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## The Study of Things Military in the Republic of Macedonia (1991–2015): Flying in Place

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### ABSTRACT

In this study ‘things military’ refers to political, social, and cultural concerns related to (and derived from) the military and national security policy. The research scope is limited to the disciplines that are believed to have — albeit weak — basis in the country’s academic traditions. We argue that social study of things military is marked by parochialism and ‘intellectual autism’. Macedonia’s main incongruity — being a NATO candidate country and an object of international state-building — inevitably reflects on its academic community’s inability to sustain any critical reflection on things military both internally and internationally.

### Introduction

The discussion in this article proceeds along three lines of inquiry into the relations within the military/security/democracy triad on the one hand and the kinds of academic research produced in the Republic of Macedonia about these concerns on the other.

The first line of analysis probes the patterns of quantitative growth of studies of the military since the Republic of Macedonia (once a federal unit of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) gained independence in 1991. Due to the importance of the armed forces, particularly during the process of state making, one could have assumed that military studies rooted in the social sciences would be marked by a continuous flow. As even a cursory glance demonstrates, however, it was not until the 2000s that academic interest solidified and gave rise to certain enrichment of such studies. What factors related to the particular historical and social circumstances of the time can explain this growth? Is it all about the dominant NATO agenda, or it had to do with the post-conflict imperatives?

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The second line of inquiry bears on the content and form of these studies. It centers on patterns of continuity and change in the study of the military in Macedonia, focusing on the kinds of issues and themes that scholars have deemed worthy of particular attention. Special emphasis is placed on how much academic interest has been shown with regard to uniqueness of the military institution as such and civil-military and society-military relations in transition.

The third focus centers on the character of Macedonian scholarship and its impact in the country and internationally. Given the importance of the military as a mainstay of statehood, and the dramatic historical circumstances that have prevailed since the 1990s, one would have expected development of unique analytical frameworks for understanding the military or its relations with State and society. Yet in writing about things military, the Macedonian scholars have been relying on theoretical concepts and frameworks developed elsewhere regardless of the national context and historical circumstances. In (few) cases where Macedonian scholars have suggested an original theoretical approach, their arguments have not had any serious academic impact on international scholarship. What are the reasons for this preference for externally elaborated theories intended for the domestic audience at the expense of locally developed analytical insights?

The article further investigates two interrelated dimensions of the production of academic knowledge. First, it brings to light how the production of knowledge about military issues has been influenced by wider social, political, and security developments that have encouraged or discouraged certain debates about the Army of the Republic of Macedonia (ARM) and, consequently, have promoted or hampered the academic study of such matters. Second, it explores the concrete circumstances within which such knowledge has been produced: the kinds of publication strategies adopted by academics, the institutional settings and structure of academic careers, as well as the incentives and disincentives underlying academic work. The starting theoretical presumption here is the one of critical theory, as Robert Cox put it in a nutshell: 'Theory is always *for* someone, and *for* some purpose'.<sup>1</sup> In other words, social knowledge reflects the time or context in which it was created, and therefore knowledge, and the facts that form it, cannot be objective and must contain some aspect of the values of its espouser.

### **Macedonia's intellectual traditions in things military**

The Republic of Macedonia — a tiny new state that came into being after Yugoslavia's dissolution — had had no significant statehood and even fewer

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<sup>1</sup>R. Cox, 'Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10(2) (1981), p. 128.

military traditions. Following the referendum on independence from 8 September and the 1991 Constitution, the first organic law to be adopted by consensus was the Defense Law (February 1992). De facto and de jure the new defense system in a few months' period coexisted with the old Yugoslav one. Not only had Macedonia avoided any involvement in the regional wars/conflicts, but after the peaceful withdrawal of the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) by April 1992, she remained literally 'demilitarized' — i.e., it was stripped out of all military equipment and armament because it was badly needed on other YPA fronts. The state leadership had to rely on the police forces that overtook border protection as well as on the Territorial Defense Units.<sup>2</sup> By spring 1992 the state leadership brought together all former YPA officers who responded to the government's call to return to their country of origin as well as the others who decided to stay in Macedonia (due to personal or political reasons); hence, the Army of the Republic of Macedonia (ARM) was born five months after its constitutional embedment.<sup>3</sup> Amidst the Balkan turmoil, for 10 years she had been dubbed the 'oasis of peace in the Balkans' because of the peaceful way of gaining independence and relatively successful management of inter-ethnic affairs.<sup>4</sup>

As the entire professional experience and military ethos of the ARM's staff were inherited from Yugoslavia,<sup>5</sup> the same applies to the academic research on military issues. Systematic study of war and things military on an academic level (mostly, in the field of military sociology) had already begun to develop in late 1950s to early 1960s. The introduction of the new defense and military doctrine (Total People's Defense) after the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia meant dramatic change of the defense system, which reflected on the academic thinking. The federal army's monopoly was abolished and instead a significant decentralization of the defense system was introduced.<sup>6</sup> The defense doctrine practically meant logical adjustment of the military sphere to the already decentralized political system in which constituent republics had gained more national and political autonomy from Belgrade. As a result, in 1975 the universities in five republics' capitals (Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, and Skopje) established departments

<sup>2</sup>According to the Constitution, the Yugoslav Armed Forces had two components: YPA as a regular standing army and Territorial Defense as a militia-style organization on the federal unit's level.

<sup>3</sup>Article 122 of the Constitution reads: 'The Armed Forces of the Republic of Macedonia protect the territorial integrity and independence of the Republic'. The legislative by default uses the name of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia. The Constitution is available online at [http://eudo-citizenship.eu/NationalDB/docs/MAC%20Constitution%20\(amended%20by%20XXX\)%20eng.pdf](http://eudo-citizenship.eu/NationalDB/docs/MAC%20Constitution%20(amended%20by%20XXX)%20eng.pdf) (accessed 20 September 2016).

<sup>4</sup>See A. Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Violent Conflict in Macedonia*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY, 2000; P. H. Liotta and C. R. Jebb, *Mapping Macedonia: Idea and Identity*, Praeger, Westport, CT, 2004; S. Ramet, O. Listhaug and A. Simkus (eds.), *Civic and Uncivic Values in Macedonia: Value Transformation, Education and Media*, Palgrave, New York, 2013.

<sup>5</sup>J. Gow, *Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1992; M. Hadzic, 'Manjak pretpostavki za demokratsku kontrolu Vojske Jugoslavije', in Miroslav Hadzic (ed.), *Demokratska kontrola vojske i policije u SR Jugoslaviji*, Beogradski centar za bezbednosnu politiku, Beograd, 2001.

<sup>6</sup>A. R. Johnson, *Total National Defense in Yugoslavia*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 1971.

for national defense and protection to educate civilian experts. The faculty staff were not only in YPA uniforms but also with a military mind-set. For quite some time, the thought on the military and warfare was mostly 'reserved domain' for military and social-cum-military scholars. The dominant literature glorified Tito's military genius, partisan warfare, and the national doctrine of self-defense. There was no antipathy or distrust of the military whatsoever: On the contrary, the YPA was a sacred symbol of national unity (or better, 'brotherhood and unity' in the multinational federation) and a source of great pride. It was well integrated in the one-party system and had a position of a 'state within a state'. Expectedly the literature served mostly educational or simply propagandist needs. Such a policy got a boomerang effect during the final phase of Yugoslavia's dissolution when a magazine from Ljubljana (*Mladina*) opened the closet of YPA skeletons: stories of misuse of financial and political power, corruption, arms trade with dictatorial regimes, etc.<sup>7</sup> Seen from a qualitative point of view, military research — with few exceptions — was a blend of ideology, indoctrination, and scholarship. Only some of the publications (usually written by high-ranking officers) were translated in English — clearly with no intention to get into conversation with international academia but to 'prove' one's own unique military thought and exceptional way of social development. One could single out a professor at Ljubljana University, Anton Bebler, as a shining exception — he was a distinguished scholar who got his doctorate in the United States and had the privilege to live abroad due to family reasons; throughout his life he had already been a prolific author both in national and comparative perspectives far before Yugoslavia's dissolution.

On the eve of the end of the Cold War, a distinguished group of international scholars presented a comprehensive comparative study of rather underdeveloped military-related social research in their countries.<sup>8</sup> They pointed out different reasons, such as antipathy to the military and military studies (Great Britain), underestimation and neglect of sociological research of the military outside military institutions (France), study at infant stage (Netherlands), etc. As presented there, Yugoslavia seemed to be a rather unique case (together with Poland) within the socialist countries with a relatively promising academic future.<sup>9</sup> In a later study Miroslav Hadzic exposed a rather grim picture: 'Decade's long domination of anti-intellectualism in the YPA was overcome by pseudo-intellectualism in the late 1970s. Once Broz had been awarded an honorary doctorate, all active or retired

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<sup>7</sup>B. Magas, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracking the Break-Up 1982–92*, Verso, New York, 1993; T. Rakos, 'How a Slovenian Magazine Found Yugoslavia's Weak Spot', *Transitions Online*, 11 September 2011, <http://www.tol.org/client/article/22611-how-a-slovenian-magazine-found-yugoslavia's-weak-spot.html> (accessed 20 January 2017).

<sup>8</sup>J. Kuhleman (ed.), *Military Related Social Research: An International Review*, SOWI, Munich, 1989.

<sup>9</sup>A. Bebler, 'On Military Sociology in Yugoslavia', in *Military Related Social Research: An International Review*, *ibid.*, pp. 117–186.

generals got offers to gain PhDs'.<sup>10</sup> It was a turning point; the following hyper-production of MAs and PhDs was hard to stop. According to Hadzic, as a result there were numerous writers of books on behalf of these 'scholars' as well as widespread and unpunished plagiarism.

The military academies and research centers across Yugoslavia had a very small number of lecturers/researchers of Macedonian origin. Also the military bibliography from that period encloses few names of Macedonian authors. However, the pattern was the same everywhere. For instance, the most respectable leader of the partisan movement in Macedonia, retired general Mihajlo Apostolski, had already been president of the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences when he submitted his thesis and got his PhD in military sciences in Belgrade in 1976.<sup>11</sup> Like his colleagues, he served as member in almost all academies of arts and sciences in the other republics. A retired military officer from Macedonia (Slobodan Dimishkovski) was the first one to get a PhD in Defense Studies at a civilian university (1984), and some others soon followed such as would-be minister of defense Gen. Risto Damjanovski — PhD in military-historical sciences).

Prior to Yugoslavia's dissolution, there were at least three hubs for studying military things and warfare: the main one was located within the YPA educational infrastructure, the second one was the universities, and finally a very small number of research centers that were occasionally dealing with these issues. One single project on the preparedness of the system of the people's defense and self-protection in the 1980s represented a rare occasion for military and civilian research institutions (several hundred researchers) to get together in a consortium and combine their knowledge and methodological skills.<sup>12</sup> The outcome was a huge study with only bits and pieces published in local languages.

The Socialist Republic of Macedonia was one of the smallest and the least developed federal units. Bordering with a Warsaw Pact member (Bulgaria), a NATO member-state (Greece), and Albania, and located in a geo-strategically very important region, Macedonia played a significant role in the federal defense plans and hosted a significant number of YPA units. Yet there had never ever been any military school or military academia on its territory. Formation of a specialized department for national defense and societal self-protection (Study Group for Total People's Defense and Societal Self-Protection) at the Faculty of Philosophy, Cyril and Methodius University in 1975, had both educational/academic and national/symbolic significance. For decades it was the only academic institution to offer a curriculum in defense studies. The first civilians got PhDs in Defense Studies as late as in the early

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<sup>10</sup>M. Hadzic, *ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>11</sup>The Macedonian Military Academy bears his name.

<sup>12</sup>The Skopje-based Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research was the Macedonian participant in this project.

1990s; they represent today's academic elite. A number of professors from related fields (sociology, economics, psychology, history, etc.) have always been included as lecturers. Their scholarly works have been analyzed and evaluated for the purposes of this article. Along with the historical changes (but also with the frequent higher education reforms), the Study Group had gone through a number of transformations: At first it was renamed Institute, while its full official name has changed at least three times depending on the change of curricula and anticipated state's needs for educated civilians. Currently, its official name is Institute for Security, Defense, and Peace (ISDP), which obviously reflects a wish to encompass as vast an education sphere as possible to attract as many students as possible. The number of junior and senior staff has hardly increased despite obvious ambitions and alterations of the study programs. The research activities are of secondary significance, as the ISDP is mainly focused on teaching (for years it has been the most popular institute at the Faculty of Philosophy with the highest number of students enrolled per academic year). During the four decades of its work, over 2,000 undergraduates finished their studies, more than 50 got MA degrees, and over 30 got PhD degrees.<sup>13</sup> With such a big number of well-educated civilians in the defense and security affairs, one would expect a solid research base and strong strategic community. However, it is far from the truth, as we are going to present in the following pages. The bottom line is that the ISDP has produced enough cadres to be absorbed by a growing number of new (state and private) universities as faculty staff but rarely as researchers, since there are few research-oriented institutions.

### **Empirical investigation of the studies on things military**

This article reviews the academic works dealing with things military in Macedonia published between 1991 and 2015. Since the boundaries among military, security, state, and society are objectively blurred, we had to select a list of disciplines that deal with these interrelated matters. Taking into account the belief that sociology is the primary tool for investigating the military world and its relations and interactions with other social groups,<sup>14</sup> it would have been logical to start this research with the Macedonian sociological branch. Surprisingly or not, there is not a single military sociologist (and for the same reason, no books or academic courses on military sociology), so that path would have obviously been futile. On the other

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<sup>13</sup>The content of the ISDP website (which has not been updated for quite some time) is only in the Macedonian version: [http://ddtest2.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/page/institutes/info/bezbednost-odbrana-i-mir\\_20/zanas](http://ddtest2.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/page/institutes/info/bezbednost-odbrana-i-mir_20/zanas) (accessed 19 January 2017). In the context of the Institute's history and achievements, indicatively this presentation ends with a pathetic sentence that speaks for itself: 'Institute for Security, Defense and Peace — as of today and in the future — proudly stands up and will be standing in the face of the new historical challenges, always as the first one on the bumper of the defense of the vital interests of the Republic of Macedonia, as it has been doing in all key historical milestones since the country's gaining independence up to date'.

<sup>14</sup>G. Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, Springer, New York, 2006, p. 4.



hand, political science was officially 'born' and included at the university only in 1993/1994. Hence the bibliographic data set has been created mostly from the publications of the scholars that exclusively work in the field of security and defense studies. More precisely, it includes all of the Macedonian and foreign language academic works of relevance. Further refinement called for a number of key words that would serve as a filter; these include: military, civil-military relations, defense system, national security, NATO reforms, and all of the combinations of such words with others, such as military service, military organization, military and politics, democratic control, army career and military education.

The main bibliographic database we searched was COBISS.MK. In addition, a systematic search was carried out in the libraries of the Macedonian state and private universities, including their catalogues and web pages. Furthermore, International Political Science Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, and Historical Abstracts were taken into account, as well as a number of relevant academic journals, both national and international ones. This quest gave poor results, as few Macedonian scholars have been members in the related international associations, attended conferences, or published in the most respectable international journals.

The initial overview displayed over 450 bibliographic items. Given the specific research focus, one would expect differentiation between published academic work and all non-academic items (memoirs and popular articles published in non-academic magazines), unpublished works (such as MA and PhD theses), and conference papers. However, we decided to take into consideration all available items for two main reasons: Macedonia is not only a small state (of close to 2 million citizens) with an even smaller academic community, but we are also dealing with a state with no military traditions and/or traditions of academic inquiry of military issues (as already presented). A strict analysis of exclusively academic works would inevitably leave us with insufficient empirical material to come to any intellectually meaningful conclusion.

Nevertheless, having made some filtering of the available publications from a point of view of their quality and focus, the final catalogue of works included 272 items published in Macedonian and an additional 68 published abroad (340 in total). They represent work of 78 scholars from Macedonia, which at glance looks like an exceptional pool of scholars. The works published abroad are published in English but also in some of the Balkan languages.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, we could not identify a single non-Macedonian scholar with academic interest in things military in the small state with uncertain future. Having carefully reviewed all items, we classified them in two main categories: according to the forms of publication and

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<sup>15</sup>The Macedonian language is not only very similar to other Slavic languages, but Serbo-Croatian used to be the lingua franca in former Yugoslavia, so all scholars who are not proficient in English (which means the majority of them) consider 'near abroad' as a good option to get wider affirmation and achieve necessary requirements for academic promotion at the university.



according to the thematic focus. The first category consists of books, textbooks, scholarly articles, book chapters, conference papers published in collection of works, as well as doctoral dissertations and some relevant articles published in non-academic journals, providing they are authored by scholars. The second category was initially subdivided into 10 categories but in the end only four categories (themes) were selected as the most relevant for this study: Having noticed that some subjects appear infrequently or incidentally, we have looked only at those that more concretely referred to the ARM/military organization, civil-military and/or society-military relations, the defense and/or national security system, and defense reforms in the context of NATO accession. Final selection of publications on things military entailed 219 works in Macedonian and additional 60 texts published in international publications (279 in total) written by 68 scholars. Among the remaining texts (61 in total), i.e., the ones that cover miscellaneous themes, one could find a wide range of issues, such as terrorism, geo-politics, military geography, military history, security sector reform, civil protection, post-conflict transformation, conflict/crisis management, psychology, and memoirs.

### ***Quantitative trends of academic production***

Between 1991 and 2015, Macedonian scholars authored 279 academic pieces about things military (as already defined in wider terms). As the analysis reveals, it is impossible to speak about steady growth and development of military thought; instead there is a rather slow increase with great oscillations. For instance, we discern a few periods with significant increase of academic interest in things military, followed by a sharp decline in other periods (see [Figure 1](#)).

Expectedly, the initial period (1991–1995) is characterized by a low number of publications: 20 works for a four-year period — or 9 percent of the total works in Macedonian language — were published during this period, and the yearly average is five publications. In the most crucial period for the creation of statehood, no Macedonian or foreign scholar showed interest in publishing abroad about the military and the state in the making. Macedonia has been far more interesting as an object of study in the context of Yugoslav wars, and especially from perspective of conflict prevention/mitigation and inter-ethnic relations.

The second period begins in 1995 and lasts until the end of 1999. During this period, the average number of publications per year was slightly higher than before (11.2). The total number of publications was 56, but the number of publications (11) published abroad (in English, to be more precise) made a great difference compared to the previous period. The year 1995 saw the greatest number of publications, with 13 publications in Macedonian plus the first one published abroad (in English). The lowest level was however hit

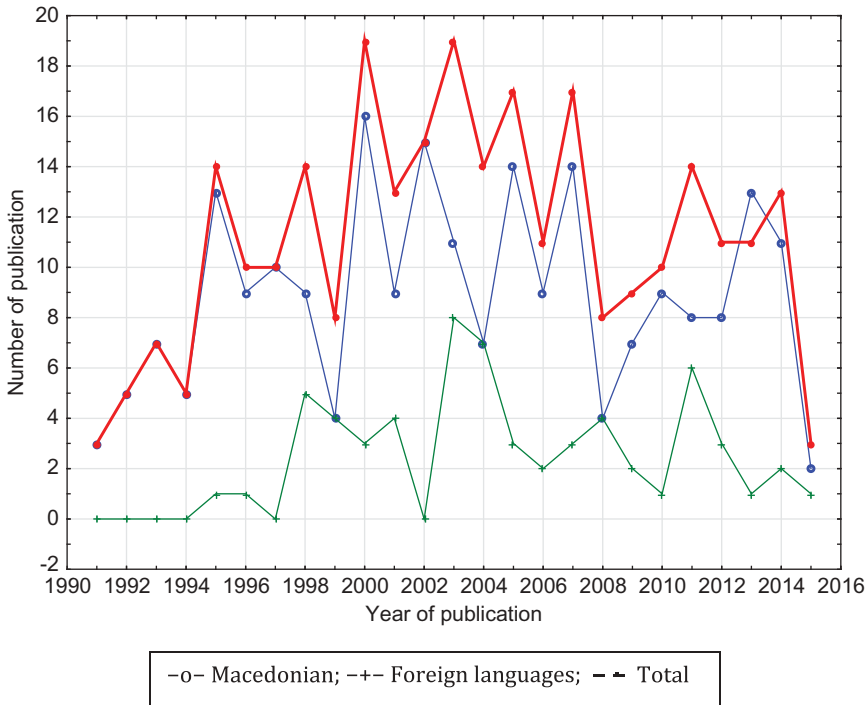


Figure 1. Frequency of publications on things military 1991–2015.

again in 1999 — with an equal (low) number of publications published at home and abroad — four in each category. A more productive period begins in 2000, and with some oscillations it lasts until 2007.

In this period the average number of publications went up to 15.34; the sum of publications published abroad is 45 percent of all works within this period. The percent for publications in the Macedonian language is 42 percent of all works published in 1991–2015, or 44 percent of the total number of publications on things military that were published between 2000 and 2007.

Another low point was reached in 2008 (alike in 1999) with four publications in Macedonian and four in foreign languages. It took three years to see some improvement: 2011 witnessed eight publications in Macedonian and six in foreign languages. The decline has been visible ever since in both categories. Further analysis displays a dramatic shift of research interests toward other subject areas (as it will be further elaborated). Statistically speaking, the average number of publications (in both categories) in the research period is 11.6, while the average of publications published abroad is only 2.4. Probably an even more significant indicator that speaks about the future trends is the fact that 2015 witnesses the lowest point with only two publications in Macedonian and one published in a regional academic outlet. The picture of Macedonian scholarship on things military becomes even more depressing

if one deducts all books and textbooks that have been reprinted due to commercial needs or simply recycled through self-plagiarism.<sup>16</sup>

Almost all of the selected works have a single author. Just 10.4 percent of all publications are a product of joint work of two or three scholars (only a couple of them are the result of collaboration with a scholar from a foreign country). Even in such cases team work is a rare phenomenon: Co-authorship is often done among scholars from different disciplines that have no point of contact with the work's content. Indirectly this indicates hidden motivations behind the joint endeavors. Namely, the higher criteria for promotion on upper academic posts imposed by the new legislation have enforced scholars to make favors to each other by signing one's name on the authors' list regardless of the fact that it is a work of only one author. Obviously, publishing about the national security, military, and state/society for the majority of authors was just a 'one-night stand', to use an excellent phrase used by Israeli scholars.<sup>17</sup> In some cases commitment to some research themes and frequent change of interests have been determined by change of employment, curricula (and the courses a scholar was expected to teach), or by some dramatic national or global event (such as 9/11, the 2001 internal conflict, migrant crisis, etc.). In sum, dramatic shifts of interests are still quite common phenomena in the Macedonian academic community. Cynics would say that there are far too many 'renaissance wo/men' among the Macedonian scholars. Inevitably this has had a strong impact on the superficiality of the knowledge produced.

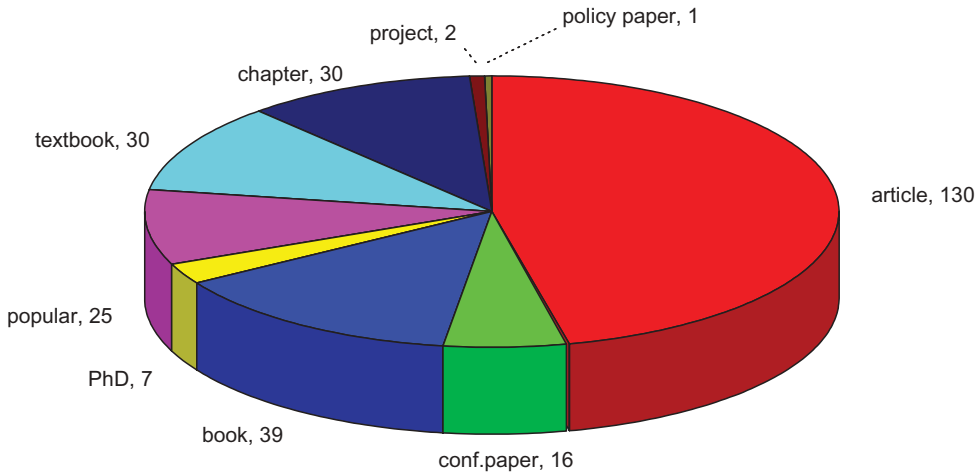
From a statistical point of view, some facts are hard to notice. For instance, in terms of personal output, just eight (out of 68) scholars are responsible for over 60 percent of publications. It is these individuals who form the 'core' of research about the military and security. Moreover, one scholar among them alone has a share of almost 22 percent of all publications (almost exclusively on civil-military relations or society-military relations); furthermore, the same scholar is responsible for 43 percent of all publications published abroad (almost exclusively in English), including a book published with a respectable publisher.<sup>18</sup> The shift of academic interests of this scholar led to a visible decline in the number of publications published internationally. Out of these eight most prolific authors,

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<sup>16</sup>Publication policy is a dubious aspect of scholarship. Since there are no funds for publishing at the university, and commercial publishers are not interested in distribution of textbooks, it is common for professors to finance publishing of their own books or textbooks. Having published a book by their own efforts, the authors' fee are commonly collected by selling the books to the students. As the textbooks are mandatory, professors with large classes often need to reprint the same old (or just slightly revised) publication for the needs of the new generation of students. Obviously, publishing of textbooks or monographs can be a quite profitable business for otherwise poorly paid professors.

<sup>17</sup>R. Zeev, D. Maman, and E. Ben-Ari, 'The Study of War and the Military in Israel: An Empirical Investigation and a Reflective Critique', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35(3) (2003), Special Issue: Commemorating the 1973 War, p. 464. This excellent piece was de facto a source of inspiration for the current study, although there are not many similarities between Israel and Macedonia in terms of social-based military studies, let alone the other parameters.

<sup>18</sup>Actually, it is the only book on things military co-authored by a Macedonian scholar and published abroad since 1991: B. Vankovska and H. Wiberg, *Between the Past and Future: Civil-Military Relations in the Postcommunist Balkans*, I.B. Tauris, London/New York, 2003.



**Figure 2.** Types and number of publications on things military (1991–2015).

just three have appeared on the international and regional academic scene; the others are exclusively oriented toward the Macedonian public (and students).

Analysis through the prism of the type of publication is presented in [Figure 2](#). Article-length works published in journals clearly dominate (130), while project reports and policy papers are almost non-existent. We also categorized 39 books, 30 textbooks, 30 book chapters, and a few edited collections (mostly made of conference or workshop papers).

The biggest number of publications apparently deal with military and state or society (over 43 percent), followed by 27 percent focused on the wider area of defense and security studies (mostly national defense and/or national security system), while the rest are almost equally distributed between the themes such as military organization, the ARM, and NATO reforms. However, qualitative analysis sheds a different light and shows that — no matter how paradoxical it sounds — the central interest is not truly related to military and politics and/or military and society. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that during the last 25 years both the Macedonian military and state have been going through an extremely turbulent process of state-building from the ashes of the former Federation. What is surprising, however, is the obvious decline of interest in this area instead of consolidation and growth. Thus, figures may offer some insight in the state of affairs but far from the whole truth.

### ***Qualitative analysis of the academic works on things military***

Qualitative analysis of knowledge production related to the Macedonian military over the past two and a half decades is far from an easy task. There is much to say about what is missing in the scholarship rather than to evaluate its content and quality. Yet we tried to determine more typical features of the knowledge produced.

A crucial fact derived from our quantitative findings suggests that not only have publications about things military had unsteady growth, but interest in these matters is in deep decline currently. Retrospective tells us that one should not expect too much: The first-ever PhD thesis that practically pioneered the concept of civil-military relations in the Macedonian scholarship was defended in October 1992.<sup>19</sup> It took some years for researchers to get familiar with the theoretical frameworks and different schools of thought, which was quite a challenging task for an academia that had never been opened to the outside world and that could not easily gain access to the theoretical literature or even international scholarly journals.<sup>20</sup> Civil-military relations were literally terra incognita and stayed so for quite a while. Occasionally the patriotic discourse and references to the (alleged) glorious military traditions presented in the media and the only magazine, *Odbrana* (meaning Defense), published by the Defense Ministry since 1993, overshadowed the ignorance of political and/or sociological inquiry of the military. What had been known as classical paradigms of civil-military relations elsewhere in the world were for the Macedonian scholars a 'theoretical breakthrough'. Their research began ab ovo in two regards: First, they needed to get familiar with the theory and comparative practice; and second, they lacked empirical material to be investigated in their own state. While the theory of civil-military relations was welcomed by some scholars, the military and society approach was totally neglected for a longer period of time despite the obvious problems that called for answers. The most persistent perspective (and probably the easiest to deal with) has been the one dealing with the instrumental role of the military in achieving Macedonia's strategic goals — joining NATO and eventually the EU. In sum, even the apparent increase of academic writings does not mean widening horizons and/or deepening research interests: Many theoretical questions about things military have never been asked or have been intentionally avoided. There can be no significant theoretical thought without sophisticated analytical and methodological tools to tackle more concretely micro-level problems. Instead, the focus has been turned to macro-level issues (i.e., grand national issues). The ARM has been given one (rather mythologized and ideologized) mission: to bring the Macedonian state into NATO, where well-being and peace will be guaranteed by default. The dogmatic attitude influenced intentional blindness toward the specific societal context and the specific needs of the Macedonian military and defense. Absurdly enough, sticking to theoretical classics prevented many

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<sup>19</sup>It was defended at the Faculty of Law in Skopje as officially there had been no political studies in Macedonia. Actually for a long time political science had been seen as a bourgeois invention of the capitalist West in Yugoslav academia. It did not mean that there were no respectable political scientists and solid studies. Political science got full academic recognition only in 1993/1994 — as a special study program at the Faculty of Law.

<sup>20</sup>Things were far easier for the sciences since there was no fear of 'capitalist indoctrination'. For instance, the Faculty of Chemistry has always subscribed to some of the best international journals from the field — and consequently it is evaluated as the best one in Macedonia in terms of academic achievements, particularly in terms of the number of scientific articles published with journals with impact factor.

scholars from noticing theoretical pluralization; hence many issues that are central in modern societies have been treated in a cursory manner (such as, for instance, the military and gender, ethnicity, religion or sexuality, etc.). Just one scholar has consistently paid attention to the links between citizens and military service, while the issue of ethnicity and the military is still a taboo despite the growing inter-ethnic tensions apart from the experience of the 2001 conflict.

The diversification of subject matter has never been a result of an intended development of the academic interest but rather a by-product of the conjuncture of events in the societal or institutional sphere. Hence one subject would be most relevant at one point and then forgotten and traded for another academically more advantageous one. It took a long time for academia to emancipate and liberate its mind-set from the old (socialist) ideological and theoretical thinking of military affairs — only to fall into another trap: i.e., to uncritically embrace anything coming from the West and thus transforming it into a new dogma. At first, Western thought was penetrating slowly and in a disordered manner. Scholars had never before been used to communicating with the international academia, few were fluent in English or any other foreign language, and the libraries were full of old books written by quasi-scholars and ideologists. But once the state (and the society) turned to the West, theoretical stands have become almost dogmatic due to the unquestionable and uncritical embrace of everything that applies to the developed democracies and their armies — even when the reality of the transitional society, the weak state and its military, did not fit the particular theoretical framework.

As already noted, academic works by default have been published in the Macedonian language exclusively: This academic production has been meant to remain peripheral or to be used as teaching material for students and military cadets. Interestingly, it is hardly possible to find any work published in the Albanian language too (the second official language in the country since 2001), despite the fact that academia consists of a significant number of scholars and professors of Albanian origin.<sup>21</sup> Within the Albanian part of Macedonian academia, it seems there is no interest in things military — so the most one can find are studies of NATO enlargement and the 2001 conflict seen through the lens of the Albanian population.

The first publications disseminated in English have started appearing occasionally only since 1995, and for quite some time they were authored by a single scholar. Few foreign scholars had known anything about the newborn state and even less about its military affairs. It comes as no surprise that there have been no

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<sup>21</sup>The Albanians in Macedonia represent one-quarter of the population. The 2001 inter-ethnic conflict ended up with a peace agreement (Ohrid Framework Agreement) and an amended Constitution that introduced a power-sharing model of political system. The Framework Agreement is available at [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/the\\_former\\_yugoslav\\_republic\\_of\\_macedonia/framework\\_agreement\\_ohrid\\_130801\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/framework_agreement_ohrid_130801_en.pdf) (accessed 31 January 2017).

case studies and/or book chapters on Macedonia in the comparative book projects focused on civil-military relations in Eastern and Central Europe and/or on civil-military relations in transition. Macedonia was invisible for the most of the researchers gathered in various international forums and associations. Since the 2001 armed conflict, the country has been explored mostly in the context of post-conflict peace-building. Dialogue over things military in Macedonia is missing: Nationally, they all seem to agree with the official state positions and policies, while international academic forums are hardly available except if organized by NATO, DCAF, etc.

How can we account for these patterns of language and authorship? To understand the character of the social studies of things military in Macedonia, we need to ask questions such as where a certain work is published, in what kind of journal or press, and what is the selection process leading to publication. To begin with, there has clearly been a very low incentive structure in academic life to publish in English. Only recently scholars have started publishing in English — but mostly in the bilingual journals published in Macedonia. Clearly proficiency in English is very low: It is the main reason why Macedonian scholars can hardly succeed in publishing abroad.

The quantitative increase has unfortunately not been accompanied by qualitative achievements. Diversification of subject matter is not necessarily related to things military. At first, most works focused merely on the broad aspects of the defense system with the Army treated as its core element but rarely as a research subject in its own value. The formal application for NATO membership (1993) and joining PfP (1995) were the turning points that shifted the focal interest of the local researchers: Indeed, a significant part of research has turned to NATO perspectives of the country and the defense reforms induced by this development. The ARM downsized significantly, and there was serious internal transformation under the auspices of NATO or other Western advisers (including the private military company MPRI). But the institution remained nontransparent to local civilian researchers. The local researchers — or even policy makers — have been relieved of any need to deliberate and rethink what would come from Brussels; any criticism would be immediately labeled as an anti-NATO stance. Thus the line of descriptive and rather superficial analysis has been a constant feature of academic production up to date, with a few ‘hiccups’ related to the internal engagement of the ARM during the 2001 crisis. The global war on terrorism and Macedonia’s active participation (mostly in Afghanistan and Iraq) has induced new interests related to international missions. However, few (if any) studies dealt with the experiences and lessons learned from these missions. The number of post-graduate and doctoral students from military ranks has always been significant, but they are reluctant to explore the institution where they came from.<sup>22</sup> Since 2006

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<sup>22</sup>The last few years have witnessed a new phenomenon: Quite often the Macedonian officers decide to exchange their military service with jobs at contractor firms in Afghanistan and Iraq for financial reasons.



the ARM has become fully professional, which in turn imposed some hitherto unknown social problems with a category of professional soldiers that reached a certain age and were dismissed from military service with no prospects for employment. The problems took visible forms (such as protests marches of former military professionals in uniform in front of the Government building), yet few analysts have ever paid attention to them, or in general to the social status of professional soldiers and officers.<sup>23</sup>

Back to the question about the circumstances that may explain the diversity of research subjects, we argue the following: Despite the undisputed ARM's high public esteem, the 2001 conflict and the post-conflict developments have weakened the discourse of 'national security' and the 'Army as an institution of all citizens' in ethnically divided Macedonia. The international state-building has diminished the national and socio-political significance of national defense and the military. The ARM is not publicly challenged, but it is academically abandoned. Things military are not an object of critique or dispute — the research transcends national security, putting more emphasis on international issues, such as terrorism and other global security threats.

Macedonian academia has rapidly developed in quantitative terms rather than in qualitative ones. The number of (state-funded and private) universities has grown to unprecedented levels in the last decade, including security studies departments. This fact, accompanied by the higher education reforms that entail the principle of 'publish or perish', resulted in apparently richer production. In sum, it is the changed social context (not necessarily related to the ARM or national security as such) that explains, foremost, the rise in the sheer number of works dealing with security, defense, and the military. The seeds of this trend were sown in the 2001 conflict aftermath, but the focus of the research has been more on the characteristics of the conflict rather than on the ARM's participation, the security system's responses, and consequences for the police and military personnel. Soon literature on the security sector reform boomed as the state was under pressure to implement a set of measures related to post-conflict reconstruction. However, in the eyes of many researchers (as well as state authorities), it was an academic 'minefield' to be avoided to not disrupt inter-ethnic coexistence. Thus it was politically more correct and academically beneficial to publish more on Macedonia's military participation and peace missions in Afghanistan and Iraq or merely on Macedonia's path to joining NATO.

### **Organizational and social contexts**

Finally, this study attempts to identify the factors that may explain the quantitative and qualitative patterns of developments of the Macedonian thought on military affairs. This is far from an easy task, since there are

<sup>23</sup>S.-J. Marusic, 'Macedonia Soldiers Stage Strike', *Balkan Insight*, 2 November 2009, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-soldiers-stage-strike> (accessed 18 December 2016).

numerous factors that sometimes have made a combined impact and sometimes may affect the state of art independently. This aspect calls for another in-depth study. Yet we shall enumerate just the most significant causes — i.e., the ones that one may expect to have a long-term effect.

Normally, one should start with the internal, organizational circumstances within which research of the military affairs in the social sciences takes place. As said before, the key academic hub when it comes to defense and security studies has been the ISDP. Its frequent and over-ambitious curricular shifts (from defense studies to peace research) have indeed opened new academic venues and helped establish until then non-existent academic disciplines; yet it is one of the main causes for its academic staff to become ‘jacks for all trades’.<sup>24</sup> One could single out a few individual researchers — from the Institute for Sociological, Juridical and Political Research (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University) and the Faculty of Security (Bitola University) — who have incidentally been working on military issues.

The first-ever Military Academy established in 1995 was temporarily closed down in 2003 (in the meantime, a great number of officers obtained an education in partner-countries, such as the United States, Turkey, Great Britain, etc. — depending on the external assistance projects). The Academy reopened in 2008 as an associate member of the University of Shtip. In mid-2016 the government established a brand-new University for National Security, Defense, and Peace.<sup>25</sup> In a country of less than 2 million inhabitants there are 23 state and private universities in 15 cities; they consist of 135 faculties and 466 curricula. Yet there is not a single specialized research center/think tank at the MoD or at the universities to work on research projects. Universities are more interested in student enrolment and teaching rather than research because of commercialization of higher education; the same applies for the Military Academy. The budget for higher education and research is insufficient to boast significant research endeavors in any scientific field: It is only 0.2 percent of the state budget. Unlike the armed forces elsewhere, which usually have in-house research arms (that was the case with former YPA too), the ARM and Defense Ministry have no such units. On the other hand, it is still fashionable for the top brass to gain MA or PhD degrees; so far they have served only for personal prestige, but the opening of the new state university may change this situation. Master’s and PhD studies are practically a main point of contact between civilian academic staff and the high-ranking officers. Having been close associates, the critical distance has been lost. On the contrary, in some cases right after the public defense of a PhD thesis, the

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<sup>24</sup>The Institute’s 40th anniversary was marked by a major international conference on 18–19 September 2015 in Ohrid, Macedonia. The general title of the conference (*Contemporary Security Paradigms and Challenges: Theory and Practice*) as well as the composition of participants illustrated well this cacophony. The conference papers were published in the special issue of the Institute’s scholarly journal, *Security Dialogues*. See <http://sd.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/pdf/sd-sedition6.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup>The new university is going to have nine faculties. In addition to faculties of economics, engineering, architecture, law, medicine, and security, it will also include the Military Academy for Infantry, Air Forces Academy, and Faculty for Peace Studies and Crisis Management (plus two institutes — for command functions and leadership and for IT and cyber security).

supervisor and the PhD candidate-cum-officer appear as co-authors of the same text that lacks any critical disposition.

For years there were no academic venues to publish expert or academic pieces. Military officers as well as civilian scholars could share their knowledge only through the magazine *Odbrana*. Analysis of its issues shows that officers were using it to shyly express their needs and concerns, and sometimes for personal affirmation, while scholars benefited from it in their career promotion. As far as the magazine is concerned, the propagandist and highly patriotic tone has dominated throughout the years: At first, it was a sort of inertia from the socialist times; later on it has become an expression of Macedonian patriotism and nationalism and devotion to NATO. The first theoretical journal (*Contemporary Macedonian Defense*) was established by the MoD in 2000. The editorial board has always combined state officials, army members, and civilian scholars. The review process has been rather hasty (with great difficulties to guarantee blind peer review process in a small community where everyone knows everybody else). Due to the stricter criteria imposed by the higher education law (2010–2011), the journal *Contemporary Macedonian Defense* formally fulfills requirements to be treated as an international journal (according to the Macedonian legislative), which has been done by adding a number of names of foreign scholars on the list of editorial boards. The ISDP launched a new international journal (*Security Dialogues*) in 2010. Thus the number of popular articles has dropped and the number of scholarly articles has increased. In-depth analysis shows that the authors mostly publish ‘recycled’ parts of their books (or even textbooks), while the Macedonian language is still the one in which they prefer to publish (despite the fact that both journals are bilingual).

Closeness of the military with institutions of research and scrutiny by civilian researchers is typical for all military establishments; the Macedonian case is no exception. The only way to carry out research is to do it in collaboration with the military staff. Sadly enough, the first-ever research project on defense reforms (which includes some parts that tackle civil-military and society-military relations) was published late in 2015 with one of the co-editors being a general of ARM and combined research team from the ISDP, Military academy and Defense Ministry.<sup>26</sup> In such endeavors, self-censorship is no surprise at all — but at least the Macedonian strategic community produced something with joint work on things military.

## Conclusion

In this article, we have traced the social and academic conditions within which knowledge about the Macedonian military is, and has been, produced. The general conclusion is quite harsh: Research about things military is practically

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<sup>26</sup>B. Oliver and D. Petrovski (eds.), *Reformi vo odbranata*, Ministry of Defense, Skopje, 2015.

nonexistent, which is confirmed both by the quantitative and qualitative analysis of academic publications. Even lecturers at the Military Academy do not gladly take up investigations into things military. Social scientists do not perceive the ARM or other military affairs as one of their central concerns. The fact that international state-builders and reformers have a greater say in determining reform processes and policies discourages research work at many institutions. Thus the study of things military remains at a very nascent level.

The state does not finance or commission research projects, so most of the scholarly work of some quality is the result of individual efforts and enthusiasm. Dynamics of publication of scholarly work on the military may be explained as an outcome of just one factor: Requirements imposed by the higher education legislative refer to the number of publications regardless of the thematic orientation. In general, scholarly work has no relevance for the policy-making or decision-making process, and even less when it comes to military and defense affairs. A quarter of century since independence there is still no conscious attempt to keep up with major developments in the central social scientific communities of the developed countries. The Macedonian scholarship may easily (and rightly) bear imputations of provinciality — because the attempts to catch up with international academia are incidental and practically irrelevant. Macedonia looks like a happy ‘orphan’ in global academia. It is still an ‘academic oasis’ where the main principle reads: ‘It is better to be in the leading position in one’s own village than the last one in someone else’s city’. The only realistic opportunity for a Macedonian scholar to meet foreign colleagues is to travel within the neighborhood, in the Balkans (and vice versa). Most of the international events and exchanges are limited to the territory of the so-called Western Balkans.

The analysis presented in this article portrays a grim picture of social study of things military in Macedonia that is marked not so much by parochialism but rather with self-marginalization and intellectual autism when it comes to the values and achievements of international scholarship.

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