the issues important to the Albanians and the recognition and respect to all "non-majority citizens". This requires vision and courage, because the ethnic tensions in the Balkans from 20 years ago are a good example of how, under certain conditions, they easily transform into ethnic conflict. In summary, the multi-ethnic dilemmas will probably continue to plague society and its citizens and will not disappear from our political scene anytime soon. The events from time to time shows that the water under the political institutions and state structures in Macedonian society is not calm.

Many questions should be asked. Do we accept or are we ready to accept the multi-ethnic reality in which we live? What lies in the essence of the demands of ethnic communities and in the essence of ethnic conflicts? Does the need for identity recognition end only with well-structured and formulated legal provisions and institutional designs, or is a different and broader social integration required? Political science and the science of multiculturalism and the division of power (power-sharing) have been trying for more than a century to propose the best models and to give the most adequate explanation of the processes and challenges faced by multi-ethnic societies. Due to its complexity and various aspects, the hitherto unchallenged ideal of liberalism stands up to the challenge of how to answer

these questions. Is it necessary for the public sphere and institutions to remain impersonal and neutral in relation to our different identities and to treat all citizens as equals, or is it necessary to protect the rights of individuals as members of specific cultural groups through their public recognition? Although the new constitutional order, inspired by the solutions in the Ohrid Framework Agreement, as well as the extensive written (legal and scientific) material on this topic, produced after 2001, provide a good basis for inter-ethnic tolerance and understanding, recent incidents between groups of young people from different ethnicities affiliation, unfortunately, makes this issue more than current and interesting for debate (Misev 2013). The search for new ways, models for integration, different concepts of educational policy in ethnically divided societies, territorial and non-territorial demands for autonomy, states Misev, should help in the movement towards a transitional democracy in a multi-ethnic society such as ours.

Ethnopolitical mobilization represents political organization of ethnic groups in order to rearrange the established social relationships or some of their segments, in the interest of the group, whereby efforts are made to change the general rules according to which people live or, on the other hand, some segment of them. Those changes may include, or integrating, and excluding, or disintegrating (Minoski 2013). Specific characteristic of our model is the policy of "final internal separation". This is the way of creation of ethnic spaces and parallel life – ethnic municipalities, exclusive languages of education, etc. Most of the "multicultural" privileges are shared only by one ethnic community – the Albanians. The multicultural discourse of the Macedonian and Albanian leaders is just a cover for their "ethnic dreams", the fulfilment of the national state of Macedonians or subnational state for Albanians. Other communities than Macedonian and Albanian are absent from this "ethnic" competition. The new achievement by the Albanians is the control of the municipalities where they have significant majority. And on the

municipality level the ethnic "battle" continues. In the context of ethnic identity the model where the ethnic category dominates, sometimes turn into an opposite of the democratic politics, into the ethnic politics.

Ethnic democracy is a democratic political system that combines the extension of civil and political rights to permanent residents who wish to be citizens with the bestowal of a favored status on the majority group. This is democracy that contains the non-democratic institutionalization of dominance of one ethnic group. The founding rule of this regime is an inherent contradiction between two principles – civil and political rights for all and structural subordination of the minority to the majority. The "democratic principle" provides equality between all citizens and the members of society, while the "ethnic principle" establishes explicit ethnic inequality, preference and dominance" (Smooha 2002). This kind of system generates ethnic tensions and conflicts. It imposes ethnic rules in the politics against the other ethnic group. Typical example of this is the demand of Albanians for ethnically based government budget. Also, on many occasions Albanians insists on proportional ethnic participation in the state institutions, which is mentioned but not defined in the Framework agreement (equitable participation). The "citizens" and ethnic groups will continue to compete with the ethnic arsenal. The era of powerful ethnicity as mobilizing factor continues. The ethnic democracy is just another product of this paradigm (Atanasov 2012).

The study of the team of the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research[6] for social integration in North Macedonia claim that the Macedonian model after Ohrid Agreement and constitutional amendments is functional, but it cannot solve the difficult issues and problems. The benefits

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[6]   https://isppi.ukim.edu.mk/izdavastvo/istrazuvacki-studii/can-volatile-societies-support-stable-states

from it are only for the ethnic elites. According to this, integration processes have been turned into a segregation and segmentary issue. The key moment is the problem of differences (language, religion), and "ethnic knots" make it difficult for some segments of society to integrate in the mainstream. The multicultural model is ideally intended to make everyone equal. In the case of Macedonia, power-sharing relations between ethnicities (Macedonians and Albanians) define the dominant political and social order. In this way, the multicultural model leans toward "ethnic democracy" rather than "multicultural democracy"[7]. On the sociocultural level, the most prominent are the ethnic differences and divisions in society, which have a great impact on the life and relationships between the communities. Over the past 20 years, the importance of ethnicity and the power of ethnic elites has continuously grown, by strengthening ethnic identity among Albanians. Macedonians are prone to feel that their identity is rather a symbiosis of ethnic/cultural and national/state identification. It is up to Macedonian political elites to find a space and inclusive approach for the "others" to be incorporated into their common society.

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[7] The term "multicultural democracy" was coined by Pierre van der Berghe in 2002 in one of his known works named as "Multicultural democracy: can it work?", published in *Nations and Nationalism* 8(4): 433-449.

Ethnification[8] of the Macedonian political reality

One of the published analysis "Ethnic polarization in the media and public communication during election processes"[9], for the election period of 2024 done by the Institute for Media and Analytics showed interesting findings. It claim that the polarization has been repeatedly highlighted as one of the biggest problems in the country. The report in 2024 detected a deepening of political and ethnic polarization, through the use of harmful propaganda narratives, which not only inflame ethno-nationalist passions, but also encourage discrimination and hatred on ethnic, national and political grounds. There are several characteristic examples of ethnocentric narratives, which were part of public and media communication before, during the campaign and after the holding of the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2024, and which contributed to the deepening of ethnic polarization in the country, according the analysis of Zharko Trajanoski. OSCE/ODIHR publicly indicated that during the campaign it observed "cases of discriminatory rhetoric, including the use of nationalist slogans, as well as some cases in which the actions of political parties were mixed with those of ethnic communities". In the part of the analysis signed by Sefer Tahiri "Inter-ethnic relations in public communication during elections: The dominance of ethnocentric discourse continues", the university professor emphasizes that "the 34-year history of political pluralism in North Macedonia proves that inter-ethnic relations, especially those between Macedonians and Albanians were (abused) by the political parties in the parliamentary, presidential and even local elections". In this context,

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[8] The process of ethnic origin, customs, symbols, etc. becoming more important; in the "state-level party system, ethnification is strongly correlated with economic inequality between groups". Also, the word ethnification is taken as used in the analysis of John D. Huber and Pavithra Suryanarayan "Ethnic Inequality and the Ethnification of the Political Parties", evidence from India.

[9]   https://civilmedia.mk/analiza-na-ima-polarizatsija-po-etnichka-osnova-diskriminatorska-retorika-natprevaruvachki-natsionalizam-na-dvojnite-izbori-vo-2024-godina/

Tahiri points out, the media-political discourse has often been a "discourse of diversity". The "paradigm of diversity", more precisely the ethnocentric discourse, followed the political debate, but also the media content, regardless of whether it took place in the Macedonian or Albanian language. He says that "as a pillar of political stability and security, inter-ethnic relations are the 'key', especially for right-wing parties, to win as many votes as possible during elections. In that direction, part of the media was often an extended hand, that is, they affirmed, but also encouraged the ethnocentric narratives that were produced in the party laboratories".

The conclusion may be that the ethnic as a tool and strategy is pretty much used and misused in the elections for longer period of time. During the elections the political atmosphere abound with the vocabulary us against them. The Albanian political parties are often very loud competing who will better represent the Albanians in North Macedonia. And the tensions goes down after the elections because in Macedonian society two decades after the conflict and the Ohrid agreement, the situation is pretty much in balance, concerning the ethnic questions. Maybe the new element is that the former guerilla transformed in political party (DUI) first time after the 2002 will not be in the Government. And this makes the political battle entering the new phase for the Government. Nevertheless, the new Government has four years ahead and the ethnic versus the civic will be surely part of its political agenda.

Let us begin with the short analysis of the main electoral promises of the Albanian political parties during the parliamentary elections in 2024. DUI (Democratic Union of Integration) after 20 years in Government had few and very general and "politically correct" promises about the political system and i.e. ethnic issues. Some of them are of strategic interests for the state (NATO and EU), and some for more "power sharing" mechanisms considering the

ethnification of the democratic decisions and promoting "consensual" President of the State:

• Constitutional amendments in 2024.

• Over 2% percent of GDP from the defense budget according to NATO's decision.

• Equalization of views on security and foreign policy in accordance with the EU.

• Consensual democracy in making decisions on important issues.

• Consensual President of the State elected in Assembly with 2/3 of the votes and plus voting with "Badenter".[10]

The political coalition of the Albanian political parties named "VLEN[11]", entering the electoral process as opposition wanted to attract more votes promoting stronger ethnic mechanisms and agenda, among others, new modern and democratic Constitution as a state of two majorities, and the rights for minorities, higher status of Albanian language, accepting the Albanian national holidays as state events, full recognition of the Albanian (state) national symbols, and establishing a National council of the diaspora together with Kosovo and Albania:

• A new, more democratic and modern constitution, which will redefine the country as an equal state of two majority communities and will guarantee full rights for the minority communities as well.

• Equal participation of Albanians in the population census process.

• The Albanian language should be the state language in all of North Macedonia, completely equal to the Macedonian language.

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[10] From the election platform of Democratic Union for Integration: https://bdi.mk/category/dokumente/

[11] From June 2024 part of the Government.

• An end to the problems caused by the so-called "passivation" of addresses, regardless of how long, in which country they live or are homeless.

• Albanian national holidays will also be fully recognized.

• The use of the Albanian national anthem, coat of arms and flag in schools and institutions should enjoy equal legal rights with those of Macedonians.

• Reducing the number of municipalities and increasing their powers.

• Creation of the National Council of the Albanian Diaspora. The council will be established in cooperation with Kosovo and Albania.[12]

The elections were as we have witnessed full of ethnic statements, who is bigger patriot on both campuses, Macedonian and Albanian, and the protecting the state from the opponents, etc. The polarization was obvious and the elections were very competitive with new promises and hopes, expectations as well. The elections were done and the coalition was formed between the pro-national VMRO-DPMNE and the Albanian opposition VLEN. The election agenda of DUI was mainly connected, if we consider the Tirana Platform, with the higher political status of Albanians in North Macedonia. But, the election agenda of VLEN, was connected with the redesigning of the role of Albanians in the State, basically asking for redefining the state as consisting of two equal majorities. The political status of Albanians in Macedonia through strengthening the Albanian national symbols and a creation of regional parallel institution (National Council of the Albanian diaspora) in cooperation with Kosovo and Albania, were like "ethnic"

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[12] From the election platform of VLEN coalition: https://www.ifes.org/tools-resources/election-snapshots/elections-north-macedonia-2024-parliamentary-elections

promises. Promises that were not much discussed and debated during the campaign and afterwards.

Still, three months after the elections (September 2024), the Prime Minister Hristijan Mickoski spoke in public, asking all political parties to join the Government in the new course of the politics, and starting a process of major social change. His agenda consisted of ten principles. "Today, I am announcing ten principles around which we had to create unity and cohesion of all factors and social actors, not only the government, or several parties from the opposition. But to everyone, the universities, trade unions, businessmen and chambers, farmers, Macedonian Academy of Arts and Science, professors, doctors, to all social drivers", said the President of the Government Hristijan Mickoski in his speech on the occasion of the commemoration of September 8 – Independence Day.[13] Among the ten principles, the two are very much connected to our analysis, the third and the tenth. Firstly, in the Third principle he stresses the importance of decreasing the influence of the ethnic concept:

> "Thirdly, we must distance ourselves from **ethnic** conflicts and isolate the elements that create **inter-ethnic** disunity. We must put a moratorium on **ethnically** produced topics driven by the lucrative interest of **individuals**. There must be an end to the list, the long list of wishes for **ethnic rights**, behind which nothing really stands, but the personal interest of those who produce them, at the expense of the **collective**. How absent it sounds when someone asks for a second house in the parliament, and there is no drinking water in Lipkovo and Tetovsko. I want solutions for the **personal** problems of the people and not solutions for the personal interests of the small groups of politicians who abuse the **collective** suffering of the people" – adding that the standard of all citizens must be improved, and this should be the main focus of the Government.

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[13] https://vlada.mk/node/36978

The "we do not speak about it" thesis was widely disapproved during the last decades. The identity politics one may say that won in this debate. But how far should this politics go it is up to the specific state and society. In Macedonian case, the ethnic groups are already in the Constitution and the Laws (constitutionally labeled as "communities"). The state is still unitary and this political model will have to be developed and supported. "How to do it" is a main task of the new politics that was announced. In that direction, probably, the tenth principle communicate the civic concept philosophy through the categories as common patriotism, belief and struggle:

> "Tenth, we must distinguish and believe in ideological battles. Ours, mine is the **common patriotism**, which should unite us. It is nothing but a **common belief** and **common struggle** for the future in the country. It should unite us all, Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Serbs, Bosniaks and everyone else under the Macedonian sun. Let's not rejoice in small sparks, but together for big victories and big steps forward. Too much has been missed and a lot needs to be done."

Prime Minister Mickoski asked for unity and cohesion and told all leaders to unite towards this unifying platform. This would mean that the government policy will change considering the ethnic concessions and benefits on the side of Albanians. It is difficult to distinguish between political vocabulary and legal provisions. A lot can be done, but also should be designed and vote together, among many political parties. Some of them have political platforms that consists of exclusively demands for benefits of ethnic Albanians.

Let us consider what one of the main political figure in opposition publicly stated after the elections. Namely, Zijadin Sela[14], proposed publicly "to unite all Albanian parties, regardless of whether they are in power or

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[14] An Albanian politician from Alliance for Albanians and long time in the politics, now holding a MP position and in the role of opposition together with DUI.

opposition, in order to prevent the implementation of malicious plans towards Albanians and other communities". He assesses that there are many prejudices from the Macedonian political factor towards the Albanians:

> "We are in a time when we need to think very carefully about what will be the behavior, the positioning, not of the Alliance for Albanians, of DUI, Besa, DPA or I don't know who, the Democratic Movement or whatever it is called, not in relation to VMRO, but in relation to the Macedonian politics. Here we need to find a common language to prevent in the future from implementing plans that are not benevolent towards the Albanians, but also towards other communities", said the president of Alliance for Albanians, Ziyadin Sela.

This is indicative, because comes from the Albanian politician that is in opposition. Among other things, Sela commented on the last statement of Arben Taravari (Albanian politician that is in the Government), who said that the hiring will not be done on ethnic basis and that they tend to do the hiring by referring to fair representation and meritocracy. Sela said about this that it is a scandal, adding that the Albanian parties in power are removing Albanians from their jobs, with the reasoning that they do not have a budget, and the next day they are replacing them with Macedonians in those jobs.

> "I hear this language of politicians from Macedonian politicians every time they wanted to oppose the realization of fair and adequate representation, while what Albanian politicians say is a scandal, because they forgot where they would find a place at the University Clinic if they did not state that they are from Albania ethnicity, he would not be a university professor if the initial basis for employment was not based on the right to adequate representation" – said Sela.[15]

To be right on the spot, main political parties in Albanian block are trying to hold and strengthening the ethnic category that was initiated as a

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[15]   https://mk.tv21.tv/sela-so-apel-za-obedinuvane-na-albanskite-partii-da-se-sprechi-realiziraneto-na-nedobronamernite-planovi-kon-albantsite/

constitutional provision in the fields of employment, education, etc. (Ohrid Agreement). The fair and adequate representation in the institution overcame the discrimination towards the Albanians regarding employment in central institutions. Still, the decentralization process allowed Albanians full enjoyment of the rights on local level considering identity, employment, education, culture, etc. Thus, despite the ethnic provisions, the state and the society need the social integration processes in the way that the people should still feel the state as one and the society as indivisible. Contrary to this, the last 20 years we have seen the processes of segregation that were stimulated by ethnic political elite, in education most evidently.

As we have seen, one of the current event after the elections is the debate referring to the numbers and percentage of employment in the state institutions of different ethnic communities, where some claim that the number of employed Macedonians is increasing, while the number of employed Albanians is decreasing. The tool, called the "balancer", has been criticized for its misuse, where individuals "change" their ethnicity to gain employment advantages. According to the Ministry of administration in the previous calculations, the problem was that the number of non-resident population was also taken into account, and so the Albanians were in advantage, who were counted at 29.54% (Census result for resident and non-resident population). Now, in the next period, there will be a correction of the percentages, where the number of Macedonians will increase, and the number of employed Albanians will decrease. More precisely, the correction would look like this: Macedonians from 54.21% to 58.44%, Albanians from 29.52% to 24.30%, Turks from 3.98% to 3.86%, Roma from 2.34% to 2.53%, Serbs from 1.18% to 1.30%, Bosniaks from 0.87% to 0.87% and Vlachs from 0.44% to 0.47%.[16] The absurd situation is that in the last period this tool has

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[16]   https://lider.mk/kompetentnosta-kje-bide-edinstven-kriterium-za-vrabotuvanje-namesto-kontroverzen-balanser-javnata-administracija-kje-se-vrabotuva-so-merit-sistem/

been criticized for its abuse, where individuals gave different statements of their ethnicity to gain employment opportunities.

It was stated that the Government has an agreement for the adoption of the Law on Fair Representation. This was announced by the first vice-prime minister, Izet Mejiti, who said that the "balancer" has not been functioning in the recent years, due to the false declaration of ethnicity. Whereas, with the Law on Fair Representation, employment will be based on qualifications:

> "To be honest, in the first years (*the balancer*) it contributed to this and improved the image of ethnicity in the public and state administration, but in the last years it was not effective, it had the opposite effect because there were many cases, which although the balancer says that an Albanian must be employed, Turkish or Macedonian, people made false statements in order to get a job. We have a political agreement for this to be regulated by the Law on Fair and Qualitative Representation. This means that if the Macedonians must be employed, yes, they will be hired, but the most qualified, if the Albanians must be employed, yes, but the most qualified, the most educated, the most prepared will serve the citizens better for their needs, tomorrow and the day after that", said Izet Mejiti.[17]

After this statement, the Albanian party in opposition (DUI) reacted with ethnic passion and emotions, defending the Albanian cause in Macedonia:

> "Instead of building policies that serve the national interests of Albanians, these parties become tools of the forces that aim to damage our interests. This is not an attack on only one party or one leader, but an attempt to destroy the dignity and national aspirations of Albanians, claim DUI in their press release. DUI remains firmly committed to protecting the interests of Albanians and all citizens with transparency and dignity. We will not allow these low maneuvers to stop us on our way to fulfilling the aspirations of Albanians for equality and fair

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[17]   https://alsat.mk/mk/medhiti-vo-vladata-postoi-dogovor-za-zakonot-za-pravichna-zastapenost-koj-ke-go-zameni-nefunktsionalniot-balanser/

representation. We call on all Albanian citizens to continue to remain united and vigilant against these attempts to divide us and manipulate public opinion."[18]

In the press release there are also words like Albanian cause, dignity, Albanian people, the will and aspirations. So, in North Macedonia there is nothing new speaking about ethnicization of politics. We assume that the better word to describe it is ethnification of politics. This ethnification might be as showed in the analysis in the Indian case. In majoritarian systems, maybe ethnic identity is most salient to electoral behavior when there are high levels of inequality between ethnic groups. This argument is proved in the Indian states and find that state-level party system ethnification is strongly correlated with economic inequality between groups. When income differences between groups increase, the groups tend to support different parties. The analysis reveals a strong class component to ethnic politics in India, underscoring the possibility that what scholars often view as identity politics can have an element of class politics in disguise (Sunyanarayan 2016). Maybe for the same reasons in Macedonian case we see the continuation of the epic battle between the Ethnic and the Civic and with the chances of increasing on both sides, following the physical process of action – reaction. From today's perspective the Ethnic is still strong as a category of identity and it is very much involved in the public. Whether the civic will find more space for advancement depends of many factors, among others, the increasing of economic standard of the population, elimination of inequalities between communities, better education opportunities and the more choices for career of young people that will together nurture the common feeling of belonging to the state.

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[18] https://fokus.mk/dui-albantsite-nema-da-bidat-alatka-na-stsenarijata-na-drugite/

Conclusion

In the last decades no evidence proved that the multicultural model is sustainable. The only sustainable multicultural political models are federations/confederations, where ethnic communities/groups mind their own business, in a more multinational manner – Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, etc. The Macedonian multicultural model is functional but cannot resolve "historical" issues. On this account the processes of integration are turned into segregational issues. In the case of North Macedonia the power sharing relations between ethnicities define the mainstream political and social order. In this way the multicultural model lean towards ethnic instead of multicultural democracy, speaking conceptually. For multicultural model what is needed is comfortable majority with the necessary higher level of political culture. In countries of transition such preconditions are absent (Atanasov 2012). The question is raised whether glorification of only the ethnic differences is not the beginning of the end of multiculturalism in a way that was recognize it in theory.

Instead of loosing the importance, the ethnic dimension in Macedonian society is just getting stronger on both sides, Macedonian and Albanian. "In the Republic of Macedonia, we should invest in togetherness, not in diversity. It is necessary to invest in democratic values, not in ethno-cultural differences. The public sphere should be understood as an arena in which cooperation for a better life will take place and that it is necessary to build social ties based on common interests. We need a model that will satisfy the majority of citizens, not just the political elites. Even less only the ethnic leaders" (Atanasov 2021). There are two possible lines of development of the Macedonian political model that depend on the internal conditions in the country, but also connected with the regional political

context. The first line is the increase and strengthening of the political majority in the country. This majority need not to be or is not necessarily uninational. It could be "one society for all". The second line is similar to the Belgian model of a federal state, but with strict ethnic boundaries and complete separation between the two ethnic sections. Of course, in both the first and the second case, it is assumed that the membership of North Macedonia in NATO is a great investment for the stability of the country in the future. In that way, even the prospect of joining the EU is an important factor in containing potential inter-ethnic conflict.

Macedonia is still vulnerable considering the ethnic balance. As it was the main thesis of the study of the team from the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, published under the title *Can Volatile Societies Support Stable States?*[19] The study analyze that the situation in Bosnia is difficult, and that they would like to have the current Macedonian circumstances. With strengthening of Albanian ethnicity and ethnification of politics in North Macedonia we can get closer to the Bosnian model, which do not properly function. The Bosnian dysfunctional model should be avoided. Additionally, the Greek obstacles with the name issue and now the Bulgarian vetoes considering the EU process are triggers that can bred bigger dissatisfaction with the blockade of the accession either from Macedonian or Albanian side.

In the last couple of months, the parliamentary election campaign showed more ethnic ideas from Albanian political parties for the prosperity of Albanians in Macedonian society and regionally as we have showed in this paper. Unfortunately, rarely the prosperity of the citizens generally is seen through addressing the corruption and crime and efficient rule of law – as

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[19]   https://isppi.ukim.edu.mk/izdavastvo/istrazuvacki-studii/can-volatile-societies-support-stable-states

weak elements of Macedonian democratic present, instead of asking for more ethnic concessions. Concerning the modern political competition, in North Macedonia maybe the multi-ethnic political parties (at least two of them and ideologically profiled) or stable Macedonian-Albanian political coalitions (at least two of them, too) can take us out of these issues, without ethnic patriotism and populism needed. In that situation I guess the Macedonians would not have problems with an Albanian "President" or any other political position. In North Macedonia the economy is weak[20], democratic processes are with the snail speed, yet, for the ethnic themes, the debate is always fast and explosive and with a lot of emotions. This is the result of the process of ethnification of politics, as we have argued. But there are less and less voters because the processes of emigration are intensive and the number of emigrated Macedonians and Albanians are rising, especially on the road to EU. With one goal, to provide better standard for their families and to secure higher chances for success for their children. It seems that the national flags and national songs are appreciated but moved to the second list of priorities. They have them plenty on Internet whenever they feel nostalgic, if they have spare time after the shopping sessions and spending their incomes provided by Germany, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Netherlands, etc.

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[20] https://mkd.mk/podednakov-e-procentot-na-nevraboteni-makedonci-i-albanci/

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CONSIDERATIONS ON CENSUS METHODOLOGY FOR RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

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Abstract

After numerous delays and controversies, on September 2021, a Population, and Housing Census has being conducted in the Republic of North Macedonia. The last census has been conducted 19 years prior, thus the new data was eagerly awaited by all the institutions and the relevant factors of the Macedonian society. However, after the data has been published, numerous reactions emerged, particularly about the religious affiliation of the population. The reactions were mainly in regards to the 13.4% of the population that were registered as Christians only, without specifying their denomination. Furthermore, in the published data, 132,260 citizens were registered as "individuals whose data were taken from administrative sources", while it was not specified to which religious affiliation they belong to. Regarding these reactions, the State Statistical Office, which is the institution that conducted the census, stated that the census was conducted

in accordance with the most relevant international standards, however, they did not present any additional clarification regarding the religious affiliation data. In order to present a clear overview of the inconsistencies, and irregularities, regarding the religious affiliation data, this paper provides an account of the relevant international acts and suggestions for a population and housing census, as well as, an account of the methodological approach, and the way the questions regarding the religious affiliation are being formulated in the censuses of the neighboring, and other countries. Therefore, in order to meet this paper's goal, an analysis of the directions from international census acts, and their implementation in the methodology of the 2021 census in the Republic of North Macedonia, was carried out, as well as, their implementation in the methodology of a census, regarding the issue of religious affiliation, in other countries.

Keywords: census, methodology, religious affiliation, reactions

Introduction

In the intricate tapestry of a nation's development, the human capital serves as the foundational thread, weaving together the fabric of progress and well-being. Recognizing its pivotal role, accurate and reliable assessments of a country's human capital becomes an imperative. The census of the population and households emerges as a primary instrument, dedicated to unraveling the complexities of this essential constituent. Beyond mere enumeration, the data gleaned from such censuses serve as the bedrock for informed decision-making across diverse sectors. From shaping economic and developmental policies, to influencing local, educational, investment, and agricultural strategies, the census data becomes the compass guiding a nation's trajectory. Moreover, these vital statistics cast a discerning light on the vulnerable segments of society, shedding insights into the plight of the poor, elderly, people with disabilities, and migrants. Thus, the census stands not only as a numerical account but as a beacon illuminating the path towards comprehensive and inclusive national progress. This realization is additionally supported by the relation of the census data, and the monitoring of indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, for monitoring of 107 out of total of 231 SDG indicators, collected census data from each of the countries, are necessary (UNFPA 2022).

The most widely accepted definition of a population census is that of the United Nations, according to which the census is defined as: "The operation that produces official counting (or benchmark) of the population on a territory of a country, and in its smallest geographical sub-territories, at regular intervals, together with information of a selected number of demographic and social characteristics of the total population" (UNECE 2015). Thus, according to the UN recommendations along with the population census, a household census should be conducted as well, a

census which is defined as: "The operation that produces official counting (or benchmark) of all housing stock in the territory of a country and in its smallest geographical sub-territories, at regular intervals, together with information on a selected number of characteristics of housing" (UNECE 2015). Additionally, UNFPA (2022) recommends that a census should be conducted at regular time intervals, namely, once at every 10 years. This recommendation is based on the fact that the suggested time period provides a suitable comparison of the large census data, which are necessary for creating development planning policies, crisis management, creating social welfare programs, as well as analysis of the markets of a given country, or a region.

In the period from 5th to 30th September 2021, 19 years after the last one, a population and a housing census has been conducted in the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM). But from its very beginning, the census was followed by a number of reactions and distrust from the opposition parties, and various civic associations. Despite the State Statistical Office's (SSO) assurances, that the census was being prepared, and it was going to be conducted, in accordance with the international standards and methodology, the date of the census' beginning has been contested since its very conception. More specifically, the opposition remarked that the planned period for the census conduction, from 1st till the 21st April 2021, is not adequate, and it would cause an additional health risk to the population, having in mind the health circumstances at the time, caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Following the opposition's reactions, for which an agreement for postponing of the census has been reached, other numerous reactions and remarks about the census followed, which later resulted in conception of the national block "I Will Not Open the Door." This block was unifying political parties, associations and Macedonian citizens from North Macedonia, as well as, from foreign countries. Besides the remarks about the population health risks, they also stated their remarks on the applied methodology for the

preparation and conduction of the Census (United Macedonia 2022). Despite the warranties given by the SSO's director, in which he states that the Census will cover the entire population and households in the Republic of North Macedonia, thus giving a realistic representation of the matters, the reactions did not subside ("Герасимовски" 2021). Very soon, the national bloc called for a boycott of the Census.

Reactions and criticisms on the census' results

After the completion of the Census, and the data processing, on 30th of March 2022, SSO had published the first set of data on their web site. This event, as was the announcement of the decision for the census conduction, was also followed by many reactions from the political parties, civic associations, religious groups, experts, etc. The results regarding the religious affiliation were the ones attracting the most reactions as well as, an extensive media coverage. At first, these reactions were aimed at the surprisingly small number of atheists, only 355 citizens, while the number of the Evangelical Protestant Christian believers had risen to 8,764 citizens. This kind of reaction was based on the comparison by which 6,746 citizens have declared themselves to be Catholics, as well as on the data from 2002 census in which 520 citizens have declared as Protestants (Блажевски 2022). After these reactions, SSO released an announcement, as well as a public apology regarding the technical error while processing the religious affiliation data. Namely, they explained that a permutation of the data between the options, "atheist" and "Evangelical Protestant Christian" have been made (State Statistical Office 2022). After the publication of the final results of the Census, in the data on religious affiliation, in addition to: Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants, Evangelists and Evangelical-Methodists, it was stated that 242,579 citizens declared themselves as Christians (see: T-

1). This was followed by numerous reactions in the public regarding this category, and in addition clarification was sought to which church, religious community or religious group the citizens who declare themselves as "Christians" belong to (Заревска 2022b). Additionally, the number of Orthodox Christians dropped by 19% in comparison to the 2002 census, and according to the public reactions, this was due to the citizens' registering as being Christians, without specifying the denomination. At the same time, another confusing data was added, namely, 132,260 citizens, or 7.2% of the resident population in North Macedonia were registered as "individuals whose data is transferred from administrative sources" (see: T-1). Moreover, even though the data, for this category of citizens, was being given in the religious affiliation overview, an explication for their religious affiliation, was not presented.

T-1: Total resident population in the Republic of North Macedonia by religious affiliation, Census 2021

Total resident population in the Republic of North Macedonia according to the statement of religious affiliation, by sex, Census 2021											
	Gender - TOTAL		Male	Female							
Religious Affiliation - TOTAL	1836713		911087	925626							
Orthodox	847390		416832	430558							
Muslims (Islam)	590878		295843	295035							
Catholics	6746		2828	3918							
Christians	242579		119978	122601							
Protestants	1313		638	675							
Evangelists	678		334	344							
Evangelical-Methodists	889		433	456							
Jehovah's Witnesses	1137		523	614							
Not a believer (atheist)	8764		5146	3618							
Did not plead	1964		1068	896							
Others	1221		621	600							
Unknown	894		505	389							
Persons for whom the data is taken from admi	132260		66338	65922							

Source: State Statistical Office "Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021" (final data).

After the Census results were published, the first to release a public announcement was the Synod of the MOC-OA, in which the disagreement with the registered religious affiliation "Christians" have been stated. The Synod had criticized the applied methodology, and further stated that in the

part for religious affiliation, there is no clear distinction made between, affiliation to a religion (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, etc.), affiliation to a faith (Orthodox Christianity, Hasid Judaism, Sunni Islam, etc.) and affiliation to a church or religious communities/groups (Macedonian Orthodox Church, Islamic Religious Community, Jewish Community, etc.). It was also stated that on 13th of September 2021, following a reaction from members of the Orthodox Religious Community, Synod of the MOC-OA made an appeal, for the Orthodox Christians to declare themselves as Orthodox, not only as Christians (Macedonian Orthodox Church 2022). Due to such inconsistencies, the Synod of the MOC-OA remarked that the religious affiliation census' results, do not give a realistic image of the religious affiliation in RNM, and therefore the Synod considers the results as not relevant. It was further noted that the registered religious affiliation "Christians", is a "serious statistical error" in 13.4% of the citizens (Macedonian Orthodox Church 2022).

Regarding these inconsistencies, The Commission for Relations with Religious Communities and Groups had issued a public announcement, stating that, "The results of the Population Census, namely, the part about the citizen's religious affiliation, do not match the real religious map of the society, which is conditioned by two factors: 13.21% declared Christians, which is religious affiliation, which incorporates religious affiliation through the denominations, and the 7.2% of citizens for which there is no census data" (Commission for Relations with Religious Communities and Groups 2022). Thus, the Commission had pointed out, that such display of the religious affiliation of the population in RNM, does not give a clear image for the country's religious map. Moreover, it was remarked that the results of the Census, do not accurately present the religious subjects, belonging to different religious affiliations, which are registered in the Unique Court Register. Additionally, in the Commission's statement had been stated that

the SSO was not consulted when the methodology for the Census' conduction, had been determined.

Following the many public reactions, SSO had issued an announcement, in which they stated that they followed and implemented international standards and suggestions for conducting a Population Census, when the questionnaire for the Census was being made (Заревска 2022а). It was also stated that a special code was given for the "Christians" category, in accordance with the Code of Codes for Census Questions, which was implemented in the Census' application, based on the register of this religious affiliation, in the previous censuses. However, it was not specifically pointed out, in which prior census the religious affiliation "Christians" had been enumerated, since in the 2002 census results, such affiliation was not enumerated (see: T-2).

T-2: Total resident population in the Republic of Macedonia by religious affiliation, Census 2002

Tabel a 4. Vkupno nasel eni e na Republ i ka Makedoni ja spored i zjasnuvaweto za veroi spovedta, po pol
попис 2002
Table 4. Total population of the Republic of Macedonia according to declaration by religion, by sex

	Veroi spoved / Religion						
	vkupno / Total	pravo-sl avni / Orthodox	musl i -mani (i sl am) / Moslems (Islamic)	kato-l i ci / Catholics	protes-tanti / Protes-tants	osta-nati / Other	
Republ i ka Makedoni ja	2022547	1310184	674015	7008	520	30820	Republic of Macedonia
ma` i	1015377	654630	341441	3156	241	15909	male
` eni	1007170	655554	332574	3852	279	14911	female
Skopje	467257	343197	109954	2457	216	11433	Skopje
ma` i	229485	166504	55839	1037	96	6009	male
` eni	237772	176693	54115	1420	120	5424	female
Gazi Baba	72222	54242	15968	248	14	1750	Gazi Baba
ma` i	36177	26995	8176	105	8	893	male
` eni	36045	27247	7792	143	6	857	female
Bul a~ani	1104	1104	-	-	-	-	Bula~ani
ma` i	582	582	-	-	-	-	male
` eni	522	522	-	-	-	-	female
I dri zovo	1589	691	892	1	-	5	Idrizovo
ma` i	821	342	473	1	-	5	male
` eni	768	349	419	-	-	-	female

Source: State Statistical Office "Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia 2002" (final data).

In the SSO announcement was also stated that the Religious Communities were accustomed with the content of the preparations, before the beginning of the Census. It was additionally stated that during the preparation for the Census, a meeting was held, with the director and the deputy director of the SSO, heads of all religious communities in the Republic of North Macedonia, the director of the Commission for Relations with the Religious Communities and Religious Groups, and the director of the Agency for Emigration, under the patronage of the Foreign Affairs Minister. The main topic at this meeting, at which only the heads of the three largest religious communities in RNM participated, was, securing a support for the self-registering process, of the Macedonian Diaspora (State Statistical Office 2021a). The announcement of the meeting did not indicate whether other topics were discussed, so it remains unclear whether the attendees discussed the methodology that will be applied to the Census, that is, the formulation of the question about religious affiliation.

In the period after the announcement of the results, that is, in the first half of April 2022, the Institute for Political Research Skopje, the Internet portal Religija.mk and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, conducted a survey of the attitudes of believers regarding the results of the Census (Божиновски и Николовски 2022). Within the framework of this research, a national survey of a representative sample was conducted in which, according to the authors, all relevant socio-demographic characteristics of the population in the Republic of North Macedonia were observed. According to the findings of this research, 72% of the respondents stated that they declared their religious affiliation in the census. At the same time, for 35% of the respondents, the official results of the census are not a realistic presentation of the situation regarding religious affiliation in the country. Also, 45% of respondents believe that more information was needed for a precise statement regarding religious

affiliation (among Orthodox Christians, the percentage of those who believe that more information was needed regarding religious declaration is 54%). When asked about the recommendations from religious communities for the declaration of religious affiliation in the census, only 5% of the respondents gave an affirmative answer, while 84% indicated that they had no recommendation from the religious community to which they belong to, regarding the declaration of religious affiliation (Божиновски и Николовски 2022).

Formulation of the question about religious affiliation

Religion belongs to the group of traditionally defined demographic and social data which are collected during the population census. But some countries omit the question of religion from the census, because they consider that there is no need for such data, because there are certain legal barriers, or because it is a sensitive issue (UNSD 2017). According to the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, Article 19 states that the freedom of religion is guaranteed to the citizens. In doing so, it is emphasized that citizens are guaranteed: "free and public, individually or in community with others, expression of faith" (Службен весник 2011). With the guarantees and protection of freedom of religion formulated in this way, the legal prerequisite for the inclusion of the issue of religion in the census has been met.

But according to the UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, if a country decides to include the question of religious affiliation in the census, then it should specify a definition of religion that is most appropriate to its needs (UNSD 2017). It is also pointed out that due to the fact that the issue of religion is a sensitive issue in a large number of cases, it is necessary for respondents to be informed

about the purpose of the data they provide, as well as the protection thereof. The SSO, in the Methodology for the Preparation, Organization and Conduct of the Census, adopted a modified version of the definition of religion from the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Home Censuses, stating that: "Religion is generally regarded as a set of beliefs and practices, usually involving acknowledgment of a divine or higher being, power or principle, by which people order the conduct of their lives both practically and in a moral sense" (State Statistical Office 2021b). At the same time, it is pointed out that the respondent, of his own volition, can give an answer to the question about religious affiliation, and he can also not answer this question. However, in the instructions on the question of religious affiliation, given in this Methodology of the SSO, the question of "religious affiliation" and "religion" are simultaneously stated, that is, the question itself in the census form is stated as "Religious affiliation (religion)" (State Statistical Office 2021c). This formulation of the question does not distinguish between belonging to a religion and a creed, which was actually stated in the reaction of the Synod of the MOC-OA.

And while the SSO indicates that the wording of the question of religious affiliation is done in accordance with the UN Census Recommendations, these recommendations do not require a specific wording of the question of religion, but it is noted that: "Questionnaires should, as with ethnicity, include write-in (open) responses to allow small groups of local denominations to identify freely" (UNECE 2015). Finally, despite such recommendations, each of the countries is left with the opportunity to choose the form of the question, while the main emphasis is placed on stating the option for respondents who do not belong to any religion, that is the choice "no religion", and the option not to answer the question, that is, stating the "no answer" option. Also, these recommendations emphasize that the decision to ask the question about religion in the census of a particular country is determined by several factors

and circumstances, highlighting the national needs for such data and the appropriateness of asking a religious question in the census of a country. At the same time, it is pointed out that the amount of collected data on this topic depends on the requirements of a specific country, that is, whether only the data on the religion of each citizen is sufficient, or whether the data on the specific denomination to which they belong are also relevant. In this regard, it is stated that in countries where there are several denominations, this will also be reflected on the space in the questionnaire provided for the question of religion, especially in cases where write-in answers are requested (UNECE 2015). According to Prof. Nenad Pokos, whose scientific research is related to the demography of Croatia, specifically regional demography and changes in the structure of the population, faith is an important part of an individual's identity, as well as an indicator of the social and cultural diversity of a country (Tašev 2021). This kind of consideration is also indicated in the UN Census Principles and Recommendations, where it is stated that: "Depending on national circumstances, cultural diversity may be measured by language spoken in the home or community, religion and national or ethnic group" (UNSD 2017). Pokos also indicates that based on the data on religious affiliation, the policy of a certain state towards religious communities, that is, freedom of religion, is determined. At the same time, he points out that the answers to questions about religion and affiliation to a certain religious community are of great importance for both small and large religious communities that exercise their rights based on their share in the population of a country. Also, according to him, these data help religious communities in planning and organizing their activities at the local and regional level (Tašev 2021). Finally, the UN Recommendations state that the census classification of religious affiliation data should be comprehensive. In order to increase the consistency and comparability of the data, the following classification of religions is indicated in them: 1. Christianity (Catholic;

Orthodox; Protestant – including Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Calvinist, Evangelical, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Pietist, Presbyterian, Reformed, and other Protestant groups; Jehovah's Witnesses; Oriental Christian; Other Christian); 2. Islam (Alawit – Nusayris); Ismaili (Seveners); Ithna'ashari (Twelvers); Shia; Sufi; Sunni; Zaydi (Fivers); 3. Judaism; 4. Buddhism; 5. Hinduism; 6. Sikhism; 7. Other religious groups; and 8. No religion (UNECE 2015).

Formulation of the question about religious affiliation
in other countries

Regarding the possibility of a different wording of the question about religion, we cited examples from other countries, as well as expert (legal) analysis of census data. In doing so, the census questionnaires from Croatia and Australia for the censuses conducted in 2021 have been analyzed as characteristic examples. In addition, the analysis of the legal aspects of the collection, use and significance of the statistical data on religious affiliation from the census in Serbia, conducted in 2011, is indicated.

During the analysis of the legal, that is, the methodological framework of the census in Croatia, it can be seen that the State Statistics Office, as the competent authority for its implementation, emphasizes compliance with the European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing, as well as with the decrees of the European Parliament and of the Council (Croatian Bureau of Statistics 2022). Within the questionnaire for this census, in addition to the question of religious affiliation, that is, to which religion the respondent belongs, the question of which religious community the respondent belongs to is also stated (Croatian Bureau of Statistics 2021). When asked about affiliation to a religious community, one can choose one of 54 registered churches or religious

communities in the Republic of Croatia, or choose the option "I am not a member of a church or a religious community." Likewise, if the person does not want to declare in any of these ways, the question can remain unanswered. The choice to list two questions related to religion, according to Prof. Nenad Pokos, is a reflection of the previous census from 2011, in which the question about religion was of a semi-open type, that is, during the choice of answers, only one answer was offered, only for members of the Catholic religion, while for all other religious communities the answers were entered manually. As a consequence of this, the majority of Greek Catholics and Old Catholics declared themselves as Catholics only, after which they were shown together with Roman Catholics (Tašev 2021).

A characteristic feature of the census in Australia is the period of conducting the census, that is, the census is conducted every five years. But apart from this exception, all other elements are in line with The 2020 World Population and Housing Census Program launched by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division (ECOSOC 2015), and hence the methodological framework is in line with the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (UNSD 2017). The question about religion is listed within the group of questions on cultural diversity, and that is the only optional question on the Census (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2018). At the same time, several answers are offered to the question about religion, that is, religions and faiths, while for the rest there is a (marked) space for write-in answers. This space is intended for all respondents who do not identify with any of the offered answers or would like to specifically name the religion they practice. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), this design of the answers is conditioned by the vast number of religions practiced in Australia, so listing them all would make the question too long and difficult. It is also indicated that when designing the questionnaire for each census, the most common answers from the previous

census are listed. In this way, according to the Bureau, it is easier for the majority of respondents to choose, and the same approach is used for questions about country of birth, origin and language spoken at home. When preparing answers to the religion question, the Bureau applies the Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups. In doing so, this classification is also being updated, in order to enable an inclusive approach (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2024). Due to this approach of the Bureau, the request of Belinda Delios and the Macedonian associations and communities was accepted, to insert the category "Macedonian Orthodox" within the religious groups listed in this classification ("Македонка во Австралија" 2022). The main argument for such a request was the frequent identification in the Western world of the Orthodox religion with the Greek Orthodox.

Regarding the statistical data on the national, linguistic and religious affiliation of the population in the Republic of Serbia, a legal analysis was published by the Republic Institute of Statistics and the Institute of Comparative Law. Within the framework of this analysis, a special review was made of the census in the Republic of Serbia, conducted in 2011. In the part of the analysis that refers to the data on religious affiliation, Vladimir Ђурић (Ђурић 2014), reviews the formulation of the religion question, which was given in an open form (Републички завод за статистику 2011), as well as the census classification of religions. In doing so, he points out that despite the fact that the data on religious affiliation must be consistent with the answers given by the persons who were covered by the census, this does not mean that the state authorities could not determine a more detailed classification of religions, in order to increase the consistency and comparability of the data, without harming the freedom of declaring one's religious affiliation. According to Ђurić, such a classification would cover certain religious denominations, which have age-old origin and are recognized throughout the world, while there is no dispute regarding their

existence. At the same time, he points out that such a classification is partially provided for in the Methodological Guidelines for conducting the census, which is in accordance with international recommendations for conducting the census in the period around 2010 (Ђурић 2014). However, in the questionnaire for the 2022 census in Serbia, the question about religious affiliation retained the same formulation (Republički zavod za statistiku 2022).

Conclusion

The basic purpose of a population census is to provide information about the size, distribution and characteristics of the population of a particular country. At the same time, this information enables the formation of comparable basic statistical data for the specific country as a whole, as well as for each of its administrative units, localities and small areas. Such data are of crucial importance for understanding and assessing the demographic, social and economic circumstances of each country, in order to be able to develop sound national policies aimed at its development and the well-being of the population living in it. Data on the number of the population as a whole, that is, data on certain geographic regions, as well as sub-groups within the population of a country, are particularly important in determining the distribution of government funding and services. With all this in mind, population and housing census presupposes careful and thorough planning, realization and implementation.

Despite the emphasis by the SSO that the formulation of the question on religious affiliation was made in accordance with the UN Population Census Recommendations, in the content of these recommendations, apart from indicating the inclusion of write-in answers and the declaration of respondents who do not belong to any religion, strict formulation of the

question of religion is not required. Finally, as seen in examples of censuses in other countries, conducted in the same year, it can be noticed that apart from the question of religious affiliation, the question, to which religious community the respondent belongs to, is also stated, and, on the other hand, several answers are offered to the question of religion, that is, religions and denominations, while for the rest, a space is marked for a write-in answer. If, in the 2021 census in North Macedonia, such formulation was applied to the question of religious affiliation, perhaps the inconsistencies and ambiguities that arose from the obtained results would have been avoided.

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INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION OF THE POPULATION IN THE OHRID-STRUGA REGION

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Abstract

Major changes in society, both economic and political, as well as social, are also accompanied by changes in value priorities in the social system of values. Those changes are quite dynamic and intense. Exposed to the influences of social, political and cultural developments, people find it more difficult to adapt and lose confidence in their own abilities to solve the many important tasks they face. People look for help in solving these tasks in religion, which through its teachings offers a philosophy of life, which is in line with the teachings of a certain denomination, that is, it establishes a mutual relationship with them, while offering solutions to people for the many issues they are faced with in everyday life. Of course, the role of the confessional communities, which through their activities and organizational forms, are increasingly trying to attract attention, while filling the gaps that other social institutions and organizations have failed to fill, is also important. The

research was carried out in the Ohrid-Struga region, which includes the municipalities of Ohrid, Struga, Vevcani and Debarca, a region in which two confessional communities operate, namely: the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Ohrid Archdiocese and the Islamic Religious Community, and which with its characteristics as a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional environment represents in some way a minimized form of the Macedonian multicultural, that is, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society. In this research, we started from the premise that religiosity is correlated with the following socio-demographic characteristics: religious affiliation, gender, age, place of residence (city-village), marital status, level of education, occupation of respondents, number of members in the household and the social status of the respondents. This paper will present part of the research results that refer to only one segment, that is, the individual religious identification among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region according to socio-demographic characteristics.

Keywords: religion, religiosity, religious identification, indicators, socio-demographic characteristics

Introduction

When studying religion and religiosity as multidimensional and quite complex phenomena, it is not enough to study them only from one aspect, that is, only from one scientific discipline, but rather a multidisciplinary approach is needed. So, we must emphasize that the sociological approach is only one of the possible approaches in the study of religiosity.

From a sociological point of view, religiosity is related to a certain dependence on social changes that in some way determine the influence and meaning of religion in society, which is certainly a characteristic of these areas as well. The political and social transformations in the Republic of North Macedonia since the nineties have an impact on the redefinition of the position and role of religion in society. The transition period in our country was accompanied by the revitalization of religion and desecularization of society. In short, the revitalization of religion in our country can be described as a movement from a privatized and marginalized position to deprivatization of religion and desecularization of society. These processes are seen through the increase in the number of believers, especially among the younger population, as well as the connection and dependence of religion on politics and vice versa.

Theoretical background

Many social science theorists who have dealt with the question of what religion is have encountered serious difficulties in trying to answer this question. "There is a large number of researchers, members of various scientific disciplines, who share the opinion that religion and religiosity are extremely complex and dynamic social phenomena. On the other hand, the number of researchers who agree with a single definition of the term religion and religiosity is small" (Bashkimi 2021: 13). "The reason for the many types

of definitions of religion and religiosity should not be sought only in the complexity of these phenomena, but also in the different angles of view, embodied in numerous disciplinary approaches and in their frameworks of different theoretical understandings" (Blagojević 2005: 36-37). The complexity and dynamics of religion and religiosity as social phenomena on the one hand and the numerous disciplinary approaches on the other hand are the reason for the large number of definitions of religion and religiosity. However, those differences continue in the sociological approach itself in defining these social phenomena "which are most evident at the level of global sociological theories such as: Functionalist, Marxist and phenomenological" (Bashkimi 2021: 13).

Despite these differences, at the beginning of any research, as in our case, there should be a precise and clear definition of religion and religiosity, because without it research is not possible. Depending on the goals of the research, the researcher can eliminate some of the many definitions of religion that differ from each other by means of selection. "Since the purpose of the research in our case is aimed at researching established (institutionalized) traditional religions and conventional religiosity, it is necessary to start from this kind of definition" (Bashkimi 2022: 10). But that does not mean that that definition should be closed and eternal. "At the beginning of the research, the definition of religion clearly limits the subject of the research, but at the end of the research, there is an opportunity to correct and supplement the initial definition of religion with arguments from the research itself. So all the time we are dealing with a working definition of religion, because the complete definition of religion is its true history" (Blagojević 2005: 39).

For the sake of greater transparency, in the following we will briefly see what some definitions of religion look like, which represent a basis for building a good heuristically fruitful definition. So, for example, for Giddens,

who makes a distinction between what religion cannot be and what religion actually is, "the characteristics that are common to all religions refer to the following elements: religion always implies the existence of a series of symbols with which evokes a sense of respect and awe; then rites and ceremonies in which the community of believers participates are important for religion" (Gidens 2001: 272). Hose Casanova (1994) emphasizes the public role of religion in the modern world. Hervieu-Leger (2000) analyzes the role of religion in secularized and globalized societies, offering a framework to study its transformation, the growth of spiritual individualism, and the challenges confronting traditional religious institutions. According to Vuko Pavičević, the definition of religion is built or made up of five elements: the idea of a supernatural being, religious feelings, religious symbols, ritual and religious organization. He gives the following phenomenological definition of religion: "Religion is an organized set of beliefs, feelings, symbols, cult actions and moral rules related to the idea or concept of the otherworldly Being, which is taken care of by a special organization-the worm" (Pavičević 1980: 17). For Šušnjić, religion must primarily be defined by its essence, not by its function. According to him, "religion can be considered any belief in an absolute and mystical power, on which man depends and which controls his life and death, but which he can influence, if he behaves in certain ways; he can express his experience with that power in a cognitive, emotional, practical and mystical way, i.e. in the form of teaching, rites, community of believers or charismatic personalities; the acquisition and expression of experiences with that strength has a certain meaning for him, and a certain importance for the community, because without it his life and the life of the community would look completely different" (Šušnjić 1998a: 50). While Ivan Cvitković defines religion as "belief in the Supernatural and sacred expressed through religious customs, rites and symbols for which religious organizations and religious leadership stand, and

which provides the followers of a given religion with moral definitions" (Cvitković 2005: 37). Bešić and Djukanović will emphasize that the definition of religion should contain the following elements: faith, sacred, collective, transcendent and cultural-historical conditioning. According to them, "religion represents a culturally-historically conditioned and collectively ascertained faith in the sacred, which as such is of a transcendent nature" (Besić i Đukanović 2000: 32).

Some authors, when defining religion, emphasize its subjective side, i.e. individual experience, while others point out that religion represents a special specific organization. "Religion is essentially a broad term in which religiosity and confessional communities find their place" (Bashkimi 2021: 14). In addition to the subjective dimension of religion, i.e. religiosity, we should mention that religion also exists as a special specific organization, i.e. confessional community. In that context, it is important to note that the eminent sociologist Grace Davie regarding the sociological approach to religion claims that the discipline of sociology is about pattern, it is concerned both with the non-random ways that individuals, communities and societies order their lives and with finding explanations for these ways of behaving (Davie 2007: 5).

As we previously mentioned, two confessional communities operate in the examined area: the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Ohrid Archdiocese and the Islamic Religious Community.

Research results

The Ohrid-Struga region, as we have already mentioned, consists of the municipalities of Ohrid, Struga, Debarca and Vevcani and is located in the southwestern part of the Republic of North Macedonia with a total area of about 1,333 km². The Ohrid-Struga region, with its characteristics,

represents a multi-cultural, i.e. multi-ethnic and multi-confessional environment. According to the Census of Population, Households and Apartments in the Republic of Macedonia in 2002, the total population in the Ohrid-Struga region is 127,065 inhabitants, of which 58,592 belong to the cities of Ohrid and Struga. In terms of religious affiliation, 74,975 (59.1%) declared themselves Orthodox, 50,721 (39.9%) Muslims, 178 (0.1%) Catholics and 1,191 (0.9%) declared themselves to belong to another religion group (State statistical office 2022).

Quota purposive sampling was used in this research. Quotas express the variation of the phenomenon under investigation. In accordance with the subject of research and the expected goals, as well as with the research approach itself, the design of the sample was made. The sample consists of 400 respondents over the age of 18, selected according to pre-defined relevant characteristics. That is, when determining the quotas in the sample, care was taken to reflect the various geographic and socio-demographic characteristics of the examined area. For this purpose, the sample includes subjects from different settlements in the Ohrid-Struga region and with different socio-demographic characteristics, which correspond to the geographical and socio-demographic characteristics of the examined area. The survey research, that is, the questionnaire adapted to the research model, represents a primary source of data, complemented by other research techniques such as observation and informal conversations. This research was conducted during 2015 and 2016 and is part of the research entitled "Religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region" (Bashkimi 2022).

The research used indicators that cover the four components of religiosity, namely: Indicators that refer to the cognitive-emotional component, that is, belief in the sacred, i.e. identification with a particular religion through the acceptance of religious teachings; Indicators that refer to

the conative component, that is, the behavior of respondents in society, which stems from the moral aspects of religion; The indicators that refer to the action component, i.e. that cover the practice, i.e. religious practice within religious organizations through which a sense of religious belonging develops; As well as the indicators that refer to the knowledge of the theological doctrine of one's own religion. The questions in the questionnaire, that is, the indicators, are arranged in a way that covers all components of religiosity. We should point out that in this research we used the term "classical" religiosity, a term taken as it was used by all significant researchers in our area. The survey questions in the first part of the questionnaire are the same for all respondents, while the questions in the second part of the questionnaire are different and adapted according to the religious affiliation of the respondents (Bashkimi 2022).

As we have already pointed out, in this research we started from the premise that religiosity as a subjective category, i.e. as a dependent variable, is conditional, i.e. it is correlated with the following independently variable categories, i.e. socio-demographic features, namely: religious affiliation, gender, age, place place of residence (city-village), marital status, level of education, occupation of respondents, number of members in the household and social status of respondents. This paper will show part of the results of the research that refer to only one segment, that is, to the individual religious identification among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region, depending on socio-demographic features.

All segments of religiosity will be shown depending on the already mentioned socio-demographic characteristics. In this way, we will try to make a typology of religiosity according to socio-demographic characteristics, that is, to obtain a profile of people according to the degree of religiosity depending on socio-demographic characteristics. Based on the answers to the questions, the respondents were categorized into certain degrees of

religiosity. The first category, i.e. respondents with a low degree of religiosity, include those respondents who answered the questions with "I do not agree" (e.g. with the attitude that one should believe in God, after the transitory earthly life, thanking God eternal life awaits us, etc.) and who answered the questions with "never" (e.g. do you pray during the day, do you fast, etc.) or who answered "wrongly" to the questions related to knowledge of the theological doctrine of their own religion. In the second category, respondents with a medium level of religiosity include those respondents who answered "I don't know" and "somewhat" to the questions. While the third category, i.e. respondents with a high degree of religiosity, include those respondents who answered the questions with "I agree", answered the questions "regularly" and "correctly". Through the answers to the questions that cover all the segments of religiosity, i.e. the percentage mean value of the answers to the segments of religiosity, the belief in the sacred, the attitude of the respondents in society that stems from the moral aspects of religion, religious practice and knowledge of the theological doctrine of their own religion and depending on the socio-demographic characteristics, we will try to obtain the profile of the respondents with a high, medium and low degree of religiosity, depending on the socio-demographic characteristics.

At the beginning, we will show the degree of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region, depending on the religious affiliation of the respondents.

T-1: Religious affiliation

	Religious affiliation					
	Orthodox			Muslim		
Degree of religiosity	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree
Overall mean	13.5%	22.3%	63.5%	3.8%	10.2%	84.8%

From the obtained results of T-1, it can be seen that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is significantly higher among respondents from the Islamic religion (84.4%) compared to respondents with a high degree of religiosity among respondents from the Orthodox religion (63.5%). That is, 84.4% of the respondents from the Islamic faith and 63.5% of the respondents from the Orthodox faith responded to the questions from all segments of religiosity with "agree", "regular" and "true" to the questions asked.

In the following, we will show the degree of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region, depending on the gender of the respondents.

T-2: Gender

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
Degree of religiosity	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree
Overall mean	9.7%	17.8%	70.1%	7.8%	16.1%	74.2%

From the obtained results of T-2, it can be seen that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is significantly higher among female respondents (74.2%) compared to respondents with a high degree of religiosity among male respondents (70.1%). That is, 74.2% of the female respondents and 70.1% of the male respondents answered the questions asked from all segments of religiosity with "agree", "regular" and "correct" to the questions asked.

In the following, we will present the degree of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region, depending on the age of the respondents.

T-3: Age

Degree of religiosity	Age								
	18-29			30-59			60+		
	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medim degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree
Overall mean	8.7%	17.8%	71.3%	8.7%	17.2%	72.1%	8.7%	14.4%	74.9%

From the results obtained in T-3, it can be seen that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is significantly higher among respondents over 60 years of age (74.9%) compared to respondents with a high degree of religiosity among respondents aged 30-59 year old (72.1%) as well as respondents with a high degree of religiosity among respondents aged 18-29 years old (71.3%). That is, 74.9% of respondents over 60 years old, 72.1% of respondents aged 30-59 years old as well as 71.3% of respondents aged 18-29 years old answered the questions asked from all segments of religiosity with "I agree", "regularly" and "correctly" to the questions asked.

In the following, we will show the degree of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region, depending on the place of residence of the respondents (city – village).

From the results obtained in T-4, it can be seen that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is significantly higher among respondents from rural areas (74.7%) compared to respondents with a high degree of religiosity among respondents from urban areas (69.1%).

T-4: Place of residence

Degree of religiosity	Place of residence					
	City			Village		
	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree
Overall mean	10.1%	18.1%	69.1%	7.3%	15.9%	74.7%

That is, 74.7% of respondents from rural areas and 69.1% of respondents from urban areas responded to the questions from all segments of religiosity with "agree", "regular" and "correct".

In the following, we will present the degree of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region depending on the marital status of the respondents.

From the results obtained in T-5, it can be seen that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is higher among respondents with a marital status of married (73.7%) compared to respondents with a high degree of religiosity among respondents with a marital status of single. i.e. unmarried (68.6%), followed by respondents with a high degree of religiosity, those with a marital status of widowed (63.0%) and finally, the lowest number with a high degree of religiosity among respondents with a marital status of divorced (60.5 %).

T-5: Marital status

Degree of religiosity	Marital status											
	Married			Single			Divorced			Widowed		
	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree
Overall mean	7.8%	16.4%	73.7%	15.8%	18.5%	68.6%	16.6%	22.9%	60.5%	15.1%	18.0%	63.0%

That is, 73.7% of respondents with marital status married, 68.6% of respondents with marital status single, i.e. not married, 63.0% of respondents with marital status widowed and 60.5% of respondents with marital status divorced, to the questions asked, from all segments of religiosity answered with "I agree", "regularly" and "correctly" to the questions asked.

In the following, we will present the degree of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region depending on the level of education of the respondents.

T-6: Level of education

Degree of religiosity	Level of education								
	No education, incomplete primary education and completed primary education			Completed secondary education			Higher education, master's degree, doctorate		
	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree
Overall mean	8.0%	14.7%	76.0%	9.5%	18.4%	69.8%	9.4%	18.2%	69.4%

From the results obtained in T-6, it can be seen that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is higher among respondents with no education, with incomplete primary education and with completed primary education (76.0%) compared to respondents with a high degree of religiosity among respondents with completed secondary education (69.8%) and the respondents with a high degree of religiosity those with completed higher education, master's degree and doctorate (69.4%).

That is, 76.0% respondents with no education, with incomplete primary education and with completed primary education, 69.8% of respondents with completed secondary education and 69.4% of respondents with completed higher education, master's and doctorate who, to the

questions posed by all segments of religiosity responded with "agree", "regular" and "correct" to the questions asked.

In the following, we will show the degree of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region, depending on the occupation of the respondents.

From the results obtained in T-7, it can be seen that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is higher among respondents who declared that they are unemployed (75.9%) compared to respondents with a high degree of religiosity who are with NQW (Non-Qualified Workers), SQW (Semi-Qualified Worker), QV (Qualified Worker) and HQV (High Qualified Worker) workers (72.4%), respondents with a high degree of religiosity, (SSE) Civil servant with secondary education, (HVE) higher vocational education, (UE) university education and finally respondents who declared that they are farmers by occupation (63.5%).

T-7: **Profession**

	Profession														
	Farmers			NQW, SQW, QV, HQV			Civil servant with secondary education, higher vocational education, university education			Pensioners			Unemployed		
Degree of religiosity	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree
Overall mean	12.7%	21.1%	63.5%	8.1%	18.5%	72.4%	9.7%	18.0%	69.0%	10.2%	14.1%	73.7%	6.8%	15.7%	75.9%

That is, 75.9% of the respondents who declared themselves unemployed, 73.7% of the respondents who declared themselves pensioners, 72.4% of the respondents NQW, SQW, QV and HQV workers,

69.0% of the respondents are civil servants with SE, CD and UD and 63.5% of respondents who declared that they are farmers by occupation and who answered the questions from all segments of religiosity with "agree", "regular" and "correct" to the questions.

In the following, we will show the degree of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region depending on the number of members in the respondents' household.

T-8: Household members

Degree of religiosity	Household members								
	Alone			Up to 5 members			More than 5 members		
	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree
Overall mean	14.9%	18.9%	65.1%	9.0%	16.3%	71.3%	6.4%	14.9%	76.8%

From the answers to the questions in T-8, it can be seen that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is higher among respondents who declared that they live in a household with more than five members (76.8%), followed by respondents with a high degree of religiosity who declared that they live in households with up to five members (71.3%), followed by the respondents with a high degree of religiosity who declared that they live alone (65.1%).

That is, 76.8% of the respondents who declared that they live in households with more than five members, 71.3% of the respondents who declared that they live in households with up to five members, as well as 65.1% of the respondents who declared that they live alone in the questions asked by all segments of religiosity responded with "agree", "regular" and "correct" to the questions asked.

In the following, we will present the degree of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region, depending on the social status of the respondents.

T-9: Social status

	Social status											
	Poor			Middle class			High class			No answer		
Degree of religiosity	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree	Low degree	Medium degree	High degree
Overall mean	10.8%	18.2%	68.6%	7.8%	16.6%	73.7%	9.5%	17.7%	70.5%	12.1%	18.0%	68.1%

The answers to the questions in T-9 show that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is higher among respondents who declared that they belong to the middle class (73.7%), followed by respondents with a high degree of religiosity who declared that they belong to the high class (70.5%), then the respondents with a high degree of religiosity who declared that they belong to the poor stratum (68.6%) and finally the respondents with a high degree of religiosity who did not answer which stratum they belong to according to the total household income (68.1%). That is, 73.7% of the respondents declared that they belonged to the middle class, 70.5% of the respondents who declared that they belonged to the high class, 68.6% of the respondents who declared that they belonged to the poor class, as well as 68.1% of the respondents who did not answer which layer they belong to according to the total income in the household, to the questions asked from all segments of religiosity they answered with "agree", "regular" and "true" to the questions asked.

Concluding observations

This research started from the assumption that religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region is unequal in terms of belief, practice, behavior resulting from the moral aspects of religion as well as knowledge of the theological doctrine of one's own religion, depending on socio-demographic features, and the same was confirmed during the research.

As we have already pointed out, the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is significantly higher (69.6%) compared to respondents with a medium (17.3%) and low degree of religiosity (13.1%). From the obtained results, it can be seen that among respondents with a high degree of religiosity according to socio-demographic features, the most represented respondents are of the Islamic faith, female respondents, over 60 years old, living in the countryside, married, without education, with incomplete primary education and with completed primary education, unemployed, who live in families-households with more than 5 members and who, according to their social status, belong to the poor stratum. Among respondents with an average level of religiosity according to socio-demographic characteristics, the most represented respondents are from the Orthodox faith, male respondents, aged 30-59 years, living in a city, divorced, with secondary school, according to occupation NQW, SQW, QV and HQV workers, who live in families-households of up to 5 members and who according to social status belong to the poor stratum. Among respondents with a low degree of religiosity, according to socio-demographic features, the most represented respondents are from the Orthodox religion, male respondents, aged 18-29, who live in a city, unmarried, with VSS, who according to their occupation are officials, who live alone and who, according to their social status, are persons who did not answer which stratum they belong to.

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PREVENTATIVE EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED FISSILE MATERIAL CUT-OFF TREATY (FMCT) ON THE GLOBAL THREAT OF NUCLEAR TERRORISM

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Abstract

With nuclear weapons being rapidly proliferated in recent times, most experts on international relations evidently claim that humanity is desperately seeking security in an otherwise unsecure world. This research paper provides a brief legislative analysis of the proposed Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) with regards to reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism and the simultaneous promotion of "international responsibility". However, negotiations on a FMCT have not yet officially begun due to some States increasing their production of highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium as the key components to developing nuclear or other explosive weapons. This worrisome situation raises concerns revolving around the potential acquisition of nuclear weapons by non-state actors who often hold radical political ideologies. An international treaty such as the proposed FMCT is

believed to demonstrate significant contributions towards the ultimate support against nuclear weapons proliferation and utilization. Hence, the international community deems stalemates of negotiations for a FMCT inacceptable in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). And while it is not possible to completely eliminate dangers and threats of nuclear terrorism in the near future, they can be successfully mitigated through collaborative efforts on a global scale, provided that political obstacles and objectives do not ultimately prevail.

Keywords: International Law, Nuclear Terrorism, FMCT, Fissile Material, Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Proliferation

Introduction

Ever since the 1950s, proponents of nuclear disarmament have been striving to establish a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) that would limit the quantity of fissile material accessible for the production of nuclear or other explosive weapons, thus providing a solid foundation for permanent reductions (IPFM 2006). Namely, plutonium and highly enriched uranium (HEU) represent the key components necessary for the development of nuclear weapons, which is why the effective management and removal of fissile materials are crucial towards advancing the notion of nuclear disarmament (CACNP 2009). Although the FMCT proposes a worldwide ban on the production of new fissile material for nuclear weapons, there is a disagreement as to whether the ban should include all fissile material or simply new fissile material as newer and smaller nuclear powers feel that such an agreement is biased against them (Futter 2015). Moreover, the notion of "fissile material" bears various definitions according to potential State signatories and other supporters of a FMCT; the definition of fissile material in the U.S. draft FMCT is in line with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) definition for weapon-usable or "direct use" material, covering uranium enriched to over 20% in U-235 or U-233, and plutonium containing less than 80% Pu-238. On the other hand, a different proposal was put forward by Russia in 2005 which aimed to prohibit the production of "weapon-grade" uranium and plutonium, which specifically refers to materials containing over 90% of the isotopes Pu-239 and U-235, respectively. Despite its limited scope, this particular definition did not garner support from other members of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) (IPFM 2006). Regardless of such disagreements, it is of crucial importance for scholars of international law to particularly focus upon the legal benefits of a FMCT.

Critical Legislative Analysis

We begin our legislative analysis toward the preventative effectiveness of a FMCT on the global threat of nuclear terrorism by primarily emphasizing that both Russia and the U.S. (being recognized as Nuclear-Weapon States [NWS] signatories to the Non Proliferation Treaty [NPT]) have cooperated continuously to enhance export control measures and other components of the international regime in order to combat proliferation and nuclear terrorism. Such cooperation began in a major initiative known as the 1992 Russian-U.S. formal agreement to ban the production of fissile materials which was expanded to create the concept of a multilateral FMCT (Hafemeister 2003) and included guaranteeing negotiations and its enforcement with widespread (ideally universal) application (Brooks 2010). In addition, Non-Nuclear-Weapon States (NNWS), as signatories of the NTP, have already pledged to abstain from manufacturing fissile material for nuclear and other explosive weapons. These States are closely monitored and verified by the IAEA to ensure compliance (IPFM 2006). In other words, a FMCT would not have much practical effect on NNWS party to the NPT that decided to join. Under the NPT, those states are *already* prohibited from producing fissile materials for nuclear weapons and are obliged to accept comprehensive IAEA safeguards to verify that they are abiding by that prohibition. The FMCT, therefore, would not add to their existing obligations (Einhorn 2008). On the other hand, the practical effects of a FMCT would be more noticeable to NWS party to the NPT – should they decide to join – within the context of nuclear non-proliferation. This is an important aspect given that nuclear proliferation, among other risks included, enables the possibility of nuclear terrorism as a serious threat to worldwide nations (Jonas 2006). In particular, a FMCT could strengthen the non-proliferation regime in several ways, among which it would prohibit the five recognized NWS (Russia, the U.S., the U.K., France and China) from increasing their stocks of weapons

material, as well as demonstrate further movement toward meeting their arms limitation and reduction requirements under Article VI of the NPT and the agreed goals of both the 1995 NPT Extension Conference and the 2000 NPT Review Conference (Chyba et al. 2006). Thus, according to experts' beliefs, an international agreement of the likes of the proposed FMCT, besides the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and the NTP, could lower the chances of a nuclear terrorist attack, even though the objectives of the aforementioned treaties are not specifically aimed towards combating nuclear terrorism (Fidler 2020), which may be additionally confirmed when reviewing the main objectives of the FMCT:

(1) To secure a comprehensive ban on any further production of fissile material for any nuclear explosives;

(2) To bring all production facilities that are not subject to any international inspections under a strict verification and monitoring regime;

(3) To make the world safer from nuclear weapons; and

(4) To make it obligatory for the parties to the FMCT not to produce fissile material for any nuclear devices and give any undertaking to accept verification and monitoring regime (Chatterjee 2010).

While international disarmament talks are expected to include topics such as complete nuclear disarmament, the arms race in outer space, and security guarantees for non-nuclear states, as well as to involve full "negotiations" on an international prohibition on the manufacture of new nuclear bomb-making material (France-Presse 2009), negotiations on a FMCT have not yet officially begun due to some States increasing their production of fissile materials and consequently opposing such negotiations (Holloway 2013). According to the latest statistics provided by the

International Panel of Fissile Materials (IPFM), as of the beginning of 2023 (see: T-1) the global stockpile of unirridated HEU was estimated to be about 1,245 metric tons. Most of this material – about 1,100 metric tons – is in weapons or available for use in weapon programs. The global stockpile of separated plutonium was about 560 metric tons. Of this material, 420 metric tons were produced outside of weapon programs, covered by obligations not to use it in weapons, or not directly suitable for weapons. This leaves about 140 metric tons of plutonium in weapons or available for weapons (IPFM 2024).

T-1: Fissile Material Stockpile (HEU and Plutonium [Pu]) at the Beginning of 2023

Country	Total HEU, MT	Of this, HEU available for weapons, MT	Total Pu, MT	Of this, Pu available for weapons, MT	Undefined
Russia	680	672	193	88	873
U.S.	483	361	87.6	38.4	570.6
U.K.	23	22	119.6	3.2	142.6
France	29	25	98	6	127
China	14	14	3	2.9	17
Pakistan	5	5.1	0.54	0.54	5.54
India	5	/	10	0.7	15
Israel	0.3	0.3	0.9	0.9	1.2
DPRK	0.7	0.7	0.04	0.04	0.74
Others	4	/	47.6	/	/
Total:	*1245*	*1100*	*560*	*140*	*/*

More importantly, while recognized NWS have expressed their support toward a FMCT, newer NWS have expressed strong reservations. For instance, although North Korea signed on to the CD agenda to discuss a FMCT, it announced a step-up in plutonium production and threatened to enrich uranium amid international criticism for its missile tests. Further, Pakistan's opposition has also blocked FMCT negotiations for several years and has renewed its opposition, citing concerns about India's fissile material stockpile (CACNP 2013). With varying perceptions on a global level, the ongoing nuclear negotiations have expectedly come to a halt, causing a growing perception of the NTP being at its weakest point in history. This worrisome situation raises concerns about the potential acquisition of nuclear weapons by non-state actors. Namely, unlike state actors, these external partners are not deterred by nuclear capabilities and often hold radical political ideologies, making them more prone to engaging in nuclear terrorism (Shkolnikov 2023). Implicit yet never stated explicitly in the drive for FMCT negotiations to advance is the intention behind the illusion of progress. Many fear that not much is being done on the front of nuclear non-proliferation when there are no planned FMCT negotiations and no anticipated advancements on other significant arms control and non-proliferation programs. Stated differently, a new international agreement in the area of nuclear non-proliferation could allow for the feasible assertion that, at the very least, some progress has been made recently or is being discussed to safeguard the public from the threat of nuclear weapons, and that, by endorsing such an agreement, the U.S. is proving its adherence to the NPT Article VI. This is especially relevant in light of the current threat posed by nuclear terrorism (Jonas 2009), given that under the NPT Article VI, Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS) pledged to make "good faith" efforts in eliminating nuclear weapons due to their possession increasing the likelihood of their utilization, thus endangering the planet (Lendman and Asongu 2007). By

lowering the possibility of nuclear terrorism and encouraging "international responsibility" in society, the nuclear industry has duties to the IAEA in NNWS. Precise material accounting allows for constant presentation to the IAEA. Every factory has security and safety equipment installed, and global obligations foster an environment of accountability and openness. In contrast, the nuclear industry is seen as a subject of solely national concern in some NWS and governments that are not members of the NPT. The introduction of adequate discipline and accountancy standards would be possible through the verification of the FMCT and implement the notion of "international responsibility" concerning nuclear weapons (Schaper 2011). For many years, scenarios for a FMCT have been discussed in various academic and diplomatic forums. While the details of a future treaty are not clear, most states emphasize the benefits of verification due to its highly symbolic value for a paradigm shift – for the first time the NWS would accept international verification on fissile materials and production sites on their territories and report to the international community (Schaper 2010).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The establishment of a FMCT would entail an agreement among the NWS to adhere to the fundamental principle of refraining from the development of fissile material for nuclear and other explosive weapons with the NNWS. The verification mechanisms for such agreement could resemble those already acknowledged by the NNWS under the NTP, albeit with certain limitations. Notably, any plutonium and HEU produced prior to the Treaty's implementation would not be subject to inspection by the IAEA (CISAC 2005). Investing in inspections of the NWS is an important step in shifting nuclear mentalities toward more accountability and a small price for achieving a high non-proliferation payoff from the FMCT. Without a proper

verification regime the FMCT would lose many of its virtues (Grand 2000). Yet, numerous NNWS, particularly those affiliated with the Non-Aligned Movement have displayed hesitancy in endorsing counter-nuclear terrorism endeavors. This includes initiatives aimed at reducing HEU within the framework of the NPT review process and the IAEA, where it could be said that their reluctance stems from the belief that focusing on incremental measures detracts attention from the more urgent goal of nuclear disarmament (Potter 2008). Many scholars of international law agree that a FMCT should be discussed and negotiated in a short time, as far as overproduction of weapons-grade fissile materials in the world is obvious and extremely dangerous in view of the risk of nuclear terrorism (Nikitin and Oznobishchev 2008). Given the urgent imperative to lessen the risks of nuclear terrorism, the stalemate in the CD is no longer acceptable by the international community. Removing the linkages between various items on the CD's agenda is crucial to overcoming barriers that are hindering the start of productive work. Hence, it is suggested for the CD to promptly establish an *ad hoc* committee on a FMCT and delve into the matter of nuclear weapons-related issues without further delay (Lüdeking 2003). In summary, while it may not be possible to completely eliminate nuclear dangers and threats in the near future, they can be successfully mitigated through collaborative efforts on a global scale (Sun 2018). For the FMCT, effective verification is technically feasible. The obstacles are political in nature (Maerli 2006). The question is now whether start of negotiations on this long-stalled treaty is – at best – likely to be further delayed, of not abandoned altogether. Or, whether political de-emphasis of verification may in fact revive the interest in a FMCT as a norm-making institution and an operational tool amongst the treaty's key parties – most of whom have been well accustomed to nuclear autonomy (Schaper and Maerli 2007).

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THE POWER OF STORYTELLING IN PUBLIC SPEAKING: APPROACHES AND IMPACT

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Abstract

This paper explores the art of storytelling and how it can enhance the power and impact of public speaking. By analyzing academic literature and the opinions of professionals this text explores why storytelling resonates with the audience, establishes emotional connections and enhances the retention of the messages we sent to the audience. The paper looks into the fundamental components of storytelling such as narrative structure, audience identification and emotional connection. It also explores storytelling's unique ability to simplify abstract concepts, foster trust and inspire action. By using personal anecdotes, created narratives or shared experiences, the speakers can create memorable and engaging presentations that connect with their audience. The paper emphasizes that storytelling is not only an enhancement to public speaking, but it can be a transformative tool that can break down barriers, give empathy and foster deeper connections between speakers and listeners. Practical techniques for integrating storytelling into public speeches are also discussed, emphasizing its relevance in

contemporary communication. The findings underscore storytelling's potential to inspire, educate and leave a lasting impact on different audiences.

Keywords: storytelling, public speaking, audience

Introduction

Focusing on a lecture for an hour can feel challenging, yet watching a long movie for four-hour like *Avatar 2* often feels effortless. Why is that? The reason is simple: storytelling captivates and holds our attention (Ameresekere 2023).

Throughout history, leaders, educators and notable individuals have used storytelling to effectively and persuasively communicate their ideas. Stories have always been used to inspire, educate and impart wisdom-from the myths and fables of antiquity to the current TED Talks. They have the power to influence audiences' opinions, foster trust and motivate audience to take action. The advantages of using stories in public speeches are becoming increasingly apparent to politicians, business executives, educators and students. Business executives are being advised more and more to switch the traditional approach of communicating vision and mission to a new form, the one that tells the company's story. Academic research highlights how teachers can help students in understanding and remembering material by using stories. Politicians have been taught to tell stories in their speeches for years. Also, Suzuki et al. (2018), found that from different perspectives, scientists find the topic of storytelling to be both fascinating and helpful to engaging in science (Suzuki et al. 2018). Storytelling proves to be a versatile tool, finding relevance across a wide range of fields and communication contexts.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the components and role of storytelling in public speaking. It seeks to highlight how storytelling captures audience attention, establishes emotional connections and enhances message retention. The objective of the paper is to identify the application of

storytelling, components of an effective story and the purposes for using storytelling in public speaking according to previous studies. The paper provides an overview of academic literature, expert opinions and relevant studies to examine the theoretical foundations and practical applications of storytelling in public speaking.

Defining key terms

Public speaking

Public speaking is essential for modern society, enabling individuals to articulate ideas effectively. Carnegie and Esenwein (2005) define public speaking as the process of conveying information, ideas, or messages to an audience through verbal communication. The authors emphasized the importance of effective presentation, audience engagement, and building confidence in public speaking (Carnegie & Esenwein 2005).

Stephen A. Lucas has defined public speaking as an "extended conversation" and as such has some similarities to conversations but also some major differences. As a conversation, it has elements of awareness and sensitivity to your audience; an exchange of explicit or less explicit information; a reliance on feedback to know if you are successful in understanding (usually nonverbal in public speaking, but still present). Public speaking is a structured, in-person interaction designed with the intent to inform, entertain, or persuade an audience, typically consisting of five or more individuals, using words, physical presence and occasionally visual or audio aids (Tucker et al. 2018: 3). Meanwhile, DeVito defines public speaking as any form of communication in which a speaker delivers a message in a

unique context to a large audience in a relatively continuous way. He discusses the concept of Contemporary Public Speaking where he emphasizes the importance of audience analysis, effective speech delivery, and ethical considerations that must be followed in public speaking (DeVito 2018).

The evolving role of public speaking in the 21st century underscores its importance for personal growth, professional advancement and leadership development. Additionally, public speaking facilitates personal growth, encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving. It also helps increase visibility and recognition in professional networks, which often leads to new opportunities and partnership (Wankhade 2023).

We hear a lot of speeches where people tend to go beyond the theory and the point they are trying to make. Instead, the most memorable speeches are the ones that are filled with stories (Ameresekere 2023).

Presenting a prepared speech in front of an audience is one of the essential skills you need to function effectively in today's society. Also, it is important to mention that public speaking is necessary for almost every job. We promote such skills among colleagues to actively attend events and meetings, learn about the concept of participation and be open to sharing opinions and making any contribution. One needs to understand the components of communication and apply them in his presentations in order to communicate effectively, act professionally and effectively communicate with an audience (Parvis 2001).

The goal of public speaking is to pass information in the minds of your audience, and very effective way to do this is through the telling of a story. People are not ready to give attention to boring things. Telling a story is a way to engage the audience and help the ideas you are presenting come alive.

Presenters can make their speeches more interesting and memorable for the

audience by using storytelling to make them come to life. Speakers may emotionally engage their audience and effectively communicate their message by utilizing the power of storytelling. The audience can have a memorable and powerful experience if it is used a story in the public speaking.

Storytelling

Storytelling has to do with the ability to create a narrative that accomplishes a goal for an audience (Brown-Grant 2022). The definition that the National Storytelling Network gives on storytelling is:

> "Storytelling is the interactive art of using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener's imagination" (National Storytelling Network 2024)*.*

Storytelling in public speaking refers to the art of using anecdotes, personal stories, or stories to engage and connect with an audience, deliver a message, and enhance the impact and remembering of the content. Storytelling is the art of organizing and presenting stories in a way that captures the audience's interest and improves the presentation as an entire. Since public speaking is the formalization and expression of oneself, the first step in time and importance is to be, think and feel things that are worthy of being communicated (Carnegie & Esenwein 2005).

Lugmayr et al. (2017), discuss the concept of Serious storytelling and define it as:

> "Storytelling outside the context of entertainment, where the narration progresses as a sequence of patterns impressive in quality, relates to a serious context and is a matter of thoughtful process" (Lugmayr et al. 2017: 3).

Storytelling is a skill that can be developed through practice and refinement, according to Goodman, storytelling is powerful because our brains are structured to hear and retain stories. When crafted properly,

stories often move make us take action. Today, there is an ever-growing list of platforms and content strategies vying for space in an already crowded scene. There have never been more ways to reach an audience, but it's harder than ever to truly capture their attention (Goodman 2023).

According to Ameresekere (2023), stories in public speaking are important for three main reasons: they increase credibility by sharing personal experiences, make the message memorable to the audience, and attract attention with the "What's next?" effect, keeping listeners engaged and intrigued (Ameresekere 2023). As communication tools, storytelling content offers numerous advantages, particularly in fostering shared interests and building connections with an audience. Storytelling may generate interest and increase the content's likeability and credibility (Taufiq & Amir 2020). According to Taufiq & Amir, storytelling is a powerful tool in public speaking, offering several key benefits when used effectively such as emotional connection with the audience, maintaining the interest of the audience, make the information more memorable and build trust. Emotional connection is one of its strengths, as stories can evoke emotions and deepen engagement with the audience through personal experiences, relatable characters, or dramatic elements. A well-structured narrative starting with an introduction, rising action and resolution in the end maintains interest and provides a satisfying conclusion. Authors discuss that to resonate with the audience, stories should align with the presentation's topic and purpose and illustrate the key points or offer context. Incorporating vivid descriptions and sensory details makes the story more engaging and memorable, while authenticity builds trust and credibility. Additionally, effective storytelling requires practice, with attention to delivery aspects like tempo, tone, gestures and facial expressions to maximize its impact (Taufiq & Amir 2020).

Mead distinguishes three main principles to storytelling. Effective storytelling engages the audience's rational and emotional centers, making

messages memorable and impactful. Additionally, it fosters critical thinking and action by sparking creativity and internal dialogue. Also, successful storytelling connects the narrative to a clear message, includes concrete details and it follows a structured plotline (Mead 2023).

Application of storytelling

Sinusoid (2021) considers storytelling in public speaking can be effectively applied in three main ways. First, speakers can share personal stories, such as overcoming a significant challenge or achieving a remarkable success, to connect with the audience. Second, they can recount the experiences of others whether personal acquaintances, historical figures, or well-known personalities that align with the presentation's theme. Lastly, storytelling can highlight a product or brand, such as narrating the creative process behind a product's design during its launch. These approaches add relatability, depth and engagement to public speaking (Sinusoid 2021). According to Kent, every story follows a basic pattern: an opening, development and conclusion or ongoing thread (Kent 2015).

Components of storytelling

The key components of storytelling include *emplotment* (the type of story being told), narrative theory (the act of telling the story), identification (establishing a connection with the audience), and form (structuring a compelling story) (Kent 2015). *Emplotment*, refers to organizing events into a cohesive narrative with a plot that conveys meaning; Narrative Theory, views storytelling as an inherent human activity that uses symbolic actions to influence and connect with others; Identification, which focuses on creating

a bond with the audience by emphasizing shared values, experiences or beliefs; and Form, which structures the story to satisfy the audience's expectations and resonate on a deeper, memorable level. Each element works together to craft impactful and relatable stories (Kent 2015). According to Fisher, every story must resonate with its audience (Fisher 2009).

Purpose of storytelling

Stephen Denning in the work related to storytelling for business purposes defines storytelling as "Narrative, often referred to as storytelling, encompasses a variety of techniques, each tailored to serve distinct business objectives" (Denning 2006). He distinguishes eight objectives of storytelling; sparking action, communicating who you are, transmitting values, communicating who the firm is – branding, fostering collaboration, taming the grapevine, sharing knowledge and leading people into the future. He elaborates how each type of storytelling is designed for a specific purpose. For instance, "Sparking action" involves sharing stories of past successes to motivate change, while "Communicating who you are" uses personal stories to show your strengths or even vulnerability, making you more relatable.

Denning argues that storytelling can be a powerful tool to connect with people and achieve different goals, whether it is building trust, inspiring action, addressing rumours or achieving other goals. It depends on choosing the right kind of story for the moment and telling it in a way that resonates with your audience, so that the audience feels engaged and motivated. Each pattern can be used for specific purpose, such as sparking action, transmitting values, fostering collaboration, or branding an organization. For example, "Sparking action" leverages stories of past success to inspire the audience to present their own potential solutions, while "Transmitting values"

uses relatable characters or situations to present shared principles. See T-1 for an illustration of Denning's (2006) categorization of narrative patterns.

T-1: Eight Narrative Patterns for Storytelling (reproduced from Denning 2006)

Exhibit 1 Eight different narrative patterns			
If your objective is:	*You will need a story that:*	*In telling it, you will need to:*	*Your story will inspire such phrases as:*
Sparking action (springboard stories)	Describes how a successful change was implemented in the past, but allows listeners to imagine how it might work in their situation	Avoid excessive detail that will take the audience's mind off its own challenge	"Just imagine ..." "What if ...?"
Communicating who you are	Provides audience-engaging drama and reveals some strength or vulnerability from your past	Provide meaningful details but also make sure the audience has the time and inclination to hear your story	"I didn't know that about him!" "Now I see what she's driving at!"
Transmitting values	Feels familiar to the audience and will prompt discussion about the issues raised by the value being promoted	Use believable (though perhaps hypothetical) characters and situations, and never forget that the story must be consistent with your own actions	"That's so right!" "Why don't we do that all the time!"
Communicating who the firm is – branding	Is usually told by the product or service itself, or by customer word-of-mouth or by a credible third party	Be sure that the firm is actually delivering on the brand promise	"Wow!" "I'm going to tell my friends about this!"
Fostering collaboration	Movingly recounts a situation that listeners have also experienced and that prompts them to share their own stories about the topic	Ensure that a set agenda doesn't squelch this swapping of stories – and that you have an action plan ready to tap the energy unleashed by this narrative chain reaction	"That reminds me of the time that I ..." "Hey, I've got a story like that."
Taming the grapevine	Highlights, often through the use of gentle humor, some aspect of a rumor that reveals it to be untrue or unreasonable	Avoid the temptation to be mean-spirited – and be sure that the rumor is indeed false!	"No kidding!" "I'd never thought about it like that before!"
Sharing knowledge	Focuses on mistakes made and shows, in some detail, how they were corrected, with an explanation of why the solution worked	Solicit alternative – and possibly better – solutions	"There but for the grace of God ..." "Gosh! We'd better watch out for that in future!"
Leading people into the future	Evokes the future you want to create without providing excessive detail that will only turn out to be wrong	Be sure of your storytelling skills. (Otherwise, use a story in which the past can serve as a springboard to the future.)	"When do we start?" "Let's do it!"

All these patterns provide a structured approach to storytelling, allowing communicators to choose the most appropriate narrative style for their goals, ensuring engagement and impact.

According to Kent, the key to good storytelling is to focus on visualizing the plot in terms of its narrative rather than relying on its imagery. Also, it is important to keep details focused and ensure the story matches your values, along with examples of how people might respond to these stories. He argues that public relations use storytelling to express a more

profound message than marketing and advertising, which encourage viewers to consume visual content (Kent 2015).

Stories help us connect with the event/topic, help us connect with the speaker, and entertain us. Effective communication in essence enables individuals to articulate their thoughts, share knowledge and express ideas with clarity and confidence. Storytelling when properly used, can help achieve effective communication in public speaking. Wankhade states that mastery of public speaking not only enhances career prospects by enabling individuals to lead meetings, pitch ideas, negotiate and present projects, but also builds self-assurance, as overcoming the fear of speaking in public leads to increased confidence in diverse situations. Moreover, strong public speaking skills empower individuals to influence and inspire others, creating positive change in personal and professional circles. For leaders, it is indispensable for motivating teams, communicating vision, and fostering collaboration (Wankhade 2023).

Conclusions

Storytelling is a powerful tool that can be used during public speeches we have. The speaker has the ability to engage, motivate and make a lasting impression on the audience by using storytelling. The ability of storytelling to go beyond boundaries, establish a connection between the speaker and the audience and create an impression that lasts for a very long time, has been demonstrated by a number of writers and specialists who study storytelling in different contexts. By aligning narratives with specific purposes, such as sparking action, fostering collaboration or communicating values the storytelling can be used to create meaningful and lasting connections with audiences. The identified components, including the choice of story type,

appropriate details and strategic delivery underline the importance of creating stories that resonate emotionally and intellectually with the listeners.

Moreover, the practical applications of storytelling extend across a wide range of contexts starting from professional branding and knowledge sharing to leadership and organizational change. By incorporating these narrative patterns into communication strategies, individuals and organizations can inspire engagement in shared values and provoke action. Ultimately, storytelling has the ability to not only convey messages effectively but also to shape the future by connecting past experiences with forward-looking aspirations.

This exploration of storytelling offers us insights into the purpose, key components and practical applications of storytelling in public speaking. By considering this information we can make informed decisions on how to effectively integrate storytelling into our public speaking opportunities, ensuring our messages are purposeful, engaging and with impact.

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